

Significance of the Eco critical Perspective of Wordsworth and Hemingway in the Contemporary World

Rashmi Agrawal

Lecturer(English)

Govt.V.S.P.A.Sans.College, Kota

Abstract

Wordsworth, Hemingway, Coleridge, Byron, Keats and Shelley have studied the relationship between nature and literature as being in close association with each other. These writers strongly believe that it is inevitable for the survival of human race to understand the status and importance of nature and to realize that human life depends on respecting the ecological balance. The continuous development of science and technology have resulted in various environmental problems which have threatened the harmony between man and nature and can cause serious crisis if not resolved in time. Literature has been instrumental in guiding people to understand that man in nature do not have an opposing relationship, on the contrary, the welfare of mankind lies in respecting nature instead of trying to conquer or ignore it. Wordsworth and Hemingway in their literary writings embody ecological consciousness and promote love and respect for all things in nature. They encourage rethinking of the relationship between humans and nature through their protagonists. The strength of man lies in moving ahead not with a fighting spirit towards nature but admitting the fact that nature and its resources are indispensable and recognizing the dignity of nature.

Keywords: Ecological consciousness, harmony, dignity of nature

Nature has been one of the most treated themes in literature of any language. It is true that the very dimensions of nature provide existence and depth to human life. Wordsworth and Hemingway in the lieu of literature have gone a long way in realizing and presenting this fact. These writers have rightly

realized that man and nature act and react with each other. The progress of man would not be deterred but actually would gear up by kinship and unison with the agents of nature. Wordsworth and Hemingway have reflected nature in various colors and forms in their literary works. As keen observers they have been successfully able to present their unique ecological perspective in exquisite terms.

Wordsworth has dealt with nature as being one of the most intimate companion of mankind. The romantic writer has been frequently referred to as a worshipper of nature. He overvalues nature far above human life considering it as a goddess worthy of praise and respect. Wordsworth has an unflinching passion for nature and counters the ecological problems caused due to lack of sensitivity and attachment towards nature. Wordsworth's writings focus on the lack of awareness about ecological and environmental problems in the contemporary world. He presents the fact that man cannot remain unaffected if he continues the attitude of exploitation towards nature. His works are highly committed towards non-human world and present a strong belief in the ecological web between the nature and humans. The works of Wordsworth become highly relevant in the present thoughtful condition of environmental degradation. In his poem *The World is Too Much With Us*, one of the finest sonnets in English, Wordsworth presents in simple words the feeling of disgust towards the increasing materialism and the way humans are moving away from nature and destroying the life support system. He is in support of the traditional way of life where nature was given the utmost importance and all the pleasures of human life were in harmony with nature and amongst it. He strongly insists to change the mode of present thinking where monetary benefits are considered to be all in all.

Wordsworth, in his works, incorporates the ecological concept of man as being just a part and reflection of nature. He regrets that man has forgotten this fact and has become too much involved in

his material pursuits and has misunderstood this emptiness to be true happiness. He has incorporated the entire exosphere in a brief space and has dealt with it with utmost dignity. He establishes the reality that literature cannot remain unaffected by the ecological imbalance and menace caused by human interference. Wordsworth criticizes that we have lost our hearts to materialism which will result in our own deterioration and doom inevitably. A craving to possess more and more things for temporary comforts with a greed to get power and position in society has resulted in distancing us from nature and its powers. Wordsworth emphasizes that nature has a unique ability and capacity to provide us happiness and comfort and even heal us. But it is important to exercise the resources of nature in a proper way to avail its benefits in a long-term. The basis of Wordsworth's writings is the necessity to make us realize that man and nature are basically one. He wishes to make us aware that nature is beautiful, calm, quiet and full of joys. Man has lost vision to appreciate nature in its true sense. He has no leisure time to sit with nature and enjoy its beauty be it The Sun or the Sea. The beautiful scenes of nature fail to move his heart. Being busy in collecting the articles which are believed to make his life luxurious, the kinship with nature has been lost.

Wordsworth is in deep love with nature so much so that he is ready to merge his own personality with the various forms of nature. He expresses his innate desire of being a pagan, one who believes that Gods and Goddesses reside in every object of nature, and worship nature. Wordsworth demonstrates his hatred towards the deep-rooted materialism in the contemporary world and appeals us to take solace in the company of nature. What is needed is collaboration with nature and persistent realisation that the objects of nature are our basic strength and we are just tiny representations of nature. If we preserve nature many calamities like earthquakes, Tsunami, droughts and floods can be prevented to a large extent. Wordsworth thus rightly says that the world is too much with us. We can rightly place the writings of Wordsworth in the category of eco-criticism as he heralds the relationship between the conservation of nature and the survival of man.

The Old Man and the Sea by the American writer Hemingway has also been recognised as a representative work of ecological literature guiding people to value nature and try to get along with it without demanding immediate results. Happiness of man should not be determined by the extent to which he can consume nature but on the contrary by his selfless unification with its powers. *The Old Man and the Sea* is the story of an old fisherman, Santiago, who tries to catch fish for 84 consecutive days but meets a tragic fate in the materialistic sense of the term. However the story has a deep ecological meaning attached to it revealing the relationship between nature and mankind. It presents the belief that nature can neither be defeated nor predicted. It is in this divine concept that the beauty and dignity of nature lies and man must learn to accept and respect this. *The Old Man and the Sea* was written post world war second which was a period of economic crisis and people were eager to reinstate their status and lifestyle. In that era Hemingway presents the simple life and desires of the old fisherman who admires the different aspects of the sea with great love and adulation. Santiago is ready to accept a life of struggle and poverty but does not wish to part away from the love of his life that is the sea. Hemingway through Santiago has personified the sea as a lovely and bounteous woman who is kind and full of zeal. Santiago is not frustrated by being defeated in his attempts by the Sea repeatedly but continues to respect the sea and has a deep willingness to be with the sea forever. The poet appreciates the way Santiago values the sea much above his own existence which he considers negligible as against nature. This thought has a great significance in today's self-centred world where others as well as nature are given no importance above man's own mean interests. The old fisherman in the poem does not have a smooth experience with the sea. He makes repeated attempts to catch fish in order to improve his life and prove his worth and ability to others. He decides to go to the deep sea when he fails to catch a full load of fish despite many trials. Presenting his struggle in simple words Hemingway symbolises the wish of human beings to subdue nature by the wish of Santiago to conquer a big marlin which he encounters while fishing in the deep sea. The old man believes it to be his triumph when he eventually succeeds in capturing the big fish. However the futility of the human

efforts to surpass the ecological law is presented by the defeat of the old man on his way back. He is defeated badly by the sharks who take away his much desired marlin cruelly. Hemingway, thus, invokes us to think and rethink, examine and re-examine our wish to conquer nature and realise that the powers of nature are endless and indefatigable. This is the law of nature. We need to reflect on our exploitative nature and actions and stop wrestling with the natural resources and the ecosystem.

Reflecting on the irony of human folly both Wordsworth and Hemingway condemn human actions and ignorance in failing to realise that true happiness and progress of human life as a whole lies not in contradiction but in integration with nature. A confrontation between the two would result in destruction of both. Both the poets present a certain feeling of guilt at the human-centric values. They place nature above all creatures and persuade us to abandon our unlimited material greed. Nature should be our pride and must be considered our basic support system and source of all pleasures. Instead of posing a threat to nature and trying to gain a victory over it, man must live in harmony with nature and give its due importance, keeping a wide ecological view. Only in this way a sustainable development of mankind is possible. This ecological perspective has a great significance in the modern society. If the exploitation of nature continues in this uncontrollable way it would lead to a series of unwanted consequences and would destroy the human civilisation. The sooner we realise this the better it is, not only for the environment but for the entire human race.

References

- Arun, N. and Rakesh Saraswat, editors. *Ecology and Literature: Global Perspective*. Creative Books, 2009.
- Bate Jonathan. *The Song of the Earth*. Harvard UP, 2000.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Great Derangement : Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Old Man and the Sea*. Arrow Books, 1993.

Reddy Kesava. *He Conquered the Jungle*. Macmillan India, 1998.

Wordsworth, William. The World is Too Much With Us in the *Anthology Poetry Down the*

Ages. Orient Longman Pvt. Ltd., 2004(ed.)