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Ecological Consciousness in Dylan Thomas' Poetry

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Abstract

Dylan Thomas' poetry reflects the world of nature as having an organic whole and interconnects the body nature with the body text. There is a kind of ethical and biocentric vision of nature connecting landmarks with textmarks, thereby making a kind of interplay between all the ingredients of nature so as to oppose utilitarian value of nature that has caused modern environmental degradation. The communion and interconnection between man and nature are enhanced by death as a medium to let human beings in the sanctified world of nature. His poems are eco-effects as they are composed by the inspiration of ecology with ecological consciousness.

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CHAPTER ONE

DYLAN THOMAS' POETRY: AN INTRODUCTION

Dylan Thomas' poetry mainly deals with the dominant issues of sound and meaning nexus, life and death, and most prominently the interconnectedness between the human and non-human elemental world of nature. The two entirely distinct ontological zones: human and non-human, are brought together and interassimilated in his poetry so as to reflect an organic vision of nature in a way Romantic poets in England did long time ago.

Ecological consciousness reflects how man is attached to the world of nature and how this ultimate place of dwelling appears in literature. Dylan Thomas tinges on the eco-friendly images in order to concentrate upon various aspects of human-nonhuman relationship. He strongly projects how human and non-human entities are related to each other. He does not simply regard nature as luring and enchanting force, rather treats nature as the transforming force. Nature is not only a benevolent force to humans but also a force that empowers human beings with creativity and knowledge. Human intimacy to nature turns them to be satisfied, prosperous and enlightened beings.

Nature is represented in assimilative way in an intricate web with man in the poetry of Dylan Thomas. He tries to find an organic whole in nature and locates humans as a part of it. For all his resistance to pantheism, Thomas was a scrupulous and deeply inquiring observer of the natural world of his own dwelling place, Swansea. The very subtlety of his own intelligence attuned him to the economy of nature. Thomas does not merely eulogize nature but rather assimilates it and represents the place where he was living. He wrote poems about animals, birds, flowers, and human beings to vitalize the

human spirit. He claims that there is 'one life' within us and abroad that the earth is a single vast ecosystem which we destabilize at our peril.

Though charged as controversial, confused and obscure poet of mid-20th century, Thomas got leading position in the poetry of 1940s along with his Neo-Romantic vein. He has been variously described as a surrealist, a primitive, a Welsh bard, a metaphysical poet, a Dadaist and the list is extensive. Perhaps the term most frequently attached to him is "twentieth century Romantic" (Tindall 13). Thomas is renowned for the unique brilliance of his verbal imagery and for his celebration of natural beauty. The charge of obscurity and complexity are thwarted by his eco-friendly ideas in his poems. He saw himself as an heir to the English Romantic tradition, a tradition that he evoked in his poetry as an "alternative to the classicism of Eliot and the political consciousness of Auden, the other major voice to appear in the 1930s"(Tindall 22). As a Romantic poet, Thomas finds holiness in nature and shows his deep respect for the organic world of nature, and treats poetry as dwelling on the earth.

Thomas' earlier and latter poems "recall Wordsworth in the representation of the nature and deep sense of unity of all life and nature" (Trivedi 576). His poems concern with bedrock facts of existence: birth, death and reproduction; rocks, wind and the sea; the thrusting tendril and the eating worm. His poems express, as John Wain points out, "joy and pleasure on the greenness of the earth" (32). So, seasonal change, reminiscence of the lost childhood, the Eden (paradise) and the glimmering afterimage of their lost intensities are recurring ideas in Dylan Thomas' earlier and latter poems.

Regarding the poetry of Dylan Thomas, David Daiches posits that there is always willingness to represent the world of nature and celebrate the very world as organic whole. He says:

His breathless and daring imagery with its skulls, maggots, hangmen, wombs, ghosts, and thighs, his mingling of biblical and Freudian imagery, of the elemental world of nature in the raw with the feverish internal world of human desires, human secrets, human longing and regrets [. . .]. He uses images for the service of a number of clearly conceived themes-the relation between man and his natural environment, the problem of identity in view of the perpetual changes wrought by time, the relation of the living to the dead and of both to seasonal change in nature. (1142)

For Daiches, Dylan Thomas' Poetry is the means to unite two distinct zones: human and non-human. In his poetry, the natural processes of linking man and nature comfort him.

There is unity of all life, and death is a part of a continuing process involved within nature. William York Tindall points out that "life and death are parts of a natural process that link man with what surrounds him inner with outer, above with below" (48). Further, he posits that "we come from nature and return to it for secular renewal with the bees and flowers [. . .] to establish the idea of nature and romantic holiness and to make mankind one with other living and dying creatures" (192). To him ecology remains at the heart of Dylan Thomas' poetry reinforcing ecological consciousness.

Similarly, Walford Davies focuses mainly on the vision of organic process of nature in Thomas' poetry. Davies explicates that "the un-stated claim of the earlier poetry seems on reflection to have been that there is around us this organic nature, and we share

in it directly through our bodies and there is nothing else" (80). Davies further asserts that "Thomas is evoking a close identity between the events of nature and event within the human body" (32). His physical organic life is given a kind of elemental grandeur. In depth, the rationalizing factor for unity, language is one.

M.H. Abrams in his editorial views Dylan Thomas' poetry as thematically bound to the unity of all life so as to enhance the organic vision of the nature. Expressing his views Abrams comments:

Dylan Thomas was a master craftsman and not the shouting rhapsodist that some had taken him to be. His images were not carefully ordered in a patterned sequence, and his major theme was the unity of all life, the continuing process of life and death and new life that linked the generations to each other. Thomas saw the working of biology as a magical transformation producing unity out of diversity, and again and again, in his poetry he sought a poetic ritual to celebrate this unity. He saw man and woman locked in a round of identities with the beginning of growth also the first movement towards death, the beginning of love leading to procreation, new growth, and so in turn to death again and to life again and because of this view he comforted himself with the unity of humankind and nature, of past and present, of life and death and so 'refused to mourn the death of a child'. (2510)

To Abrams, Thomas' poetry is the poetic ritual to celebrate the natural world. It is the poetry of place that dwells upon the earth. His poetry unconceals the essence of nature.

All sets of polar opposites are, for Thomas, at some level equally holy and necessary; holy is the "hawk", holy the "dove". So, there is no separation between human and non-human natural world. Rather there is interrelationship, interconnection and interassimilation among all the ingredients of the nature.

In many of the poems, Thomas' imagery creates a kind of parallelism between man and nature, man and animal, and nature and animal. Human activities are compared to natural activities, and natural activities are spoken in terms of human physiology. Similarly, human characters are qualified through animals.

Thomas' poetry regards nature as having intrinsic force that attracts everything towards its tent and regulates every aspects of natural world. Similarly, the same force controls growth, decay, beauty and terror of human life. No one can escape from it. So, human beings cannot be separated from this force that inevitably binds us with nature. On the otherhand, human attempts to be away from such force become vain project since it leads human beings towards the alienation from nature, so happens to modern man as Thomas claims. And, thus comes crisis in human-nature relationship. Regarding this, G.S. Fraser comments:

Thomas is massively identifying the body of man with the body of the world. The forces, he is saying, that control the growth and decay, the beauty and terror of human life are not merely similar to but are the very same forces as we see at work in outer nature. Man is part of nature; is that a new startling idea? (12)

The man nature equation here gains strength from inter-transference of qualities between or more strictly, of our emotional attitude towards man and nature.

Thomas' treatment of God is parallel to nature. God and Christ are always around in Thomas' poetry-not in their proper capacities, however, but as "metaphors for nature, poet and their creative powers" (Tindall 17). He does not believe in God, but God has made "this summer full of blue winds" (18).

Like any vegetable loving romantic, singing 'the green fuse', Thomas finds nature holy. The country, for him, is holy. His images acquired from the chapel and from Hopkins or Joyce are suitable for expressing natural holiness. He has nature in mind affected by it and affecting it. The holiness of Thomas is a romantic holiness, at once diffused and concentrated that finds its expression in the images and rituals of chapel and church.

Thomas is equally conscious of the ongoing environmental crisis due to the western anthropocentric vision in the Christian world. For this, he pinpoints the fault of irresponsible human activities. Human beings are distracted from nature and, thus breaking external and harmonious bond between human and non-human. Thomas, regarding himself as biocentric, rejects crime against nature committed by human anthropocentrism. He upholds the horizontal relationship between man and nature and discards vertical relation rooted in Christian world. Treating nature as organic whole in itself and man as a part of it, Thomas seeks to acknowledge the power of nature and human communion with the elemental world of nature. He reinforces to have ecological gratitude on the egalitarian earth.

All of the above points raise a number of questions: Is Thomas an ecologist? Is he really conscious of the modern environmental crisis and why? Is his poetry really the poetry of place? Why does he reject death as the end of life and like to create harmony

between human and non-human world of nature? Behind the assimilation and interconnection of human and non-human world of nature in Dylan Thomas' poetry, there are obviously several reasons. First Dylan Thomas is a 'Welsh bard'. So, he represents the natural life of Welsh, Welsh childhood and the Welshness along with the "bees, flowers, rock and the mountain". He regards himself as "a Welshman". The world he represents in his poems is mainly the Swansea or Laugharne where he lived. Swansea was on a steep suburban hill, opposite of which were a field, a school, and a park. So, his poetry is "more or less Welsh in character and feeling- almost as Welsh in respect of theme as the poetry of Hopkins" (Tindall 15). His attachment with his home in Swansea surrounded with little hills and green vegetation and intense desire to present the world of nature in his poems led him to write poetry of place.

Secondly, Thomas locates man and nature in a very intricate web to find out solace in the desolate world. Modern World is the world of 'frustration', 'depression' and 'sexual repression'. It is what Eliot calls 'the spiritual wasteland'. In such world, there is inevitable alienation of human being from the nature under ecological crisis. Behind this, technology has the greater role that encourages the pervasive war and destruction. In order to be away from 'derangement' and 'alienation', to find 'solace' out of the 'bitterness of external life', and to get pleasures of the internal imaginative life, Dylan Thomas turns to nature and regards human beings as a part of it. The desolation and alienation of modern man, as Thomas takes, are in partiality. But in totality man is bound to nature that is organic whole of every living and non-living entities. Man, if taken culturally religiously and ideologically, indulges in frustration, but within nature, there is always

blissful existence. Thus, Thomas wishes to entangle himself in the very stand in order to escape from the external realities.

Thirdly, apocalyptic war and the recurrent death of the Second World War, and his observation of it make Thomas to take death merely as a process of life. On the otherhand, the cultural death and degrading faith persist him to turn toward nature as ultimate resting place. Though he was entangled in tragic life and saw death of his relatives, he regards death as a knot to join human beings with other non-human entities. It is a step closer to nature. In his poem "And Death Shall Have No Dominion", expresses:

And death shall have no dominion.

Dead men naked they shall be one

With the man in the wind and the west moon

[. . .] Though they sink through sea they shall rise again. (56)

Thomas wishes to be one with the natural world so that he can be away from the trouble, burden and pain of material life. Thus, he celebrates the naturalness of death and enjoys being a part of organic nature in pastoral atmosphere.

Fourthly, Thomas was equally conscious of modern environmental crisis. Because of the emerging science and technology, the environmental degradation and pollution created serious problems to human beings. In order to cope the problem and have eco-friendly relation with nature, Thomas turns to the relationship between human and non-human entities as the subject matter of his poetry.

Finally, Thomas' personal life, his childhood experiences of regular visit of his aunt, Ann Jones' farm in 'Fern Hill' and his perception of it had deep impression within

him that created nostalgia to turn himself towards nature. So, he makes extensive use of images drawn from natural life, animal and vegetable. The farm landscape is seen as Eden in his poems. On the otherhand, his suffering, chronic disease and deterioration of personal health made himself disgusted with his own life of drunkenness and sexual repression. Poverty and hopelessness of Swansea young boys in adolescent frustration, and youths' repressed desires either of traumatic shock of awe or of horror and pain persisted him to turn towards the concern of death and unity of man with nature. Because of these reasons, Thomas' poetry unravels the world of nature with egalitarian gratitude and fosters ecological consciousness.

CHAPTER TWO

ECOCRITICISM AND ECOPOETICS

2.1 Ecocriticism: Origin and Definition

The study of literature in relation to physical environment and representation of the elemental world of nature in artistic work dates back to Greek time as 'Oedipus Rex' opens with a plague upon a land. Transcendentalism in American literature and Romanticism in English literature uphold similar ideas in reflecting organic vision of nature. But ecocriticism, as literary criticism, got rightful place only in the 1990s with its own professional organization- the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) established in 1992 at a special session of Western Literature Association (WLA) conference in Reno, Nevada. ASLE now has groups in Germany Japan, the United Kingdom and Korea whose purpose include sharing of facts, ideas and texts concerning the study of literature and the environment. In 1993, Patrick Murphy established a new journal, Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE), to provide a forum for critical studies of the literary and performing arts addressing environmental consideration. So, American ecocriticism was already a burgeoning academic movement by the early 1990s beginning to establish its professional infrastructure of designated journals and an official corporate body.

However, Cheryl Glotfelty traces the origin of ecocriticism back to 1970s. She says the term, ecocriticism was possibly coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay: 'Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism'. Rueckert defines ecocriticism as "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (qtd. in Glotfelty: xx).

Ecocriticism, as it now exists in the USA takes its literary bearings from three major 19th century American writers: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau whose works "celebrate nature, the life force and the wilderness as manifested in America" (Barry 249). By contrast, the UK version of ecocriticism, or green studies, takes its bearings from the British Romanticism of the 1790s rather than the American Transcendentalism of the 1840s. As Peter Barry says "the founding figure on the British side is the critic Jonathan Bates' (250). But the infrastructure of ecocriticism in the UK is less developed than in the USA.

Since 1990s, a series of major professional conferences and critical essays have been published in literature and environment. The logic of the organization and the journal is that human culture is connected with the physical world. Thus, literature also does not go beyond that. Now, eco-criticism has interdisciplinary nature. It invites all perspectives into its tent in order to understand the co-existence of living and non-living entities. It has been developed as highly interdisciplinary field with research, not only on written text but also on different varied fields as media, photography, films, painting and so on.

Ecocriticism, as a literary theory, is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment, acknowledging the connection of language, culture, knowledge and any other discipline with nature, the ultimate dwelling place. Ecocriticism makes it clear that eco-awareness provides knowledge of the world and that knowledge becomes the subject matter of ecocriticism. According to ecocriticism knowledge is the outcome of human psychology that has intrinsic relation with the physiology. This physiology is connected with nature as its domain. To know is to have

idea of the things. Even art, culture, language, and literature are the product of physical environment, having their root on the earth.

Ecocriticism studies relationships between things, in this case, between human culture and the physical world. Human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artefacts of language and literature.

Though every literary theory examines the relations between writers, texts and the world, synonymous with society—the social sphere, ecocriticism expands the notion of 'the world' to include entire eco-sphere. It gives the earthiness approach to the text. As an earth-centred approach, ecocriticism assumes that no thought, no philosophy, no theory or culture predates the earth. It embraces the notion that language, thought and knowledge begin and end with the earth. Man is of the earth and earthly: earth is a part of man itself. In the 1996 collection, *The Ecocriticism Reader*, Glotfelty and Harold Fromm posit:

Ecocriticism is the study of 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-centred approach to literary studies. (XVIII)

It is an ecological approach on the study of relationship between literature and environment. It studies the reciprocal relationship between human being and land. The

home ground of ecocriticism is the human's inseparable attachment with the soil in its existence. So, dwelling place becomes the centre of ecocriticism in its experimentation.

Ecocriticism's central thrust is that the presentation of human attachment with other non-human natural world. The communion between man and the physical eco-sphere helps in understanding the harmonious relationship and co-existence of human as well as non-human natural world if we agree with Barry Commoner's first law of ecology: "Everything is connected to everything else" (qtd: in Glotfelty: XIX). It shows the interconnection, interassimilation and interrelationship among all the ingredients of nature whether biotic or abiotic. We must conclude that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic ether, but rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system. Energy matter, and ideas interact.

Ecocriticism turns away from the 'social constructivism' and 'linguistic determinism' of dominant literary theories and instead emphasizes ecocentric values of meticulous observation, collective ethical responsibility and the claims of the world beyond us. Regarding this, Peter Barry in *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* posits:

Ecocriticism, then, repudiates the foundational belief in 'constructedness', which is such an important aspect of literary theory. [. . .] Everything is socially or linguistically constructed has not diminished its grip on day-to-day debate about literary theory. Nevertheless, the essence of the ecocriticism's intervention in theory has been to challenge it. (252)

So, ecocriticism challenges even the feminist, Marxist, linguistic, cultural theories in terms of their focus on constructedness. So, it is rather phenomenological and

experimental than political and ideological. As phenomenological and experimental theory, it focuses on the physical world and human consciousness in relation to the perceived things. The relating of consciousness with the environment, thus, becomes considerable in ecocriticism.

To negotiate between human and non-human world, ecocriticism "puts one foot on literature and the other on land" (Glotsfelty: XIX). On the Vedic attitude of relation between man and earth, Raimondo Punikarm writes:

In Vedic attitude towards the earth springs from mankind's primordial experience of being on the one hand a guest and the other an offspring of earth. The Earth is undoubtedly mother and close to man. But at the same time, she is alien, other and aloof. The earth is the foundation of, the basis out of which emerges all that exist on which everything rests. The earth is the basis of life. (120).

Therefore, earth is the source of everything. Even man as a part of it depends on the earth in every respect. Ecocriticism embraces the opinion that no branch of knowledge can ever be devoid of ecocentric implication. Every knowledge follows the earth; nothing can be understood in the absence of any spatial or temporal point of reference. Because of this reason ecocriticism establishes the earth as crucial for the understanding of ethics and religion, art and literature, philosophy and physics, culture and politics, and all other discipline.

Ecocriticism leads the reader towards knowing the earth. Similarly, it assumes that language evolves out of some evolutionary process of the earth. Language cannot be separated from eco-sphere. They are completely interconnected. Language is not the

representation of the world but it functions within our experience of the world. Language concerns with our observation of the world as it represents the things and objects we see in the world. We communicate with the worldly things in terms of language. The earth becomes visible in language on the one hand. On the other hand, language evolves on the earth as living beings. Therefore, ecocriticism believes that language is earth and the earth is language. So, it studies the interconnectedness between language and landscape, text and terrain, and words and words.

By and large, ecocriticism assumes nature, as organic whole having cosmic unity of her ingredients. It is sensitive to interdependencies. The lives on the earth are connected with each other and wholly dependent upon such basic natural elements for their survival: sunlight, water and air. It expands the concepts as "growth and energy, balance and imbalance, symbiosis and mutuality and sustainable or unsustainable uses of energy and resources" (Barry 264). At the sametime, it gives special canonical emphasis to writers who foreground nature as a major part of their subject matters as Transcendentalists, Romantics and some 20th century poets. Ecocriticism rereads literary works from an ecocentric perspective with particular attention to the representation of the natural world.

Ecocriticism is not just a means of analysing nature in literature. It implies a move towards a more biocentric worldview, an extension of ethics, a broadening of human's conceptions of global community to include non-human life form and the physical environment. Jonathan Levin in 'Forum on literature and environment' says:

Ecocriticism is marked by a tremendously ambitious intellectual, ethical political, and even (sometimes) spiritual agendas. Though there is already

great diversity of opinion in the field, ecocritical dialogue often aims at nothing less than the transformation of human environmental and ecological consciousness. [. . .] By and large, ecocritics tend to believe that a considered appreciation of these processes can help restore a harmonious balance between nature and human culture. (1098)

Ecological reading helps to establish a culture to respect the non-human world. If the interconnectedness between human and non-human members is understood, in many ways it can heal the environmental wound humans have inflicted upon it. Ecocriticism looks upon how literature clarifies human responsibility to respect non-human entities. So, it is worthy effort to direct our attention to matters about which the modern world must mediate on. The agendas posed by the ecocriticism have located ecocriticism beyond the traditional boundaries of literary studies making it assured that such study can help to result a harmonious balance between nature and human.

The home ground of literature is inexplicably the human world. Since everything is connected to everything else, there is organic bond between literature and landscape or environment. Concerning this, Meyer Abrams identifies the idea that "the site of literature is the human world and a work of literature is the product of a purposive human author addressing human recipients in an environing world" (qtd. in Carroll 147).

Ecocriticism puts forward its basic biological proposition that organisms are the result of an interaction between their innate characteristic and their environmental influences. Literature, as an act of communication between individual people in an environing world, needs philosophical justification provided by ecopoetics. So, the world of living things and their physical environment affect the way we know something. They

are the source of knowledge in human mind and thus form literary work. Literature, in this sense, is the product of the awareness of ecosphere and the relation of all living organisms in egalitarian world, and conditions our philosophical understanding of nature.

Summing up, ecocriticism tends to reread the texts with eco-friendly motive and ecological consciousness. It shows the integrate relationship between human and non-human having interconnection and interassimilation. And it invites all perspectives into its tent in order to understand the co-existence of living and non-living entities.

Ecocriticism does have a contribution to make a 'green politics', as 'Postcolonial' and 'Feminist' reading contribute to 'race' and 'gender politics', but its true importance may be more phenomenological than political. If that is the case 'ecopoetics' will be a more helpful denominator than ecocriticism. On the otherhand, the dominant aspect of ecocriticism, the study of the relationship between literature and landscape, appears in poetry. Ecopoetics, as related with ecocriticism, studies the relationship between poetry and dwelling (place); and they are interconnected. So, ecopoetics extends more ideas of ecocriticism in terms of poetry.

2.2 Ecopoetics: Poetry and Dwelling

In the word 'ecopoetics', 'eco' is derived from the Greek '*Oikos*', 'the home or place of dwelling' and 'poetics' is Greek '*Poiesis*', 'a making'. Thus, ecopoetics is related with the poetry of dwelling place. Regarding ecopoetics in its Greek base, Jonathan Bates in *The song of the Rolling Earth* writes:

Ecopoetics asks in what respects a poem may be a making (Greek *poiesis*) of the dwelling place-the prefix 'eco' is derived from Greek *oikos*, 'the home or place of dwelling'. According to this definition, poetry will not

necessarily be synonymous with verse: the opening of the dwelling is not inherently dependent on material form. However, the rhythmic, syntactic and linguistic intensifications that are characteristics of verse writing frequently give a peculiar force to the *poiesis*: it could be that *poiesis* in the sense of verse making is language's most direct path of return to the *oikos*, the place of dwelling because meter itself a quite but persistent music, a recurring cycle, a heartbeat, is an answering to nature's own rhythms, an echoing of the song of the earth itself. (75)

For Bates, ecopoetics is the way of looking at the relationship between poetry and ecology. Ecopoetics can be conceived as a response to the question: whether we can ever approach nature in a non-ideological way or are human endeavours to capture nature theoretically or poetically or narratively, nothing more than our own peculiar approach of it?

Ecopoetics tries to liberate modern man out of his alienation from nature. It tries to restore us to the earth which is our home. Restoring us to the earth is what good ecopoetry can do and ecopoetics is not just the pastoral theme which Bates asserts, may be "in fact, the only poetic theme", it is poetry itself. Ecopoetics is more phenomenological than political and while its force does not depend upon versification or metrical form, it constitutes the most direct return to the place of dwelling. It regards poems "imaginary parks in which we may breathe (e) an air that is not toxic and accommodate ourselves to a mode of dwelling that is not alienated" (96).

Ecopoetics knows that things have a life, but it also has to recognize that it can only communicate that thing in the form of propositions by using the divided Cartesian

language of subject and object to know our place and to celebrate the biota among which we have lived and grown is not necessarily to reject cultural difference. Rather it incorporates the cultural diversity within its tent. And it is ecopoetics that is supremely committed to localization of the spaces of human intimacy with the world.

Indeed, there is a peculiar set of relationships between place, poetry and bioregion. Clearly, the set of relationships between place, poetry and region generate a further set of questions about the construction of the canon and the curriculum, the role and representation of nature in the formation of national and cultural identities. Thus, Romanticism developed a series of associations: intuition over rationality, feeling over beliefs, with the sense of mysticism and oneness with nature. And William Wordsworth remains the founding father for thinking in relation to place. Before, Wordsworth, the poetry of place tended to be inspired by occasion or a historical event or association, whereas with him, the poetry of place began to be inspired by place itself. For him, argues Bates, "poetry is something that happens at a particular time and in a particular place. The poet is a green leaf playing in the gentle correspondent breeze which is at once the inner imagination and the external spirit of place" (209). Poems are the verbal equivalents of anything in nature. So, the interior order of human mind is inextricable from the environmental space which we inhabit.

A poem is not only a making of the self and a making of the world, but also a response to the world and a respecting of the earth. If mortals dwell in that they save the earth and if poetry is the place where we save the earth. Poetry is concentrated in the sensual, and by engaging the human senses it centres the poetic experience in the body, and thus blurs the internal and external realm, consciousness and nature. McClure argues

that" poetry is biological [. . .] an organism, complex act of a complex creature who is both matter and flesh in a universe that is matter and flesh, and nothing less" (138, 99). Poetry Brings the bioregion as its subject and revitalizes it. So, the outer workings of the natural world affect the inner workings of the body, a link is created between poetry and the state of the environment. In this sense, poetry has become perhaps the most direct means of addressing environment in crisis. In the world of poetry, we hear the tender voice of our lost mother nature. Poetry is the place of exile where we grieve for our lost home upon the earth.

Describing a poem as stored energy, William Rueckert explains that "reading is an energy transfer and that critics and teachers act as mediators between poetry and the biosphere, releasing the energy and information stored in poetry so that it may flow through the human community and be translated into social action" (iii). For Rueckert, ecopoetics looks at the relationship between poetry and the biosphere in terms of stoked energy and information.

Ecopoetics seeks not to 'enframe' literary texts but to mediate upon them, to thank them, to listen to them, albeit to ask questions of them. Ecopoetics renounces the mastery of 'enframing knowledge and listens instead to the voice of art'. An ecological or ecopoem must not only refer the reader to the natural world, it must do so in a way that is both aware of itself and of the role that human play in natural cycles. It is to create parallel between worlds and objects.

Common ecosystems may be thought of as united into bioregions, which are bounded by great rivers and mountain ranges. A bioregion is a place that has its own

distinctive natural economy. It has, in Heideggerean language, its *Dasein*. Heidegger claims:

There is a special kind of writing called poetry, which has the peculiar power to speak earth: poetry is the song of earth. Poets are often exceptionally lucid or provocative in their articulation of the relationship between internal and external worlds, between being and dwelling. (253)

Heidegger takes poetry as synonymous with 'bringing forth into presence'. Poetry is our way of stepping outside the frame of the technological, of reawakening the momentary wonder of unconcealment. Poetry, first of all, admits 'dwelling into its very nature, its presenting being'. Poetry is 'the original admission of dwelling' because it is a presenting, not a representation, a form of being, not of mapping. The essence of nature can be unconcealed in poetic writing because it has power to speak earth and save earth. Poets may save the earth. The task of the poets is to sing of things; by making being to speak and naming things. Regarding the actual position of being in the world over time and place, Heidegger posits:

Everything we talk about, mean, and are related to is in being in one way or another. What and how we ourselves are is also in beings. Being is found in thatness and whatness, reality, the objective presence of things, subsistence, validity, existence, [dasein] and in the 'there is' (es gibt). In which being is the meaning of being to be found. (5)

So, being takes objective presence in the world. Such a revelation of being appears in poetry. Poets can unconceal the being of things, can unravel the essential thinginess of

the thing. Language, in poetry, hides the being under poet's guardianship. The *Dasein* of the thing is unconcealed in the *Dasein* of the poem.

For Heidegger, language is the house of being; it is through language that unconcealment takes place for human beings. By disclosing the beings of entities in language, the Poet lets them be that is the special, the sacred role of the poet. Then our home, our world is not earth but language. *Dasein* is there in time and place; it is that we "dwell poetically". The language of poetry, Heidegger claims, unconceals the essence of nature. In terms of literature, the act of writing and dwelling, Heidegger states:

The act of writing takes the poet out of his self, out of his confinement, through windows which are like gates to beauty, out to a view of a church steeple and to the living world of birds and trees, things that are 'so simple' yet 'so very holy' that 'one fears to describe them'. Poetry is the medium through which poet explores both connection with and dislocation from the earth. (159)

Thus, Literature evolves out from the same landscape, being attached to the earth as a living organism; and so is language. So, ecocriticism believes that language is earth; and earth is language as language and landscape, text and terrain, and words and woods are interconnected. Language does not concern with any thing beyond nature, rather it revitalizes the landscape and evolves as the evolutionary process going on in the earth.

Poetry is the means by which humans can assert their connection with the natural world by both literal and literary means. Leonard Scigaj has argued that "ecopoetry's substitution of biocentrism for the anthropocentric view that have dominated our culture is one way of disrupting contemporary consumer practices" (72). The biological nature of

poetry makes not only a tool for changes, but also a mirror in which we can see reflected the ways we as human interact, perceive and respond to our environment. So, ecopoetry enables us to think, be and dwell since it exists at the expense of wood, for those of us who do not know wood. It makes us realize earth as a living organism as James Lovelock envisions in 'Gaia Hypothesis'. So, ecopoets are there to quicken our appreciation of what environment is and might be, and that acts of the imagination lift the veil of familiarity to reveal a 'planet of which we are a part' but which we do not possess. They make us aware to avoid our mastery and possession of nature; and lead us towards the elemental world of nature.

Therefore, ecopoetics proposes the importance of landmarks and reawakens the consciousness that without landmarks, there is no possibility of text marks. It surpasses the claim of postmodernity that regards all marks as textmarks. Any discipline, knowledge and superstructure are based on these landmarks. So, poetry itself floats on the surface of the earth and saves the earth in poetic place, and thus blurs the dichotomy between consciousness and environment, man and nature, and nature and culture.

2.3 Literature, Nature and Culture

Literature has always conditioned our philosophical understanding of nature, giving its prior focus on the physiology. Human physiology has connection with the existing nature where literary texts become the medium of exposing the interconnection and communion between human and non-human entities. The eco-elements in literary works can give birth to the sense of kindness and love to the objects other than human. The consciousness of ecosphere as the common denominator of human and non-human

entities, leads human beings to bind themselves with the organic nature, treating any cultural configuration and social stratification as the part of nature.

Nature, the realm of the sacred and the profane, the dwelling place of the existing entities in the world, covers the entire ecosphere whereby forms of life and human constructs as culture are treated as evanescent in a cosmic scheme. Human appropriation and domination over nature is not the way of liberation of human misery and pain, but rather a process of breaking the fundamental bond of human being from nature. So, human endeavours to separate out of nature creates subsequent problems.

In an early sense, culture was precisely the collective noun used to define that realm of human beings, which marked its ontology off from the sphere of the merely natural. So, we no longer confront the natural as if we were continuous with it, as it is supposed that animals do. We now meet with the natural through our vocabulary of symbol, which are primarily linguistic but increasingly elaborate, out into other forms like custom, convention, habit and even artefacts. Chris Jenks Claims that "the symbolic representations that constitute human knowing are, in their various groupings, classifications, the cultural" (9). The very idea of culture therefore generates a concept, which at one level provides a principle of unification for the peoples of the world, through time and across space. Thus, culture is the common domain of human beings.

Culture as a social category is "regarded as the whole way of life of people"(10). In sociological and anthropological sense, culture incorporates all the social constructs. The dominant European linguistic convention equates 'culture' largely with the idea of 'civilization', culture and civilization are regarded as synonymous. Culture, in this sense, recapitulates all human symbolic representation.

E. B. Tylor informs us that "culture or civilization, in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (58). It is the original definition of culture within anthropology that does not distinguish social organization and institutions from a general concept of culture.

Through symbols, culture covers both explicit and implicit patterns with the aggregate of social relations. Culture emphasizes the component, of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as material, which the people inherit, employ, transmute, add to and transmit. Regarding this Kroeber and Klukhohn posit:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior, acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture system may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (192)

Thus, culture includes all social constructs on its ontological basis analysing the whole tradition of analysis.

The process of socialization tries to separate nature from culture but the theory of evolution, as Charles Darwin posits, treats nature and culture having similarities and sharing their fundamental aspects. The original freedom of man in nature along with the bond to other living and dying creatures cannot be away from culture that evolves as the biological beings of the earth. Culture evolves in its various forms in different time

periods as the evolution of different beings. Nature, as ecocriticism claims, is the immediate cause of the entire material world, of all phenomena including humankind. The rationality of regarding nature as the original other in the entire western Christian world of anthropocentrism is recovered as the focus turned to ecocriticism. It locates the key problem of human-nature dichotomy and provides a solution for this in terms of interconnectedness of human and non-human natural world.

The link between evolutionary theory and anthropology is very important to our contemporary thinking about culture. Human civilization is evolutionary. So is culture. Regarding this, Chris Jenks states:

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution focuses on the adaptation of animals that comes into collision with Christian theology, over the exploration of human origins. What Darwin provided based on explosion of both the inner and outer horizon of human potential that was much more in line with the desires and achievements of modernity's project. [. . .] the theory of evolution provided a scientific justification for the ideologies of growth and development that had, once entangled with the capitalist enterprise, become equated with the 'good' of civilization.

Thus, culture has evolutionary nature as all living beings in the egalitarian earth.

Because of the advancement of culture in its evolution, human mastery and possession over nature is enhanced by technology that is the instrument which enslaves nature and exploits the masses. So, technology instrumentalizes nature along with its utilitarian values and discards nature as having its own intrinsic values. Modern man's

alienation from nature is also caused by the very technology as Adorno and Horkheimer claim in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. They say:

Enlightenment's instrumentalization of nature frees mankind from the tyranny of nature but its disenchantment of nature licenses the destruction of nature and hence of mankind. Men have always had to choose between their subjection to nature or the subjection of nature to the self. But technology brings the choice closer to a crisis. (qtd. in Bates 78)

Adorno says that the increasing technological domination of nature, which marked the 18th century, led to the repression of nature's wildness. The aesthetic appreciation of wild landscape thus emerges as the counter-tide of technological modernity. The industrial revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries is conventionally seen as the period in which technology first wrought a large-scale transformation of social condition through the harnessing of natural resources as iron and coal. But the experience of natural beauty may be a means of transcending the tyranny of subjectivity and social oppression.

However, ecocriticism regards nature and culture as interconnected and interassimilated. For the salvation from impending environmental apocalypse, man has to return to nature. The humans are product of their climate that the imaginative and aesthetic sense of different people is shaped by the landscapes, the very rock-formations, which surround them. In order to survive, human beings need social and environmental networks, both human bonds and good weather. Even our identities are constituted in both time and place and are always shaped by both memory and environment. So, nature is a prime means of linking spatiality and temporality.

Ecocritics reject the idea that everything is socially and linguistically constructed. For them, claims Barry, "nature really exists out there beyond ourselves, not needing to be ironized [. . .] which affects us and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it" (252). So ecocriticism repudiates the fundamental belief in 'constructedness', which is such an important aspect of literary theory. Every knowledge, discipline, language, and even culture is under the grand narrative of nature. Therefore, ecocriticism interconnects nature and culture not in poststructuralist sense but in terms of intrinsic values.

Since poetry is the product of culture whereas ecology is a science which describes nature, it may seem perverse to bring the two fields together. But there has always been a network of intimate relations as well as hostility between nature and culture. So, culture and nature are held together in a complex and delicate web. This web can be analysed in terms of two religious beliefs: Christianity and Hinduism.

2.4 Ecology in Christianity and Hinduism

Christianity, the religion of the west, is based on anthropocentrism that takes nature as instrument to be used for endless material gain. It regards nature as a part from man throughout history giving prior focus to utilitarian values more than biocentric values. Anthropocentrism is the human-centred view that ruled entire western philosophical and literary world for centuries. It legitimizes and rationalizes the exploitation of both land and wild life in the name of religion, and separates self and other: self as man and other as nature. Thus, it creates alienation of man from nature.

What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about

our nature and destiny, that is, by religion. Christianity, as an anthropocentric religion, regards man and nature as two distinct ontological zones: former master and latter slave. It emphasizes on the vertical relation of all the ingredients of the world and thus formulates a hierarchy. Human beings, being on top of the hierarchy, have been exploiting the earth and using the natural resources as if the resources are all meant for their voluntary usurpation and arbitrary subjugation and that they do not at all need to respect the resources. Even Christian holy book, the Bible, focuses on the use as well as mastery of man over natural world. It is clear that Genesis 1:27 is divine commitment to conquer every part of nature, and make it mankind's slave. God created men in the image of him and named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them and asking them to rule over the world. According to the Bible:

God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them. Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have domination over fish of the sea, and over fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

(Genesis 1:27)

God gave humans the power to dominate the fish in the sea, the birds of the air, and all wild animals on land. In this sense, the Judeo-Christian view of creation is intrinsically anthropocentric, considering humanity to have "transcendence of, and rightful mastery over nature" (Kempton et al 88). In "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis", Lynn White, Jr. makes it clear that:

Christianity; in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia's religions (except perhaps, Zoroastrianism), not only established dualism of man and

nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends. (10)

By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects. The implications of Christianity for the conquest of nature would emerge everywhere more easily in the western atmosphere. So, it would not be of prejudice to state that Christian religion is at the heart of the present environmental crisis and hazard.

Both modern science and technology have been cast in a matrix of Christian theology. Christian world is the world of the west. So, in its western form Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has ever seen. Blaming Christianity as the cause of ecological crisis, Lynn White, Jr., further gives warning that may shock many orthodox Christians:

Since both science and technology are blessed words in our contemporary vocabulary, some may be happy at the notions, first, that viewed historically, modern science is an extrapolation of natural theology, [. . .] and rightful mastery over nature. Science and technology joined to give mankind power which, to judge by many of the ecological effects, are out of control. If so, Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt. (12)

Thus, Christianity, bearing the burden of guilt, still assumes the superior and dominant role of human beings in the world. This leads that man's natural position is not as a subset of nature, but as a manager of nature. Nature, for Christian, should not be 'worshipped' by humans. This is the exploitative vision within western Christian religio-cultural milieu. So, the humans are regarded superior and dominant. The rest of the non-human world has

been regarded to be completely separate from humans and their roles have been neglected for the development of ethics. Thus, man has become the sole subject, speaker and rational sovereign of the natural order in the story told by humanism since the renaissance. Henceforth, man's effective monopoly on nature continued ever since.

In Christianity, the ethics to dominate non-human world produced ecological crisis and posed the necessity of environmental movement and environmental counter ethics. Regarding the need for environmental ethics, Christopher Manes in "Nature and Silence" writes: "An ethics of exploitation regarding nature has taken shape and flourished, producing the ecological resistant now requires the search for an environmental counter ethics" (16). He examines how both literary and Christian exegesis have rendered nature silent in western discourse. He contends that nature has shifted from an animistic to a symbolic presence and from a valuable subject to a mute object, such that in our culture only humans have status as speaking subjects. During the 20th century, however, the ecological perspective that views the need for human beings to exist in harmony with nature has begun to supersede the notion that nature is a hostile need to be subdued and dominated. Although anthropocentrism is still a dominant perspective, the bio centric or ecocentric view expressed in the writings of such environmentalists as John Muir, Lynn White and Aldo Leopard have grown in popularity. Leopard's proposal of a land ethic based upon the notion of a community that includes non-human life and inanimate objects as well as human beings has stimulated philosophers to consider the possibility of developing a general system of ethics based on an ecological perspective. In this respect in "Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics" Paul W. Taylor explains the meaning of the inherent worth of all

living organisms and how this concept coupled with a rejection of human superiority can be used for on the basis for a justifiable system of environmental ethics:

One of the central aims of environmental ethics has been to contest on anthropocentric, instrumental valuation of the non-human natural world, and to argue that new ways of thinking about and valuing it are needed. (18-19).

Thus, it is inevitable to put forward environmental ethics to cope the ecological crisis.

What we do about ecology depends on our ideas of the man-nature relationship. More science and more technology are not going to get us out of the present ecological crisis until we find a new religion, or rethink old one. Lynn White, Jr. opposes the anthropocentric arrogance of Judeo-Christian religion in terms of possession and mastery over nature. He argues that "the environmental crisis is a matter of the beliefs and values that direct science and technology; he censures the Judeo-Christian religion for its anthropocentric arrogance and dominating attitude towards nature" (XXVII). White sparked heated debate and lead to increased environmental consciousness in Christian church. After the blame of White to Christianity, on the otherhand, the U.S. Bishops formulated their response in a statement entitled "Renewing the Earth: An Invitation on Reflection and Action on the Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching". Since the environmental crisis is a moral challenge, claim the U.S. Bishops, it is our need to have urgent attention towards environmental degradation. They focus on the moral dimension of ecology rather than utilitarian and about the links between 'social justice and ecology', between 'environment and development'. They call upon catholic scholars to explore the relationship between the tradition's emphasis upon the dignity of the

human person and our responsibility to care for all of God's creation. They, further, put hope on Christianity for nature's revival.

Accordingly, in 1992 Union of Concerned Scientists prepared the warning entitled "World scientists 'Warning to Humanity" to make human beings conscious of environmental degradation especially in the Christian world. They warn " human beings for their harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and urge to sustain life avoiding the human nature collision" (457). As they told, we must bring environmentally damaging activities under control to restore and protect the integrity of the earth's systems we depend on. The injury on global biological system can be controlled only when we have eco-friendly relation with the environment. They claim to have new ethics to respect the nature, and say:

A new ethic is required -a new attitude towards discharging our responsibility for caring for ourselves and for the earth. We must recognize the earth's limited capacity to provide for us. [. . .] This ethic must motivate a great movement, convincing reluctant peoples themselves to effect the needed changes. (461)

Thus, the western Christian world has become a little bit conscious of ongoing ecological crisis and need of human-nature relationship.

In contrast to anthropocentric worldview of Christian west, Hinduism, the religion of east, preaches the bio-centric worldview along with its focus on horizontal relation of all the entities of the world. Whether for utilitarian or aesthetic or religious or spiritual base, bio-centric value focuses on nature having its own right to be protected and creates harmonious relation among its all ingredients. According to the logic of Hinduism,

humans are part of nature and have integral relation with all non-human natural entities. Hinduism rejects the dichotomy between human and non-human, and reinforces the eco-centric view. The *Gita*, the Hindu holy book, extends environmental awareness and interconnectedness between man and nature/ environment. The eco-friendly images of the *Gita* can be very useful for eco-awareness. In the *Gita*, Lord Krishna in his dialogue with Arjuna says: "That which creates diversity, and all that can be seen or known is called Prakriti. Prakriti is also the material cause or the material out of which everything is made. Prakriti is the original source of the material world" (705). Prakriti (nature), unlike what the Bible preaches, is not to be subdued and destroyed by man but it should be valued and preserved; for nature is the manifestation of the supreme, and the source of everything. In this sense, the *Gita* has been praised as a source of environmental sensitive ideas both by Hindus and by eco-thinkers in the west.

In order to establish the harmonious relation between human and non-human, it is necessary to recognize intrinsic values in the natural world and in non-human species. It is " also inevitable to transform the social economic, and ideological structures that perpetuate ecological devastation" (Nelson 128). Lance E. Nelson in 'Reading the Bhagavatgita from an Ecological Perspective' writes that " the Hindu vision of dharma involves the idea that human beings must accept certain curbs on their desires so that the harmonious order can be maintained" (129). Hinduism believes that all life forms: human and non-human, are of equal value. The co-existence of human and non-human beings brings the cosmos in harmony. Even God can be perceived within the natural world and vice versa as revealed in the *Gita*. So, there is not any dichotomy between human and non-human.

Raimundo Punikarm focuses on the interplay between man and earth in *The Vedic Experience: Mantra Manjari*. He reinforces that there is a special bond between man and the earth. Man is of the earth and earthly. Earth is a part of man itself. He writes:

In Vedic attitude towards the earth springs from mankind's primordial experience of being on the one hand a guest and the other an offspring of earth. The earth is undoubtedly mother and close to man. [. . .] The earth is the basis of life. Man is of the earth and earthly but the earth is not simply nature, is not merely geographical or material; it is part of man himself. So that man can no more live without earth than he can live without a body.

(120)

The idea that non-human beings have exactly the same spiritual potential as human- having an *atman* that is qualitatively the same as a move towards biocentrism. So, Hinduism extends the moral responsibilities and obligation of human beings to conserve the earth as mother. Humans should not harm nature because we are part of nature; species have a right to continue; and nature has intrinsic broader than mere species survival. All species have a right to evolve without human interference. If extinction is going to happen, it should happen naturally, not through human actions. So, biocentric values range from a vague feeling of oneness between humanity and nature to the idea that nature has right and deserves justice.

Ecocriticism, taking biocentric worldview, regards humans, as intimately a part of the natural environment and it has become an established philosophical worldview to distinguish it from a scientific theory. It librates human society accompanied by a dawning realization of the interconnectedness between human beings and all other non-

human entities. If humans are truly related to all living things, then all living things must be entitled to a share in the natural right that will surely be vindicated in the progress of human liberation. Thus, to extend this idea, Hinduism teaches the notion such as overcoming anthropocentrism and recognizing the intrinsic value in the natural world and in non-human species. Therefore, it is bio-centric in its view with an egalitarian spiritual outlook.

Regardless of the opposition between Christianity and Hinduism in terms of their outlook towards ecology, ecocriticism has covered multiple areas in its study whether in theory or in philosophy, literature and any other discipline. To understand the co-existence of living and non-living creatures, it invites all perspectives towards it being an interdisciplinary study of language, culture and landscape.

2.5 Interdisciplinary Nature of Ecocriticism

In general, ecocriticism has interdisciplinary nature. It invites all perspectives into its tent to show the co-existence of living and non-living creatures. It has been developed as a highly interdisciplinary field with research not only on written text but also on different fields like media, photography, films, paintings, literature, science and so on. While interdisciplinary approach remains central to ecocriticism, there is always distinctive contribution to ecocriticism's interdisciplinary mix. So, literature and environmental studies include multiple perspectives towards reading literary texts.

Ecocriticism often aims at nothing less than the transformation of human environmental and ecological consciousness. Rationalizing ecocentric paradigm, it has deeper respect for the integrity of the different forms of life with which human kind saves the earth. Jonathan Levin in "Forum on Literature and Environment" explains:

Our bodies, our language, our socio-cultural environment all shape our distinctive style of living. Without them, we could not recognize the natural environment, let alone express concern for it. The choice is not between culture and nature, [. . .] but rather among different styles of dwelling in the world, as well as our literary representation of it. (1098)

Thus, everything is interconnected with everything else in the earth. This interconnectedness is the area of study for ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism, or 'green criticism', is one of the most recent interdisciplinary fields to have emerged in literary and cultural studies. It analyses the role that the natural environment plays in the imagination of a cultural community at a specific historical moment, examining how the concept of 'nature' is defined, what values are assigned to it or denied to it and why, and the way in which the relationship between humans and nature is envisioned. More specifically it investigates how nature is used literally or metaphorically in certain literary or aesthetic genres that may not address this topic directly. In addition, some ecocritics understand their intellectual work as direct intervention in current social, political and economic debates surrounding environmental pollution and preservation. It becomes a bridge between science and literary or cultural criticism. Environmental concern is itself the area of science on the other. Science has bolstered green claims regarding the deterioration of the environment. Ecocriticism looks back on a long tradition of scientific analysis as detrimental to aesthetic appreciation. Indeed literature and art, in this framework, easily come to be perceived as bulwarks against science and technology, a view that goes back at least as far as the romantic era, rather than as sites of encounter between different types of knowledge and discourse.

Green literary criticism, therefore, is confronted from the start with a spectrum of different and not always compatible approaches to the environment: the 'discursive construction' which foregrounds the extent to which the very distinction of nature and culture is itself dependent on specific cultural values: the 'aesthetic construction' which places value on nature for its beauty, complexity, or wildness: the 'political construction', which emphasizes the power interests that inform any valuation or devaluation of nature; and finally the 'scientific construction' which aims at the description of functioning natural systems. One of the central questions that necessarily emerge in such an interrogation is the question of how the value of the natural environment can and should be assessed in relation to human needs and societal well-being which must determine our approach to nature. The natural science is a vital source for discussion for the ecocriticism unlike for the other critics. It is always a biocentric criticism, which better understand the relationship between all animals and plants on the ground of natural science. So, ecocriticism is inherently interdisciplinary; it can appropriately be applied to a work in which the entire eco-sphere plays a dominant role and where a significant interaction occurs between author and place, character and place.

However, ecocriticism tends to focus on the earth centeredness regarding language, culture, knowledge, philosophy and theory as constructed within it. Indeed, the driving force behind ecocritical studies has in the conception that the parts of the nature are connected to the whole nature itself. So, no view, no theory, no philosophy, no religion and no knowledge can have so much life force or vitality as that of the earth. The earth is the essence of our knowledge and it is always greater than our imagination. The earth is the source and our thoughts are the eco-effects supplied by it. The earth surpasses

our understanding. Therefore, there is always organic whole among all the elements of the earth.

To these ends, this dissertation mainly focuses on the poetry of Dylan Thomas that reinforces the organic vision and interconnectedness of human and non-human elemental world of nature giving prior focus to the land ethics than other any ethical concepts.

CHAPTER THREE

DYLAN THOMAS' POETRY: AN ANALYSIS

Dylan Thomas, the leading poetic figure in neo-romantic poetry of 1940s in England, reflects ecological consciousness in his poetry challenging the cerebral orderliness of the fashionable poetry of the time and going beyond the modern desolation. His poems are concerned largely with human attachment with the elemental world of nature affecting it and affected by it, thereby making a kind of organic unity of all life. The treatment towards nature as he exposes in different poems is one of ecofriendly. This ecofriendly attitude leads him to proceed towards the interassimilation, interconnectedness and integral relation of man and nature, and search for symbiosis between the human and non-human entities so as to recover the age-old human alienation from nature and cure the environmental degradation inflicted by human beings.

The dominant aspect of Thomas' poetry-a nostalgic view of lost innocent childhood and the sanctity of nature-appears mostly in his later poems such as "Fern Hill", "Poem in October" etc. The use of landscape in such poems makes the readers aware of the body nature in pure and sanctified state equal to the child existing on the lap of nature. So, he longs for the lost childhood as well as the pure nature in order to get mental solace out from the sense of alienation created by modern man's detachment from the world of nature. Therefore, he wishes to return to the lost childhood through imaginative reconstruction in poetic lines.

Thomas opposes the utilitarian value of nature. Utilitarian concept makes human beings forget their moral obligations and ethnical responsibilities to the non-human

entities. It forces us to subdue and exploit nature for endless material gain in the name of religion and ethics. Utilitarian values are not a sufficient basis for environmental protection and that environmental activists should argue on non-utilitarian values as well. So, the utilitarian traditional Judeo-Christian basis has been criticized or ignored by the environmental intelligentsia as Thomas who takes bio-centric view of the nature ranging from a vague feeling of oneness between humanity and nature to the idea that nature has rights and deserves justice. On the other hand, Thomas represents nature in different ways to breed the issue of poetics in terms of ecological study.

Man-nature equation is reinforced by the idea of death in Thomas' poetry as he regards death as a natural process of life leading one closer to nature to make one with the organic nature. His treatment of death is common and indispensable to search unity and totality in the sanctified world of nature.

In his poetic world, there is the body of natural ingredients equal to the body of a poem. There is parallel between emotion and nature and between the internal and the external realms. By locating sensory perception in the body, and the body in the natural world, the boundaries between the experiences of the inner body and the outer body become blurred.

The sense of an actual place pervasively affects the language and atmosphere of his poems. Landscape appears frequently in his poems as the source of creativity as he reflects Swansea and Welsh life everywhere. His poems are the eco-effects created by the intricate relation with the world of nature having egalitarian outlook.

Similarly, the respect and awe for nature remain at the center of Thomas poetry. His poems represent nature from ethical perspective giving prior focus to environmental

ethics where the distinction between instrumental value and intrinsic value has been of considerable importance. Such ethics ultimately poses a challenge to traditional anthropocentrism that has enhanced the modern environmental degradation.

Thus, Thomas' poetry connects landmarks with textmarks, the land ethics with the creation of poetry so as to reflect ecological awareness and extend the notion that poetry unconceals the essence of nature in its original form with the concept of global community.

3.1 Nostalgia for the Loss of Nature's Sanctity

Nostalgia for the loss of the purity and sanctity of nature remains as the dominant aspect of Thomas' poetry especially in his later poems. It is associated with the innocence and glamour of childhood along with his experiences in Swansea and his aunt's farm at Fern Hill. Being disgusted by the desolation and frustration created by the modern life, he wishes to return to the world of nature so that he could get mental solace in his alienated life.

Thomas, being disgusted by the materialistic modern world, is unable to enjoy the life in the physical world in his old age. His hunchback like life is teased and insulted by others in the park as he shows in the poem "The Hunchback in the park":

The hunchback in the park

A solitary mister

Propped between trees and water

From the opening of the garden lock

That lets the trees and water enter

Until the Sunday sombre bell at dark. (93)

Thus, the modern world cannot provide mental solace; and he goes back to his childhood experiences and the purity and sanctity of nature in his later poems.

The poem "Fern Hill" stresses on the harmonious unity of the child's vision of the world. The haunting memory of his childhood experience of the regular holiday visit of his aunt's farm at Fern Hill and his perception of the farm as a boy are brought by nostalgia and imaginative reconstruction of the speaker's perception. The speaker remembers his joy and pleasure created by the nature as he, as a boy, was in harmony with the animals and other natural entities. In order to recreate the childhood innocence, he regards himself as "prince of the apple town", "a huntsman", and "a shepherd". As he becomes adult and old, the purity of the natural world no longer remains; rather he is dragged into adult inferno. The speaker remembers his youthful joy in the following lines:

Time let me hail and climbs

Golden in the heydays of his eyes.

And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns

And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves

Trial with daisies and barely.

Down the rivers of the windfall light. (134)

The extensive use of imagery from natural life as "apple boughs", "daisies", "the hay" and "cock" shows his close attachment with the natural world. "The apple bough" and "apple town" refer the beauty and richness of natural life. The "green" and "golden" color refer

to creativity symbolizing youth, joy and innocence, and purity and fullness respectively. The boy's life is composed of repetitions of the cycles of nature where the cyclical relation upholds the parallelism. Led by time and at his mercy, even when "young and easy", the poet knows how that time has always "held him". Once green, he was "dying" like all green things—like the ignorant green sea itself. As the sea sings in the chains of moon and sun, so the chained young boy sang then. Walking to death, the poet still sings green and golden songs. Time has become enemy in his old age changing the green and golden joy of childhood into the shadowy sorrow of maturity as the poem's final lines expose: "Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,/Time held me green and dying/Though I sang in my chains like the sea" (135). Thus, Thomas recreates the Edenic life of his childhood in the midst of natural world especially at Fern Hill through nostalgia, and sanctifies the nature giving deep respect. He does so because of his desolation and dissatisfaction in the war-torn world where poverty, frustration and alienation are pervasively increasing.

Thomas finds holiness in nature and country. In his poems, there are extensive references of the landscapes, the flora and fauna of nature along with Swansea area on a steep suburban hill, opposite which was a field, a school, and a park. The very naturalness of life comes frequently in his memory affecting the poetic lines. He remembers the birds as heron, sparrow and swan in the poem "Over Sir John's Hill" to show how the heron used to mourn at the death of other creatures. The biocentric world is recaptured in this poem as the poet shows the heron bowing head: "Crashes, and slowly the fishing holy stalking heron/In the river Towy below bows his tilted headstone" (143).

The nostalgic celebration of childhood and admiration of Vaughan's "sacred landscape" with visionary figures are inextricably the focus of the poem "Poem in October". The poet sacramentalizes the land of his birth and the time as October but finds himself in the midst of darkness as he proceeds towards adulthood.

Thomas climbs heaven's hill towards sunlight in the autumn rain, a birthday "shower" of all his days, as the heron, returning to water, dives. This side of the border, birds and things, however are wet. As the poet leaves Laugharne in the morning, he finds nature holy. The turning from sun brings back the forgotten summer of childhood at Swansea and Fern Hill, abounding in fruit; for two times involve two or more places. Though the poet still stands in the "summer noon" of childhood, he is aware of the town below, "leaved with October blood" of trees and of his October heart, which sings this truth. He remembers his childhood as: "It was my thirtieth year to heaven/Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbor wood" (86). Thus, the childhood experience and the sanctity of nature come reverberatingly in this poem.

Similarly, the farm of aunt, Ann Jones and his life with her on the lap of nature can be seen in the poem "After the Funeral". The poem is an elegy on an aunt on which he sees the sad shabbiness of her life and environment transfigured by love. The poem turns from mourning to comfort as the nostalgia of the farm and the landscape around it make him realize the naturalness of life. His comfort is shown as:

But I, Ann's bard on a raised hearth, call all

The seas to service that her wood-tongued virtue

Babble like a bellbuoy over the hymning heads.

Bow down the walls of fern and foxy woods,
That her love sing and swing through a brown chapel,
Bless her bent spirit with four, crossing birds. (73)

The speaker comforts himself as he remembers his aunt along with the purity of the natural world as the fact. There is a conflict between mourning of a desolate boy and the fact of the fern and foxy woods of Ann's farm, but the landscape, that was really magical makes the speaker self aware about the ecology. Ann's undismayed bard calls all seas and woods to her service now—all "the fern and foxy woods", which though living, correspond to her stuffed fox and stale fern as the "brown chapel" she attended, corresponds, if only by contrast, to the chapel of holy nature.

Therefore, the nostalgic presentation of the sanctity of natural world remains the dominant aspect of Dylan Thomas' poetry that leads to his biocentric vision. So, the purity of nature is vividly presented as he emphasizes on biocentric values of nature opposing the utilitarian values.

3.2 Utilitarian and Biocentric Values of Nature

For long time, the western philosophy has been found describing nature as instrument to be used for endless material gain. Christianity, dominant in the west, preaches that humans are separate from and thus superior to the rest of nature, which is there to be used, possessed, exploited and dominated by human kind. So, it preaches the anthropocentric world view even while it has been subject of criticism even in the Christian Church after the conference of the US Bishops and the World Scientists. It clearly shows that from the beginning, the western philosophy has been dominated by

anthropocentric attitude. Regarding humans as superior, the non-humans are taken to be subdued by human being and their role has been neglected for the development of ethics. The utilitarian value of nature makes human beings forget their ethical responsibilities towards the non-human entities. Rather it leads that man's natural position is not as a subset of nature, but as a manager of nature. So, opposition of the utilitarian value of nature is reinforced by the biocentric value of nature in Dylan Thomas' poetry.

On the other hand, biocentric world view emphasizes the need of the non-human entities to cope with the modern environmental degradation. Biocentrism reinforces the harmonious relation of all the ingredients of the world making an organic whole. Biocentric values range from a vague feeling of oneness between humanity and nature to the idea that nature has right and deserves justice.

Dylan Thomas foregrounds his biocentric ideas throughout his poems discarding anthropocentric devastation and utilitarian value of nature. So far his poems are concerned, the human activities in cultural milieu are the root cause that separate human from non-human entity and create frustration and depression in human mind. When the eternal bond between human and non-human elemental world of nature is broken, the sense of alienation appears in human mind and man has to bear different problems. Thinking such consequences, Thomas tries to connect himself with nature and condemns those who defy the law of nature. Human beings should not harm nature because we are part of nature; species have right to continue; and nature has intrinsic rights broader than mere species survival. Each individual living thing in nature whether animal or plant is a teleological center of life having a good or well being of its own which can be enhanced or damaged. So, human beings are having the same capabilities being subject to

the same ethics. He discards utilitarian value of nature with anthropocentric devastation in the poem "This Bread I Break" as:

This bread I break was once the oat,

This wine upon a foreign tree

Plunged in its fruit;

Man in the day or wind at night

Laid the crops low, broke the grape joy.

Once in this wine the summer blood

Knocked in the flesh that decked the vine,

Once in this bread

The oat was merry in the wind;

Man broke the sun, pulled the wind down.

This flesh you break this blood you let

Make desolation in the vein,

Were oat and grape

Born of the sensual root and sap;

My wine you drink my bread you snap. (36-37)

Human beings use oat and grape to make bread and wine by destroying the nature. But in the destruction of the world of nature, the destruction of human being is immanent. The environmental degradation is reinforced by the utilitarian value of nature as the speaker

describes the human activities of breaking the natural objects as oat and grape.

Thomas' willingness for biocentrism appears in the poem cursing the anthropocentrism that is the root cause of environmental degradation. Here, he links man and nature to give comfort. The speaker focuses on human encroachment or interference in the world of nature, breaking the bread and destroying the oat. So, he raises the environment or nature in the equal position to human activities so that horizontal relation can be maintained.

Commenting on the poem, William York Tindall writes:

Man is one with vegetable. We, human beings are both the destroyer and preserver of nature by realizing her value in our life. We are biological being and part of ecosystem since everything is connected to everything else in the nature. The poem is nature's voice reminding human beings that they are consuming and spoiling her. So, the destruction of nature becomes the cause of the speaker's dissatisfaction since nature is the ultimate resting place of all human and non-human entities. When we destroy nature, the unity is disrupted. (96-97)

Therefore, Thomas, here, rejects human intervention in the process of nature giving due regard for the natural world that is ultimate dwelling place. Similarly, the bread and wine of Eucharist as he brings from Christianity serve as analogy for the holiness of nature of all green force from sap to sperm and for the holiness of poetry. So, he is environmentally conscious in this poem and tries to avoid the degradation of the environment so that the ecofriendly relation of man with nature can be restored.

Biocentric values reflect human beings as part of nature, and they have the same fundamental capabilities as other species. Thomas finds shape of the sea creating shape of the man as Adam taken as "my Clay fellow" in the poem "Foster the light":

Who gave these seas their colour in a shape

Shaped my clay fellow, and the heaven's ark

O who is glory in the shapeless maps,

Now make the world of me as I have made.

A merry man shaped of your walking circle. (51)

So, the body of nature is blurred with the body of man to show the land ethics as the countervailing idea to provide ultimate resting place for all biological beings.

Biocentric values reiterate the ethical responsibilities and moral obligations to the nature because nature has intrinsic rights to sustain any form of life. Any human encroachment becomes morally wrong activity for the environmentalist. Thomas brings the world of nature as it is almost tantamount to the human body and the creation of the process of life going on. He expresses in 'Light Breaks Where No Sun Shines':

Light breaks on secret lots,

On tips of thought where thoughts smell in the rain;

When logics die,

The secret of the soil grows through the eye,

And blood jumps in the sun.

Above the waste allotments the down halts. (24)

The breaking of light and jumping thoughts in the mind at the time of poetic creation are given equal value in this poem.

Similarly, Thomas shows how anything in nature 'grieves', either its own or anything else's mortality. In the poem "Over Sir John's Hill", he shows the heron stabbing at some fish in the river but immediately giving homage being "the elegiac fisherbird". By associating himself and the heron as mourners, is not he, paradoxically, emphasizing that in fact only man grieves consciously in the face of mortality? In biocentric world even the fishing "holly stalking heron" bows his "tilted headstone" to mourn at the death of the innocent creatures. Thus he equates himself and a bird: "The heron and I, / I young Aesop falling to the near night by the dingle / of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distant" (143). Therefore, the poem presents the mourning of the heron equal to the speaker keeping the bird in the rank of human beings.

Moreover, the biological world can be seen vividly in Thomas' poetry. He brings the hills of Swansea, the bees, the flowers and the animals from the surrounding and gives equal value to them. The way he brings the elemental world of nature is to celebrate it with splendid grandeur as Hopkins does. Therefore, the very idea of praising the world of nature beyond utilitarian values and representing the flora and fauna of nature treating them equal to the human beings make Thomas' poetry biocentric. And this biocentric value is enhanced by his nostalgia of the loss of the sanctity of the natural world and search for the organic whole in the world of nature.

3.3 Representation of Nature as an Organic Whole

Dylan Thomas represents the world of nature as an organic whole in terms of the integral relation of all its ingredients regarding human as a part. An attempt has been made here to show communion between man and nature with ecological consciousness. Thomas projects the elemental world of nature in communion with human internal world. "The echoes of the earlier romantic extravagant", David Daiches writes, "are envisioned in the communion with the elemental world of nature in the raw with the feverish internal world of human desires, human secrets, human longings and regrets" (143). By using images taken from the world of nature, Thomas imparts a number of clearly conceived themes-the relation between man and the environment, the problem of identity in view of the perpetual changes wrought by time, the relation of the living to the death and of both to seasonal change in nature. Poems written in different phases of his life concern with this organic unity of all life within nature. Thomas saw the working of biology as a magical transformation producing unity out of diversity, and sought a poetic ritual to celebrate this unity. The ritual of celebrating this unity is best captured in the poem "The Force That through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower", where the poet unravels the unity of man and nature so as to incline towards the integral relationship between all lives. In this poem, the poet equates the human life and nature in terms of the forces that nature possesses. The speaker's life proceeds forward by the time and seasonal change in nature as his youthful spring turns to the wintry old age. The following lines of the poem show how this unity is reinforced in overt expression giving prior focus to the intrinsic value and force of nature:

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower,

Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees

Is my destroyer

And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose

My youth is bent by the same wintry fever. (13)

The intrinsic forces of nature that drive the flower in nature control growth, decay, beauty, and terror of human life. Even life and death are parts of a natural process that links man with what surrounds him, inner with outer, above with below having correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm. Creation and destruction are our kissing poles. For Thomas, life and death, being contingent, come in the process of nature. Reinforcing the intrinsic value of nature, G.S. Fraser comments:

The poem is massively identifying the body of man with the body of the world. The forces he is saying, that control the growth and decay, the beauty and terror of human life are not merely similar to but are the very same forces as we see at work in outer nature. Man is part of nature; is that a new startling idea? (12)

In this poem, Thomas compares youth as spring and old age as wintry fever that has withered his life. Thus, the nature attracts everything towards it as he emphasizes this whole to crisscross any constructs out of it.

At the root of all phases of Thomas' poetry, however, lies the assimilative representation of nature, drawing themes and attitudes that are essentially extra-social. For what might seem to keep ideology, morality or even ordinary human compassion in any obvious sense out of the poem is Thomas' concern, instead with organic natural

process. The very assimilative representation can be seen even in the earliest poem celebrating the organic cycle, "And Death Shall Have No Dominion":

And death shall have no dominion,

No more may gulls cry at their ears.

Or waves break loud on the seashores.

Where blow a flower may a flower no more. (56)

Here, Thomas reinforces the holiness of nature along with all living and dying creatures. William York Tindall claims that "we come from nature and return to it for secular renewal with the bees and flowers [. . .] to establish the idea of nature and with other living and dying creatures" (192). The dying of flower in autumn and returning in spring show how the process goes on in nature. And salvation is possible not by faith, but by nature. So, Thomas' obsession with the issue of life and death merges in an intricate web making them as processes of nature. Thus, he comforts himself at the time of death and decay during the modern age, assimilating himself with nature and celebrating the intrinsic values of nature.

On the other hand, Thomas locates himself in the nature to comfort him from the desolation and alienation created by war and destruction. The world of nature and return towards it give mental solace for him regarding himself as a part of nature. Most of his later poems relish the scenic materials presented by final settlement in Laugharne. But it should not be ignored how naturally they would have devoted into this essentially organicist view of the world for which in a sense, the geography at Laugharne simply provided new emblems that happened now to have a local habitation and a name. Thus,

the celebration of elemental oneness of the natural unthinking cohesion of physical and spiritual state is the aim of "Fern Hill" and "Poem in October" as much as of the early pre-natal poems.

In the midst of the malaise of modernity and horror loving craze of modern life, the poem "Fern Hill" remains as the center of attention in terms of its presentation of the natural world in communion with human world. In this poem the integral relation is highlighted by the interconnectedness of the child and other creatures. Here, the speaker dreams of the farm that owls seem but fail, to carry away of birds flying with the Ricks and flashing horses. In this poem, the poet tries to recapture the timeless world of the childhood in communion with nature. The pure and sanctified world of nature is envisioned through the imaginative reconstruction of youthful joys in contrast to the malaise of the old age. The "green" and "golden" joys of childhood and the shadowy sorrow of maturity become the joy of art. The world of nature is best captured in the poem as he says:

Now as I was young and easy under the apple bough,

About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green

[. . .] And honored among wagons I was prince of the apple town. (388)

Here, the speaker brings harmony of the boy with the animals and other natural entities. In order to re-create the childhood innocence, as William Wordsworth does, he regards himself as "prince of the apple town", "hunter", and "a shepherd". He tries to bring out the paradise of childhood that is overshadowed by the adult inferno. The boy's life is

composed of repetitions of the cycles of nature where the cyclical relation upholds the parallelism.

Thomas searches for the communion with organic nature so that his desolation and alienation in the war torn world could be coped with the idea of organic nature. It is time, for him that drags him towards his old age leading towards death as he writes that "Time held me green and dying/Though I sang in my chains like the sea, but in depth, he shares the qualities of sea" (389).

The nature and human mind contain analogous processes. The best example of communion between human and nature can be found in "Poem in October" where the images taken from the world of nature are used to signify human body and its activities. Similarly the images taken from the human life serve to illustrate nature and its activities. Here, the two landscapes and weather are suggestive of the two lifetimes and experiences of the speaker: childhood and adulthood. The dreamy landscape is suggestive of the dreamy state of the speaker whose mind is working with fancy and imagination at the poetry writing time. The geological state of the 'hill' is conveyed by the physiological image 'shoulder' which suggests the upper part. The images of "harbour" "neighbour wood", "heron", "seagull" and "rook" are brought together to show the world of nature in totality. The poem begins as:

It was my thirtieth years to heaven

Woke to my hearing from harbor and neighborhood

And the mussel pooled and the heron

Priested shore

The morning beckon

With water praying and call of seagull and rook. (86)

Therefore, Thomas admires Vaughans "sacred landscape" with visionary figures and regards the nature as organic whole.

"Prologue" as "Poem in October" stands by itself as an affirmation of nature and art, the destructive and creative fellows of his forked green fuse. Here, the glory of art proclaims "nature's glory" contending opposite – life and death, water and fire, sea and land, light and dark, country and city- circle, diverge and unite as before. Description of the seaside at Laugharne yields in the second part to description of the woods, whose beasts and birds replace the "fish", "shells" and "birds" of the shadows. Singing sunset at the summer's end, the boy of summer, seedy but tropical to the last turns towards his nightfall with joys as the poem begins:

This day winding down now

At God speeded summer's end

In the torrent Salmon Sun,

In my sea shaken house. (6)

The clock of the seasons is "winding down to summer's end". So, in this poem, Laugharne's shore may be an image of death in life and life in death.

Because of the troubled and frustrated life, Thomas wishes to find out solace in the material world. His thoughts turn to hopes of a permanent home in Wales preferably in Laugharne. So, he represents the very naturalness of Swansea and acknowledges its real presence as he says in the poem "Once It Was the Color of Saying":

Once it was the color of saying
Soaked my table the uglier side of a hill
With a capsized field where a school sat still
And a black and white patch of girls grew playing. (74)

On one level, Thomas is quite realistically remembering his early home in Swansea-on a steep suburban hill, opposite which was a field, a school, and a park. In his youth the other side of that hill was open farmland. But the poem is decidedly about something more internal, the poet's attitude to language and how it affects his attitude outside reality. In this sense, his themes in any case are understood only in terms of his Welshness and the regional milieu in which he wrote.

Moreover, Thomas approves on the relevance of 'seas' as the source of every form of life. Sea as representative of nature is organic whole from where every form of life emerges: "Ancient woods of my blood, dash down to the nut of the seas/ If I take to burn or return this world which is each man's work" (79). We wonder first of all on the poet's use of negative and positive image depending on whether the poet will "burn" or "return" to this world. The significance of their being not just literal woods but "woods of my blood" is that they evoke the evolutionary growth of humanity; hence the relevance of "seas" the source from which all life is taken to have emerged. In positive sense it is a return to the primary source "the nut of the seas". So, it reaches the ideas that Thomas focuses on the real aspect of poetry. In order to locate humankind in nature with intricate web and get the thrust of nature as organic whole, his idea of death as unifying force becomes important because death, for Thomas, is the means to come back and be one

with the organic nature that one cannot reach in lifetime because of his /her alienation from nature.

In this regard, Thomas represents the nature as organic whole and interconnects human beings in the intricate web of nature where our position remains as one of the ingredient of it.

3.4 Nature, Man and Death

Man-nature equation and interconnectedness is fostered through the issues of death in Thomas' poetry where he regards death not as an end but as a natural process of life leading one closer to the elemental world of nature. Death, as Thomas takes, is nothing more than the way out from the material world that is full of frustration, sexual repression and depression. It is one step closer to be one with the elemental world of nature that is itself a submission in the organic nature. Regarding death as a common phenomenon and natural process of life, it is inevitable as well as indispensable and rest oneself in the pure and sanctified world of nature to get relief from the burdens of life and search the organic process of existence. The material existence and apocalypse of modern world can be surpassed by the cosmic one that can be reached only after the death as human beings enter into the elemental world of nature.

At death, we rejoin the organic life of the universe as a whole. "Poem on His Birthday" begs the question very clearly. We might ask first of all whether the notion of human life surviving death only in some unconscious organic way led the work into expression of cynical or only primitive views of the value of life itself. Regarding Thomas' treatment of death, in his poems, Walford Davies in *Dylan Thomas: Open Guide to Literature* comments:

The closer he moves to death, the more intense do the splendors of the natural world become both in his appetite for them and as if they actually celebrate the very naturalness of his mortality. And in the whole process he himself also grows to a greater love for other mortals. (85)

Therefore, death is the direct way of reaching organic nature being interconnected for Thomas. In the "Poem on His Birthday" the first four verses have differentiated between man and nature even while focusing on what unites them: the fact of death. It is just a kind of refutation against the argument but the focus on death as uniting force revitalizes the central concern of interconnectedness. The poet 'knows' that ultimately the 'place' will be a cosmic one (stars), brought about by the end of conscious life, as opposed to material existence. The poem's final two stanzas reinforce the idea of the celebration of death treating death as a means to lead humankind back to the sanctified natural world:

That the closer I move
To death, one man through his sundered hulks,
The louder the sun blooms
And the tusks, ram shackling sea exults...
I hear the bouncing hills
Grow larked and greener at berry brown
Fall and the dew larks sing
Taller this thunderclap spring, and how
More spanned with angels ride

The mansouled fiery islands! Oh,
Holier than their eyes,
And my shining men no more alone
As I sail out to die. (147)

Therefore, Thomas celebrates the naturalness of his mortality as he will have real aesthetic relationship with the objects of nature after death. So, he celebrates the naturalness of his mortality throughout this poem.

Thomas takes death as a knot to join human beings with other non-human entities to crisscross the miseries and pains of the material world. The imaginative escape into the world of nature is reinforced by the idea of death as the gateway for the communion with nature. Death unites man and nature, and intensifies the holiness of nature as holy living and holy dying. Here, William York Tindall posits that "we come from nature and return to it for secular renewal with the bees and flower" (192). We find man after death as joining, not only the skeletal remains of birds and mammals but an 'Unborn' God. In the poem "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London", he sees the human communion with nature after death, thus, refuses to mourn her death or postpones the mourning. The poem celebrates the intensity and integrity of non-human organic life as the poem begins:

Never until the mankind making
Bird, beast, and flower
Fathering and all humbling darkness
Tells with silence the last night breaking

And the still hour

Is come of the sea tumbling in harness

And I must enter again the round

Zion of the water bead. (59)

The poet does not refuse to be moved by, or to move with the event. But it does refuse to mourn in the server in which one might make political or doctrinal or sentimental capital out of the death. Thomas, here, "endeavors to postpone the mourning until all things (anima) vegetable, and humans return to their first origins in that primal darkness which made fathered and humbled all" (Davies 69). But that darkness is not felt to be a void. The postponement of mourning is in effect its cancellation. There will come a time when mourning will cease to be a relevant possibility. When the gap between natural organic process and human social interpretation or emotion is finally closed, man can be one with nature. At death, man becomes a part of an organic, unmourning universe. On the day of doom, Thomas, as mankind's representative must return to the seed and water from which he came and to which this child, also mankind's representative, has preceeded him. All have returned to their dark origin: the water bead, the ear of corn, and the earth. The daughter's mother seems both London and the earth, darkly veiled with rivers as Epsom thinks, with ore. Earth's water, like the water bead and the elegist, is "unmourning" because it is the water of life and renewal. The "riding Thames" is a river of life, flowing out to the harnessed sea, may be in order to ride it. Therefore, however, many meanings may appear to crowd into the poem's last line: "After the first death, there is no other"(60). Even by Christian orthodox belief of the resurrection of Christ after death, it is justifiable to envision the rebirth of the girl and the meaninglessness of mourning at her

death. The point insists that all those who have died before have physically given human significance to the organic cycle which the girl now re-enters.

Similarly, the very idea of death as uniting man with what surrounds him can be seen in the poem "And Death Shall Have No Dominion" as Thomas says, "And death shall have no dominion / Dead men naked they shall be one / With the man in the wind and the west moon" (56).

Here, death is the means of interconnecting human and non-human entities so as to release one from the burdens of material life.

Thomas's response to actual death is positive in which he envisions the dead person returning into the organic cycle. In turn, death itself is seen as a strange new burgeoning in which all the senses become one, and with a spiritual refinement that can be imagined also for the five senses in actual life as Thomas asserts in "When All My Five Country Senses":

My one and noble heart has witnesses

In all love's countries, that will grope awake;

And when blind sleep drops on the spying senses

The heart is sensual, though five eyes break. (37)

The physical death of the body, the breaking down of the senses is simply the temporary escape from the material world but in depth it leads man to be one with organic nature.

So, Thomas takes death as way of reaching human totality. When man is alive, he/she has ideological, cultural, sexual, and other identities and cannot live totally. Only after death, the totality can be achieved in nature since nature contains this totality. In this

sense, all of the above instances prove that Thomas celebrates the naturalness of death through a kind of poetic ritual and tries to escape from the evanescent world to reach the cosmic one where eternal bliss can be experienced. Death leads human beings towards organic nature where the purity and sanctity of natural world can be experienced, as Thomas brings nostalgia of Swansea and Fern Hill, and the essence of nature can be perceived through outside as Thomas associates poetic creation with the processes that go on in nature. Thus, the communion of landmarks and textmarks, the domains of ecopoetics remain at the center of Thomas' poetry to uphold ecological consciousness.

3.5 Association of Landmarks and Textmarks

In order to approach nature from a non-ideological way, Dylan Thomas brings landscape as the source of poetry and creativity as every knowledge follows the earth. The objects of natural world and the creatures appear frequently in his poetry. Rather than taking abstract ideas, the concrete objects are presented so as to turn towards landmarks and reflect ecological awareness in his poetry by establishing poetics of the space. On the other hand, there is an intricate web between the body text and the body nature as he associates the natural processes going on in nature with human internal processes for the creation of poetry. The localization of the places as Swansea and Fern Hill are shown along with human intimacy with dwelling place. Ecology, thus, remains as the source of poetry for Thomas who stands himself as ecologist ultimately to cope with the modern environmental degradation and restore the sanctified world of nature as the source of solace in the modern desolate world.

Our understanding of Dylan Thomas' poetry deepens by knowing how the landmarks and textmarks are associated, making former as the source of latter. The body

nature corresponds with body text. The events going on in nature are similar to the events within the human body because the controlling force is the same intrinsic force of nature whether for human beings or for other species. The way he shows this process of nature in the poem "Light Breaks Where No Sun Shines" is similar to the creation of poetry in human skull. The poem becomes almost like the body nature in terms of the events:

"Down breaks behind the eyes;/From poles of skull and toe the windy blood/Slides like Sea" (25). "Windy" identifies the circulation of blood with the movement of the sea around the globe as well as the creation of a poem; and again "slides" conveys a vivid physical effect of the process. Here, Thomas is evoking a close identity between the events of nature and events within the human body. His physical organic life is given a kind of elemental grandeur. Thus, in this poem, both nature and human beings are identified, intermingled, each taking the character of other, with only two actual statements of composition. The images "sea", "water", "tide" and "flesh" are related to female and the images of "light", "sun", "ghost" and "bone" are related to male. The physiological imagery suggests the reproductive parts and elements found in human body as he says:

Light breaks on secret lots,

On tips of thought where thought smell in the rain when logic die;

The secret of the soil grows through the eye

And blood jumps in the sun;

Above the waste allotments the dawn halts. (24)

Dawn, replacing general light, breaks in the head, 'behind the eyes'. Meanwhile our blood flows like a sea between the poles of head and toe. So, external world seems more nearly with us while the poetic creation takes place in human mind in the manner of the circulation of blood.

Thomas' poetry reflects the nature with the scenery of his thought. Once in his letter, Thomas writes:

Through my small, bonebound island I have learnt all I know, experienced all, and sensed all. All I write is inseparable from the island. As much as possible, therefore, I employ the scenery of the island to describe the scenery of my thoughts, the earthquakes of the body to describe the earthquakes of the heart. (39)

The body, its appearance, death, and diseases, is a fact, sure as the fact of a tree. It has its roots in the same earth, his body earth, his hair a wild shrub growing out of the land as Thomas tells in the poem "Before I Knocked". All the thoughts and actions emanate from the body. Therefore, the description of a thought or action can be beaten home by bringing it onto a physical level. Every idea, intuitive or intellectual, can be imaged and translated in terms of the body, its flesh, skin, blood, sinews, veins, glands, organs, cells or senses. This association of human body with the world of nature can be seen in the following lines:

I knew the message of the winter,
The darted hail, the childish snow,
And the wind was my sister suitor;

Wind in me leaped, the hellborn dew;

My veins flowed with the eastern weather;

Ungotten I knew night and day. (65)

In this sense, the flow of the speaker's body is compared to the flow of the eastern weather, affecting it and affected by it. Thus, the very flow of weather becomes inspiring factor to create the poem within the mind of the speaker.

History has dominated much recent discussion of literature, but geography also has its claims; we live and die as part of the body politic, but we also live and die in place. The poet is as much a geographer as a historian. "There is a strong analogy between poet and geographer, poem and map; the poet writes his text on a stone on the side of mountain, while the map maker turns the mountain into a text" (Bates 85). Geographer and poet are reminded that nature cannot always be seen, controlled, and mapped – it must be respected. If history may be said to play an important role in the formation of our identities, then so may Geography/Topography. Thus, Dylan Thomas associates his own identity with his Welshness of life as Welsh bard. And Thomas' poetry is inherently the celebration of Swansea and Laugharne than of life and death, war and destruction.

Poetry has the peculiar power to speak earth and to bring forth the presence of the dwelling place or earth out of her silence. The nature of his surrounding and Welshness of life are captured in Thomas' poetry as he says, "When I experience anything, I experience it as a thing and a word at the same time" (54). We do not need as yet to identify complex reasons for this, beyond saying that it is likely to some degree to be a

case of the attraction of words and the urge to be a poet being so intense that the two orders of reality (words and things) are constantly intermingling. But on the whole he seems to "mistrust words more than things" (Davies 22). We have here perhaps a symbol of his choice in some poems of concrete enactment over discourse or description as the method of poetry. Concrete narratives create their own reality, while discourse or description tends to work by reflecting on the world as we already know it. Nevertheless "Especially When the October Wind", itself still remains essentially a meditation on an actual world of recognizable things (October, trees, birds, grass etc.). The theme of this poem is poetry and the writing of a poem making it as a part of creativity that Thomas celebrates. Tower, tree, sea and bird are images for the word. Here, he associates the words of a poem with the things of the physical world. Words appear as tower; children gesture as star; and oak tree and water have voices. Thus, he reiterates:

Shut, too, in a tower of words, I mark

On the horizon walking like the trees

The wordy shapes of women, and the rows

Of the star-gestured children in the park

Some let me make you of the vowelled beeches,

Some of the oaken voice, from the roots

Of many a thorny shire tell you notes,

Some let me make you of the water's speeches. (19)

Shut in his tower, the poet changes actual women into trees and "wordy shapes". Even the "rows" of children are confused with stars. But these "star-gestured" children mark

Thomas' discovery of the innocence and glamour of childhood, its naughtiness forgotten. Women as wordy trees and the trees of the park remind him, perhaps, of the ancient Welsh association of tree and word. "Vowelled Beeches" "oaken voices", and "thorny shires" remind us that the tree of Calvary carried the work, which created the trees of Eden. On the other hand, he praises the hills of Wales and steeps of Swansea as he writes:

Especially when the October wind

(Some let me make you of autumnal spells,

The spider-tongued, and the loud hill of Wales)

With fist of turnips pushes the land,

[. . .] By the sea's' side hear the dark-vowelled birds. (18)

In these lines, the natural life of Swansea is reflected giving due regards to the relation of poetry with the land the dwelling place. The very place becomes the source of poetry in his later phase as he recollects his experiences on the lap of nature.

On the other hand, there is a close gap between word and thing. The "thingness" of the words is the result of our not quite knowing in the first place what the things are that they communicate. So, thing and word appear to become one. We find the interconnectedness of the physical things with the human organs as he simultaneously brings the images of natural world to refer human organs. For example, the poem "The World Is Pyramid" brings the image of "pyramid" to indicate the speaker's sexual organ and expose his repressed sexuality in depth. The female genital organ is shown through 'broken halves and limp in the street of sea' as he says:

The broken halves are followed in a cripple,

The crutch that marrow taps upon their sleep,

Limp in the street of sea, among the rabble,

[. . .] My world is cypress, and an English valley. (27)

Thus, he locates himself with the place as its ingredients and consoles himself from the pain of sexual repression in this poem.

Thomas, on the other, talks about the natural objects in a very celebrating manner and shows the rootedness of the lady in the place when she is in tombstone, "The rain through her cold heart speaks/And the sun killed in her face./ More the thick stone can't tell"(28). The way he represents nature is the way he got poetic inspiration from the dwelling place that is the original resting place of man and poetry at time. Hence, Thomas brings the flora and fauna of nature as the source of poetry regarding poetry as dwelling on a place unconcealing the essence of nature with poetic sensation that is either Swansea or Laugharne.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Dylan Thomas brings together the human and non-human elemental world of nature regarding them as interrelated and interconnected to each other. Projecting the human-nature relationship in a very intricate web, Thomas tinges on the eco-friendly relation of the ingredients of nature under the intrinsic force of nature. The process of nature makes human life evanescent and transient, but the fact of death, as Thomas claims, brings the human life closer to the world of nature. While representing the world of nature and its flora and fauna, Thomas becomes almost like an ecologist. As ecologist, he regards nature as organic whole both in terms of the relation of the ingredients of nature and the intrinsic force of nature to sustain life. Thus, ecological consciousness remains the focus of his poetry.

Ecocriticism embraces the opinion that no branch of knowledge can ever be devoid of ecocentric implication. Nothing can be understood in the absence of the earth on spatial and temporal reference. Since poetry brings the essence of nature in presence, it is the original place of dwelling. So, the very relation of the poetry and the earth is captured in Thomas' poetry, leading the readers to know the earth. Ecocriticism is not just a means of analyzing nature in literature - it implies a move toward a more biocentric world view, an extension of ethics and broadening of human conception of global community to include the non-human life form and the physical environment. So, the very idea of land ethics for the collective human responsibility is center of Thomas' poetry that germinates the ecological consciousness.

Thomas represents the world of nature through nostalgic vision of his childhood experiences in Swansea and Fern Hill. The way he brings the deep rooted memory of the land, the birds and animals becomes lively in his adult life as he enters into the frustrated and desolated adult inferno. The purity and sanctity of the natural world is envisioned through his imaginative reconstruction of childhood equal to the joys and pleasures of nature. Thus, return to the world of blissful existence, the nature, becomes the only way out to get mental solace in the desolate world.

Being frustrated and desolated by the modern war-torn life and his sense of alienation along with depression and repression, Thomas tries to locate himself on the lap of nature in assimilative way. Nature is represented in assimilative way in his poetry so that he could place himself as a part of nature affecting it and affected by it. Because of human communion with nature, there is eternal bond, that is inseparable. There is always organic unity. But once it is broken, the system cannot operate. As a result, the environmental degradation appears in proportion to human encroachment of nature. So, Thomas rejects the anthropocentric devastation and wishes to foster the biocentric world view in the egalitarian earth in order to respect nature because nature deserves rights to be protected.

Thomas is equally conscious of the ongoing ecological degradation. For this, he pinpoints the fault of irresponsible human activities whether in the name of Christianity or the utilitarian value of nature. Human beings are alienated from nature and, thus breaking external and harmonious bond between human and nature. Because of the breaking of the harmonious relationship, man is alienated from nature, thus causing pains

and suffering. Thomas, experiencing the sense of desolation and frustration, tries to locate himself in nature along with his biocentric world view.

The malaise and desolation of modern man in the midst of war torn world, as Thomas takes, are caused by human partial identities as cultural, ideological, familial national etc. The whole or totality can be possible only in nature. When humans are alienated from nature, the totality is impossible. But taking man in totality is taking him on the lap of nature. But, for Thomas, the step towards nature becomes closer by the fact of death. The death, as natural process of life, takes human beings in communion with the non-human entities so that the original one can be achieved and humans can have totality and get blissful co-existence.

However, the association of landmarks with textmarks and the challenge of environmental ethics in the modern world-the domains of ecopoetics-concern largely with Thomas' idea of ecological consciousness. Because of his willingness to join the body text with the body nature, his poems become the eco-effects that make the essence of nature visible everywhere. On the other hand, the processes that go on nature are associated with the processes of internal human mechanism and the process of the creation of poetry. Thus, his poems are no less than the reports of the environmental concern respecting all of the natural elements and appealing human beings to foster the egalitarian gratitude in the biocentric world.

So, everything is connected to everything else in the poetic world of Thomas where every flora and fauna of nature gets equal strength and focus. All in all, Thomas' poetry is ecopoetry that fosters ecological awareness with close affinity between two ontological zones: human and non-human. Thus, nature is the whole and any other

ingredients as humans are its part which are bound to the whole. This is what eco-poetics looks at in terms of Thomas' poetry that only by living in harmony with all natural elements rather than exploiting and destroying them, we can be re-paradised and put into practice the vision of organic nature.

All in all, Thomas' poetry has helped to develop an environmental ethics for the harmonious existence and correspondence which is a step for nature conservation with ecological awareness. The close affinity of all the ingredients of nature with the organic whole, as Thomas represents, fosters ecological consciousness with the association between landmarks and textmarks posing collective ethical responsibility towards nature. Thus, Thomas' poetry has become the ground to show the thrust of ecopoetics and eco-criticism.

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