

# Ecological Apocalypse in T. C. Boyle's *A Friend of the Earth*

<sup>1</sup>I. Gayathri, <sup>2</sup> Dr V. R. Jeyasala

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar (Part-Time),  
P.G Department & Research Centre in English,  
Alagappa Govt. Arts College, Karaikudi, Tamilnadu.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor,  
P.G Department & Research Centre in English,  
Alagappa Govt. Arts College, Karaikudi, Tamilnadu.

*Abstract : The aim of this study is to investigate the goal of envisioning and demonstrating the connection between nature and the Earth in every aspect of social creation. The ecocritical research concerns itself nature's worth and reasonable status and its non-human settings. This paper discusses that occasionally we overlook that we are not free and solitary animals on this planet. We live among many creatures, plants, and non-living things. The demeanour of the non-human types of life gives some regular deplorable, the termination of species, and an unnatural weather change. T.C. Boyle is an incredible American author and short story essayist who highlights the environmental Apocalypse from all viewpoints and shows the significance of nature in his works. A Friend of the Earth (2000) is an apocalyptic science fiction novel that distinguishes between the dangerous effect of global warming on the Earth and everyday terrible events like profound floods and windstorms in the 21st Century. Furthermore, he uncovered that anthropocentrism clashes with ecocentrism, which prompts disregard for conditions in non-human settings and brings the termination of creatures and different species on the planet.*

**KEYWORDS: ECOCRITICISM, ECOLOGY, APOCALYPSE, ANTHROPOCENTRISM, ECOCENTRISM**

This paper intends to trace the role of the Ecological Apocalypse in T.C. Boyle's *A Friend of the Earth* (2000). It also follows the scrutinizing of natural debasement during the late twentieth century with an ecological degradation perspective. The ecological Apocalypse is one of the biological perspectives in Ecocriticism. Ecocriticism can be characterized as an analysis of writing, just as social advancement that causes ecological degradation. Lawrence Buell defines in his work "The Environmental Imagination" that "Apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental has at its proposal" (Buell 285). According to this point of view, apocalyptic rhetoric is utilized to work on the material risk and to depict that the threat isn't imminent yet as of now exits. It appears to be an eminent part of environmental discourse. It is fit for exhilarating activists, changing over the uncertain and, at last, maybe, affecting government and business arrangements. It can draw upon profound wellsprings of mainstream and abstract apocalyptic slant in the US. The news media regularly reports ecological issues as calamities not just because this creates dramatization and the likelihood of human intrigue yet additionally because news more effectively reports occasions than procedures. Apocalypse gives a sincerely charged casing of reference inside which mind-boggling, long-haul issues' decreased to a mono-causal emergency, including clashes between conspicuously contradicted gatherings.

In identification with this, the term Ecological Apocalypse is unnecessary to clarify. Since all apocalyptic will be or should be natural. The ramifications of Apocalypse, in scholarly sorts, aren't just overstating ecological corruption, for example, a biological system; instead, it highlights the debasement of woodland, which causes global warming, abusing the dirt causes soil disintegration and disposing of plastic trash causes contamination in ocean water just as a lake. Environmental Apocalypse answers conquering our worldwide biological emergency and demands how the Anthropocene must reassess our place and lessen the anthropocentrism's effect on the planet. Anthropocentrism is human-centred. It focuses that humans have more intrinsic value than non-human nature (Ecocentric).

To prove this definition, T.C. Boyle shares through his books about the Ecological Apocalypse, Nature and our Overpopulation, whereas the parts of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism investigated from ecocritical standards embroiled in his novel. In his interview with Robert Birnbaum, T.C. Boyle states that 'All the books are allied in one way or another...is about illegal immigration on the surface, but the subtext is about the environment and over population and our being animals in nature and how do we deal with all this? Then I did that full-blown in... *A Friend of the Earth*, which is set in 2025.' This shows the affinity of Boyle towards nature and its destruction. In the Eco critical aspect, the novel talks about the present status of the Earth and its non-human settings. And *A Friend of the Earth* paints a vivid picture of an ecological apocalypse where the natural world is in a state of profound crisis. Throughout the novel, Boyle explores the consequences of environmental degradation, climate change, and human activities on the environment.

T.C. Boyle concerns the investigation of nature, which endeavours to comprehend the motivation behind nature and ecocentrism and its causes to leave the worldwide emergency. The emergency is the effect of a developing Apocalypse. *A Friend of the Earth* is a preservationist novel which depicts the life of eco-lobbyist Tyrone O' Shaughnessy Tierwater (Ty). Ty is seventy-five in the year 2025 and gave all his rich fortune to an extreme tree-hugger association Earth Forever! T.C. Boyle shortly utilizes this association name as EF! in the novel. In the meeting with Gregory, Boyle expresses that he impacted this term from Earth First! which was set up during the 1980s as one of North America's most radical natural associations, joined progressive in humanism, apocalyptic convictions and direct activity to secure wild zone.

The novel starts with the flashback year 1989, and Ty is an excited extremist in Earth Forever! dissents the deforestation in the Siskiyou National Backwoods in Oregon by resting before trees that are yet to be cut by a wood organization. Anthropocentric view (human-centered) neglects to focus on nature similarly and begins to demolish the woods for occupation and disregard

conditions. Sierra, a thirteen-year-old lady, a little girl of Ty, likewise includes the revolt to spare the trees. Andrea, stepmother of Sierra, impacts Earth Forever! to Ty as an association which, bit by bit, makes an increasing number of activists' battle against deforestation. Later Ty understands that the Earth Forever! is deriding their exertion of making pits in the roadside where the woods may endure to pass the street to arrive at timberland. The gathering activists were captured since the media disregarded their push to broadcast media. Boyle communicates the disappointment of the hero on humans; however, he is human.

The nonsensical demeanour of the hero uncovers when Ty feels irate with timber organizations and the government for not concerning the harm it causes to the Earth. Furthermore, he was likewise disappointed with EF! for its ineffectual contribution. Boyle demonstrates how the individual activists lose their objectivity and become brutal in conduct through the character of Ty. For instance, Ty carries on unreasonably by terminating the number of trees the Cross Creek Timber Organization plants in the Sierra Nevada Mountains to develop for timber. Ty's devotion towards the condition hurts his association with Sierra which disengages her from society and her dad. It drives her to fall from the red tree when the Cross Lumber takes steps to cut the red tree for timber. Sierra proceeds with her family convention of being in tree hugger activism. Boyle's portrayal system helps us comprehend the unique role of trees in a future age (21st Century).

The story of the years 2025 and 2026, Ty himself describes, demonstrates that Ty, Sierra, Teo, Andrea and different individuals from EF! association are valid for their appraisal that in 2025 biosphere will be felled, and all creatures will be extinct. Ty portrays a world in which the world will get devastation when the condition fails to concern. Twenty-first-century segments of the novel have not been uncovered in customary portrayal. Instead, Boyle portrays the state of species which consider uncommon species. So Boyle describes Ty as the guardian of strange creatures in Mac's home at the novel's beginning. The deforestation which happened in 1989 caused to have windstorms in 2025. The ecological state of California intensifies, and constant windstorms crush creatures' enclosures. Ty and Chuy salvage three lions from the flood and lodge the lions in Mac's home. Shockingly one of the lions murders Mac, and Mac's child shoots the remaining two. Boyle classifies the depiction of climate conditions in California through the hero as "floods, winds, thunder, and helping, even hail" (2) and portrays a world of global destruction. Boyle describes the environmental difference in the twenty-first Century that causes the physical illness of the individuals through the protagonist 'I might be seventy-five years old and my shoulders might feel as if they're attached the joint with fishhooks, but the new kidney... I can still outwork half the spoon-fed cretins on this place. (FOE 2) For instance, seventy-five-year-old Ty frequently experiences numerous physical infirmities in the novel. Towards the part of the arrangement, Ty safeguards the species, for example, Petunia the fox with him, which Ty and Andrea pretend as a dog.

"That's right," I say, "that's right, she's a dog." And then, for no reason I can think of, I can't help adding, "And I'm a human being." (FOE 271)

Boyle portrays the Ecological Apocalypse in the long periods of 1989, 2025 and 2026. Apocalyptic is an investigation which uncovers that the end of the world is imminent. Here are some key elements of the ecological apocalypse in the novel which affects the world:

**Climate Change:** The novel depicts a world where climate change is wreaking havoc on the environment. There are references to extreme weather events, such as record highs and lows, unusual patterns of precipitation, and the melting of polar ice caps. These changes have disrupted ecosystems and made the climate increasingly unpredictable.

**Species Extinction:** Many species of plants and animals have become extinct or are on the brink of extinction. The loss of biodiversity is a recurring theme in the novel, and it is often attributed to habitat destruction, pollution, and overexploitation of natural resources.

**Resource Scarcity:** Resource scarcity is a prominent issue in the novel. The characters struggle to find basic necessities like food, clean water, and gasoline. This scarcity is a result of both environmental degradation and overpopulation.

**Environmental Degradation:** The Earth's ecosystems have been severely damaged. Lakes are polluted, forests are disappearing, and the land is scarred by human activities. The degradation of the environment is a central concern for the characters, many of whom are former environmental activists disillusioned by the scale of destruction.

**Social Unrest:** The ecological apocalypse has led to social and political instability. There are references to protests, riots, and acts of eco-terrorism as people grapple with the worsening conditions and the failure of governments and corporations to address environmental issues effectively.

**Personal Loss:** The characters in the novel often experience personal loss and tragedy as a result of the ecological apocalypse. This loss includes the death of loved ones, the destruction of cherished landscapes, and the collapse of once-thriving communities.'

The above elements show and justify that this novel *A Friend of the Earth* serves as a cautionary tale, warning readers about the potential consequences of environmental negligence and shortsightedness. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of human actions and their impact on the natural world, and it encourages reflection on the urgent need for environmental stewardship and responsible decision-making to prevent such an ecological apocalypse from becoming a reality.

The mishandling of nature by people will prompt the destruction of the world. Human progresses toward becoming non-human, who expel themselves from the heart and evacuate nature for their motivations. Thus nature removes humans from the world as demolition. *A Friend of the Earth* a novel, demonstrates the mixing of anthropocentrism, ecocentrism and apocalyptic in the season of present and future. The novel ends with the expectation that nature will figure out how to return by securing the Petunia. Ty rescues the fox assortment of Petunia by imagining them as dogs. The hero's aim may spare and demonstrate Petunia the fox to the future generation. The discourse propounds that humans must be a defender of nature, as uncovered in the Book of Genesis, instead of the abuser of nature.

#### REFERENCES

1. Boyle, T.C. *A Friend of Earth*. New York: Viking, 2000; Bloomsbury, 2000.
2. Bryan, L. Moore. *Ecological Literature and the Critique of Anthropocentrism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
3. Bryan, L. Moore. *Ecology and Literature*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
4. Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism the New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2012.
5. Gleason, Paul. *Understanding T.C. Boyle*. Columbia: University of South Carolina:

Press, 2009.

6. <http://www.tcboyle.net/guppies.html>(assessed 22 May 2019)

7. <https://www.tcboyle.net/bass.html>(assessed 26 June 2019)

