

## TRANSMUTATION OF NATURE IN THE LITERATURE AND LAND ART

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### ABSTRACT

The Human's tendency to make changes in the nature has raised various views in the area of literature and art; and over the history, these views have become a concept integrated of diverse themes. One of the major consequences of the present age is the disturbed relationship of the human with the nature, which is a threat to the world of ecology, and the society continuously looks for a technological solution for dealing with a crisis developed by the technology itself. This consequence has developed requests for broader discussions on the changed concept of nature and contributions to promote humans' thoughtfulness in order to find a way out of the crisis. The concern of many poets and artists in this regard is to develop a language consistent with this time for regaining the nature and its relationship with the human. This qualitative study was conducted to examine the effect and recognize the synchrony of ecocriticism and land art, which are nature-oriented in their works, using references available in the library and illustrated references. The nature-oriented literary criticism has developed a new perspective toward expressing artistic purposes, which is the main objective of this study, through using verbal features and effectiveness of the manifestations of nature.

**Keywords:** *Nature, Literature, ecocriticism, land art.*

### INTRODUCTION

Nature has been always a source of art from the beginning up to now; from Chinese and Japanese paintings to Timurid and Safavid paintings and miniatures; landscape paintings of painters living in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries AD and painters of the nineteenth century AD, such as "Turner" and "Constable;" impressionist painters, such as Van Gogh, Gauguin, Monet, and Pissarro; and works of various schools of the twentieth century AD that originate from the nature in a modern way. It is also more obvious in the art of poetry where relevant examples and signs of nature can be found in poetic works all over the world since old days. The colorful fantasy nature is the main theme and dominant perspective of the songs and poems of Saffo and Billy Tees in Greenland and magical coasts of Greece; ignorant Arab poets, such as Amr al-Qeis; and lyrics at the beginning of odes composed by Iranian practitioners of the ode in the fifth and sixth centuries AH, such as Farrokhi, Azraqi, Khaqani, and especially Manochehri who is specifically named the "poet of nature."

It might be argued that all the humans over a certain period of history were poet; the period when people were getting surprised with normal natural events, any sensory perception of the environment was new and amazing to them, and naming the objects was the initial experience and the poetic and rational consciousness.

However, the works of Romantic poets and painters were the first ones introducing the nature not as a context for human activities but as an independent and integrated entity. The nature concept, especially in the sense of natural beauty, up to the end of Romanticism was inspired by the Plato's philosophy, which is almost related to the notion of harmony as a unity developed between human and nature, as the human is a separable part of this harmony. This specific Romantic orientation continued in next eras in works of people, such as Henry David Thoreau and John Moor, through prioritizing the wild intact nature over the civilization and its products. Another factor effective in the expansion of the nature-oriented approach to the world was Darwin's theories that perceive the human not as the center of nature but only as one

element of the nature, along other elements, and finds all the elements of nature interdependent. These two factors together resulted in serious doubts about the superiority of the human over the nature.

In this regard, the progress of science and mechanization led to the scientific perception of the nature, and soon, the use of quantitative and qualitative designs accelerating the different perceptions of aesthetics became common in the verbal and non-verbal languages. The people's thought, however, was ceaselessly inspired by the ideal Romantic belief, that is, the intact natural beauty.

Based on the history in this regard, "the Western attitudes toward the nature originate from a combination of Jewish views, as mentioned in the first scriptures, and the philosophy of the ancient Greeks, especially the Aristotle's attitude. Unlike some other ancient traditions, such as Indian traditions, the Jewish and Greek traditions both set humans in centers of the world of ethics; actually, not merely the centers but often the ethically important whole aspect of this world." (Singer, 2008, p. 142)

When Christianity dominated the Roman Empire, it absorbed principles of the ancient Greek attitude toward the nature. The influence of the Greek attitude on the Christian philosophy was developed by the scholastic philosopher of the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas, whose achievement in his life was the integration of Christian theology with Aristotle's thought. To Aristotle, nature consists of hierarchies where creatures with less intellection exist for the sake of creatures with higher intellection, "plants exist for the sake of animals and brutish animals for the sake of humans, domestic animals for humans' feeding and wild animals for supplying food, clothes, and various tools for humans."

In his major work named *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas follows the above Aristotle's statement word by word and continues that such an attitude conforms to the divine command mentioned in the Genesis. He classifies sins only into sins against God, sins against oneself, and sins against one's neighbors. According to him, commitment of sin against the animals or the nature is not possible at all. Such a manner of thinking was dominant in Christianity at least in its first eight centuries. According to the Western common tradition, the world and the nature exist in the interests of human beings. God has dominated the human over the nature and does not mind how the human behaves the nature. Humans are the only morally important members of this world. The nature itself does not have an intrinsic value, and it is not sinful to destroy plants and animals unless humans are damaged (Singer, 2008, p. 144).

In fact, after the Renaissance, a twofold attitude toward the nature is seen in the West. On one hand, the matter of metaphysics is eliminated from the nature, and the nature changes into a brutish lifeless creature free of metaphysics and without any right, which is the raw material of human activities, and the human is allowed to manipulate it in any way; and on the other hand, the nature receives attention in some contemporary intellectual circles and changes into a main subject in the area of literature and art following the rejection of the idea that deemed the nature the place of Satan in the Middle Ages.

The energy crisis and environmental disasters in 1960s and 1970s pushed Americans to pay attention to the sustainability of natural resources. This was an onset of an unprecedented art movement called *land art* whose influence was experienced in the Europe. The land art arose numerous critical reactions. However, it emphasized their determination to break the common perception of art. It implies the cultural reproduction of natural materials and directs the humans toward developing a possible compatibility between designs and their natural samples.

Some artists reviewed the relationship between human and nature in the past and concluded that the presence of a respectful sanctimonious attitude toward the nature and its elements in the traditional world of the art and literature of different regions has made the human deem the nature sacred and divine and thus try to protect it continually. In the modern world, however, there is a viewpoint that tries to exploit the nature as much as possible in order to obviate the human's immediate needs and has resulted in

destruction of the environment and serious damages to it. Reviewing the modern human's ideology of the nature, therefore, such artists struggle to save humans against the danger they may themselves make, and the approach to the relationship between human and nature can be helpful in this regard.

The present study was conducted to examine and recognize the effect of ecocriticism (the nature-oriented literary criticism) and its relationship with the land art and the fundamental concept of nature through analyzing nature-oriented works of some certain poets and artists.

Some main questions answered in this regard are as follows: firstly, how have humans' metaphors of land affected the way they treat it? Secondly, how have the land art and literature affected the relationship between human and nature? Thirdly, how has the environmental crisis influenced the contemporary literature and the popular culture, and what are its influences? And fourth, how do the literary studies and environmental discourse integrate and interconnect?

Given that artists try to produce noble and native art works regarding the cultural and social needs, training the artists and raising their knowledge and counseling about art approaches can be helpful in this regard. It is hoped that the familiarity with the real image of the temporary art; the evaluation of relationship among art, literature, and society; and the familiarity with the status of artists in the society would largely contribute to the progress of goals of all artists and art lovers for protecting the environment.

### **Review of literature**

There are various books and documents, which are in English and related to the Western thought, about the land art. One of the reliable references in the area of land art and environmental art is the book *Land and Environmental Art* that was written by Kastner and mostly discusses the history of such arts and works and biographies of artists of this new movement.

Another book in this regard is the *Earthworks and beyond* written by John Beardsley and published by Abbeville Press. The border between environmental art and landscape architecture is not clear in the above book. Other books in this regard include *Currents: Contemporary Directions in the Visual Art* written by Howard J. Smagula. One chapter of the book has been dedicated to introduce the land art and its well-known artists. Another major book published in this regard is the *Land Art* written by Michael Lailach in 95 pages in 2007. It discusses the origins of the land art movement and initial works of its artists. However, it introduces few works of the artists and only discusses their attitude and working procedures briefly on one page.

However, there are numerous articles and works in the area of the role of nature in literature. The most important book written in this regard is the Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism*, which is the subject of this study. The author of the book, which is a kind of literary criticism, examines the historical evolutions of ecocriticism and introduces the most important metaphors in this regard, such as the pollution, desert, apocalypse, habitation, animals, and the earth, to readers. The book, however, does not only introduce the ecocriticism and examine environmental subject matters in literature but also talks about an independent context that begins a new era in studies on the environment and ecocriticism that is the subject of this study. Garrard's attitude is critical, in that, he does not only introduce specific concepts and currents of ecocriticism but also reveals the extent to which each of the concepts and currents is ideological.

Given that numerous artists and poets in the area of literature and art manifest the archetypes and primitive beliefs about the perceived time and existence in their art and become intimate with the nature using natural elements, no article or book on the link between literature and art has been published so far. It is hoped that the present study would contribute to future studies in this regard.

### **Ecocriticism in the literary criticism**

It is centuries humans are the major aggressors of the nature. Humans have cruelly exploited the earth with their rough and abusive behavior, and clearly, they do not have a goal other than overcoming the elements of nature and changing them into their desirable things. It seems that humans always have sought to captivate the entire universe over the centuries. In this regard, ecocriticism is a new theory of literary criticism that has been defined as “a science of examining the relationship between literature and the environment” around the human by Cheryll Glotfelty, a pioneer and an inventor of this type of literary criticism, in 1996 and explores the human’s cruelly attitude and behavior in poems and literary works of artists from past to present. The environmental critics mainly aim to eliminate the human / nature or culture / nature conflict and believe that the human-centered approach to the world is the major cause of environmental crises.

Here on the basis of the nature-oriented literary criticism, the culture of the human behavior is questioned precisely, and numerous subjects, which are considered as determinative attitudes and issues of the interaction among the human, nature, and culture, are discussed regarding naturalism. “In its broadest sense, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the environment or, in other words, the study of the relationship between human and nonhuman issues.” (Garrad, 2004, p. 5)

It is the nature-oriented literary criticism where humans may have tried and succeeded to view everything from the perspective of nature regardless of their own profits and losses for the first time. Those who have paid attention to this moral philosophy in their works include Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), an outstanding Bengali poet who was a philosopher, a writer, a critic, an artist, and above all, a teacher although he has been known as a poet. Tagore who traveled to Iran twice in 1911 and 1932 and 1934 was primarily a poet and an artist. His epic poems, dramas, novels, and literary essays had become perfect in all literary styles. That Indian brilliant artist was the first Asian figure winning the Nobel Prize for his collection of poems named *Gitanjali* in 1913. He has composed exquisite and profound poems many of which are related to the nature. In this regard, he wrote a letter to one of his friends in 1930 as follows:

A major part of my early years was spent in watching the world of nature. Watching these beautiful manifestations of the universe made me happy. The love of nature in me was so deep that when I woke up in the morning, I was sure I would find newborn things in the nature that would fascinate me, and I would be overwhelmed with joy when I am watching them; new-created novel things with endless beauty and glory. (Rouhi, 2005, p. 45)

His own view to the nature as a space allowing the human to perceive a sense and in which the relation of human to the environment and the human’s invasion to the nature and its reciprocal adverse effects for the human can be seen in one of his poems entitled *O flower, I picked you*, “I picked the flower; oh, when I put it on my heart, its thorns annoyed me. When the night came, and the daylight disappeared, I found that the flower had withered, but my pain still remained.” (ibid)

Although the above poem begins with flower, the main objective is to *pick* the flower. When he picked the flower, his hands were injured with the flower’s thorns, “what an aroma and beauty numerous flowers gift us, but now, the time to pick the flowers has gone, and when night came, nothing was left from those red flowers except the pain.”

He continues in another part of the poem, “No, you do not have the right to pick the blossoms in the flowering season, shake and split the buds, and break the branches. Because, it is beyond your power to grow and blossom them again and ...”

It is absolutely clear that some of these metaphors provoke the perceived intact space that has been destroyed by humans’ mistakes. In the above verses, humans receive the normal reaction of their behavior because the nature is not a silent observer

and someday shows a reaction that might be a thorn scaring humans' hands or a horrible earthquake or tsunami!

The mystical approach to the nature in the area of literature can be found in works of another poet and artist Sohrab Sepehri who is of special importance in Iranian poets and artists. Sepehri drowns in the nature, and when he is overwhelmed in the nature as such, he achieves the material of his poem's images. Thus, the nature is in the climax of fancy in Sepehri's poem when he says:

I'm a Muslim  
A red rose is my qibla  
The fountain is my prayer mat, and the light is my seal.  
The land is my prayer mat ...  
I say my prayer when the wind call to the prayer  
On the finial of cedar  
I say my prayer after the grass begins to pray  
After the wave begins to pray ...” (Sepehri, 2015, p. 272)

The characteristic of Sepehri's poetry is to personify the natural phenomena and objects. Everything is alive, can feel, boasts, and breathes in Sepehri's poetry. As he says, he is actually that poet using the plural *you* to address the madonna lily. In his poetic language, words are created simultaneously with the entire poem. Like his love of plants, grass, and flowers, his poetry suddenly grows in his mind. His chastity, purity, and rural innocence seem to influence his poetry (Figures 1).

In his poetry, Sepehri applies a simple language and invites people to watch the nature carefully, approach it, and integrate with it.

He did not like the environment and time in which he was living and was seeking a superior world.



Figure1. Sohrab Sepehri [www.espace-sculpture.com](http://www.espace-sculpture.com)

In this regard, he says at the end of his poem:

We are not supposed to identify the red rose  
We may be supposed to levitate in the enchantment of the red rose ...  
We may be supposed to  
Seek the song of truth  
Among the lilies and the century.

The end of the above poem is actually an invitation to perceive the mysticism truly and use it in the era of steel and friction of metals. In the bustle of various sounds in machine age, Sepehri still listens to the song of truth deeply and is worried about the loss of humans in the cement surface of the century.

Frough Farrokhzad describes the above situation in a very beautiful poem as follows:

I feel sorrow for the garden

No one cares about the garden

No one cares about the fish

No one wants to believe the garden is about to die ... (Farrokhzad, 2004, p. 287)

Another beautiful poem in this regard is that of Manochehri Damghani, a great poet in the fourth century AH, who describes the sorrowful leaf-shedding fall with utmost subtlety and beauty:

Go and bring fur, it is fall / the cool wind is blowing from the Kharazm

See that shedding leaf on that grapevine / it is like the dyers' wear

The farmer is surprised / because neither the flower nor the pomegranate in the garden (Manochehri, 2003, p. 165)

The similes used by Manochehri, the poet composing of nature, are the most precise and fantasy paintings of the nature. The fall in the earth can be well felt in the above poem. The poet dedicates the color of his own character to the poem when choosing a subject from the environment; this is a combination of mental life with the social environment as an artistic creation. His manner of describing the nature, use of similes, and equalization of the natural elements, objects, and affairs arise from the living environment.

According to the philosophy and science, no phenomenon in the world remains fixed, and no truth can be hidden; however, mystical knowledge is necessary to understand the philosophy of nature.

“Returning to the origin necessitates the recurrence of a truth in the world. The reason is that the return of a moving entity to the point that has left behind is futile. In the course of their moving, objects and nature pass through similar points, such as the wheat that moves from the root to the stem and then to the cluster. People assume that the product is the same wheat cultivated in the soil, whilst, the wheat has broken in other representations and continues in next forms” (Pournamdariyan, 1996, p. 271).

Jibran Khalil Jibran states:

When you are chewing an apple with your teeth, say yourself, ‘your seeds will continue living in my body. Blossoms of your seeds will blossom in my heart. Your pleasing aroma will ascend to the superior world with my breaths. Yeah, we will be cheerful together forever. (Jibran, 2003, p. 45)

The Iranian famous poet Sa’di has described the four elements stunningly in his poems:

God created the sea. He created / the sun, the moon, stars, and day and night for trees and humans

He creates animates from a sperm and sugar from sugarcane / the wet leaves from the dry wood and wells from granite

He creates gems from granite, pearls from the shell / Humans from soil and petals from the plant. (Sa’di, 1988, p. 80)

With his art, Sa’di pleasantly depicts the natural elements surrounding him and provides readers with a colorful painting of words that has been maintained its freshness and elegance up to now. The meadowlands, trees, stars, passage of seasons, and so forth fascinate any audience, and changes in them would make humans happy or sad. However, poets who perceive the world from another perspective find these changes more beautifully and seek creating marvelous themes and interpretations that may be messages for humans and raise their spirituality.

One day, however, humans have to pay high costs in recompense of their egoistic attitude toward the nature. They are used to destroy some things to build other things. They destroy beautiful rocks in order to build a statue of themselves. They break a generous tree to make a musical instrument. The strange point, however, is that they think they can grow blossoms with the help of technology and science, whilst, only the mother nature can bear and raise its children.

Although ecocriticism has been introduced over recent years following the incidence of natural events and reduction of natural resources in the world, the humans’ cruelty has obviously received the attention of many poets and artists from the past to the present. Of a large number of poets and artists, Tagur,

Manochehri Damghani, Sepehri, and so forth have been among few people who paid attention to the humans' aggressive behavior toward nature and depicted it besides praising the nature as a source of literary inspiration and artistic creativity.

### **Nature in the land art**

The nature has been of special importance in the traditional ideology as an agent associated with the metaphysics and logos. Moreover, the nature has been always emphasized as the most important model of beauty manifestation for artists. In Dekhoda Dictionary, nature refers to the entity on which humans are created, character, matter, temper, essence, quiddity, and so forth; the four elements, including soil, water, air, and fire; one of the faculties of the general soul; the faculty of natural integrity in objects, faculty of thinking in all things (Sophia), the faculties' origin that can reason, the origin of any motion and stillness, and the divine truth (as termed by Sufism) (Dekhoda, 1998, p. 15381-2). Aristotle define the nature as "the origin and cause of motion and stillness of an object essentially not accidentally." Ibn Sina also uses the term nature in several meanings of which the major meaning denotes, "a power making the element move" (Nasr, 1998, p. 331).

The above definitions show the nature's intellection, reliance on the Sophia, and vivification from the perspective of traditional sages. In the contemporary perspective, the nature is an entity the human is not involved in its creation, and it is the result of human's mental; dialectics and world of objectives. The nature in the contemporary perspective includes the entire earth planet; even the existential universe that involves all creatures, including humans; the earth without humans and their productions; and natural elements inside or outside the living environments (Naghizadeh, 2005, p. 31).

Despite the common grounds in different cultures' attitude toward nature, different civilizations and eras also have totally different ideas about the nature, which have resulted in appearance of differences in artists' attitude toward the natural environment.

Such ideas are found in many civilizations. In pre-Islamic Iran (Zoroastrianism), the nature and its elements were considered sacred and sometimes have gods. In Zoroaster's message, the protection of nature and respect for the ground, water, soil, and plants are seen more than any other things (Mohammadi, 2011, p. 53). In Zoroastrianism, the fire was a symbol of Ahura Mazda; contaminating the nature and its elements, such as wind, water, fire, and soil, was considered a great sin; and *Anahita* and *Ashi Khashu* or *Ardu Khashu* were goddesses of water in Iran (See Khaleghi Moghaddam, 2007).

However, the subject matter of this study is that the nature and the four elements are eternal and living beside humans, and each of them has too many symbols that are sources of inspiration for artists and poets in the area of literature and art. In the literature and contemporary literary criticism, these symbols of environmentalism comprise a collection of approaches and attitudes, each of which perceives the environmental crisis in its own way. The most important approaches are as follows: cornucopia, environmentalism, ecofeminism, social ecology, ecophilosophy, and so forth (Figure 2).

Each of these approaches toward the nature is important on its own. The texts in this regard are mostly based on the prediction of adverse events if ignored, environmental crises would occur certainly. Furthermore, the elements of nature are of special importance in the area of art, are always used as materials in works of artists, and have been changed into numerous art movements, such as the land art, over the history. The artists of this movement actually have taken an action to defend the natural resources, and the movement began in the United States in 1960s.

The United States as the origin of land art faced with interior and exterior crises, such as racial unrest, student riots, and so forth. These environmental crises and disasters in early 1970s attracted the Americans' attention to the natural resources. To express the serious violation of the traditional perception

of art and the common system of social values, young avant-garde artists moved from the city toward Nevada's desert areas that remained more or less intact. Actually, it should be argued that what pushed the artists of the land art toward Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and so forth was that endless space and neutral ground that somehow induce serenity.

The land art is directly related to the natural environment and natural materials, including stone, wood, soil, and so forth, which are used to form the structure of the land art. Mortality is the complementary part of land works. The direct experience of winds, rains, life-threatening storms, searing sun, and humans' destructive and aggressive thoughts specify the historical destiny of land works. "One of the characteristics of land art is its affinity to the volumization tradition that has made a new path since the beginning of the minimal art. The art of volumization may be excavation of a place, a land full of metal bars, a buried cottage, or footprints on the lawn. Another characteristic of the land art is that it is created in an open space, that is, the works are not exhibited in galleries or museums. The works are perceived only where they are created. Artists can only show the paintings, maps, texts, models, pictures, and videos of their project in exhibitions." (Lailach, 2007, p. 24)

In the contemporary historical context where land works are created, the thought of attenuation, the frequent losses of systems and organizations and inefficiency of many of them, the destruction of thoughts and beliefs have not been strange. Such a routine along with the historical life routine that is full of destructions have raised the thought of mortality as an inevitable reality in the mind of land works and have welcomed it sometimes as a criticism of the natural life events or man-made systems and sometimes as an amiable thought for creating a modern world.

The art material is a medium influencing the symbolic and figurative message of the resulting work. In the area of land art, the material not only refers to the flexible objects but also is considered a means of transferring fundamental, historical, and mythical concepts. The propagator of land art, Walter De Maria, states, "God has granted the land to us, and we disregard it" (Lynton, 2014, p. 374).

It is over thirty years since Walter De Maria expressed his interest in disposable materials (the materials that were disregarded as disposables by the previous art). "He had found out the unique quality and aesthetic attraction specific to the land as a medium" (ibid). "This unconventional action is a very different category known by various labels, such as the land art [art as large as a landscape], minimal art, impossible art, environmental art, and so forth, depending on the form it takes" (ibid).



Figure 2. Nature in the land art

Artists in this area change the huge mass of soil into temporary sculpture-like forms, create patterns on the frozen surface of a river, or make new arrangements in a recently plowed farm through re-raking. They may act similar to Richard Long who walked on a marked line in a remote area of the world to the extent that he made a pathway in a land that had remained intact. Long presented only a picture and a map of his

struggle. His free designs manifested the primary conflict of all spectacular interventions in the land (Long, 1994, p. 127).

The Iranian artist Ahmad Nadaliyan is one of the artists who have venerated the pragmatic variable sense of the relationship between culture and nature and presented their works in the natural environment. To do so, Nadaliyan lives in the nature and places his sculptures in a peaceful environment in the nature surrounding him. Water is a vital element in his works and makes them meaningful, and a large number of symbols he uses root in ancient myths and rituals of pre-Islam civilizations. His art is expressed through various media, such as carvings on the rocks, layouts of the eland art, the art of ritual performances, determination paintings that remind ancient designs, the installation art, video art, net art, and interactive works that require the addressees' cooperation. In an exclusive interview held by the art critic and author J. K. Gerande, he explains:

I like my works show the obsolescence and deterioration of the nature on one hand and the wish promising its revival on the other hand. I did not choose the nature, rather the nature chose and attracted me and teach me how to represent the lost nature again. My behavior might have been instinctive and I might have sought my lost paradise. That paradise has been both my childhood memories in the nature and a reminder of nostalgias for the ancestral lifestyle ... I do not intend to deal with the present realities and do not ignore the present beauties. I like to keep the current life and the future of past beauties with myself. I have intentionally buried many of my carvings in the nature. (Figure 3)

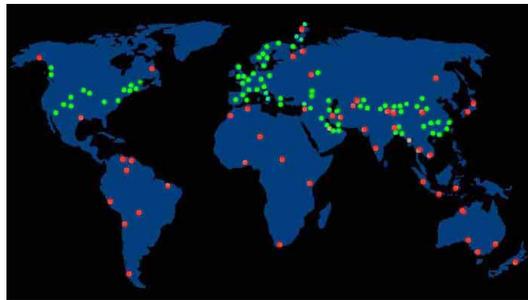


Figure 3 .Places where Nadaliyan has buried his works.

Such a burial is like a secret shared with the land. These secrets present their own message when they would be discovered. One can realize the value of soil through these works. The soil has been the cradle of humans and civilizations. One of the works of Nadaliyan visualizes patterns of fish that have been performed using cylinder seals in the Persian Gulf coast and vanished soon following tides of water. The disappearance of works by the water or wind gives them a special meaning and is actually considered a procedure, which is captured with a camera, in creating these works (Figure 4 -5).



Figure 4. Ahmad Nadaliyan; the Persian Gulf coast



Figure 5. Ahmad Nadaliyan; the Persian Gulf coast

The works of the land art are not available to the addressees and thus should be shown to the addressees through some media, such as videos or pictures. The artists of land art try to represent the indispensable unity of art and nature. Therefore, they neither imitate the physical nature nor escape from it; rather, they emphasize the unity of the physical reality of the world. (Gardner, 2014, p. 663)

In this respect, the emergence of the land art is somehow attributed to the minimal art because many of initial works of land art are the magnification of minimal art. It is also associated with the ecology and its tendency to the geology and is, at the same time, conceptual. The reason is that the mostly mortal works are somehow created using unconventional materials and are shown in unusual places. These principles are developed by the conceptual art and grow along it. Artists of the environmental art go to the surrounding environment, which may be even an urban area, and perform their work using the materials they bring to the relevant area themselves and the materials available in the area or wastes remaining in the nature. The difference between environmental art and land art is that the land art often feels responsible toward the environment and tries to less damage it in order to leave a didactic and environmental effect as well.

Sometimes, it is argued that the characteristic of the land art is not its impracticality or uselessness but its obvious irrationality: the thought, work force, and materials are used to create a temporary phenomenon without any clear meaning. Isn't it the waste of resources in a world that becomes increasingly sensitive to its improvidence? Is it really a useless action?

When one reflects on these art works, however, he finds that they are actually protesting representations against exploitation of human and natural resources, the accelerated constructions and destructions that are characteristics of cities in the twentieth century, and eventually, humans' arrogance in confrontation with nature and time. None of these artists suggest a practical lifestyle but discuss the duties and responsibilities directly.

Not so long ago in 1763, the French writer, Diderot stated, "Hasn't painters' brush been in the service of evil and depravity too long? Shouldn't the art stop satisfying humans' repressed desires and passions and follow a spiritual purpose and, as a moral force, conduct humans toward higher social spiritual level prior to its aesthetic influences? Is the art of an ornamental nature or a didactic nature?" (Lynton, 2014, p. 375) Albert Schweitzer uses the phrase *reverence for life*. To confirm the protection of environment, he argues as follows:

The true philosophy must commence with the most immediate and comprehensive facts of consciousness. And this may be formulated as follows: I am life, which wills to live, and I exist in the midst of life, which wills to live. ... Just as in my own will-to-live there is a yearning for more life, and for that mysterious exaltation of the will which is called pleasure, and terror in face of annihilation and that injury to the will-to-live which is called pain; so the same obtains in all the

will-to-live around me, equally whether it can express itself to my comprehension or whether it remains unvoiced. Ethics thus consists in this, that I experience the necessity of practicing the same reverence for life toward all will-to-live, as toward my own. It is good to maintain and cherish life; it is evil to destroy and to check life. To him, life as such is sacred. He tears no leaf from its tree, breaks off no flower, and is careful not to crush any insect as he is walking ...” (Singer, 2008, p. 154)

The American contemporary philosopher, Paul Taylor has recently advocated the above argument. In his book entitled *Respect for nature*, he states:

Every living being seeks welfare in its own way. Once we realize it, we can consider all living beings as the same way we consider ourselves and thus be ready to value their life to the extent we value ours. (ibid, p. 155)

Similar to the questions raised today, the above questions were raised at that time, and all people inquired of the person raising the questions. Nowadays, mass media indicate that those questions still have remained and not received any answer! The important point in the land art is its creative sense (ideas for how to respond to the land and art of drawing). Richard Long believes, “The art is the redevelopment of organic materials in life in the simplest way possible (a line of stones, a branch of leaves, etc.). In this way, the ecological destruction would be minimized” (Smith, 2015, p. 132).

## CONCLUSION

The ecocriticism is one of the rare literary theories that still adhere to the connection between literature and reality and seek the reflection of environmental issues in the literature. The common priority of both literary and artistic approaches is the protection of the nature from cultural and technological threats. However, some people believe that humans’ perceptions of the nature have been a means of legitimizing some class, racial, and sexual norms. What is known as art, and in other words, what we know as art is based on a motivation that eventually arises from rules of *visual pleasure*. Humans’ desire to create art works and pleasure hidden in this creation always originate from the aesthetic performance and secrets of attractiveness. According to the theory of ecocriticism and Cheryll Glotfelty, culture is a great achievement that has been developed over centuries. However, this great achievement often behaves predatory and feeds off the nature like a sponger, whilst, it never contributes to compensation of the destroyed or transformed energy and resources and restoration of the energy to the life cycle of the nature. The ecocriticism and land art both are special movements in the history of art and literature and communicate with the natural environment directly. They actually try to communicate with the land and begin talking with the environment.

It should be noted that the time when humans realize that there is no distinction between humans and the nature has come to an end. Humans actually cut the branch on which they themselves sit, and thus, they can survive only through maintaining the nature with its all grasses and seemingly insignificant fine particles. That realization has been possible not only with the incidence of natural disasters but also with the help of nature-oriented literary criticism in order that humans can see the deep loneliness of the nature and forget their helplessness in that loneliness, like Tagur did.

Although some artists thoroughly know that their works would be destroyed some day, they create a work of art and choose temporary conditions intentionally in order to accomplish their objectives. The idea of the water, air, soil, and so forth and immersing in them and coming out of them has been the most basic sense of Creation and revival in humans’ mind for a long time. Today, however, it does not matter people live in a small village or in the global village; they have something in common, the crisis of the loss of environment. The present century has brought new capabilities and technologies that have caused specific problems and crises. The environmental problems and crises and the desire to return to a clean

environment require a new art. The land art and literature play an important role in this regard. Using these two items, one can reveal the crises, criticize causes of the crises, and describe an ideal world.

### Footnotes

- 1- Ecofeminism refers the movements and philosophies linking feminism to ecology. The term was first introduced by the French feminist writer, Françoise d'Eaubonne, in his book named *Feminism or death* (1) in 1974. Ecofeminism implies that the dominance of men over women represents and intensifies the dominance of the society over the environment, and these two problems are interrelated. Patriarchal gender relations in the society are associated with the male-centered confrontation with the environment.

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