



Harmony with Nature and the Ecological Concern: A Comparative Reflection on Thoreau and Tagore

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Abstract

David Thoreau's "Walden" and Rabindranath Tagore's numerous works in the 19th century can be seen as a reflection of profound ecological concern, and their writings prove how necessary it is to protect nature in contemporary times. Their works also prove that harmony with nature provides inner peace. The concept and theory based on nature and its ecology were completely unknown to both 19th-century writers. However, their writings are very essential and praised at the peak of ecological degeneration. Thoreau's transcendental concept of a minimalist lifestyle emerged, and he stayed near Walden Pond instead of indulging in luxury. On the other hand, Tagore expressed his profound devotion towards nature and its power in many of his notable works, like "Banabani" or "Voice of the Forest". It is noteworthy that nature provides us with most of the essential things, and it is our obligation to protect nature and every aspect that creates enhanced biodiversity throughout the world. Their devotion to nature has been teaching us. Its consequences will be the essence of damage, and it is humans who will suffer more in the future. Their writings established the fact that an indispensable motive is to sustain harmony with nature from gradual pollution and the denouement that has already begun.

Keywords: Ecosystem, serenity of nature, essential sources, benevolence nature, pantheistic view, biodiversity crisis, ecological degradation, anthropocentric prosperity, movement for regeneration.

Introduction

Nature has its own space where the whole universe would have lived in harmony. Henry David Thoreau wrote "Walden" to emphasize the transcendental idea that defines a major shift from an urban-centric, monotonous life to a life of serenity in the midst of nature. His writing is based on mid-19th-century America, and history says that time raised many revolutions and wars, and the illusion about the 'Great American Dream' had been prevailing during that period of turmoil and disturbance. By realizing the necessities of an enhanced environment that provides peace and imbibes the profound philosophy that nature always provides in her own way. 'Walden' is not only a mere work but also proves the initial connotation of the word 'nature.' 'Nature' has its Latin origin in 'natūra,' meaning 'birth' or 'essential qualities.' Initially, she gives an environment for living and every essential thing. As Thoreau said, 'My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles...'

Rabindranath Tagore's numerous works are dedicated to the sacred relationship between nature and living creatures. Tagore's work "Banabani" or "Voice of the Forest" has elevated a great ecological concern. In the Indian context,

there are many tribal regions where forests and nature are a sacred goddess because of their abundant wealth. His writings include the five most essential things (earth, water, air, fire, and space), and their existence is connected to the universe. Tagore, an intellectual figure of the 19th-20th century, an era of oppression in British India and Bengal, was disturbed by the patriotic movement. In that situation, Tagore's vision of creating a space would exhibit natural phenomena to display that humans are not only connected but also inextricable.

The writings and conceptions of David Thoreau and Rabindranath Tagore prove the proverb 'Noble men think alike.' This paper will explore how both writers have skillfully articulated that nature does not correspond with those who initially desire to dismantle her sources, and it is humans whose arrogance and intensity in controlling nature's power foster inevitable catastrophe for the entire biodiversity. It is the responsibility of humans to prevent their actions, which affect the whole universe, and elevate the harmony that always existed between them.

Nature Insists Thoreau Live in Her Lap and Experience the Inevitable Philosophy

Nature possesses an invisible potentiality which encourages

Henry David Thoreau to write his magnum opus "Walden" (1854), which consists of 18 essays, and each and every essay depicts the eternity, sublimity, and fathomless strength he himself experienced in 2 years, 2 months, and 2 days. The sound of nature, the fishes and water in the pond, the place he finds, and the long winter that gives its unbearable loneliness all enhanced his experience and helped in developing his theory on 'transcendentalism'. It transcends between conscious and unconscious, reality and concealed worlds, a life of countryside, a simple, composed life, and an urban life full of confusion and complexity, forest and macadamised road. Nature distributes an elevated view on Thoreau; it presents a minute fish as having the right to live, and nobody has the privilege to snatch its life for his luxurious life. Indeed, in this way, he gradually becomes a philosopher, a true worshipper of nature.

As he said in the journal of 1851- "Ah dear nature—the mere remembrance, after a short forgetfulness, of the pine woods! I come to it as a hungry man to a crust of bread..."

Thoreau Experienced both in Urban Life and in the Amidst of Nature

The work "Walden" provides two contradictory phenomena experienced by humans. Thoreau himself became a victim of that contradiction. He lived in a society pervaded by fragmentation, downtrodden individuals, and the demise of ethical values. It was full of disobedience and disorganization due to the turbulence that arose from the impending American-Mexican War (1846-1848), underscoring how he felt frustrated and monotonous in that life. But when he became an inhabitant of nature, an omnipresent, generous entity, he found peace; he found loftiness, sublimity, and dignity that nature provides us without considering anyone's caste, religion, property, or community. He feels that nature has its own rhythm, its own avenues, its own wisdom, and its distinct qualities that always disseminate to all.

Tagore's View of Nature

Along with Henry David Thoreau, Rabindranath Tagore, a pantheist and a great literary figure in 19th century Bengal, is known for his Magnum Opus 'Songs of Offerings,' from which many anthologies like "Banabani" are based on the intense bond between nature and humanity. He is the pioneer of the concept that children must learn in the lap of nature, and he built Shantiniketan in 1913, an institution based on his philosophy. There are many programs organized to highlight the harmony between nature and humanity. 'The Plantation Day' is celebrated on the 22nd of Shravan, the day when saplings are sown in the soil, and in this way an unbreakable bond has bloomed. 'The Halkarshan Day' (The Ploughing Festival) is also celebrated in order to symbolize fertility and show dignity in ploughing. The primary focus of all these programs is to determine the fact that a pristine and enigmatic chain has been established from the very beginning of creation. Even in ancient times, many erudite and sacred hermits emerged in meditation for many decades, surrounded by tranquil nature.

An Intense Relation between Nature and Humans

Except for that, humans and nature have their profound, inscrutable relationship. After all the worldly, materialistic life a human has led, the only feelings he has are those of hollowness, loneliness, and a mundane life that has no significance. It is nature that reflects what life should be. Unlike humans, who morally break down in any situation,

nature has mountains that have been erected and prevent all adversity. Unlike humans, who scrupulously present themselves to an omnipotent being, nature has waters that flow eternally, and it has the potential to transform a large rock into a cluster of sand; it does not need any pretence of superficial power. Thoreau declared "All nature is doing her best each moment to make us well—she exists for no other end. Do not resist her. With the least inclination to be well we should not be sick." This beautiful contradiction postulates that if a man finds his state full of despondence and depression, a man must not seek all vain hopes; rather, he should immerse himself in nature, which provides him with lessons spontaneously and leads to a humble, generous, and compassionate life.

Beauty of Nature's Creation and Brutality of Human's Creation

The impeccable atmosphere prevailing throughout the world is maintained by nature itself. Its generosity reminds us to create something new, which is inevitably unique from each other. It always happens when nature's destructive force is irresistible, and she herself re-creates everything she destructs gradually. On the other hand, the human world has rudimentarily depended on nature. But humans are not capable of maintaining it well, and its aftermath has always been tremendously dreadful. The world's creation is always superior to the artificial environment. A world engendered by industry, harmful gases, the demise of animals, and the natural resources that have been utilized for the degeneration of aquatic life, as well as those who have been the inhabitants of the jungle.

Catastrophic Phenomena have been Happening Due to Man's Negligence about Nature's Nurturing

Thoreau and Tagore were both 19th-century writers of American and Indian backgrounds who actually foreshadowed the indispensable requirement of nature in the future. In recent years, there has been a profuse climatic change caused by the excessive misuse of natural resources. It has been confirmed that 2024 is the hottest year in the calendar, with the global average temperature 0.12°C above 2023. Another issue is the heavy rains have created floods and caused landslides in many upland areas. Moreover, the three greenhouse gases have increased, and they affect the ozone layer. Another disaster is that the WHO has declared, after a survey, that 4.2 to 7 million people have died because of air pollution. Last but not least, the profuse use of plastics is the foremost reason for pollution and harming animals. From 1950 to 2015, 2 million tonnes of plastic were used, exacerbating into 419 million tonnes of plastic waste. There have been many meetings held by the UN (United Nations) to decrease the use of plastics as soon as possible.

Conclusion

Thoreau's and Tagore's writing has instigated the concept that they had latently manifested the idea that the role of nature encapsulates a merit-demerit role in the environment. Their writings might have influenced some great ecological movements that remind us how intensely humans can save their greens rather than ruined them. History has provided examples of humans protecting the movement, such as 1. The Chipko Movement (1974), 2. The Narmada Bachao Andolan (1985), and 3. The Silent Valley Movement (1970s). These are evidence of how humans are connected with their roots. Since the beginning of creation, it has underscored the

cooperation between 'Flora' and 'Fauna', and they have contributed equally to the role that made up the ecosystem.

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