



ISSN: 2663-8118 (Online) | ISSN: 2074-9554 (Print)

Journal of Al-Frahedis Arts

Available Online: <http://www.jaa.tu.edu.iq>

Tikrit University

J.F.A

Journal of Al-Frahedis Arts

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Keywords:

- Place
- Space
- Poetic Creation
- Lucy

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 17/09/2019
Accepted: 13/10/2019
Available Online: 15/10/2019

A Reading of Spatiality and Place in In William Wordsworth's Selected Poems

ABSTRACT

Place plays an important role in creating the human history, cultures and civilizations.

So, it is a subject for inquiry and study. Poets had their own ways in creating their places.

The space cannot be realized without the place that becomes the center or the basic for understanding the space. William Wordsworth's spatiality can be seen through reading his poetry specially "The Lucy Poems". He dealt with the place and space in a delicate way creating a dreamlike world.

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1. Introduction:

Place plays an important basic role in shaping the human beings' mental realizations of life. The human beings have realized that distinctive role of place since their early life. The theoretical history in the past shares the same basics of the present.

The idea of place has passed through mythology and philosophy, but it reaches its development through the science and philosophy. It is the relativity hypothesis which sums the time and place and considers time a fourth dimension for three-dimensional place or (what is called the Chronotope).

Bakhtin (1981) says that the primary principle in the chronotope in the modern novel is *time*, due to the now severed link with the crude physicality of the world and natural phenomena. In the modern novel, he says, the latter had "ceased to be a living participant in the events of life" (p. 266). This term has its roots also in literary trends as in poetry.

William Wordsworth reflects an immaculate association with the place, as it is deemed a creed for the romantic poets to celebrate their realizations of place through their poems. The increase in bioregional literature and thinking further reflects the importance of relating place to the life. Thayer (2003) considers bioregionalism in the primary importance of regenerating deep place connections and awareness. He describes simply by some as "living a rooted life" it "means you are aware of the ecology, economy, and culture of the place where you live, and are committed to making choices that enhance them" (p .76).

The Place and Reality:

The physical and natural environment of places, as determinants influential on sense of place and place value, are indubitable. Crawford (2000) debates the significance of making magical places. Accordingly, he believes that such places are marked by "human scale, rich details, beautiful settings, harmonious sounds and evocative scents. They require an appreciative public to come alive; people involve themselves in the magic helping to sustain it" (p. 288). Making unique magical emotional genuine and inspiring places is a challenge, and it is a hard task for the poet.

Wordsworth approaches that point exquisitely through his "Lucy Poems", especially in "Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known". Thus, he disambiguates the place step by step showing the poetic creativity in sketching Lucy's cottage. So, he writes:

I to her cottage bent my way, Beneath an evening-moon (II. 3-4).

In these lines, the poet insinuated to a heavily forested area with intermingled trees and branches, that compel the poet to bend over his horse to traverse safely. Significantly he used the night as a cover to protect the secrecy of Lucy's place.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye, all over the wide lea; With quickening pace my horse drew nigh Those paths so dear to me (III. 1-4).

Furthermore, the poet kept his eyes upon the moon as a guide for his long journey. The presence of the moon endows the place with a magnificent glamor. The poet cruses the wide green pastures that lead him to his beloved Lucy after long riding and hastening pace. The emotional aspects are clearly ascribed to these paths since they are associated with Lucy. The poet's psychological state reveals anxiety, as he reaches the groves. So, he says:

And now we reached the orchard-plot; And, as we climbed the hill,
the sinking moon to Lucy's cot Came near, and nearer still (IV. 1-4).

In these lines, Wordsworth employs natural beauty to the setting of his poem. The place here is introduced as an eminent and unique one, that ranks to Lucy's status. Hence, the topography imparts the place a physical and emotional alleviation to capture the reader's imagination.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof, at once, the bright moon dropped (VI. 1-4)

The place is given life through a progressive activity; thus, the poet shows the horse acting in harmony with the place through its earnest attempt to climb the hill. Moreover, the poet applies a supernatural phenomenon to his poem to mark the place with sublime death. The melancholic atmosphere dominates the scene indicating Lucy's death.

The Space and Reality:

Space must be a container capable of retaining its own qualities, even during the very performance of containing. Plato describes the receptacle "Its nature is to be available for anything to make its impression upon, and it is modified shaped and reshaped by things entering it" (Cooper, 1997, P. 1226)

In the attractive world, the space remains an unchanging permanent and a passive pre-condition of being. Plato claims that the mind apprehends space by a sort of intuitive cognitive that functions without the necessity for sensory information, and also distinctive for accepting all things in all times and never to be in any nature in any way.

That means Plato sees place as independent from things but renewed and rebuilt through them, like a ring which prints shapes on the material "We look at space as in a dream when we say that everything that exists must be of necessity somewhere, in some place and occupying some space which doesn't exist somewhere, whether on earth or in heaven, doesn't exist at all" (Cooper, 1997, p. 1226)

Plato's theory of space is often criticized for its demotion of space to the background of western philosophical thought, according to Dion (2012) who says that "after all, if space is a passive backdrop for creation, what more is there to say about it? We need only know that it exists. Its influence in worldly matters is nonexistent" (p. 29).

Plato's conclusion and study of place in his (*Dialogues*) are related with the same time as a direct effect of his approach to the question, forged

in the (*Temaus*) as one of cosmogony, and little signs in (*Philebus*). Plato thinks that the world was created from three main elements, its material, creator and pattern, and that “top genesis almost, always follows cosmogonies” (Cooper, 1997, p. 13).

Plato has believed that place precedes the existence of time as Cooper (1997) states that “space also precedes time, since the latter too cannot exist as night and day without the planets, also created objects in Plato’s tale” (p.1224).

In poetry the description appears beside the musicality. The description has many functions: one of them, is the stunning art of depiction for a place, it is also an enhancement for personal activity that reacts with the place. William Wordsworth’s poetry reflects a profound and minute description for the place especially in his poem “She dwelt among the untrodden ways”. For, he introduces a virgin place with a virgin girl, a place which is not frequented by human beings, as Lucy tends to relinquish into a unique spatiality:

She dwelt among the untrodden ways Beside the springs of Dove, A Maid whom there were none to praise and very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone Half hidden from the eye! —Fair as a star, when only one Is shining in the sky (ll. 1-13).

It is so important to say the description does not transform the colours and shapes as the eyes see them, but it transforms artistically the esthetic psychology to serve the poem, and through language in form it helps to create space, and helps readers to move on and feel the poetic creativity. So, the place becomes an essential part of the poetic structure. Wordsworth presents Lucy as a violet living by a mossy stone; she penetrates the place to be one fabric with its carnivals of beauty and uniqueness.

Wordsworth’s description of the place in the poem confirms that time isn’t absolute, but it is just for domination, and he affirms that in his poem “The Solitary Reaper” as he says:

No Nightingale did ever chant More welcome notes to weary bands of travellers in some shady haunt, Among Arabian sands:

A voice so thrilling ne’er was heard in spring-time from the Cuckoo bird, Breaking the silence of the seas Among the farthest Hebrides (ll. 7-14).

The spatial zone of the poem is unlimited as it passes intercontinental place to unfold new horizons for the poet (Arabian sands, the silent seas and the farthest Hebrides). The poet here empowers the place through his poetic images. So, he converges with Bachelard’s (2014) views about the human imagination, as he calls these spontaneous stereotyped ‘poetic’ images. For he says: “the poetic image is not subject to an inner thrust. It is not an echo of the past. On the contrary: through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away” (p. xvi).

"The Solitary Reaper" reveals a multifold space. Thus, Wordsworth creates a magical world within the real one. as he. The poet portrays in his poem the highland girl as deeply rooted in the fields. She creates her own way of communication with nature with her gorgeous beauty. As he writes:

Behold her, single in the field, Yon solitary Highland Lass! Reaping and singing by herself; Stop here, or gently pass! Alone she cuts and binds the grain, and sings a melancholy strain; (ll. 1-4).

This girl is in a state of perfect association with the place, as she sustains herself in a harmonious way with nature. Thus, Wordsworth uses the metaphor through comparing her beautiful song with the flux of water, which covers everything in the valley:

O listen! for the vale profound Is overflowing with the sound (ll. 6-7).

The lass has charmed the poet with the spontaneity of her song and its elaborate melancholic tone. Moreover, she has transferred the poet into an exotic realm, where he is deprived of his power, as she hypnotizes him through her munificent melancholic song:

I listened, motionless and still; And, as I mounted up the hill, the music in my heart I bore, long after it was heard no more (ll. 29-32).

This extract reveals the very unconscious part, which is also linked to the place. The feeling compasses time and zone and extends its dimension to a new realm. Dion (2012) writes this "not only to a biographical time. But these images also transcend biography at some level and are common to humanity; collectively, humans imagine certain types of places in the same way" (p.47).

Moreover, Wordsworth extends the place into a wide space in his poem 'I travelled among unknown men', through describing the English space:

Among thy mountains did I feel the joy of my desire; (ll. 9-10).

The topographical aspects are involved hand in hand with time to produce an overwhelming image of space. The spatial England is bigger than any other places as Wordsworth feels and realizes due to the sentimental and emotional associations with this locality. Henceforward, he presents the core concept of place and time through an idealized love for beauty which compromises the space.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed, the bowers where Lucy played; And thine too is the last green field That Lucy's eyes surveyed (ll.13-16).

The psychological aspect is clearly revealed by Wordsworth, as he associates the place with his psychology. Casey (1997) argues "to psychoanalyze our unconscious entrenched in primitive abodes, it would be necessary, on the margin of normal psychoanalysis, to our important memories, and attain to the plane of the daydreams that we used to have in the places identified with our solitude." (p. 9).

Foucault (1984) in his article (*Of Other Space*) states that “Bachelard’s monumental work and the descriptions of phenomenologists have taught us that we do not live in a homogeneous and empty space, but on the contrary in a space thoroughly imbued with quantities and perhaps thoroughly fantasmatic as well” (p.23). The place in poetry is still deemed as one of the main artistic elements in creating the setting. Even the poet refers to it as realistic place or even though calls it, or intends it be similar to the reality. The place in a poem is a literal imaginative place created by the imagination and by the language according to the writer’s needs.

For poetry the place does exist in a reader’s imagination and it is not in the outside world. The poetic place is made only by language and through this aspect it becomes distinguishable to suggestions or occurrences. So, it looms between the external and internal realm for the poet’s world. If the starting point is in a traditional realism, the arrival point will be a realistic one; it creates an independent world which is a peculiar form.

When the poet uses the place descriptions or its names, he is not obliged to depict the outside place, but he does depict a poetic place within his mind, which may converge with the real one, it is untrue and the cause that makes the writer use descriptions and names of place, are just meant to stimulate readers’ imagination.

Humans' feelings that are developed in certain places would become a device for a creative imagination, and for unconscious representations of affective states. So, they would overcast a cloud over the human perception for the place and the space. That’s to say the two concepts are intermingled and interrelated in an intricate and bewildering manner. So, Bachelard may not separate the space from the place or define the two as carefully as other theorists, Dion claims that – “his references to ‘space’ would normally be the ‘place’ of other thinkers – he does challenge spatial theory in a few important ways. For one, Bachelard’s places need not be physical or sensible at all” (Dion, 2012, p. 46).

Function of Place in Poetry:

In poetry, place appears as a background character moving in concurrence with the poetic creation of the poem. The romantic place reveals the psychology of characters and their harmony with the universe and life. It carries some ideas, where the human associations with place have deep influences on both sides.

Place attachment, or emotional commitment to place, is another way, Mesch and Gustavo (1998) state that “place that has significance or special meaning to us, it engenders special consideration in our action and behaviour (p. 504). Accordingly, place attachment can be described as a “positive emotional bond and “the emotional linkage of an individual to a particular environment” (Mesch & Gustavo, 1998, p. 505).

So, the place foregrounds the poem as an active element for creating and developing the poem. Also, it passes inside the nature of characters and affects their feelings and reactions towards nature. The place should be introduced creatively to give signification for the poem. This process makes the created place a pleasant and delightful environment. Pleasant, desirable places are places that stimulate our sense. So, Tony Hiss calls these aspects “simultaneous perception” that let us realize or understand and draw in many different sensation and stimuli. Hiss states this kind of awareness that, “seems calmer, more like a clear, deep, reflective lake” (Hiss, 1991, P.3).

The place supports its primary function, as a setting of events as it happens into an extensive space for imaginative construction through basic angles. So, it is a human artistic aspect that would discern the value, and here lies the difference between place in poetry and that in reality. Simply because the place in poetry is introduced through a creative imaginative angle, it would leave its emotional traces on active readers, unlike abstract places that are void of sentimental associations. It subdues the readers’ mind and haunts their imagination. The call of place is the poet’s mission through creating a poem. This call of place transforms reader into realms of place which has certain real name. This gives rise to the imaginary and the real simultaneously.

Conclusion:

William Wordsworth has perceived the place in an extraordinary way through his active imagination and artistic carrier. His poems are strongly associated with the place as a concept and as reality. Moreover, Wordsworth succeeds in transforming the limited place into an open and free space especially in his poem “The Solitary Reaper”, “She Dwelt Among the Untrodden ways”, “Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known” and “I Travelled Among the Unknown Men”. Thus, he employs his descriptive power in an immaculate way to create a realistic place that would engage the readers and capture their mind. He provokes their psychological and emotional attachment to that virtual place in a unique way. Focusing on the time and place, Wordsworth employs the chronotope as a dominating concept in his poems to set them free into the broad spatiality where they cannot be limited to a specific time nor a place.

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