



Literature, Culture and Environment: A Reflection on Lost Nature in Selected Poems

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Abstract

Literature has always reflected the time in which it is written. The poems selected for this study show a deep connection between humans and nature during the Romantic and Victorian periods. This paper draws upon selected poems by William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Gerard Manley Hopkins to understand how poetry expresses environmental awareness through culture and art. While reading these poems today, it becomes clear that the kind of nature the poets described is slowly disappearing from our lives. This paper studies how poetry connects culture, art, and environment, while also reflecting on how modern society has lost touch with nature. The poems help us understand environmental values, the role of art as awareness, the importance of conservation, and traditional sustainable ways of living.

Keywords: Literature; Culture and Environment: A Reflection on Lost Nature in Selected Poems

Introduction

"The Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not everyone greed."

-Mahatma Gandhi

Nature plays an important role in literature, especially in poetry written during the Romantic and Victorian ages. Poets of that time lived closer to nature and observed it deeply. Their poems show rivers, forests, birds, and landscapes as living forces that shaped human emotions and values. While studying these poems today, researcher feels that much of the nature they described no longer exists in the same form. Due to industrial growth, urbanization, and modern lifestyle, our connection with nature has weakened.

Humans have lost their souls by chasing material life. Soul here refers to the nature the poets of Romantic Periods for whom nature, which was everything for them, their God, their teacher, their philosopher, their friend, and most importantly, their healer. Poets of that time went to nature for peace and spirituality. We have lost that connection with nature because of industrialization, modernization, materialism etc.

This research paper studies selected poems to understand how literature reflects environmental awareness. It also presents a personal viewpoint that the natural world celebrated by these poets is slowly being lost. The discussion is based on four themes: environmental themes in literature and arts, role of media in environmental awareness, eco-tourism and cultural heritage conservation, and traditional knowledge and sustainable practices.

Environmental Themes in Literature and Arts

'For this for everything, we are out of tune. It moves us not.' (The World is too much with us)

The sonnet written by William Wordsworth in 1807, 'The World is too much with us', talks about how due to materialism, we have disconnected from the nature. Who was considered as the divine for them. The lines mentioned above tell us that we are so out of tune and that we are no longer moved by it. If put in one line it talks about materialism destroying spirituality.

'Flower in the Crannied wall, I pluck you out of the crannies' (Flower in the Crannied wall)

Tennyson's 'Flower in the Crannied Wall', emphasizes the impatience of the smallest of small elements in nature. The poem suggests understanding nature can help lead us to a deeper understanding of life and the divine. This also reveals our responsibility towards every living being in nature.

Nature never did betray the heart that loved her. (Tintern abbey)

'Tintern Abbey', is the last poem written in lyrical ballads by William Wordsworth. This poem is addressed to his sister Dorothy Wordsworth. The poem talks about the transformative power of nature and the role of memory in shaping human experience. In this poem Wordsworth is truly admiring and enjoying himself in the presence of nature with all five senses and he is telling his sister to make as many memories as she can for her to comfort during her hard time.

'And for all this, nature is never spent; Their lives the dearest freshness deep down things' (God's Grandeur)

'God's Grandeur', written by Gerard Hopkins acknowledges the damage caused to nature or by industrialization on the other side. It also talks about the divine power of nature to renew itself which shows us hope that nature can be preserved and renewed as well.

'For the dear God who loveth us, he made and loveth all.' (Rime of the ancient mariner)

'Rime of the Ancient Mariner', is the first poem written in lyrical ballads by S.T. Coleridge. this poem talks about respect for all living beings small or huge. The poem presents a strong moral lesson on how humans treat nature. Every life in the water bodies and on land matter too.

Role of Media in Environmental Awareness

Literature works as a powerful medium to spread awareness about environmental issues. Unlike news or advertisements, poetry touches emotions and stays in the reader's mind for a long time. These poems make readers feel guilt, responsibility, and admiration for nature.

Even today, literature can play an important role in environmental awareness. Poems like these make us reflect on what we have lost and what still needs to be protected. Personally, these poems make us more aware of how different life was when nature was respected and valued as part of culture.

Eco-Tourism and Cultural Heritage Conservation

The natural landscapes described in these poems are not just places but part of cultural heritage. Rivers, hills, forests, and seas shaped people's lives and traditions. Today, many such places are either polluted or overused for tourism.

Eco-tourism focuses on protecting nature while allowing people to experience it responsibly. The poems indirectly support this idea by teaching respect and care for natural spaces. Preserving such landscapes is important not only for the environment but also for cultural identity.

Traditional Knowledge and Sustainable Practices

The poets reflect traditional ways of thinking where humans lived in harmony with nature. Nature was seen as a guide, teacher, and spiritual force. Such beliefs encouraged sustainable living and limited exploitation of resources. In contrast, modern society often ignores traditional knowledge and depends heavily on technology. This has led to environmental imbalance. These poems remind us that sustainable practices are not new ideas but part of old wisdom that we need to relearn.

Conclusion

The selected poems show how deeply nature was connected to human life in earlier times. Through simple images and strong emotions, the poets expressed respect, care, and responsibility towards the environment. From today's point of view, it feels that much of the nature they described has been lost or damaged. The nature mentioned in each of the selected poem above calls is together to guard out nature by valuing, being kind, responsible and mindfully about how our actions are affecting nature in negative way. Our world contains both city and nature but doesn't seem to have room for both. So, let's be more responsible with our actions and behaviour towards nature and guard what's given to us by the divine. This study shows that literature is not only art but also a record of environmental history. The poems help us understand what we have lost and encourage us to protect what remains. By learning from the past and respecting traditional values, we can move towards a more balanced and sustainable future.

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