Challenges to an Irish Eco-Criticism

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Abstract

If the term ‘Green Studies’ is a contemporary synonym for ‘eco-criticism’ then Ireland would seem a natural habitat (as it were) for the practice of eco-criticism. No country has been more identified with the green world; and had Irish Studies been called from the first ‘Green Studies’ few would have objected in the days before environmentalism and before other colours in the cultural, if not political, Irish spectrum were admitted. Irish paradigmatic perceptions and representations of the natural world still exert great cultural influence on and in our literature – the aesthetic, the scientific, the economic, the Romantic, the nativist, the religious, the folkloristic. Of these, only the economic and scientific have not been culturally celebrated by many literary critics, while science’s productions – from nature-writing to scientific papers and monographs – are largely ignored by critics and anthropologists, and by writers who are scientifically unsympathetic, indifferent or not conversant. Yet eco-criticism requires the scientific paradigm, and while a truly environmental literature may not have come into being in Ireland there is nevertheless a great deal of Irish writing can stimulate future ecocritical discussions.

Keywords

Irish Literature; Ecocriticism; Green Studies

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the 1970’s Intellectual Influences Influenced by 3 major American Writers: • Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) • Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) • Henry David Thoreau. (1817-1862) • All transcendentalists from the 1840’s Beliefs • Reject the notion that everything is socially or linguistically constructed • I.e. “it isn’t the langua What is Eco-criticism? An interpretation of literature that examines ecological issues within the text and its time period, while also using these insights to illuminate present-day environmental issues. Montana Shakespeare in the Parks’ global warming Macbeth. Eco-criticism as activism. "The greatest challenge for critics engaged with climate change may be how to acknowledge that climate change is inevitable, already under way, without paralyzing our ability still to imagine a future worth struggling for.” —Timothy Clark. Practicing Theatre.