

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Ovaj rad dostupan je za upotrebu pod licencom [Creative Commons Imenovanje 4.0 međunarodna](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



**Morteza EMAMGHOLI TABAR
MALAKSHAH**

Golestan University
English Language and Literature
Department
Gorgan, Shahid Behshti Street, Iran
Malakshah.morteza@gmail.com

UDK 821.111.09 Keats, J.-1

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29162/ANAFORA.v5i1.10>

Izvorni znanstveni članak
Original Research Article

Behzad POURQARIB

Golestan University
English Language and Literature
Department
Gorgan, Shahid Behshti Street, Iran
Pouragharib_lit@yahoo.com

Primljeno 14. prosinca 2017.
Received: 14 December 2017

Prihvaćeno 10. svibnja 2018.
Accepted: 10 May 2018

THE MANY FACES OF NATURE: AN ECOCRITICAL READING OF THE CONCEPTS OF WILDERNESS AND THE SUBLIME IN JOHN KEATS' SELECTED POEMS

Abstract

This paper examines the concepts of Wilderness and the Sublime and discusses different views of nature in John Keats' poetry through the theoretical lens of ecocriticism. Analysing the poems "O Solitude!" (1816), "On the Sea" (1817), "Written Upon the Top of Ben Nevis" (1838), and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (1819), it employs two ecocritical approaches – Deep Ecology and "The Dark Mountain Project" – to point out that Keats' conception of nature is both ecocentric and highly sceptical, apprehensive of humanity's precariousness and vulnerability in the face of it. It argues that such an oxymoronic, albeit still highly potent and relevant take on the dichotomy between man and nature is in line with

Keats' self-definition as a "chameleon poet" who takes many forms and is able to observe things from different viewpoints.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Romanticism, John Keats, Wilderness, the Sublime, Deep Ecology, the Dark Mountain Project

Introduction

Following the rise of ecocritical studies in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the Romantic era became a rich source of material for the ecocritical study of literature. The poems, letters, and essays of the six most famous Romantic poets – Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, Keats, and Blake – have been much analysed and critiqued by the ecocritics over the years as the concept of nature, one of the main premises of the Romantic movement, is also one of the main focuses of ecocriticism. Although Romanticism has been widely discussed among ecocritical scholars, John Keats has remained one of the underrated figures, neglected in their works. This lack of proper attention is unfortunate because Keats' poetry and points of view still have much to offer to the contemporary ecocritical reader. An ecocritical inquiry into Keats' concepts of Wilderness and the Sublime can shed more light on the relationship between man and nature, and ultimately present a deeper understanding of ourselves and our world.

Keats' tendency to observe phenomena from multiple angles by reinventing his poetic self explains his peculiar, multifaceted view of nature as both beautiful and redeeming and dangerous and limiting. Such a contradictory view finds its contemporary expression in two different (post)environmental approaches to the phenomenon of nature – that of Deep Ecology, which advocates an ecocentric point of view as opposed to an anthropocentric one, and the Dark Mountain Project, which emphasizes the insignificance of mankind in the face of nature. This paper employs the two philosophies of nature to shed new light on Keats' poems "O Solitude!" (1816), "On the Sea" (1817), "Written Upon the Top of Ben Nevis" (1838), and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (1819) and illuminate the contemporary ecocritical perspectives. Its methodology comprises both critical and

biographical studies on John Keats as well as contemporary ecocritical theory and philosophy, including recent ecocritical interviews and debates.

1. Romanticism and Ecocritical Reading

The attention given to environmental discourse in recent decades is undeniably apparent and immense. Concepts such as “Green Fuel,” “Electric Cars,” “Environmental Friendliness,” and “Clean Energy” appear more and more frequently in academic and non-academic discussion and have eventually become a global matter since environmental crisis became a global issue. As environmental studies arose, literature got involved as well. According to Glen A. Love, the notion that nonhuman contexts are also involved in literature started during the 1970s and 1980s, and there were many signs during those years that pointed towards a new attention to literature and the environment (3). This new attention was later on labelled “ecocriticism.” Being a rather recent addition to the literary and cultural studies family, ecocriticism has had various definitions. Glotfelty et al., for example, define it as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xviii) whereas some definitions relate it more closely to “environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory” (see Garrard 3).

One of the challenging aspects of conducting an ecocritical literary research is the lack of any solid and unified theory. As Bressler contends, “because Ecocriticism welcomes multiple perspectives, there is no single, dominant methodology by which ecocritics analyse texts” (235). Being a rather broad and flexible branch of literary criticism, ecocriticism is easily compatible with other literary disciplines. This has led to the birth of new fields such as ecofeminism, which studies the relationship between nature and feminist values. Still, being a very broad field of criticism does not mean that ecocriticism is bereft of any theoretical backdrop. In his book *Ecocriticism*, Garrard outlines the most discussed concepts in the ecocritical scene – Apocalypse, Pastoral, Wilderness, Pollution, and the Sublime – giving a pseudo-theoretical outline to ecocriticism. Although these concepts are not exclusive to ecocriticism, and were definitely not born within it, it is

their interest in nature that makes them relevant to the literary studies and vice versa.

With nature being one of the major focuses of ecocriticism, it is not of any surprise that the Romantic era is of high importance to the ecocritical reader. As Hutchings puts it:

Because Romantic literature often appears to value the non-human world most highly, celebrating nature as an [sic] beneficent antidote to the crass world of getting and spending, and lamenting its perceived destruction at the hands of technological industrialism and capitalist consumerism, Romanticism has provided much fertile ground for ecocritical theory and practice. (172–73)

According to Garrard, the Romantics played a significant role in the formation of ecocriticism, and the works of Wordsworth and Shelley were the most important material of ecocritical studies in the 1990s (4). In his poetic manifesto “Lyrical Ballads,” Wordsworth explains his work as his “effort to counteract the degradation in taste that had resulted from the increasing accumulation of men in cities” (Abrams 11). This hostility towards city life and urbanization not only became the reason the Romantic era is nowadays known as “Nature Poetry” (Abrams 11) but also gave birth to a concept called “Romantic Pastoral” (Garrard 39). Both Romanticism and ecocriticism offer a wide range of views towards nature and the ways humans interact with it. Each Romantic figure views nature differently, which enables the ecocritical reader to analyse Romantic literature from different angles. Employing the philosophies behind the Deep Ecology and the Dark Mountain Project movements to the work of John Keats, this paper attempts to show how the variety of contemporary ecocritical perspectives brings a new lens to a critical perception and analysis of Romantic notions of nature.

2. Wilderness and Deep Ecology

The Deep Ecology movement was established by the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, who coined the term and delineated its major

premises (Drengson and Inoue xvii). As a movement that opposes anthropocentrism (Hay 42), Deep Ecology puts an emphasis on nature itself. It shifts the focus from a (human-centred) point of view to an ecocentric (nature-centred) one. Defending the necessity to include the ecocentric perspective into public discourse, Naess points out: “Some policies based upon successful homocentric arguments turn out to violate or unduly compromise the objectives of deeper argumentation” (206). According to Guha, one of the major characteristics of Deep Ecology “is its focus on the preservation of unspoilt wilderness and the restoration of degraded areas to a more pristine condition” (1). Such a bold focus and demand inspired many political activist groups, such as the Earth First! Movement and the Sea Shepherds (Luke 1). All of those groups advocate a concept of Wilderness as a pristine setting, as opposed to the urban one, that signifies “nature in a state uncontaminated by civilization” (Garrard 59). As Glen A. Love explains, the attributes of Wilderness are “primitivism and escapism, that is, a total rejection of civilization and a mindless immersion into the appeals of sensory life and apparent simplicity” (85). Perhaps Cronon describes it best: “Wilderness is the natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization that has lost its soul. It is a place of freedom in which we can recover the true selves we have lost to the corrupting influences of our artificial lives” (16).

Such a notion of Wilderness needs to be differentiated from Pastoral, another concept that suggests a return to nature. Whereas Pastoral focuses on the “country,” Wilderness seeks “nature” in the purest form of it. While Pastoral represents a return to the “domesticated” nature, which was long-settled by man, Wilderness cherishes a return to the “untamed” nature (see Gerrard 60). Obviously, the two sides of this pole define each other, as one could not exist without the other, and to truly understand one concept, the other one must be apprehended as well. As Alison Byerly argues, “The idea of wilderness refers to the absence of humanity, yet ‘wilderness’ has no meaning outside the context of the civilization that defines it” (qtd. in Glotfelty et al. 46). Yet, as Luke warns, Deep Ecology’s emphasis on the pure nature untouched by civilization also accounts for its “fetishization of wilderness” (xiii).

3. The Sublime and the Dark Mountain Project

Whereas the concept of Wilderness celebrates the return to the untouched and pure nature, another concept – the Sublime – warns of nature’s hostility. While returning to nature, its ruthlessness becomes apparent, especially in contrast to the comfortableness of city life. Living in the city is much easier and more comfortable than living in untouched nature. Urban life is more accessible and safe whereas nature is brutal and dangerous. Although depicting nature as a threat dates back to the earliest form of literature – *The Epic of Gilgamesh* – it is often argued that the complete antagonisation of nature is a Judaeo-Christian concept. Be it the exile from heaven, the wandering of Moses and his people, or the great flood of Noah, the Wilderness has always been a free, yet dangerous place (Garrard 61–3). Garrard defines the Sublime with its might and power: “The beautiful is loved for its smallness, softness, delicacy; the sublime admired for its vastness and overwhelming power” (64). Interestingly enough, it was in the Romantic era that the Sublime was praised the most in literature. The contrast between nature, mostly mountains because of their monstrosity, and the human body surfaces on numerous occasions in the Romantic literature. Wordsworth describes woods and meadows as a “vast abyss,” and Mary Wollstonecraft writes: “I asked myself why I was chained to life and its misery?” when in presence of “The impetuous dashing of the rebounding torrent from the dark cavities” (qtd. in Garrard 61–5).

The Dark Mountain Project, a most recent (post)environmental movement, heavily embraces the concept of the Sublime, indulging in the discussion of the ruthlessness and the hostility of the overwhelming nature. According to Librová and Pelikán, in recent years, society has seen the rise of “green fatigue,” a scepticism regarding the validity of the green movement that questions the assumption that a single person’s actions can change the environment (2). The Dark Mountain Project is one of the results of this sceptical outlook. In his article in *The Guardian*, The Dark Mountain Project’s founder, Paul Kingsnorth states:

I stopped believing [in environmentalism]. There were two reasons for this. The first was that none of the campaigns were succeeding, except on a very local level. More broadly, everything was getting

worse. The second was that environmentalists, it seemed to me, were not being honest with themselves. It was increasingly obvious that climate change could not be stopped. (“Why I Stopped”)

At its core, The Dark Mountain Project is a deeply pessimist and defeatist movement that presumes not only that humans cannot save the environment but that they are also insignificant in the face of nature and its overwhelming power. In an interview with *Gist.org*, Kingsnorth contends: “What I care passionately about is nature in the round: all living things, life as a phenomenon. . . . But my view is that humans are no more or less important than anything else that lives” (“I Withdraw”).

4. Discussion

Being a Romantic poet, Keats was tremendously intrigued by the concept of nature. His relationship with nature, though, remains ambiguous and complex at best. A deeper analysis of Keats’ approach to the subject reveals that he did not hold a singular view of nature, but believed it to have many faces. In his letter to Richard Woodhouse, Keats described himself as a chameleon poet, emphasizing the ambiguity of his poetic self:

As to the poetical Character itself (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a Member; that sort distinguished from the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself – it has no self – it is every thing and nothing – It has no character – it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated – It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the camelion [sic] Poet. (qtd. in *Keats’s Poetry and Prose* 294–45)

The “chameleon poet” takes multiple forms. He is everything and nothing. As Lockridge’s analysis of Keats’ and Byron’s peculiar worldviews, distinctive from that of other Romantic poets, confirms, “Keats held a very dark view towards realness, one which [correlated] with ‘nothingness,’ an equation he never completely disavowed, and one brutally confirmed for

him on his deathbed” (381). The conflicting nature of Keats’s beliefs regarding poetry and nature led him to conclude that he must be “obliged to smother [his] Spirit and look like an Idiot” (qtd. in Lockridge 386). Such an unstable and dynamic apprehension of the poetic persona allows for Keats’ work to be analysed from multiple perspectives and accounts for his view of nature not only as beautiful and giving but also as shocking, dangerous, and beyond our conception.

The concept of Wilderness is clearly apparent in a number of Keats’ poems, including “O Solitude.” In this poem, Keats simply wants to flee to the wilderness, away from the city:

O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell,
Let it not be among the jumbled heap
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep,—
Nature’s observatory—whence the dell,
Its flowery slopes, its river’s crystal swell,
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
’Mongst boughs pavilion’d, where the deer’s swift leap
Startles the wild bee from the fox-glove bell. (1–7)

Tired of “murky buildings,” he wants to take shelter in “Nature’s observatory,” seeking tranquillity. What he describes is not an inhabited nature, but a pure, untouched one. “Flowery slopes,” “river’s crystal,” and the “boughs pavilion’d” are places outside the human territory. Keats composed this poem while he was at a new urban environment studying medicine, which explains the resentment towards the murky buildings that surrounded him and the yearning to leave them behind (Keats and Cox 52). Although the speaker in the poem continues to flee to the wilderness not alone, but accompanied by a kindred spirit, he takes shelter in the untamed nature nonetheless.

What accounts for the poem’s “deep ecological” resonance is the fact that it is extremely ecocentric. Keats’ departure from city life – getting away from the “jumbled heap of murky buildings” – is only mentioned once, and of course in a negative way, but the poem does not dwell too much upon that fact. The rest of the poem is written in admiration of nature. In other words,

the representation of anthropocentrism, identified with urban life, gets little attention, even if the urban site is the main “antagonist” of the poem. Instead, the majority of the poem is heavily focused on the representations of the speaker’s ecocentrism, i.e. the untouched Wilderness which he desires to flee to.

Keats takes this ecocentric view to its extreme in his poem “On the Sea,” in which he nearly worships nature and shows his disdain for the human-centred city life. Keats spends most of the first half of the poem praising nature, with the sea being a representative of nature, and in the second half of the poem, he begins to take a “deep ecological” approach and invites the reader to go to the untouched nature to take shelter from urban life:

Oh, ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tired,
 Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
 Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,
 Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
 Sit ye near some old Cavern’s Mouth, and brood,
 Until ye start, as if the sea nymphs quired! (9–14)

The significance of this poem in the “deep ecological” context lies neither in the way Keats invites the reader to take shelter in the wilderness nor in the manner he portrays urban/city life – even more negatively than he did in “O Solitude!” – but in such a complete ecocentric estrangement that it almost excludes its own authorial voice. Keats does not mention himself in any form (I, my, etc), and in an almost activist-like manner addresses the reader and encourages him/her to take action: “Oh, ye! . . . Sit ye near some old Cavern’s Mouth, and brood” (11, 13). His attack on city life is also heavier than in “O Solitude!” as he uses an “uproar rude” and “cloying melody” to describe the unpleasant sounds of urban life and assumes the person who lives in the city to have “vexed and tired” eyes.

Yet, Keats did not always perceive nature as a refuge-like haven for his tortured and tired mind. He acknowledged the brutally limiting forces of nature as well. As Lockdrige points out,

[Keats] knows nature can assume the inhospitable force of circumstance, and we can no more achieve “earthly Happiness” than we can do away with “the sands of Africa, Whirlpools and volcanoes.” Just as a rose cannot escape “a cold wind, a hot sun,” so we cannot escape the circumstances or “worldly elements” that limit our happiness. (394)

Keats shows this other side of his chameleon-like poetic persona in the poem “Written Upon the Top of Ben Nevis,” in which he depicts nature at hostile and fearful, thus demonstrating its sublime character. The poem resembles the ideology of the Dark Mountain Project as it portrays nature as indifferent, ruthless, overwhelming, and powerful. As the title of the poem suggests, Keats wrote this piece while climbing mount Ben Nevis, the highest peak of Britain. The climb, and the overall experience of the Highlands, was beautiful, yet painful for the young poet. Even though Keats himself describes the experience of, “being half drowned by falling from a precipice” as “a very romantic affair” (*Selected Letters of John Keats* 186), critics like Judith Weissman believe that in “Written Upon the Top of Ben Nevis,” Keats does not share the Romantic idea of humans and nature understanding each other: “Keats, however, gets no response when he asks the muse to speak to him in this most sacred of natural places. The mountain is only a mountain; the mist is only mist; he learns nothing there of the human or supernatural worlds” (Weissman 100). Keats, who left Ben Nevis with a sore throat and died two years later of tuberculosis, leaves us with the vision of the chameleon poet who sits upon the top of Ben Nevis and in a very defeatist, “dark mountain-like” manner talks about being blind in the mist, whimpering about mankind’s suffering from being powerless in the face of nature:

... I look o’erhead,
And there is sullen mist,—even so much
Mankind can tell of heaven; mist is spread
Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,
Even so vague is man’s sight of himself! (5–9)

Keats is fully aware of the hostility of nature and his own lack of defence in the face of it. He calls himself “a witless elf” in the face of the mist and the mountain itself, the forces which challenge his sight and his health. The poem thus aligns with the philosophy of the Dark Mountain Project as the poet both finds himself defenceless in the face of nature and feels nature’s indifference towards humanity. In Keats’ poem, just like in Kingsnorth’s philosophy, humankind is not more or less important than any other living thing.

An exploration of nature’s hostility and an even more defeatist stance against the mightiness of nature can be found in the poem “La Belle Dame Sans Mercy,” in which a knight finds himself in the midst of a natural scenery:

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has wither’d from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel’s granary is full,
And the harvest’s done. (1–10)

Then he comes across a seductive woman, who looks appealing; yet, later on, the tale reveals her true evil intentions:

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream’d—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream’d
On the cold hill’s side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—“La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!”

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing. (31–48)

The poem fully reflects the Dark Mountain Project's views on the unfathomable force of nature by depicting an attractive woman who is easily seducing and later on trapping the knight. The unfortunate fate of the knight and the hostility of the fairy woman clearly demonstrate the concept of the Sublime. The evil La Belle Dame, who is part of nature, lures the knight and ultimately brings him to her evil elfin grot. According to Enscoe, "La Belle Dame and her elfin grot are evil . . . [she is] evil, destructive, and merciless" (qtd in. Banerjee 75). In a similar vein, Weissman argues that the knight has a terrifying vision of nature, and that the fairywoman is an "enchantress who uses nature as a means of seduction" (99). In other words, the appealing nature, which initially attracted the knight, turns out to be a threat.

The knight is also completely powerless in La Belle Dame's presence and aware of his hopeless position. Consequently, he does not even try to fight back or defend himself, but instead just gives in to the overwhelming power of the enchantress. Significantly, this poem's defeatist view of nature, reminiscent of that advocated by the Dark Mountain Project, is further upheld by mentioning other knights and warriors who suffered the same fate, emphasizing humanity's collective vulnerability and helplessness in the face of nature.

Conclusion

The genius of John Keats, his powerful poetry, and his radical views on life, poetry, nature, and love have made him a major figure in the history of English literature. A contemporary ecocritical reading of Keats' work

confirms its immortality and continuing relevance in this day and age as it upholds current standpoints on our planet's ecological condition and its fate – an optimistic nature-centred one and a defeatist and pessimist one premised upon the destructive force of the Sublime and nature's ultimate indifference to man. In a time when both nature and humanity are facing great risks, a dialogical outlook on the condition of our species and our planet informed by the new ecocritical perspectives and the legacy of John Keats is indeed needed more than ever.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M.H. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed., vol. 2, W.W. Norton, 2006.
- Banerjee, Angela. *Female Voices in Keats's Poetry*. Atlantic Publishers and Distributions, 2002.
- Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1996, pp. 7–28.
- Drengson, Alan, and Inoue Yuichi. *The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology*. North Atlantic Books, 1995.
- Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. Routledge, 2004.
- Glotfelty, Cheryll, Teresa Shewry, and Harold Fromm. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. U of Georgia P, 1996.
- Guha, Ramachandra. "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation." *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1989, pp. 71–83.
- Hay, Peter. *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought*. U of New South Wales P, 2002.
- Hutchings, Kevin. "Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies." *Literature Compass*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2007, pp. 172–202.
- Keats, John. *Keats's Poetry and Prose: Authoritative Texts, Criticism*. Edited by Jeffrey N. Cox. W.W. Norton, 2009.
- . *Selected Letters of John Keats*. Edited by Grant F. Scott, Harvard UP, 2009.
- Kingsnorth, Paul. Interview by Wen Stephenson. "I Withdraw': A Talk with Climate Defeatist Paul Kingsnorth." *Grist*, 11 Apr. 2012, <http://grist.org/climate-energy/i-withdraw-a-talk-with-climate-defeatist-paul-kingsnorth/>. Accessed 18 March 2018.
- . "Why I Stopped Believing in Environmentalism and Started the Dark Mountain Project." *The Guardian*, 29 Apr. 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/apr/29/environmentalism-dark-mountain-project>. Accessed 18 March 2018.

- Librová, Hana, and Vojtěch Pelikán. "Ethical Motivations and the Phenomenon of Disappointment in Two Types of Environmental Movements: Neo-Environmentalism and the Dark Mountain Project." *Environmental Values*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2016, pp. 167–193.
- Lockridge, Laurence S. *The Ethics of Romanticism*. Cambridge UP, 2005.
- Love, Glen A. *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment*. U of Virginia P, 2003.
- Luke, Timothy W. *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture*. U of Minnesota P, 1999.
- Naess, Arne. "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects." *Earthcare: An Anthology in Environmental Ethics*, edited by David Clowney and Patricia Mosto, Bowman & Littlefield, 2009, 197–212.
- Weissman, Judith. "'Language Strange': 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and the Language of Nature." *Colby Library Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1980, pp. 91–105.

VIŠESTRUKA LICA PRIRODE: EKOKRITIČKO ČITANJE KONCEPATA DIVLJINE I UZVIŠENOSTI U ODABRANIM PJESMAMA JOHNA KEATSA

Sažetak

Morteza EMAMGHOLI TABAR MALAKSHAH

Sveučilište Golestan

Odsjek za engleski jezik i književnost

Gorgan, Shahid Behshti Street, Iran

Malakshah.morteza@gmail.com

Behzad POURQARIB

Sveučilište Golestan

Odsjek za engleski jezik i književnost

Gorgan, Shahid Behshti Street, Iran

Pouragharib_lit@yahoo.com

Rad propituje koncepte divljine i uzvišenoga te razmatra različite poglede na prirodu u poeziji Johna Keatsa kroz ekokritičku teorijsku perspektivu. Analiza pjesama „O solitude!“ (1816), „On the Sea“ (1817), „Written Upon the Top of Ben Nevis“ (1838) i „La Belle Dame Sans Merci“ (1819) služi se dvama ekokritičkim pristupima – „duboka ekologija“ i projekt „Dark Mountain“ – kako bi ukazala na to da je Keatsova koncepcija prirode istodobno ekocentrična i iznimno skeptična jer ukazuje na ljudsku krhkost i ranjivost. U radu se tvrdi da takav oksimoronski, premda izuzetno snažan i relevantan pristup dihotomiji između čovjeka i prirode odgovara Keatsovoj definiciji sebe kao „pjesnika kameleona“ kojega karakteriziraju različiti oblici i sposobnost promatranja stvari iz različitih perspektiva.

Ključne riječi: ekokritika, romantizam, John Keats, divljina, uzvišenost, duboka ekologija, projekt „Dark Mountain“