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Enhancing Ecological Thinking and Affecting Doing: A Study of K.V. Dominic's Select Eco-poems from *Contemporary Concerns and Beyond*

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Abstract:

This paper attempts a critical reading of K.V. Dominic's select eco-poems from *Contemporary Concerns and Beyond* (2016), Doiminic's sixth collection of poems. It attempts to explore how Dominic's evocative eco-poetry substantially contributes to enhancing ecological thinking and affecting necessary doing among the readers in the face of global environmental collapse and anthropogenic climate change crisis. Dominic's pungent criticism of the anthropocentric approaches in modern society and an unequivocal celebration of the ethics and praxis of biocentrism obviously carry some special significance in motivating substantial personal and political human action to keep the planet a liveable one for the present and future generations. In keeping with the activist function of eco-poetry, Dominic's eco-poetics dismantles the myth of human supremacy and moves the readers to unthink the traditional human idea of nature and rethink the human-nature relationship from eco-centric perspective.

Keywords:

Ecopoetry, Environment, Ecological thinking, Anthropocentric, Dominic, Eco-poetics, Nature, Global.

For the last thirty years or so, the nonhuman environment and human-environmental interactions have undoubtedly been one of the most discussed topics across the world as they relate to the very question of human survival on earth today. Two extreme environmental events that have led people in the recent past to rethink environment and the place of humans in it are the potentially catastrophic problems of global warming and depletion of Ozone layer. These global catastrophic risks and the apocalyptic challenge they pose to the entire human civilization today have caused people to reconsider the human idea of environment and the global politics surrounding it. The possibility of the survival of human race being imperilled by its own action has moved the thinkers, writers, activists and scientists to speak out about the terrifyingly increasing environmental problems around us and to argue for such environmental causes as biodiversity and sustainability, afforestation and conservation, environmental management and sustainable development. In the United States of America, environmental thinkers and eco-sensitive creative writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Aldo Leopald, John Muir, Rachael Carson and many others came forward with their profound sensitivity to environmental considerations that ignited environmental

thinking and understanding in the Global North. Rachel Carson has unanimously been acknowledged as the patron of the modern environmental movement and it is the publication of her “fable for tomorrow”, *Silent Spring* (1962) that kindled the modern environmental movements in the West. In sharp contrast to this beginning of the modern environmental debate in the West by intellectual critique, environmentalism in India, as we know it today, is born by the pressure from the below. In a Third World Country like India, the present form of environmentalism began with popular grassroots socio-environmental movements like Chipko Andolan or Narmada Bachao Andolan which are instances of “a wide spectrum of social conflicts over natural resources in contemporary India” (Gadgil & Guha 387). Whatever may be the starting point of modern global environment debate and its diverse forms as we see today, there is no denying that a wide variety of local and global dialogues and debates on present environmental crisis and anthropogenic climate change has been going on in different parts of the world and the various forms of cultural activity have substantially been contributing to these significant debates and dialogues.

Literature and other cultural texts have always been powerful instruments to reflect on the disturbing realities of the present and the hitherto unattended incidents of the past. Since the middle of the 20th century, the various forms of cultural activity have provided a new perspective on and a far-ranging enquiry into the global environmental problems and human-induced climate change menace. A group of environmentally informed literary writers has translated into literary expression their experiences and visions of human-caused environmental catastrophism and the dominant discourses influencing it. Their eco-texts represent in a suggestive way the grim pictures of the self-proclaimed human dominance over nature, the environmental collapse and the deadly changes in climatic patterns with a view to make human society realise its serious mistakes and make amends. Their main objective in composing these evocative eco-narratives is enhancing ecological thinking and ethical responsibility among the readers and encouraging them in practising and celebrating the well-upheld principles of reduce, refuse, recycle and reuse. And in this context, Indian Anglophone poetry is no exception. Through the phases of imitation, assimilation and experimentation, Indian poetry in English has achieved an identity of its own and in the course of this making of an independent identity in the domain of creative works, nature and human-nature interactions have been diversely represented by a great number of Indian English poets in their poetic enterprise.

Even before the impressive formal beginning of Indian poetry in English, nature and natural phenomena had been the dominant concerns in Indian classical sacred and secular texts. The Hindu sacred texts like Vedas, Ramayana and Mahabharata reflect the ancient people's unique understanding of and respect for the natural world-plants, trees, animals and insects and other nonhuman organisms. Even the Indian secular texts like Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, the edicts of Ashoka, Kalidasa's creative oeuvre and Aryabhata's writings explore the environmental awareness as it was there in ancient

India. In the early stage of the development of Indian Anglophone poetry, nature has been represented as a convenient background affecting human thoughts and actions in multiple ways. Being influenced by the English Romantic tradition, the early Indian poets in English represented nature in all its beauty, lustre and splendour without taking into consideration the substantial changes brought in nature by the unprecedented human actions. The representation of nature by poets like Sarojini Naidu, Toru Dutt, Monmohan Ghosh, M.S. Iswaran was mostly aesthetic as their view of nature subscribed to a philosophical or mystical celebration of it without proper consideration of the gradual environmental deterioration and the role of human in it. Their poems certainly belong to the broad category of nature poetry, but in no way they reflect the serious environmental concerns and messages that form the very essence of ecopoetry which is, to be exact, an artistic product of the present post-industrial and post-material world.

In the second half of the 20th century, with the emergence of the theoretical idea of “ecocriticism” which, as Camilo Gomides defines, is “the field of enquiry that analyzes and promotes works of art which raise moral questions about human interactions with nature, while also motivating audiences to live within a limit that will be binding over generations” (Gomides 16), the birth of ecopoetry was quite obvious. As the most ancient and perhaps the most substantial form of literary expression, poetry must have been affected by the growing propensity to represent the complexities of human-nature interaction and the sordid reality of man-made environmental disasters in literary and cultural productions. And, therefore, came into being the genre of ecopoetry that emphasizes on enhancing ecological thinking and affecting necessary doing in the face of global environmental collapse and anthropogenic climate change. Ecopoetry is different from both nature poetry and environmental poetry in the sense that it issues some kind of “warning” to the readers about the environmental doom, something which nature poetry and environmental poetry do not address. However, critics do agree that ecopoetry is a subgenre of environmental poetry which is, in turn, a subtype of nature poetry because it is nature which forms the central concern in all these three forms of poetic expression. J. Scott Bryson’s definition of ecopoetry in the introduction to *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction*, according to Kate Dunning,

gives ecopoetry three characteristics beyond the broader category of nature poetry: first, a considerably stronger focus on the ecocentric view of the world as ubiquitously interdependent; second, the necessity of “humility in relationships” with all aspects of nature; and third, an extremely cautious approach in light of “hyperrationality” and “an overtechnologized modern world,” as well as a strong emphasis on the proximity of potentially disastrous “ecological catastrophe”. (Dunning 70)

By giving the readers serious warning about the ecological catastrophe and terrifying signs of environmental doom, ecopoetry attempts to enhance an ethical “responsibility”¹ among the readers in maintaining the well-being of the environment and the

different human /nonhuman organisms living in/on it. The central purpose of ecopoetry is to move the readers to substantial personal and political action in minimizing environmental pollution and degradation and in that way to keep the planet a liveable one for the present and future generations. Ecopoetry's pungent criticism of the anthropocentric ways of living and an unequivocal celebration of the ethics and praxis of biocentrism obviously carry some special significance in making people aware of the global problem of environmental deterioration in the present age of anthropoceneⁱⁱ and the action needed to redress it.

It is usually believed that the genre of ecopoetry originated in the United States of America where poets like A.R. Ammons, Wendell Berry, W.S. Merwin, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Hayden, Muriel Rukeyser and Gary Snyder came forward with their poetic words to address the issues of human-nature interface and the damages done to nature by humans. The ravaging process of thoughtless modernization, privatization of common property resources, excessive human interference with the non-human world and the indiscriminate destruction of the greens leading towards environmental disaster made these poets concerned about omnicide and they shared their anxieties and concerns in the form of poetic expression. In Britain, poets like Alice Oswald, Geoffrey Hill, Derek Mahon, J.H. Prynne significantly addressed this potential threat to the continuing survival of human societies in their poetic works and all their poems have been written to motivate human action to save the planet earth for future generations of both human and non-human. Their poems turn out to be "an ecotone between...ecology, poetry and ethnopoetics." (Arigo 2). In this atmosphere of global poetic dialogues on the irreparable destruction of nature by thoughtless human action and the human-caused environmental degradation, Indian Anglophone poetry certainly could not remain unaffected. Many Indian eco-conscious poets came forward with their extraordinarily powerful ecopoetics to voice out the greens and non-humans with the purpose of making people put a check on their environmentally unfriendly thoughts and ecologically destructive actions. Their poetic representation of relevant socio-environmental issues has led the readers to rethink "our place in the cosmos, including our relationship to other species, to the land we live on" (Dickerson 158). Their poetic language with its unique figurative capacity acts as an eye-opener making us realize our foolish anthropocentric actions that have put the entire creation in imminent danger. Their poetic enterprise has issued fair warning to the readers about the fact that if we don't put an immediate check on our anthropocentric and exploitative approach to and treatment of nature and its non-human organisms, we'll end in turning the earth into a non-liveable and 'alien' place for the future generations. In Indian Anglophone literature, ecopoetry came into being as recently as in the second half of the 20th century when the second wave of Indian environmentalismⁱⁱⁱ was at its peak. The second wave of environmentalism in India is all about the popular social-environmental movements and the first generation of Indian ecopoets must have been influenced by both intellectual critiques and popular grassroots environmental movements. The Indian ecopoets like Gieve Patel, Dilip Chitre, Vikram Seth, Baldoon Dhingra,

Keki.N.Daruwalla, Vihang. A.Naik, Mamang Dai and many others have addressed the contemporary socio-ecological problems like the growing deterioration of our bio-physical environment, cruelty to animals and the relentless exploitation of flora and fauna done to cater to the anthropocentric needs and other related issues in their ecopoetry that “encompasses both spiritual practice and political activism” (Moore n.p)

A man of conscience with the outlook of a pantheist, K.V.Dominic is a celebrated contemporary Indian Anglophone poet who uses his poetry as an instrument “to attack the three mafias- religious, political, and intellectual- that exploit people and nature” (Dominic v). As a realist and social critic, Prof. Dominic has addressed several relevant socio-political, religio-cultural, gender and ecological problems of the contemporary time in his reality-rooted aesthetics. A conscious artist who has firm faith in the power of his verse, Dominic “believe(s) that the best literary genre for addressing [these] innumerable diverse issues is poetry because with minimum use of words, (I am) able to impart these messages and values into the minds of the masses” (Dominic vi) An indefatigable chronicler of the oppressed, Dominic unearths some of the disturbing and sordid realities of India today- the problems of social hierarchization, the dynamics of androcentric domination, the politics of war and terrorism, religious fanaticism and bigotry, class discrimination, casteist politics, child labour and many other significant real issues of the contemporary India. Being influenced by three different religious philosophies, Jain, Hindu and the Buddhist, his poems “preach to love all creations of the world and show discriminations to none” (Dominic 6).

Beside different socio-political concerns that characterise his poetics, Dominic has been equally alive to the problems and politics of progress and its environmental consequences in modern India. His ecopoetry explores his serious resentment against the mass felling of trees, depletion of natural resources, environmental pollution and the development-sponsored environmental hazards that characterise the present age. Born in “God’s own country”, Kerala, Dominic has celebrated the Hindu philosophy of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” that speaks of the world as one family without any division between the humans and nonhumans. In the interview Dominic had with Goutam Karmakar, the celebrated poet commented: “The concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and the universe as a single religion in place of diverse religions on earth are the driving force of my writings” (Dominic 4). Dominic denounces the idea of “Cartesian Dualism”^{iv} or “Hyperseparation”^v that insists upon radical separation and dualistic construction of the identities based on the culture-nature binary in which the natural world is inferior to everything associated with reason. Disregarding this invariably hierarchical dualistic constructions, Dominic’s ecopoetry argues that “the right of all forms (of life) to live is a universal right which cannot be qualified. No single species of living being has more of this particular right to live and unfold than any other species” (Næss 166). Though baptized as a Christian, Dominic rejects the Christian idea of human dominion over nature and human exceptionalism that have given birth to the conceptual categories regarding human-nonhuman and culture-nature. Born in the holy place where the great 8th century Indian philosopher and the

founder and main proponent of Advaita philosophy^{vi}, Adi Shankara was born, Dominic is a sincere believer in the doctrines of Advaita Vedanta philosophy that celebrates the philosophy of monism, or oneness of God. He believes in the philosophy that everything on the earth is a kind of expression of the one 'Brahman', the God. The poet's firm faith in this non-dual identity of the divinity is clear when he commented: "Basically I am a follower of Advaita philosophy. Though I am a Christian by birth, I believe in Advaita. My common sense doesn't allow me to see God as 'Separate entity'. I believe that there is a supreme power or energy which is controlling the universe. We call it God or the Creator".^{vii} A believer in the healthy intercommunication "between God, humanity and the cosmos" (Deane Drummond xii), Dominic's eco-poems are the poetic manifestation of his deep ecological consciousness and his eco-theological outlook. Dominic's treatment of and attitude to human-nonhuman interface are actually two-fold. On one hand, his ecologically informed poems celebrate his belief in the inherent worth and intrinsic value of the non-human others; on the other hand, he is outspokenly critical of the development paradigms and neo-capitalist practices that have been operative at the cost of severe environmental degradation in post-colonial India.

K. V. Dominic's sixth collection of poems *Contemporary Concerns and Beyond* (2016) explores his serious socio-environmental thoughts in the context of massive environmental degradation and climate change catastrophe that have been profoundly impacting our life in so many multiple ways. A collection of thirty-eight powerful poems that deal with the myriad socio-environmental issues of contemporary India, *Contemporary Concerns and Beyond* establishes Dominic as a socially committed, environmentally conscious and politically alert creative writer who uses his pen as a mighty instrument to voice out his insightful thoughts and worthy opinions regarding different social, political and environmental concerns of the time. The poems in the collection explore the multiplicity of themes that characterizes Dominic's poetic enterprise. As clarified by the poet himself:

The topics (in *Contemporary Concerns and Beyond*) range from problems, tortures and tragedies of the marginalized like women, beggars, transgender, children, the old, and issues of war and peace, nature, environment, vasudhaiva kutumbakam, tribute to farmers and soldiers, philosophical thoughts, karma, spirituality, social issues and criticism, haiku etc.^{viii}

This diversity of themes and concerns in Dominic's poetry and his voicing out of the subalterns place his poetry in the tradition of socio-politically active creative literature. Beside different socio-political and cultural concerns that characterise the poems in *Contemporary Concerns and Beyond*, this collection also explores Dominic's condemnation of exploitative development discourses and an unequivocal celebration of a healthy and harmonious coexistence of different forms of life and the natural environment. His ecopoems in this volume as in the other collections too lay bare his

green consciousness as inextricably linked to his critical social consciousness as a whole. In fact, the main purpose of these poems is to evoke responsibility among the readers and move them from a narrow anthropocentric point of view to an ecocentric one that “demands a return to a monistic, primal identification of humans and the ecosphere” (Garrad 24).

The poem “Ecological Debt Day” well unearths humans’ tampering with the basic fabric of the planet earth. The modern economic growth has been exerting pressure on the ecosystems in such profound and far-reaching ways that its dire impact has begun to dawn on humanity in irrecoverable ways. The title of the poem significantly refers to humans’ unprecedented consumption of earth’s natural resource and its serious environmental impacts. The UK-based think tank The New Economics Foundation (NEF) introduced the concept of “Ecological Debt Day” aka “Earth Overshoot Day” to refer to the calendar date in which humanity’s total resource use for a particular year (ecological footprint) overshoots the capacity of the earth to produce those biological materials (biocapacity) for that year. The concept of “Ecological Debt Day” calls attention to the “unprecedented crescendo of economic and population growth” in recent years and its serious human and environmental cost (Kalshian 19). The excessive human demand on natural capital has altered the biosphere to such an extent that the human civilization has begun to confront the scary signs of environmental catastrophe. Dominic’s poem explores, in an expressive way, the reality of how human activity has been putting increasing pressure on the environment and thereby putting the planetary survival in question. Dominic writes:

Ecological Debt Day
Alias Earth Overshoot Day
Falls on 13 August in 2015
Was on 23 December in 1970
Our needs now amount to
Resources of 1.5 earth
And by the mid century
we need two earths
Man’s insatiable thirst for
more comforts and luxuries
ignores and disregards
reserve for future generation (1-12).

These lines are powerful enough to highlight the excessive human consumption of natural resources to fulfil his/her “insatiable thirsts” and the resultant march towards the substantial degradation of the environment as a whole. In fact, by introducing the concept of “ecological debt”, Dominic sharply expresses his serious resentment against the modern development paradigms and their overt anti-environmental agenda.

An artistic combination of twenty powerful haikus, a globally popular Japanese form of poetry, the poem "Haiku" throws light on some of the most important concerns facing the human civilisation today. With his pen, dipped deep in concern for ecological degradation, and destruction of ecosystem diversity, Dominic here powerfully raises his voice against the excessive human claims to and exploitation of the natural world. The haiku: "Rains reluctant to descend:/ no shrubs and trees/ to welcome their arrival" (7-9) powerfully encapsulates everything the entire poem sets out to bring to the surface. The scarcity of rainfall and the depletion of the earth's ecological bank as suggested in the haiku speak enough about the overreaching of ecological limits by humans who have colonised the entire planet to satisfy their needs. Again, a serious decrease in the planet's forest stock has been highlighted by the poet-speaker in the sixth haiku in the poem: "Tigers enter villages:/ how will they survive/when forests are encroached?"(16-18). The insidious human encroachment into the forest area has resulted in the denudation of the forest cover that poses a serious threat to the forest-living animals after the destruction of their home-nurturer. The poet here gives voice to nature and the non-humans who speak for an acceptance of the inherent worth of different organisms and a considerable respect for the non-human forms of life irrespective of their instrumental benefits to human needs: "Other beings remind humans:/ We too have equal rights/ to live on this planet" (52-54). All these give expression to the poet's deep ecological concern with an emphasis on "biocentric equality, which upholds that all elements of the biosphere have an equal right to live and flourish." (Christopher 128). The poem also strikes the non-human animal question and condemns the politics of human exceptionalism that has relegated the nonhuman animals to a helplessly inferior position. The discourse of human/animal dualism and the ideational exploitation of the non-human animals have been explicitly contested by the poet. He determinedly states: "man has no right/ to torture them (animals)" (11-12). Again, the haiku "Stray dogs' begging/ look at human beings:/ Have mercy on us" (37-39) describes the sufferings of the animals that have been marginalized by human Speciesism. Thus, the poem succeeds in forming an ecocritical and ethical animal-centric aesthetics that attempts to deconstruct the myth of human-nonhuman bipolar divide and thereby carrying out the intended objective of ecopoetry.

The poem "I can Hear the Groan of Mother Earth" explores, in straightforward terms, the relentless exploitation of the natural world by the mindless human consumption of natural resources. The poet uses the popular metaphorical expression of "Mother Earth" to refer to the important role the earth plays in sustaining its human sons. The "Mother Earth" helps the humans survive on earth providing them with the necessities of life but the ungrateful sons ravish the mother earth in a frenzy of progress. Dominic writes:

I can hear the groan of mother earth
being raped by her own beloved human sons

Having sucked all milk from her mountain breasts
quarry deep out of construction mania (1-4)

Dominic is here explicitly critical of the dominant development discourses that cause severe environmental meltdown under the rhetoric of progress. The use of the metaphor of mother to designate the earth brings to mind the “Gaia Hypothesis” that proposes that “the Earth itself has to be seen as a kind of super-organism” comprised of all forms of life and all inorganic elements (Garrard 200). By giving human attributes to the objects of nature, the poet brings the harsh contemporary reality of human exploitation and destruction of nature to the fore:

I can hear her (earth’s) shriek for help
when they cut each her vein
and drain all brooks and rivers
Can’t you hear your mother’s wail
when they pluck her hair after hair
felling trees and plants which protect them? (5-10)

This is really unthankful on the part of humans who destroy nature that ensures their survival on earth. It is indeed unfortunate that human comfort and luxury take precedence over the rest of creation on earth. The human insensitivity to the deterioration of ecological condition of environment and endangerment of species has also been critiqued by Dominic who shows his deep concerns in regard to the menacing environmental challenges we are faced with at present.

This theme of nature’s bounty and human ungratefulness has been carried forward by Dominic in his poem “Mother India, I Weep...” which, in an elegiac tone, muses over the serious decrease in the country’s ecological bank and its adverse repercussions. The first stanza of poem consists of an artistic expression of the conscious poet’s lamentation over the loss of the time when nature was not so irrecoverably transformed by exploitative anthropocentric action. In recent years, the unprecedented human takeover of nature has done an immense damage to the physical environment and ecosystems that will ultimately lead to the destruction of human race, if left unchecked. This reality of human tampering with the natural systems and the resultant ecological crisis has been wailed over by the poet:

Your wicked (human) sons shaved off
plants and trees that cooled your body
Where are those mounds and hills?
Where are those wet lands and fields?
They levelled to build skyscrapers
and overburden you like Atlas
Seeing you lamenting helplessly
Mother India, I weep... (10-17)

As a powerful piece of ecopoetry "Mother India, I Weep..." also laments, in figurative terms, the substantial decrease in the number of birds and the absence of "music of birds" in the air. This concern relates Dominic's "Mother India, I Weep..." to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, the book which kindled the modern environmental movement in the Global North. Carson writes:

It was a spring without voices. On the morning that had once throbbled with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens, and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh (Carson 22)

Carson's concerns over the absence of birds and music due to the overuse of chemical pesticides and insecticides, as she detects the reason, find a powerful poetic expression in Dominic:

We used to wake up greeted by
music of birds like crows and cuckoos
Nature's hymns at dawn to the Creator
Gone are those birds and music now (18-21)

By using his aesthetics of protest Dominic here condemns the anti-environmental human economic activity that has put the global ecosphere into crisis.

The poem "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is perhaps the most philosophical and most powerful in the anthology. Using the minimum number of words possible and leaving much to the readers' imagination, Dominic here describes, in a very simple way, what Wordsworth calls, "outrage done to nature" by humans. He has made an effective use of the Upanishadic philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", (the world is one family) to substantiate his arguments in support of biospherical equality and multispecies coexistence. Dominic here denounces the Judeo-Christian notion of human "stewardship" of nature that gives passport to humans to exploit nature for instrumental benefits. The reference to the Hindu philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" certainly gives an ecotheological dimension to the poem. It also invokes the environmental philosophy of "Deep Ecology" that celebrates a healthy and harmonious coexistence of human and non-human forms of life within an ecological community. The poet is sad to note that these "eternal laws of the planet/ Meant for humans and non-humans" (2-3) have been violated by excessive human intrusion into the nonhuman world: "But rational human beings never care/ Violators everywhere/ and abiding very few" (4-6). The human consumerism and their "selfish thirst for comforts and luxuries" (19) have turned the planet into an inhospitable and alien one. However, the poem ends on a preachy note as the poet calls for a "collective efforts of nations" to save the planet standing in the face of global environmental.: "Damages done to ecology/ can't be remedied singular/ Needs collective efforts of nations" (34-

36). In this sense, the poem also substantially contributes to the ongoing global dialogues on environmental justice and responsibility, climate change mitigation, environmental commitments, green agenda and many other similar eco-political issues. The only way, according to the pantheist poet, to get out of this catastrophic condition is the philosophy of “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” that’ll guide people to live in harmony with all other forms of life in happy mutuality: “Let’s hence abide by the eternal/ laws of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” (37-38). Thus, in the face of aggressive anthropocentric exploitation of nature the poem celebrates what Arne Næss calls biospherical egalitarianism” (Næss 219).

Thus, Dominic’s poems that are discussed above explore all the four major themes of ecopoetry as identified by Helen Moore- (i)(Re)connection, (ii)Witnessing, (iii)Resistance and (iv)Visioning. In these poems Dominic has addressed some of the major environmental concerns with a view to make the human society active in environmental action to redress environmental problems and challenges. Dominic advocates interactive, interdependent and mutually reactive relationships that should exist between the different forms of life and the natural world within a harmonious ecological community. Dominic’s eco-poetics dismantles the myth of human supremacy and moves the readers to unthink the traditional human idea of nature and rethink the human-nature relationship from ecoocentric perspective. It is true that Dominic’s poems cannot do much in harnessing the problems in ecology, but they can certainly help in defining and resolving, at least to some extent, the ecological problems. This potential contribution of ecopoetry to enhancing ecological thinking and affecting necessary doing justifies P.B. Shelley’s well-known claim about the power of poetic imagination with which the veteran poet concludes his celebrated essay “A Defence of Poetry”: “Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world” (Shelly 255).

Notes:

All references discussed in my article are collection from the official website of K.V. Dominic. http://www.profkvdominic.com/?page_id=1703. Accessed on 20-03-2018.

ⁱ Donna Haraway uses this term to refer to humans’ ethical responsibility to engage with nonhumans. For details on can read Donna Haraway’s *When Species Meet* (2008) where Haraway’s thoughts are clearly informed by posthumanist ideas.

ⁱⁱ Although subject to contention among the geologists, Anthropocene has become a buzzword these days among environmental thinkers who use it to refer to the new geological epoch which has resulted from human tampering with the basic fabric of our planet in irrevocable ways. For details on can consult Jeremy Davies’s *The Birth of the Anthropocene*, published from the University of California Press in 2016.

iii. This idea of the different phases of environmentalism in India is taken from Ramachndra Guha's talk on "The Three Waves of Environmentalism in India" at the annual Piers Blaikie Lecture at UEA on 5th October 2016. The lecture is available on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnKprWbTNPc>.

iv This philosophical idea refers to the problematic concept of dualism between (immaterial) mind and (material) matter/body proposed and popularised by the French Philosopher René Descartes. Descartes believed that nonhuman animals do not have the reason and consciousness and therefore, they are inferior to the conscious humans with minds and souls. This idea is, in fact, at the root of the politics of divide between human and nonhuman as it formalises the discourses of human exploitation of the nonhumans.

v Popularised by the Australian ecofeminist Val Plumwood, Hyperseparation is a conceptual mechanism that places humans over the rest of nature on the ground that humanity possess a unique reason that the natural world doesn't have. Hyperseparation is an ideological tool of domination and conquest that denies any possibility of interrelationships and mutuality between the "superior" humans and "alien" natural phenomena. For details one can read Val Plumwood's book *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*, published from the Psychology press in the year 2002.

vi Originally known as Puruṣavāda, this non-dualistic school of Indian philosophy celebrates the idea of one reality and one God. This religious philosophy which speaks of spiritual liberation through acquiring knowledge denounces the idea of duality and promotes the idea of oneness in every sense. For more information on this school of philosophy one can go through Eliot Deutsch's book *Advaita Vedanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction* from the University of Hawaii Press in 1980.

vii This quotation is taken from the Preface to the Dominic's third anthology of poems *Multicultural Symphony (A Collection of Poems)*. It is retrieved from K.V. Dominic official website <http://www.profkvdominic.com/>. Accessed on 28-03-2018.

viii This quotation has its origin in the Preface to Doiminc's sixth collection of poems *Contemporary Concerns AND Beyond (A Collection of Poems)*. The select poems from this anthology are the subject of my study in this paper. The quotation is retrieved from the official website of K.V. Dominic. http://www.profkvdominic.com/?page_id=1703. Accessed on 28-03-2018.

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