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Ecological Sensibility in Gray Snyder Selected Poems

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by

Devikala Sharma

Roll. No.: 400276/070

T.U. Regd. No.: 9-2-53- 372-2009

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Declaration

I here declare that the thesis entitled,
"Ecological Sensibility in Gray Snyder Selected Poems"
Is my own original work carried out as a master student at the Department of
English at Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that
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All resources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no
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Devikala Sharma

July 4, 2018

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled "Ecological Sensibility in Gray Snyder Selected Poems" submitted to the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, by Devikala Sharma, has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research Committee.

.....
Pro. Dr. Ananda Sharma
Supervisor

.....
External Examiner

.....
Pradip Sharma
Head Department of English

July 16, 2018

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Abstract

Gray Snyder was a major English poet whose views towards nature and man's treatment of nature have supported his position as an important icon of ecocritical studies. His fame lies in the general belief that he has been viewed as a nature poet who viewed Nature superior to humans. In other words, his views about nature and his poems seek to heal the long-forgotten wounds of nature in the hope of reaching unification between man and nature. Therefore, this study is an attempt to focus on **Snyder's selected poems: "Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout," "For All," "Water," "Milton by Firelight," "Ripple on the Surface," "Anasazi," "Manzanita" and "Hay for My Horses."** in the light of ecocriticism in order to shed light on the poet's cautious views about the interdependence of man and nature. Through the poems takes into account the importance of the reciprocal relationship between man and nature as the major constituent of a vast ecosystem and suggest humans to assimilate ecologically and achieve tranquility in an era suffocated by technological pollution.

Introduction; Ecocriticism and Gray Snyder's Poems

Ecocriticism is the study of literature and the physical environment. It investigates the relationship between nature and literature. The word ecocriticism is coined by William Rueckert in 1978. It is based on the human response to the natural environment. Similarly ecological sensibility is a way of being that respects the natural world plants, trees, animals, and insects. Ecocritics with an ecological sensibility often are very sensitive to animals and ardently interested in nature.

Ecocriticism has a close affinity with the science of Ecology. Based on the *Oxford Learner's Dictionary* Ecology is "the relation of plants and living creatures to each other and to their environment" (4). In other words, ecology explains the interconnectedness of human beings and natural environment. This theory tries to find out the modern day ecological problems through the inspiration drew from nature Centre literature.

Eco-criticism links science and literary criticism. It examines various ecological issues that are referred to in literary works. Technology, industrialism, urbanization, excessive chemical plants, increase in population degrade ecosystem to such a great extent that many social and ecological institutions have come up to fight for the rights of environment. According to M.H Abrams:

Ecocriticism was a term coined later 1970s by combining "criticism and with a shortened term of "ecology"- the science that investigates the interrelations of all forms of plant and animal life with each other and their physical habitats. Ecocriticisms designates the critical writings which explore the relations between literature and the biological and physical environment, conducted with the acute awareness of the devastation being wrought on the environment by the

human activities. (71)

Abrams clears ecocriticism is the study of human nature relations in literature, film and other cultural expressions, has rapidly become established in the field of literary theory later 1970s.

Ecocriticism is not merely the study of nature as represented in literature. Nature here does not mean a mere fancy of its beautiful aspects like plants animals. Nature here means the whole of the physical environment consisting of the human and the non-human. The interconnection between the two creates a bond which is the basis of Ecocriticism. As long as there is a harmony between the living and the non-living, there prevails a healthy eco-system for the benevolence of mankind as well as the earth. The modern ecological consciousness has a feeling that the balance between human and the natural world must be maintained.

Though ecocriticism as a literary theory is of recent origin, the elements of it are found in the works of several writers in the earlier period. Romanticism, in this regard, is an embodiment of the fundamentals of ecocriticism. **Similarly Nasif Al. Jumaili says: "The Romantic poets attempted to rediscover the mystery and wonder of the world, and tried to establish a meaningful relationship between literature and Nature (16).** To Romantic poets nature is the principal source of inspiration and spiritual enlightenment. William Wordsworth, who belongs to the first generation of the Romantic poets, is considered to be a Nature poet, who viewed Nature as a living entity, and who believed that Nature was endowed with feeling and purpose. "Ecocriticism does not simply mean nature study; it has distinguished itself from conventional nature writing, first by its ethical stand and commitment to the natural world and then by making the connection between the human and the non-human world" (Mishra168). Ecocriticism concerned with human and non-human interaction

and interrelationship.

Eco-criticism talks about, the planet, earth and the ecosystem and its representation on literature. The eco-critics try to find out the viable relation between a text and nature. The poetry of Gray Snyder shows that the presence of nature and human life are united together and their relationship is bound by the natural forces driven by nature. So, human existence can be seen as a part of the whole ecosystem. It should not be derived from the idea that we humans are not the center of everything but part of a large ecosphere.

Ecocritics features the characteristics of establishing a balanced human nature relationship, preserving the natural world against mechanical exploitation. It studies the human exploitation of the natural world. It has come into popular use as a means of denoting poetry with a strong ecological emphasis or message. It deals with the variety of significant ideas about human-human relationships and human-nature relationships.

In my thesis, I propose to analyze the works of contemporary American eco-poet Gray Snyder. I will explore poetic forms employ in his representation of nature. Gray Snyder is a major figure in modernist Movement. Regarding the writing of Snyder Charles Molesworth says: "His poems witnessed a sharp decline in idealistic thought as a result of the dominance of modernist movements. Therefore his poems deal with idealistic vision of the relationship between human beings and the natural world" (16). Similarly David Tagani says:

He mostly talks about mortality and escapism from the reality through natural beauties. He relates his literary practices in the complexity of human life and the subjects that define human condition. Snyder in his poetry always relates his urgency to be immortal to enjoy the beauty of

the world. Snyder ideas and thoughts can easily be related with the idea of eco-criticism. (42)

His literature is mostly related with the nature and the human condition. Mortality, death, sex and transience of life all these things are the subjects of his poetry.

Gray Snyder's poems principally focus on the representations of physical environment. His poems create a memorable impression due to the presence of nature. His poems are often focused the themes of rural landscape and wildlife. The use of nature as the setting of the poems is one of the finest features of his writing. His way to look at the pastoral things is unique. Along with various seasons, he aptly uses the images of fog, trees, stones, pasture, snow, leaves and various animals etc. to create pathetic fallacy. Since it is impossible to discuss all poems of Snyder in its full extent in the research paper like this, only few representative poems have been selected for the present study. **They are: "Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout," "For All," "Water," "Milton by Firelight," "Ripple on the Surface," "Anasazi," "Manzanita" and "Hay for My Horses."**

Gray Snyder in his poem "Mid-August at Sourdough Mountain Lookout" successfully creates the fascinating atmosphere of wonder and wilderness. The traveler is enchanted by the natural beauty of the mountain. He enjoys the beauty and serenity of the nature. Modern man is going away from nature; moreover, the concept of wilderness is also changing. Due to his encroachment on the nature, the entire ecosystem is deteriorating. Beside the persona meditates upon a landscape that he describes. The poem begins like a descriptive poem, but is a serious meditation upon an American rural landscape, and upon the people who have literally and metaphorically left it behind when they went after the lure of the city civilization. Similarly Firas Jumaili argues: "For All" reflects the profound influence of Zen and

North American Indian cultures and myths on his sensibility and thought. To him, the poet faces two directions: one toward the world of people, language, and society, and the other toward the nonhuman, nonverbal world of nature" (14). He finds words are incapable of capturing the inner world of human nature, that part of human nature that comes before language, custom, and culture. Much of Snyder's poetry unites identification with nature with concern for the ecological consequences of progress and civilization.

"Turtle Island" is another ecocritical conscious poem. In this poem, Snyder talks about a beautiful natural landscape, describing it in a touching and loving way, and conveys the notion that everything together in the bioregion is alive. The way he describes it also suggests that it is delicate, and unsteady, in other words it all exists in a delicate balance that Snyder says we can live with peacefully, "without tools or clothes." If people can change their ways, and learn to live without destroying the environment, we can live with it, and become a part of it. Similarly his poem "Anasazi" is very important as it sets the tone for the whole work. The poem shows Snyder's interest in Native Indians for the whole poem is dedicated to the Anasazi's tribal existence and praises the state of harmony between those primitive people and their physical environment.

"Manzanita" is another poem taken from "Turtle Island" through the poem Snyder admires the green vegetation. We can say that this poem is a song of plant life. The poem shows Snyder's concept of ethnobotany and the use of vegetative life in human culture. The poem celebrates the immediate physical environment. In the poem of "Hay for my Horses" Snyder is telling the story of a man who has bucked hay most of his life, through the eyes of another man who is receiving hay from the man bringing it. The man bringing the hay, is a rough hard man and as he sits, he reflects

on his life, maybe not so much disappointed with his life now, just that he said a long time ago that he wasn't going to do something and then the realization, at that particular moment that that is exactly what he has done. Similarly through the poem "Water" Snyder places equal value between himself and other ecosystems. He does not present himself as a dominant figure but as a small part in the universe. The whole poem seems to be a description of a real event but religious and ecological implications are conveyed through it.

Ecocriticism and Ecopoetry

Ecopoetry features the characteristics of establishing a balanced human nature relationship, preserving the natural world against mechanical exploitation. It studies the human exploitation of the natural world. It has come into popular use as a means of denoting poetry with a strong ecological emphasis or message. It deals with the variety of significant ideas about human-human relationships and human-nature relationships. Regarding the ecocriticism and ecopoetry Bryan L. Moore says: "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" (34). Transcendentalism in American literature and Romanticism in English literature uphold similar ideas in reflecting organic vision of nature. Similarly Michael P. Cohen says:

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 purposes include sharing of facts, ideas

and texts concerning the study of literature and the environment. (36)

Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) is established 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.

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.

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 arte facts 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: Landmarks in Ecology*, 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.

Ecocritics believe 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.

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.

Reflection of Ecological consciousness in the selected poems of Snyder

Gray Snyder, the leading poetic figure of modernist movement poetry of 1930s in America. Basically his poetry reflects ecological consciousness in his poetry challenging the intellectual orderliness of the fashionable poetry of the time and going beyond the modern desolation as Jason T. Hertz says: "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" (14). 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.

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. Similarly David Tagnani says: "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 Sourdough Mountain 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 Snyder's poetry (143). 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, Snyder's 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.

The opening poem of *Riprap*, Snyder's first book of poetry, "Mid-August at Sourdough Lookout" presents an ecological image that indeed. This poem is a quiet meditative type of poem in which the persona meditates upon a landscape that he describes. The poem begins like a descriptive poem, but is a serious meditation upon an American rural landscape, and upon the people who have literally and metaphorically left it behind when they went after the lure of the city civilization. The poem brings both the land and the self. The density of the imagery of the first stanza suggests the smallness of the poet's humanity as opposed to high still air.

Down valley a smoke haze

Three days heat, after five days rain

Pitch glows on the fir-cones

Across rocks and the meadows

Swarms of new flies. (1-5)

To clarify the deep meditation of Snyder's towards the nature, John Suiter says:

"Having lived his childhood in the Pacific Northwest, Gary Snyder began to develop deep feelings towards the natural world at an early age which later characterized his poetic style. Snyder developed his ecological vision of poetry as a way of stimulating positive changes in the ecological world order, which may help to preserve life on this planet" (8). In other words, reading the poem ecologically emphasizes the tiny place humans have in the hugeness of the universe. Snyder presents in this poem a picture of solitariness and serenity. Living a simple life and being close to nature make the poet feel at peace. Snyder rejected the sweeping materialism of Western civilization, represented in its unconscious desire to render the wild world tame and to bend nature to its will. Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, poet and ecologist Gary Snyder at an early age began developing sensibilities about the natural world which would later come to define his literary style.

"Water" is another poem of Gary Snyder taken from the collection poem book *Riprap*. Through the poem he argues that animals, plants, and the ecosystems that sustain them have intrinsic value, that is, they are valuable apart from any instrumental value they might have for human beings. Rivers and lakes should contain clean water not just because humans need uncontaminated water for swimming and drinking, but also because fish do to survive.

Pressure of sun on the rockslide

Pool of pebbles buzzed in a Juniper shadow,

Tiny tongue of a this-year rattlesnake flicked,

Deep tumbling under arching walls and stuck

Whole head and shoulders in the water.

Eyes open aching from the cold and faced a trout. (1-7)

Above lines discover that Snyder places equal value between himself and other ecosystems. He does not present himself as a dominant figure but as a small part in the universe. This is shown in the last line in the poem when he is face to face with a fish. To clarify this Jamelah Earle says:

This poem shows Snyder in the context of the natural world, the poem suggests that he is only a small part of the world – not a dominant figure. Nowhere in the poem does Snyder say he has a more important place than any other part of the ecosystem, rather, it suggests that he is an equal. This is demonstrated in the poem's final line, where he ends up face-to-face with a fish. (7)

The whole poem seems to be a description of a real event but religious and ecological implications are conveyed through it. The theme Snyder emphasizes is that everything has its position in the universe and no one component is superior over others in the world. The world that Snyder describes in the poem is one in which everything has a place and is important, and suggests that human life is equal to all other forms of life.

Ecologist Barry Commoner argues everything in the Universe is interconnected each other. There is one ecosphere for all living organisms and what affects one, affects all. He says: "Everything is connected to everything else" (24). This argument considers the connections between aspects of our natural environment and human society. As Commoner Snyder is also conscious about every organism of

this earth.

"For All" another poem of Gray Snyder this poem has the same ecological implication of equality among all living beings. Snyder calls for new loyalty, a loyalty to the land and environment more than a flag or government:

I pledge allegiance

I pledge allegiance to the soil

of Turtle Island

and to the beings who thereon dwell

in diversity

under the sun

With joyful interpenetration for all. (14-20)

This given stanza clears all of these plants and animals are an essential part of the Great Basin ecosystem. To clarify it Geneen Marie says: "It is also noteworthy that Snyder's new pledge of allegiance makes no specific mention of humans. Humans are implicitly to in the line, "and to the beings that thereon dwell," but the poem never raises humans above the other forms of life on Turtle Island. Again, this demonstrates Snyder's belief that humans are only a part of the world, and not necessarily the most important one" (5). Snyder presented a new pledge which seems to be a revolutionary concept. He shifted the focus from national identity to nature. Loyalty is confirmed "to the soil," "the beings" and the ecosystem. He stresses what he considers the most important characteristic of nature: the interdependence of all beings. Human beings are only implicitly mentioned and are never given superiority over other forms of life. This demonstrates once more that human beings are an essential component of the world but they are not the most important. The poem holds central parts of Snyder's ecological consciousness.

Snyder 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. Through his poem "Milton by Firelight" Snyder argues human beings are distracted from nature and, thus breaking external and harmonious bond between human and non-human. Snyder, 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, Snyder 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. Through the poem Snyder warns against the decline of the natural environment:

In ten thousand years the Sierras
 Will be dry and dead, home of the scorpion
 Ice-scratched slabs and bent trees.
 No paradise, no fall
 Only the weathering land (15-20)

The poet is concerned about the damage caused to the environment by scientific progress which had given man superiority over the nonhuman elements of nature. In this poem, Snyder especially displays his cosmic consciousness which he always expresses in his writing. Regarding the ecological consciousness of Snyder Noah Niehaus Says:

In a way, Snyder seems to be similar to other American nature writers like Henry David Thoreau, Wendell Berry, Annie Dillard and Edward Abbey. However, Snyder's idea of nature goes beyond the

conventional romanticizing of it. He attempts to be objective though no description can be completely objective. Snyder immersed himself in experience and mixed the inner and outer worlds. (41)

Gray Snyder 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, Snyder 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 Snyder claims, brings the human life closer to the world of nature.

While representing the world of nature and its flora and fauna, Snyder 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. His poem "Ripple on the Surface" focuses on the ecological sensibility of poet he says: The vast wild/the house, alone (14-15). The house represents the human habitat. It is a building in which people live; residence for human beings. But Snyder places it alone in "the vast wild," which suggests that human civilization is only a small part of the world. Snyder further calls attention to this concept by reiterating and restating it in the next stanza:

The little house in the wild,
the wild in the house.

Both forgotten

No Nature

Both together, one big, empty house. (16-20)

The above given stanza gives Snyder's innovative exploration of humankind's place in nature. Similarly Kriti Pal says:

The house represents the human habitat, but Snyder places it alone in "the vast wild, which suggests that human civilization is a small part of the world. He goes on to say that the house in the wild and the wild in the house have been forgotten. People have forgotten their inherent connection with nature, and do not see that they are only a part of the ecosystem. (9)

This above given statement suggests that without the recognition of the connection between humans and nature, the ecosystem is empty because it lacks the spirit of coexistence which is necessary for it to be full. From the given poem "Ripple on the Surface " Snyder clears the deep relationship between nature and human being. It means everything human homes and nature make up one big ecosystem, which we all partake of and live in.

Snyder's ecological views are derived from certain traditional beliefs taken from Indian culture, Buddhism and other contemporary beliefs. Snyder looks at the earth as a 'mother' to living beings. This image is repeatedly seen in his book *Turtle Island*. According to Snyder, the relationship between the earth and living beings should be motherly since the earth is like a mother that provides its inhabitants with food, water and air. Earth, therefore, deserves the respect of its children and their protection. More significantly, Snyder believes in the interdependence of all life forms on earth; this concept seems to be considerably derived from Buddhism professor, Nsaif Al Jumaili says:

Snyder shares the Buddhist belief in the interrelation of all living beings not only on a spiritual level as Buddhism saw it, but also on a biological and physical level as shown in the food chain. Humankind, for Snyder, is a transient form with particular characteristics like spirit

and energy among various forms of living beings but not superior to others as humans are only a part of them. (17)

Buddhism ideology argues to survive; mankind should keep the diversity of those forms of life because their extinction would threaten human life on the planet.

Buddhism desires to achieve loving kindness, sympathetic joy and serenity not only to human beings but to all things in the universe. Being unkind to the planet and its inhabitants opposes Buddhist beliefs. Thus, Snyder blends religion and environmentalism in his writing.

Turtle Island displays Snyder's mystical relation to land in several ways.

Through the poem Snyder stresses on the importance of being primitive to be in harmony with nature. In accordance with his ecological concerns, Snyder calls for poetry that includes man, animals and ecosystems; a kind of poetry which presents a community of human and nonhuman as "brothers and sisters." Furthermore through the poem he argues human being should know plant life, weather, soil and all knowledge needed to preserve biological life Snyder attempts to establish a connection between land, community and human beings.

Similarly through the poem he presents human being are part of a broad community with the non-human; plants. Snyder thinks that all things in the universe have equal value. Snyder's ecological vision is that nature, society and spirit are interdependent and what happens to each would inevitably affect the others. To be more specific, what happens in nature has social and spiritual effects. Thus, what happens in society has natural and spiritual consequences and what happens spiritually has social and natural results. Snyder also believes in the unity of cultures which can be realized through the ecological perspective that focuses on the interrelation of people. This theme can be found in his poem "Anasazi:"

Anasazi,
 Anasazi,
 tucked up in clefts in the cliffs
 growing strict fields of corn and beans
 sinking deeper and deeper in earth. (1-5)

The opening poem of "Anasazi" is very important as it sets the tone for the whole work. The poem shows Snyder's interest in Native Indians for the whole poem is dedicated to the Anasazi's tribal existence and praises the state of harmony between those primitive people and their physical environment regarding it David Tagnani says:

Snyder stresses on the importance of being primitive to be in harmony with nature. In accordance with his ecological concerns, Snyder calls for poetry that includes man, animals and ecosystems; a kind of poetry which presents a community of human and nonhuman. (42)

Snyder was interested in Indians since childhood. Not only did he know them through books, he lived amongst them when he was a child. The poem displays the Anasazi people as skillful at gardening, pottery making, basket weaving and architecture. They were especially admired for their villages built into the sides of steep cliffs:

Trickling streams in hidden canyons
 Under the cold rolling desert
 Corn-basket wide eyed
 Red baby
 Rock lip home,
 Anasazi (14-18)

Snyder wanted to study human life, not in isolation from other elements of nature but

as an integral part of the natural world. Snyder's belief for the need to recognize the earth itself as a living being along with all its trees, rocks, plants, and animals including humans is a major theme in this poem as it is in much of Snyder's work. Throughout the poem, there is an interaction of humans, animals, plants, even sandstone and rock canyons. The poem concludes with a striking image of identification between the Indian tribe and the landscape. As Charles Molesworth says: "The poem applies to us only insofar as we can see ourselves as products of, and preservers of, a physical environment (9). This poem can be often considered to be reflecting a Buddhist worldview depicting man's close relationship with natural surroundings and man's detachment from civilization.

In Snyder's poem "Hay for My Horses" an aspect of connecting with nature through hard physical work in countryside can be seen. In the poem, the speaker starts by talking about another person, a farmer, driving a truck loaded with hay to the farm. He indicates that it was a very long and dangerous journey. Then the speaker quotes the farmer, a sixty eight years old man, who admits to have never thought that he would keep working like this since he started at the age of seventeen:

'I'm sixty-eight" he said,
 I first bucked hay when I was seventeen.
 I thought, that day I started,
 I sure would hate to do this all my life.
 And dammit, that's just what
 I've gone and done. (15-20)

The farmer can be seen to have experienced epiphany or enlightenment; for he does not seem to regret the hard work he is doing and finds pride in it. The poem suggests a possibility of spiritual connection with natural surroundings through

hard work, which according to Zen Buddhism is seen as an act of meditation leading to deeper understanding and harmony. To clear the concept of Zen Buddhism Elder Olson says:

It is seen from his poems that Buddhism helps to approach nature in a romantic way experiencing emotions in confronting the sublimity of untamed nature and its picturesque qualities (7).

Snyder's great interest in Buddhism contributed significantly to his involvement with environmental issues as he found considerable correspondence between Buddhism and environmentalism.

Gary Snyder as an environmentalist and ecofriendly poet, he is not only important as a writer about environmental issues, but also as a model for modern environmental activism because he attempts with his writing to redefine the ways in which nature is popularly perceived, he is combating the generations of negative thought and action directed towards the environment. His poem "Manzanita" seems to be a song of plant life. The poem shows Snyder's concept of ethnocentric and the use of vegetative life in human culture. The poem celebrates the immediate physical environment:

Manzanita the tips in fruit,
 Clusters of hard green berries
 The longer you look
 The bigger they seem,
 "little apples" (21-25)

Through the given stanza Snyder expresses the beauty and verity of natural environment. As Jenny Morse says: "The poem suggests that natural variety is the critical factor in creating a healthy life. That is, unity and harmony can only be

achieved through the preservation of the diversity of the natural world. "Charms," the last poem of this section, on the other hand, is about animal life. If "Manzanita" expresses a vegetable kingdom, "Charms" adds the animal kingdom" (34). Snyder made great efforts to redefine the traditional concept of nature and fought against the negative notions and acts of people that greatly harmed environment.

Snyder's writings, therefore, tried to change the attitude of people towards nature and by doing so, he wanted to change the way they act towards nature. His writings showed new ways of interacting with nature which preserve the natural world. Although Snyder's concern and involvement in environmental activism may be seen as an active display of passion, one can argue that his writings are more active and influential than his activism.

Conclusion: Ecological Awareness in Snyder's Poetry

In the world with deep ecological and environment crisis, poems of such great poet as Gray Snyder remind readers of rural, idyllic life where man lived in harmony and accord with his environment. Poems of Snyder like "Turtle Island" is deeply affected by the wilderness and the marine ecosystem of Pacific Ocean. Through a engagement with bioregional poetry, the author investigates how indigenous grow in their capacity to develop an ecological sensibility for the places they inhabit.

Similarly Snyder attempt in various ways to overcome the nature-culture dualism, a largely neglected topic in modern English literature, which is in accordance with a Romantic conception of nature. Through his writing he reflects an awareness of the complex interdependence of humans and their natural environment, i.e. a basic form of ecological sensibility. Furthermore he explores the correlation between ecological sensibility and the search for the good life, which aims at cultural and social change. Snyder made great efforts to redefine the traditional concept of nature

and fought against the negative notions and acts of people that greatly harmed environment.

Snyder's writings, therefore, tried to change the attitude of people towards nature and by doing so, he wanted to change the way they act towards nature. His writings showed new ways of interacting with nature which preserve the natural world. For Snyder, a possible solution for the global crisis is to stimulate people to reconcile and bridge the gap between their civilization and wild culture. Snyder's commitment to this presentation of nature is instrumental in shaping modern environmental thought.

Although Snyder's concern and involvement in environmental activism may be seen as an active display of passion, in all his poetry, ecological issues are given great importance. Snyder fought for the preservation of the environment from the deadly harm modern civilization caused. By showing the sublimity of the natural world and giving a sacred dimension to the moral commitment to the environment's safety from any probable human damage, Snyder could attract the people's attention to the beauty of the wilderness and urge them to protest against any harm which might be done to the natural world. Snyder considered himself a mediator between civilization and nature.

In conclusion we can say that ecocentric readings of Snyder's poems compel us to believe that poetry can develop environmental consciousness in man.

Environmental changes can be achieved through changing our perception of the natural world, and poetry can play an important role in transforming our attitude towards it. An optimistic anxiety of the natural world in poetry can counter the post-industrial mental disintegration which distanced man from nature.

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