

## AN ECOCRITICAL READING OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S LUCY POEMS

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**Abstract:** The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of a great number of literary and cultural concepts, which resulted in a significant increase in the number of possible interpretations of works of literature. In response to rising worries about the consequences of human civilization on the natural world, a new school of literary theory known as ecocriticism evolved. The primary connection between literature and setting is going to be investigated for this project's purpose. The significance of this link is brought into focus here. Wordsworth's "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower" is one of the five poems that make up the collection that is often referred to as "Lucy Poems," although it is the most notable of the bunch. However, there has been a lot of speculation within the critical community over the identity of Lucy. This research makes an attempt to analyze this beautiful poetry from an ecocritical perspective. This book is an investigation of the connections that may be made between man and the natural world, between culture and literature, and between the natural world and the written word.

**Keywords:** Ecocriticism, environment, literature, nature, culture, man

### Introduction

William Wordsworth was a significant player in the development of Romanticism in England. It is widely acknowledged that his publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), which he did in collaboration with Coleridge, marked the beginning of the Romantic Movement. To the natural world, he was comparable to a powerful priest. He considered the natural environment to be a trusted friend, guide, and instructor. In addition, mysticism and pantheism may be found throughout his works. The writings "Tintern Abbey," "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," "Resolution and Independence," "Michael," "Lucy Poems," "The Old Cumberland Beggar," "The Solitary Reaper," and "The Prelude," among others, are considered to be among his most notable achievements as a writer. The theatrical piece that Wordsworth created, "The Borderers," was also very well appreciated (Daiches, David 1969). He spent the remainder of his life exploring in his poems how people fit into the natural environment around them using the medium of poetry. This is the argument that he advances in "Tintern Abbey."

"...nature has never once beentray[ed] me."

The heart that loved, and it being her privilege to do so,

Throughout each and every one of these decades of our life, to le

"...from joy to joy..."

This poem, titled "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower," is one of many that can be found in the collection that is collectively referred to as "Lucy Poems." The collection of poems titled "Lucy Poems" by Wordsworth includes the following works: "She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways," "Strange Fits of Passion have I Known," "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower," "A Slumber did my Spirit Seal,"

and "I Tavelled among Unknown Men." Lyrical Ballads was the title given to a book of lyrical poetry that was published in the year 1800(Enright D.J 2012). Someone named Lucy is mentioned at some point; she might be the poet's sister, his girlfriend, or his child. There is a possibility that the poet fabricated her in his or her imagination. Her real identity is a closely guarded secret at this point. Given the news that Lucy had died away at such a young age, the poet's utter sadness and grief was quite comprehensible. The straightforwardness, sincerity, and aesthetic appeal of these poems are actually what set them apart from others. Lucy's formative years were spent in close contact to, and instruction from, the natural environment, as the poem "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower" illustrates (Abrams, M.H. 2014). In addition to this, it recounts the poet's profound grief at her early death. The dual functions of protector and dependable educator played by nature are stressed here.

It is believed that William Rueckert was the first person to use the term "ecocriticism" in the year 1978. His intention was to provide the impression that the study of literature may profit from the application of ecological ideas and principles. However, in modern times, the term "ecocriticism" has come to refer to study that investigates the relationships between literature and the natural world. In other words, the purpose of this investigation is to investigate the overlap that exists between the domain of nature and the literary arts. Although critics such as Leo Marks and Raynond Williams have earlier suggested the significance of natural environment in literature, the term "ecocriticism" did not become an important sub-branch of cultural and literary studies until the late 1980s and early 1990s (Bate J 2018). Ecocriticism is a significant sub-branch of cultural and literary studies. As a result of the fact that people in the past did not need to be concerned about the damage of the environment, this tendency is relatively recent (Albert, Edward 2015). On the other hand, ecocriticism may be seen as the practice of analyzing works of literature from the perspective of the earth's geographic location. It is important to keep in mind that ecocriticism often adopts an active stance. The fundamental objective of ecocriticism is to raise awareness among the general public on the need of caring for and taking action to protect the natural environment. As a consequence of this, they emphasize how important the natural world is to the craft of writing. It should thus come as no surprise that a significant number of ecocritics are also engaged in the struggle for environmental justice (Campbell.S. 1989).

Cheryll Glotfeltry is largely recognized as the discipline's founder in the United States.

Together with Harold Fromm, she co-edited the pioneering anthology *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. This publication is widely considered to be a landmark in the subject. It was an important collection of fundamental writings from across history. In the same year, 1992, she was also one of the founding members of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE). It does so by publishing an academic journal dedicated to the investigation of the connection that exists between literature and the natural world (Long, William). The works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau are considered to be literary touchstones for the field of ecocriticism in the United States. All of them were influential authors working in the United States throughout the nineteenth century. It should come as no surprise that their artwork celebrates the majestic qualities of the natural world, the wilderness, and even the life force itself. However, what is currently known as "green studies" or "ecocriticism" in the United Kingdom gets its inspiration from the British Romanticism that flourished in the 1790s(Daiches, David 2016). Jonathan Bate, a scholar from the United Kingdom, is the author of *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. This book is widely regarded as the foundational text for this school of critical thought.

"Ecocriticism... designates the critical writings which explore the relations between literature and the biological and physical environment," write Abrams and Harpham in a beautiful definition of ecocriticism. "Ecocriticism..." designates the critical writings which explore the relations between literature and the biological and physical environment, conducted with an acute awareness of the damage being wrought upon that environment by human activities.

Now, one could feel compelled to describe the historical setting that was responsible for the creation of

this notion. As the 20th century proceeded, human activity caused an ever-increasing amount of damage to the natural world (Birch, Dinah 2016). On Earth, there existed a situation that posed a threat to the environment. The waste products from industries and chemical processes have contaminated the various components of the environment. The loss of forest cover, the extinction of species, and fast population increase are all factors that contribute to the degradation of ecosystems. Ecocriticism was conceived subsequent to the accumulation of all of these factors. As a consequence of this, the purpose of a great number of ecocritical works is to inform readers about the damage that people are causing to the earth as a result of their thoughtless and harmful acts. The readers of these writings who are particularly perceptive are often moved to some kind of social or political action. When it comes to the protection of our natural environment, ecologists aren't only concerned with ensuring that future generations will have access to a good quality of life for themselves and their offspring.

Ecocritics may be recognized by the many methodologies and techniques, such as the classicist and postcolonial approaches, that they use in their writing. They see the replacement of anthropocentrism with ecocentrism as one of their top priorities and aims. Anthropocentrism, in case you were wondering, is the concept that human beings are intrinsically hostile to and superior to nature, and that the interests and needs of human beings should take priority (Sen Dr. S). On the other hand, ecocentrism claims that all kinds of life and the natural world have equal worth and value and that they should be allowed moral and political rights. This contrasts with humanism's view that human beings are the only things that have worth and value.

Another point to consider is that ecocritics are very critical of dualistic perspectives that pit people against the natural world or civilizations against the natural world. It has long been thought that man and environment cannot coexist peacefully. For example, culture and nature are often portrayed as being on different ends of the spectrum. Ecoskeptics say that mankind and the natural world are intricately intertwined and cannot be separated, which is their response to this claim. All aspects of human life—the natural environment, human society, and human culture—are intricately intertwined.

Last but not least, a number of ecocritics contend that "green reading" need to be expanded. They argue that it is necessary to investigate a text in order to look for indications of environmental awareness. It is past time for the canonical canon of literature to acknowledge the value of writing about nature. These kinds of efforts deserve more recognition than they now get. More attention need to be paid to the regional works of fiction written by writers such as Thomas Hardy, Mark Twain, and Sarah Orne Jewett.

The fourth contribution of ecocriticism is an analysis of the different ways in which different groups of people place value on different aspects of the natural world.

Last but not least, ecocritics are showing a growing interest in the religious activities of so-called "primitive" tribes. Additionally, they have a strong fascination with eastern religions like as Buddhism and Hinduism (Barry, Peter 2010). They put a premium on civilizations that do not subscribe to the western dualist ideology that pits man against nature. Traditional cultures present the natural world as a holy entity where people should live in peace and harmony with all other kinds of life, in contrast to the teachings of Western religions, which teach that humans should dominate everything that isn't human, including other forms of life. The relationship between humans and the natural world is strengthened through these kinds of rituals.

A notion that "everything" is a social and/or linguistic creation is one that "the ecocritics reject," as Peter Barry has pointed out.

Nevertheless, several distinct schools of thought subscribe to this line of reasoning. Ecologists are steadfast believers in the notion that the natural world exists apart from human conceptions of it.

The simplicity, spontaneity, subjectivity, and melody of "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower" help to distinguish it as a beautiful piece of lyrical poetry. The poem was written over the course of three years. In the first three years of her life, Lucy experienced both "sun and shower," as the opening words of the

poem put it. Then, nature whisked her away from the evil and depraved sphere of humans and brought her into its own realm, which was pure and righteous (Geofrey Galt 2014). Ecocriticism agrees with the poem's interpretation of nature as an intelligent being on account of how it portrays nature. Immediately apparent is the fundamental relationship that exists between individuals and the natural environment in which they live. The author presents the natural world as a trustworthy and knowledgeable friend. It is not a dead thing but rather a sentient individual who has a full host of human qualities, including all of those listed above. In this instance, mother nature lends a hand to the care of a human infant:

Then Mother Nature said, "A lovelier blossom  
Never before planted on Earth;  
I'm keeping this baby for myself.

She'll be mine, and I'll raise her to be my own special woman.

Therefore, it is up to mother nature to ensure that Lucy has a healthy and happy life. The majority of the poem is made up of descriptions of various aspects of the natural environment. She discusses the progress that Lucy has made while in her care. After spending some time in the great outdoors, Lucy will experience feelings that are both virtuous and disciplined:

I promise to my sweetheart that I will  
Law and instinct: and I, the girl of rock and plain, at my side.  
There will be a sense of a guiding force everywhere on earth and in the stars.  
spark or hold back"

Lucy is predicted to live in harmony with all other kinds of life as well as inanimate objects, in accordance with Mother Nature. Lucy will gain knowledge from a wide array of natural objects, and she will be enthralled by them. As an example, the "mute and insensate things" will instill "the calm and the silence" in Lucy. She will be bestowed with the splendor of the ethereal clouds that float by. The willow will teach her the value of humility. Even the turbulence that forms Lucy's body will reveal a certain kind of beauty to her:

She won't be blinded either.  
Still, the storm's movements  
Beauty that will shape the Maiden via understanding silence

From the perspective of ecocriticism, it is abundantly obvious that the traditional dichotomies between, for example, people and the natural world or between civilizations and the natural world have been deconstructed. One more time, the natural world is not dependent on the language or culture of humans in any way. Instead, it is a living creature, which we are unable to differentiate from in any way. In this example, it seems that nature has compassion for humans and their plights.

Nature goes on to suggest that Lucy would eventually acquire an appreciation for the night sky as well as the sound of water trickling through brooks and rivers. Her allure will be enhanced as a result of the music. The "vital feelings of delight" that Lucy gets from natural things will continue to be beneficial to her development:

"And resonant emotions of joy  
Will raise her body to a royal height,  
Her swollen, unmarried breasts.

The following sentences provide a reiteration of the concept that humankind and the natural world are intricately intertwined with one another (Buchanan 2010).

"I will give such thoughts to Lucy," the speaker says.

While we both continue to exist together

Right in the middle of this peaceful valley"

But despite the fact that Lucy had a joyful infancy because to the nourishing influences of nature, she was taken away from the poet far too young. In spite of this, the poet continued to find at least some measure of comfort in nature:

"After she passed away, she left all of her possessions to me.

This verdant, hushed, and tranquil region; the reminiscence of days long since passed

And it will never, ever happen again"

This is the poem's way of expressing that ecocentrism has triumphed over anthropocentrism and it all comes together at the end. To put it another way, the poet gives the impression that he or she is suggesting that it is always preferable to spend one's life in close proximity to the natural world and the physical surroundings rather than in the company of other people. It questions the notion that people are intrinsically superior to the natural world, hence it is an example of ecocriticism as well. In addition to this, it contests the notion that people need to be in perfect command of the natural environment in which they live. Instead, the poem encourages readers to embrace the concept that it is possible for people and other natural components to coexist peacefully.

## CONCLUSION

Because of this, the poem participates in an important exercise in ecocriticism by analyzing the interconnectedness of man and the physical world in which he lives. In this part of the globe, the natural world and human civilisation are not two distinct things. The natural world is not independent from human thinking and deed; rather, it is deeply intertwined with both. This is an image of a planet that is pure and free of pollution. Because of this, the poem "Three Years

She Grew in Sun and Shower" written by Wordsworth gives some insightful reflections on the relationships between people and the natural world, as well as the connections between the natural world and human civilization. It is a work of nature literature, and as such, it will continue to exist in the minds and emotions of readers.

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