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## **Deep Ecological Consciousness and Interconnectedness in William Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey***

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**Abstract.** Humans and nature interconnectedness is a dynamic process. The extensive misuse of natural resources has left us in an uncontrolled situation. Ecological disasters are worsening our relationship with nature. Humans' anthropocentric attitude to dominate nature needed to be relooked from biocentric lenses. Rediscovering our interconnectedness with nature will advance our ecological consciousness to bring equilibrium between humans and nature. This paper intends to examine "Tintern Abbey", the famous poetry by William Wordsworth to raise awareness of interconnectedness of human and nature in people's mind, through deep ecological perspectives.

**Keywords.** Environment, Ecocriticism, Deep Ecology, Nature, Interconnectedness

### **Introduction**

The famous poem "Tintern Abbey" by William Wordsworth is a poem about the interconnection between poet and nature. He was deeply sublimed by the place and composed this poem. The famous poem "Tintern Abbey" will be discussed from the deep ecological perspective and uncover its ecological consciousness and interconnectedness of poet and nature.

Ecocriticism studies the relationship between humans and the natural world in literature. It deals with how environmental issues, cultural issues concerning the environment and humans' attitudes towards nature are expressed and analyzed. One of the main goals of eco criticism is to study how individuals in society interact and react in relation to nature and ecological aspects. Ecocriticism is interdisciplinary studies, it emphasizes the partnership between natural scientists, writers, literary critics, anthropologists, historians, and more. Ecocriticism asks us to examine ourselves and the world around us, critiquing the way that we represent, interact and harmonize.

Whereas, Deep ecology is a biocentric environmental philosophy and social movement which emphasizes the inherent value of nature. It relooks the environmental perspective from a deep ecological perspective unlike anthropocentric, which interprets or regards the world in terms of human values and experiences. Deep Ecology is a more radical doctrine built on preservationist themes from the early environmental movement. Its main originators are Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, the American sociologist Bill Devall, and the American philosopher George Sessions.

William Wordsworth was a forerunner poet of the British romantic period and the leading voice of romantic poetry. He was one of the best natural poets in British literature. From his early age he encountered nature and fell in love with the beauty of nature. The frustration came in his mind after he witnessed the haphazard development of industrialization and sufferings of people as well as to the environment. Gradually, he refilled himself with the connection of nature, yet the inspiration of his early experience of the wild nature remained, and it made him put all his feelings into his poetry. This paper will deeply investigate the deep ecological consciousness and interconnectedness between poet and nature.

### **Literature Reviews**

This famous poem "Tintern Abbey" has been looked from different perspectives, most of the critic describes it from romantic lenses. "Tintern Abbey" contains multiple qualities that romanticism describes: glorification of nature, emphasis on aesthetic beauty, themes of solitude, imaginations, vivid sensory description etc. The poem is a recollection of the past and the lamentations, hope for the future. Where, poet explains beautifully in a highly symbolic and metaphoric way. Michelle Smith writes in his article, *The Romantic Imagination, Wordsworth, and "Tintern Abbey"* about the "Tintern Abbey" and its romantic characteristic:

Four themes relating to our conception of the Romantic imagination are embodied in "Tintern Abbey;" these themes include the centrality of subjectivity in imaginative processes, the sense of participating in the divine through creativity, the search for meaning in life through exploring the mystery of our being, and nature as the primary source of inspiration. If "Tintern Abbey" seems to fit easily into these cornerstones of the Romantic imagination. (2)

These lines advocate the romantic characteristics of a writer searching a solace in the imagination to nature. The self-satisfaction is not the major attribute to be in relation with nature. But, the connectedness is there the serenity of nature also pushing writers to delve into self to rediscover the deeper Self. It is not only imagination, it also helps writers to expand self. On the other hand, David S. Mial writes in his article, *Locating Wordsworth: Tintern Abbey and communicating with nature*, "A green reading of "Tintern Abbey" argues that the mind is rooted in and shaped by the same underlying processes that can be identified in nature" (3). This makes clear that the human mind is also rooted to the same fundamental source as nature does. Human and nature are inseparable. To understand this core connection this poem needs further description from a deeper perspective to unfold the deeper interconnectedness.

Similarly, Damian Walford Davies tries to relook the "Tintern Abbey" in his article *Romantic Hydrography: Tide and Transit in 'Tintern Abbey'*, "a tidal hermeneutic allows us both to confirm and to contest some of the assumptions of New Historicist readings of the poem. Over and above its supposed pantheism, its 'pictures of the mind', 'Tintern Abbey' represents a compelling psycho-geographical chart (11). It emphasizes the external, geographical explanation of the poem, furthermore, it searches the psycho-geographical description. It urges to relook the poem from a new historical perspective. Here, one of the significant things is that humans are part of nature. Without doubt, humans' feelings are influenced by nature. It cannot be only the psychological reflection rather it required deep contemplations to rediscover its connections. As Xiuzhi Zhangln writes about the Wordsworth poetry in his article *Ecological Consciousness in William Wordsworth's Poetry*:

Wordsworth's times, the Industrial Revolution made the rich wealthy and worsened the poor people's working and living conditions and Wordsworth experienced and observed the terrible conditions and showed pity for the poor. So he held a critical attitude to the

ruling class. Later in life he went back to nature and advocated that man should return to nature. (171)

This underscores the background of William Wordsworth's mind. The poet's love of nature is to release the depression from that contemporary society. Where, the extreme development bogs down the humans' inner attribute: love, respect, spirituality. Therefore, William Wordsworth seems to have returned to nature to reestablish the lost relation. Moreover, this opens the way to embark another journey of poetry with nature. Which is in fact, searching the interrelation or finding the more conscious attachment with nature. All beings belong to the universe. Through honoring our inherent interconnection with all life forms, humans can rediscover a human mode of being in alignment with the natural world.

Unlike those critics, this paper focuses on the study of deep ecological consciousness and interconnectedness of "Tintern Abbey" deploying recently developed deep ecological perspective of ecocriticism.

### **Theoretical Insights**

Deep ecology is a biocentric environmental philosophy and social movement which emphasizes the inherent value of nature. It relooks the environmental perspective from a deep ecological perspective unlike anthropocentric, which interprets or regards the world in terms of human values and experiences. But, Deep Ecology is a more radical doctrine built on preservationist themes. Its main originators are Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, the American sociologist Bill Devall, and the American philosopher George Sessions share with social ecologists a distrust of capitalism and industrial technology and favor decentralized forms of social organization. Deep ecologists also claim that humans need to regain a "spiritual" relationship with nonhuman nature.

Deep ecology portrays itself as "deep" because it asks deeper questions about the place of human life, who we are? Basic principles of deep ecology: one is a scientific insight into the interrelatedness of all systems of life on earth. They believe that anthropocentrism: human-centeredness is a misguided way of seeing things. Deep ecologists say that an ecocentric attitude is more consistent with the truth about the nature of life on Earth. Instead of regarding humans as something completely unique rather they see us as integral threads in the fabric of life. They believe we need to develop a less dominating and aggressive posture towards the earth if we and the planet are to survive. Therefore, they term the anthropocentric views as shallow ecology and biocentric views as the 'deep ecology' which search the interconnectedness of everything in the planet.

In the poem "Tintern Abbey" William Wordsworth's tries to restore his mind in tranquility. In the poem he Imagines, laments and adores his own experience with nature; the bitter sweet relationship can be seen. He meditates more densely to discover the invisible power of nature and at the same time, rediscovers himself as a moral being. These all attributes of "Tintern Abbey" required to observe more deeply from deep ecological perspective.

### **Discussion of Poem "Tintern Abbey" form Deep Ecological Perspective**

William Wordsworth strongly opposes haphazardness of human beings towards nature. He indirectly expresses the illness of industrialism. In the other hand he sees nature as a mystic and super phenomenon that humans are not separate but a part of nature, it has interconnectedness with nature. He further examines everything as the manifestation of supreme. Therefore, his frustration of contemporary world and attachment of nature can be seen starkly in the poem "Tintern Abbey", "The still, sad music of humanity / Nor harsh nor grating,

thought of ample power/ To chasten and subdue. And I have felt / A presence that disturbs me with joy” (168). These powerful lines of poem express William Wordsworth’s encounter with nature as a spiritual scripture which is eternally teaching him. He finds nature as a living entity and enters into inner conversations and urges to restore human relation with nature. His acceptance of nature as Supreme Being advances the consciousness of ecology and co-relations of human beings and nature in deeper level. Deep ecology also views that humans need to heal their relationship again with our home earth. In the book *Deep Ecology*, Bill Devall and George Sessions write about deep ecology:

Deep ecology is emerging as a way of developing a new balance and harmony between individuals, communities and all of Nature. It can potentially satisfy our deepest yearnings: faith and trust in our most basic intuitions; courage to take direct action; joyous confidence to dance with the sensuous harmonies discovered through spontaneous, playful intercourse with the rhythms of our bodies, the rhythms of flowing water, changes in the weather and seasons, and the overall processes of life on Earth.  
(7)

This clarifies that deep ecology tries to reconnect again our originality with nature. As everything is interrelated and interdependent to each other, the same theme is in “Tintern Abbey” poet tries to reconnect with nature lamenting his disconnectedness. As deep ecology searches for a way to bring an ecological equilibrium among all biosphere the poet seeks his tranquility to restore his lost connection. The same feeling and emotions are expressed in first stanza of the poem:

Five years have past; five summers, with the length  
Of five long winters! and again I hear  
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs  
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again  
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs. (167)

The unearthly feeling from the natural serenity is found in these lines. He revisits the valley and searches for the lost connections and he overwhelmed by nature's love. These lines not only express the feelings but in deeper level search his answers of his frustrations of modern industrializations. Moreover, the spiritual feeling of a poet closed to nature also reflects his inner quest. As the poem unfolds each stanza grows the poet's consciousness. It suggests that the poet's inner quest unlocks the ecological consciousness in himself and the readers as well as.

Furthermore, William Wordsworth evolves himself as the poem unfolds. The inner attachment of poet with nature makes his feeling as powerful as nature. This is more deep reflections after he revisited the valley. The emotions here are not just the emotions but, it displays the interconnectedness of humans and nature, which enlarge the knowledge and the relation with nature. Moreover, it empowers humans to comprehend the deeper significance of nature. William Wordsworth further expresses beautifully such inner power from nature:

Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man. (167)

The poet realizes the power of Nature, which resides in nature and as the part of nature human being lost the interrelations. Therefore, poet demands the inner relations. The more deep understanding of the mystery of nature. His feeling of hugeness near to nature makes him feel a small part of nature. It flattens his ego and superiority towards nature. The mystic power of nature inspires him to dissolve into nature to find his better self. By observing the wonders of nature, he comes to know that his inner capacity is still weak in front of nature. This makes clear that our ecological consciousness is still superficial or shallow, that is why humans need the capacity to comprehend nature's inner laws and its power. Deep ecology's main purpose is to elevate human and nature interconnectedness. As Mariusz Marszałek writes about deep ecology in his article Robinson Jeffers' Poetry from Deep Experience to Deep Ecology, "As Naess suggests, individual deep experience of oneness with nonhuman universe (identified with acceptance of eight platform principle) leads to deep questioning of oneself ideological premise" (3). Deep ecological eight principle clearly describes the relations and position of human beings, that everything has inherent positions and their differentness is their quality to be interconnected with all biosphere.

Similarly, William Wordsworth recalls his early age, and describes the beauty that he could not express:

O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the wood  
How often has my spirit turned to thee!  
And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought  
With many recognitions dim and faint. (168)

Bank of the Wye river poet recalls his past and laments his former serene feelings that he used to feel. Now, once again he tries to reconnect by his hazy recollections. This highlights that human and nature are rooted from the same spirit. Poet repents his past and becomes serious about the beauty of nature that becomes deem by the human's mundane attachments. He reminisces the river Wye for solace. He remembers natural beauty as a healing music, in the midst of modernizations. Without doubt, nature is tranquilizer for modern human being—the restlessness being. Returning to nature is searching the true self in nature or it looks the way to be connected with nature. Deep ecology also searches the human's deeper spiritual capabilities to communicate with nature. As Xiuzhi Zhang describes in the article Ecological Consciousness in William Wordsworth's Poetry, "He praises the miraculous power of nature that can get rid of man's fickleness. When he is very disappointed at the industrial city life, he can have recourse to natural power and believes the mysterious nature can give him energy" (3). Nature is a place where there is a power of supreme soul. But, the growing industries in the name of modernizations are reducing and harming nature. This core lamentations and the prayer are found densely in "Tintern abbey" which emphasizes the urgency of new relation with nature. In the same way, Deep Ecology advocates preservation of nature to keep it in its original form without any interference of man as nature has its own right to survive. All organisms on this earth have their own intrinsic values and no one is the master of anybody. This realization will give a sense of equality that every living being is connected intimately.

Finally, at the end of the poem, William Wordsworth advises to humanity, advising his sister Dorothy:

If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,  
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts  
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,

And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,  
If I should be, where I no more can hear  
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams. (169)

The poet returns to love for his sister Dorothy. He imagines humanity suggesting his sister to be blessed by nature. He focuses on the future of hope from his sister. In this poem, the poet communicates with sister but it reminds all human beings of their fundamental interconnection with nature and advances the Self eroded by modernizations. He repents on the bank of Wye river and educates his sister that he has learned a lot from nature. The wisdom, love and the spirit he has realized, he wants to see that hope form his sister at large from humanity. The poem concludes with Wordsworth sharing to his sister that Nature, and this moment that they have shared together, will always be remembered. Even when he is gone. The gradual development of his intimacy with nature starkly stirs up the deep ecological awareness from his poem "Tintern Abbey" to all humanity. The poet's emotional response is desperately further seeks dynamic of nature. The distance between his memories and his present reflection gives Wordsworth to evoke his emotional response to humanity. As George Session explains deep ecology in his book *Deep Ecology for the 21 Century*:

Naess further argues that science and technology alone cannot solve our environmental problems. And since logic can't prove one's starting point, people must go beyond narrow rationality and reliance on "authorities" and learn to cultivate and trust their basic intuitions as a basis for environmental action and meaningful personal values. And echoing Thoreau's injunction that we simplify our lives, Naess claims that the cultivation of an ecological self involves a materially simple lifestyle, and values that maximize the quality and richness of our experience. (4)

This gives light on the deep ecological aspect of environmental criticism that human beings are not only the physical being but humans are much more beyond physicality, which can be discovered in relation with nature. The extreme developments of technology only cannot address the future of humanity ... It is suffering from a myriad of environmental crises. Therefore, humanity needs to develop a deep ecological conscience for the future of humanity. These messages are well expressed in "Tintern Abbey" by William Wordsworth. The above discussion from the deep ecological lights confirms that human being need to evolve their deep ecological consciousness and the interconnectedness with everything in the planet.

### **Conclusion**

The poem, "Tintern Abbey", is not only a poem about nature but it is a deep ecological poem which tries to bridge the relationship between Nature and human beings. The poem starkly highlights advanced interconnectedness is necessary to bring the balance between humans and nature. It also indirectly alerts every reader to look back and see how human beings have behaved towards Nature in the past, and what the consequences of their anthropocentric attitude towards Nature. This paper examined the poem "Tintern Abbey" from deep ecological theoretical insides and found the poem is searching for harmony between humans and nature. Wordsworth is known as an ecological poet. For all his life, he immersed himself in the beautiful landscape. Nature to him was something to console him and purify his soul. In his heart, nature has a positive influence on man's growth, spirit and health. So the good relationship between nature and man is beneficial for man's existence. Therefore, Wordsworth's deep ecological views in his poetry can arouse man's ecological ideas to protect nature. If we want to live in equilibrium with nature, we should change our anthropocentric views towards nature. The

deeper root of the present ecological crisis is humans' state of disconnectedness. Our disconnectedness needs to be restored. Our extreme consumerism and human centeredness: anthropocentric tendency is leading this ecological disaster. Human's awareness about the ecosystem and the inner value based awareness is needed. This paper shortly discussed the poem and brought the hidden deep ecological messages of poem "Tintern Abbey" which will advance the deep ecological consciousness and interconnectedness between humans and nature.

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