

Literature, environment and human rights: Reading the connectivities

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One of the commonalities between environmentalism and human rights is that both these ideas have a universal scope. Though we talk of environmental degradation in a particular place, it will certainly be of global concern because people in this earth share the same roof. The public discussion of global environmental problems such as loss of biodiversity and climate change made obvious the need for ecocritical discourse to develop new ways of addressing global interconnectedness which literature and other art forms have been doing since ages. Similarly, human rights literature resonates a kind of activism in writing. Writing then not only remains an artistic aesthetic exercise, but also a way on the part of the writers to realize the social commitment under the power of their literary creation that has a public impact. This is based on the theory of what French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre calls “engaged literature”, that assumes the moral duty of the author to promote change, and that every human has a power to make a social change. Apart from asserting that disciplines like literature, environment and human rights are contributing towards a planetary connectedness through a shared imagination of “safer earth”, from a discussion of selected poems of a few Nepali poets; Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Siddhicharan Shrestha and Mohan Koirala, this paper argues that because of the interest of environmental literature in aesthetic imaginations that deal with particular frames of storytelling, the real life interaction of human beings with the natural world is made possible, and in the longer run, these interactions influence human behaviour and attitudes towards nature at large.

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