

ENVIRONMENTAL PHENOMENON IN THE POETRY OF WORDSWORTH

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Abstract

Wordsworth's poetry embodies deep ecological thinking and provides insight into the human place and dwelling in Creation. Wordsworth in his poetry clearly depicts the deep environmental phenomenon directly linking with the deep Ecological movement which believes that animals and wild areas have a value in them and that human value cannot be separated from this because everything is connected and is a part of the same web of life...

Keywords

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| 1. Ecology | : | Environmental Science |
| 2. Environmentalist | : | Habitat |
| 3. Post Modernism | : | Post Structuralism |
| 4. Diversity | : | Manifoldness, Multiplicity |
| 5. Diminishing | : | Shrinking, Reducing |
| 6. Manifestation | : | Demonstration |

In his great autobiographical poem "Prelude, Wordsworth states in his cast memory of childhood was the sound of the river Derwent, whose murmurs "from his alder shades and rocky falls, sent a voice that flowed along my dreams"? (I: 272). He claims that his first memories were those of sounds, a speaking forth of the river directly into the dreams of the infant, making him an engaged participant in the world that surrounds him, not merely a detached observer. In the beginning of the 19th century, when industrial revolution started, the manufacturing cities of Longhand disappeared into a thick haze of photochemical smog. It was evident that new technologies of mass production might alter the climate and eventually destroys the Carth's ability to sustain life. That was the time when the environmentalists perceived thus dancer and warned every as of it and suggested to take the remedial steps to avert. A environmentalist

philosopher Val Plum wood visualizes the natural crisis as the "massive process of biospheric degradation and the failure and permanent endangerment of many of the world's oldest and greatest fisheries, the continuing destruction of its tropical forests and the loss of much of its agricultural land and up to half its species within next thirty years" (Plum wood:). Even the Postmodernism alerted the writers to be conscious of their nature! Surroundings in an age of global warming and industrialization. Man's love for material comforts has led him towards the exploitation of nature's treasure to this extent that today he is in constant war with environment. The poets and writers, time and again, have emphasized the urgency of ecological balance threatened by "an unending conflict and war between the natural eco-sphere and manmade techno-sphere" (Commoner: 7).). the poems of the British Romantic poet William Wordsworth and his contemporary poets and writers invariably focused on nature and environment. In *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind*, Karl Kroeber argues that British Romantic poetry was "the first literature to anticipate contemporary biological conceptions and those poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and P.B. Shelley were proto-ecological in their intellectual orientation" (). They have addressed the questions concerning the relationship between mankind and the nature concerning the development of ecological literary criticism. The well-known critic Jonathan Bate voices his anxiety: Carbon dioxide produced by the burning of fossil fuels is trapping the heat of the sun, causing the planet to become warmer. Glaciers and permafrost are melting, sea levels rising, rainfall patterns changing, winds growing stronger. Meanwhile, the oceans are overfished; deserts are spreading, forests shrinking, and fresh water becoming scarcer. The diversity of species upon the planet is diminishing, (2000: 24). The study of the poetry of these poets can be a positive step towards the solution of this Global problem because, "The business of literature is to work upon consciousness"(Bate, 2000. 23). The present paper attempts to unfold the environmental phenomenon as portrayed in the poetry of Wordsworth Towards the close of the eighteenth century, man was disappearing into money and nature into machinery. That is why Rousseau's call back to nature' sounded authentic and was widely acclaimed by the Romantic poets. Man was indeed reveals the fact that man is alienated even in the society. The most common and powerful literary creations of this period are end *Ancient Mariner*, a self-exiled Childe Harold and a *Solitary Reaper*. The order of Wordsworth are ordinary people, shepherds, sad and lonely women all lost creatures showing a strange strength of heart in the company of

nature. On the whole Wordsworth is particularly concerned with man and nature. Fed up with the crowded smoggy city life, Wordsworth is instinctively driven to nature where he seeks his freedom in places of nature. For example in "The Daffodils," the poet cherishes the eco friendly moments:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once. I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils. (187).

Nature for Wordsworth is a spirit ready to soothe a suffering heart. Wordsworth is a poet of ecology in the sense that he perceived turbulent contemporary times and reacted against it. The following observation of Wordsworth in the Lyrical Ballads exhibits his prophetic vision,

"For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and, unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of al-most savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for an extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners, the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves." (Brett and Jones: 210)

Wordsworth obviously felt the dehumanizing impact of the growing mechanization of could foresee the gradual manifestation of the horrible consequences of the industrial revolution. His anguish results in the following lines of the sonnet "The World is Too Much with us":

Great God! I'd rather be

A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn. (23)

In the above lines, the word 'forlorn' is a key word which stands at the threshold of the forces the poet to go back to the primitive realm of nature. People are running after a materialistic life,

Which is eating away their time and energy blinding them of the beautiful objects of nature? The poet depicts the horror of social, moral and ecological degradation embedded in the industrial pursuit:

*The world is too much with us, late and soon
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers*

Little we see in Nature that is ours,

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon! (Ibid.)

In this context, Bate's remark is quite apt: "Wordsworth's politics were truly green and that he is the first authentic ecological poet in English. His message has strong relevance to our own contemporary census with the depiction of the layer, the damages of acid rain, the disappearance of the tropical rainforests, and the development of energy saving technology and clean engines, and the problems of industrial pollution generally". Wordsworth believes in the presence of divine spirit in the objects of nature like trees, plants and flowers etc.

In the poem "Tintern Abbey," he describes again his return to the banks of the river Wye that he first visited five years ago. His initial response is one of sheer delight in the evidently unchanged appearance of the landscape: he celebrates the endurance of wild natural beauty, even in the midst of intensive human preoccupation. The opening lines of the poem depict a human community dwelling in harmonious co-existence with nature; the local farmsteads are green to the very door, and the local farmers have acted to preserve a remnant of the primordial ecosystem of the region by allowing their hedgerows to run wild. It is the central meditative development of the poem in which Wordsworth depicts his younger self as if 'he were a wild beast, bounding over the mountains. In short, Wordsworth wrote poetry to propagate natural peace and prosperity on this planet.

Wordsworth's poetry particularly "Lines Written in Early Spring," manifests, as K. R. Johnston observes "the same split or contrast between praise of natural beauty and expressions of sympathy for the poor" (179). The following is an apt instance of poet's anxiety about the lot of man alienated from natural eco-sphere:

*To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man. (482)*

However, it is worthwhile to infer that being aware of the environmental hazards; he aspires for natural wilderness for the growth and survival of humanity. His poems succinctly reveal the ecological speculations. Wordsworth delineates the picture of the early morning in the poem "Upon Westminster Bridge" where the great beauty of the London city is marvelous. He imagines an environment where the towers, domes and temples stand glittering under the smokeless sky. Such a sort of ecological speculation is experienced in the following lines:

*This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning: silent bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air. (269)*

Hence, one can see that Wordsworth has the perception of the natural world as a dynamic ecosystem and a passionate commitment to the preservation of wild creatures and serenity of nature. Fed up with 'anthropocentric' problems, he turned his back to the realm of primitive nature. The peace that he derived from natural objects was not merely a response to the striking and beautiful patterns of nature but a constant source of enrichment of his imagination and moral being. Most important was his characteristic belief that man and nature were inter-dependent. If there would be imbalance then this inter-dependence would lead to colossal loss which would ultimately harm the humanity.

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