

# Exploring the Interconnectedness of the Human and Natural Worlds in American Literature

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## Abstract

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin” this is a thought provoking quote by William Shakespeare, highlighting the interconnectedness of humans and nature suggesting that nature reflects our inner lives. We all know that literature always tries to connect human emotions and other literary theories. In recent days, literature also captures the interconnectedness of humans and nature. From the concept of transcendentalism to environmental activism, we can see the enduring power of nature in literature. Particularly, the American literature has a rich custom of representing nature as a dominant, royal, and sacred force. Most of the classical and modern literary works makes the readers to feel and understand that nature is a source of inspiration guiding the entire world. This symbiosis is brilliantly portrayed in many American genres. The advanced concepts of literature give more importance to ecology because the depletion of planetary resources has resulted in

several ways including the society's mental and physical well being. This phenomenon underscores the intricate web of connections between human societies and the environment, highlighting the far-reaching consequences of human actions on the natural world. Modern American literature tries to address the harsh realities of the environmental changes happening in the name of urbanization. Several factors affects the bond including rising global temperatures, sea-level rise, and extreme weather events are all linked to human activities that disrupt natural systems, such as pollution, deforestation and other activities against nature. The present paper aims to explore the way how American authors connect the interconnectedness of Human and Nature in their literary world.

**Keywords:** Environmental Activism, transcendentalism, urbanization, web of connections  
**American Writers as Pen Wielders**

American writers can rightly be called as Pen Wielders because they have a unique perspective in shaping, influencing, raising and inspiring the reader's perspective in a positive way. Their writings can bring significant change in the reader's mind which sometimes results beyond the expectation. Their writing can touch the heart of a person in the name of romance, sometimes can touch the stars in the name of science fiction, sometimes they create imaginary characters through their fantasies, even they can change or analyze the events, cultures and civilizations. Through their words they can search for identity, create the kingdom and can make the environment a better place for survival. American literary writers like Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson have described nature in vivid manner, emphasizing its beauty, complexity and interconnectedness with human life. The American Naturalist Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay stated that nature is a source of spiritual insight. He believes that oversoul connects us to the natural world. Another writer Henry David Thoreau emphasized and reflected on nature's power while rejecting societal norms. Through their writings the readers can understand the real bonding that humans and

nature had together for million years and above. Their writings indirectly represent the consequences of promoting materialism, conformity, and technological progress in the society. The primary focus of their writings is to inspire a cultural shift, encouraging society to adopt a more nuanced, respectful and sustainable relationship with the natural world.

The natural serenity enjoyed by Thoreau, Whitman, and Dickinson in their time have been exacerbated and transformed in the modern world, largely due to human activities that contribute to climate change. As represented in the work of Thoreau about the arrival and departure of migratory birds are totally changed in the modern era because of the encountering climate change. His simple living experiment at Walden Pond was, in part, a response to the rapid urbanization of his time. Today, urbanization continues to accelerate, leading to increased greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and heat island effects.

It is a known fact that Whitman's poetry often celebrated the democratic ideals of equality and justice. Today, climate change disproportionately affects marginalized communities, exacerbating existing social and economic inequalities. His experiences as a nurse during the Civil War and his observations of urbanization in New York City are relevant to the modern issue of urban heat islands. Climate change has increased the frequency and severity of heatwaves, which disproportionately affect urban areas.

Dickinson's poetry often explored the themes of mortality, impermanence, and uncertainty. Today, climate change has created a sense of uncertainty and insecurity, as individuals and communities face unprecedented environmental challenges.

American writers have also indeed romanticized the wilderness of nature, often portraying it as a symbol of freedom, adventure, and spiritual renewal. One of the classical writer James Fenimore Cooper in his work "The Last of the Mohicans" explores wilderness and civilization. It highlights the conflict between nature and humans. Not only the conflicts but also it exhibited the beautiful connection of native Americans that they had with the land

and culture. Through the story, he also narrates how the frontier myth has shaped American identity, politics, and society. Cooper's portrayal of the natural world and its relationship to human societies offers valuable insights into the environmental concerns of his time and our own.

American writers also explored the darker side of progress through the consequences of human progress and the power of nature. Sometimes these authors exhibit the harsh realities of life and the natural world, by often highlighting the darker aspects of human existence. Stephen Crane's *The Open Boat* and Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* explores how nature is indifferent to human suffering, highlighting the fragility of human life and the powerlessness of individuals against the forces of nature. These classical works explore the dangers of greed and exploitation and the importance of respecting the natural world. The story portrays the ocean as a powerful, indifferent force that threatens the lives of the four men in the open boat. This emphasizes the idea that nature is a force beyond human control, highlighting the interconnectedness of human and natural systems. The men's struggle against the ocean's fury underscores human vulnerability in the face of natural forces. This vulnerability is a reminder of the interconnectedness of humans and nature, as human lives are intimately tied to the natural world.

Many times the American writers have taken the role of Conservationist, to protect and preserve the natural world. Aldo Leopold was a renowned American ecologist, environmentalist, and writer. His works had a profound influence on modern environmentalism, conservation biology and ecological thinking. He believed that ecological balance is essential for maintain healthy and resilient ecosystems. He argued that every individual should maintain biodiversity, protect ecosystem services, prevent soil erosion and conserve water. Then only we can change the anthropocentric world to eco-centric world. Followed by Aldo Leopold many contemporary voices started to explore environmental

justice. Barbara Kingslovers 'The prodigal summer, Louis erdrich the round house, modern writers like Kim Stanley Robinson 'The ministry for the future, Richard powers The overstory are examples. Always literature inspires action, Cormac McCarthy's The Road is a powerful and haunting novel that explores the human condition in the face of catastrophic environmental collapse.

The novel highlights the devastating impact of human activity on the environment, underscoring the concept of the Anthropocene, which recognizes human influence as a dominant force shaping the planet. The Pulitzer prize winning novel explores the journey of a father and son, and indirectly sets as a reminder of the importance of preserving the natural world and recognizing our place within the larger web of life.

Annie Dillard's Pilgrim at Tinker Creek (1974) is a contemporary work of American literature that explores the interconnectedness of humans and the natural world. Dillard's book is a personal and philosophical exploration of her experiences in the natural world. Her writing warns against human hubris and the dangers of manipulating the natural world without fully understanding its complexities. Through her works she emphasizes the importance of ecological awareness, encouraging readers to develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world and our place within it. Dillard's writing advocates for humility and reverence in our relationship with nature, recognizing the limits of human knowledge and the importance of preserving the natural world.

## **Conclusion**

American literature has long been fascinated with the relationship between humans and the natural world. Through the works of American classical writers the readers can understand the intricate web of relationships between human societies and the natural world. The interconnectedness of nature and humans, a theme that runs through the works of these writers, is now threatened by the devastating consequences of climate change. Rising

temperatures, sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and ecosystem degradation all disrupt the delicate balance of the natural world, leading to loss of biodiversity, ecological connections, and human well-being. As we face the unprecedented challenges of climate change, the writings of these American literary giants remind us of the importance of preserving the natural world, recognizing our place within it, and adopting a more sustainable, equitable, and reverent relationship with the earth. By embracing the interconnectedness of nature and humans, we may yet find a way to mitigate the consequences of climate change and create a more resilient, thriving world for all.

**Conflict of Interest:** The corresponding author, on behalf of second author, confirms that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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