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Rewriting Mythology

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## Wilderness and Culture: An Ecocritical Approach to Select Mythical Works

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### Abstract

The growth of scientific temperament in the Eighteenth Century along with the Industrial Revolution and the succeeding World Wars consequently brought conflict between faith and science. The ground that supported the foundation of faith or religion was completely shaken. People began wiping the religious principles, tradition and customs aside to embrace materialism and consumerism. But, unbelievably, the advancements have only degraded the society physically and morally. The time has arrived to re-learn the ancient philosophies and merge them with filtered, contemporary practices to regenerate Humanity and Nature that sustains life. Modern times have witnessed people discarding the age-old philosophy, customs and myths to be irrational and non-scientific which is absolutely incorrect. It is these religious preaching, mythical tales and customary practices that have kept the societies ordered from time immemorial. Although blind belief should be avoided, yet the ancient writings carry substantial lessons and codes for life. So, this study intends to shed the irrationality and illuminate the rational and significant implications in the mythical texts Ramayana and Sita: An Illustrated Retelling of the Ramayana. The paper would,

however, attempt an ecocritical study of the specified works. As ecological concerns have called for urgent attention, ancient wisdom can assist scientific ideologies and thus, go hand in hand to unite humans to become environmentally sensitive. Moreover, this research paper shall endeavour to eliminate all the misconceptions regarding Wilderness and Culture and establish their true essence.

**Keywords:** Mythology, Religion, Ecocriticism, Wilderness, Nature, Culture, Eco-ethics.

### Introduction:

Glotfelty defines in the introductory note of *The Ecocriticism Reader*: "Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.... Ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (xviii). The critical theory of Ecocriticism believes in the co-existence between humans and non-humans and asserts that both influence each other tremendously. The theory advocates a bio-centric relationship between all the elements of nature. Mythology or myths explain the ideas of justice, good and evil, truth, origin of creation, deeper meaning of life and death, suffering, moral ethics and much more. India, too, is rich with myths and mythological works. The Vedas, The Hindu Puranas, the epics like *The*