

Poetry, Ecocriticism and the Concepts of the Global South

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The manifold implications of globalisation in all its varied forms have long been forming part of the central theme of poetic inspiration. Since the ancient Greek poets the environment has featured both as a physical context within which they could construct their own imaginative and experiential project, and as an ethereal background against which writers could set their own interior landscape. The human persona of the Renaissance and then Illuminism is already a being of global pretensions, an offshoot of the ideal figure which classical sculptors and poets had already defined as cosmopolitan, namely global, a citizen whose patria is the whole planet, not just a restricted stretch of land known as a nation. This conception far predates Ernest Renan's assumption that national states are perhaps not necessarily meant to exist forever. Poetically, such a belief stemmed from one simple assumption, much aloof from any shade of controversy: humans are inhabitants of one wholesome, single planet.

Literary tradition amply manifests the belief that truth, beauty and love are variations on one single theme and that all are to be explored and ultimately found in the natural environment, a house (visible) and a home (interior). Nature is the abode of the spirit, an objective place as much as a subjective condition. For quite a long time literary criticism of a thematic orientation gave paramount importance to the landscape and identified in it the only real context

within which the human spirit could discover itself, find its own realisation and understand the mysteries of being. A physical as well as a metaphysical approach seemed to be equally necessary for a proper understanding of what poetic experience really consisted of.

The poetic origin of ecocriticism

Since the romantic era ecocriticism started to assert itself alongside other leading forms of literary analysis. Even Formalism and Structuralism have been making use of their own methodologies with the aim of arriving at a scientifically valid conclusion about the real issue at stake: the essence of poetic experience as an autonomous text expressing an initially psychological and eventually a scriptural, verbal subject-object relationship. In philosophical terms this all involved an application of Kant's a priori forms to specific texts which amply manifested the function of the environment as a source of inspiration and a constant point of reference in the thinking and the writing process. Throughout the European literary tradition, and particularly so since the romantic revival, criticism necessarily adopted an ecological attitude, and consequently contributed to a very large extent to the subsequent formation of the concept of ecocriticism itself. Ecological awareness emanated from poetry, and poets like Homer, Virgil, Horace and Statius can be easily defined as the real founders of ecological, environmental poetry, the expression of humankind's sublime rapport with the outer world. Eclogues, bucolics, idylls, all forming part of what is known as pastoral poetry, are early samples of what art in general was to discover through the appreciation of the natural landscape. Criticism has duly and for many centuries, at least since the Middle Ages, gave paramount importance to the relationship between the poetic soul and the surrounding ambience.

Literary criticism frequently reduced itself to an analysis of the effect of the outer world on the inner one. Since Freud admitted that psychoanalysis was initially discovered by poets and by philosophers, as he consequently adopted a scientific method to analyze the phenomenon, ecocriticism has increasingly made use of all the material psychology could provide. For instance, both poetry and psychoanalysis are necessarily concerned with the underlying language, namely figurative or metaphorical discourse.

At least since Freud, the psycho-analytical interpretation of art in terms of the poet-nature rapport established itself as one of the major trends in the field. Since Structuralism, stylostistics and other methodologies, showed that relevant data could be collected and scrutinized through the computer, new unassailable conclusions have been reached which prove how fundamental the poet-nature encounter has been in world literature, and especially so in the Mediterranean. It embodies the relationship between humankind and Nature, the content and the container. The ancient concept of Mother Nature, so fundamental in the early times of Southern Mediterranean culture, had in itself implied the idea of globality as an essential feature in the definition of Nature itself. Motherhood is one, permanent, unique, unchangeable, and universal. It has long been amply proved that the poetry of all times and of all cultures, except in instances when Nature is intentionally localised, Nature is not merely personified but is also anthropomorphised: an enchanting woman, actually a mother at times equally merciful and cruel, she is also a universal, cosmic representative of fertility. Her motherhood explains life, not simply as a biological fact but also as a mystery, and her antiquity evokes the idea of continuity, a limitless, inexhaustible productivity to which all creation is accountable. She assumes the characteristics of divinity, and all else, including males, are subject to her. As opposed to the

masculine concept of military power, causing devastation and death, this feminine perspective stands for birth and secure life.

In traditional critical terms, particularly with reference to what Benedetto Croce forcefully asserts regarding the universal dimension of poetry, it basically means that poetry is by definition global, transcending geopolitical boundaries, thus constituting a sort of archetypal condition regarding the man-space dimension of being. In Aristotelian terms this is equivalent to the distinction between historical truth and poetic truth.

Global regionality

Mediterranean Literature is frequently regarded as a 'landscape literature,' and major poetic works, ranging from ancient epics to romantic lyrics and more modern poems of any form, have been constantly analysed in terms of this psycho-physical dimension. The Mediterranean dimension involves the North African segment as much as it involves the Southern European one. The range of works falling within this category is quite old and wide. For instance, since Aesop the fable tradition has made full use of animals as agents of either good or evil. They seem to be innocent, naïve, animals, and are actually personified versions of typical human attitudes frequently implying blatant political content. Human characteristics are transferred unto them, thus changing them in somehow new creatures, both sentient and rational, whose thoughts and actions are evaluated in standard moral terms. A humanised narrative involving animals illustrates typical human conditions through animal behaviour, and it leads to a final moral lesson, a conclusion which is in itself global, namely pertaining to constant ethical values, applicable to all humans anywhere and anytime, and demanding adherence to a specific correct behaviour.

Fables and all their varied forms, including cartoons, fairy tales, legends, make full use of the significance animal behaviour can have if moralised and related to human situations. Even if less common and perhaps less effective, plants, and trees, and at times even inanimate entities are selected and creatively adapted in such a manner as to prove how morally relevant can all environmental components be to convey a positive message to both adults and minors. Styles differ but all such genres stress the globality of Nature.

Regionality plays a determinative role and greatly contributes towards diversification, since different places are portrayed as producing different effects on inhabitants. Prevalent different elements of nature account for the varied effectiveness of Global Nature. The functionality of such elements – for instance, mountains, fjords, rivers, lakes, sea – evidently resembles the effect they have on average inhabitants, but literary works tend to stress such an impact and to give it an overtly moral stance.

Geographical consideration may imply political conditions, and consequently the phrase ‘Global South’ may refer to the group of countries undergoing the aggression of superior forces, or the countries which form part of the south of a region or a continent. In both cases the term ‘south’, having a connotation which is either historical and transient or natural and permanent, somehow implies a radical difference from the north. For example, the literature of southern Europe can be defined according to a set of moral, social, religious and psychological qualities which are somehow shared by the people inhabiting the area and which are considered to be greatly determined by definite conditions, namely space, population density, climate, tradition. The reality of islands – for instance, Sardinia, Malta, Sicily, Cyprus – involves further consideration

mainly due to the overwhelming relationship with the sea. In Mediterranean terms the ocean, for instance, resembles infinity, timelessness, continuity, a space heading towards the absolute.

Beyond the island’s shores there is otherness, the unknown. According to Paul Ricoeur one’s own self is found in ‘the other’: ‘I am the other.’ For Sartre existence itself involves the objectivisation of the subject, and otherness may be positive or negative. Any pathetic fallacy amounts to that. Otherness depends on who and where one is. The initial consideration in the case of island cultures is their collocation. The poetry of these islands forcefully betrays traits unique to their geographical condition. Their literary heritage, as well as any other sector which forms part of their identity, cannot be fully understood, whichever the critical methodology in question, if the basic principles of ecocriticism are not fully taken into account. The land-sea relationship, frequently embodying the difference between permanence and transience, is essential to any proper understanding of Mediterranean literature, and stands out as a summative example of a major tenet of the whole cultural spirit of the region: the underlying sense of life as being inherently dualistic. Analogous conclusions may be derived from the analysis of countries separated from others by land and not by the sea. A whole age-long tradition, ranging from Plato, Aristotle, St Thomas, to Descartes, Sartre and the Existentialists, confirms that twoness is fundamental. Environmental poetry is just a specific example of how a whole world vision could be translated into an imaginative form.

The intrinsic ecological aspect of poetry

Apart from composing verse, poets feel the need of discussing their work, in itself and in relationship to society and to

its basic values. Poems, like all other genres of art, are justified and evaluated in terms of their 'where' and 'when': they belong to a given space and they occur at a certain point in time. The intrinsic space-time dimension forms part of the complex ecological character of any work of art. Poetry does not occupy space, but it distinctly derives its identity from somewhere, a specific location. The relevance of this concept is at least twofold: the place related to the author as a given person (the individual dimension of space), and the place presented in the work (the creative dimension, added to the previous one). Scientific criticism delves into the significance of the poetic system of expression and communication, but poets persist in proposing their own way of looking at themselves and at the role of the product which both make them, and reveal them for, what they truly are. Writing is therefore simultaneously empirical and transcendental: it is a literary text and also a personal document, an equally social and personal revelation. This means that tradition, however rich and far-reaching, is itself an evolving process and that self-awareness necessarily leads to new approaches and to the evaluation of the older ones. Literary criticism has always been implicitly ecological, but the term 'ecocriticism' is recent due to the fact that ecological, environmental awareness is quite recent, if it is to be considered as a global phenomenon. The 'thing' frequently precedes the 'idea' of the thing.

The modern era tends to give the impression that poetry is obsolete, or on its way towards extinction, and that there is no considerable public demand for it. From a purely literary, formalistic point of view, this may be partially true, but the concept of poetry is much wider even within the boundaries of literature itself. Part of the merit of poetry lies in the fact that it has been instrumental in forming the modern concept of ecology not only as a political measure but also, and essentially, as a recognition of the sacrality

of Nature, the globality of which is made up of many creatures who must all have their own respective set of rights, at least so far as sentient beings (animals and humans) go. The modern concept of rights has been extended to trees as well; it again manifests the practical functionality of concepts, feelings and attitudes which have been long essential and typical of a whole ancient and uninterrupted literary tradition. What had been treated as 'merely' and innocently poetic has been solid enough as to inspire and lead twentieth-century thinkers and politicians to translate the ecological character of poetry into ecology, namely a political vision which necessarily involves specific beliefs, measures and laws.

Examples illustrating all this abound in all sectors, and such awareness is now gaining ground at the educational as much as at the legislative levels. The reverential attitude with which traditional poetry has treated Nature, as one, universally organic and global, has eventually been understood as a phenomenon demanding real, practical recognition. At least three distinct, though closely interrelated, realities have emerged from the popular and the political appreciation of ecological poetry: 1) Places which are largely characterised by the natural condition of their landscape have been recognised as such and retained as much as possible in their original state. Such is the case with the Lake District, a place of mountains and lakes in Northern England, intimately associated with Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey, all known as the Lake Poets; 2) Prehistorical and historical sites which had been ignored for thousands of years, such as the Maltese stone temples, have been restored and safeguarded, and were eventually recognised worldwide for their uniqueness as, in Colin Renfrew's assessment, the oldest free-standing stone buildings in the world; and 3) The environmental heritage, both natural and historical, of various countries has become a secure point of reference in the list of

tourist resorts. In this sense tourism is an offshoot of the environmental literary tradition prevailing for many centuries in Europe. The newly-coined term 'ecological tourism' is an example of how distinct values (Nature and Poetry) have been finally fused into one whole.

On the other hand, the environment amply proves that humanity is still in search of its own significance, which is not exclusively scientific or empirical. Contemporary experience provides us with numerous examples of human attitudes which transcend the material level. In its widest sense, this truth is evidence of the inalienable inner need of humans to understand themselves as the rational inhabitants of earth in terms of infinite time and infinite space, namely in terms of categories which are superior to the immediacy of history and geography. This all constitutes a significant segment of the essential thematic content of universal poetry. There is clear consensus among critics worldwide that such dilemmas are frequently expressed through metaphors derived from Nature, namely through identification with animals, plants, the sea, the earth and whatever constitutes the world which is outer to one's own consciousness. The global character of the environment, universal rather than anonymous, is again the setting within which poets give literary shape to their existential queries. Ecocriticism in this case has to largely rely on philosophy and assess to what extent does abstract content, intellectual and emotional, is translated into figurative language.

Poetry as a reminder

Culture may be generally defined as the contribution of mankind to the natural condition. On the basis of the characteristics of nature, humans have gradually constructed their own modes of

behaving. Different nations have consequently produced different attitudes and conceptions. The most diverse civilizations have proved how inexhaustible human creative potentiality is. Ethnic, geographical, religious, social and political differences have led, and still lead, to the formation of differentiating factors. The existence of so many diverse languages bears witness to what nationality, for instance, can do to further distinguish a group of people from another. Ecocriticism, even when concerned with specific places and cultures, is expected to treat the environmental theme globally, in terms of oneness. It contributes towards the formation of a universal mentality by assessing the common elements shared by different countries, regions and continents. Part of its political relevance lies within such limits, proving that environmental values transcend boundaries of any sort without abolishing them.

On the other hand, poetry, like other creative genres, has always shown mankind its way back towards initial, primeval unification of historical diversification. If cultures reveal the identity of what is particular, poetry underlies what is universal and collective. If different nations have produced different types of poetry, the creative spirit has again acted as an authentic reminder of what is essential, superior to the historical level of experience. The environment is essentially one, common to all parts of the planet, though it strongly varies in what is incidental and contingent within its global uniqueness. Variability, whether natural or cultural, tends to cause absolutes and constants to be forgotten. Poetry, however, is a source of remembrance. The Greek Muses, the "Mousai," probably the "reminders," were the daughters of Mnemosyne, that is, Memory. The role of poetic activity, therefore, has been that of reminding man of his innermost identity, and to act as a powerful force against forgetfulness. Perhaps even nowadays we agree that the poet is the searcher of truth, the substance

hidden beneath the layer of resemblance. Understanding the real condition in which he lives, he goes further to embrace humanity in its unchangeability. In Aristotelian terms, we conclude that while historical knowledge reveals what actually happened, poetic knowledge, or better, intuition, deals with probability and necessity. Ecocriticism is a most suitable scientific methodology for poetry to further succeed in creating awareness, encouraging participation and making full use of the beneficial aspects of globalisation.

The expression of universals

In detecting what is probably or necessarily the human condition, poetry discovers what is basically human. In political terms we look at poetry as cosmopolitan; in philosophical terms we consider it as cosmic. The term 'global south' can be also understood in terms of being anywhere, wherever the distinction between North and South is strongly pronounced. The world formed of different nations is here defined as one unique, inseparable nation. And so does ecocriticism in seeking to decode a text in terms of what makes it human, namely global, rather than regional, national and continental. Whether this is the theme recalling the concept of "mother earth" or the ideology of modern internationalism, we can safely conclude that such an evaluation of poetry stresses its practical, efficient relevance at all levels. The spiritual bondage which seems to relate the poetic heritage of a country to that of any other is itself a proof of the fact that the poet is much more than a refined strategist of words and rhythmic patterns; he is a translator of spiritual content into literary form. It is just the latter which seems distinct culturally, whereas the former is the same universal self-consciousness of mankind on earth. It has initially been a poetic intuition to treat the environment as sacred and unified. Modern thought, both religious and academic,

has come to consider such a definition as equally virtuous and true. Ecocriticism has actually grown out of the need for humankind to treat the environment responsibly. Its present character is twofold: it provides a scientific method of textual analysis, and it transcends the restricted confines of literary scholarship and strives to attain political relevance. Furthermore, fundamental questions of an existential character are frequently put by poets to personified elements of Nature, such as the sun, the moon, the stars and the sea, all considered as absolute, permanent and changeless from which the human spirit demands an answer to the question of the meaning of life.

If poetry is not only social or political or cultural, but also human, or better universal and cosmic, it cannot ignore man in his time and space dimensions. The universal cannot be properly arrived at without a proper recognition of what is particular. Essence cannot be adequately understood and expressed without its immediate manifestation in a given situation. Hence it is equally necessary that poets develop their social awareness, keep their eyes open on what is continuously happening around them, and formulate their own interpretation of the data known to everybody and perhaps not sufficiently observed and analysed by everybody. Poetry which is ecologically committed justifies its existence in an era which is largely post-verbal, non-literary and anti-poetic.

The creative faculty is not necessarily a special gift shared by the chosen few. Since the times of the romantic revival one cannot easily go on thinking that poets are a superior type of beings without further qualifying the concept of "superiority". Poetic activity, however, is unique, in the sense that it is the actualization of the good qualities latent in all human beings. Poets are therefore different from the rest insofar as they feel more intensely and fully what the



rest tend to ignore or to take for granted. This they normally do through the imaginative exploitation of the natural environment. As agents of recollection they are bound not to be “original” in the strictest sense of the word, but to impose remembrance on collective alienation and thoughtlessness. Nature normally provides motives and figurative speech for such a purpose. Literary tradition shows that the environment is the most convincing and widely available source of inspiration for any message to be both pleasant and relevant. Ecocriticism eventually leads to the conclusion that poets are the ones who express on behalf of the rest what all others feel indifferently, or silently, and what they alone have the spiritual and the technical capability to build up into a pleasant form. It may range from innocuous analysis to blatant protest in aid of what a socially engaged interpretation may call ‘The Global South’. Modifying Riffaterre’s famous conclusion, it may be stated that through ecocriticism the scholar emphasizes what public opinion merely expresses.

This consideration happily reduces the whole question to a quantitative, and not to a qualitative, diversity. Alexander Pope’s statement in *Essay on Criticism* that: “True Wit is Nature to advantage dress’d, / What oft was thought, but ne’er so well express’d” sums up the poets’ role as the interpreters of the hidden, suppressed emotions and aptitudes of the multitude. In modern terms the multitude includes animals. The gradual widening of the term is due to the fact that environmentalism, a concept of literary origin, has also emerged as a vision of the whole of creation, a further acknowledgement that the ‘great chain of being’ includes whatever is organic, and mainly sentient. Within such cultural boundaries the animal rights movement emerged as a socio-cultural phenomenon. When poets succeed in voicing the experiences of men as well as animals, they justify their own existence and establish

themselves as what Shelley calls “the unacknowledged legislators of mankind.” Shelley’s own ‘Ode to a Skylark.’ as much as similar odes by so many other romantic poets, can readily be considered as a metrical and metaphorical exposition of what ecocriticism was then expected to redefine scientifically. The history of ecocriticism starts with a whole spate of poetic intuitions; once again, sentiment has preceded science. Anthropomorphism has bridged the gap between humans and animals in terms of animal instinctive goodness.

It must be sufficiently obvious, therefore, that poets must have a set of values easily identifiable with known natural and historical conditions. They must side with sensitive beings and discover the nature and significance of their joys and sufferings. The common urge for peace and collaboration is itself a poetic content which they are expected to translate into poetic form. Artistic challenges are actually technical; there must not be any lack of agreement among poets as to what should be the content of their message; it is only in the field of form and technique that cultural and aesthetic distinctions creep in. Such principles have been guiding criteria of an environmentalist orientation for decades. The fundamental difference between ecocriticism and all the other types of modern criticism is that, perhaps even more than the neo-humanist movement itself, ecocriticism is essentially ethical in its basic criteria. It is necessarily inclusive. In this sense the concept of the Global South is not only geographical and political but also ethical, psychological, denoting a challenging condition for some, a vague distant object of observation for others, and implying for all a diverse, contrasting Global North. It is frequently through poetry that environmental awareness is not at all distinguishable from animal rights movements and from activities involved in reducing social injustice at all levels ranging from what is national to what is global. The South is here conceived metaphorically, a localistic figurative representation of social inequality.

The metaphor: the language of the collective, global spirit

The real language of poetry is not the one studied in grammar books; it is the image, the crystallization of experience into figurative moments which constitute a whole. Literary history has proved that all different works of different authors, in different countries, ages and styles participate in a definite number of patterns, or archetypes. The whole literary heritage of mankind can be looked at as a whole, unique process evolving in diverse manners but according to perennial models. It is not difficult, therefore, to recognize that whereas poets of distant nations consider themselves different, a deeper enquiry into their substantial content brings to the fore an unsuspected common source, a fundamental nucleus from which variety emanates. In other words, variety pertains to form, whereas content is the same collective spirit itself, common to all. Again, literary archetypal patterns are in themselves aspects of what is summarily termed 'globality.' In its own ways, poetry has been habitually globalising themes and sentiments due to its claim of being the universal voice of creation.

If this is correct, it is equally so to conclude that spiritual homogeneity is in itself a poetic feature of humanity, and that poetry is automatically the discovery of what is unique. In political terms this is what we call peace; in philosophical terminology it is universality. Poetically it is what we are now recognizing as a cross-cultural dialogue through the values of Nature, now considered to be the common heritage of humankind.

While acknowledging the distinctive features of national cultures, and while doing our utmost to sustain them and to help them grow and flourish (this is particularly necessary in the case of minority group cultures), the greatest consequence to the

international, human essence of the poetic act must be duly recognised and activated, if such a literary genre is to survive and to retain its functionality. Even if languages differ and constitute a barrier to immediate expression and understanding, poetry defies this isolation since its real language is metaphorical, and its context is anywhere. The formation of images, itself the real substance of poetic activity, is a universal aptitude of the human spirit; it is one of the fundamental skills of the mind, and is therefore a type of transcendence of the elementary linguistic level, that is, of the level on which logical communication occurs.

If the knowledge of different codes of reasoning is an effort to reduce the problem of communicability, the creation of images is itself an act of participation in what is common to all human beings, a return to the primeval condition when man was (as the poet always is, or remains) a child, a dreamer perceiving truths through the apparently deceitful suggestions of imagination. Since symbolization is a universal language, it can be said that the poetic act unifies humans among themselves as much as it unifies humanity with whatever is not human. As the real language of poetry is figurative, it can be argued that this is equally true in the case of both affective and descriptive metaphors. This distinction, proposed by Cohen, defines the former as engaged and subjective, and the latter as detached and objective. Ecocriticism regards both as being equally, though differently, involved in establishing a relationship with the environment, which is actually a conditioning force and potentially a cause of change. Ecocritical accounts of literary works frequently prove that environmental development involves psychological transformations. Though the environment is global, and attitudes may be so too, the individual still remains an unknown quantity, and life 'an eternal flux'.

The positive character of poetic behaviour is also manifest in all the other types of extra-literary behaviours through which humans reveal themselves poetically, namely as fabricators of subjective relationships between objectively diverse points of reference (that is, between what in critical terminology I.A. Richards recognizes as tenor and vehicle, the notional terms constituting a metaphor).

Humankind in environmental poetry

It is extremely difficult to produce a reliable portrait of contemporary poetry since it concerns ourselves, especially with respect to our own anxieties, ideals and emotions. Environmental changes, especially those concerning the climate, are proved to have created various problems, especially psychological ones. Humans are too much involved in what is happening, and it is our own human experience that is being translated into poetry. A certain temporal "distance" is always essential to guarantee objectivity and completeness. However, it is likewise important that humans become more conscious of their own identity as depicted in contemporary verse. More than ever before such a definition is bound to imply a setting within which, in terms of Sartre's vision of the human condition, a person is observed, looked at, namely considered as an integral part of the environment, the complex object under observation.

The most typical feature of the twentieth century image of humanity, as portrayed in poetry, is perhaps the sense of insignificance in front of the intricacies and complexities of modern living. The devastation of the environment has meant the uprooting of the human spirit. The self is frequently fragmented and disenchanted with both the inner and the outer worlds. Anxiety, whichever its origin and nature, underlies the psychology of the

average man in the street, and has gradually become one of the most important themes of poetic inspiration. The view of man as the "outsider" within the universe is basically the main motive of the more important European and American poets who, having either experienced war personally or become fully aware of it through the anxiety inherited from the previous generation, look ahead towards the future with a deep lack of faith in the human race itself. It is difficult to fail to detect the haunting vision of war in most works inspired by peace and universal harmony. The contemporary type of *angst* is necessarily embedded in recent history and equally determined by the fear of its repetition. Environmentalism is motivated also from a purely human concern for inner peace.

Poetry, however, is itself an act of faith in what is fundamentally positive in mankind. It insists on the purification of emotions and on the development of the urge for life and brotherhood. Such a task is frequently envisaged as a rediscovery of the innocence and the beauty of Nature. Objective data produce subjective serenity; a non-human reality produces a human state of tranquillity. In this sense this sort of poetry, even if intimate and introspective, is indirectly political. The conflict between Jack Maritain's *homo poeta* and *homo faber*, the man of reflection and the man of action, is resolved positively by poets who act as a force leading to synthesis. Reflection and action must become one composite whole; the former must be conducive towards the latter, whereas the latter must follow the former.

This interpretation implies that modern society is incomplete without poetry, or better without the sense of what is humanly poetic; on the other hand, the poetic practice is both ineffective and sterile if it loses sight of complexities of the outer environment.

The subject and the object, the world and its consciousness, society and poetic aptitude must constitute a single phenomenon. It is the role of poets to bridge the gap separating humanity from poetry, reality from truth. In assuming the function of an instrument of consciousness, poetry reveals man to man himself, renders him all the more human, and provides public opinion with another irrefutable proof that poetry is not an escape from, but an escape towards, reality. This flight towards “truth... to which all of us are forever fleeing,” as Wallace Stevens puts it, does not imply the need of following Stevens’ own concept of “anti-poetic diction,” since poetic diction itself must seem like the best level of expression man can ever reach. Without tarnishing in any way its sublime characteristics, poetry must go on combating alienation, proposing the way back to Nature, and contributing towards the exploration of the poet latent in every man, the eternal child lingering in the spirit of every adult.

Green Concerns Over White Granules: The Relevance of Ecocriticism

T. Ravichandran

“In nature nothing exists alone.”
Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (51)

Fifty years past the publication of *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson’s presentiment of the “white granular powder” afflicting an imagined idyllic town and drastically dwindling it to a derelict pile resonates with the acutely real, global, and contemporary concerns for environmental conservation. The white granular powder, for Carson, referred specifically to DDT (dichlorodiphenyl-trichloroethane), the insecticide that in the Sixties in America, by affecting the food chain, annihilated the birds, the animals, and the humans who inadvertently accumulated it in their systems. In the present day, it can figuratively correlate to any pesticide, any pollutant, any “biocide” that threatens through its insidious effects to exterminate the symbiotic relationship between the humans and their environments. The white granular powder, in a global sense, can be symbolic of the global climate change that has become a universal threat and the most pressing environmental challenge. In addition, as an extended metaphor for environmental pollution, it can represent the havoc caused to environment by cell towers in present times. *Silent Spring* speaks volumes for the responsibility of science and the limits of technological progress, by bringing to the fore the central ecological concern: *Man is a part of nature*,