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Human Reconnection to Nature: An Ecopsychological Appeal in Corona Time Poetry

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Abstract

Ecopsychology emphasizes on the intrinsic bond between humans and nature for mutual well-being. This article examines how poetry of corona time expresses human anxieties of environmental loss and sense of alienation from nature and how it makes people aware of their inherent sense of emotional attachment with natural system for their happiness, well-being and meaningful life. The objective of this paper is to investigate humans' alienation from nature and their efforts for reconnecting to it. To achieve this, the paper evaluates the selected poems using theoretical modality of ecopsychology propounded by Theodore Roszak and Robert Greenway. As a piece of qualitative research, it incorporates interpretive and analytical approaches following the techniques of close reading of the selected texts. Along with the relevant observations of critics, the focus lies on the thematic and textual analysis of the selected poems. The findings of the research unveil that corona time poetry depicts humans' alienation from nature as a consequence of their indifference to and domination upon it, and the only way for their well-being is reconnection to it.

Keywords: Alienation, COVID-19, ecopsychology, environment, humanity, nature, well-being

Human-Nature Relationship and Corona Time Poetry

With the rise of market capitalism, human destruction of ecosystem and natural environment has posed many health questions and sustainability challenges. COVID-19 pandemic, a global health crisis, is one of them. Humans have disregarded the fact that their inherent bond with biosphere can ensure the healthy humanity and healthy environment. Their obsession with materiality, financial gains and artificial urbanity has alienated them from natural environment causing their illnesses and

anxieties. The deep long intrinsic bond between humans and nature has been broken as individuals have moved from natural life to a more mechanical life. Apart from facing new medical issues and problems, COVID-19 has also drawn a significant attention to environmental concerns and the discourse of human-nature relationship in the new context. In a sense, the pandemic also reminds humanity of the importance of renewing its good relationship with natural environment for making the earth a joyful place to live on and thereby promoting human well-being, happiness and meaningful existence.

Amid the Corona virus outbreak, poetry writing around the globe is worth noticing. The COVID-19 pandemic has found a significant expression in poetry after its outbreak. Pandemic woes, fears, nervousness, despairs, uneasiness and shocking lockdown experiences are expressed in poetry around the world. Many poets also link COVID-19 concerns to the current environmental problems questioning the destruction of pristine nature. Worried about the broken ties of human-nature vitality in the context of the pandemic, the poets appeal for strengthening a healthy, emotional and intrinsic bond. The article deals with a dozen poems published by poets around the world after the pandemic outbreak. The poems include: "Lockdown" by Simon Armitage, "Great Realization" by Tom Roberts "Fixing Corona" by Jayendra Kumar Shau, "An Imagined Letter from COVID-19 to Humans" by Kristin Flyntz, "In the Time of Pandemic" by Kitty O'Meara, "Pailaharu" ["Steps"] by Rajani Dhakal, "Gaun ra Korona" ["Village and Corona"] and "Vatavaran Divasama" ["On Environmental Day"] by Basudev Adhikari, "The Balance" by Halim A. Flowers, "Covid Lessons" by Anusha Alex "A Perplexed Little Bird" Kritika Bhalla and "A Covid Time" by Lesley Foster. The poems articulate the spirit of ecopsychology that human wellness is directly relative to natural environment and the healthy earth. Critiquing humans' ignorance to and alienation from nature these poems evoke necessity of humans' emotional connections to nature for making all species' life sustainable and joyful. Making individuals conscious about ecosystem and unharmed planet, the poems help readers think positively and change the feelings of anxiety to rejoicing and substantial living.

Statement of the Problem

Reading the selected corona time poems, I have observed that they have an anti-anthropocentric appeal that humankind should live in harmony with nature without destroying it. The main concern of this paper is to reflect upon how the poems depict humans' emotional distance and fundamental alienation from natural world, and how they attempt to awaken the inherent sense of environmental reciprocity and yearn for the reconnection. Specifically, the paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Why and how do the poems portray the rupture of human-nature emotional

intimacy?

2. How do the poets they appeal for the emotional reconnection rousing ecological reciprocity inherent in human psyche for human well-being and a healthy environment?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this article is to explore human- nature emotional bond as expressed in the Corona time poetry. The particular objectives are to examine how the selected poems explore humans' state of alienation from the earlier bond of natural environment in present context, and to analyze their longing for reconnection to nature for the sake of the well-being of both the human community and the biosphere.

Methodology

The article analyses how the selected poems reflect the disconnection of human bond with nature and how they appeal for the need for the reconnection. To achieve the objectives, I have selected a dozen of poems composed after COVID-19 pandemic outbreak as primary texts, and books, articles and academic reviews as secondary resources. Since COVID-19 is a global crisis and environmental discourses are globally undertaken, the poems have been chosen from across the world. The poems have been collected from various library and online sources, such as social media sites, and e-publications. The secondary resources have also been obtained from library and online sources. As a qualitative research work, the article relies on thematic and textual analysis of the poems. Using an interpretative and analytical approach, and the technique of close reading, I have analyzed the poetic lines as well as critics' views on them in connection to my research inquiry.

The research work is guided by the philosophical and theoretical parameters of ecopsychology. As a newer field in ecocritical studies, ecopsychology studies the emotional connections between humans and the environment for on well-being and progress of humankind as well as for ecologically healthy and sustainable earth. Since one's psyche is shaped by the modern world that suffers from its ecological disasters, ecopsychology seeks to expand and remedy the emotional connection between humans and the earth. Theodore Roszak, a pioneer who coined the term, maintains, "Ecopsychology holds that there is a synergistic interplay between planetary and personal well-being" (321). He claims that, "the goal of Ecopsychology is to awaken the inherent sense of environmental reciprocity that lies within the ecological unconscious... [and] to heal the more fundamental alienation between the person and the natural environment" (320). Deep and enduring psychological questions of humans are inseparable from their relationship to the physical world and overriding environmental questions are deeply rooted in human psyche. Deep roots of human mind remain bonded to the earth with all sympathies for it as it is the prime cause of

existence. He believes when humans are more in touch with the natural world they are more in touch with themselves.

Ecopsychology helps individuals feel connected to a much bigger more-than-human world and consider their place in it. Zanyar Faiq Saied and Firmesk Othman Rahim opine, “It is undeniable that nature is part of human beings’ life, and human beings develop among the natural elements belonging to the earth. Therefore, both humans and nature are part of one ecosystem....Ecopsychology comes to remind human beings about their surroundings to make them have a sense of communion with the natural world” (392). The field seeks to develop and understand ways of expanding the emotional connection between individuals and the natural world, thereby assisting individuals with developing sustainable lifestyles and remedying alienation from nature.

Review of Literature

Creativity is more flourishing in the time of crisis because it can help people cope through anxieties and sufferings. Creative writers produce their best works during or following the times of crisis and upheavals. Such works are not only the reflections of human agonies at critical times but also therapeutic tools as people may find relief and consolation in writing poems and sharing with others. Harish Trivedi postulates how literature becomes a record of pandemics and of a source of comfort in such uneven context, “Literature may not explain away or fight off things such as pandemics, even as modern science sometimes can’t, but it does become a source of consolation, a way of sharing our common humanist concerns, and, in its own way, provides the deepest and most insightful record of the events” (qtd. in Ghosh). Although literary works cannot fight the pandemics directly as the medical science, they soothe the anguished hearts in crisis. Such critical times are more prolific for the creation of literary works.

Poetic creation has become more vibrant in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic troubles, and also has captured a good readership even during this unfavorable time. Covid poems, that reflect the experiences of lockdowns, isolations, social distancing, quarantines, and other hurdles generated by corona virus, have been trending on social media. Anasuya Menon states “Corona poetry and covid19 poetry are trending on social media. Instagram has poets’ communities from around the world versifying by the minute about the challenges the virus has thrown up — isolation, quarantine, sickness and loneliness.” The poems have captured the moment faster.

Different critics and authors have observed different tendencies in analyzing the poems of corona time. Some of the critics read corona poetry as the expression of experiences of human sufferings in corona crisis. They evaluate how the poets reflect panic feelings, sufferings and mourning deaths of individuals. Observing how poetry reflects loneliness and panic conditions of individuals, Kara Lewis observes despite

the challenge of the corona virus, “some poets have found an unexpected surge to keep creating... to ‘tap into big, hard feelings’ and encapsulate the profound.” They capture the hard emotions of the time. Mentioning the history of pandemics and emergences of art works Mohammad Shafiqul Islam reveals, “Whenever there has been an outbreak of pandemics, artists and authors have responded, with a sense of responsibility, to the miserable human condition....As the history of pandemics suggests, a great number of poets and writers have composed groundbreaking works reacting to human suffering.” In spite of sudden disruption of everyday life, poets capture the hard time to express their feelings. Richard Levick agrees the world has entered a new period of social pain, “One of the best ways to deal with anxiety – whether it’s yours or society’s – is to write a poem about it.” Poetry writing has become the best way to articulate the difficult time of the pandemic.

Other critics read corona poetry as a healing therapy to cope the experiences of lockdowns and quarantines, death of the relatives and other vicious consequences of the pandemic. John Charles Ryan asserts the healing capacity of corona poetry the hope it generates, “During times of crisis, poetry can offer an outlet for expression and identification. When language itself becomes a source of anxiety—read: pandemic, contact tracing, surging cases, at-home self-isolation, flattening the curve and so forth—the restorative effect of poetry can intervene by reestablishing our hope for (and in) the future.”

He believes poetry is both the outlet and hope for individuals to live through the hard times. Considering poetry as the means to heal the agonized hearts in the pandemic time, Simon Armitage voices, “Poetry as an essential art form helps us alleviate our agony during the critical times of pandemics” (qtd. in Islam). Stressing on the positive role of poetry that may help people overcome depression, and on the continuation of creativity in the face of epidemics, the present poet laureate of the USA, Joy Harjo contends, “We always turn to the arts, to poetry at times like these when we are thrust into the unknowing, into places of terror or awe. People are calling on artists to help inspire and make sense during these times.” (qtd. in Islam). She believes poetry can inspire and encourage people in the difficult time.

While critics view poetry about COVID-19 as the reflection of human psychology in relation to lockdown experiences, quarantine difficulties and human worries and anxieties, they have hardly paid any attention to the connection between human and environmental issues in the poems. Human emotional and psychic revelations in response to nature in the pandemic time have been left for discussion. Since no research has been conducted on corona time poetry connecting environmental issues to human emotions, I find this project new, interesting and relevant in the present context of corona crisis. I believe this study will contribute to extending new knowledge in the area of eco-studies. To fulfill this research gap, ecopsychology is used as the theoretical foundation.

This new field helps people to become aware of human-nature intrinsic link and to restore bond where it has been broken. Andy Fisher asserts the human mind and environment are inextricably bound because they represent both life and consciousness. For him, “ecopsychology is often defined by the claim that human well-being is synergistically linked to the well-being of the planet... Ecopsychologists argue that to care for the human mind we must care for the earth, as these cannot be divided” (Fisher). The individual human psyche is inseparable from the surrounding environment. In light of ecopsychology, this article examines how poetry written in corona time reveals the consequences of humans’ alienation from nature and necessitates their reconnection to nature as a remedy.

Impacts of Human Alienation from Nature

Humans are not just part of their own community, but are inherently linked to the non-human world. The ways they treat nature affect all their lives and mentality. The separation of humans from nature leads to mutual suffering, such as through environmental devastation and grief and alienation. Quest for material prosperity leads humans to experience a fundamental detachment from their emotional bond with nature. Their ecological unconscious is repressed by capitalist thrust and industrial life. They have lost their intrinsic connections to nature experiencing “the much-vaunted human-nature split” (Greenway). This alienation from nature provokes adverse effects like the feelings of anxiety and frustrations in them. The selected poems of corona time express their deep concern and worry at this acrimony. As the reminder of humans’ indifference to value of natural environment, the poems appeal for the emotional reconnection between humanity and nature.

Humans have suffered because they have broken their intrinsic tie to the natural world. In his viral poem “Fixing Corona,” Indian poet Jayendra Kumar Shau asseverates his worry about the present humans’ suffering as a consequence of growing detachment from nature. He believes that the problems like corona diseases are the outcome of human greed for material endeavor and estrangement from nature. He questions upon humans’ exploitation of nature for fulfilling their greed, “how humans have arrested the freedom of nature??/ how detached humans are from reality??” (“Fixing Corona”) By capturing the “freedom of nature” they have lost the essence of life in real sense. Their isolation and frustration are caused by the lost connection with nature. He feels upset that COVID-19 is the “suffering for everyone but lesson for none” (“Fixing Corona”). The main cause of the suffering is human ignorance of nature.

Humans suffering is the result of their domination upon nature and other countless non-human living organisms. Indian poet, Kritika Bhalla in “A Perplexed Bird,” unfolds the pitiful states of humans as they are detached from nature. Nature enjoys utmost freedom only in the absence of human intrusion into its life. The bird as

the poetic persona feels extreme joy of freedom while people are locked and worried inside their homes amid the corona pandemic. Ironically, while people watch the freedom of birds flying “through the bars of their windows with appalling eyes and downhearted spirits” (38) the birds are happy with their “independent breathing place to roam and explore the outside world” (38). It reflects the appalling life of humans while nature remains unaffected. Humans are not friendly to other living beings. The more detached they are from nature the more they confront adversities. Without humans’ interruption, the bird feels joyous, “Now I can fly and chirp around the whole sky finding its brim/ As there are no aeroplanes flying around interfering into my dreams” (A Perplexed Bird" 39).

The poem implies that nature flourishes only when humans get back from interfering nature and develop intrinsic relation to it. Observing the joy of fish in the absence of ships and boats, the bird utters:

They were full of joy and were spinning and whirling with happiness
Their view towards the sky was no more blocked with big ships and boats
No waste was dumped from months into their rivers and seas
Yes, they complained of the plastic cans, bottles and polythene bags. ("A Perplexed Bird" 40)

The fish are happy and high spirited as they find no human disturbance. Big ships, boats and wastes threaten all sea life. All creatures express their joy, if not threatened. The bird’s expression indicates that humans are the problems in maintaining the healthy ecosystem. They suffer because do not respect the co-existence of living organisms.

Human alienation from nature can also be observed in “An Imagined Letter from COVID-19 to Humans” composed by American poet Kristin Flyntz. In the poem, a letter is sent to humans reminding them of their destruction of nature is the main cause of their present crisis and their troublesome life. COVID-19 as the speaker warns the humans that they never consider seriously the earth’s pain. The persona rebukes human’s role in creating the sufferings of all and the earth:

We are not well.
None of us; all of us are suffering.
Last year, the firestorms that scorched the lungs of the earth
did not give you pause.
Nor the typhoons in Africa, China, Japan.
Nor the fevered climates in Japan and India.
You have not been listening.
It is hard to listen when you are so busy all the time, hustling to uphold the
comforts and conveniences that scaffold your lives.
But the foundation is giving way,
buckling under the weight of your needs and desires. ("An Imagined Letter

from COVID- 19 to Humans")

The speaker reproaches all human needs and desires that cause the sufferings of the earth and other living things. Firestorms, typhoons and fevered climates are the outcomes of human spoliation of nature. Buckled under strain and stress of mechanical life, they are isolated from the exuberance of life that nature generates. Rather, being afflicted by "individual concerns" and characterized with "the frenetic, hurried rush of illusions and 'obligations'" they feel deprived of true happiness and high spirits. In Iona Rusell's words, "The poem demonstrates the fears and worries shared by our global community, regarding both COVID and the state of nature." Humans suffer as they gradually get detached from the nurture of nature.

Humans have neglected the fact that nature is their home and they need to protect it for their own well-being. They cause harm to natural process and the elements of nature. Blaming humans who befoul the air, land, water and all nature, Nepali poet Basudev Adhikari asks different questions:

The sunshine coming down to earth,
Who dared to smear it?
Such a gloss of moonlight
Who dared to dim it?
What made the river go dry?
What caused the snow melt on the mountain? (Vatabaran Divasama" ["On Environmental Day"] 62)

The poet charges humans for causing environmental deterioration. The original beauty of sunlight and moonlight is hardly seen; natural flow of river goes dry; and mountains get melted. Humans have refused to acknowledge the importance of the biosphere's health for promoting their health. He alerts them symbolically, "Is it for others? / To clean the eating plate/ To wash up beddings" (62). They have ignored the fact that protecting natural components contributes promoting entire humanity. The poem expresses its deep concern over ecological loss and disfigured earth. Adhikari critiques the way humans do not care natural environment and get alienated from it.

People who live in the crowds of cities are more responsible for deteriorating environment and more affected by modern diseases. Villages are closer to nature and are, therefore, less likely to be affected by environmental problems and the pandemics. In "Gaun ra Corona" ["Village and Corona"], Adhikari observes once people leave village they have fear of illnesses. He questions if people are alienated from village life and natural life, "Are youths living in the village?/Or are they terrified by Corona in Qatar?" (My translation 33). There are no people in the village. The land is uncultivated and people do not produce food for own sustenance but buy from shops. The youths who are toiling in foreign lands have more fear because they have left their village. Those youths who leave the village have nostalgia for the lost happiness and undergo some kind of mental lack as they are away from their land.

Capitalism has played a major role in separating humans from nature. In “The Great Realization,” Tom Roberts, an American poet, denounces the way humans run after materialistic values forgetting their duty to respect nature. He narrates a bedtime tale to his son that the present crisis has its roots in the past when “people came up with companies to trade across all lands,” and “the work life balance broke” (“The Great Realization”) keeping them alone and suffered. He “tells his listeners about pre-pandemic life — ‘a world of waste and wonder, of poverty and plenty’ — that falls apart when the virus hits” (Krug) and explains the world is trapped in over consumption, pollution and that the world’s eco-system has suffered. Human quest for material fulfillment has defiled the health of the earth.

Roberts claims that self-indulgent consumerists emphasize the monetary economy ignoring the emotional satisfaction found in close attachment with elements of nature. He illustrates how people suffer after subjugating the natural environment:

‘And every day the sky grew thicker, till we couldn’t see the stars.
So we flew in planes to find them while down below we filled our cars.
‘We’d drive around all day in circles. We’d forgotten how to run.
We swapped the grass for tarmac, shrunk the parks till there were none.
‘We filled the sea with plastic cause our waste was never capped.
Until each day when you went fishing, you’d pull them out already wrapped.
(“The Great Realization”)

Human craze for built environments and hunger for financial success have posed threats to natural environment and life everywhere. Consequently, the sky is getting thicker with dust and people hardly see stars. Instead of walking around parks, they fly planes and drive cars. They have destroyed green grass for making roads. They have polluted sea with wastes. Thus, they are prevented from taking the real joy out of nature.

In “A Covid Time,” Australian poet Lesley Foster depicts an appalling condition of human – nature rift. She contends humans now should realize that “A new direction must prevail./ Our world has put us on notice: step back”. Humans need to step back from exploiting nature. She expresses her worries about the loss of human relation with nature:

Millions of jaded people scurrying here and there
like ants before the rain
continuously seeking new and exciting places
only to have to find another
in a never-ending cycle of movement (“A Covid Time”)

This crowd of humans travels just for their financial gains. They never allow “the earth rest and breath” (“A Covid Time”) in fulfilling their petty desires. They fail to take pleasure in their companionship with nature. Their movements for achieving material benefits keep them away from natural environment. Thus, humans have really taken

nature and life into their hands and invited crisis.

Nature has to fight back to maintain that balance which they have destroyed in the quest of selfish fulfillments. The loss of emotional bonds results in the illness of both humans and the earth. As humans realize their detachment from the nature they miss the innate bond and urge for it. Examining the psychological processes that bond humans with and alienate them from nature, Ecopsychology concludes that only reconnecting to nature promotes individual healing, psycho-emotional bonding, and sustainable lifestyles.

Reconnecting Mankind to Nature

Human life is directly linked to its relationship with the nature. A required balance between the consumption of individuals and the capacity of the natural environment for renewal ensures the well-being of both humans and the earth. However, people often act as if they are separate from nature — as if they can survive without nature. Nature serves as the primary source of human life. It bears the capacity of enriching human happiness, health and well-being. Nature is a source of inspiration, for solace, for enriching people’s spiritual lives. Humanity’s welfare largely depends on the health of biosphere.

Humans have an inbuilt attachment with nature formed as ecological unconscious. Industrial capitalism has attempted to keep humans away from nature in pursuit of financial benefits. Considering the growing alienation, poetry of corona time makes an appeal for an emotional reconnection between humans and nature for well-being of both of them. The selected poems express that individuals’ emotional bond with nature can intuit their well-being and meaningful life. Revealing his utmost pleasure of being emotionally connected to pristine nature, Chau enunciates, “I am so happy to breathe the fresh clean air,/ I am elated to see the wildlife gently flourish” (“Fixing Corona”). He feels joyous to live and to see other wildlife live in a friendly environment of nature. He makes an earnest request to humanity that they should “respect and value life of us [humans], of living beings and of our Planet” (“Fixing Corona”). He realizes that human well-being is not possible without respecting the life of the planet and other living things.

Roberts presents how natural environment blooms when lockdown forces human activities to halt:

‘And with the sky less full of planes, the earth began to breathe.
And the beaches brought new wildlife that scattered off into the seas.

‘Some people started dancing, some were singing, some were baking.
.....

‘And so when we found the cure and were allowed to go outside,
We all preferred the world we found to the one we’d left behind. (“The Great

Realization”)

People are getting back to their natural world which they had lost for a long time due. Corona virus has taught them a great lesson that true happiness and health depend on healthy and unaffected nature. Assuring his son, he speaks, “Well, sometimes, you got to get sick, my boy, before you start feeling better” (“The Great Realization”). The sickness will be cured soon as the nature begins to renew itself.

American poet Halim A. Flowers reminds humans that their undertakings have affected the lives of other non-human beings. Once they refrain from suppression, natural process is restored to normality. He presents an idyllic picture of natural life as people stop polluting air and water.

So now, the dolphins can play on the shore
of Sardinia and the filth has disappeared from the waters of
Venice, along with the void of polluting people.

The air can finally breathe and
the wind can win
And we can all be concerned how we
touch one another again. (“The Balance”)

The endangered sea life becomes vibrant again. Feeling no more threatened by humans, dolphins start playing on the sea shores. Seas look clean again without wastes. The air is no more polluted. The poet realizes that humans and non-humans are the part of the same earth and same ecosystem and affect one another’s life. He observes that corona virus has alerted humans to correct their exploitation of the earth and all natural processes for their own well-being:

Sad that we had to be confined
For the sun to shine
through, as we were imprisoned to our home
To gentrify the layers of the ozone

.....
Now we all wear masks
For Mother Earth to breathe
For everything else to live free. (“The Balance”)

As humans stop their over speed of social and financial activities, the sun shines beautifully, the ozone layers get saved from depletion and the earth gets a chance “to breath” and ensures the freedom of all life.

Bhalla focuses on the importance of the mother earth using the little bird as her poetic persona:

I swear I don’t hate humans; they too are a creation of mother earth like us
But I just wish that they could slow down their speed and learn to live life
Enjoy with the beauty and creations of mother earth

And make this mother earth a better place for every creation to live blissfully
May my dream come true one day and I will fly high and high and my
happiness

will have no bounds. (“A Perplexed Little Bird” 40)

The bird does not have any sense of enmity with humans despite their destructive tendency. But it wants them to respect others’ existence too. Anusha Alex also feels that Covid lessons are great. “It taught us to value our lives/ It made us to care for all at all times” (“Covid Lessons” 22). Humans need to care all ecosystems and earthly phenomena to for their own enriched life. She observes the vanity of anthropocentric domination over nature and reiterates the necessity of co-existence.

Human health is interlinked with the health of nature. Flyntz articulates that corona virus is the messenger to remind humanity of this reality. The poem warns humans that hurting nature cannot keep them healthy and safe. Addressing humans COVID -19 as the speaker requests:

To look up into the sky, streaked with fewer planes, and see it, to notice its condition: clear, smoky, smoggy, rainy? How much do you need it to be healthy so that you may also be healthy?

To look at a tree, and see it, to notice its condition: how does its health contribute to the health of the sky, to the air you need to be healthy?

To visit a river, and see it, to notice its condition: clear, clean, murky, polluted? How much do you need it to be healthy so that you may also be healthy?

How does its health contribute to the health of the tree, who contributes to the health of the sky, so that you may also be healthy? (“An Imagined Letter from COVID-19 to Humans”)

The speaker seriously attempts to persuade people that the earth is the source of human well-being. They should avoid “individual concerns and consider the concerns of all.” If natural environment is protected, entire humanity will remain healthy and happy. Nancy Windheart claims, “There is deep wisdom in her writing that arises from great sensitivity and connection with the non-human worlds.” The poem stresses the reciprocity between humanity and nature.

The speaker maintains that as the health of a tree, a river, the sky tells humans about the quality of their own health, humans should also tell the earth the quality of the health of the rivers, the trees, the sky, and all ecosystems:

Stop. Just stop.

Be still.

Listen.

Ask us what we might teach you about illness and healing, about what might be required so that all may be well.

We will help you, if you listen. (“An Imagined Letter from COVID-19 to Humans”)

Emphasizing on the well-being of all who share the same planet as their home, the speaker promises to teach humanity this lesson if humans are considerate over their treatment of nature. The poem demands “we stop polluting the earth, leaving our skies smoggy and waters murky. This collective call asks that we stop infecting our planet, much the same way we want the virus to stop its devastating journey” (Russell). Humans should stop their activities that harm health of the earth. They should listen and realize that human illness and healing are determined by the condition of nature’s well-being.

Adhikri’s “On Environment Day” [“Vatavarana Divasama”] also presents a full apprehension of human responsibility of protecting natural resources for mutual health:

Dear lockdown!
Let’s clean the river
Let’s keep the air cleaner
Let’s turn the dirt into soil
Let’s make the soil our wealth
And grow gold there. (My translation 62)

He claims that humans are responsible for pollution of water, air and soil. He urges them to keep these sources clean and pure for their sustainable survival.

As people devote all their time and energy to work and routine life, they become spiritually sick. Kitty O’ Meara’s “In the Time of Pandemic” is a strong expression of how people could heal themselves if they are out of work and routine life. She imagines that they not only changed their everyday activities but also “began to think differently.” The poet argues that humans can heal themselves when they respect the earth and stop destructing it:

And the people healed.
And, in the absence of people living in ignorant,
dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth
began to heal. (“In the Time of Pandemic”)

She imagines as the people healed themselves, the earth also began to heal. To heal the earth and themselves people should create new ways to live. In fact, she makes a serious request to humans that they should stop damaging the nature for fulfilling their selfish desires.

In her poem “Pailaharu” [“Steps”] Nepal poet Rajani Dhakal meditates upon the collaboration between humanity and nature for perfection of life. Accepting that the soil is the source of her life, she expresses, “Having stepped into this soil/ I started/ The great journey of life to earth” (“Pailaharu” [“Steps”]). She confesses she has learned from COVID-19 a lesson that humanity should go along with nature for mutual well-being:

Leaving the human settlement locked

Avoiding the opposing thoughts
I just keep remembering
Ever sprouting inside my heart
The potential of life
I'm asking for
The medicine of time
With these steps
Perhaps for creating
Another settlement
In the mutuality of nature and humans

I keep meditating in my journey. (My translation "Pailaharu" ["Steps"])

Despite lockdown, the poet keeps continuing her journey to a meaningful life. She imagines a beautiful world that presents a perfect union for humans and nature. Rishi Ram Sharma writes that Rajani's poem gives a message of ecological awareness that post corona life of humans will be eco friendly. Humanity's wellness is inseparable from that of nature and ecology.

Adhikari's poem "Village and Corona" ["Gaun ra Corona"] associates real happiness and fulfillment with villages. Nurtured by nature, villages offer a model of living as an alternative to the rush of city life. Addressing the lockdown, he praises village life because it is safe from all diseases that spread fast among human crowds in the cities:

The village is all safe
No epidemic of VIP disease
No fear of infection from travelling
The village is so sweet like a poem
So delicious like organic food. (My translation 33)

Village life offers happiness and safety to residents. The poet compares the village to a sweet poem and organic food.

In "A Covid Time," Foster envisions a world with a perfect harmony of nature and culture. She celebrates Linear Park as a "piece of Paradise". All people are happy to pass their time joyfully "along the riverside path." She describes the park where humans make a perfect union with nature's beauty:

both young and old take in the beauty and peace of nature,
only broken by the squawk of sweeping cockatoo,
laughter of perching kookaburra,
song of small coloured rosella or parakeet
swirling and dipping to treetop and grass.
Nature and nurture are at work
for a return. ("A Covid Time")

She narrates a scene in the park where all young and old people happily enjoy the

enchancing beauty of nature forgetting the pains of the pandemic. They are delighted by the overwhelming “squawk of sweeping cockatoo,” “laughter of perching kookaburra” and “song of small coloured rosella or parakeet” (“A Covid Time”). The poem gives a message that a perfect union between “Nature and nurture” promotes mutual well-being. Nature has released people from their anxieties and worries of critical covid time and people look happy in nature.

In “Lockdown” Simon Armitage contemplates on how humans cope amidst the alien situation and anxiety through a connection to nature. He feels the time in quarantine is a chance to escape the hectic lives and concentrate into the beauty of the natural world. The poem alludes to a scene in “Meghadūta, an epic by the Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa, in which “the exiled *yaksha*” sends reassuring words to his wife in the Himalayas via a passing cloud. The cloud is ready to take the message because the *yaksha* tells him that he is going to pass across many beautiful landscapes:

streams like necklaces,
fan-tailed peacocks, painted elephants,

embroidered bedspreads
of meadows and hedges,

bamboo forests and snow-hatted peaks,
waterfalls, creeks,

the hieroglyphs of wide-winged cranes

and the glistening lotus flower after rain. (Armitage "Lockdown")

By intertwining domestic imagery with the natural images, he suggests that humans need to enjoy their immediate surroundings of nature, and trust the earth for their well-being. The poem “will encourage people to pay closer attention to their local communities, and the landscapes around them” (Saunders). To emerge from the pandemic, as Armitage thinks, people need to learn “about taking things easy and being patient and trusting the Earth... [realizing that] the problem is our hectic lives and our proximities and the frantic ways we go about things” (qtd. in Flood). Earth is the final refuge for humanity in all crises. The poem ends with a hopeful note that by appreciating and respecting nature humans can get rid of the fears and isolations.

Nature is the part of humans’ life since they grow out of earth. For increasing healthy life humans need to maintain a healthy environment. Projecting the idea of how nature plays a significant role for humanity’s well-being, the selected poems emphasize on an emotional bond between them. Humans’ attachment with the natural environment and surroundings liberate them from all kinds of worries, fears and anxieties. For better health and a more meaningful life humans should live in harmony with nature. Humanity flourishes in a close affinity with the earth.

Conclusion

Humanity and natural environment are linked to each other for mutual well-being. But, under the influence of market capitalism, humanity has overlooked this fact and broken the emotional bond with nature at present time. COVID-19 reminds humans of their responsibility of protecting environment for healthy life. Without keeping the earth healthy, humans cannot keep them healthy physically and emotionally. The rush of urban life has kept people away from the purity of natural life and real joy. As a result, humans suffer from anxieties and different kinds of physical and mental diseases. Their split self stands opposite to their spiritual well-being and happiness. Their healing is possible only through the reconnection with nature. Depicting how humanity is gradually being alienated from natural environment, the selected poems make an appeal for the emotional reconnection. The poems illustrate how individuals can get relieved from all worries and illnesses being closer to nature and respecting it. I have attempted to interpret corona time poetry from the perspective of ecopsychology. However, this study opens ample opportunities for other researchers to study corona time poetry using other ecocritical, social and trauma theories.

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