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Prof. Dr. Anjali Pande
Associate Professor
Head of Dept. of English
Email Id- anjalilandge66@gmail.com



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Environment Awareness in the Poetry of Robert Frost

Dr. Anjali P. Pande

Asso Professor, Department of English, Sri Vatsalaku Nauk Mahila Mahavidyalay
Bisal Mob No 9766099812, Email Id – anjalilandge66@gmail.com

Abstract :

The Purpose of the present paper is to focus on the literary work of one of the most popular and honored poets of America, Robert Frost known as a 'Voice of America'. Frost won Four Pulitzer, prizes, medals, honours and degrees for his literary contribution. It is through his nature poetry, Frost voiced his thoughts, ideas and feelings. To him nature was an eternal source of inspiration that resulted in his creativity. The present paper deals with the environment awareness in Frost's poetry. In today's ecological crisis, Frost's ecological consciousness gets more important significance. On the background of such crisis Frost's poetry Frost's Poetry assure peace and content to the mankind. In this sense Frost is considered as the most ecologically conscious poet of 20th century. The paper is presented in three parts that talks of beautiful environment and wild nature around Derry that provided stuff for his nature poetry. The second part of the paper comments on interrelatedness between man and nature with humanistic approach. The third part of the paper deals with Frost as a philosopher. The present paper not only attempts ecological consciousness of Frost but it also gives us inspiration through his ecological consciousness hidden behind his nature poetry.

Keywords – environment, ecology, nature, humanity.

Introduction

Across the world people are facing new and challenging environmental problems every day. The progress of science and technology, materialism and high living standards result in the emergence of ecological crisis. In all fields of life, including literature, ecological crisis receives much attention from scholars all over the world to guide their daily action, and to contribute to the cause of environment. Among the ecologically conscious poets Robert Frost, an American poet is considered, as outstanding poets of 20th century as most of the poems of Frost describe pastoral scenery and wild life of new England. This pastoral nature is the main source of Frost's creation. In addition to, his simple language with profound meaning, Frost's nature poetry deals with ecological consciousness that has more practical significance. This is the reason for the wide popularity of Frost as a nature poet. This is an attempt of the present paper to draw attention to the ecological consciousness of Frost's poetry. This paper is presented into three parts 1. Environment in which Frost spent the crucial period of life 2. Interrelatedness of nature and man 3. Philosophy of Frost

The present paper attempts to focus on ecological consciousness hidden behind the poetry of Frost in the first part. Environment at Derry farm proved boon for Frost. From the very childhood Frost was influenced by nature poetry of William Wordsworth. In addition his farming experience developed his love of nature. This nature at Derry farm provided stuff for his poetic talent. It is true that his poetry came out of his farming experience. It would be very interesting to know that an advice of farming for his better health proved the 'best advice' for Frost. At Derry farm Frost lived in the lap of nature surrounded by woods, apple orchard, the west running brook and beech trees. Out of his love for the land and nature around it, Frost's best nature poetry took birth. Nature in Derry preserved the 'poet' in him. This nature and environment inspired him for his creativity. Most of Frost's Poems are the products of his experience of the activities in nature which he experienced and observed himself. One of the unexpected boons of Derry years was a small group of friends who would mean a great deal to him in retrospect. In Derry Frost did farming along with the supply of eggs and apple to meet the needs of his family. Frost later said 'I was a poor farmer in those days, but rich too. There was plenty food and time, too. Lots of time, I was time-rich'. The pleasant atmosphere at Derry farm provided Frost great content. There he experienced quite comfort in the role of farmer and also in the form of father of three children. In the serene atmosphere of Derry Frost became fond of his chickens and farm animals. His meals also provided him good health which were supplemented by nuts, berries and fruits gathered throughout the year. Breakfasts were also nutritious-eggs, home-made bread and fresh cream over fruits from the farm. At dinner they had fresh meat and vegetables. In spite of his health problem he kept a farm for a decade and enjoyed it. Rather, this beautiful environment and farming kept him fresh, energetic and relaxed. It



was life at Derry farm provided him flexibility that a writer needs for his creation. Amid such pleasant environment and ease daily routine, Frost's poems rooted and developed also. In addition in Derry Frost began to listen keenly to the people who were farm labourers and who later became the characters in his poems. By this study, the paper brings out the significance of pleasant environment that is needed to live peaceful and contented life that Frost experienced in Derry. Such pleasant environment definitely inspires one's creativity.

Secondly the paper focuses on the interrelatedness between man and nature that is also the major theme of Frost's poetry. Most of the poems of Frost such as Mowing, Mending Wall, After Apple picking concern activities that take place in the lap of nature. Especially Frost depicts human activities in the countryside and studies them in relation with the natural environment around men. That's why his nature poetry gets a realistic touch. Human activities of every day life dominate nature poetry of Frost. Frost places common man at the centre of his poems, presents him with his joys and sorrows and brings forth the significance of his faith in action and work culture. Frost's people live in the countryside and adopt the qualities of nature and front boldly to get solution for their problems that are created out of misunderstanding or aloofness with nature. Frost's mower and apple-picker enjoy their work and find salvation in doing their duty honestly. Frost's people are captured in the beauty of nature but never wander from reality and their duties, By doing earthly duties they unite ' avocation and vocation' to get the grace of heaven. Even Frost's people teach lesson of humanity that is missing in today's world. It is through his poems Frost teaches work culture that is an essence of human life.

It is also worthy to note that most of Frost's people are isolated from nature and often this nature is aloof and indifferent to man. But it doesn't mean that his people hate nature. On the other hand they find affinity between man and nature and learn lessons from nature. Nature in Frost teaches human values. ' Lovely, dark and deep woods' teach Frost the significance of duty, and faith in action. This faith in action shows man proper direction and also gives content with this faith in action, his men attain aesthetic and values of life even in confusion and dilemma. of life In today's confused state of mind, nature seems to be the best solution This aspect is highly pointed out in the poetry of Frost. His scythe works so sincerely that it just thinks and dreams of labour it has to do. His scythe whispers. **The fact is the Sweetest dream that labours knows;** Even in 'After Apple Picking' the tired and exhausted apple picker dreams of magnified Apples 'appear and disappears and listens the rumbling sounds of loads of apple coming in

Frost's attitude towards nature is not romantic His men do not spiritualize or glorify nature. On the other hand their attitude towards nature is very practical and real. In this sense 'man responding to environment around him' is the major theme of Frost's poetry. One more remarkable feature of Frost's poetry is his scientific knowledge of nature. This knowledge makes his people to look at nature very practically. 'Design' is an example of Frost's knowledge of medicinal plant 'heal-all', a white spider and white moth, all are combined together to create a beautiful design that compels him to think it as a careful planning or design of god to threaten human beings on the earth. It is this botanicals knowledge of nature make Frost practical in nature description.

In the manner of Emerson and Whitman Frost also celebrated America as independent nation as a new world garden and described his land with the variety of its flora and fauna. Emerson and Whitman stressed on Adamic simplicity, innocence and naturalness of man. Following them, Frost also stressed natural simplicity and innocence of his country men.

The third part of this paper comments on the Philosophy of life Frost learns from nature. Frost himself said 'my simplicity is just superficial. Delight at initial stage gets the twist of wisdom at the end' This twist gives a philosophical touch to Frost's poetry. As a philosopher Frost brings forth simple philosophy of successful and meaningful life. For Frost ultimately 'work is worship' and 'duty is true beauty of life'. He learns philosophy from nature rather nature teaches this philosophy to Frost. Birches is the best manifestation of Frost's philosophy. Boyhood activity of swinging to the birches attracts even grown up Frost. It is mainly because of its taking him from 'down to up' and 'up to down.' It enable Frost to keep proper balance between 'earth and heaven.' Frost has attraction for aspiring world but it is momentary. On the other hand he wants to combine earth and heaven. It is only for this reason Frost wants to be the swinger of birch tree. Frost loves this earth with all its aspects. According to him **'Earth is the proper place for love' I don't know where it is likely to go better.** In spite of the worldly fever and fret Frost loves this earth He realizes that this momentary escape can never be a solution on the problems of life. On the other hand Frost finds real joy on the earth, facing the problems and getting

...and human nature. This down to earth philosophy is an essence of Frost's poetry. *Participation* in which he lived solved his problem with solutions and experienced divine strength. This helped him to discover an organic unity between man and nature. It is this interrelatedness between man and nature gives meaning to human life and nature also.

Conclusion

In a world, Frost emerged on the gloomy period of declining prosperity in New England. The fast growth of industrialism, materialism and insecurity of life affected his view of life. At such a stage man is lost from the threats of the world around him. He experienced the Connectedness with nature as the best solution for the bewildered and confused state of mind, when he lost faith in life. Even today, in the ecological crisis, Frost's poetry is the best solution to tackle the problems of life. It is no wonder that Frost worked for the ultimate goal of teaching the significance of nature in human life. The capability of human values through his nature poetry to make man better and wiser is the most unparalleled and unique contribution of Frost to the world. In today's ecological crisis, Frost's poetry comes as a relief to the whole mankind as it brings a new hope and gives a great promise of hope to the future.

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Kamala Das : Confessional Poet of India

Dr. Anjali P. Pande

Dept of English,

Smt,V.N.Mahila Mahavidyalaya Pusad

FULL PAPER

Particularly considering the history of Indian poets writing in English it is observed that in the pre-independence period the poets such as Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu kept alive the tradition of poetry along with men poets. In post independence period, gradually, poetry by women-writers writing in English changed and took new dimension commenting on man-woman relationship with special focus on love and sex. Since independence, poetry of Indian women shifted from romantic and socio-cultural to a new kind of poetry based on realistic and personal experience. Their Poetry, especially love poetry, was written in the context of Indian situation and traditional ideas of womanhood with modern ones. The poets like Tapati Mookarji, Kamala Das, Sunita Namjoshi and Gauri Deshpande rebelled against the conventional role of woman in society and struggled to search their identity as an individual in this new world of experiences.

The modernism and feminism of Indian women poets begins with Kamala Das as she broke away the romantic tradition of pre-independence women-poets and presents a realistic and concrete picture of real life based on her experience with focus on man-woman relationship.

Writing in both Malayalam and English, works of Kamala Das include her autobiography 'My Story', one novel, several short stories, her collection of poems, 'Summer in Calcutta', 'The Descendants,' 'The Old Play house and Other Poems.' Through the 50s and 60s Kamala Das continued writing in confessional style. Her poems reveal herself, her intense desire for love, her failure to achieve emotional essential involvement in her love hence it becomes an essential to understand her personality to understand her poetry. Her early and unsatisfactory marriage with Madhava Das at an age of fifteen proved unhappy one. Her frustration, disillusionment and bitter experience of married life colour her poetry. In reality her husband was kind to her but she did not expect matrimonial happiness or security

from him, rather she expected emotional involvements from her. She narrates this psychological traumas in her autobiography - My Story. This bitter married experience gives a new dimension to her love poetry. Her poetry has its roots in Indian epics and also has a significant aspect in western tradition.

Poetry of Kamala Das talks about her struggle with sexism, love, loneliness and disillusionment that leave readers awestruck. That's why her poetry is a search for love with its principle theme, and it is through her love she tries to discover herself. Going through the love poems of Kamala Das, it is observed that her love poetry can be divided into two phases physical love and spiritual love poetry. Kamala Das presents various shades of physical love that is very prominent in the first phase of her love poetry. In the second phase she strongly craves for ideal love, a kind of relation that exists between Radha and Krishna physical love that and spiritual love and it is much noticed that poetry of Kamala Das has various shade of physical love and she has written her love poetry in confessional mode. Very frankly, without keeping any veil, Kamala Das presents her personal experiences humiliations and intensity of her experience. As it is said that personality is the raw material of her poetry, her experiences lends a kind of authenticity to her poetry. Naturally her sexual and emotional traumas become the subject matter of poetry. This disappointment in her married life and failure to get the love within the framework of marriage forces, Kamala Das has to search her love outside the wedlock. Soon she realizes the futility of her search. In the poem 'The Descendants' Kamala Das asks if it is any happiness for a woman to lie beneath a man for the sexual act and points out that the world extends a lot beyond her lover's six foot frames. She intends to escape from this prison into a world of new love and infinite ecstasy. She needs no kindness but love, true in its sense. In the poem 'The Prisoner' Kamala Das says that she must find an escape some day from the snare of a husband's physical attractions. The agony of not finding a true lover and a sense of defeat oppresses her and she does not find a way out of it. Kamala Das is aware of the fact that physical love is an obstacle and a trap that prevents her from experiencing true love -

As the convict studies

His prisoner's geography

I study the trappings

Of A your body, dear Love

For I must someday find

An escape from its share

(The Prisoner)

Kamala Das also expresses her wish to leave the cocoon which her husband builds around and fly around like petals of flowers. So almost all the poems of Kamala

Das are a strong message of feminism in confessional tone that labels her as a staunch feminist poet.

Most of the poems of Kamala Das portray the complex relationship between lust and love, and also boldly confesses the futility and meaninglessness of physical love. Gradually Kamala Das discovers that the pleasure of body are of cloying and ephemeral at nature. She also realizes soon that the physical love is bound to wither as it flourishes on body, and even the search for true love in this world is useless exercise. Having been highly influenced by her grandmother's younger sister Ammalu who was also a poet and worshipper of Krishna, Kamala Das returns to mythical world of Krishna and Vrindavan to seek everlasting love. In the second phase of her love poems Kamala Das imagines herself as Radha and gets lost and finds comfort in the arms of imaginary Krishna where there is no surrender to her man and yet no starving for love -

*Give him all, give him
What makes you woman, the scent of
Long hair, the musk sweat between the breasts
The warm shock of menstrual blood and your
Endless female hungers.*

(The Looking Glass)

In the presence of Krishna she experiences absolute liberty from the rigid social code and the issue of super ego. Kamala Das longs for such an ideal love that never impedes her freedom. This concept of true love she gives in her poem *The Old Playhouse*. In spite of her marriage, she turns to Krishna to forget the boundaries of their narrow selves. Kamala Das confesses that she has relations with different men who fail to provide her love and satisfaction she lognes for. In her autobiography *My Story* she writes 'I was looking for an ideal lover. I was looking for the one who went to Mathura and forgot to return his Radha'. So by seeking solace in Radha-Krishna myth Kamala Das was seeking for an ideal lover. In the love, poems of Kamala Das the haunting image of Krishna becomes inseparable. She remembers him on her bridal night, during her illness and also has mystical experience of listening the sound of flute. Her poem 'Ghanshyam' vividly portrays her search for true love. In her mythical love poems, it is clearly marked that the element of Bhakti lacks somewhere. Her relation with Krishna is purely human thus she lives simultaneously in two worlds - in actual world where love is lust and mystical world of Vrindawan and also combines indigenous tradition and confessional western tradition.

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