

Negotiating Postcolonial Ecologies: Representation of the Disruption of Identity and Natural Harmony in Selected Poems of Kath Walker, Carol Ann Duffy, Vachel Lindsay

Anamana Bhattacharya

Abstract

Colonization, along with technological progress, brought the white man's wants to the foreground. The effects of colonization are not limited to the colonized losing their land and natural resources to the colonizers but they also lose their identity and lifestyle which is closely associated with the land, the forest, and their surrounding nature. The indigenous people of Australia, North America, India, and Africa have lived in harmony with their natural surroundings for eons. The process of colonization disrupted this natural balance between humans and nature as the natives lost their sacred land and resources. It also created a hierarchy where the colonizers and their lifestyle formed an ideal and the lifestyle and habits of the aborigines was looked down as primitive and backwards. But the ideal life could only happen at the expense of natural resources. Technological advancements brought in trains, cars, electric poles, telephone lines, factories and a host of other things that make life comfortable. But it took away communal lands, sacred grounds, forests, fields, rivers, and everything that the primitive people worshipped given their harmonious existence with nature. The branch of Ecocriticism, which emerged in the 1970s in North America, dealt with the relation of human beings to nature and its components with an emphasis on the depleting resources. Postcolonial Ecocriticism, which came later focussed not only on the human-nature relationship but how colonization has affected physical environment, resources, animals, plants, and human beings. It focusses on those narratives which have been suppressed systematically, where the destruction was disguised as a gift. In this light I would like to discuss three poems, Kath Walker's 'We are Going', Carol Ann Duffy's 'Selling Manhattan' and Vachel Lindsay's 'The Flower-Fed Buffaloes of the Spring'.

Keywords: colonization, marginalized, indigenous, nature, environment