
Tadele Bayeh Ezezew
Lecturer, Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature- Amharic
College of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Gondar, Ethiopia
Email: tadelebayeh481@gmail.com

Abstract
Ecocriticism is one of the schools of literary criticism concerned with the representation of the environment and ecological issues in the works of literature. It tries to find possible solutions to correct contemporary ecological situations by analyzing the ways nature and environment are presented in literature. Ethiopia has been possessed enormous traditional, cultural and natural resources with different range of latitudinal position and topography which creates variation in climate conditions and diverse biodiversity. However, we are poor because of our lack of ecological consciousness and careless use and management of nature. We can say that, indigenous trees and shrubs were destroyed completely over the last century all over Ethiopia but a patchy of old aged forests can be found mainly around the Ethiopian orthodox churches (EOC). The present environmental crisis is not caused by how the ecosystem functions; but how our ethical system functions; how we behave with Mother Nature. This paper is aimed at finding out the environmental and ecological issues discussed in the novel called Z’egora, which is written in Amharic. This research applies descriptive – qualitative method. To answer the research questions, the writer uses a textual analysis with ecocritical theoretical approach.

Key words: Ecociticism, Amharic Novel, Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Introduction
Ecocriticism started as an organized movement within literature studies in the early 1990s, a scholarly generation later than the first movements within the environmental humanities (in history, ethics and theology).

The term ecocriticism was first coined by William Rueckert in his critical writing “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” in 1978. Eco is a short of ecology which is concerned with the relationship between living organisms in their natural environment and their relationships with the environment. And Lawrence Buell defines ecocriticism “as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist’s praxis.” Therefore we can say that ecocriticism is a literary criticism comprises an elect and cross-disciplinary initiative that aims to explore the environmental dimensions of literature and other creative media in aspirit of environmental concern not limited to any one method or commitment.

Nature and Literature are intertwined with each other. This relationship has been reflected through writers and poets throughout different cultures across the world. A variety of novels, poems and other expressions of literature been depicted on the background of issues concerning nature. It is an interesting study for a literary critic to study the texts of writers who have discussed the close relationship between man and nature. Ecology and criticism have become important terms in today’s literary expressions. Thus ecocriticism is based on the idea that the physical world and human culture are connected and are affected by each other. It examines the relationship between the human and nonhuman represented in literary texts.

From the explanation above, the writer is interested in analyzing and finding out the environmental and ecological issues discussed in the novel called Z’egora, which is written in Amharic. The novel was first published in Ethiopia’s national language, Amharic in 2008 E.C. by Alemayehu Wassie (Dr.). Many contemporary writers have been writing Amharic Novels that focuses on both local and international issues. However, Z’gora is the first and the only Amharic Novel that elicit ecocentric issues.
Objectives and Research questions

The objective of the research is to analyze and find out the environmental and ecological issues discussed in the novel called Z’egora. The research question addressed by this paper includes:

- What literary mechanisms should an author implement in order to show the state of ecosystem in Ethiopia?
- How is the relationship between human and nonhuman alien discussed in the novel in term of taking care to the ecosystem.

Significance of the study

I hope this paper would enrich the variation of literary work analysis. I have expected that the readers can analyze the literary works from various aspects without forgetting and leaving the aesthetic and emotional values that contained. Moreover, this research can give any significance and information to the writer and readers, especially for those who enjoy and appreciate literature from ecological perspective.

Research Methodology

The research applies descriptive-qualitative method. To answer the research questions, the writer uses a textual analysis with ecocritical theoretical approach. A textual analysis has been conducted based on indicators (issues, themes, ideologies, settings etc.). The ecocritical approach reaches results that are not different from a tool of speech for the defense of the environment. It cites examples of how the issues of ecocriticism can be interpreted through the reading of the novel.

Discussion and Findings

The story in the novel is purely ecological in the sense that it addresses critical environmental concerns which need immediate attention. There are several environmental themes and perspectives pertinent to ecological crises specially the vegetation. It provides a detailed description of the facts that the status and potentials of Ethiopian vegetation, challenges and associated threats for the ecosystem resources. It is clear that the author did a lot of research on what he was writing or had a personal experience of the issue.

It is clear that from reading the book one can find out that, Ethiopia is a country which is prosperous with diversified natural resources and possesses diverse ecosystem. However, it is also one of the poorest countries in Africa. The author believes that we Ethiopians are not poor because of the deficient in natural resources rather because of our lack of ecological consciousness and careless use and management of nature. He tries to verify this fact with various evidences and references. Mainly, he used several literary subjects and literary techniques to present in the story.

Firstly, the story presents our lack of ecological consciousness, careless use and management of nature plausibly through the technique of making the setting (place and time) of the story. The setting is purposely premeditated to express the issue implicitly. The flashback narration, contrasting Ethiopia with Abudabi via the main character, Sisay while he visits Abudabi tell us our poor awareness to nature, lack of ecological consciousness and careless usage and management of nature.(P 37-38)

The character says through via stream of consciousness that, though we Ethiopians are prosperous with diverse natural resources, we are poor; though, rich with cultures and heritages, we don’t appraise it. (p 41).

The expression asserts the aggressive commentary of the author regarding to Ethiopian’s poor attitude for their natural resources and cultures.

In addition to places, the time given to the character to complete his mission presents we have no time to keep silent and look carelessly for the endangered natural resources and vegetation inflected by our injustice action.

Secondly, the plot is the main ground of the book. The mission tending to do the main character, Sisay by the monks to solve the reason behind the mystical place around the church passes through exposition, rising action and climax. It is also unscientific and hard to believe or deviates and clashes with realist. It is mainly explains the correlated religious events and major actions that link together to make the whole story. The technique which an author has been made for the denouement to
resolve the mystery in the plot sounds like extreme parable. (P 319-320). However, it is purely ecological in the sense that it addresses critical environmental concerns which need sensitive attention. It presents a challenge to the existing indigenous species of trees around Ethiopian Orthodox Churches (EOC). Moreover, it tells us that for the time being Ethiopian Orthodox Churches are the only central places where the remnant diversity of old age vegetation types are found. This way of presenting an ecocentric issues do have a strong impact on the readers as do the issue.

Thirdly, the author applies several literary subjects and techniques to depict his ecological issues. Some of these are:

- **Characterization** - When we see all the characters in the story, they can play a great role for both pro and anti ecological activities. They are ecologists by their profession (including the scientist group who came from abroad, the main character and his friend), farmers, the monks and priests.

- **Expressions** - Expressions and comments by the main character through stream of consciousness is the one mainly he used to address the issue. For example:

  - The expressions he used to contrast Ethiopia with Abudabiregarding their natural resources capacity, their utilization capability and their attitudinal difference, etc (P 37-38)

  - The expressions he used to show that Ethiopia possesses diversified ecosystem which found at different altitudinal range and prosperous with diversified natural resources. (p 50, 59, 123, & 173).

- **Conclusion**

  Ecocriticism can be define broadly as a form of literary inquiry that asks and critics of literature, language and communication can contribute to the tasks of protecting biological diversity, minimizing human health risks and using resources sustainably. Accordingly, the analysis discloses that the present environmental crisis is a bi-product of human culture. It is not caused by how the ecosystem functions; how we behave with mother nature. In the time being, the only central place where indigenous trees and shrubs were found in the compounds of Ethiopian Orthodox Churches and the future existence of these remnants of natural forests depends on our effective conservation and sustainable utilization.

**Reference**


