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ECOLITERACY, ENCHANTMENT, AND CONSILIENCE

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Abstract: *In this paper I focus on ecopedagogy, ecoliteracy, and the role of literary texts and cultural sites in the field of practical ecocriticism. I argue that the literary author as an ecopedagogue and “nature endorser” (Love) has been understated and undervalued in ecocritical discourse, especially in terms of their potential role in synthesising science and the humanities, and in galvanising critical thinking. I maintain that this authorial role is multifaceted but ultimately it functions to facilitate the Freirean notions of conscientization and praxis: to instil knowledge, transform consciousness, and create dialogue in order to challenge the normalised ideological and ontological conceptions of “the natural order of things.” I argue that the integration of aesthetic texts, or “narratives of enchantment” (Bennett), with the impersonal and objectified world of scientific fact, leads to an optimal aesthetic methodology to comprehend nature, and understand humanity’s current dichotomous and antagonistic relationship with it. This is what I term the “ecoliterary text,” which, then, is a pedagogical tool based on ecology, science, values, morality, emotion, ethics, and politics. This amalgamation, I argue, renders the ecoliterary text as “a new kind of nature literature” (Huxley), which ultimately leads to scientific and ecological literacy, to biocentrism, to a new paradigm of holistic thinking and interconnectedness with the ecosystem, and to Freirean notions of praxis.*

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