



Environmental History as a Model of Eco-Criticism in Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl* and *Virgin Earth*

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Abstract

Eco-criticism brings a change in literary studies by linking literary criticism and theory with the ecological issues at large. Eco criticism proceeds a call to literature to connect to the issues of today's environmental crisis. In other words, ecocriticism is instantly concerned with both nature and the environment. A new eco-literary discourse can statement nature's voice without permeating it with human primacy. As Hughes (2009) debates, even though eco-criticism has become a field in literary theory and the extensive landscape of environmental history, it could benefit from an enhanced framework. Environmental History is relevant to numerous things, including the history of the mutual relations between the human race and remnants of nature. It studies the related effects that other types, natural powers, and sequences have on human beings, and the web of connections with non-human organisms and entities has been affected by the actions of individuals. This study attempts to analyze Philippa Gregory's "*The Other Boleyn Girl*" and "*Virgin Earth*" based on the features of environmental history as a model of ecocriticism. In her novels, Gregory tries to define the true history and surroundings of the 16th and 18th centuries of Britain, particularly among the kings and queens who are seeking power even with the war. First, concerning the features of environmental history, a model of analysis will be structured. Then, the analysis of Gregory's selected novels based on these features will be indicated. Finally, the results of the analysis will be discussed to confirm how it can be implied as a novel's approach to literary theory.

Keywords: Eco criticism, Environmental History, Environmental Anthropology, Environmental Philosophy

INTRODUCTION

Eco criticism is the study of the relations between the physical environment and literature. Similar to Marxist criticism which brings a knowledge of modes of production and economic classes to its reading of texts, and as feminist criticism searches language and literature from a gender-conscious view point, eco criticism involves an earth-centred approach to literary

studies (Colten, 1998).

Sharing the fundamental premise that human culture is attached to the physical world concerns in all ecological criticism, affecting it and affected by it, despite the broad scope of probe and various levels of integrity. The subject of eco criticism takes the interconnections between nature and culture, explicitly the cultural artefacts of language and literature. "Eco criticism" is the word in which carefully selected by Cheryll Glotfelty and

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Harold Fromm in their book, *The Eco criticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (1996), as the ecological approach to literary studies. It indicates the occurrence of a new sort of literary criticism, currently unanimous known as eco criticism. So, eco criticism as a methodology that is reconsidered the history of ideologically, aesthetically, and ethically inspired conceptualisations of nature which is the role of its productions and metaphors in literary and additional cultural applies, and also the conceivable effects of these discursive, imaginative productions have on man's body as his natural and cultural environments (Barry, 1995). Cheryll Glotfelty in *The Eco criticism Reader*, states eco criticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (xviii) and equates it with other activist practices such as Marxist and feminist criticisms. *The Eco criticism Reader* was the first of its type -an anthology of eco critical essays dedicated to establishing an area of study whose efforts until the early 1990s, had not been "known as belonging to a dissimilar critical school or movement" . In order to avoid eco criticism's theoretical and conceptual self-marginalisation in the larger space of the humanities, for Armbruster and Wallace, the inclusion of urban, ethnic, and national perspectives in an ecological approach to literary and cultural studies is essential. While simultaneously, it consents eco critics to expose the historical and ideological embezzlements of nature as a reasoning for systems of cultural and social domination.

The thoughts and notions developing from these collections provide vital stepping stones for emerging eco criticism into a worthwhile, competitive, and advanced methodology in literary and cultural studies. And yet, as Louise Westling perceives in her involvement to the current volume, the field is still under theorized (Nash, 1989).

A new eco-literary discourse can statement nature's voice without permeating it with human primacy. Then a dialogic interface with nature's language would challenge the position of humans as the advantaged speaking themes. To do this eco criticism desires to draw from the current critical theories to organise literary

ecology, to state ecologically fixated literary discourse, which it has called eco-literary discourse, and to convey the theoretical foundation of ecological criticism as such (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

Eco criticism does qualify the critic to observe the textualizations of the physical environment in literary discourse itself, and to grow an earth-centred approach to literary studies. In this case, overpassing of the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman scopes would permit the eco critic to examine the methods in which an ecological idea is addressed or undermined in literary works. In such eco critical approaches the usage of literary and ecological discourses would inexorably make a rich cross-fertilization when interconnections between the natural sciences and literary studies are set unadorned (Bracke, 2012).

Environmental history is a slightly new discipline that originated during the 1960's and 1970's. It has been a shortest consequence of the growing alertness of universal environmental problems such as air and water pollution by pesticides, reduction of the ozone layer, and the improved greenhouse influence initiated by human activity. As a result, historians began to seek the roots of the current problems, illustrating the knowledge of an entire field of scientific disciplines and specialties which had been expanded during the previous century (Iovino, Schliephake, & Holmes, 2017).

Environmental history is about human interaction with the natural world or the interaction between culture and nature. The major aim of environmental history is to deepen our understanding of how natural environment effects on humans in the past with what results (Worster, 1994). Environmental history is resulting in part from a recognition of the consequences of ecological discipline for the accepting of the history of the human kinds. This was suitable, since ecology, in the logic that it trainings chronological changes in natural societies, is a historical science. Paul Sears titled ecology a revolutionary science, and when taken extremely by historians, it has surely subverted the conventional view of realm history as it was up to the mid-twentieth

century. The scope of clarification of environmental modifications and procedures is principally left to the natural disciplines. If the human section is involved in searching for details, this is typically left to theorists and sociologists who try to clarify people's actions in relation to resources, landscapes, and nature generally. Alternatively, these studies, frequently do not place progresses correctly in the historical background, often put forward notions which are not adequately verified by historical facts, and rarely use the occasions presented by history as a test centre for analysing new thoughts in the field (Mikhail, 2013).

The well-known British author who tends to declare so many secrets of the history, Philippa Gregory was born on January 1954. She is considered as the historical writer which in her works all of the traces of history can be found. In her prominent novels such as *The Red Queen* (2010), *The Constant Princess* (2005), *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2001), *Virgin Earth* (1999), *Earthly Joys* (1998), *The other Queen* (2008), the timeline of sixteenth to eighteenth centuries also are described. The civil war, Tudor dynasty, and all the powers which gain by everyone as a king or queen of Britain. So that many authors imitate her, specifically in the field of historic writing. Because of that, her novels are valuable for studying and analyzing based on the environmental history. So, based on this guidelines, "*The other Boleyn Girl*" and "*Virgin Earth*" are read in this present research.

DISCUSSION

The Theoretical Framework: Environmental History

The methodology has been used in this study is based on the study made on environmental history which is subfields of Eco-criticism or green criticism. It investigates the relationship between man and environment, and it also deals with culture in its slight sense, such as literature, visual art, and music. Air pollution, threatened species, deforestation, wetland loss, rampant consumerism, and animal rights have all been considered as controversial issues in the western literature for many centuries. In a broader outlook, Eco criticism makes a pattern

for examining the world and critiquing the mannerism of society in the treatment of nature (Barry, 1995).

Donald Worster (1977) has declared this term, explaining it as the study of nature itself through renovation of former environment and related to the interaction between human and nature, with socio-economic relation related to natural resources, also explaining how knowledge of nature has shaped man's belief, thus preserving environment (Manes, 1996).

The environmental history is the study of human relations over time with the natural societies of which they are fragment, so that clarify the procedures of change that affect that connection. As a mode, environmental history is the practise of ecological study as a means of comprehending human history. It studies the related effects that other types, natural powers, and sequences have on human being, and the web of connections with non-human organisms and entities have been affected by the actions of individuals. Environmental historians identify the methods in which the existing and non-existing schemes of the Soil have influenced on the progression of human affairs. They also estimate the effects of changes triggered by human activity in the natural environment. These procedures happen simultaneously and are equally conditional (Meeker, 1980). Environmental History is a wide and varied field that holds a number of themes, approaches and methodologies that occasionally overlap. In recent decades, scientific attention to the interaction between people and the environment has been increased. Environmental history has emerged as a separate discipline from the late 1960s and the interest in the subject continues to grow also in humanities and social sciences (Hughes, 2016). The environmental history studies the old relation between people and nature in both ways, and tries the answer this question as how the people in the past were influenced by nature, and how nature and natural resources were affected by people. In addition, environmental history with the material and symbolic transformations has been considered as configured space for human action. Whereas the study of human biological ecology can tell

much about human adaptation, the cultural aspect of adaptation must be examined through cultural ecology (Garrard, 2014). The springiness of human adaptive reactions needs the study of intelligence, human learning, sociability, and basic needs to help recognize how people and cultures transact with their everyday difficulties. This is according to the ways in which people use culture for adapting their environment.

The Features of Environmental History

Climate

The climate system is a multifaceted, cooperative scheme containing of the land surface, atmosphere, oceans and other bodies of water, snow and ice, and living things. The atmospheric constituent of the temperature organization most clearly illustrates climate; it is frequently defined by means of typical weather (Nash, 1989). Climate is regularly defined in expressions of the mean and changeability of temperature, rain and wind over a timescale, fluctuating from months to many centuries. The climate structure evolves in period under the effect of its own interior dynamics and owing to variations in exterior issues that affect climate.

Environment

The term "environment" has been taken its name from a French word "Environia" that equal to surrounding wherein entities live. It mentions together biotic (living) and abiotic (corporal or non-living) environment. The organisms and environs are double active and compound part of nature. Surroundings controls the life of the organisms as well as human. Human beings cooperate with the environs more energetically than other living organisms. Generally surroundings denotes to the resources and forces that environs the existing creature. Environment is the total of circumstances that surrounds living creatures at an exact phase and space. It is included of the interrelating schemes of corporal, natural and cultural features which are intertwined both individually and cooperatively. Surroundings is the whole of situations in which an entity has to live or preserve its life procedure. It

affects the development and expansion of living systems (Hughes, 2016).

Woodlands and Forests

Forest ecological unit, which contains woodlands with an intermittent tree covering, play significant natural roles and arrange for wood and many other produces that donate considerably to human being at native, general, and universal stages. The varied environment facilities provided by woodlands consist of the preservation of territory and water properties, constructive effects on local temperature, the extenuation of international climate change, the maintenance of natural multiplicity, development of metropolitan and pre-urban existing circumstances, the defence of biological and traditional inheritance, existence properties for many rustic and native societies, the group of occupation, and leisure chances (Bellarsi, 2009).

Water and Wetlands

Water is a significant supply for all living organisms. Consequently, the utilizing of water and its resource from foundations are very essential. Wetlands are an ecological unit from man grove to subarctic fertilizer plots that have pretentious human. The initial societies were settled nearby the waterway, lake, and water meadow. Numerous wetlands are impermanent part among river and global ecologies. These ecological unit are separated into two sets reliant on the number of water: perpetual and sequential underwater. Subsequently wetlands are dispersed in many diverse territories on world, they imitate dissimilar replies and actions to ecological variations. So, wetland sorting is significant, and changes can be set up. It is essentially separated into natural and human made wetlands (Manes, 1996).

Geographical Boundaries

It appears apparent that amongst other features geography shows a noteworthy, essential role in forming consequences in human civilizations. It is usual that geographical aspects afford the basis of states; anywhere a nation is substantially positioned effects shapes of endogenous

way of life and who are the states' fellow citizen for the populace is probable to association exogenous global relationships. These situations point toward that geographical situations have impact on states' culture and history. Not only for nation state but also for persons, geography controls many features of people's common sense of identity; for example, reliant on the residence wherever a person is born or rising, will have a diverse cultural self, dissimilar nationality, and diverse official facilities for lifespan (Bate, 2000).

Local Knowledge

Local Knowledge Systems contain the awareness, opinions, traditions, observes, organizations, and worldviews established and continued by native and local societies, and are supposed to signify an adaptive approach to the environs in which these groups live. The worth of local knowledge has been disputed by some researchers as being constrained to local subjects, and local knowledge containers have substitute been titled as protectors of the world, environmentalists, or as maintenance users who will no extensive live together sustainably with the surroundings when their populaces upsurge, and as they become more unified into market economies (Garrard, 2014).

Application and Analysis

Based on the features of Environmental history which discussed above, the novels which connect to environmental history can be analysed. In this study Gregory's "*The other Boleyn Girl*" and "*virgin Earth*" were selected read and analysed based on these features.

Environmental History in "*The other Boleyn Girl*"

The novel begins with the execution of the Duke of Buckinghamshire, at the royal courtyard in front of Mary Boleyn, because of his declaration that the King would die without a male heir publicly. One year passed and Henry is still childless. Anne joins Mary at the court, her father, Thomas Howard, and the Duke of Norfolk, in a conspiracy against the King. They plan to force a relationship between Anne and Henry, so that they can have a son

as an heir. In this way, the Boleyns and the Howards will have the support of the King. However, everything is changed and accidentally Henry fall in love with Mary, another Boleyn girl. In a short time, Mary finds herself pregnant, and her father and her uncle fear that Henry will become tired of Mary, and they decide to offer Anne to the court. Anne seduces Henry and devotes her time to him. Henry leaves Mary, but then when Mary delivers a boy, calling him Henry, once again she is returns back to the King. However, her child cannot be legitimized, and she finds that Henry has an affair with Anne. As projected, the King cannot resist the temptation made by Anne, declaring himself the head of the Church of England, sending away Katherine of Aragon, and finally decides to marry Anne. Anne delivers a girl, named Elizabeth, and again she decides to have another child preferably a boy. She realizes that she is pregnant but this time too it is a failure. It is revealed that Henry is the one who cannot produce a boy. Consequently, she sleeps with George her own brother. She gives birth to a deformed child who is born dead; however this event makes people believe that she is a witch. After a short time, Henry grows tired of Anne. He desires to have Jane Seymour while gossip is about Anne's witchery and promiscuity. Henry finds the truth about Anne and her brother, so he decides to execute George and imprison Anne at the London Tower. Finally, Henry sentences Ann to death.

Climate has been of great importance as an element of nature impact on the earth and in the lives of creatures. Gregory divides her novel into parts named after each season of the year to declare the importance of the weather in the life of 16th.centry people. Each season has a particular role in the life of people, specifically peasants to play: "The dinner ended at about five o' clock on the cool April evening and they brought the horses around to the front of the house" (p.22). From Mary's viewpoint, nature is considers a brilliant gift of God; she describes conditions in summer as follows: "The verges on the side of the road were thick with the white of gypsy lace-and big- faced white daisies and lush with early

summer greenness of grass" (p.27). The picture of spring also is depicted for clarifying all of the events in the time of Henry VIII: "The three of us walked from the great hall into bright of the spring sunshine" (p.97). The author uses the weather to show the feelings of her characters with that special season as Mary says about the king's attitude: "The hedgerows were greening with the fresh colour of spring growth, the king sang me a love song of his own composing" (p.102). Mary narrates the amazing summer she has with Henry, that's why Gregory wants her readers to be familiar with the entertainments of that time during summer: "We spent wonderful summer riding together, hunting and dancing every night" (p.134). The particular task which the court has to do in summer, is defined as follows: "The court went on its midsummer progress, down the dusty lanes to Sussex and on to Winchester" (p.150).

The other feature which establishes a connection between the events and the characters of the novel on one hand, and the environment, on the other, is wood lands and forest. In most of Gregory's work this feature can be traced. In this novel, she presents it clearly: "Beyond them lay the park where he ran deer for hunting and between the park and the gardens was a beautiful lawn kept ready all the year round for the king's use as a jousting green" (p.36). In the 16th century the wooden area was the source of providing food for the people especially the royal one: "The huntsmen trotted anxiously away from the hunt, criss-crossing the forest by the little rides" (p.80). The famous entertainment for the king was hunting in the jungles through the trees and bunches of flowers: "The court went on its midsummer progress, down the dusty lanes to Sussex and on to Winchester and thence to New Forest so that the king could hunt deer every day" (p.150). Since the beginning of the world, water has played a vital role in the existence of creatures through centuries. Gregory confirms this feature in the novel as well: "The stage broke away and was racing for his life across the rough empty ground at the edge of the woods that led to the water meadows and the river" (p.80). Mary defines the Herver

as a small Island which the as a wet land she sees: "The grey stones of the walls was reflected in the still waters of the moat so it looked like two castles" (p.203). Everywhere Mary sees the water, she sees the living creatures and the sense of life there: "The ground fell away from the road toward the river. At the river's edge there were reed beds and a flight of ducks" (p.410). Mary expresses all over the place that water is flaw, the fertile lands also exist: "Water was glinting in every furrow, this would always be wet land. Further north I could see some fields planted with apple trees" (p.411). Gregory presents the role of water as connector between nearby areas: "That evening, before dinner, the two of us made our way down the river" (p.493). The last feature of environmental history that can be applied to the novel is the geographical boundaries. The varieties of climate, nature and environment can be comprehended between the borders as Mary tells about different conditions of two cities: "When the road took us onto our own land, downhill through Edenbridge, and through the wet meadowlands toward Hever" (p.56). Transferring the seeds and also plants to other boundaries is the most prominent job at that time as Mary asks farmers to do that: "The more enterprising young farmers outside Edenbridge, could see that there was a market for lucrene. I wrote for them to a farmer on my father's estate in Essex, and got them both seeds and advice" (p.61). Gregory also displays the specific features of each countries and their particular geography and nature in other part of the world; such as the pomegranate in which was the particular fruit of Spain: "When the stonemasons set to work chipping away the pomegranates of Spain" (p.405).

Environmental History in "Virgin Earth"

As a sequence to her earlier novel, "Earthly Joy," Gregory surveys John Tradescant, a royal gardener travels to Virginia and England. When for the first time he travels to Virginia to gather mysterious plants, he gets familiar with a pretty Suckahanna, an Indian girl. After bringing his samples to England, he decides to come back to Virginia and marry the Indian girl, but he is informed of his father's death

and consequently leaves a message for her about his marriage with Hester. Unfortunately, because of having two children by his former matrimonial, and his inherited collection of rare plants and the Ark, and also the Tradescant's prominent garden, John has to marry Hester. In the meantime, King Charles I, initiates the civil war, and John as a reliable servant should be at his service. To escape war with which he does not agree, he comes back to Virginia and Indian girl, abounding his family in England. He begins to have a garden in Virginia, but he doesn't know anything about the land and inhabitants (Powhatan) of that region. Once more John needs to decide on verges in a war that is between the English and Powhatan. He is uncertain between them; he is in a dilemma between his affection for the two women.

Like in the other novels, Gregory begins the story with the seasons or months of the year to emphasis the matter of climate and weather changing through 17th.century: "And when the weather got warmer those who were not dead of their wounds, or of grief, or of starvation, died of the plague," she went on" (p.16). With season changing, the weather has a particular impact on the nature: "J turned away and wandered further along the shoreline, his eyes at the edge of the wood looking for saplings and little plants in their first flush of spring growth that he might get safely home to England" (p.20). "Strong trees, now green and rich with the summer growth of their spread palmate leaves" (p.33). Using the season's name is the vehicle for starting the new part. Besides, she draws a vivid picture of the natural surroundings as follows: "They were in the warmth of the rarities room where a large fire kept the collection warm and dry though there was a storm of wintry sleet dashing against the grand windows" (p.52). John has to adapt himself with the different climates in Virginia, even sometimes it is difficult to bear: "The cold winter mornings at sea were hard for John. While he had been in Lambeth, trapped between the demands of the king and the duties to his family, he had managed to forget the last words she had called to him — "Come at Nepinough," the harvest time" (p.77). When

the author focuses on the exact season and time, she intends to convey a fact which occurred at that time with the specific conditions: "until this terrible winter that the white people would renege on their promise to move on, on their promise that they wanted only a small patch of land at Jamestown, and then their promise that they would settle a narrow strip by the river and live in peace with their neighbours" (p.171). The climate also affects in the life of animals and plants in every parts of the world: "But later in the summer, when the melons were in flower, he would visit again and take a soft rabbit's tail from one to another to pollinate them" (p.259). In Virginia, John finds the importance of forests for the native people as well as in England: "Candlewood? Spoon wood?" J had a moment of wild imagining, thinking of a tree growing candles, a tree growing spoons, a bush growing soap. Is an Indian, a savage? One to use as your own. To take you out into the forest and show you all these things" (p.6). "The only people who know anything of plants or trees in Virginia are the Indians" (p.8).

The forest hides some tribes among the tress and prevent the fighting for food: "The trees closed around them, over their heads, around their backs, they were hidden in a world of green. The girl ran the canoe up on a sandbank and stepped out" (p.18). The Indian people learn their children how get the food from jungles: "The woods she had roamed every day for mile after mile, hunting turkey or wood pigeon, or looking for roots or nuts, were burned back to a few scorched trees among plowed fields" (p.81). John is familiar with hunting in the forest and provides his food: "We pass through the forest too, we follow them when we hunt them, we clear land for a season to grow our food" (p.99). Invading jungles by human for structuring their homes and also villages, is the matter that Suckahanna finds in a white men's ideas: "Then Suckahanna told them how she had heard of a new white man who had made a clearing in the wood and built a house and had planted a flower at his doorstep" (p.129).

John explains the importance of water and river, especially in the case of farming: "From

the shingles on the roof to the ice in the cellar. And this by people who did not come here to farm; but came hoping to pick up gold plates from the seashore, or emeralds from the rivers, or pearls from out of every oyster" (p.9). Also, Suckahanna as an Indian girl knows how the plants' life depends on the water: "Then she stepped forward and pointed at the little plants in his pocket and gestured toward the river. She mimed the strong paddling of a canoe, out toward the sea" (p.14). "Then she leaned forward and dug the blade of her paddle into the lapping river water, and they moved slowly away from the wooden pier" (p.17). Human's need to water was the topic which is started from the day of creation, as John searches water for his meal: "He took the basket inside and set it down by the fireplace, and then, feeling his desire for food rekindled at the sight of the eggs, he went quickly down to the river and filled his cooking pot with water" (p.94). In ecological order, the importance of water is cleared as John watches his surrounding: "He ran through the darkness with the bag held tight in his mouth and everywhere he ran there was land made, and water made, and the great deer to walk the land and drink the water and feed the new-made man and woman" (p.113). "The stag snuffed the wind. He could smell nothing, the wind had veered with the rain. The only scent he got was the clear water smell of the river behind the herd. Uneasily he glanced around and then he turned his head and walked a little back the way they had come, to the river" (p.120). During 17th century the matter of local knowledge was again paid attention. John's garden has some of these local herbs: "On the far sides were plants for cutting, for drying and for medicinal use in a scramble and a muddle of richness" (p.290).

John learns about the kinds of new plants which he hasn't seen before: "He hardly glanced over his shoulder. "Tobacco, of course," he said. "You'll learn to recognize it soon enough" (p.3). Such as his father, John goes to the new geographical borders to transplant to England: "how shall I find an Indian to guide me?" J asked. For a moment he felt as helpless as a child, and he thought of his father's travels — to Russia, to the Mediterranean, to

Europe" (p.7). "There were only a couple of people making the return voyage to England. The rest of the space was taken up with the cargo of tobacco" (p.25). John describes a beautiful geography which he realises in Virginia: "In Virginia I have seen a whole forest glade filled with them, like the whiteness of snow. And I once saw a woman plait the flowers into her black hair and I thought then it was the most beautiful little flower I had ever seen, like a brooch, like a jewel" (p.200). Trading plants across the Virginia and Europe is an opportunity that John gains it: "What I'd rather do, more than anything else, would be to collect new plants, to go with you to the Americas, the West Indies, travel, find things, bring them home and grow them" (p.216). "A very light scent, very sweet. And I have a Virginian rose, there's only two of them in the whole country" (p.254).

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the features of environmental history such as climate, environment, woodlands and forest, water and we lands, geographical boundaries and local knowledge can be traced in Philippa Gregory's *The other Boleyn Girl* and *Virgin Earth*. As a model of eco criticism, environmental history has been used as natural vehicle through which we can describe and bear witness to the challenges of daily life mainly in 20th century. The features of environmental history in *The other Boleyn Girl*, appear in Mary as the lover of the king, which narrates her story, paying special attention to the weather and the environment of England. She describes the amazing jungles and rivers in her new home far away from court. She ends her letter to Anne with few words about the beauty of Spain. Also, in the other novel the features of environmental history can be seen in the life of John Trandescant as the royal gardener during the 17th century. Therefore, He mentions all the changes in the weather of England and Virginia during the story. When John begins his journey to the new land, he finds the importance of the Jungles and water sources more than before. At the end he becomes familiar with native knowledge of the Virginia's inhabitants in contrast with his native land,

that all of these features can be found in environmental history. Thus, the result of this research will help to everyone who is interested in European and especially British writers such as Philippa Gregory, read and understand such literary works more consciously and comprehensibly and also finding the features of this model during the centuries certainly in the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

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