

ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS IN SYLVIA STULTS' SELECT POEMS

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Abstract:

This paper mainly concerns environmental degradation in the past few decades. Overpopulation and the industrialization of society are the main causes of the exploitation of natural resources. Consequently, people are confronting the imbalances of the ecosystem in various aspects. Human-caused turmoil such as deforestation, the large amount of plastic production, pollution, and all other disasters disrupt the entire ecosystem. However, the ecological imbalances completely ruin the later generations' living conditions as well. The overconsumption of natural resources would absolutely break the biocycle. Global warming plays a crucial role in the biosphere. The constant change in weather patterns is a consequence of greenhouse gas emissions. Comprehensively, the world is losing its basic natural substances. "Warned", "Awareness about Our Environment" and "The Brink" are poems by Sylvia Stults, an American writer who insists on the importance of environmental preservation in the future. Moreover, she envisions the climate crisis in her poems.

Keywords: Overconsumption, Environmental preservation, Ecological imbalances, global warming.

Sylvia Stults is a twentieth-century American writer and poetess. Most of her works express her concern for Nature. Her eco-centric perspectives on Nature insist on the value of preserving natural resources. Stults has written a few more poems, including "There is a God", "The Brink", "Make me a Garden", "A Shadow from Before", "Seagull's Cry" and "Awareness about Our Environment", as well as other works that mainly give a call to protect Nature. Most of the early writers in English literature portrayed the essence of nature and its distinct qualities in an exemplary way. "Boccaccio and Chaucer, in taking their lead from Statius, represent their woods as just such a sacred environment, with non-celestial divinities living alongside ancient trees that had divine patronage" (Schildgen 91).

"Warned", "Awareness about Our Environment," and "The Brink" are famous poems in which Stults largely talks about the current issues of environmental deprivation, climate change, climate hazards, and pollution. Warned is one of the environmental short poems. Through this, Stults gives a warning to everyone about the importance of protecting the ecosystem. She is one

of the forerunners of the twentieth century who sheds light on the importance of preserving nature for future generations. Stults firmly believes that the exploitation of nature is the reason for the ecological cataclysm. This poem, "Warned" has twenty lines. Each stanza has four lines. She uses rhyming schemes at the end of every line. For instance: fear, clear, gleamed, streamed, white, plight and so on. However, environmental exploitation began and continued in the early modern age. Even in the early modern era, environmental degradation was a problem. The environment has deteriorated as a result of the globalisation of mankind and the rebirth of technology. Globalisation and technology are the current complications in the environment.

The advent of modern science, Reformation theology, overseas exploration, the rise of global capitalism, and the technological take-off of the West, European societies gained an unprecedented capacity to explain, admire, and exploit the environment. (Borlick 19)

"Awareness about Our Environment" is another poem where Stults states the substance of protecting the environment through raising awareness across the globe. This poem is composed of sixteen lines. Each stanza has four lines. It is in the form of free verse. "The Brink" is a poem by Stults in which she advocates the healing power of nature. This poem has five stanzas. Through this poem called "The Brink", she urges everyone to feel the tranquil ambience, which naturally induces plenty of happiness:

Close your eyes and listen.

Take a deep breath and exhale.

It heals the body deep within

Naturally, not by artificial means. (Stults, "The Brink" 4,8)

Stults identifies the overuse of synthetic pesticides, which become poison for the crops in an agricultural field. The use of spray on fruits and vegetables would certainly lead to diseases such as cancer and diabetes in the early stages. She worries about these and appeals, "This is the environment that surrounds me? Poisons and insecticides sprayed on our food," (Stults, "Awareness about Our Environment" 4, 5). The toxicity of such chemicals on agricultural land ruins the large amount of crops produced in the field. The natural essence of crops is being affected by the use of chemicals. Moreover, the human respiratory system gradually loses its stability. At present, people have largely encountered and identified this kind of problem in their bodies. Stults considers, "It not only affects society; It pulls health from the brink (Stults, "The Brink" 19, 20). She remains aware of the poison that has been disguised in the form of insecticides and all other pesticides:

Development of human societies has involved a continuous process of adapting to changing stresses and opportunities. While climate change is seen as a relatively recent phenomenon, individuals and societies are used to adapting to a range of environmental and socio-economic stresses. (Gregory 2143)

Pollution is one of the most unavoidable hazards in the cosmos because it contaminates the land, water, air, and all other natural resources. The explosion of pollution not only interrupts the surroundings but also ruins a human being's healthy lifestyle. However, it easily affects the three major pollutants, such as land, air, and water pollution that paved the way to killing creatures of different species in the world. She warns and explicitly states that in many places people consume resources for free, but in the future they cannot expect the same thing as they are getting in the present. Stults strongly believes that nature will give back what it has been getting from us. She asks everyone to plant a seed for a better future. Stults specifies:

As they say, you reap what you've sown

So let us plant a better seed

Tear out old roots, cultivate, weed. (Stults, "Warned" 13-16)

The impact of global warming has created huge awareness among the young generation in the present century. The young writers of the twenty-first century picture the consequences of the future crisis in a thoughtful manner. Though they are aware of their circumstance, which has been tainted with unwanted pollution, they cannot resolve everything by themselves alone. Stults points out that everyone has a responsibility to resolve the calamity. She utters, "One can't blame pollution alone" (Stults, "Warned" 10). "When young citizens learn about and begin to address the issue of climate change, they inevitably have to grapple with some tough questions about how society collectively deals with complex global problems and the future" (O'Brien 13).

For many centuries, Climate change and all other environmental degradation have been the prime subjects for developing dystopian writings. In addition, the emergence of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic writing stands in an upright position in the late twentieth century. "Climate change has made its way towards the mainstream in recent years, on both the screen and the page, and has now eclipsed nuclear terror as the prime mover of the apocalyptic and dystopian imagination" (Hughes 01). Post-apocalyptic writers such as Stephen King, John Wyndham, J.G. Ballard, and Richard Matheson effectively portrayed dystopian and post-apocalyptic crises in a better way. Ecological concern is one of the elements in which the writers and the social workers have discovered many ways to preserve nature:

The pollution of the environment and of the food chain by reckless humanity is not a new subject in dystopian writing. It has been a major preoccupation in a range of feminist dystopian texts for over forty years, and it continues today with renewed emphasis on post-apocalyptic and eco-critical dystopias. (Copley 41)

Sylvia Stults explains how pure water becomes filthy. The clean water gets poisoned by the mixing of various chemicals, such as synthetic detergents, fuels, and so on. Every source lacks originality. Stults sees the people's possession of material things as the reason for the upheavals. Therewith, Stults insists on the uttermost eruption of pollution, which leads the entire cosmos like a deserted one. In the following lines, Stults addresses how the aquatic ecosystem becomes muddy and streamed by the water bodies' pollution:

Crystal clear our waters gleamed

Fish abundant, rivers streamed

Ocean floors sandy white

Now littered, brown, pollution's plight. (Stults, "Warned" 5-8)

Global threats like deforestation and the exploitation of smoke in industry cause geological and meteorological crises in the universe. The ethical behaviour of humans has completely changed in accordance with overconsumption, selfish attitudes, and their greedy nature. Because cutting trees causes soil erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and all other impacts, Stults bothers a lot in her poems. She personally worries about the tragedies that will be encountered by future generations. She alerts everyone to the changes in natural factors:

Trees towered high above

Trunks baring professed love

Birds chirping from sites unseen

Gone, paper joined pollution's team. (Stults, "Warned" 9-12)

Mark Steven is a poet who has written the poem "Comprador," in which he stresses that the arrival of industry is the chief basis for extracting the earth completely. The growth of industrialization is not only a tactic for economic growth; similarly, it paves the way for the enormous devastation around the globe as well:

The thing about realism

is industry really means

extraction but extraction

now means extinction

so industry is code (Steven, lines 1-5)

Climate change is a complex phenomenon in the current century. The cause and effect of natural disasters create breakdowns in climate change. "The peculiar features of the climate change problem pose substantial obstacles to our ability to make the hard choices necessary to address it. Climate change is a perfect moral storm" (Gardiner 398). Stults fears a lot about climate change and its plight, which gradually agitates the whole ecosystem. As per the statistical survey, it is proven that global warming has been raised by a massive number of industries, companies, and also by the people themselves. Stults relates these to certain changes, such as how the blue skies and stars are dimmed and obscured by the pollution haze:

The sands of time have rendered fear

Blue skies on high no longer clear

Stars were bright whence they came

Now dimmed, obscured, pollution's haze. (Stults, "Warned" 1-4)

Overpopulation and technological advancement are the key factors contributing to emerging global warming. Above all, corporations and governments are consuming the resources in a larger amount than normal people absorb them on a daily basis. Subsequently, the scarcity of resources happens. The increase in temperature comes through the emission of carbon dioxide. International trade in importing and exporting goods acts as a mediator in trading territories. For producing a large number of goods, the trading arena extracts natural resources in a synthetic way. The excessive consumption of resources would lead to shortages in the future. Hence, the world would face postcolonial criteria in the future, where everyone would be treated in accordance with class categorization. "It is widely noted that some of the gaps in the often heated repartee between postcolonial and ecocritical/environmentalism stem from the history of the environmental movement" (Wallis 837). The substantial economic and political powers treat everyone's lifestyle in a different manner. If it continues as follows, capitalism will disseminate its roots throughout the whole entity. Gurrero alerts, "There is an increasing acceptance that capitalism is directly connected with Climate change and that the apocalyptic consequences" (Gurrero 03):

The fundamental problem, however, is that without a healthy atmosphere and self-regulating climate, we would not be able to survive, and money would be worthless. Yet capitalism in its current form assumes everything, including natural capital, has a monetary value and is interchangeable. This is the heart of the problem: by evaluating the world in terms of dollars, we confound market price with actual value. (Park 193)

The writers such as J.G. Ballard, Emerson, and Thoreau sternly rejected the growth of industries in rural areas, since these writers in their period were able to distinguish the biased nature of capitalism over innocent people. Stults hates this kind of government and corporate interference in rural areas. "The bias in the production-function approach arises because it fails to allow for economic substitution as conditions change" (Smith 02). The so-called metropolitan city encourages corporations to build their factories and companies in the countryside. As a result, they take one step ahead and enter the forest and cut down the trees, establishing their own province. "The exposition of Eco's semiotic theory would lead the reader interested in literary criticism to yet another level of reading, the examination of the role of the reader in interpreting a text" (Sallis 04). There comes a destruction in which the inhabitants of the forest annihilate all the animals and their species in huge numbers. Stults feels saddened for the future generations who will encounter an apocalyptic world filled with emptiness. "Socioeconomic inequities exacerbate ecological vulnerability, and contribute to environmental displacement" (Jayawardhan 116). This is how everything has been distorted. "Although individual behaviors are certainly important and have the potential to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions,⁴¹ collective actions may feel more appropriate given the scale of the problem" (Armstrong 65).

Stults argues for the importance of saving the environment by spreading awareness among everyone. Stults is strongly concerned about the predicament of nature and how to bring

everything back. She asserts her point that people and the government should take some steps to prevent a great disaster in the future:

There has to be something that someone can do,

Like raise the awareness to those around you

That if we don't heed the problem at hand

It's your life that's at stake, the destruction of man. (Stults, "Awareness About Our Environment" 13-16)

Stults firmly suggests that everyone should sustain the resources by using them in as limited a way as possible. She seems to recommend that the government encourage the people to plant trees instead of demolishing the forest. There are plenty of solutions that can be implemented for prevention. The government should restore energy by reducing plastic usage and regulating certain rules for this. Furthermore, she encourages everyone to spare and save some resources for the younger generations. She incorporates, "Protect what has been given for free—our waters, skies, wildlife, and trees—for once they're gone" (Stults, "Warned" 17-19). In order to restore energy, each and every person should play their part in preserving nature. Agriculture should be fortified by the government as well as the people. The emissions of greenhouse gases should be reduced. "Saving the environments, Is bigger than you think" (Stults, "The Brink" 17, 18). The natural way is to restore carbon by recycling biodegradable waste. Thus, Stults stresses on eradication should be erupted from the globe for the sake of saving the earth.

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