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An Eco-Critical Approach to Select Poems of Williams Wordsworth

Jyoti Kumari, Dr. Kumkum Ray

B.A.(H) English, Amity School of Languages, Lucknow Campus, U.P. India

Head of Department, Amity School of Languages, Lucknow Campus, U.P. India

ABSTRACT: Ecocriticism has played a pivotal role in the field of study for a long time. The main focus of ecocriticism is to develop a relationship between humans and nature. With the increase in global warming and climate change, it has become crucial to study and focus on this relationship between humans and nature more closely. As we all know nineteenth-century English romantic poets have given great significance to nature. Amongst these poets, William Wordsworth has considered nature as a source of inspiration for his poems and has used the beauty of nature to express his thoughts, emotions and ideas. This project aims to examine a few of William Wordsworth's poetry from an eco-critical standpoint.

KEYWORDS: Ecocriticism; nature; English romantic poets, emotions, romanticism.

I. INTRODUCTION

The main focus of ecocriticism is to develop a relationship between humans and nature. William Wordsworth was a renowned English romantic poet. He has considered nature as a source of inspiration for his poems and has used the beauty of nature to express his thoughts, emotions and ideas and considered nature a living entity. William Wordsworth was born on 7 April 1770 in Cockermouth, United Kingdom. He produced a few of the greatest English poems during the late 1700s and early 1800s some of them are It Is A Beauteous Evening Calm and Free, to the Daisy, The Solitary Reaper, I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, and The Forsaken.

He has contributed to the romantic movement which highlights the importance and strength of nature. He has considered nature as his teacher, a source of inspiration for his poems and has used the beauty of nature to express his thoughts, emotions and ideas. He used to personify nature and consider it as a separate entity. Eco criticism is a specialization of the study of literature that addresses the relationship existing between humans and nature. As a discipline in academics, eco-criticism started in the early 1990s.

In the eternity ode, he shares that during his youth, he cherished nature with unbridled eagerness. However, as time passed and he matured, his approach to nature evolved to encompass the lens of human hardship.

Romanticism (1798-1832):

Between 1798 and 1832, a prominent literary and artistic movement known as Romanticism emerged, primarily influencing painting and music.

The romantic period in English literature begins with the publication of William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge's lyrical ballads in 1798 and ends with the accessions of Queen Victoria in 1837. The romantic period coincided with the revolution in France and America and therefore it is also known as the age of revolution. Though the romantic age in English literature began with the publication of the lyrical ballads in 1798 yet traits of romanticism were found in the writers of transition like Gray and Collins.

Later eighteenth-century poetry's subject tone and style were influenced by the gradual development of love and nature. This leads to result in poetry in the quest for more elementary and particular themes. Augustan/ neo-classical ages work out of fashion, now growing interested in the natural form of writing.

Romantic Age also known as the Age of Revival:

A revolt against the pseudo-classical age, rejection of the ideals of the neo-classical age. Nature is the expression of personal feelings. 'medievalism' is a growing interest in the Middle Ages, an age of romance. Celebration of nature, imagination, personal feelings, emotions and beauty.

Industrialization created lots of slums and child labour and problems reflected in William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience. Thomas Chatterton is considered as first romantic poet in English. Friedrich Schlegel is a German critic, the first to use the term "romantics".



Romantic age is a return to nature. The timeline of the romantic age is 1798 ad to 1837 ad after which we have the Victorian age. As we all know, rationality was highly valued during the Age of Enlightenment, while sentiments and emotions were the primary focus throughout the Romantic era.

Wordsworth as a nature poet:

William Wordsworth is considered one of the greatest and most influential poets of the poet of romantic age and has always remained widely popular, even though most of his works are complex and inclined towards the theme of politics, and social and religious upheavals of his time, through this only he gained the reputation to being called as 'nature poet'.

The perspective of William Wordsworth towards nature is very different from that of Alexander Pope. According to his belief, a man who has no interest in nature should be punished, for him, nature is the most important thing in his poems. One of the sonnets of William Wordsworth indicates this idea

“ the world is too much with us, late and soon, getting and spending,
we waste our powers little with nature that is ours”(William Wordsworth)

The love of nature that William Wordsworth has can be divided into four stages according to the convenience

First stage – the outer appearance of the world is loved by him the most. The grandeur in colour and beauty, the form and other external and internal features of nature are appreciated by him to a great extent. As a faithful lover of nature, he explains the form of nature and also describes the child's joy experience by simply describing the features of nature.

Second stage –about the second approach, he took a different stance toward nature. He began to perceive the significance and existence of a universal spirit in it, which made it clear to him that there is a close and profound relationship between humans and nature in this world. In the second stage, wisdom was born for William Wordsworth out of his deep existence connection and love for nature, on one side its forms and colour and on the other side the sad thought of humanity prevails.

William Wordsworth considered poetry as an overflow of emotions of any person or poet.

Eco-logical view on William Wordsworth's poetry:

The poems of William Wordsworth can be divided into two categories and topic one is nature and the other is human life. But for him, nature is a prominent theme of his poetries because it gives him peace and zest. In his view, nature is the source of love, joy, soothing, happiness, healing power, togetherness, peace, and knowledge and he provided many heart-touching and beautiful poems related to nature that could thrill people and wake them to see the beauty of nature.

The main focus and purpose of this paper are to throw light on the ecological awareness of the readers of the poetry of William Wordsworth, in his poem " I wandered as a Lonely Cloud" is considered an important nature poem. The storehouse is used to define nature which is full of joy and happiness.

To conclude, the poems of William Wordsworth provide the modern man, who lives in the contemporary world and is oriented to the materialistic world and technological things with a new lens to look through the integral world of nature and an inseparable relationship between nature and the man in the cast.

A critical study of William Wordsworth's poems:

The world is too much with us late and soon

In the poem "The World Is Too Much With Us Late and Soon" (William Wordsworth), William Wordsworth highlights the beauty and force of nature in a manner that most people haven't heard of. In his poem, he describes the wind, the flowers and the sea. In the first three lines of the poem "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" the author says that most people are missing out on the beauties of nature and are too caught up in the material world.

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free

In the poem "It is a Beauteous Evening, calm and Free" the poet William Wordsworth used personification, alliteration, metaphor and imagery to beautifully portray the scene of an evening that he saw while walking with her daughter Caroline Vallon by the sea. He compared the time of the evening to be peaceful, quiet and holy as a nun he compared the sound of the ocean to the sound of a mighty being who is just awake and the sound seems like an everlasting thunder personifying the greatness and power of the ocean.

A slumber did my spirit seal

In the poem "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" the poet conveys the message that everything that has originated from nature has to return to it someday, if someone had taken birth they would die someday. The author has used alliteration in the phrase "the touch of earthly years" to convey that after death one can no longer be able to touch or sense anything nor they can see, move or hear anything and they are beyond the reach of time.



The poem 'a slumber Did My Spirit Seal' is a "Lucy poem" from William Wordsworth about the death of his beloved Lucy.

My heart leaps up

In the poem "My Heart Leaps Up" William Wordsworth portrays the comfort and beauty of nature. The poet says that he becomes excited every time he sees a rainbow and his heart leaps up, it doesn't matter if he is a child or a man, he will keep on enjoying watching the rainbow and will keep on enjoying it even when he grows old. The main theme of the poem is about a man who used to love and feel joy by watching the rainbow in the sky when he was a child and still experiences the same feeling when he is a grown-up.

The forsaken

In the poem "The Forsaken" the poet has developed a very beautiful relation between the emotions of humans and nature. He has used rich imagery and personified nature to convey the pain of a man who has lost his love. William Wordsworth is one of the renowned Romantic era poets, he is famous for his affection and care for nature which he expresses in his poems. The poem "The Forsaken" is a short, four-stanza poem written by William Wordsworth which perfectly demonstrates his love for nature. William Wordsworth has developed a very beautiful relation between the emotions of humans and nature.

I wandered lonely as a cloud

William Wordsworth a poet of the poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" uses metaphor, simile and personification to develop a relationship between humans and nature. The poet says that the poet was overwhelmed by the beauty of nature when he saw the daffodils beside the lake and every time, he remembers this sight he is overjoyed. William Wordsworth compares the daffodils with stars that shine in the Milky Way galaxy and says that he saw ten thousand daffodils stretched in a never-ending line across the river bank all seeming to be tossing their heads while doing a lively dance.

Written in march

In poem "Written in March" expresses the feelings of the poet William Wordsworth about nature in the form of a song. The poet has used a simile to portray the beauty of nature and the changes it undergoes with the changing seasons. He compared the winter to a defeated army that is fleeing as the spring takes over and the mountains get covered with flowers and greenery.

Composed upon Westminster bridge

In the poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" William Wordsworth creates an image of an early morning city of London from a bridge and says that he is overjoyed to see this view and only a person with a dull soul will not enjoy this view. He has personified nature to portray how it would have looked like if it had existed without human beings or any civilization. He also adds that without any pollution or smoke nature looks even more beautiful, the sun has never dotted the sky like this and even the valleys, rocks and mountains look very magnificent.

Poetic techniques employed by William Wordsworth:

I wandered as a lonely cloud

Rhyme scheme

This poem was written by William Wordsworth "I Wandered as a Lonely Cloud" consists of four stanzas each stanza is six lines and the rhyme scheme followed by the poem is ababcc. This consistent pattern in the poem contributes to the poem's musical quality.

Style

The poem daffodils is written in iambic tetrameter, a meter with four iambs per line. These metrical patterns play an important role in giving the poem a rhythmic, flowing quality that shows the natural scene as described in the poem.

Poetic techniques

Imagery- Wordsworth creates a vibrant imagination to draw a picture of the scene before him to have a great perspective. The imagery not only creates a vivid picture of daffodils but also animates its image in the landscape.

Personification - the daffodils are personified as 'tossing head in sprightly dance' and 'dancing'. This technique is used to give them human-like qualities, emphasizing the connection of the poet to nature.



My heart leaps up

Rhyme scheme

The poem 'My Heart Leaps Up' follows the rhyme pattern of abaabcc in its six-line stanza, which plays a great role in its musicality and makes it easy to read, making nature more memorable and accessible by observation.

Style

Wordsworth style in the poem 'My Heart Leaps Up' has embarked clarity and simplicity that makes the poem easy to read. The language used by the poet is straightforward and it conveys deep emotions and insights, consisting of the romantic ideal of searching the sublime in the everyday and everywhere.

Poetic techniques

Imagery - the technique used by the poet is vivid imagery to summon the beauty of nature and this natural world. The image created of the rainbow is not just imagery but also symbolises the beauty, ephemeral nature and the hope of life.

Personification - the main and prime focus of the poem is mainly on the natural phenomenon of the rainbow, William Wordsworth gives its life of its own, indicating the deep-rooted connection between humans and nature.

The world is too much with us late and soon

Rhyme scheme

The poem "The World Is Too Much With Us Late and Soon" is a fourteen-stanza poem. It is a Petrarchan sonnet; the first eight lines of the poem are octaves following the rhyme scheme of abba abba and the last six lines are sestet following the rhyme scheme of cdcdcd.

Style

The poem "The World Is Too Much With Us Late and Soon" is written in an iambic pentameter rhythmic pattern and the rhyme scheme of the poem changes halfway through.

Poetic techniques

Simile - the poet used a simile in the seventh line "and are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;" to link the sleeping flowers with the howling of the winds.

Metaphor - the poet used metaphor in the fifth and sixth lines. The line "the sea bares her bosom" compares the ocean to a woman and in the line "the wind is howling"

The forsaken

Rhyme scheme

The poem Forsaken by Wordsworth is a fourteen-line stanza poem. It follows the rhyme scheme of abababb ababccc. The main story of the poem is about a man who has lost his love and wandering through the countryside.

Style

The poem "The Forsaken" has four stanzas. This poem has leading elements of imagery that fully portray the beauty of nature, as well as the deep emotions that were felt by man.

Poetic techniques

Personification:- the poem uses personification to give nature human-like qualities that allow readers to immensely feel the weight of man's sorrow.

Alliteration:- alliteration is a poetic device that plays a vital role in giving the musical quality to the poem, which is reflective of the movements of the water in the pools and rills that were mentioned in the poem.

Written in march

Rhyme scheme

The rhyme is directly dependent on the desired effect and the form of the poem. A suitable choice of rhyme scheme must be abab or abcabc, which provides a balanced and pleasing sonic pattern.

Style

The style of the poem written in March as it is a march-themed poem could range from lyrical, mainly points and focuses on personal observation and emotions, to narrative, telling which beautifully captures the essence of the month.

Poetic techniques

Imagery - the description of transition season is vivid, such as the melting snow reflecting the first green sprouts or the lingering chill in the air.

Personification - the human-like qualities are given to march or in other words elements of spring, such as "march whispers to the sleeping buds" or "the sun gently awakens the earth".



It is a beauteous evening, calm and free

Rhyme scheme

The poem "It Is a Beauteous Evening, calm and Free" is a Petrarchan sonnet, the first eight lines of the poem are octaves following the rhyme scheme of abba abba and the last six lines are sestet following the rhyme scheme of cdedec.

Style

In the poem "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free" poet uses imagery representing nature and combines them with explicitly religious imagery. The poem is written in an iambic pentameter rhythmic pattern.

Poetic techniques

Personification - William Wordsworth used personification in the line "the gentleness of heaven broods over the sea" to personify the sky represented as heaven watching over the ocean peacefully.

Metaphor -in the poem "It is a Beautiful Evening, calm and Free" William Wordsworth uses metaphor to establish a relationship between nature and religious imagery. He portrays the time to be holy and quiet as a nun.

A slumber did my spirit seal

Rhyme scheme

The poem "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" is a short two-stanza poem consisting of four lines. The poem follows the rhyme scheme of abab for the first stanza and cdcd for the second.

Style

The poem "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" uses a ballad meter, which oscillates between iambic trimeter and iambic tetrameter creating a pulsing rhythm imitating a heartbeat.

Poetic techniques

Alliteration:- William Wordsworth used alliteration in the poem "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" by using the same consonant sound in the same stanza. He uses words such as "slumber, spirit, and seal", and "rolled and round".

Personification:- in the poem "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" William Wordsworth used personification in the line "The Touch of Earthly Years" to convey that after death one can no longer able to touch or sense anything nor can see.

Composed upon Westminster bridge

Rhyme scheme

The poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" written by William Wordsworth is a Petrarchan sonnet that consists of fourteen lines. The poem follows the rhyme scheme of abba abba cdc dcd and is divided into a sestet and octave but has an exception in lines two and three, having slant rhymes 'by' and 'majesty'.

Style

The poem "composed upon Westminster Bridge" uses loose iambic pentameter, which oscillates between five pairs of stressed and unstressed beats.

Poetic techniques

Hyperbole:- in the poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge", William Wordsworth uses hyperbole to exaggerate the beauty of the Westminster Bridge of London in the morning. He used the line "earth has not anything to show fairer" to convey his feeling and emotion which he experienced when he saw from the bridge.

Personification:- in the poem "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" William Wordsworth uses personification in line four, in which he compares the city of London to a human being who just woke up and is wearing his clothes and in line twelve in which he personifies the river, establishing the thought that it has its own will.

II. CONCLUSION

William Wordsworth's love, care and affection for nature can truly be felt in his poems. He is truly one of the greatest and most renowned poets of the Romantic era. His poems always established a relationship between human beings and nature and the need for humans to coexist with nature. William Wordsworth has always considered nature a living entity with a divine spirit. According to him nature has healing power and is a source of joy, knowledge, healing, spirituality and love. According to him humans do not dominate nature, it's nature that influences humans and humans should live in harmony with nature.

William Wordsworth declined and rejected the thought of humans dominating nature and, in his poems, he always makes nature look superior all-over human beings. He portrays his views in the context of nature and human relationships. In this way, he is regarded as the most ecologically conscientious and aware poet of the romantic era in English literature.



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