

Gary Snyder as Poetic Voice of Natural Neutrality and Spirituality

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Abstract

The study of the poetry of Snyder is nothing but the global sympathy for the Nature and its antic mystery to maintain in a positive and optimistic way. Snyder is the champion of the Nature and Environment. He studied in his poetry the relation between Nature and Human nature on humanistic level. As a priest of Nature and lover of its all creatures, Snyder, favors more on the original civilization which cares much about Nature. He likes Buddhism which kept reserve the Natural bond in its ancient values and seeks out the real joy of life in the rich wealth of Nature. The purification and content of mind, calm of soul and stability of intellect is not in shining four walls, but in the boundless Natural wildness. According to Snyder, Buddhism is the compendium of Natural joy which spur the poet, to denounce the earthly pleasure and explore the real motto of life. The issue raised in the poetry of Snyder is concerned with the environment and ecology which is the universal topic of talk, particularly in modern environmental polluted world. According to Snyder, the 'Revival of Nature' based on Buddhism is a ray of hope for content life forever.

Keywords: Ecology, Ecocriticism, Buddhism, Spirituality, Nature, Environment, Social Concern etc.

Gary Snyder is an American poet as well as an essayist, lecturer and naturalist, reputedly known as an unofficial 'poet laureate of Ecology'. Snyder is a winner of Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. His work, in his various roles, reflects an interest in both Buddhist spirituality and Nature. The love for Nature, cordiality for wildness, sympathy for the billows of the killing animals, disappearance of million species, pathos in deforestation and compassion in deserted birds is highly projected in the poetry of Gary Snyder. He accepts Nature not only as his family but as abode. Far from physical and pleasure life, Gary Snyder finds a dose of tonic to the anxiety in Nature. Snyder is a firm believer of Buddhist philosophy, urged the world to keep the eternal bond of Natural love in practical life. The eco of Ecology and Buddhism in Snyder's poetry teach to love Nature and its all creatures. As a medicine to the malady of human whimsical nature, 'Natural Neutrality' is an elixir to Snyder, to balance Natural World. It will save entire social civilization from demolishing the earthly geology. He makes conscious to his reader about the impending danger of the collapse of the world, if it continues; the man will have to pay the heavy price for the decay of Naturalness. Snyder as a champion of Nature, an environmentalist, and crusader of Natural creatures and its preservation, is an accomplished technician in poetic craft in the world of words. As an ambassador of Buddhist philosophy, Snyder, is optimistic with its absorption in the lap of Nature.

Snyder's work blends physical reality and exact explanation of nature with inner insight received mainly

through the practice of Zen Buddhism. While Snyder has gained attention as a spokesman for the preservation of the Natural world and its earth-conscious cultures, he is not simply a 'back-to-nature' poet with a superficial message. Snyder has looked to the Orient and to the beliefs of American Indians for positive responses to the world, and he has tempered his studies with stints of hard physical labor as a logger and trail builder.

Ecosystem is an asset for healthy and hygiene world. From the primitive to the present day, the Natural creativity is showering its blessings upon human beings. The greed for Mammon worship, lust for physical pleasure and power and craze for blind development of modern man is limitless. For the attainment of all these blind values in this 'fast food generation' world, under the guise of glow and glamour, the moral and ethics are on its devastation. Consequently, the Natural ecosystem is losing its aboriginal stage. The world is facing the numerous problems on internal and external level. The environment along with its all aspects is showing its dangerous mood due to human hurt. The global warming, melting glaciers, deluge, water, air and sound pollution, deforestation, destruction of rocky mountains, drought, famine, aridity of soil and countless diseases in human body are the burning problems before the universe, today. The omission of the poisonous green house gases like Carbon Dioxide, Nitride Oxide and CFC of the developing and developed countries, to find common consent solution on it, is an acid taste to the world. The

present civilization under the veil of progress, corroding the ecosystem and this Natural hollowness is nothing but the eclipse to the earth. To preserve the universe, Snyder urged the world to back towards Nature as rested in Buddhism.

As a priest of Nature and staunch supporter of Natural Justice his poetry brings out perennial love for Nature. The amalgamation of Ecocriticism and Buddhism on the basis of humanity is a breathing line to Snyder. As an ecological poet he excels in delineating the rays of Ecocriticism and Buddhism in his poetry. The relation between Literature and Nature is quite profound. Gary Snyder's poetry, as a genre of literature and form of art, has blended Buddhism and Nature and human nature in an artistic and humanistic way. The poetic aspects of Snyder's art are quite appealing to students, readers, humanitarians and amateurs of literature, to follow the path of his direction. Snyder has flashed the Eco of Ecocriticism and impact and ideology of Buddhism in his poetry.

As a translator and traveler of human mind, Snyder associated with American Literary Movement. It was a broader phenomenon encompassing visual and performing arts, philosophy, cross-cultural interests, particularly in Asian cultures, and new social sensibilities. He uses mainly public speech-patterns as the basis for his lines, though his style has been noted for its 'flexibility' and the variety of different forms his poems have taken. He does not typically use conventional meters or intentional rhyme. Love and respect for the primitive tribe, honor accorded the Earth, the escape from city and industry, the possible, contemplation, the communal, such, is the awareness and commitment behind the specific poems. Snyder's poetry addresses the life-planet identification with strange simplicity of style and complexity of effect.

From the late 1960s, the content of Snyder's poetry increasingly had to do with family, friends, and folks. He continued to publish poetry throughout the 1970s, much of it reflecting his re-immersion in life on the American continent and his involvement in it. Snyder wrote numerous essays setting forth his views on poetry, culture, social experimentation, and the environment. Many of these were collected in *Earth House Hold* (1969), *The Old Ways* (1977), *The Real Work* (1980), *The Practice of the Wild* (1990), *A Place in Space* (1995), and *The Gary Snyder Reader* (1999). In 1979, Snyder published *He Who Hunted Birds in His Father's Village: The Dimensions of a Haida Myth*, based on his Reed thesis. Snyder's journals from his travel in India in the mid-1960s appeared in 1983 under the title *Passage through India*. In these, his wide-ranging interests in cultures, natural history, religions, social critique, contemporary America, and hands-on aspects of rural life, as well as his ideas on literature, were given full-blown articulation. He shared Buddhism, extensive travels, and performed independent work as a naturalist. He has explored a wide range of social and

spiritual matters in both poetry and prose. All poetic activity of Snyder shows the great zeal about ecology and Buddhist spirituality.

As Snyder's involvement in environmental issues and his teaching grew, he seemed to move away from poetry for much of the 1980s and early 1990s. However, in 1996 he published the complete *Mountains and Rivers without End*, a mixture of the lyrical and epic modes celebrating the act of inhabitation on a specific place on the planet. This work was written over a 40-year period. It has been translated into Japanese and French. In 2004 Snyder published *Danger on Peaks*, his first collection of new poems in twenty years. Many of Snyder's poems aim specially at instilling an ecological consciousness in his audience. This theme pervades Snyder's 1974 Pulitzer Prize-winning volume, *Turtle Island*, a work in which the poet manages "to locate the self ecologically in its actions and interactions with its environment. Snyder has always maintained that his personal sensibility arose from his interest in Native Americans and their involvement with nature and knowledge of it; indeed, their ways seemed to resonate with his own. And he has sought something similar to this through Buddhist practices, Yamabushi initiation, and other experiences and involvements.

His poetry reads the gap between nature and culture so as to point to ways in which the two can be more closely integrated. This simplicity and complexity derives from Snyder's use of natural imagery, geographical formations, flora, and fauna, in his poems. Such imagery can be corporeal at a personal level yet universal and generic in nature. In the 1968 poem "Beneath My Hand and Eye the Distant Hills, Your Body," the author compares the intimate experience of a lover's caress with the mountains, hills, cinder cones, and craters of the Uintah Mountains. Readers become explorers on both a very private level as well as a very public and majestic level. A simplistic touch becoming a very complex interaction occurring at multiple levels is the effect intended in his literary art.

Natural wildness is a boon for mankind if its benefits and usages are taken on the basis of humanity. Human life and Nature is a bond of forever. The atmosphere of rivers, rivulets, fountains and flowers is an antidote to human illness. The values of water, air, fire and earth have been playing an important role in the human life right from evolution to exist time. The fair use of flora and fauna has helped the universe to attain the acme of success. But as civilization advanced Nature declined. Industrial Revolution and Scientific Progress destroyed the wonder of wild woods. The extra greed of mankind from Nature polluted it with bones. The ecosystem of Nature is degenerated due to imbalance of Nature. The dehumanization of nature has appealed to the Nature worshippers, environmentalists and literatuors all over the globe for the restoration of its primitive charm alive.

The preservation of Nature in its genuine stage is the need of hour. To restore Nature in its ancient value,

Snyder peeps into Buddhism which provides peace and content of life on the level of medium path of Lord Buddha. The sense of meditation, casting off the yoke of corrupt human senses, the concept of 'All in Nothingness and Nothing in All', are the trends of Buddhism rested in dark and deep woods, in high mountains and meadows, appealed to Snyder. As an ambassador of Buddhist philosophy, Snyder, is optimistic with its absorption in the lap of Nature. As a priest of Nature and staunch supporter of Natural Justice his poetry brings out perennial love for Nature. The amalgamation of Buddhism and Ecocriticism on the base of humanity is a breathing line to Snyder. As an ecopoet he excels in delineating the aspects of Buddhism and Ecology in his poetry.

The reflection of Buddhist ideology has been discussed in Snyder's poetry. The relationship of Buddhism and flashes of fauna and flora in respect of wild nature is sought out by the poet. The transition in natural life from pure primitive to present panic stages described in it. So also the projection of crazy, money and narrow minded nature of modern man is exposed here. The ecosystem of the global hemisphere is being shaken rootely due to extra use of natural resources and overload malpractices for physical satisfaction by the solid sophisticated society. The follow up of glow and glamour and consequently degeneration of moral values and ethics, destruction of natural treasury and untimely collapse of the millions of living lives and imbalance of earth rotation are the views delineated in Gary Snyder's poetry. The central line of Buddhist philosophy 'Live and Let Live' and 'Altruism' as world religion on humanistic level and today's corroded and barren natural life in all sphere, caused by selfish modern generation which has uprooted the system of earth ecology. The preservation of primitive values in genuineness and urgency to restore the ancient glory of naturalness is finely woven.

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