

The Philosophy of Nature in the Poetry of Ghulam Sarwar Yousuf and William Wordsworth: A Comparative Ecocritical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a comparative ecocritical investigation considering the relationship between man and nature in cross-cultural contexts as reflected in the poetry of two great admirers of nature in England and Malaysia: William Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar Yousuf. Both poets have composed poetry that strengthens man's bonds with nature and inspires environmental consciousness. Their nature poetry has been previously studied from different individual perspectives, but none has approached it comparatively from an ecocritical stylistic viewpoint. This study aims at analyzing selected nature poetry to identify the unique philosophy of nature both poets adopted, highlighting the artistic and aesthetic values their poetry are teeming with. The study demonstrates the cognitive development of the poets' environmental consciousness through three phases of attitudes towards nature; the physical, the intellectual and the mystical. Using major ecocritical concepts like ecocentrism, symbiotic interrelationship and ecological consciousness, the study adopts a comparative stylistic approach to scrutinize linguistic and literary representation of nature in the selected poems. It identifies the similarities and differences between both poets concluding that despite differences in their times, places, cultures, language and style, there is an affinity between both poets in their treatment towards nature. The present study responds to the enormous need for literary-linguistic investigation of leitmotifs of nature across geographical, cultural, and linguistic contexts as a means of facilitating environmental sensitivity and sensibility.

Keywords: Ecocriticism; Ecocentrism; Interrelationship; Ecological awareness; William Wordsworth; Ghulam Sarwar

INTRODUCTION

From the smallest grain on earth till the largest star in the sky, nature has always been present in works of art and literature. In her article entitled "*Introducing Criticism at the 21st Century*" (2002), Kate Rigby asserted the significance of nature in literature through different usages of nature as commodification, symbolism, setting and realist description. Almost all the world's literatures from the very early Greek and Latin theatre to the modern worldwide literary

productions contain works dealing with the theme of nature from one perspective or another. However, the treatment of nature varies according to the outer and inner worlds of the writers.

In poetry, nature has always been a source of inspiration for poets around the world. Poets have been employing various inspiring, curative and comforting dimensions of nature to echo their insights about the worlds inside and outside themselves (Shende, 2012). In English poetry, nature has been seen in pastoral worlds of the medieval poetry of Spenser and Chaucer. It existed in the Elizabethan and the Metaphysical poetry. It reached its peak popularity in the 18th century Romanticism with its preference for nature rather than machines, primitivism instead of civilizations and intuition rather than rationality. Nature dominated everywhere in religion, culture, politics and philosophy. The romantic poets like Byron, Shelly, Coleridge, Keats and Wordsworth celebrated nature in their work.

Nature has also been a favorite topic for many Malaysian poets. In a country like Malaysia, rich with greenery and mesmerizing natural scenes, poets have found a soothing avenue in nature to relax, ponder and reflect upon. Many poets like Ee Tiang Hong, Muhammad Haji Salleh and Ghulam Sarwar Yousuf composed melodious verses for nature in their poems. Muhammad Haji Salleh's "Rain", "The Forest's Last Day", "Seeds", "Leaf Fall" and "Night's Rain" and E.T Hong's "Look", "Fajar", "To a shrub", "After the Storm" and "Reflections" are best examples of nature poems that have been widely read and discussed for its poignant depiction of the natural environment.

Nature has been the core concern of Ecocriticism, an approach in literary studies that aims at investigating the connection between human beings and nature as portrayed in literature. Johnson (2009) states that it is a literary tendency that emerged over the last three decades that studies how humans relate to nature or non-human environment in literature. The term Ecocriticism was first introduced to literary studies in 1974 by Josef W. Meeker in his essay entitled "The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology". William Rueckert (1996) used Ecocriticism as a term in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". The trend faced passiveness in the successive years until Cheryll Glotfelty and Glen Love emphasized the term Ecocriticism in a meeting at the Western Literature Association (WLA) meeting in Loeur d' Alene in 1989. They advocated the term and encouraged environmentally-oriented criticism and since that meeting in 1989, the term Ecocriticism has bloomed (Shikha, 2011). It evolved in America in the 1980s then flourished in England by the 1990s. Ecocriticism concentrates on the practice of ecological ideologies in analyzing the meaning of literature.

Ecocriticism went through two waves as stated by Buell (1995) and Glotfelty (1996). The first phase took place in the 18th and 19th century with its focus on nature writing. In this phase, Ecocriticism got its standing as an "avowedly political mode of analysis" (Gerrard, 2004). At this point, Ecocriticism endorsed the value of nature maintaining a cultural distance between human and nature. The succeeding wave tended to be predominantly modern as it broke down many of the established discrepancies between the human and the non-human (Gerrard, 2004). It questioned the boundaries between the human and the non-human, nature and non-nature, redefining and expanding many concepts of "environment" and "nature" (Buell, 1995). Both waves were not precisely different and clearly show that Ecocriticism evolved undergoing numerous shifts in attitude and direction since its commencement. Ecocriticism has diverse approaches. The first one is the pastoral approach which emphasizes on the contradiction between urban and rural life idealizing nature and the rural and demonizing the urban. Another approach in Ecocriticism gives attention to wilderness, investigating how it is built, appreciated, and involved. Ecofeminism is another branch of Ecocriticism that analyzed the interconnection

of the oppression of women and nature. (Bressler, 1999). It examines the hierarchical gendered relationships sketching a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women.

This study attempts to extend the existing body of research in the field of Ecocriticism and compares the philosophy of nature in the poetry of the British Romantic poet of the 19th century William Wordsworth with that of the works of a contemporary Malaysian poet Ghulam Sarwar. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) stands out prominently as he is considered as the real disciple of nature who has given nature a special standing in his poetry. Although Wordsworth was not a typical romantic, he shaped the emergence of a new literary epoch as an opportunity to unshackle the dull poetic diction of his day and created a language of men speaking to men. On the other hand, Ghulam Sarwar Yousuf is an eminent Malaysian poet who has published works of poetry, drama, short stories and translation. Although Ghulam Sarwar's main contribution is in theater, his poetry holds a great importance and literary recognition due to its versatility of themes, profundity of meaning and exquisiteness of style. His poetry has been described by Edwin Thumboo, a Singaporean poet, as "a distinctive contribution to Malaysian poetry in English" (Sarwar, 2015, p. 2-12). Combining descriptive and personal poems, Ghulam's poetry reflects his search for the finest words to embody his state and frame of mind. Ghulam's poetry derives its backdrop from the cosmic nature revolving around themes of life and death, love and separation, existence and isolation. His style is packed with lyricism and imagery and is "self-contained, a poetry that is its own best commentary" (Sarwar, 2015, pp. 2-12). Ghulam's connection with nature is everlasting. All his four poetry volumes "*Perfumed Memories*", "*Songs to Shooting Stars*", "*Sacred Rains*", and "*Transient Moments*" are abundant in themes related to nature. His nature poetry, according to him, is a reflection of his self and selfhood. His language and style are creative, sensuous and effulgent. Ghulam's nature poems are not merely an external description of the nature; rather they reflect deep meaningful philosophies about self, life and the outer world.

Since the emergence of ecocritical theory, many researches targeted various works of English poetry to investigate themes related to nature and environmental awareness. As for William Wordsworth, many studies dealt with the ecocritical perspective of his poetry on an individual basis. Among these studies, a paper by Miah (2012) discussed the deep moral and ecocritical insights and the infusion of ecological themes in selected poetry by Wordsworth. Zahang (2017) analyzed the relationship between man and nature the esthetic value of nature and even the significance of his ideas represented in Wordsworth's poetry from ecological angles. Abbasi and Zarringooee (2015) investigated ecocritical ideas in selected poetry by Wordsworth emphasizing on his critique of the contamination of nature by modern civilization and how Wordsworth preaches human to find a remedy for their wounds by resorting to nature and reconciling with it. Wordsworth's famous "*Tintern Abbey*" was the focal point of investigation in a study by Britto (2012) where he presented an outline of ecocriticism, followed by the sources of ecological crisis, and solutions offered by Wordsworth in "*Tintern Abbey*" to protect Nature. Another study by Sultana and Saleem (2016) investigated the contribution of William Wordsworth's "*The Prelude*" in increasing the ecological consciousness of man towards nature.

From a comparative point of view, there are a couple of researches that analyzed Wordsworth's ecological concerns in comparison to literary works from around the world. For instance, Moellering (2010) conducted a comparative ecocritical study of the poetry of Wordsworth and the American poet Henry David Thoreau where he discussed how both writers present nature as the place where they develop and critique ideas about national and local

political economy. Despite coming from different social contexts, both writers demonstrate virtually identical constructions of the natural world, engaging popular rhetorical practices to create a value-laden, yet precisely figured, natural world in ways that remain recognizable. Another study by Guo (2010) investigated the correlation of the nature poetry of Wordsworth and the Chinese poet Wang Wei as the spirit of ecological holism and studied the similarities and differences of both poets in themes and style. Quite closely, the Chinese researcher Li (2015) presented a comparison between Wordsworth, the representative of British romanticism and Tao Yuanming, the representative of the highest accomplishment of Chinese ancient pastoral poetry. The study finds that both poets simultaneously eulogize nature passionately and achieve inspiration and truth from nature yet their style presents many differences.

A similar comparative study of Wordsworth with the Indian poet Vir Singh was conducted by Sing and Kaur (2017). In this study, an ecocritical approach has been adopted to analyze the similarities and differences of both poets' visions and techniques that fortify the environmental consciousness through their poetry. Mohammed (2017) also compared the poetry of William Wordsworth with his British Romanticism fellow poet John Keats shedding light on the ecocritical characteristics of their approach to the relationship between human being and his natural surroundings, portraying their understanding of the existence of the natural elements and their evaluation of human existence, culture, and the lives of individuals which are crucial aspects of their artistic legacy. Shamsi and Lashkaryan (2014) investigated different approaches towards nature employed by the two poets from an ecological aspect to encourage the modern man to look at nature as an equal to himself, so as to be able to respect and protect nature. Likewise, another comparative ecocritical investigation of the poetry of William Wordsworth in comparison to the Iranian poet Sohrab Sepehri was conducted by Bahador and Faghfori (2014). Using deep ecology as an analytical lens, the study proved the great Ecocritical contribution of the two Romantic poets who depict the beauty of nature in their poems to remind man of what he has lost in the modern age. The study concludes that the identification with nature in Wordsworth and Sepehri results from self-awareness and leads to the rediscovery of the interconnectedness of man and nature.

This study therefore, attempts to extend the existing body of research in the field of comparative ecocriticism by comparing the philosophy of nature in the poetry of William Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar Yousuf from a stylistic perspective to highlight the vital role of poetry in reconnecting man with nature. Although Ghulam Sarwar's poetry is rich with themes of nature, an ecocritical reading of his poetry has yet to be carried out. This paper argues that Ghulam Sarwar's modern literary works, especially poetry, are very much influenced by Wordsworth's 19th century poems, and this can be seen not only thematically, but also in their stylistic similarities. This is done by analyzing Wordsworth's famous nature poems '*Tintern Abbey*', '*The Prelude*', '*The Solitary Reaper*' and '*I wandered Lonely as Cloud*', and comparing them to the Ghazals and Haikus from Sarwar's "*Encounter with realities*" and "*Sacred Rains*". By reading them using the concepts of ecocriticism and comparative stylistic approach, the current study illustrates that nature not only serves as a source of physical beauty, but also as an element to reach a spiritual and mystical understanding of the self. The analysis is divided into three sections which correspond to the three levels of the poets' philosophy of nature. Their philosophy of nature begins at the physical level, develops into an intellectual level and ends at the mystical level.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ECOCRITICISM

The ecocritic Jonathan Bate (2000) says that poetic language is a specific type of expression for Romantic writers that has the ability to demonstrate an imaginative reunification of mind and nature. Using the term “ecopoetic”, Bate regards such poetical works as effectual structures for reutilizing the affluent feelings and thoughts of a community. In Ecocriticism, nature is not only the ordinary realm of which human is a tiny part, but also as a “singular, abstracted and personified religious being: the monotheistic God” (Williams, 1980, p. 69). Timothy Morton (2012), an ecologist, highlights that this current symmetry between human beings and nature is the major philosophical reason for humans’ destruction of the environment. He offers a theoretical model for bridging the discrepancy between subject and object, nature and humans/culture, by suggesting that if human practice the datum that we are rooted in the world, we would take more effort to preserve it. Thus, it is assured that all human and nonhuman lives are connected in a multipart network of symbiotic interrelationship (Morton, 2010). Literature may be regarded as an “aesthetically and culturally constructed part of the environment” (Khosravi, Vengadasamy and Raihanah, 2017, p. 58) as it is a direct discourse that questions human erections, such as meaning, value, language, and imagination, that might be connected to the ecological consciousness that is essential for humans to gain.

Henceforth, the theory of ecocriticism aids in figuring out the representation of the physical world in literary texts and attempts to account for human activities and behavior that participate in ecological problems with the aim to find alternative means to respect and save all non-human and ecological process (Hutchings, 2007). Utilizing this aspect of Ecocriticism, this paper discusses the portrayal of nature as an independent entity with spiritual powers as represented in the poetry of William Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar. It reveals the intellectual growth of the poets’ consciousness of their relationship with nature from the physical to the spiritual and reaching to the mystical bonds. The study applies three concepts of ecocriticism and environmental studies: ecocentrism, symbiotic interrelationship and ecological consciousness.

ECOCENTRISM

Ecocentrism is a nature-centered and anti-anthropocentric concept that focuses on the equal interests of all species and natural features of Earth's ecosystems, without preference for any aspect or species. It concentrates on interspecies relationships, natural processes, and the interrelationships between natural features and biological organisms. According to Stan Rowe, “compared to the undoubted importance of the human part, the whole ecosphere is even more significant and consequential: more inclusive, more complex, more integrated, more creative, more beautiful, more mysterious, and older than time” (Rowe, 1994, pp.106-107). Ecocentrists focus on the inherent worth of all entities while recognizing their contributory value to one another as part of the universe. This concept is applied in this study in analyzing the selected poetry that promotes the value and wellbeing of nature and accentuates the human responsibility to protect and respect nature.

SYMBIOTIC INTERRELATIONSHIP

Interrelationship is the connection between organisms in an ecosystem. All organisms in an ecosystem are associated with each other. Each element interacts with one another in a complex web of relations, known as ecological relationships. There are six ecological relationships in which two are oppositional and four are symbiotic. The oppositional relationships are predation and competition. The symbiotic relationships are mutualism, commensalism, amensalism, and parasitism. This study uses symbiotic interrelationship concepts to analyze man's intellectual and mystical bonds with nature as reflected in the poetry of William Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar.

ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Ecological consciousness is one of the basic environmental eco-philosophical ideas. Generally, ecological consciousness is the change in behavior, attitude or belief which must induce and designate substantial eco-philosophical reconsideration of the human connection to non-human world. Ecological conscience reassures our sense of obligation to protect our environment from gratuitous interruption and persuade our individual feelings of association in the natural communities (Branch, 1993).

In this study, the aforementioned ecological concepts are utilized to trace the cognitive development of this consciousness of relationship with nature from physical relation to intellectual relation and ultimately to mystical relation. There is a shift in viewing nature as a perpetual source of sensuous beauty to viewing it as a source for spiritual enlightenment, and ends with a perspective of nature as an agent for unity with the Almighty. By doing so, it is verified that the nature poetry of Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar confirms the existence of an interrelationship between spiritual worldviews and the survival of nature aiming to evoke man's harmony with other humans and nature. It reveals how nature poetry reflects the worlds around and helps expand our understanding of the self-propagating ecological philosophy as a vital characteristic of their poetry. This holds significance especially in today's world which is surrounded by environmental issues as the poetry helps replenish the selves and restore modern man to nature by bringing human back as a part of nature and its Sovereign. From two poets who are different in their nationality, age and religion, the study draws on how they are nevertheless meticulously correlated in explaining the conjunction of the ecological and spiritual worlds.

METHODOLOGY

COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO ECOCRITICISM

Comparative ecocriticism aims at studying the two discourses that are homologous in their ecological concerns (Heise, 2017). It is considered as a part of this larger venture of comparative literary studies that aim to cultivate reading across linguistic, geographical, national and cultural boundaries with the emphasis on relations between literatures and cultures, both thematically and stylistically. The central contribution of comparative ecocriticism is the analysis of how humans' ecological impact has sedimented in language and literature. The current study employs this approach in comparing a British Romantic poet with a Malaysian modern poet in their concerns about man's relation and reaction to nature with the ultimate aim of strengthening man's ties with nature. To facilitate the comparison, the findings are grouped according to the three ways in

which it was deemed that the poets had approached nature in their poetry; the physical, the intellectual and the mystical.

The physical approach corresponds to ecocentrism as its concerns are reflected through a descriptive illustration of nature landscapes as a vital source of beauty for the beholder. As detailed later in the findings part, the physical stage is the phase where descriptive language is being used to describe the effects of the ostensible beauty of nature on man's senses, man's actions in the realm of nature and his reactions towards it. On the other hand, the intellectual approach corresponds to the symbiotic ecological relationship where man relates to nature intellectually. In this phase, the poets' attitudes towards nature become philosophic. Man starts speculating upon a hidden meaning for the existence of nature in human life rather than being a mere source of physical beauty. In this stage, the spiritual influences of nature on man are identified through figurative language that personifies nature as a soothing agent for the human soul. The final approach is the mystical phase that corresponds to the interrelationship concept 'Mutualism' that relates to the process in which some species aid the life of another, with both forms benefiting. Here, nature serves man as an unifying agent with the Sovereign. Nature here provides a medium to access the imperceptible reality and its anxiety through contemplation that helps us to attain a realization of all existence, and eventually lead to a state of ecstatic bliss or tranquility. The language in this stage is elevated to the theological and ineffable mystic levels. Stylistics is used as the general tool to analyze these three approaches to find scientific linguistic representations of environmental themes that maintain an equilibrium between linguistic form and literary function.

FINDINGS

Ecocriticism tends to reveal the vivid role of nature as the catalyst for the initiation of a peaceful bond between human beings and nature enforcing humanity to contemplate upon the vitality of nature for human subsistence. It also deepens the belief that any act against nature parallels the devastation of the humanity on the whole. An ecocritical analysis of nature poetry highlights the chief role of a true poet of nature who not only enjoys nature as a source for the physical beauty, but also has faith in nature as a source of the elevation of mind and soul. Commenting on this unshakeable relation of nature with poets, Philip Sydney says:

"Nature for the poet is the idea, the form, potentiality, which in history, and in fact, strive to realize themselves in refractory matter. Art completes what Nature leaves imperfect; Nature offers a brazen world – the poet only delivers a golden" (Sydney, 1868, p. 11)

Based on Sidney's quote, we could say that both poets who are the focus of this study have taken nature as the axis around which their poetic philosophy rotates. Using nature as the overarching framework, we can then elucidate their poetic philosophy through three approaches: the physical approach, the intellectual approach and the mystical approach.

THE PHYSICAL APPROACH

In this physical approach, ecocentric concerns are reflected through descriptive picturization of nature landscapes as a vital source of beauty for the beholder. The poets seek pleasure in roaming in the vast realm of nature believing that the beauty of nature has a deep and everlasting soothing effect on the beholder, reflecting what Frank Lloyd Wright said in his famous quote

about the sensuous effects nature has on our senses: “*Study Nature, love Nature, stay close to Nature. It will never fail you*”. Hence, the persona wanders in different angles of nature admiring its beauty and expressing its magical effects on the visual, auditory and olfactory senses of the persona.

One example of the physical approach is depicted by Wordsworth in “*Tintern Abbey*” where he describes nature as an object of a “passion for the picturesque”. The shades and shapes of the clouds, mountains, woods, water and flowers were greatly appealing to the persona. Sometimes it happened that the voice (sound) of the waterfall haunted the persona in a passionate way. Therefore, it is evident that the persona loved nature with an unreflecting passion.

*I cannot paint What then I was.
The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms were then to me
An appetite.'*

(Tintern Abbey, 1954, pp. 75- 80)

In the above stanza, the persona’s reference to the physical features of nature and the beauty it imparts to its beholder is evident when he states that he was unable to ‘*paint What then I was*’. Language fails to phrase the beauty he encountered when viewing the mountain, rocks and woods which kept chasing him like a ‘passion’ and became like an ‘appetite’ to him. This denotes fondness, desire and a craving to have more of this pleasure. The lexical choice of words like ‘rock’, ‘mountain’ and ‘wood’ stresses the importance of geographical features of nature. Wordsworth metaphorical expressions for nature as a ‘passion’ and ‘appetite’ indicates how much the poet is in love with nature that he considers it essential for satisfying his needs. This absolute love of nature and excitement in its joyful lap is best stated by Ghulam Sarwar when he describes how his heart melted when he heard a voice of nightingale in a beautiful scented garden:

*As I walked in the garden
Perfumed with the scent
Of red rose
I heard the call
Of the nightingale
And my heart
It was burnt to ashes.*

(Exhilaration, 2013, p. 271)

Ghulam here also reflects the ecocentric notion by explaining the physical features of the garden and its impact on his senses. Words like ‘garden’, ‘roses’, ‘nightingale’ stresses the equal importance of natural entities to human beings. Ghulam’s choice of action words like ‘walked’ and ‘heard’ demonstrate physical activities that are parallel with the metaphor of the heart “burnt to ashes”. Consumed with passion and joy, the persona’s heart is described as being physically obliterated at the sound of the nightingale. The natural atmosphere in these lines encompasses all visual, auditory and olfactory senses which engulf the persona with a magical beauty that he surrenders to.

This physical aspect of man’s relationship with nature is also manifested in the poems that proclaim all human and non-human entities as equal parts of the ecosystem. In “*I Wandered*

Lonely as a Cloud”, the poet narrates his noticing a patch of daffodils moving in the light wind and its lasting effect on his quiet moments of reverie:

*“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;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze”*

(I wandered lonely as a cloud, 1815, p. 326)

Here, the cloud, vales, hills, daffodils and the poet himself form a holistic environmental unity. Wordsworth situates himself as part and parcel of nature. He was so much immersed in nature that he uses the simile ‘I wandered lonely as a cloud/ That floats on high o’er vales and hills’ as if he is a cloud suggesting an amalgamation with nature. He is giving the reader a message that he is with nature and the two can live harmoniously. Nature as represented by the daffodils, deliver physical beauty for him. These flowers dominates the ‘pensive’ moments of his life, forming a picture of unity between man and nature. This suggests the the overwhelming power of nature, where man becomes a part of nature. Ghulam Sarwar also illuminates this view in one of his poems “Message from a Leaf” when he saw a yellow tree leaf falling floating with water:

*“I have seen forever,
A leaf floats towards me.
I hear its barely
Perceptible words: brother
You and I are closer than you know
Or never will, I a yellowing leaf,
You lesser, no greater”*

(Message from a Leaf, 2015, p. 32)

The message that the leaf sent was that of the ecosystem concept; that every element of the world holds equal importance and needs to live harmoniously with each other. At the end of the poem, the poet holds the leaf close to his heart. All these symbolic images meaningfully reflect the ecological concern of the poet. Leaf here represents the ecosphere where the poet, leaves, tree, lake and all other elements are alike. The representation of nature with a piece of leaf has implicitly conveyed the importance of living unitedly with nature.

Wordsworth preaches the relationship between man and nature. If nature provides physical beauty, nature ought to be seen as sacred, and deserving respect and love without any disturbance or intervention to its melodies. This is reflected in Ghulam Sarwar’s poem when the persona cautions the listeners to observe extreme care of the flowers so as not to disturb them:

*Shh. Walk gently now
Lest your footsteps awaken
The sleeping flowers.*

(Haiku viii, 2013, p. 121)

The word ‘walk’ reflects a human activity that should be carried out ‘gently’ so as not to awaken the ‘sleeping flowers’. This profound imagery and symbolism aids in arousing the environmental awareness in the minds of the readers. This reminds us of Wordsworth’s ‘The Solitary Reaper’, who was singing in a tremendous cosmic natural background, causing the

persona to stand still because he did not want to disturb this natural fusion between nature and man:

*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.*

(The Solitary Reaper", 1902, p. 85)

The Highland Lass' action of cutting up crops for human consumption underpins her involvement with nature. This union enhances both the beauty of the valley and the sound of her voice, signaling an emotional reaction both nature and man has towards one another.

So far in this stage, we can see a physical relation between the poets and nature. Nature provides an optical feed for human beings by providing a source of sensuous bliss and concrete enjoyment. Unlike other romantic poets who faced different moods of nature, Wordsworth is seen always positive and harmonious with nature. Nature for him is a source of jubilation and delight. Likewise, Ghulam Sarwar too finds nature to be a perpetual source of pleasure and happiness. This creates a sense of underlying gratitude to nature and an invitation to protect it so that humans would continue to be showered by its endless blessings.

THE INTELLECTUAL APPROACH

The intellectual approach entails how a man relates to nature intellectually. In this phase, we find that the poets' attitudes towards nature become philosophic. A symbiotic ecological connection is realized by the persona between human beings and nature that he starts speculating upon a hidden meaning for the existence of nature in human life rather than being a mere source of physical beauty. In this stage, the influences of nature on man are identified. For Wordsworth, the bliss of nature moves further than an element that calms the mind and soul:

*"She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless--
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness."*

(The Table Turned, 1815, p. 105)

Wordsworth refers to nature with the pronoun 'she' and uses personification to impart human-like and feminine qualities of gentleness and comfort to nature. This characteristic of nature is also admired by the persona in Ghulam Sarwar's "Colors". Nature becomes a painter who fills an empty canvas with colours which enlighten and brighten the human mind and soul:

*"A stirring array of hues
Uncountable, mysterious
Paints the living canvas
Of earth and sky
Even the shades of inner
Universe, mirrors
Of heart and mind"*

(Colors, 2013, p. 319)

Both Ghulam Sarwar's and Wordsworth's poems share the image of nature as becoming a source of goodness. The symbolic representation of nature as a loving teacher and a crafted painting intensifies the 'Amensalism' aspect of interrelationship concept in ecology where some species can influence the lives of others without actively doing anything, usually just because they exist. Nature here provides intellectual and philosophical wisdom to man and an enlightening to his mind and soul.

In the following verse, Wordsworth presents Nature as a healer that balms the uneasy hearts and lightens the burden of the soul. It opens its arms and listens to the aching hearts and cures their pains. An appreciation of nature provides medicine for the human heart, mind and soul, just as nature offers assurance in its predictability that dawn comes after night and spring comes after winter (Carson 1962). This is reflected in Wordsworth's immortal lines:

*For these uneasy hearts of ours,
I find A never failing principle of joy
And purest passion.*

(The Prelude. 1805, p. 33)

A similar role of nature is also evident in Ghulam Sarwar's verse. The persona relates how each drop of rain plays its part in easing his or her burdens of life (heavy stain of being). Nature impacts our wellbeing and plays the role of a soothing agent that consoles the tired soul that has been afflicted with sorrows, griefs and troubles of life:

*Every drop
Of rain
Falling
From the sky
Cleanses
My heart
Of the heavy
stain
Of being*

(Poem, 2013, p. 336)

The syntactic and graphological structure of the extracts above were meant to achieve some literary effects corresponding to the theme. Ghulam's typographical representation of the verses in short forms consisting of no more than two words in a line, corresponds to the visual imagination of the precipitation of rain and the intellectual effect of its water in easing the mind and heart. On the other hand, Wordsworth's arrangement of the internal constitutes using adjective phrases with 'of' like 'uneasy hearts of ours' and 'never failing principle of joy' emphasizes the connotated message of the reciprocal interrelationship between man and nature,

In another example, Wordsworth's persona feels the joy of a peaceful spring morning that brings hope and happiness to the soul in '*It was an April Morning*' (1852):

*'The Spirit of enjoyment and desire
And hopes and wishes from all living things
Went circling like a multitude of sounds'*

(It was an April Morning, 1852, pp. 261-262)

The poem reflects how nature is inspiring and captivating despite the confusion of heart and the crowd of emotions in his heart as this poem was written in a time when he was in relationship troubles with his French beloved (Mingus, 2015). Although his heart was littered with fear, anxiety and despair, the natural world around him does not stop imparting senses of

awe, delight and hope. The syntactic arrangement of consecutive emotional vocabulary with repetitive use of conjunction ‘and’ in ‘*enjoyment and desire and hopes and wishes*’ instills the emotional impact of nature on human soul. The same element of joy is felt by Ghulam Sarwar’s persona in his verse about a rainy morning that promises a cleansing of the soul (*Of potential rain, The cleansing of the world...*). Though the morning begins with a thunderclap, the persona is confident that the rain will refresh and liberate his or her spirit (“*Thunder Clap*”):

*“The first thunderclap
Of the still-dark
Silently awakening
Dawn
Sings a song
Of potential rain
The cleansing
Of the world
A refreshing
Expansion of the spirit”*

(Thunderclap, 2013, p. 322)

The use of visual and auditory imagery of the start of rainfall in these lines along with personifications in ‘awakening’, ‘cleansing’ and ‘refreshing’ assists the thematic concern of the poem that nature has a salient role in the purgation of human soul.

The effects of nature are not temporary, felt only at the time the eye makes contact with the beauty of nature. Rather, they are permanent and they last in the memory of the persona to console him or her at a time of distress and solitude. This is mentioned in Wordsworth’s poem known as ‘*I wandered Lonely as a Cloud*’, as shown below, where the persona had once glimpsed a chain of beautiful Daffodils that mesmerized him with its beauty. The beauty of the vision was preserved in his memory long after the experience:

*For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

(I wandered Lonely as a Cloud, 1919, p. 530)

In these lines, the relationship of the personas with natural places, rivers, rocks and mountain provides an intellectual and emotional connection with the place for the persona. Such poetry is like that of the ecopoet, Neruda, who is also a “place” maker who relates his memory echoing the persistent element of intimacy with place that establishes intimacy to nature (Khosravi, Vengadasamy, and Raihanah, 2016). According to Bryson (2002), “the processes of going back and placemaking are intertwined; in order to recover the sense of place we must remember and return to what we have known in the past” (Bryson, 2002, p. 18). This spiritual and emotional connection with nature is a sequent to the first stage of the physical belonging and attempts to strengthen the man’s commitment and devotion to nature. The syntactic arrangement of sentences to suit the poetic rhythm and rhyme by proceeding the object before the subject in “*on my couch I lie*” and “*my heart with pleasure fills*” coordinate with the poet’s mood of joy and bliss bestowed by living in the memory of nature. Once again, a similar experience can be found in Ghulam Sarwar’s verse ‘*Beauty*’. The persona narrates a beautiful sight and the scent of a

pleasant perfume which fill his senses with pleasure and provide comfort to the soul (spirit) every time he recalls the moment:

*"I recall time and time again beauty
That once was there
And the light scent of smiling perfume
That regaling at once all senses, giving
Liberation to the inner spirit of being
And gladness"*

(Beauty 2, 2013, p. 323)

Unlike Wordsworth, Ghulam uses free verse that allows him to convey his message with free choice of vocabulary and syntactic patterns. Ghulam organized the free flow of his ideas that the lines appeal to the mind and hearts, supplying it with musicality and rhythm to maintain the theme of natural beauty and joy and the equilibrium between man and nature as vital components of the environment.

Thus, in the intellectual approach, the concept of symbiotic interrelationship between man and nature demonstrates that the poets' views of nature have developed from a mere physical perception to an intellectual and philosophical level where nature is not perceived in the physical sense as being silent or passive, but more as a dynamic and lively entity that reacts to man, communicates with him, and even reciprocates his actions towards it.

THE MYSTICAL APPROACH

This is the last mature and distinctive level of cognitive process where the soul is elevated to the stage of mysticism. Mysticism is an instantaneous direct and intuitive knowledge of God, attained through personal religious experience (Jones, 2016). According to Larson, "mystical experience is an intuitive understanding and realization of the meaning of existence" (Lidke, 2005, p. 144). Mysticism is the doctrine of distinct mental state that allows an understanding of ultimate truths (McClenon, 1994). Thus, it is a perceptive procedure besides a mode of feeling. This quest of the imperceptible reality and its anxiety through contemplation method to a realization of all existence eventually leads to a state of ecstatic bliss or tranquility. In this stage, the mystical dimension of man's relation with nature is analyzed using the symbiotic interrelationship concept 'Mutualism' that relates to the process in which some species aid the life of another, with both forms benefiting. Here, nature serves man as unifying agent with the Sovereign. Wordsworth expresses such a state in his poem "*The Prelude*" (1917) when he talks of being contented with bliss "ineffable" that filled him with calmness and serenity. Upon reaching this stage, the persona says:

*"Thus, while the days flew by, and years passed on,
From Nature and her overwhelming soul
I had received so much, that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented, when the bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;"*

(The Prelude, 1917, p. 431)

Wordsworth has been blessed with the endless bounties of nature that made him reach the sublime level of higher-order thinking that he imagines feeling the “bliss ineffable” of the presence of the holy spirit of Almighty in nature (*when the bliss ineffable, I felt the sentiment of Being spread*). This “sentiment” of oneness of all creatures with the Creature, according to Wordsworth, is beyond human understanding and knowledge but is felt deep in his heart and this is what can be referred to as the mystic insight. Treading a similar path, Ghulam Sarwar too detects a sign of divinity in the elements of nature. The persona in his poem “*Beauty*” states:

“.....beauty
That filled my every existence
To the brim, a sign of divinity
Everywhere to be seen yet elusive
In its many shy manifestations”

(Beauty, 2015, p. 56)

The language here is elevated to theology so it may comply with the mystical connotation by using symbolic images like ‘overwhelming soul’, bliss ineffable’ ‘invisible’, ‘divinity’ and ‘manifestations’. Nature here has become a demonstration of the divinity and a channel to attain unity with the Creator. Ghulam Sarwar further asserts that the whole cosmic world is a proof of the connection of all creatures with the creator, as evident in the following verse from “*Song*”:

“The song of the morning stars enters
Into every cell of my being
Its subtle center and beyond
Its vibrations reaffirming
Connection with all that sings”

(Song, 2015, p. 59)

This notion of universal affinity is inseparably associated with the formal mystic practice, chiefly descended from Plato’s philosophy of the phenomenal world as a shadow of the Absolute Reality, existing as an idea in the ineffable mind; believing in the doctrine of the union of all existence. The soul’s intense yearning for amalgamation in the infinite and its involvement in invisible non-physical unity with the Divine delivers it to the uppermost form of delight, which is known in different mystic paths as ‘Ecstasy’ (Underhill,2018). This is what is experienced by Wordsworth in flashes of profound acumen when he ardently chants of the spiritual affinity between man and nature:

“A sense sublime,
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.”

(Tintern Abbey, 1954, pp. 75-80)

Ghulam Sarwar too expresses a similar mystical experience of nature in his own verse. He realizes that there is a divine spirit in each creature that unites all creations. That is the spirit of Almighty. He says:

*Each leaf falling
In the mellowing silence
Of meditative evening
Is an enticement into realms
With which we*

*Have passed
A more than passing
Acquaintance*

(Connection, 2013, p. 324)

The “realms” that Sarwar refers to are what Wordsworth pointed out as “sublime”. They are the ecstatic reunion with the Almighty and the bliss of His companionship. To both poets, there is a keen relationship between man, nature and God. Nature is no longer a mere nourishment for the sight, it is a food for the soul, for the search of truth, for the yearning to be in union with the Almighty. Hence, as Ghulam Sarwar puts it, the whole universe sings in one voice which is eternal:

*“The waters of life singing
With us in one voice
With the creation”*

(Inseparable 2, 2013. p. 329)

All the above-mentioned extracts determine the interrelationship of nature and man that nature provides a medium through which the poets experience transcendence with God. Nature aids the Unitary Consciousness (Marvan & Polak, 2017) of the poets which are both nonspatial and non-temporal with a sense of objectivity and reality. Wordsworth & Sarwar are not mere poets but seers and mystics with astonishingly subtle minds, and the unusual capacity for feeling that enabled them to see life and passion in all objects around them. As spiritual disciples of Mother Nature, they believe that she can show us the secrets of Creation itself where the voice of Spirit is heard echoing through the natural world leading the heart to a place beyond the changing tides of the rational mind. This is a stage of complete transcendent union with the entire manifest world culminating into a particular practice of overwhelming totality that grants blessedness, joy, peace and happiness.

DISCUSSION

The aforementioned findings reveal the different levels of the relationship with nature that the poets had gone through before they reached the mature distinctive mystical perception of nature which indicates eternal kinship of human being with nature. The ecocritical reading of the selected works of both poets from comparative stylistic perspective illustrates a high level of maturity in thought, sublimity in the expression of ideas and perfection of style. The essence of Nature predominates the poetry of William Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar. The verses analyzed in this paper exemplify how both poets admire nature, reaffirm man’s strong bond with nature and value nature as a means of attaining unity with God. To achieve such an effect, the stylistic tools employed by the poets include the use of beautiful imagery, subtle figurative language, colorful paradoxes and a variety of meters and rhymes. Thematically, both poets advocate nature as vital source of beauty, intellect and unity with the creator, although Ghulam seems more philosophic and mystic in his tendencies towards nature than Wordsworth who gives physical dimensions of nature much stress and space in his poetry. Wordsworth bases his nature poetry in rural landscapes hence geographical descriptions prevail in his poetry, while Ghulam’s poetry stems from urban lands where meteorological images are recurrent especially rain and wind. Stylistically, both used distinguished stylistic structures to support their theme of tying man to nature and arousing ecological awareness. There are some stylistic differences as related to the poetic verse, rhyme and rhythm, symbolism and imagery, lexical and syntactic structures.

Wordsworth, influenced by Romanticism, tends to be more rhythmic because of the preservation of rhyme and meter. His use of imagery is more commanding while Ghulam's style is more ambiguous and deep due to the use of free verse and the manipulation of words to convey his dense feelings.

The ecocritical reading, however, also shows that there are some limitations to the philosophic expressions of nature in both the poets' works. There is a lack of humor and dramatic power in some of the verses that at times they appear too prosaic, and almost dull in their appeal. It appears that, unlike other nature poets, Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar did not use their poetry for the sake of morality or social reformation, rather they seemed to have written poetry for the sake of poetry. The depiction of nature in both the poets' poetry could even be perceived as one sided as both poets have presented the perfect side of nature and neglected the sufferings and terrible aspects of nature as reflected in some other pieces of work such as those by Robert Frost.

On the whole, Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar are priests of nature who portray nature in its most wonderful forms. Their ability to transform penetrating feelings about nature into verses is what makes their poetry sublime. Both poets look at the natural world with love and optimism. The whole inclination of their writings is towards the simplification of life and a universalized harmony with the divine spirit. To the poets, man is at his most happy and healthy state when he lives in the midst of Nature. Thus, the nature poetry of both poets plays a significant role in awakening human beings to the value of natural surroundings. The poets' vision in the poems is spiritual and natural which is like the developmental process of a single mental or spiritual experience from sensation to thought (Bradley, 1909).

The ecocritical reading of these nature poetries have a significant role in the field of Ecocriticism. By tying man to nature physically, ethically and spiritually, both Wordsworth and Sarwar endeavored to create an ecological awareness of nature to the people of their times and countries. Their nature poetry inspires ecological consciousness highlighting the perceptible and imperceptible relationship between human world and the natural environment. Both poets tried their best to relate their readers' minds to nature so that they love, value and promote nature. In Wordsworth's age, industrial revolutions were weakening man's ties with the pastoral life and natural environment. In Sarwar's modern age, advances in science and technology have made man a slave for the machines and the digital world. There has been a need to bring back people to mother nature, and nothing could be better than using poetry for this task. The three approaches discussed in the study have amply shown that "the poetry of earth is never dead" (Keats, 1817).

CONCLUSION

This paper presents a comparative ecocritical reading of a selection of nature poems by William Wordsworth and Ghulam Sarwar Yousuf to illustrate the intricate relationship between man and nature. Using the three concepts of ecocriticism; ecocentrism, symbiotic interrelationship and ecological consciousness, the study demonstrates the explicit affinity between man and nature, and similarities between the poets in their treatment of nature in poetry. This is seen through the use of environmental imagery, diction, tone and style that aids the motif of creating the sense of belonging and strengthening physical and spiritual importance of nature so humans would promote it as a source of physical, moral and spiritual beauty. The quintessence of their philosophy about nature suggests a well-developed cognitive process and perception of nature

that signifies a strong physical, spiritual and mystic bond between man and nature. This bond enables man to transcend every day dilemmas and to join a spiritual essence or the divinity that permits him to perceive life in new ways and to overcome the sorrows of life. Nature provides an ample treasure trove that permits man to quench his thirst for union with the divinity, which is the ultimate quest of mysticism. The analysis reveals that in spite of the huge boundaries of time and space, both Ghulam Sarwar's contemporary poetry and Wordsworth's poems from the Romantic era have a very similar and strong affinity with nature. This intercultural comparative investigation highlights how diverse cross-time and cross-place cultural experiences may play a vital part in creating an ethos of communal interests to encounter the needs of a situation. Comparative ecocriticism, as applied in the study, helps to bring poetry and ecological philosophy together as a dynamic ground for the conception of our interaction with nature. Further studies exploring poetic works of nature using the current approach could provide more environmental perspectives of the nature-man interrelationship which may then be tackled from different parts of the sphere.

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