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A Wordsworth's Romantic Paradigm of The Solitary Reaper in the Ecocritical Age

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نموذج وردزورث الرومانتيكي لقصيدة الحاصدة الوحيدة في العصر النقد البيئي

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Abstract

Romanticism and ecocriticism always seek to formulate the principles for the relationship between individuals and nature. They make use of literary works to express this interconnection in the midst of scientific progress. These works foreground the centrality of the environment and human subjectivity. In the heart of Romantic and Ecocritical works is William Wordsworth's literary texts, in which he navigates the spirit, emotion, and experiences of the interconnected themes between a man and the environment. This paper aims to explore Wordsworth's poem 'The Solitary Reaper', highlighting how Wordsworth's Romantic paradigm works in the ages of not only industrialization but also of digitization. Thus, the paper tries to place Wordsworth's ideas in the ecocritical contexts of the twenty-first century. To do so, Wordsworth's paradigm is utilized to analyze the poem 'The Solitary Reaper.' The analysis focuses on the feelings, recollection, and interaction of emotions, contemplation, and creativity. These mental processes of the paradigm participate in increasing the individual's consciousness and eco-consciousness about nature and the environment in the age of digital information. In this way, the paper shows the relation between Wordsworth and ecocritical elements. It also concentrates on the memory and consciousness through ecocritical and Romantic lens.

Keywords : William Wordsworth , Ecocritical , consciousness , memory , Romantic paradigm , recollection , interaction , contemplation , creativity

الخلاصة

تسعى الرومانتيكية والنقد البيئي لصياغة قواعد للعلاقة بين الأفراد والطبيعة. في وسط التقدم العلمي قامت هذه الحركات الفكرية بتوظيف الأعمال الأدبية من أجل التعبير عن هذا الترابط. أسست تلك الأعمال مفهوم مركزية البيئة والذاتية الإنسانية. في قلب الأعمال النقد البيئي والرومانتيكي تكون نصوص الأدبية للشاعر وليم وردزورث والتي فيها تصفح الروح، العاطفة والخبرة للأفكار الترابطية بين الإنسان والبيئة. تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية لدراسة قصيدة وردزورث الحاصدة الوحيدة، مسلطاً الضوء على كيفية عمل النموذج الرومانتيكي لوردزورث ليس فقط العصر الصناعي ولكن أيضاً في العصر الرقمي. وهكذا فالبحث يحاول أن يضع أفكار وردزورث في سياق النقد البيئي في القرن الواحد والعشرون. ولعمل ذلك استخدم نموذج وردزورث لتحليل قصيدة الحاصدة الوحيدة. التحليل يركز عن المشاعر، تذكر وتفاعل العواطف والتأمل والابداع. تساهم هذه العمليات الذهنية في استمرار زيادة الوعي الفردي والبيئي فيما يتعلق بالطبيعية والبيئة في العصر الرقمي. وبهذه الطريقة يبين البحث العلاقة بين وردزورث وعناصر النقد البيئي ويركز أيضاً على الذاكرة والوعي بعدسات رومانتيكية و نقد بئية. كلمات رئيسية وليم وردزورث، النقد البيئي، الوعي، الذاكرة، النموذج الرومانتيكي، تذكر، تفاعل، تأمل، الابداع

Introduction

1.1 Ecocritical Elements and Wordsworth

The intellectual history tends to ascertain the separation between humans and nature due to the development of scientific knowledge. Rationality, specifically in the ages of industrialization and enlightenment, constructs

a hierarchical structure where the integration of man and nature is marginalized by phrases like 'Man Apart'. One of the main goals of Ecocriticism literary theory is to examine the negative sides of these objective constructs and to uncover the human connection with their environment. Dipping into literary texts, ecocriticism tries to shed light upon the human's integrality with nature or the non-human world.

Childs and Fowler (2006) define it as: -

"The study of literary texts with reference to the interaction between human activity and the vast range of 'natural' or non-human phenomena which bear upon human experience – encompassing (amongst many things) issues concerning fauna, flora, landscape, environment and weather." (p.65)

Similarly, literary works shape individuals' perceptions and eco-consciousness about nature and the environment. In his ' *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996)', Glotfelty clarifies the connection between literary works and literature by defining: -

'Eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies.' (cited from Garrard, 2004, p.3)

The origins of ecocriticism come from American transcendentalism and English Romanticism. In this theory, the romantic literary works are studied in the light of scientific developments and their moral relation to nature.

In this ecocritical context, William Wordsworth, one of the most influential writers, blends the romantic sensibility with scientific reason. Thus, his works resonate with the crisis of the environment in the twenty-first century. His efforts show the centrality of nature in the people's experience and culture. For Wordsworth and ecocriticism, nature is also the key figure in the social and linguistic construction of individuals. (Noushad Pm, 2018, p.67)

Under an ecocritical lens, the evaluation of a literary text, according to Lawrence Buell's suggestion, consists of four components: the non-human dimension, which integrates with human existence. Secondly, Human superiority is not over everything in nature. Next, the literary texts present the action of damage in responsible ways. Lastly, the text is not fixed, but it is dynamic. These criteria help reveal the individual's environmental consciousness. (Ibid., p.68). Wordsworth's Romantic ideas and themes are one of the best paradigms that level up ecocritical consciousness in contemporary times because they cover these four elements.

1.2 Interconnectedness with Nature

Due to the climate crisis nowadays and its imminent destruction, ecocriticism outlines a vision where nature becomes a crucial part of human culture. A global perspective of this culture stresses the blue planet is treated carefully and that the centrality of Man leads to destructive results. From this ecocritical point of view, an Individual's interconnectedness and Eco consciousness are its major themes in eco-literature (Mishra, 2016, p.170). In the same token, Wordsworth's Romantic paradigm seeks to establish the relation between people and nature in the midst of the industrial revolution and social dramatic changes.

So, Wordsworth's romanticism and ecocriticism tend to revision and reform through their examination of literature and the Environment. By doing this, they provide the romantic and contemporary people with methods of reading and understanding the social issues that arise from the inverse relationship between scientific advancements and the disintegration of nature. They are indeed relatively renewable revisionist and reformist trends that have dominated literary debates all over the world. Their works highly delineate the nature-human alliance in constructive ways. (Abdalaziz ,et.al., 2023, p.84).

Through their constructive methods, Romantic and ecocritical authors give a true explanation and definition of nature, its beauty, its spirituality, and its harmonious connection to human beings. Utilizing their sincere love for nature, they try to motivate their readers to love it and work for the protection of nature. Their investigations of a literary text come across depictions of nature, metaphors, and their relation to nature, the interconnection between man and nature, and the negative effects of modern science on nature. (Ibid. pp 84-85)

1.3 The Problem Statement

The problem of this paper is to locate the Romantic themes in the literary theory of Ecocriticism. For many Eco critics, Wordsworth's literary theory only fascinated with the human centrality to nature. However, Wordsworth's literary and intellectual ideas are about the mutual relationships between man and nature.

Ultimately, these ideas have transformative power over the generations because they establish the balanced knowledge between science, nature, and man.

1.3 Methodology and Data Collection

This paper utilizes the qualitative analysis, in which the ecocritical and Romantic approaches are pertained to inspect the ecocritical and Romantic themes in the poem 'The Solitary Reaper'. The analysis explores the literary elements of the poem, such as imagery and the meaning of the poem. In this analytical mode of reading, the paper examines interaction and engagement between individuals and nature. It also sheds light on the role of the environment or nature on culture and identity. That's to say, the paper traces the effects of nature on individuals' memory and consciousness. Finally, the analysis investigates the process of creativity that results from the recollection, interaction, and contemplation of Wordsworth's Romantic paradigm. The data selection for the sake of analysis is William Wordsworth's The Solitary Reaper.

Chapter Two : Theoretical Background

2.1 Wordsworth's Romantic Paradigm

Wordsworth is a significant spokesperson who outlines the paradigmatic view of the radical changes between scientific knowledge of the world and individuals' perceptions of these changes. In his paradigm, intuition enables people to experience the world in a truthful way, where the world is a living part of human culture. This human intuition strongly rejects the vision of scientific reason, in which the world is merely a dead machine. (Bressler, Charles E.2012, p.34)

Wordsworth's ecocritical mode of Romantic pastoral is the imagination that results from the interaction of Romantic thought and the Industrial Revolution. His identification of creativity lies in an individual's mind and nature through which he gets the sublime. That is because, as Wordsworth suggests, 'Love of nature leads) to Love of Mankind). (op cit., cited from Garrard 39-42)

The setting of his paradigm is the countryside, where people's spirituality submerges with everything in nature, which is devalued by scientific rationality and empiricism. His subject matter and language are from ordinary people because the language and subject matter in the paradigm enable the poets to express their individualism freely without restricting their feelings and emotions in a scientific language, which tries to form a well-mannered civilization with a standard of social grace. (Ibid., pp.34-35)

As Wordsworth explained, the coherence and clarity of treating the subject stem from the complete explanation of the current state, which is determined by the interaction and reaction between the human mind and the language. Wordsworth proposes that the events of the common people become important and interesting if the investigation covers the ways in which human beings relate their ideas and nature in a state of excitement. In other words, Wordsworth's position of pure or elementary feelings is placed in the rustic places where individuals' maturity is attained. So, the contemplation and communication of these elementary feelings exist in the permanent forms of nature. In this way, He ensures that meditation shapes the feelings and excited descriptions of natural things (Wordsworth, 1800, cited from Manis, pp,7-8)

In his preface of Lyrical Ballads (1800) , Wordsworth explains that individuals' minds are responsible for modifying and guiding the influxes of feelings. During the process of their interaction and memorization of repetitive experiences with nature, individuals contemplate the connection of their feelings with the natural things to discover and understand themselves in enlightened and exalted ways. (Ibid., pp. 9-10).

For him, nature motivates and affects people's minds to contemplate their struggles, solitude, perplexity, obscurity, moral attachments to great objects of nature, and strong brotherhood. He also stresses that the beauty and dignity of nature give the basic capacity for excitement to the human mind. When the writer engages with grace, he increases the capacity of people's appreciation for nature. (Ibid.). Thus, he defines poetry as:

'Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility. The emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction, the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins,..'(Ibid.,p.,16)

In light of the above definition, Wordsworth's Romantic paradigm of The Solitary Reaper can broadly pass through four stages. In the first stage, individuals experience a powerful emotion in the world or nature. The next stage is recollection of feelings and emotions when the mind is in a calm state. The third one is the contemplation of the reaction and production of mental memories or species. The last stage is the creativity of the mental processes, or the beginning of creative composition.

This paradigm of the poem aligns with the objectives of ecocriticism in the digital age . As the latest version of literary studies, ecocriticism always encourages the interconnectedness between individuals and their environments, and for the continuous dialogue between science and the humanities. It also calls for the independence of the physical world from the social, linguistic, or cultural construction. These constructions are related to the physical world, which affects and is affected by them. (Bressler, 2011, pp 234-235)

2.2 Romantic and Ecocritical Consciousness and Memory

In all its images, characters, and settings, Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" shows how nature becomes an integral part of individuals' consciousness and personality. Likewise, Eco-consciousness is a Romantic memory that common people get from the external world and nature, as Rabani and Mishra (2023) clarify :

'Consciousness is a state of awareness of one's surroundings, thoughts, and emotions. In the context of 'ecological memory', consciousness is seen as the product of the interactions between the environment and the individual. The environment shapes the individual's experiences, which in turn shapes their consciousness and worldview.'(p 82)

In Romantic and ecocritical modes of thinking, Consciousness is an extremely unique entity in the universe. This entity is unprotected due to the tendencies of capitalist, materialist, technological, or digital minds. The interactive process between individuals and nature frees this consciousness from being a slave of mechanical and electronic profits and interests. Wordsworth's The Solitary Reaper is a suitable work to understand the proper ways of purifying the consciousness from the darkness of industrial and scientific progress, individually and collectively.

Nostalgia is an essential theme and concept in the Romantic and ecocritical thinking and consciousness. It means that people lose a sense of place and attachment to nature and environment because of urbanization, industrialization, and the degradation of nature. Through internalizing the nostalgia of nature, the individual rethinks and recollects the relationship between nature and the issues of scientific destructive powers for the environment and the people. .(p.,85)

The sense of connection to nature lies in individual and social memory in the past and present time. It is a Romantic and ecocritical memory to adapt the natural and environmental culture, which complies with scientific progress. Otherwise, the destructive powers of such progress traumatize human, who have painful and distressful feelings towards their nature and environment. By destroying and threatening the ecosystem, they create psychological states of despair and hopelessness and a feeling of disconnection. Geoffrey Hartman, in "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies," says that the role of trauma theory in literature is defined as a theory that "emerges focusing on the relationship of words and trauma and helping us to read the wound with the aid of literature (88)

So, individual and social memory is the basic feature of consciousness that works within the social framework, which organizes the ways of remembering actions, images, impressions, and sounds. In this way, the framework looks right at the individual and social memory in the heart of consciousness. (Hoskins, 2016,p 348)

The traumatic experience is transmissible in the memory, personally and culturally. Wordsworth's 'spots of time' evoke the trauma in his imagery and the flashbacks to fortify the memory of individual and social consciousness. His poetry turns nature into quasi-sacred sites to bridge his imagination and the earth. In doing so, he sheds light on the creative angle of trauma in the memory to foresee the futuristic strength of these experiences. Wordsworth's poetry emphasizes the courage and patience of memory during the industrial and urbanized societies at the beginning of the modern age. (H. Hartman,1995, pp. 552-553)

2.3 Experience and Recollection of Powerful Emotions

Between 1760 and 1840, dramatic changes in British society took place because of the Industrial Revolution. Although this revolution marked the innovative and technological developments in England, it carried negative changes on social and cultural levels. Firstly, the pollution and dirty workplaces made the industrial cities a dangerous place. Secondly, the capitalist minds and the rich exploited women and children. The social structure was based on the individual's money and possessions. (Cartwright,2024, ph. 1) The progress of the Industrial Revolution brought damage to the environment, health, families, and living conditions. (Patrick,2021, ph1)

Industrialization threatens the inspirational nature and causes heavy suffering for Wordsworth's people. Wordsworth does not leave the painful emotions, sad images, and pessimistic traces of the industrial revolution without standing against the destructive nature of mechanization. (Mishra,2016, p.,116).As a father of Romanticism, he peacefully recollects his people's despairing, gloomy, and distressing emotions and the destructive ideologies of industrial machines and the capitalist minds. He dramatically focuses on the transcendent power of nature and its ability.He wants to evoke pure emotions and to draw images and themes that create a standard balance of intellectual thoughts. In his poem ' The Solitary Reaper', Wordsworth explores these emotions and makes a deep sense of unity through which nature and human emotions interact with each other. (Das,n.d.,Section 1.8 , ph., 1o)

The focal point for Wordsworth's The Solitary Reaper and ecocriticism is to cast a true vision that resulted from the relationship between individuals and nature. For him, nature is a superior character in its unification with man. His attitudes towards nature, individualism, and man place him in the heart of ecocritical writing, as Ramazani & Beauregarde (2014) stress this by saying:

'Wordsworth was a major English Romantic poet who was considered as a forerunner of English Romanticism. His views towards Nature and man's treatment of Nature have supported his position as an important icon of ecocritical studies. His fame lies in the general belief that he has been viewed as a Nature poet who viewed Nature as superior to humans (p. 1)

For many critics like J. C. McKusick and J. Bate, Wordsworth is not only a romantic and ecocritical writer, for he calls for a holistic view of Nature and a friendly and harmonious connection between people and nature. (Ibid.p 2)

The modern era is a haunted place where man's vision is distorted by technology and a fragmented and elusive reality. This reality is examined through Wordsworth's proto-ecological lens in The Solitary Reaper to reach the level of interconnectedness in which the idea of ' biocentrism ' is highly supported and remembered in collective memories of a society. (Ibid., p 7)

Thus, Wordsworth recollects experiences of the harsh realities that are made because of the ugly edges of industrial culture. The landscape of The Solitary Reaper is a significant bridge that leads the way for the purity of emotion and individualism. All he needs to think about are these interpretive memories. The tranquility of nature provides the way for the spontaneous feeling to overflow the recollected emotions. Amid a natural setting in the highlands of Scotland, a young lady works and sings in the field. It is the best and healthiest environment to withdraw from the noisy cities and virtual realities. It is the utopian spot that reminds people about the power and the beauty of the fields of grain, the sweetness of the birds' voices, and the scenic green hills and lands.

Chapter Four: Wordsworth's Paradigm In The Solitary Reaper

In The Solitary Reaper, Wordsworth explores the relation between nature and individuals. In addition, he seeks to present the role of nature in constituting the Romantic and ecocritical consciousness for the society and people through his Romantic paradigm.Under this paradigm , Wordsworth's recollection , interaction , contemplation are shown as the eco-consciousness not merely for the people of his time but also for all next generations/

In The Solitary Reaper , Wordsworth's sensory and auditory experiences are recollected in the Scottish countryside. In the midst of breathtaking , scenes of nature , Wordsworth observes remarkable images of valley , fields and young lady , who works in the field.These nature is filled of lady's beautiful song.Wordworth begins :

'Behold her, single in the field,

Yon solitary Highland Lass!

Reaping and singing by herself;

Stop here, or gently pass!

Alone, she cuts and binds the grain,

And sings a melancholy strain;

O listen! for the Vale profound

Is overflowing with the sound.'

(Academy of American Poets).

In these poetic lines, Wordsworth describes his experiences with nature, which is the best place to overflow individuals' feelings in isolation from the traumatic images of industrial cities. He internalizes the impression of nature in the reader's memory and consciousness.

Then the interaction in the poem is shaped when Wordsworth compares the lady's song with the beautiful voices of birds, the nightingale and the cuckoo bird. Her song is incredibly thrilling that breaking the silence of the sea. Here, he invites the reader or the people who submerge in the dark of the industrial sea to look at the wonderful place. He asks the tired traveller or worker to interact with this pure voice in nature because this interaction saves them from despair and depression and brightens their minds and hearts.

'No Nightingale did ever chaunt

More welcome notes to weary bands

Of travellers in some shady haunt,

Among Arabian sands:

A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard

In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,

Breaking the silence of the seas

Among the farthest Hebrides.'(Ibid).

Then the poet contemplates the lady's songs, which express the unmixed feelings .He does not understand the song and wonders about its. literal meanings.Inspite of unknown meanings of the song, Wordsworth feels a sort of interconnection that could not be attained in the industrial places where the sounds of machines are the only destructive songs there.The poet predicts the sound of nature continues in the present and will go on in the future .As he tells :-

'Will no one tell me what she sings?—

Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow

For old, unhappy, far-off things,

And battles long ago:

Or is it some more humble lay,

Familiar matter of to-day?

Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,

That has been, and may be again?'(Ibid.)

In the last lines , Wordsworth stops listening with a very high concentration to absorb his memory and consciousness with the song, which fills his heart with the power of wisdom and creativity.This power enables him to climb the hill , where he could find his individuality to face the challenges of industrialization people and society.

'Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang

As if her song could have no ending;

I saw her singing at her work,

And o'er the sickle bending;—

I listened, motionless and still;

And, as I mounted up the hill,

The music in my heart I bore,

Long after it was heard no more.' (Ibid.)

Thus, The Solitary Reaper is a means for guiding the people and the read to understand the ways of treating the environment and nature. This poem creates the eco-consciousness that depends on the memory of experience in nature.

In this way, the poem is an ethical message for the Romantic as well as contemporary reader to realize the importance of interconnectedness and the ways of purification of consciousness to get to the level of creativity. This is so because nature is a sage that shows the proper matters for the proper recollection, interaction, contemplation, and creativity.

Conclusion

Wordsworth's Romantic paradigm of The Solitary Reaper is very significant for the ecocritical mode of reading or thoughts. This paradigm provides a sample of proper ways to deal the nature and the environment. The mental processes are a pillar of the paradigm in the interconnection between the individual and nature. At the beginning of the poem, Wordsworth recollects the experience in a very unique place in nature. His recollection starts with the loneliness of the young reaper's song and is beautiful.

The recollection of his memory makes him interact with the lady's song. The interactive feelings of the poet are set to protect the individual from the traumatic memory, which results in the negative effects of capitalist

and industrial minds. These minds aim only at the exploitation of nature and people without thinking about the harsh and horrible consequences of their materialistic ambitions. The poem stresses that the visual images and sounds in nature help the individual to recover, for they shape the memory, which is an essential part of their consciousness.

The Solitary Reaper conforms with the main goals of ecocriticism. It considers nature or the environment as the only teacher, which gives the ways of learning ethical lessons. It erects the ways for subjectivity, objectivity, and nature. Wordsworth explores the ways of reconnecting with nature in The Solitary Reaper. He begins with subjective recollecting and interaction. Then he moves to the contemplation of the relation between his subjectivity the nature.

His contemplation is a major element of an individual's creativity and hi imagination. It is extremely powerful to purify human memory and consciousness and to balance an individual's identity with scientific knowledge and developments. Without such contemplation, individuals live in the darkness of the capitalist minds forever. Thus, the solitary Reaper is Romantic and ecocritical calling for the cultures in which man, nature, and machine live together peacefully and safely. Wordsworth's Romantic paradigm proves to be highly practical in the age of ecocriticism.

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