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ENVIRONMENTALISM IS OMNIPRESENT: A JOURNEY FROM SANSKRIT LITERATURE TO ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT



This paper aims to concern about environmentalism, especially focus on Sanskrit literature and English literature. In it, a search of environmentalism through the epic and the works of English literature. In the *Vedas*, water is compared to 'Amrita' - "Apaswantaramritapsu." In *Atharva Veda*, it is written "Apo asman matarah sudayanta." In the *Puranas*, we have the environmental consciousness and balance of Nature. In the *Agni Purana*, water was described as "Hari". There are many references for digging the wells and the ponds in the *Matsya Purana* and the *Baraha Purana*. In the *Shiva Purana*; we have the conservation of water. In the *Agni Purana* and the *Shiva Purana*, we have the information on the plantation of trees. In *Abhijnanasakuntalam*, we have information to maintain eco-conservation; we see the notion against animal killing. Natural consciousness is felt within the human feelings.

William Wordsworth is well known as the worshipper of Nature who journeys from Christianity to Paganism. The *Pantheistic* creed is sourced by "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." and see the emotions in tranquility in his poetry. In Hardy's love for Nature, there is nothing mystic or transcendental as in that of Wordsworth. Wordsworth loves not only the sights of Nature but also those who live in its midst. His greatest characters are animal lovers. The landscape painting is linked with the subject of human moods. Thus, hills, heaths, rivers, meadows, woodlands in Wessex appear and reappear in the very philosophy of Hardy's existence amidst nature. This paper attempts to declare how William Wordsworth and Hardy's works create the depiction of environmentalism.

Keywords: Veda, Purana, Abhijnanasakuntalam, Paganism, Pantheistic, Wessex, Envourmantalism.

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INTRODUCTION

In all four *Vedas*, we find the concept of a clear, pollution-less environment, to maintain the ecology and the beautification and balance of Nature. In India, the entire emphasis is on water-based civilization. But if we look with a suspicious eye in the Vedic literature, then it can be observed that like water, there are also consciousness to the conservation of trees and wild animals. There is a keen eye to look out the proper balance in the ecosystem by the contemporary Vedic sages.

The Vedic sages always regarded air as their father, brother, and friend because they know that air is the source of life: "Uta bata pitasi no uta bhratato nah sakha sa no jibatabe kridhi".¹ In *Madhumantra* of *Rigveda*, we can see the total cleansing of the environment, not only the purification of air:

"Madhu bata ritayate madhu
ksharanti sindhabah Madhwirnah
santoshadhi.Madhu naktamutoshaso
madhumat parthibam rajah Madhu daurastu
nah pita".²

It is said in the *Rigveda* that all the two spheres, "Dyuloka" and "Antarikshaloka" are fulfilled with nourished with water and herb: "Madhumati roshadhiryaba apo madhumanno bhabatwantarik-Sham".³ According to the *Rig Veda*, the quality of the wind and its working is well observed. The positivity shows the vigorous creativity of the self, while the other side caused the negativity, producing evil:

"Dwabimou batou batah aa
sindhora parabatah Daksham te anya aa
batu paranyo batu yad rapah. Aa bata bahi
bhishajam ni bata yad rapah Twam hi
bishwabheshajo devanam duta iyate".⁴

In ancient times, the *Yajnas* were used to purify the air by praying to invoke rains that would clean the air

and by reducing dust and pollution from it: "Apam dharam bhindhi-puro bato barshan jinwarabritam swaha".⁵ Vedic sages are guided by the heavenly blessings of perfumed air compared to the honeyed fragrance which may cause further creativity and wisdom: "Madhu bata tayate".⁶

In the *Yajur Veda*, it is said that of the avoidance of violence and pollution spreading: "Prithibim ma himsih", "Antariksham ma himsih", "Mapohimsih ma Oushadhirhimsih".⁷

In the *Atharva Veda*, it is argued that the entire world is covered with three theories – Water(ap), Air, Banaspati (medicinal plants): "Trini chhandasi kabayo pururupam darshanam biswachakshanam Apo bata oushadhayah tanyekasmin bhuvan arpitani".⁸

It is said in the *Vedas* that water is an affectionate mother: "Ushatiriba matarah". Water is regarded as the cause of well-being for the entire world: "Apo devibrihatirbisa sambhubah". For this reason, we cannot afford to pollute water. In the *Shukla Yajur Veda*, it is said that we should careful water preservation: "Ma apo moushadhirhimsih". Water destroys the biological negativity of the human body: "Aripa apro aparipramasmat".

The purification of air controls the environmental degradation and poisoned atmosphere: Herbs has the quality to purify the air that will make a strong resistance to diseases: Water has the auspicious quality which even washes the sins: "Idamapah pra bahata yat kincha duritam mayi". In the *Rig Vedas* we find:

"Gange cha Yamune chaiba
Godabari Saraswati Narmade Sindhu Kaveri
jaleasmin sannidhim kuru".⁹

In the *Rig Veda*, there is a mantra which indicates that even thousands of years ago at the time of writing of the *Rig Veda*, Vedic sages had the idea that

¹ Rig Veda(10/186/2)

²Ibid (10/90/6-8)

³ Ibid (4/57/3)

⁴ Ibid (137/2-3)

⁵Taittiriya Upanishad(2/4/7)

⁶RigVeda(1/90/6)

⁷YajurVeda

⁸Atharva Veda(18/1/17)

⁹Atharva Veda(18/1/17)



one's vital element in breathing is Oxygen. In the *Chhandogyo Upanishad*, we can see sage Uddalak said to his son Swetketu, trees have life and they can feel happiness and sorrow like humans. Here it is said that water better than rice.

In the *Bishnupurana*, the relation between water and medicinal plant is stated in the geographical description of Hindu mythology, where it is found that this globe is imagined as seven oceans and in that we have seven islands. These seven islands are named by the origin of *banaspati* (medicinal plants). For example – *Jambudvip*, *Plakshadip*, *shalmaldvip*, *Kushdwip*, *Krounchadvip*, *shakdwip* and *Pushkardvip*: “ Jambuplakshahabou dwipou shalmalaschaparodwija Kushakrounchastathashakah pushkarashchoiba saptamah”.¹⁰

The sublimity of trees, sowing of trees, the rituals rounding trees, to found parks and ponds are vividly described in *Puranas* with a particular ritualistic process. It is remarked in *Agni Puranas* that who sowing a tree he will live for thirty thousand *Idras* times in heaven: “Aramam karayet yastu nandane suchiram baset”. “ Papnashah parasiddhi briksharamapratisthaya”. In the *Shiva Puran*, it is opined that one who planted free amidst the forest, he will release his past and future generation from any types of obligations after death: “Atitanagatan sarban pitribamshastu tarayet Kantare briksharopi yastasmadwrikshamstu ropayet”.

The teaching of the *Puranas* is proved drastically in modern times for a forestation against the reigns of pollution. Here plants are regarded as our sons because after with the plantation of trees one can have a residence in heaven. Forest producing flowers to worship *gods*, *Rakshas*, *deities*, *Gandharv* as humans' sages etc. are resided in the lap of nature. The essential for creatures to live life is water. *Agni Purana* described to give water as pious; it takes one into heaven: “ Toyodanat sarbadanphalam prapya dibam brajet”.

It is said in Purana that if a man digs a pond then he will get the results the same as “*Agnishtomo Yajnas*”. In the *Shiva Purana* we can see in various seasons we should reserve our necessary waters into various reservoirs like ponds, lakes and others. We find the information about proper timings of the plantation of trees, following the seasons and the proper technique of digging the soil all discussed.

The Puranas are described as always the protection of animals. *Agni Purana* warned us that the killing of animals will lead us to hell. In *Kurma Purana*, we find that we should not kill birds and eat them. If accidentally one had engaged in the killing of animals then he should take penance by “*Chandrayanabrata*”. In the various *Puranas*, the occurrence of penances is invoked to save the animal world against any brutal killings.

We can see the relationship between nature and man with path-breaking sympathy towards the bosom of nature by great poet Kalidasa in his great drama *Abhijnanasakuntalam*. Kalidasa worshiped the eight visible forms (water, fire, sky, air, earth etc.) of Lord Shiva to protect against any type of evils and nourish the world with divine blessings:

“Ya sristih srashturadya bahati
bidhīhutam ya habiryā cha hotriye dwe
kalam bidhattah shrutibisayaguna ya sthita
byapya biswam . Yamahu
sarbabijaprakritiriti yaya pranianh
pranabantah Pratyakshabhih
prapannastanubhirabatu
bastabhirashtabhirishah.”¹¹

It is written by Rabindranath Tagore regarding his essay about ancient literature *Sakuntala* that as the other characters like Anasuya, Priyambada, Kanva, Dusyanta, and the forest of austerities (*tapoban*) has the elements of life and personality. Her he is personifying the inanimate object or concept called “*Tapoban*”.

Even the prologue we have the description that the idle ladies are kissed politely by the bees and they use the natural flower as their ornaments in the ear:

“Ishadishachchumbitani bhramaraih
sukumarakesharshikhani Abatamsayanti dayamanah
pramadah shirishkushumamani”.

¹⁰BishnuPurana

¹¹Abhijnanasakuntalam (1/1)



After that, we can find the sage Kanva's hermitage amid landscape near the bay of river Malini. Near the hermitage of sage Kanva we can see the character of nature is established here with these lines:

"Nibara
shukagharbhakotaramukhabhrashtastaruna
madhah Prasnigdham
kwachidingudiphalabhidhah suchyanta
ebopalah. Bisvasopagamadabhinnagatayah
shabdham sahante mriga--
Stoyadharapathashcha
balkalashikhanisyandarekhankitah".¹²
i.e., Grains of wild rice fallen from tree-hollows/ where parrots nest, lie scattered under the trees;/those stones there look moist, glossy, from the oil / of ingudi-nuts split and pounded on them;/all around, deer browse in their tranquil haunts,/unafraid of the chariot's approach; yonder,/drops of water dripping off the edges of bark-garments/in long lines, trace.the paths to pools and streams.

The description of beautiful nature is seen throughout the passages of *Abhijnanasakuntalam* : "Rippling beneath a passing breeze, waters flow In deep channels to leave the roots of trees; Smoke drifts up from oblations to the Sacred Fire To dim the soft sheen of tender leaf buds;

Free from fear, fawns browse lazily in meadows Beyond, where Vidarbha-shoots are closely cropped".²⁶

the great poet Kalidasa describes nature with various natural sceneries in the drama,

Where we can find:

"Gahantam mahisha nipa nasalilam
shringair muhustaritam
Chhayabaddhakadambakam mrigakulam
romanthanam abhyasyatu.
Bishrabdham kriyatam

¹²The loom of time, Kalidasa, Penguin classic 26) Ibid

barahatatabhirmustakshatih palvale
Bishramam labhatimidam cha
shithilajyabandhamasmaddhanuh".¹³

The gradual growing of small plants by nourishing waters is very important by Kalidasa in his drama: "Tvatta api tatKashyapasya ashramabrikshakah priyatareti tarkayami yena nabamalikakusumapelaba api tvam etesham alabalapurane niyukta" and "Na kebalam tataniyoga eba asti me sodarasneha api eteshu".

A tiny plant will be the future outcome of wood as a small child will be the backbone of our future society. So the human world and the jungle is seat down in the same plane and importance to Kalidasa.

The bond between nature and man is so perfect and intimate that we can find it in various places throughout the drama. There is no other playwright who can imitate the personified nature into the feelings of human beings as well as the collaboration of landscapes to the vigorous enthusiasm:

"Arkosyopari shithilam chyutamiuba
nabamalikakusumam" and "Etasmin
shukadarosukumare nalinipatre nakhaih
nikshiptabarnam kuru".

The heart-rending call of beautiful or the natural flow of the river collaborates quite

Uniquely, in the songs of the birds. The run of the wild deer parallel to the run of the gushing emotions of the human heart full of vigor and aspiration for the betterment in the near future:

"Na namayitumadhiyamasmi
shakta dhanuridamahitasayakam mrigeshu
Sahabasatimupetya yaih priyah krita iba
mugdhabilokitopadeshah".¹⁴

So nature is correctly translating into a human being; personifies itself to the animals, human beings, birds, trees, and even in the sages, running wild and ecstatic: "Yatha esha ito dattadrishtih utsukah

¹³Abhijnanasakuntalam (2/6)

¹⁴Abhijnanasakuntalam (2/6)



mrigapotakah mataram anvishyati .Ehi. Samyojayaba enam."

In the fourth Act, when Sakuntala left her parental home in search of her husband's address, she seeks permission even to the trees assuming them as her guardian. The dramatist even poetically portrays the addressing of trees by symbolic representation tearing down the trees and the barks:

"Kshoumam kenachidindupandu
taruna mangalyamabishkritam
Nisthyutashcharanopabhogasulabho
laksharasah kenachid. Anyebhyo
banadebatakartalairaparvabhagottithai-
rattanyabharnani
tatkisalayodbhedapratidvandvibhih".¹⁵

Whenever Sakuntala goes to her husband's address, there is a sudden oracle in the sky showing the smooth journey following pleasant nature:

"Ramyantara kamaliniharitai sarobhi-
Shchhayadrumairniyamitarkamayukhatapah. Bhuyat
kusheshayarajomridurenurasyah
Shantanukalapavanashcha shivashcha panthah".¹⁶

Even the lady sage Gautami asked Sakuntala to have her prayers to those trees who made fair permission to go to her husband's address: "Jate , jnatijanasnigdhabhih anujnatagamanasi tapobanadebatabhih".

The departure of Sakuntala its not only felt in the minds of human beings but also observed in every natural element like –trees, leaves, deer and peacock: "Udgitaladarbhakabala mrigya parityaktanartana mayurah Apasritapandupatra munchantyashruniba latah".

The parting bell of her departure also symbolically represented by the cuckoo's song as observed in the text: "Anumatagamana Sakuntala Tarubhiriyan banabasabandhubhih. Parabhratibirutam kalam yatha Pratibachanikritamebhiridrisham".

The parallel comparison between Sakuntala and a creeper is well observed here, when Sakuntala takes an able husband like Dusyanta as the creeper takes the mango tree for proper dependence :

"Samkalpitam prathameba maya
tabarthe Bhartaramatmasadrisham
sukritaigata tvam. Chutena samshritabati
nabamalikeya- Masyamaham tvayi cha
samprati bitachintah".¹⁷

The departure is Sakuntala is more appealing when the emotional appeal of a tiny deer is there to make Sakuntala stay here, not to left. The divorce from nature is so bitter that only this drama can observe this type of melancholy in the whole host of Sanskrit literature. Whenever in the fifth Act Sakuntala is rejected by her husband Dusyanta, it is unique to observe that the environment is also harsh and unpleasant: "Panduptranam tapodhananam madhye kisalayamiba".

Thus, the entire drama is intimately associated with the backdrop of nature and the environment regarding human feelings and emotions.

The publication of *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, a joint venture by Wordsworth and Coleridge, in 1800, is found to mark the beginning of a new literary movement in the history of English literature, known as romanticism, pointing such features like subjectivity, escapism, melancholy note, worship of freedom, return to nature, interest in the middle ages, sense of wonder and mystery, variety rather than uniformity and dignity. Here Wordsworth attacks the artificial and restricted forms of neoclassical poetry on the grounds of over-sophistication and polishedness in style and theme. He discarded the *gaudiness and inane phraseology* of many modern writers and their complete alienation from the sympathies of men. The immediate purpose of Wordsworth's *Preface* is to defend his poems against the charges of lowness and un-poeticalness that had been made against both their subjects and their diction. Its wider intention is to relate poetry as

¹⁵Abhijnanasakuntalam (2/6)

¹⁶Abhijnanasakuntalam (2/6)

¹⁷Abhijnanasakuntalam (2/6)



closely as possible to the common life, to remove it in the first place from the realm of fantasy, and in the second from the polite and over-sophisticated amusement of the *Augustan* era. The principal object was to choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate and describe them, throughout, as far as possible in as language used by men, and at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination; whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect. By selection he means that it should be purified from provincialism and all rational causes of disgust and dislike, it was to be selected, it was to be the language of men in a state of vivid sensation. The process of selection is Accomplish through the agency of imagination when the poet is vividly inspired; imagination would create out of 'the *language used by men*', the true and real language and style of poetry. Wordsworth feels in every object of nature the presence of a sublime spirit that rolls through all things. And the poet's function is not limited to mere recording but he is a man speaking to men, a man endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, which have a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul that is supposed to be common among mankind. The evil effects of contemporary developments --- notably the spread of industrialization, the over-standardization of urban life and the consequent thirst for stimulation by sensational news--- made him thirsty for the conception of that art which is the '*breath and finer spirit of all language*' and which is the product of '*the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings*' taking its origin from '*emotion recollected in tranquility*'. His love of nature is so intense, his revelation of her inmost beauties so lifelike, that he inspires enthusiasm in those who have studied him unlike by aroused by any other writer. It has been said that no one who has once felt his touch can throw off its influence. Nature was alive to him and appealed to him so forcibly that he more than any other poets have been enabled to make others feel her power. To many objects before indifferent, his touch has added

"*the gleam*

The light that never was on sea and land".¹⁸

Wordsworth's inborn passion for nature was such that, to use his own words,

"While he was yet a boy
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run Had been his
dearest joy".¹⁹

Most of his waking hours were spent beneath the open sky, and much of his time he was under the spell of the beautiful scenes that enriched the lake country in which he lived. How genuine is his heavenly observation:

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."²⁰

It is doubtful whether any man ever lived who caught more fully the music of nature, whose soul was more fully attuned to its harmonies. To him there was an eloquence in a noble hill, in a lordly forest, in a bank of flowers, in one lone '*violet by a mossy stone, half hidden from the eye*', that moved him the very inmost depths of his being, and stirred his heart of hearts. The peace, the serenity, the loveliness of Grasmere vale, his home, '*his heart's delight*', seem to have entered his soul, and given it a note of beauty rarely, if ever, before heard by mortals. The celestial light in which he says meadow, grove, and stream, the earth and sky and every common sight seemed to him in his childhood to be appareled, was ever more visible to him than to less rare natures, and more often suggestive of that ,"*Sense sublime Of something far more deeply interfused Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns*'. Wordsworth's debt to nature is with deepest gratitude told in The Prelude: 'I had received so much, that all my thoughts / were steeped in feeling'

The provincial and local elements are predominant in Hardy's Wessex novels. The major areas focused here are hills, dales, rivers, meadows and woodlands. In

¹⁸Elegiac Stanzas

¹⁹Poems by William Wordsworth (1815)

²⁰Intimations of Immortality



The Return of the Native, Egdon Heath has a profound influence on characters. Though Hardy had personified nature, he never believed that nature has a separate life, a soul of her own. The beauties of nature and the mystic qualities of it are harmonized. The bleak, barren, wild, stormy beauteous forms of nature are described in *Tess of the D'urbervilles*. His characters are hay-trussers, dairymaids, woodcutters, furze-cutters. Hardy's love is always for the natural men of common existence. The sheepdogs of Gabriel Oak represent his love for the animal world. Tess could never bear to hurt a fly. The side effects of beautiful nature also have in Hardy's mind. Rose is a very beautiful flower with a thorn! The mortal existence is also pained Thomas Hardy. To Hardy nature is indifferent to human emotions! Tess feels very pain of her fate but there shows any observation of nature's anxiety. Hardy shows his natural landscapes following the popular character's moods. The romantic glow is invoked in the conjunction of history and prehistory. The pastoral evolves its unique form, but the flaws in natural law leave it tangled. Hardy can say "*To dwellers in a wood, almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its features*".²¹ There is a fond relation between Hardy and nature. In *Desperate Remedies* Hardy writes: "The beautiful things of the earth become more dear as they elude pursuit".

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is said that this research paper has been remaining success to present the status of environment from the Vedic to English Literature. It William Wordsworth, Thomas Hardy and Thomas Cray who gives the glimpse in their works.

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