

Tribhuvan University

Environmental Imaginings in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and P.B. Shelley's
Prometheus Unbound

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By

Ghan Shyam Panday

Roll. No. 04

Year of Admission: 2011/12

T.U. Registration: 6-1-999-711-2000

Central Department of English

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Abstract

The major thrust of this research is to trace the sense of unity between man and nature in most of romantic poems of Whitman and Shelley give rise to the anthropocentric viewpoint. The trend to mystify nature dismisses sometimes the crucial necessity to realize how she is reciprocally related to mankind. Any excessive romanticization of nature occasionally keeps at bay the vital importance of decoding symbiotic oneness between nature and mankind. In most of the poems of Whitman and Shelley including "Mont Blanc" and "Sensitive Planet", the idealization of nature minimizes the urgent need to redefine and recode the subtlety of man-nature relation. If environmental imaginings do not lead to the urgent process of redefining lopsided man-nature relation, it may not be effective in forestalling the looming threat of ecological apocalypse. There is no one answer to what the grass is. But Whitman indicates that it is possibly an emblem of the individual's mood or psychology. It is a symbol of the divine presence in everyday life. It is a figure of innocence and rebirth, reproduction and recreation, and above all the sign of a radical egalitarianism of humankind. The figure of the grass itself conveys how this vision of divine equality relates to Whitman's emphasis on the individual's relationship to a whole. Grass usually refers to a mass that is at once a distinct, undifferentiated whole. This whole stands for the holistic sense of whole that incorporates nature and man.

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