Idea of Preservation of Nature in Romanticism and Primitivism

Zaheed Alam Munna

BA Honours (English), Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka

MA in English, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at

University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

June 2024

Zaheed Alam Munna

PhD Researcher

Registration No.: 16/2014-2015 (Part-time)

Session: 2014-2015

Re-registration No.: 84/2020-2021(Part-time)

Session: 2020-2021

Department of English

University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

DECLARATIONS

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution to the best of the candidate's knowledge. The thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis. I declare that this dissertation is original and has not been submitted or published partially or fully for any other diploma or degree at any university.

Signed: _____

Name: Zaheed Alam Munna

Date:

CERTIFICATE FROM THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that Zaheed Alam Munna has submitted his dissertation to me and I find it acceptable and ready for a technical review.

I, therefore, recommend that the dissertation be taken into account for further and necessary action.

_____

Supervisor

Professor Dr. Shamsad Mortuza

Department of English

University of Dhaka

Abstract

Environmental degradation is now a major concern throughout the whole world. Environmental scientists are doing their best to save the world's environment. But looking at the horrendous environmental problems existing in today's world, one might conclude that the efforts of the scientists are not enough to stop the slide. At this juncture, literature may have a crucial role to play. By working on the conscience of the readers, literary studies may raise awareness about an individual's responsibility to ensure the well-being of nature. Romantic canon should be the most suitable area of research in this regard because nowhere the interconnectedness between the human and the non-human has been explored better than in the works of Romantic writers. Another eighteenth-century phenomenon - "Primitivism" - functioned as a guiding force for the Romantics and helped them to realise nature's spiritual significance, the importance of living in the state of nature, and the corrupting influence of industrialisation, modernity and urbanisation. With this view in mind, this study explores the idea of the preservation of nature in the major Romantics as well as the lesser-known writers of the period because of the very close bond they had with nature. As they valued this bond highly, they wanted to preserve this, and consequently, they felt the urge to preserve their natural surroundings. Therefore, the main focus of the study is to explore the organic connectivity that the Romantic writers successfully established between man and nature. The methodology of this study is mainly archival. Selected poems of the major English Romantics and the lesser-known writers of the same period and the works of primitivists are the primary sources of the thesis. Besides, the thesis makes use of secondary sources like scholarly articles and the works of other researchers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATIONS iii

CERTIFICATE FROM THE SUPERVISOR iv

ABSTRACT v

ACKNOWLEDGMENT viii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Romanticism and Primitivism:…….. 1

1.2 Critique of Industrialisation and Civilisation:……... 2

1.3 Nature as a Sublime Entity with Spiritual Significance:…….. 7

1.4 Emergence of Ecological Awareness in Romantics and Primitivists:…… 12

1.5 Gendering Nature:…… 20

1.6 Preservation: A Recurrent Theme in Romanticism and Primitivism…….. 23

1.7 Romanticism and Primitivism: A Foreshadowing of Ecocritical Interest…….. 25

1.8 Two Strands of Primitivism:…… 33

1.9 Relevance of Romantic and Primitive Perspectives:…… 35

1.10 Methodology:…….. 37

1.11 Research Questions:…… 37

1.12 Hypothesis:…….. 38

1.13 Chapter Outline:…….. 39

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 41

2.1 Environmental Perspectives in English Romantic Literature:…… 41

2.2 The Role of Literature in Saving the Environment: A New Realization:…… 41

2.3 Romantics' Love for Nature Challenged:…… 43

2.4 The Relationship between the Human and the Non-Human Redefined:…….. 52

2.5 Critics' Observations about the Influence of Scientific Developments on Romantics 66

2.6 Anticipating Some Modern Branches of Ecology:…… 70

2.7 Romantics' Big Organism Chauvinism Vindicated:…… 72

2.8 Returning to the State of Nature in Primitivism and Romanticism:……. 73

2.9 Ecological Awareness in the Lesser-Known Writers of Romantic Period:…….. 75

2.10 Research Gap:…… 82

CHAPTER 3: INDIVIDUALISM, PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION IN ROMANTIC AND PRIMITIVIST LITERATURE 83

3.1 The Romantic "Self" and Its Dissolution:…… 83

3.2 From Individualism to Preservation of Nature:…… 86

3.3 The Idea of Preservation in Its Different Manifestations:…….. 94

3.4 Mysticism and the Idea of the Other:…… 98

3.5 Embracing the Other:…… 103

3.6 Bridging the Binaries:…… 121

3.7 Nature as Man's Other and the English Romantics:…… 125

3.8 Global Apocalypse in English Romantic Poems:…… 131

CHAPTER 4: OTHERING AND PRESERVATION IN THE LESSER-KNOWN ROMANTICS 136

4.1 Introduction:…… 136

4.2 Influence of Primitivism on the Lesser-Known Romantics:…….. 137

4.3 John Clare's Activism for the Preservation of Nature:…….. 139

4.4 Gilbert White and the Birth of English Natural History:……... 165

4.5 Charlotte Turner Smith and the Marriage of Literature and Natural Science:……. 177

4.6 An Ecofeminist Study of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* 188

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION 195

5.1 Key Findings of The Research Work:…… 195

5.1 (a) Primitivism and Romanticism:…… 196

5.1 (b) Bridging the Self and the Other:…… 199

5.1 (c) From a General Sense of Preservation to the Preservation of Nature:……..... 201

5.2 The Possible Contributions of This Study:…… 203

5.3 Limitations of This Study:…… 204

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research:…… 205

WORKS CITED 206

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my gratitude from the bottom of my heart to my honourable supervisor Professor Dr. Shamsad Mortuza, Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka. His constant support and excellent guidance have made the uphill task of completing my doctoral thesis a very rewarding experience. Throughout this entire journey, he has not only been a perfect supervisor but also a compassionate and committed mentor. I was awestruck by his versatility, his depth of knowledge and his insightful observations. Every single session that I had with him was a rich learning experience. I am proud that I could get a chance to work under the supervision of a leading scholar like him in the field of English literature.

I am also thankful to the PhD committee and the Chair of the Department of English at Dhaka University. During my two seminars, I got their positive feedback and constructive observations, which helped me to develop my ideas in a very effective manner.

I sincerely acknowledge my heartfelt gratitude to Professor AFM Mafizul Islam, Former Vice Chancellor of Southeast University, Professor Dr. ANM Meshquat Uddin, Advisor to the Board of Trustees, Southeast University Trust, my colleagues of the English Department, and the other departments at Southeast University for their support, encouragement, and advice.

I am also indebted to the administrative staff at Dhaka University for their wholehearted support and service. My doctoral journey would be nearly impossible without their assistance.

On top of all, I cannot but express my heartfelt gratitude to my beloved wife who has been by my side throughout this whole journey. I am also thankful to my mother without whose blessings, any achievement in life is impossible.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Romanticism and Primitivism

The writers of the English Romantic period were among the first ones to recognise the interconnectedness between human beings and the natural world. They also realised and foreshadowed the potential consequences of human activities on the environment. The eighteenth-century phenomenon called 'Primitivism' that preceded the Romantic period had a shared concern over preserving nature in its pristine form. The Romantic and Primitive movements emerged as the reactions against the evils of industrialisation, such as pollution, deforestation, and urbanisation. In response to the rapid industrialisation of England, Primitivists put forward the idea that returning to the primitive state of life would free mankind from the evils of industrialisation.

On the other hand, Romantics expressed their concerns about preserving their natural surroundings. Writers of both movements rejected the alienating effects of modernity, resonating with contemporary concerns about unsustainable consumption and industrial practices. Romantics and Primitivists had a deep appreciation for the natural world. Romantics, in particular, highlighted sublime nature, arousing a profound sense of awe and wonder. Moreover, nature appeared both sacred and divine to their eyes and they felt a deep spiritual connection with it. Such an entity had to be preserved with all its beauty, purity and sanctity. Romantics and Primitivists frequently emphasised the importance of stewardship and reverence for the natural world in their works. By revisiting the ideas and themes of Romanticism and Primitivism, we can better understand our

relationship with the natural world. These movements can offer valuable insights and perspectives relevant to modern-day environmental sustainability discourse. This research aims to demonstrate Romantic concerns for preserving nature so that humans and non-humans can exist organically. With an in-depth textual and contextual analysis, the research argues that almost all the writers belonging to the period known as Romantic Revival shared some critical observations regarding the preservation of their natural habitats, making them forerunners of "Ecocriticim" which is a modern-day theoretical discourse that explores and analyses the complex relationship between man and nature and recognises the ways in which humanity damages nature.

1.2 Critique of Industrialisation and Civilisation

Romantic writers such as William Wordsworth, William Blake, John Clare, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Ruskin foresaw the negative impacts of industrialisation on the environment. They expressed their concerns about the threat looming large on nature because of the establishment of more and more industries. The modern industrial world was harsh and deadening to the senses and spirit. In many of the poetry of Wordsworth, Blake, and John Clare, we find these writers reacting to industrial practices through both inspection and introspection. Sometimes, their reactions went so far as to criticise sharply even social evils caused by industrialisation, such as child labour and the materialistic tendency of man. Blake's two versions of 'The Chimney Sweeper' (one from 'Songs of Innocence' and the other from 'Songs of Experience') are a testament to both the cruel attitude of the industrialised society towards the poor children and child labour in its worst form. In ‘The World Is Too Much with Us’, William Wordsworth vents his frustration for society's excessive materialism. Rather than having a spiritual connection with nature, man treats

the world as an instrument, as a route to economic end. While the poem does not directly address industrialisation, it epitomises a Romantic critique of the economic materialism and instrumental rationality that defined industrialisation. John Ruskin also shows his concern at the rise of industries while sharing his observations on the paintings of J M W Turner. Turner and Ruskin both observed and documented environmental changes. Ruskin used Turner's watercolour paintings to highlight how industrialisation threatens nature. He warns his readers about the unsustainable development. His main argument was about the damage done by burning fossil fuels. He foresaw the destruction and wrote about it in apocalyptic terms: "blanched sun – blighted grass – blinded man" ("Ruskin's Warning to the Industrial World - Watercolour World"). Besides, in his famous lecture, "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century", Ruskin blamed industrialisation as "the source of the 'Manchester devil's darkness'" and of the "dense manufacturing mist" (Day 917).

On a similar note, Percy Bysshe Shelley, in his sonnet "Ozymandias" (1818) shows how civilisation and urbanisation can destroy nature. Shelley was probably aware of the abundance and especially, the agricultural fertility of the ancient Mediterranean world. Over many centuries, the dense forests were felled; the cedars of Lebanon were destroyed; the excessive irrigation of arable lands resulted in the toxic accumulation of salt in the soil. As a result of all these human activities, these beautiful landscapes turned into barren deserts. The statue of Ozymandias lies shattered in the midst of a desert. The surrounding landscape "The lone and level sands stretch far away" (14) presents the grim truth about the brief duration of the civilisation that he commanded. Any society that believes that it can dominate the natural world should take a lesson from the paradox presented in the poem:

> Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away. (ll.11-14)

The barren desert and the last remnant of a civilisation is a grim reminder for all those who believe that nature can be conquered and dominated. Civilisation continues to exist as long as there are environmentally sustainable practices and human beings maintain their connection with nature. English Romantics knew that this connection was gradually getting lost. Romantic literature often lamented the loss of connection with nature due to the rise of industrial society. This is more frequently found in the works of William Blake and John Clare. Blake found it frustrating that human beings had gone further away from nature and spirituality as they had been overcome by their materialistic desires. The sentiment is echoed in "Introduction" of "Songs of Experience" where the poet writes, "Calling the lapsed Soul/ And weeping in the evening dew" (ll. 6-7). Here, the "lapsed Soul" are those who have embraced materialism as a result of which they are "weeping" or suffering. And "evening dew" is popularly accepted as a symbol of materialism. Blake calls these people to return, "O Earth O Earth return!/ Arise from out the dewy grass;" (ll. 6-7) but also realises that the return will not be easy,

Turn away no more:

Why wilt thou turn away

The starry floor

The watry shore

Is giv'n thee till the break of day. (ll. 16-20)

Human beings will have to struggle with the oppressive agents of Night such as "the starry floor" before they experience light ("the break of day").

John Clare's sense of loss is more strongly felt in his works. In fact, the loss of his natural surroundings and the resultant loss of connection with nature is the most dominant theme in almost all his poems. His more well-known poems are mostly protests against the implementation of Enclosure Acts that aimed at converting wilderness or the most natural places into cultivable lands. It was the change of marshlands, bushes, hills and other natural places into arable lands that made the poet write against the malpractice. In those days, his approach was that of an environmental activist who wrote out of his political consciousness against a political act affecting nature.

However, the fact that losing connection with nature can bring devastating consequences is also illustrated through "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". Written in line with contemporary Gothic tradition, the poem is about killing an albatross and the consequences of this act. The smooth sailing of the ship as it was leaving the South Pole region with the albatross following it, shows how civilisation and nature can co-exist when man cares for God's creatures:

> And a good south wind sprung up behind;
>
> The albatross did follow,
>
> And everyday, for food or play
>
> Came to the mariner's hollo! (ll. 71-73)

This symbiotic relationship is disrupted when the ancient mariner kills the bird without any provocation or any apparent reason. The ordeal that the ancient mariner in particular and other mariners in general (for supporting the act of killing the bird) go through reflects what may happen when human beings try to dominate and even overpower nature. But, more specifically, it tells

about the inevitable consequence that results from the loss of the link (in this case, the albatross) between human beings and nature.

Romantic poets like Lord Byron and William Blake could also realise that loss of connection with nature could also bring about apocalyptic consequences. Before them, apocalypse had been seen as an inscrutable act of God. It was during the Romantic period when people understood that apocalyptic events could also happen as a result of environmentally unsustainable human activities. Two such poems with apocalypse as their theme are Byron's 'Darkness' and Blake's *Jerusalem* and anticipate the dire consequences of the human tendency to dominate nature. In these poems both the poets prophesy apocalyptic consequences if all those indiscreet human activities against nature go on in the name of development. Byron's 1816 poem 'Darkness' is tinged with an apocalyptic dream-vision of a world that is utterly destroyed. It was the "year without summer". The ash cloud after the volcanic eruption in Mount Tabora in Indonesia blocked the sun causing worldwide natural havoc. The temperature in Europe dropped significantly, and it rained indefinitely disrupting harvest. In this bleak narrative, the speaker describes a strange dream: “The bright sun was extinguish’d, and the stars/ Did wander darkling in the eternal space” (ll. 2-3). As the last light fades, and starving people battle over the Earth's remaining resources, the worst aspects of human nature are revealed. Finally, in this dismal scenario, all life is extinguished; the entire Earth is frozen into a solid mass; and darkness rules over the entire universe.

The other poem, Blake's *Jerusalem*, also expresses the apocalyptic consequences of devastating environmental practices. In "Plate 18" of the poem there is a list of environmental damages presented. "Albion" is the giant personification of England. It has turned into a wasteland where the birds have died, "His birds are silent on his hills, flocks die beneath his branches" (l. 2) and

creatures are suffering in extreme weather, "His milk of Cows, & honey of Bees, & fruit of golden harvest,/ Is gather'd in the scorching heat, & in the driving rain:" (ll. 5-6) and the land has lost its perfection and glory, "His Giant beauty and perfection fallen into dust:" (l. 8). To make matters worse, produces in nature are of no use anymore, "The corn is turn'd to thistles & the apples into poison:" (l. 10). McKusick allegorises, "Albion, the giant personification of England, is 'self-exiled' by the devastation of his homeland; his children cry helplessly, and his Eon (or female companion) weeps as she beholds such terrible destruction" (Roe 208). In this way, the poem predicts an apocalyptic end of England by its own industrial activities.

1.3 Nature as a Sublime Entity with Spiritual Significance

For the English Romantic writers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries the connection between humans and nature was organic. For example, Coleridge considers human beings not only as parts of the community of humanity but as parts of a greater community that makes up nature as a whole: "the one Life within us and abroad" ("The Eolian Harp" l.23). In fact, it was a common realisation among the Romantics that nature was not just mere vegetation with some instrumental value only. The actual value of nature is, rather, inherent or intrinsic. There are instances of Romantics' belief in the inherent value of nature. In William Blake's *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (p. 45, plate 25) and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (p. 51, plate 8), the central lesson to learn is "everything that lives is Holy" (Blake, as quoted in Hutchings 181) and William Wordsworth declares in "Nutting": "move along these shades / In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand / Touch – for there is a spirit in the woods" (ll. 54-6). In this way, both Wordsworth and Blake confirm that value is

inherent or intrinsic. In the words of Hutchings, "value inheres, in other words, *in* each living being and not simply in the functions it performs in relation to other entities" (Hutchings 181).

Again, Romantics also concentrated on the aesthetic and spiritual appeals that nature affected, further strengthening the bond between them and their natural surroundings. They sincerely appreciated nature's sublime beauty, which gradually became a form of reverence. In their works, they celebrated nature for its sublime beauty and spiritual significance. Often the sublime landscapes presented in their poetry are imbued with spiritual glory. The general belief was that nature is endowed with a spirit that can bring spiritual nourishment to the soul. Nature is a manifestation of "the divine, a reflection of transcendent beauty and harmony of the universe. For example, William Wordsworth finds nature as divine when he observes in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" that "meadow, grove and stream" (l. 1) were all "Apparelled in celestial light" (l. 4). Nature that is illumined with "celestial light", becomes sacred to the eyes of the poet. Again, in "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey", the poet feels the presence of an all-pervading sublime "[a] motion and [a] spirit" (l. 102) in nature which is "A presence that disturbs me with the joy/ Of elevated thoughts" (ll. 96-97). Actually, "Tintern Abbey" is all about spiritual renewal. As the poet's persona can feel the presence of a divine spirit in nature, his love for nature turns into a kind of worship of nature and he finds his soul to be nourished with "elevated thoughts". The idea of preservation is there, too, as the poem turns intergenerational. Wordsworth passes all his thoughts and beliefs regarding nature to his younger sister so that she can carry them forward after the poet. Similarly, Samuel Tailor Coleridge learns that nature is a greater being where human beings form only a part and develops his "One Life" principle (Smith 45). Through such views, the pioneers of the Romantic Movement set the tone for other writers to carry on the belief.

This sense of reverence for nature spread not only among the younger generation of English Romantics but also among lesser-known writers like John Clare, Robert Bloomfield, Charlotte Smith, Mary Shelley and many others. These, to a large extent, also decided their attitude towards nature or the nature of the relationship that they would have with their natural surroundings. Sometimes, there was that sense of awe and wonder at the majestic beauty of nature while at some other times, they could experience a kind of spiritual connection with nature. This was true even for the painters of the Romantic Period like J.M.W. Turner and Caspar David Friedrich who portrayed nature with a sense of awe and reverence. Both the landscapes and seascapes in their paintings appear sublime and otherworldly. During the era of the industrial revolution and rapid urbanisation, these writers and artists sought refuge from the chaos and materialism of urban life in nature and nature provided them with solace and inspiration.

The writers of the English Romantic period responded to these experiences with nature by exploring the ethical dilemmas surrounding humanity's relationship with nature. Often, they portrayed nature as a source of moral guidance. For them, nature had the power to guide, inspire, nurture, and restore. Such an entity had to be preserved; it had to be in its pristine form. Therefore, sometimes explicitly and often implicitly, they emphasised the importance of stewardship and respect for the natural world in their works. In modern-day environmental ethics, stewardship, the careful and responsible management of the world's environment, and respect for nature are the two central themes.

Since nature, for Romantics, was a sacred entity, and they were concerned for its well-being, they wanted to preserve its purity and integrity. One significant attempt by William Wordsworth may be cited here. He conducted a campaign in 1844 to keep the railways from entering and affecting

the inner sanctum of the Lake District, a mile above Bowness along the shore of Windermere. The sonnet 'On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway' by Wordsworth does not only record this event but also urges nature to raise its voice:

> Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
> Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,
> Speak, passing winds; ye torrents, with your strong
> And constant voice, protest against the wrong. (ll.11-14)

Although the poet's campaign was unsuccessful, it was probably the first environmental protest and laid the foundation of later environmental campaigns; as Scott Hess writes, "Wordsworth's defence of landscape amenities against modern progress—arguably the world's first modern environmental protest—in these ways helped to establish the cultural politics and rhetoric of environmentalism" (Hess 116).

However, not all the Romantics wrote about preservation in such an explicit manner. Even for Wordsworth, the example of attempting to preserve a landscape was an exception. What is more commonly believed about the Romanics is that they often expressed their love or admiration for nature through their writings. While this is true, it may also be true that this view is an oversimplification of what they thought or felt about nature. With the emergence of "Ecocriticism", a more recent field of study, there are more pragmatic and research-based views regarding Romantics' treatment of nature. It has reopened the Romantic canon and paved the way to unearth new perspectives. The idea that the poets of the English Romantic period were actually concerned about preserving their natural surroundings is more or less established by researchers. Many advocated for a stewardship ethic, emphasising humanity's responsibility to care for and protect

the environment. They believed that humans are custodians of nature, entrusted with preserving its beauty and diversity for future generations. Although the preservation of nature was not a common phenomenon during the 19th century, a sense of preservation (not of nature but in general) was implicit in many Romantic poems. For example, in "Tintern Abbey", William Wordsworth wishes to preserve the memory of the "pastoral farms" (l. 16), "Green to the very door" (l. 17) in his younger sister. Standing amidst nature, a few miles above Tintern Abbey, when Wordsworth wishes to relive his delightful experience in later years in the eyes of Dorothy and, for that matter, in the eyes of the next generation, the urge to preserve is echoed in his voice. Similarly, in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' by Samuel Tailor Coleridge, the Ancient Mariner transmits his story to the wedding guest. This may also be regarded as an attempt to preserve what the mariner experienced.

Next, it is also important to understand how this process of preservation operates. Often, it is observed that a human entity acts as an agent of nature. While in the first example above, Dorothy is that agent, in the second, she is the wedding guest. In both examples, these agents are expected to preserve experiences in their memories. But not all the Romantics probably believed in confining experiences in their memories. For example, P.B. Shelley in "Ode to the West Wind" offers himself as an agent of the west wind and invites it to imbue him with a new spirit, "Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is" (l.57). Or, in 'Ode to a Nightingale', Keats wishes to fly with the nightingale, "Away! away! for I will fly to thee,/ Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,/ But on the viewless wings of Poesy," (ll.31-33).

This creation of human agency also makes the human and non-human relationship a deeper one. To the Romantics, the non-human world was truly important; as Kevin Hutchings observes,

"Romantic literature often appears to value the non-human world most highly" (Hutchings 172). This can be recognised as an anticipation of a modern-day interdisciplinary discourse called "Ecocriticism" based on how the natural world is presented in the literature concerning present-day environmental concerns. Romantic literature's relationship between man and nature can best be described as organic connectivity. This connectivity exists between the poet and nature, as found in 'Tintern Abbey' or 'Ode to a Nightingale,' while some writers prefer to be aloof in their literary pieces, showing such connectivity between the protagonist and nature. One example of the latter is Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. The mariners welcomed the albatross in God's name. They gave it food that "It never had eat" (l. 67) and played with it. The bird guided them out of the region of 'wondrous cold'. Hence, a symbiotic relationship between the mariners and the bird was established.

1.4 Emergence of Ecological Awareness in Romantics and Primitivists

However, some fifty years before the Romantics, Jean Jacques Rousseau, the Genevan philosopher and primitivist, introduced this idea of interconnectedness. Analyses of Rousseau's philosophy and works may help to understand how deeply these influenced and almost shaped Romantics' beliefs regarding the organic connectivity between humans and non-humans. Although there are debates among critics regarding whether Rousseau was a Primitivist, he advocated a return to the state of nature for mankind and promoted the idea of "Noble Savage" in his writings. Almost fifty years before the Romantics, this philosopher from Geneva brought about a positive change in attitude towards nature. Rousseau moved nature into the foreground in his Julie, Émile, and Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire. Thus, he redefined human-nature relationships and showed new ways of

looking at nature to a new generation of writers called 'Romantics'. In *Julie,* Rousseau connects the inner nature of individuals with their natural environment. In *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire,* nature turns out to be a privileged site for the cultivation of self-knowledge. Only pastoral retreat provides the conditions necessary for self-discovery. Leaving amidst nature, the pleasure Rousseau finds in pastoral solitude makes him reflect on human's lack of appreciation for their environment, as evidenced by activities like mining. Thus, Rousseau discerned and expressed a sense of harmony between man and nature. Probably, he was the first to recognise nature's value to humanity, which prepared him to protect nature. In this way, Rousseau emerges as an early modern 'pre-environmentalist'. Gllbert F. LaFreniere calls Rousseau an "environmental-radical" because, according to Gllbert, Rousseau was "an environmentalist demanding not simple reform but the virtual reconstruction of society and of the economic, political, and ethical attitudes and institutions which bear upon our relationship to the natural world" (42).

If Rousseau was a proponent of Primitivism, his connection with English Romanticism was even more profound. He was rightly called 'The Father of Romanticism' by Robert N Webb in his 1970 biography, titled, *Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Father of Romanticism, (Immortals of Literature)*. Rousseau's influence on English Romantics cannot be overemphasised. Firstly, it was Rousseau who pioneered what is now called 'deistic nature worship' which formed a powerful current in the Romantic Movement. Most of the Romantics and William Wordsworth, in particular, dwelt on the human-nature relationship that Rousseau had established. Rousseau's thoughts were probably influential in changing attitude towards nature from what it was during 18th century Enlightenment. It was Rousseau who advocated a more personal and emotional connection with nature. It was a move away from the supposedly "mechanistic" conception of human-nature relationships as found during the Enlightenment. In books like *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker* or *Les Reveriesd u*

Promeneur Solitaire (in French), Rousseau's subjective, emotional response to the beauties of nature contributed to establishing a new norm for aesthetically evaluating nature. Thus, Rousseau reversed the trend set by Enlightenment philosophers and scientists like Descartes, Bacon and Newton.

Thus, to a great extent, Rousseau's works shaped Romantics' belief regarding the relationship between the human and the non-human. This close association with nature also led them to realise the potential consequences of human activities on the environment. Some poems reflect this realisation. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", this organic connectivity is disrupted when the ancient mariner whimsically kills the albatross. A kind of imbalance occurs in the realm of nature as symbolised by "The horned Moon, with one bright star" (l. 213) accompanied by one star only. Only when he learns to love God's creatures unconditionally there appears one more star to restore that balance, "Softly she (the moon) was going up,/ And a star or two beside" (ll.266-67) ("The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"). This may allegorically represent the necessity of balance or harmony in nature. Besides, the havoc that nature wrought upon the mariners for killing the albatross may reflect the poet's realisation that severing even a single link in an ecosystem may upset and ultimately destroy the whole system.

As Rousseau influenced the shaping of Romantics' and Primitivists' organic connectivity with nature and the evils of industrialisation aroused in them the concern to preserve nature, a few other developments, especially in science, strengthened their ecological awareness. One of these developments could be how the idea of wilderness had come across a change before the Romantics. Until the sixteenth century, there had been a strong antipathy for wilderness in the minds of even the intellectuals. Wild countries had been viewed not only as cursed but also ungodly. Mountains,

to them, had been like pimples, warts, blisters, and other ugly deformities on the Earth's surface. Names of peaks like 'Divels-Arse' are proofs of this prevailing attitude. (Nash 44) However, with discoveries in European astronomy and physics, this notion started to change gradually. The advancement of knowledge of the solar system also engendered the view that though this universe is vast and complex, it is harmonious, and behind this majestic and marvellous creation, there is a divine source. This realisation was extended to even the outstanding physical features of the Earth, such as mountains, deserts and oceans. (Nash 45) Next, the publications of books like *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* of 1757 by Edmund Burke and *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* by Immanuel Kant further changed the notion about wilderness and associated it with sublimity. William Gilpin contributed to this idea by including nature's roughness, irregularity and intricacy as pleasing qualities in his definition of 'picturesque'. Finally, the advent of 'Deism' in the eighteenth century in England and France also contributed to developing a favourable attitude towards the wilderness. Deism, or 'natural religion' connects nature and religion. The concept of 'sublimity' already established by Kant and Burke reinforced the view that wilderness as the purest form of nature is vital because it is "the clearest medium through which God showed His power and excellence" (Nash 44- 46).

In addition to all these, the increasing technological domination during the eighteenth century may also be a reason behind the change in attitude towards wilderness. Technological achievements gradually led man to believe that he could overpower and repress wilderness. The sublime aspects of nature had remained a source of fear as long as they had not been repressed. After this repression of wilderness, nature's vast and sublime aspects elicited awe and delight. The aesthetic appreciation of wild landscapes emerged as the counter-tide of technological modernity. As the relationship of

a farmer or a sailor with nature is self-preservation, the relationship between someone who has lived in the luxury of technological modernity and nature is aesthetic. Thus, love for nature expanded to a love for wilderness. This reflection is found in many Romantic poems. For example, in 'Tintern Abbey', Wordsworth is delighted to find nature in its pure and unchanged form. Even the cottage, which is "green to the very door" and devoid of any further artificiality, seems to be a part of wild nature. Coleridge's “savage place” is another example of how Romantics preferred wild nature to nature that had been corrupted by human hands.

Technology allowed men to tame the wilderness. In addition, some Enlightenment science contributions possibly developed ecological awareness in English Romantics. The idea of ecology existed even before the Romantic period as "nature's economy" or "The Oeconomy of Nature" (1749), as the title of the essay by Linnaeus indicates. The essence of "nature's economy" is the complex interdependencies among earthly organisms which, according to Worster form "an interacting whole" (Worster x). Joseph Priestley's discovery added further support to nature's economy: "animals needed oxygen but exhaled carbon, while plants needed carbon and gave out oxygen" (Ruston 26). In fact, it was one more step towards establishing the mutual interdependency that exists in nature between creatures and plants. The concept of nature's economy was also important to Gilbert White. It helped him to validate the importance of the most insignificant creatures in nature: "most insignificant insects and reptiles are of much more consequence, and have much more influence in the economy of nature, than the incurious are aware of"; and as examples, he mentions the earth-worms: "Earth-worms, though in appearance a small and despicable link in the chain of nature, yet, if lost, would make a lamentable chasm" (White 196). This holistic concept of the economy of nature is believed to play a crucial role in Romantics' views of nature.

During the Romantic period, one crucial development was the belief that species' extinction could really happen in nature's realm. This probably drew the Romantics further towards preservation. Some natural historians and writers felt that not only nature but also the creatures in nature were under threat- the threat of extinction. In his book, *The Natural History of Selborne* (1788-89), Gilbert White presents a list of nature's creatures that were either on the verge of extinction or had already become extinct- partridge, red-deer, heath-cock, black game and grouse (White 22). As further proof, Charlotte Turner Smith wrote in her long blank verse poem Beachy Head (1807) about the bones of immense mammoths and dinosaurs, which established that species extinction had happened in nature's realm. This was crucial because it shook the belief that nature "embodies an unchanging perfection and plenitude associated with the providential order of creation" (Hutchings 175). Thus, a new understanding of nature's fragility gradually cultivated a new attitude in people, which Eugene C. Hargrove calls "wildlife protection attitude" (Hargrove 164).

The idea of species extinction led to the fear that even human existence was under some threat. Some ominous predictions were made by writers like C. F. Volney or Thomas Malthus about the consequences of Europeans' harmful environmental practices. In his book *The Ruins* (1791), Volney reminds European readers of the falls of Ottoman dominions and the civilisations of Egypt and Syria and warns them that their civilisation may one day fall like those because of their environmentally unsustainable activities (Volney, *The Ruins of Empires and the Law of Nature*). Eight years later, Thomas Malthus makes a more dire prediction in his “An Essay on the Principles of Population”. He takes the idea of species extinction further and gives it human relevance. According to Malthus, food production in Europe may not keep pace with population growth. So, the fear of human beings to be extinct through widespread starvation is not impossible (Malthus 24). Malthus's prediction has not yet turned into a reality. However, it added to the ecological

awareness that had already been developing in people's minds during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Kevin Hutchings confirms that "Malthus's controversial insights played an important role in encouraging the development of ecological awareness during the Romantic period" (Hutchings 176).

A positive outcome which could be connected with species extinction was the growing sympathy for the animal kingdoms during the 18th century in England. From the 1st edition of David Perkins' *Romanticism and Animal Rights (Cambridge Studies in Romanticism)*, it may be inferred that English people were gradually becoming more and more concerned about animal rights. Perkins writes about this phenomenon, "[k]indness to animals was urged and represented in sermons, treatises, pamphlets, journals, manuals of animal care, encyclopedias, scientific writings, novels, literature for children, and poems" (Perkins ix). Such literary activism was crucial as people became more and more aware of animal welfare. There was a crucial political development as well. The English Parliament came forward with two important decisions: firstly, in 1822, it outlawed the cruel treatment of cattle and secondly, in 1835, it made 'sports' like bull baiting and cockfighting a misdemeanour. Finally, in 1824, 'The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' was established due to the growing public concern for animal welfare.

It might have been confirmed that English Romantic writers were well aware of nature's fragility. Although 'Environmentalism' as a movement started as recently as the 1990s, the fact that nature is fragile and human beings should reconsider their environmental practices was first realised by naturalist John Evelyn in the late 17th century, much before the English Romantic felt the urge to preserve their natural surroundings. In his book *Sylva, or A Discourse of Forest-Trees* (1664), Evelyn warns the Royal Society about the unabated deforestation in England and advocates even

the formation of laws to ensure "the preservation of our woods" (Evelyn 108). Peter Ackroyd, in *London: The Biography* (2001), informs British people, "anthropogenic toxins had been compromising air quality in and around London since the Medieval period" (Ackroyd 432). These threats and warnings probably had their bearings on the minds of people in England during Romantic era. In addition to these, there were contemporary phenomena that probably compelled people and Romantics to think about the preservation of nature. The most dominant and the most immediate ones were probably rapid industrialisation and the resultant urban sprawl. Kevin Hutchings writes, "it was during the Romantic era, which witnessed a sharp rise in urban populations and an increasingly industrialised economy, that environmental problems became much more severe and noticeable, taking on a new sense of urgency" (Hutchings 175). Jonathan Bate acknowledges pointed out the ironies the positive effects of industrial revolution, cannot ignore what it did to the environment. He writes,

> The positive effects of this transformation have been manifolded (without them, you would not have the health, warmth, prosperity, leisure and prospect of longevity to be reading this book). The negative ones will become apparent the moment we note that this was the period in which the word 'pollution' took on its modern sense. (Bate 137)

In fact, environmental problems like pollution turned severe during Romantic period. Romantics who had already developed concerns for the preservation of nature, felt a new sense of urgency at this development. Some of their works reflect this concern. For example, William Blake complains in *The Four Zoas*,

> … cities turrets & towers & domes

Whose smoke destroyd the pleasant gardens & whose running Kennels

Chokd the bright rivers, (ll. 167– 9)

Besides, Percy Bysshe Shelley mentions in *Queen Mab* how pollution contaminated water. He also laments "the putrid atmosphere of crowded cities," caused by urban "filth" and "the exhalations of chemical processes" (qtd. in Morton, Shelley 133). Such pollution awareness further confirms Romantics' concerns for preserving nature.

1.5 Gendering Nature

During most of the 18th century in England, women had often been ignored or satirised in literature. Since, there were not many women writers around, male writers took it upon themselves to write about women. The examples of such derogative portrayal of women are found in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Alexander Pope's “The Rape of the Lock”. This pervading androcentric attitude was found to be expressed in the field of natural science as well. Traditionally, nature had been seen and often personified as women. Eighteenth-century scientists approached nature with an androcentric or masculinist tendency. Kate Rigby, in *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism,* observes that Bacon's occasional use of the phrase "*natura torturata*" resulted from his belief that a scientist is a masculine inquisitor who has to force nature to reveal her knowledge through a process of interrogation resembling the torture of witches- a common practice during 18th century (Rigby 19). Bacon also compares scientific inquiry with "the penetration of nature's womb" (Rigby 50, 100, 114). Sir Humphry Davy, the great chemist and one of the contemporaries of Romantics, also used similar masculine rhetoric. To his fellow natural philosophers, his advice is to "interrogate" a feminised nature "with power, not simply as a scholar,

passive and seeking only to understand her operations, but rather as a master, active with his instruments" (qtd. in Mellor, *Mary Shelley* 93).

The overall atmosphere of Romantic period, vibrating with ideas about individual liberty, proved ideal for recognising women as deserving equals. There were advocates for female equality like Mary Wollstonecraft, who fought to obtain better rights for women by explaining that equality was a logical extension of the liberty argument. This change of outlook was extended to the realm of nature. William Wordsworth's "Nutting" reflects this change in attitude. The poem contains the imagery of sexual violence. The speaker retrospectively narrates a childhood outing when in a bizarre act of rapaciousness and violence, he destroyed a "virgin scene" (l. 21). Wordsworth's speaker experiences a sense of guilt and remorse as a result of his androcentric behaviour. So, the end of the poem is the realisation so characteristic of Wordsworth: "move along these shades / In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand / Touch – for there is a spirit in the woods" (ll. 54–6). Thus, William Wordsworth set a new trend to approach nature with love and respect, resisting the earlier androcentric attitude of Enlightenment scientists.

There was a simultaneous change of attitude towards nature as well. Nature was often seen as a female entity and associated with motherhood. For example, Wordsworth compares nature with a foster mother in 'Immortality Ode';

> Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
> Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
> And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
> And no unworthy aim (ll. 77-80)

In Romantic literature, some instances show the consequences of defying this motherhood. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a perfect example of this. The eponymous character, who is an Enlightenment scientist, goes against the natural process of generation by “making a child of his own without submission to the fecundity of a woman's womb” (Bate 51). Another instance in the novel shows the opposition between scientific knowledge and motherhood. As Frankenstein starts his higher education in science or into the mastery of nature, it coincides with the death of his mother and his departure from home situated amidst the beautiful landscape of Switzerland. Thus, science causes a severance of bond between the child and maternity as well as the child and nature. The consequence of these is disastrous as Frankenstein ends up creating a monster which kills even some women in Frankenstein's life.

This way of looking at nature as a feminine entity during the Romantic period anticipated one of the modern literary theories, Ecofeminism. It is relatively new among the literary theories and emerged in the mid-1970s alongside second-wave feminism and the green movement. Ecofeminism brings together elements of the feminist and green movements while at the same time offering a challenge to both. According to Mary Mellor, "it takes from the green movement a concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women" (1997 1). Ecofeminism narrows down the generalised view that anthropocentrism is the major cause of the Earth's ecological exploitation. It, rather, more precisely points at androcentric or masculinist tendencies as the root cause behind the plundering of the natural world.

1.6 Preservation: A Recurrent Theme in Romanticism and Primitivism

Preservation and Conservation are recurring themes in Romanticism and Primitivism. Technically, these two terms do not carry precisely the same meaning. Since the word "preservation" is featured in the title, a clear understanding of it might prove important later in this work. According to the Longman Dictionary, 'preservation' means "the act of making sure that a situation continues without changing" ("Longman Dictionary"). At the same time, in the same dictionary, the meaning of 'conservation' is "the protection of natural things such as animals, plants, forests, etc, to prevent them from being spoiled or destroyed" ("Longman Dictionary"). The latter, I think, is the job of modern environmentalists. During the Romantic period, the act of protecting nature or something like the environmental movement was unheard of. However, general awareness was gradually developing in those who loved nature and were concerned about the looming threats to nature. English Romantics, well-reputed for their love for nature, could, at best, expect to find nature unharmed against the backdrop of industrial onslaughts. For example, in 'Tintern Abbey', William Wordsworth expresses his delight when he finds that the natural surroundings have not changed much in the last five years. Coleridge dreams of 'savage place' (l. 14) or wild nature in 'Kubla Khan'. John Clare, the 'Northamptonshire Peasant', evokes "with elegiac melancholy the gradual disappearance of the common fields, marshes, waste lands, and extinction of an entire way of life in harmony with the natural cycles of the day, season, and year" (Roe 204). All these examples have one thing in common- the desire to see nature in its pure or unchanged form.

Another difference between 'preservation' and 'conservation' lies in how one looks at nature. Conservationists believe that nature should be protected for the sake of human beings that live in

it. Typically, conservationists support measures that reduce human use of natural resources, but only when such measures are beneficial to human beings. They would probably encourage people to install solar panels on their homes but they would not support a policy that bans construction of roads in national parks. On the other hand, 'preservation' refers to setting aside all those areas of land that have so far been free from human influence like roads or industries or whose sole inhabitants are the natives. Like conservationists, preservationists, also, would encourage people to install solar panels on their homes. However, unlike the former, they would also support a policy that bans the construction of roads in national parks. It also indicates that preservationists believe in the intrinsic value of nature; nature is valuable for nature's sake and not because it is important for man's survival.

The idea of preservation is implicit in many Romantic poems. For example, we find it in "Introduction" of "Songs of Innocence". The child "On a Cloud" (l. 3) requests the poet to write down the songs or to preserve them "in a book" (l. 14) which the poet does using a "rural pen" (l.16). William Wordsworth is delighted to find nature on the bank of Wye River unchanged after some five years. That indicates the poet's appreciation for preservation and the local farmers' efforts to adopt an environmentally sustainable method of cultivation. Next, in "Ode on a Grecian Urn", the rural life of ancient Greece is preserved through centuries on the body of the urn and the poet celebrates this preservation in glorious terms. As a piece of art, the urn embodies truth and beauty and proves superior to life, especially for its quality to preserve. Again, in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the protagonist becomes a storyteller with the gift "strange power of speech" (l. 587). This is God's design to preserve the gothic experiences of the ancient mariner and the lesson he learns from all these. Then he transmits his story to the wedding guest who becomes another vehicle to preserve and carry the story to mankind. Finally, in Shelley's "Ode to

the West Wind" who "chariotest" (l. 6) "the winged seeds" (l. 7) to the seed-bed where they lie graved "like a corpse" (l. 8) till they germinate in spring. Hence, Shelly recognises the role of the west wind as a preserver, "Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;/ Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!" (ll. 13-14).

1.7 Romanticism and Primitivism: A Foreshadowing of Ecocritical Interest

The introduction of "Ecocriticism" has given Romanticism and Primitivism a renewed relevance. The 18th and early 19th century nature-writings have now gained a new perspective. The scope of English Romantic literature extends beyond a mere criticism of an industrialised society. Romanticism entails the emancipation of the creative spirit, ethical justice, preservation and freedom from the unjust authority of the Church and administration. These ideas are timeless. Although 1832 is considered the end of Romanticism, its spirit has transcended that time and is still relevant to modern-day environmentalism. Similarly, Primitivism, too, became a popular phenomenon and has gone through different phases since then. It began with the discovery of sea-routes, which paved the way for Europeans to come in contact with previously unknown cultures of Africa, Asia, America and Oceania. Thus, Primitivism as an othering process fostered through a time span of three centuries from the 15th to 17th centuries. Jean-Jacques Rousseau promoted this Primitivism and brought it to the consciousness of Romantics. The oxymoronic phrase "noble savage" is attributed to Rousseau. The "noble savage" was the primitive man who lacked education, technology and cultural refinement but lived according to the natural laws and was inherently moral and good. English Romantics assimilated the non-European "Other" with the "noble savage". Hence, their positive portrayal of the "Other" in their literature. Second, the

phenomenon was also fostered by anxieties from social, economic and political changes that accompanied various scientific and industrial revolutions. The French artist of late 19th century Paul Gauguin was one central figure who revived Primitivism in his art. He did not only espouse the philosophy, he actually left France in 1891 to live with the indigenous people (i.e. “noble savage”) of the south Pacific Island of Tahiti. Through his paintings, he presented Tahitian life, and the influence of Primitivism was found in his style and subject matter. The unique aspect of Gauguin's Primitivism is that he wished to live it and also embody it.

The burgeoning field of ecocriticism does not only consider the period's major or canonical writers; the 'minor' or marginal writers, too, are being rediscovered and restudied. John Clare, Robert Bloomfield, Charlotte Smith, and many other contemporaries of Major Romantics shared critical insights crucial for modern ecocritical studies. What makes their contribution crucial to modern-day ecocriticism is their close, acute and sometimes scientific observations of nature and their deep concern for the destruction of their immediate natural surroundings in the name of development.

One common characteristic of both the Major Romantics and their contemporary non-canonical writers was their connection to the land. Major Romantics established this connection by returning to nature and celebrating rural life and pastoral landscapes in their works. On the other hand, most non-canonical writers who wrote on similar themes had their origins in such settings. Therefore, naturally, their connection to the land was deeper. Both groups portrayed the countryside as a sanctuary of purity and tranquillity. However, there are differences in how they respond to their natural surroundings.

John Clare was both a poet and a farmer who witnessed the changes in the land wrought by parliamentary enclosure and reacted to that through his writings. Until recently, John Clare had

been seen no more than an impoverished 'peasant poet'. John Keats made an observation about Clare's work: "Images from Nature are too much introduced without being called for by a particular Sentiment" (Grant 115). Keats seems to criticise Clare's inability to illuminate an explicit feeling or idea in spite of his use of plenty of natural images. It may be argued that focusing only on Clare's rigorous rendering of images will simply misread his work's essence. In fact, a thorough reading of his poetry shows that his representation of natural space is never just a poetic externalisation of a particular sentiment as it is often the case with major Romantics, but a firsthand, experiential and concrete representation of a location, definite and actual, rather than imagined. His intimacy with his rural home of Helpston conveyed through his work was "genuine, and remained consistent until England's Enclosure Acts reached Clare's sequestered village and rent him from the land and lifestyle he so cherished" (Labriola 3). His poem "Helpstone Green" published in 1821, mourns the loss of his familiar natural surroundings where he grew up and which he loved so intensely:

> Ye injur'd fields, ye once were gay,
> When nature's hand display'd
> Long waving rows of willows grey,
> And clumps of hawthorn shade;
> But now, alas! your hawthorn bowers
> All desolate we see,
> The spoilers' axe their shade devours,
> And cuts down every tree. (ll. 1-8)

Although the sense of loss and hopelessness pervades the whole poem, Clare, like many other Romantics, offers himself as nature's agent to tell mankind how nature suffers at the hand of man for Government decisions like Enclosure Acts:

> Farewel, thou favourite spot, farewel!
> Since every effort's vain,
> All 1 can do is still to tell
> Of thy delightful plain; (ll. 49-52)

Thus, Clare's love for his immediate surroundings and his deep-rootedness in his pastoral locale make his poetry crucial for ecological studies. This research work looks at Clare's poetry through the lens of ecocriticism and try to bring out important ecological insights which, according to Amanda Labriola, were "the signature of Clare's poetics" (Labriola 14). Besides, Clare's role in the preservation of nature is no less significant than an environmental activist. His protest against the Enclosure Acts reflects his political consciousness which is reminiscent of modern-day environmental activism.

Like John Clare, Robert Bloomfield was also an agricultural labourer whose poetry was imbued with concrete imagery of rural life of his native Northamptonshire. His first book, *The Farmer's Boy*, published in 1800, was a "phenomenal success" (Roe 203). People loved his 'self-presentation as an uneducated poet, a natural "genius" (Roe 204). From an ecocritical point of view, Bloomfield is important firstly for his striking attention to the details of agricultural life and natural history and more importantly, for his description of birds, animals and insects. For instance, in 'Summer', he describes a beetle climbing to the top of a grass-blade:

> The small dust-coloured beetle climbs with pain

O'er the smooth plantain leaf, a specious plain!

Thence higher still, by countless steps conveyed,

He gains the summit of a shivering blade,

And flirts his filmy wings, and looks around,

Exulting in his distance from the ground. (II. 433-8)

The poem is from the perspective of the beetle and it delineates its struggle to reach the top of the 'shivering blade'. Even, the feeling of pride is from the beetle's perspective. Bloomfield thus arouses sympathetic appreciation in the mind of the reader even for an insect like beetle.

Similarly, Charlotte Smith's poetry also provide crucial ecological insights. Like Clare and Bloomfield, she also had true affection for nature's creatures which is found in poems like 'To a green-chafer, on a white rose', 'The hedge-hog seen in a frequented path', 'The early butterfly' or 'The moth'. These poems are intimate in tone and deeply personal in their mode of expression. They also reflect her extensive knowledge of botany, taxonomy, and ornithology. What makes her different from other writers of the period is the way she often converges between science and poetry. Moreover, her nature imageries are often precise and intense, as evident in her first book of poetry, *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784). "SONNET II. Written at the Close of Spring" is a case in point:

The garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,

Each simple flow'r, which she had nurs'd in dew,

Anemonies that spangled every grove,

The primrose wan, and harebell, mildly blue.

No more shall violets linger in the dell,

Or purple orchis variegate the plain,

Till Spring again shall call forth every bell,

And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.—

Ah, poor humanity! so frail, so fair,

Are the fond visions of thy early day,

Till tyrant Passion, and corrosive Care,

Bid all thy fairy colours fade away!

Another May new buds and flow'rs shall bring;

Ah! Why has Happiness—no second Spring? (Smith 22)

Smith personifies Spring and recalls how she (Spring) adorns nature with simple but beautiful flowers like anemones, primroses, harebells or orchis with her "humid hands". In the cycle of seasons, spring will return, and there will again be the renewal of all the season's beauty. In contrast, Happiness (personified), once gone, never returns to life. Of course, she had her personal life in mind while expressing this pessimism. She had been deserted by her unfaithful, violent and dissolute husband and she had to become a professional writer to support her twelve children. However, amidst all the "tyrant Passion" and "corrosive Care" in her life, the renewal of beauty, vigour and vitality in nature could have provided solace and restoration to the poet's troubled heart. Therefore, the existence and continuation of the pristine beauty of nature is important for human spirits.

The Romantic period's non-canonical or marginal writers exhibit a strong emotional bond with their immediate natural surroundings. Their love for nature and concern for preserving their respective locale are genuine. In their days, this non-instrumental love they showed for nature

might have sowed the seeds of Deep Ecology, a modern branch of Ecology that deals with the intrinsic value of every object of nature.

Critics have already traced some ecological insights in the works of major Romantics. Modern-day theoretical discourse "Ecocriticism" has made it possible to judge Romantics' works from a completely new perspective. For example, the poetry of William Wordsworth has so far been studied to understand nature's influence on man and for the spirituality associated with the thoughts presented. However, looking through the lens of ecocriticism, one may unearth completely new perspectives like the poet's concerns for preserving his natural surroundings and advocating for sustainable development. “Tintern Abbey” may be a relevant example in support of this claim. This poem used to be seen as the poet's celebration of revisiting his favourite place and an expression of his nature- philosophies. Now, a whole new dimension has been added to this analysis of the poem. McKusick, in "Ecology", observes that in the first stanza consisting of twenty two lines, the delight of the poet is evident through his frequent use of the word 'again' (it appears four times in the stanza), emphasising the unchanged appearance of the landscape. He celebrates the endurance of wild natural beauty even though he knows that there are charcoal-burners nearby and he is standing amidst intensive human occupation (in Roe 203). Thus, while Wordsworth celebrates wild nature, he does not disapprove of human existence and development activities nearby.

While Wordsworth demonstrates how sustainable development can be, Coleridge writes about the consequences of violating the spirit of this peaceful coexistence. Much before the idea called 'ecosystem' was brought to light by Arthur Transley (Schowalter 10), Coleridge had shown in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' the important role played by every single organism in the vast world

of life. Written in line with contemporary Gothic tradition, the poem is about killing an albatross and the consequences of this act. The smooth sailing of the ship as it was leaving the South Pole region with the albatross following it, shows how civilisation and nature can co-exist when man cares for God's creatures:

> And a good south wind sprung up behind;
>
> The albatross did follow,
>
> And everyday, for food or play
>
> Came to the mariner's hollo! (ll. 71-73)

This symbiotic relationship is disrupted when the ancient mariner kills the bird without any provocation or apparent reason. The ordeal that the ancient mariner, in particular, and other mariners in general (for supporting the act of killing the bird) go through reflects what may happen when human beings try to dominate and even overpower nature. Indiscriminate human activities in the name of 'development' may prove self-destructive.

Many such poems by Wordsworth and Coleridge show man and nature relationship in terms of organic connectivity. This is instead a common approach most of the Romantics adopted in their nature poems. Often it is found that the speaker (or the poet as the poet is often the speaker) brings nature at the forefront giving himself the secondary position of nature's agent. This humble approach not only confirms their unparallel love for nature but also expresses their reverence and concern for what they held so high in their estimation.

1.8 Two Strands of Primitivism

This chapter also aims to find the relevance of Primitivism in the preservation of nature and the connection it had with Romanticism. Romanticism was both preceded and anteceded by Primitivism. Some fifty years before the Romantics, Jean-Jacques Rousseau promoted Primitivism by emphasising the importance of returning to the state of nature. It was a movement that called for a return to a primitive or natural state of being. There were both artists and writers who followed the ideology of this movement. In their works, they rejected the artificiality and corruption that they believed civilisation brings with itself. They, instead, favoured a more spartan existence amidst nature and in close harmony with nature. However, after the Romantics during the later part of the nineteenth century, artists like Paul Gauguin and Henry Rousseau espoused a different kind of Primitivism based on the lives of non-European regions like South Asia, Egypt and Oceania. In their works, they associated women with nature and vice-versa. Besides, instead of recording mere perceptions, they portrayed subjective life on the canvas, prioritising concepts, emotions, and spirituality.

The first strand of Primitivism looks at civilisation as having destructive effects on the environment and human well-being. Primitivist writers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Henry David Thoreau advocated a return to a more straightforward, more natural way of life, free from the trappings of modernity and industrialisation. For example, in *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker or Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire,* Rousseau holds human activities like mining for the degradation of nature. Similarly, Thoreau was an anarcho-primitivist or an anarchist critique of civilisation. Anarcho-primitivism or anti-civilisation anarchism is a radical form of Primitivism that prescribes deindustrialisation, abandonment of large-scale organisation and all technology

other than prehistoric technology and the abolition of the division of labour as the ways to return to non-civilised ways of life.

The second strand of Primitivism valued and often idealised indigenous cultures and their strong bond with nature. There were artists like Paul Gauguin and Henry Rousseau who drew inspiration from non-European cultures. They portrayed these cultures and people as living in harmony with the natural world and embodying a more authentic way of life. It has already been shared how Gauguin depicted Tahitian life and culture by living amidst them. Henry Rousseau, on the other hand, never left France. He gathered his knowledge of the natural world from various experiences within France and became a self-taught artist. He was a primitive painter, and nature was his only teacher. Wild scenes, especially the scenes of jungles, dominate his paintings.

The thoughts and beliefs of Primitivism could have a far-reaching effect and could have been the driving force behind various later developments. For example, the Back-to-the-Land Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in America could have been inspired by the philosophical views of Primitivism. This movement called for people to take up small holdings to grow food to fulfil their needs. It also emphasised greater self-sufficiency, autonomy, and local community than in a typical industrial society. Such a living was environmentally sustainable and was in close association with nature. Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Muir espoused this philosophy and promoted the preservation of natural landscapes and the importance of living in harmony with the environment.

Preservation as well as conservation are the central ideas in both Romanticism and Primitivism. They had deep concerns for the environment and their works reflect their desire to protect the natural world from the destructive forces of industrialisation and modernisation. These movements

offer valuable insights into the human-nature relationship and continue to inspire environmental activism and stewardship today.

1.9 Relevance of Romantic and Primitive Perspectives

Romantic and Primitivist perspectives emphasise that humans and the natural world are interconnected. Both movements highlight the importance of fostering harmonious relationships with the environment. In an era when climate change and ecological despoliation have become significant environmentalist concerns, the Romantic and Primitive perspectives can offer valuable insights. The biggest contribution of these movements can be to create and strengthen the ethical and moral dimensions of environmental stewardship. For example, someone who reads "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" becomes aware of the moral obligation that mankind has towards God's creations. Since God creates and loves every creature, it is the moral, ethical and even religious responsibility of all human beings to love and care for these creatures of God. Such a feeling can strongly impact saving nature from any possible destruction.

Both Romanticism and Primitivism offer critiques of modernity and industrialisation. The consumerist societies of the modern world are engaged in various malpractices like filling in the waterbodies, deforestation, mining, etc, which threaten the very sustenance of nature. The Romantics and Primitivists advocated for alternative models of living in harmony with nature, which should effectively solve the modern-day environmental crisis. It is heartening to see that the environmental scientists of the present world are working to this direction and finding ways to live ecologically conscious lifestyles. One perfect example of living in harmony with nature can be one

of the "Lucy Poems" by William Wordsworth, "Three Years She Grew". The personified nature, being the speaker in the poem, wishes to bring Lucy up with all her influences,

> This Child I to myself will take;
> She shall be mine, and I will make
> A Lady of my own. (ll. 4-6)

Different objects of nature, through exercising their individual qualities, will contribute to Lucy's physical and mental growth. As a result, Lucy will grow into a well-balanced human being.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein the Modern Prometheus* depicts the consequences of denying such a life. The Creature urges Frankenstein to create a female partner for him. It promises that they (he and his female partner) would live together away from human society in the vast wilds of South America. They would not even kill lamb or any other creature to satisfy their appetite and feed on only acorn and berries they would gather from plants. Allegorically, this is the kind of life that Romanticism and Primitivism would approve of. However, the Creature is denied that mate and treated rudely and sometimes cruelly by all the "Enlightened men" he came in contact with. As a result, he was overcome with a feeling of vengeance and went on a killing spree, murdering many closely associated with Frankenstein's life. If the Creature is repressed nature, its vengeance may be seen as nature's retribution for all those malpractices done to it.

The Romantic and Primitivist writers, through their works, continue to inspire environmental activism and advocacy today. The spirit of Romanticism persists even today and living a simple life amidst continues to appeal to those aware of the evil of civilisation and industrialisation. The legacies of Romanticism and Primitivism like love and respect for nature, celebration of the

sublime beauty of landscapes, and warnings about the consequences of environmental degradation serve as rallying cries for contemporary efforts to protect and preserve the environment.

1.10 Methodology

This is a qualitative research project that primarily interprets and evaluates primary sources from textual and other archives. For the purpose of this research, the primary sources are the poems and prose works of the late 18th- and early 19th-century writers. The secondary sources are journal articles, textbooks, dissertations, as well as authentic and reliable online information. The research is guided by the recent developments in environmental studies and ecocriticism.

1.11 Research Questions

This thesis addresses the following research questions:

- How did the Romantic writers of the 19th century foresee the environmental ramifications of industrialisation, and what valuable perspectives can their critiques offer in our comprehension of present-day ecological challenges?
- In what ways do Romantic literature's predominant themes and motifs underscore the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world, and how do these perspectives contribute to contemporary environmental ethics and activism?
- How do Romantic and Primitivist ideologies challenge conventional notions of economic expansion and technological advancement, and how might their dissenting perspectives

offer valuable guidance for shaping strategies to nurture sustainability and conservation in the contemporary world?

- How do Romantic and Primitivist authors celebrate the sanctity of the natural world, and what ramifications do these viewpoints carry for present-day discussions concerning the significance of wilderness, biodiversity, and environmental harmony?
- What insights can be gleaned from the environmental activism inspired by Romantic and Primitivist literature, and how might these understandings guide endeavors to tackle contemporary ecological issues like climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss?
- What is the Romantics' general attitude to the "other," and how does their othering process bridge the gap between the “self" and the "other" or the human and non-human?

1.12 Hypothesis

The hypothesis posits that amidst the transformative waves of the 4th Industrial Revolution, reevaluating perspectives taken from Romantic literature can illuminate alternative pathways to address contemporary environmental crises. Rooted in the Romantic era's response to the 1st Industrial Revolution, where mechanisation and urbanisation first reshaped society, these perspectives underscore the enduring relevance of critiques against industrialisation. Romantic writers voiced concerns over the degradation of nature, the alienation of humanity from the natural world, and the commodification of landscapes, echoing contemporary environmental challenges. Moreover, the Romantic emphasis on the intrinsic connection between humans and nature and the celebration of nature's sacredness offers profound reflections on the value of harmonious

coexistence with the environment. By revisiting these themes, we can glean insights into holistic approaches to sustainability and ecological stewardship amid the rapid advancement of technology. Such insights provide a rich tapestry of ideas and perspectives to navigate the complexities of the modern environmental crisis, guiding us toward a more balanced and respectful relationship with the natural world in the context of the ongoing industrial revolution.

1.13 Chapter Outline

The thesis falls into five chapters. The current chapter introduces the topic. Chapter 2 gives a review of existing literature on major Romantics' and the Primitivists' views regarding the organic connectivity between the human and the non-human in the realm of nature. There is also a thorough examination of the key themes, perspectives, and scholarly debates surrounding environmental concerns in Romantic texts. Besides, the critical works focusing on the role of nature, ecology and environmental ethics in the texts of both the major Romantics and the lesser-known writers are analysed. And all these are done to identify the research gap that this research work aims to fulfil.

Chapter 3 is on the works of major Romantics. Following one of the key features of English Romanticism, "Individualism", the chapter explores how the idea of the "self" influenced Romantics' relationship with the natural world. There is a thorough analysis of various primary texts of English Romantics to understand their environmental concerns and the important ecological insights that they shared. Besides, the chapter also investigates the role of Primitivism in strengthening Romantics' bond with nature and bridging the binaries like the "self" and the "other", the European and the non-European, and the human and the non-human.

Chapter 4 analyses how the idea of preservation features in the works of minor Romantic writers. Available texts of writers like John Clare, Gilbert White, Charlotte Turner Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley are thoroughly analysed to find out how they depicted the relationship between the human and the non-human and how much they were influenced by their contemporary philosophical thoughts related to Primitivism. Finally, there is an attempt to look for and understand their ecological insights that can contribute to the Environmental Movement of the modern world.

Chapter 5 offers the conclusion of this study. It presents a summary of the key research findings. The research questions are answered in the findings or there is a separate section for answering the questions. There is a discussion on the study's main contributions to the modern environmental movement. Finally, the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are shared.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Environmental Perspectives in English Romantic Literature

Modern critics in Ecocriticism are now showing renewed interest in Romantic canon and nature-related writings of the early nineteenth century to explore the presentation of the natural world and the advocacy for its preservation. How humans and non-humans interact in the realm of nature has often been the focus of their studies. They are researching new ideas and insights that might contribute to the environmental movement of the present day. However, almost all the researches are exclusively on the literature of major Romantics. There were lesser-known writers also whose perspectives or viewpoints have often been ignored. Besides, Primitivism as a field of philosophical discourse and another offshoot of the industrial revolution could have had some shared concerns against the fast-escalating evils of industrialisation like pollution, deforestation and urbanisation. This chapter reviews the available existing literature on how Romantics and Primitivists portrayed nature in their works. The focus is on the more recent discourses where the treatment of nature has been interpreted mostly from environmental perspectives. A thorough examination is done of the key themes, perspectives, and scholarly debates surrounding environmental concerns in Romanticism and Primitivism.

2.2 The Role of Literature in Saving the Environment: A New Realisation

The relatively new field of literary and theoretical discourse called Ecocriticism recognises that literature can add one more effective dimension to the modern-day environmental movement.

Studies have been done to explore how literature can strengthen the bond between human beings and nature. The persistent environmental problems even after so many measures taken by the environmentalists have given rise to a new realisation regarding the value of literature; specially poetry. James C. McKusick believes that there has not been any "effective remedial action" to the "horrendous environmental problems" yet. The solution he offers is "not a quick technological fix, but a fundamental change in human consciousness" (qtd. in Roe 199). He also believes that the study of literature can bring about this change in human consciousness as he quotes Jonathan Bate's argument, "The business of literature is to work upon consciousness" (Bate 23). However, McKusick narrows down the idea further and emphasises the importance of the study of poetry by saying, "The study of poetry can lead to the interrogation of fundamental ethical values" (qtd. in Roe 200). He concludes that ecological literary criticism "may potentially transform, the persistently pragmatic and instrumental awareness of the terrestrial environment that has pervaded Western culture" (qtd. in Roe 200).

McKusick's arguments are strong enough to shift the focus from nature's materialistic and instrumental value to its more powerful and important role of working "upon [the] consciousness". There are other critics also who share their thoughts in the same direction. For example, Laurence Buell explores how literature changes human beings' attitude towards nature and raises concerns about its well-being as he opines that literary texts function as "acts of environmental imagination" that may "affect one's caring for the physical world," making that world "feel more or less precious or endangered or disposable" (2). Heidegger, on the other hand, comes down to poetry to show its close affinity with the earth. His words established a deep connection between poetry and the earth when he said, "There is a special kind of writing called poetry which has the peculiar power to speak 'earth'. Poetry is the song of the earth" (qtd. in Bate 251). This quote validates the

importance of Romantic poetry in the field of ecocritical research as this genre is more about the natural world than anything else.

2.3 Romantics' Love for Nature Challenged

The advent of Ecocriticism opened a debate regarding the Romantics' ecological stance. There are critics who reconsider English Romantics' love for nature as a reaction to the impending environmental crisis. The relatively new school of critics like Jonathan Bate, James McKusik, Seth Reno, and others take an ecocritical point of view and argue, "Romantic nature poetry is actually the first instance of western proto-ecological literature" (Huntington 1). This is in stark contrast to earlier views held by scholars such as Jerome McGann, Marjorie Levinson, and Alan Liu. They argue that "the romantic idealization of nature serves primarily as a mode of displacement of the political failures of the French Revolution" (Huntington 2). Thus, Alan Liu reemphasises a broadly accepted view regarding the Romantics, which is that they were escapists. He even goes as far as claiming that there is no nature except that which is "constituted by acts of political definition made possible by particular forms of government" (Huntington 2). However, Huntington's own argument against Liu's view is that Liu underestimated "the importance of nature's physical reality" and this could be dangerous. At the same time, he also admitted that reintegrating the physical importance of nature into Romantic poetry does not entirely separate it from politics; rather, expressing a love for the natural world is "an inherently political act" (Huntington 1). In Seth T. Reno's opinion, it is to "enact through emotion" a resistance towards "industrialisation, consumer capitalism, and certain strands of conservative ideology" (Reno 28). Some New Historicist critics go a little further and focus on the Romantics' stress on human imagination to

counter their celebration of nature. Often, their intention is to show that Romantics like Wordsworth transcended the human mind and imagination above nature. Ramazani and Bazregarzadeh observe, "The New Historicists are in the habit of reading texts under the influence of Marxism; in so doing, they turn to 'history' and 'ideology'" (3).

At an individual level also the true worth of Romantics as nature poets has been evaluated and re-evaluated. In this respect, critics showed the greatest interest in William Wordsworth's poetry and views about nature. The obvious reason was Wordsworth's reputation as a poet of nature or a worshipper of nature. Among the critics who recognised Wordsworth's importance in today's environmental movement are James McKusick, Jonathan Bate, Ralph Pite and K. Rigby. McKusick believes that Wordsworth had a "vital influence" on and "contributed to the fundamental ideas and core values of the modern environmental movement" (McKusick 5). Pite brings into consideration Wordsworth's affinity with places: "Wordsworth's sense of nature arises out of and depicts a particular group of places with which he feels himself irremovably bound up" (Pite 188). Jonathan Bate proves in *Romantic Ecology* (Bate 19) that Wordsworth's interest in nature is a "conservative ideology" which is a quest for "a harmonious relationship with nature" (Bate 19). As a matter of fact, an ecocritical reading of Wordsworth, as a "worshipper of Nature" (Wordsworth, line 152), and his poetry is, as K. Rigby argues, "a form of advocacy for an "Other", which is felt to be unable to speak for itself" (qtd. in Wolfreys 165). These critics do not only identify the strong bond that truly existed between Wordsworth and the living organisms around him, they also trace the idea of preservation as one of the concerns of the poet. The belief of McKusick that Wordsworth's works can contribute to the modern-day environmental movement is what this research work aims to explore and expand.

However, there are opposing views as well. There are critics who have challenged Wordworth's nature-thoughts and his genuine appreciation for the natural world. For instance, Aldous Huxley in his essay "Wordsworth in the Tropics" draws the attention of the readers to his belief that Wordsworth's conception of nature was one-sided as it was based on nature that was "feeble" and had "already [been] conquered". The poet loved the nature of Lake District because it had "mostly been vanquished and enslaved" although there were also woods and mountains, marshes and heath. However, Huxley believes that the reason Wordsworth loved them was that the natives became the masters of those and could overcome them at any time as their fellows had been overcome. As a result, there was never that sense of fear that could have tainted Wordsworth's extraordinary love for nature.

In his effort to demean Wordsworth's love for and glorification of nature, Huxley claims that Wordsworth was actually deceived by his tamed surroundings and "cozy sublimities of the Lake District" and was not aware of the true face of wild nature. Had the poet spent a few weeks in Malaya or Borneo, he would have been undeceived. The tropical jungles may be marvelous, fantastic and even beautiful to the poet's liking, but they are also "terrifying" and "profoundly sinister". Such places, according to Huxley are "foreign, appalling, fundamentally and utterly inimical to intruding man. The life of those vast masses of swarming vegetation is alien to the human spirit and hostile to it". At the end of his essay, Huxley opines that if Wordsworth had traveled beyond Europe and got acquainted with "the damp and stifling darkness" of the tropical forests or "the leeches and the malevolently tangled rattans" there, he would have been cured of his too easy and comfortable pantheism.

Now, this was surely a misreading. Huxley's view can, at best, be called a superficial study that fails to unearth the actual contribution of Wordsworth in initiating a new kind of nature poetry that demonstrates how the ideal relationship between humans and non-humans should be in the realm of nature. The poetry of Wordsworth is more complex and layered than Huxley would have thought. Whether Huxley was right or not regarding how Wordsworth would have reacted if he had ever been faced with the cruel realities of the tropical forests, may never be known. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly true that the organic connectivity between man and nature and the resultant peaceful coexistence of both that Wordsworth philosophises in his works, is the key for the survival of the tribes that inhabit there.

Aldous Huxley was not the only critic who attempted to denunciate Wordsworth's views about nature. There are other critics, too, who reject the idea that Wordsworth was an ecological thinker. They argue that Wordsworth values human imagination more than nature. Besides, the poet's view towards nature is an objectified one. Moreover, Wordsworth's emphasis on human imagination relates him to anthropocentrism, which places human beings above non-humans. The Yale School critics support such views giving priority to the concept of imagination and the transcendence of human mind. For example, Horold Bloom looks at Wordsworth "as a poet of imagination and not of Nature" (Ramazani and Bazregarzadeh 3). In *The Visionary Company*, Bloom (1971) suggests that the theme of Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* is "the nature of poet's imagination and imagination's relation to external Nature" (qtd. in Ho 1).

One such new historicist Alan Liu reproaches Wordsworth in *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*(1989) as he believes Wordsworth neglected and even distorted the social and political issues of his decade. Taking "The Simplon Pass" passage in Book VI of *The Prelude* as an

example, Liu asserts, "[in] a Wordsworthian tour, the arrow of signification from historical ornament toward the background is curiously blunted: historical markers point nowhere and decorate nature for no purpose" (qtd. in Ramazani and Bazregarzadeh 3). He also rebukes Wordsworth for his overlooking history and putting emphasis on nature when he declares, "[without] history in the background, a landscape, after all, is not a landscape; it is wilderness" (qtd. in Ramazani and Bazregarzadeh 3).

Another New Historicist critic Jerome J. McGann criticizes Wordsworth from socio-historical point of view. He believes that Romantics express their ideas by "extreme forms of displacement and poetic conceptualization", which leads them to describe "idealized localities" (qtd. in Ho 3). Ramazani and Bazregarzadeh share McGann's opinion about poetry, "poetry is the aftermath of social, historical and political events and should take such points into consideration" (4). McGann interprets Wordsworth's love of nature as "finding consolation in nature" rather than "attending to economic conditions" (Bate 15). For such critics, Wordsworth's stress on the role of imagination is considered as a kind of compensation for his political disillusionment or even apostasy.

Jonathan Bate also rejects the Yale critic Geoffrey H. Hartman's criticism of Wordsworth due to his turning his back on "the transcendent imagination". In *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814* (1987), Geoffrey H. Hartman opines that it is "nature itself [that leads Wordsworth] beyond nature" (as cited in Ho, 2002, p. 1). He takes "the Simplon Pass" passage of Book Six of *The Prelude* as an example to prove the point that "nature's 'end' is to lead to something 'without end,' to teach the travelers to transcend nature" (qtd. in Ho 2). Jonathan Bate, categorically, rejects this view by drawing an overall conclusion regarding these aforementioned literary schools:

> The 1960s gave us an idealist reading of Romanticism which was implicitly bourgeois in its privileging of the individual imagination; the 1980s gave us a post-Althusserian Marxist critique of Romanticism. The first of these readings assumed that the human mind is superior to nature; the second assumed that the economy of human society is more important than the "the economy of nature". (1991 9)

Hence, Bate believes, "The time is now right to allow Wordsworth to become once more what he imagined himself to be, what Shelley called him, and what he was to the Victorians: 'Poet of Nature'" (4).

Finally, there is Alan Liu who responds to David Simpson's argument that the focal point of William Wordsworth's poetry is "himself, his own ego" (qtd. in Li-Shu 128). Simpson uses John Keats term "Egotistical Sublime" to demonstrate that the poetry of Wordsworth is "self-centered" and "does not go beyond the self of the poet" (qtd. in Ramazani and Bazregarzadeh 5). Alan Liu counters this with the following argument: "Even when Wordsworth tries to describe a picturesque landscape in repose, the immediate, local, sublime story of the subaltern breaks through to reveal itself to the reader" (qtd. in Li-Shu 128). So, Liu believes that it is not only the ego of the poet that dominates in his poetry; rather, the people and the creatures living in the natural settings as depicted in the poems, are also within the poet's focal point. The opening lines of *Michael: A Pastoral Poem* (1800) may justify this point:

> And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
> Careless of books, yet having felt the power
> Of Nature, by the gentle agency
> Of natural objects, led me on to feel

For passions that were not my own, and think

(At random and imperfectly indeed)

On man, the heart of man, and human life. (Wordsworth, 2006, p. 1369, lines 27-33)

The “natural objects” arouse “passions” in the poet. These “passions” are not “my own” but “On man, the heart of man, and human life”. The final line strongly denies Simpson’s claim and confirms that the poet’s ultimate concern was not his self, but mankind.

Skepticism regarding Romantics’ love for nature touched upon Coleridge also. Critics have observed Coleridge’s troubled relationship with the natural world. This possibly emanated from his complexities with Wordsworth and his wife Sarah Fricker. When Coleridge moved to the Lake District to be nearer to William and Dorothy Wordsworth, problems started to surface in the friendship between Wordsworth and Coleridge. Weissman informs, “Wordsworth was bluntly critical of several of Coleridge's poems and Coleridge gave great importance to his thoughts” (171-179). This frustration was further intensified by his own domestic problems with his wife which ultimately led him to his opium addiction. The sense of guilt Coleridge felt due to his problems was only amplified and all areas of his life were affected (171-179). Reyyan Bal deduces, “All of these factors combined to cause a problematic relationship between Coleridge and nature” (Bal 15).

Another critic, Modiano who studies the personal factors behind Coleridge’s problematic relationship with nature, says, “[a]t times nature takes the upper hand, particularly when an enfeebled self, tormented by nightmares, guilt and disappointment with friends, seeks in the outside world a principle of stability and order" (31). Apparently, this dependency seems to be a

positive development, Modiano does not fail to notice how it ultimately caused disillusionment in the poet with nature:

> Coleridge's reliance on nature caused, as relationships of dependency normally do, a disquieting awareness of an imperfect guardianship", for frequently, when Coleridge turned to nature for poetic inspiration and relief from his troubles, he found that this strategy did not succeed (43).

Reyyan Bal, too, is aware of this disillusionment in Coleridge and attempts to unearth the reason behind this failure to establish the perfect communion with nature:

> In fact, the real problem was that, having forgotten the necessity of his own contribution to the relationship with nature in order for it to be a proper one, Coleridge, the individual, endeavoured to claim her aid via passive perception. In other words, as will also be observed in the chapter on "Dejection: An Ode", he tried to form a beneficial relationship with nature only through the first stage of the relationship. Hence his failure to do so. (Bal, 16)

Finally, despite all these frustrating developments in his personal life and his lack of consistency in the relationship with nature, it is heartening to observe that Coleridge's poems display a more consistent outlook of the individual nature relationship than his prose-writings. In the words of Reyyan Bal:

> Thus, in poetry, his innermost thoughts concerning the individual-nature relationship were able to emerge without the interference of the philosophic,

personal, and religious dilemmas that confused his attempts to rationalise them in prose. (12)

Coleridge's and Wordsworth's contemporary and the third major Romantic William Blake was also accused of being "nature's poetic adversary" by Kevin Hutchings (37). Though there is a school of critics with the same opinion, Hutchings mainly blames Northrop Frye for promoting Blake's view about nature as "anti-nature". In his seminal work, *Fearful Symmetry*, Frye alleges that, in Blake, "we see nothing outside of man worthy of respect. Nature is miserably cruel, wasteful, chaotic and half-dead" (39). Thus, the general view that Blake's works are deeply anthropocentric and nature, as presented in his poetry, offers little value to humans, has gradually been established by Frye and the critics who followed him.

Blake's works are indeed mostly anthropocentric. For example, in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, forty-two out of forty-five poems contain humans or references to humans in either their texts or their illustrations. The exceptions are "The Clod and the Pebble", "The Tyger" and "The Lilly". However, the recent ecocritical reading of Blake's texts and reexamining Blake's vision of nature show that his works are not as deeply anthropocentric as previously thought. One example is the reinterpretation of Blake's proverb "nature is barren" from his work "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell". The more traditional interpretation of this proverb was, "Blake's nature has no innate meaning—humans must impart meaning to nature by experiencing and exploiting it" (Deatrick 3). But Mark Lussier demonstrates, in "Blake's Deep Ecology" that it is possible to invert this interpretation: "by necessity of the proverb's symmetries, man is barren in the absence of nature" (404). In other words, nature has intrinsic meaning and value, and human beings depend on nature for both mental and physical health. It seems *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

supports this latter view. It contains several poems where nature is portrayed as anything but barren.

2.4 The Relationship between the Human and the Non-Human Redefined

English Romantic poets were the first to prioritise the relationship between man and nature by referring to and also promoting the interconnectedness that they have between them. Karl Kroeber recognises this and declares that Romantic poets were the first "proto-ecological" thinkers (qtd. in Li-Shu 126) who tried to bridge the gaps between human beings and nature and reestablished the broken bond. James McKusick takes it one step further as he writes in *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology (2000),* "the English Romantics were the first full-fledged ecological writers in the Western literary tradition" (2000 19). In his article titled "Ecology", McKusick gives credit to Wordsworth and Coleridge in particular, "the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge foreshadows the modern science of ecology in its holistic conception of the earth as a household, a dwelling place for an interdependent biological community" (202). In another place of the same article McKusick adds, "In their composition of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth and Coleridge shared a perception of the natural world as a dynamic ecosystem and a passionate commitment to the preservation of wild creatures and scenic areas" (203).

On the other hand, Karl Kroeber places Wordsworth ahead of other Romantics because Wordsworth was probably the first to explore and believe in this interconnectedness. He was the first among the Romantics to bring nature to the foreground where the human beings and non-human elements interact between them. In Kroeber's words, "Wordsworth remains the founding father for a thinking of poetry about place, to our dwelling upon the earth" (qtd. in Bate 205).

In this regard, McKusick provides an example from "Tintern Abbey" of what Wordsworth considered as the peaceful co-existence between human beings and nature. He observes William Wordsworth's sheer delight in the "evidently unchanged appearance of the landscape" when the poet revisits the bank of the river Wye. In "Tintern Abbey", Wordsworth celebrates this "endurance of wild natural beauty" and what is even more delightful for the poet is the coexistence of wilderness and the "intensive human occupation" near Tintern Abbey. However, the poet's concern for the preservation of this wild scenery is also implicit in the poem. First, McKusick appreciates the farmers' "environmentally benign mode of agriculture", "…the local farmers have acted to preserve a remnant of the primordial ecosystem of that region by allowing their hedgerows to run wild" but he also realises the poet's concern about "the destructive activities of the nearby charcoal burners". This concern finally culminates in the pessimistic conclusion that the "wildness cannot be sustained in any human relationship with nature". Both the poet and later his sister will succumb to the process by which "these wild ecstasies shall be matured/ into a sober pleasure" (McKusick 203).

Finally, McKusick also dispels the misconception that Wordsworth objectifies nature which makes it "touristic detachment" (McKusick 113). He strongly feels that Wordsworth never advocates the Cartesian mind/body dualism that creates "despotism of the eye" (McKusick 114). Moreover, Wordsworth's approach towards nature is nothing imperial which causes a detachment between man and nature and ends in utter destruction of nature. Rather, McKusick holds that Wordsworth adds to the ecological consciousness of human beings by emphasising how much they rely on nature.

Samuel Tailor Coleridge was probably the second after Wordsworth to prioritise and explore the relationship between human beings and nature. It is the central theme in most of his poetry. James C McKusick's study of Coleridge's works might provide a basis for Coleridge's idea about the relationship between the individual and nature. In his scholarly work "Coleridge and the Economy of Nature", he mainly assesses the significance of ecological thought in Coleridge's intellectual development. He observes that both Wordsworth and Coleridge are more than just "itinerant observer of scenic beauty" (McKusick 375). He appreciates both these Romantics for choosing Lake Districts as their dwelling place and living in harmony with nature. Even in their poetry, the persona is often a speaker "whose voice is inflected by the local and personal history of the place he inhabits" and this perspective "may legitimately be termed an ecological perspective" (375).

Another critic, Reyyan Bal, in his work titled "The Relationship between the Individual and Nature in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's Poems", explores three stages of this relationship between the individual and nature. He calls the first stage 'Associationism' when nature is active but the individual is a passive onlooker of her. According to Reyyan, "the individual's perception is solely sense perception; he sees, hears, feels, smells and tastes the outward forms, without contributing anything to what he perceives" (13). During this time, no communion takes place between nature and the individual.

The second stage is what may be called Coleridge's "Pantheism". It appeals to his yearning for unity in multiplicity and satisfies his longing for a union between nature and the individual. Basically, it is the stage when the individual is "able to see the essence, the spirit of nature, behind the appearance of the outer forms" (13), which may lead him to form a unity with nature. In this stage, both the individual and nature become both active and passive and they act and react upon

each other as polar powers. A simpler analogy to explain this communion may be to consider the individual and nature as two mirrors facing each other, both reflecting each other and seeing themselves eternally reflected in each other so that they are one eternal whole.

Coleridge elevates himself to the third stage of the individual-nature relationship by elevating the mind. Contrary to the first stage, the mind plays an active role and gains dominance and control over the relationship. According to Reyyan Bal, it is essential for the individual to rise above the unity with nature that happened during the second stage and take control of his perception of nature. Only then, the mind recreates what it sees and form a new nature out of the original one it perceived (14). In this stage, the role played by the individual mind is that of the moon as illustrated by Bal:

> Just as the moon uses the light it receives from the sun to modify the nature it reflects its light upon, the individual uses the creative power he receives from God's eternal creative power to create a new, modified nature out of the original nature created by God. In other words, in this stage, the individual resides over nature as does God; and the outcome of this interaction is usually poetry. (14)

In this way, the third stage finally leads the poet to his creations; namely, poetry. However, Bal also observes that these transitions to different stages were not always smooth or consistent. Three factors that contributed to the poet's comfortable and harmonious relationship with nature were his friendship with William Wordsworth, the initial happy stage of his married life and his relationship with Thomas Poole, who according to Weissman, was "an exceedingly supportive and encouraging friend who showed unconditional love to him [Coleridge]" (Weissman 91-129). All these factors, together, enabled Coleridge "to glide from one stage to the next in the individual-

nature relationship" and "he could keenly perceive every detail in nature through his senses (first stage), feel in perfect harmony and unity with her (second stage), and rise above this unity to re-create a new nature in the poems that he wrote (third stage)" (15).

Bal's idea may be applied partially to Carlisle Huntington's analysis of "Rime of the Ancient Mariner". Huntington observes "the lack of human agency" and "the power of the natural world" in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (9). In his essay "Can Poetry Save the Earth: A Study in Romantic Ecology", Huntington views that the Ancient Mariner, with all other mariners, experiences the "cosmic insignificance" of man in the hand of nature and realises that the idea of human dominance over nature is "illusory" (8). The poem goes on to show that man is insignificant in the context of nature as nature is endowed with an agency to resist human dominance. This idea may conform to the first stage of the relationship between the individual and nature.

Huntington also believes that any attempt to assert human agency may result in devastating consequences. In the poem, not only the Ancient Mariner but also the other mariners suffer terrible consequences as they are "ignorant of their own insignificance" and "imbued with a false sense of agency" (10). Finally, the Ancient Mariner finds relief from his physical and mental agony when he embraces the whole of life. His ego is diminished and as Huntington observes, "the Mariner is finally able to embrace "life as a dynamic totality" (12). This may refer to the second stage of the individual-nature relationship where man (the protagonist) is one with nature and both man and nature are one with God.

Though nature becomes a part of God in this stage, Huntington does not believe that nature is a moral force to Coleridge. The moral that the Ancient Mariner espouses at the end is not the teaching of nature which is wild and mercurial. Rather, Huntington feels, "it is nature's ferocity

that forces him to change his perspective and enables the mariner to then reconstruct a worldview that accommodates this change" (13).

There are critics who looked into William Blake's works to understand his attitude towards this relationship between human beings and nature. The more well-known ones are Kevin Hutchings and Mark Lussier while the two other less familiar names are Elizabeth Deatrick and Robert M. Baine. Their findings may be summed up as Blake's deeply conflicting but surprisingly modern views about nature. Hutchings does not deny that Blake's poems center around humans; however, he also tries to establish that nature plays a crucial role that cannot be ignored. Lussier finds traces of "Deep Ecology" which is a modern branch of Ecology in Blake's writings. And Elizabeth Deatrick notices that unlike Wordsworth or some other Romantics, Blake did not view nature "as [having] an untouchable connection to the distant divine" (40). Rather, in *Songs of Experience*, the human characters do not only connect with nature, but they become a part of it. In Diatrick's words:

> Blake's understanding of nature, as revealed in "Experience", is, in some ways, closer to modern conceptions of ecology and conservation biology than to that of his Romantic contemporaries; he does not see nature as necessarily "other," but rather as a greater whole that humans should seek to be embraced by, and to be a part of. (40)

Another Blakean critic, Robert M. Baine, writes in The Scattered Portions: Blake's Biological Symbolism that to ensure a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, it is nature that must return to man (47). Kevin Hutchings puts forward a similar theory by calling Blake's cosmology "unabashedly anthropocentric". To prove his point, Hutchings draws on Blake's concept of giant Albion, the "human form divine" where all the elements of this universe are united

(67). These arguments by both Baine and Hutchings are valid when one considers William Blake's works as a whole. However, a close look, in particular, at *Songs of Experience* may present the opposite. Deatrick observes:

> In fact, quite the opposite relationship is on display in *Experience*: the poems do not show nature returning to humans as Baine and Hutchings suggest. Rather, it is humans that leave human society and approach nature in a state of sadness or fearful penitence. Those who approach nature in this way eventually become a part of a larger whole—one might almost call it a larger ecosystem—once again, for nature has not been destroyed in mankind's fall from innocence, but has merely become inaccessible to all but the repentant. (42)

This idea of seeing individuals as part of nature makes Blake different from other English Romantics. Most Romantics indulge in a process of "othering" (not in a derogative sense though) nature in their poetry. Laurence Buell writes in his book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*:

> The "othering" of nature, or the division between humans and nature, is not only the leading cause of our modern environmental problems but a tragedy that springs from the Romantic Movement and its conception of the relationship between humans and nature. (32)

Buell further comments:

> The Romantic perception of nature as something fundamentally different from humanity—as something that humans cannot partake of or interact with without

> special effort,—has developed into an attitude towards the natural world that makes it all too easy to abuse our planet's natural resources. (32-3)

Interestingly, Buell's anti-Romantic comments support William Blake's view of nature. In his poetry, Blake does not put nature on a pedestal or worship its sublimity. Instead, he encourages his readers to become as close to it as possible. From a modern-day ecological perspective, such a view is remarkably progressive and semi-ecological.

John Keats's nature-poetry has also become a subject of ecological study. According to Charles Ngiewih, Keats demonstrates ecological consciousness in his works, which plays "a central role in the understanding of the aesthetic, philosophical and ethical ramifications of his theory of the imagination" (Ngiewih). Although Keats' treatment of nature is similar, in many ways, to that of Wordsworth and Coleridge, Keats' nature consciousness takes a slightly different turn. Unlike his elder colleagues, he "does not place priority on the visionary and transcendental"; rather, his eco-poetics "tends to reduce nature primarily within the confines of his aesthetic quest rather than brood over it fundamentally as a universal force or the basis of his spiritual longings"(3). So, Keats focuses mainly on the aesthetic aspect of nature and using his imagination, presents it in so appealing a way that readers are naturally drawn to it and often fall in love with it.

Another critic of English Romantics, Jonathan Bate, finds in Keats' works a direct correlation between man's relationship with the environment and man's bond with man which makes up society. In one of Keats' journal letters, written on 21 September 1819, Bate observes, "Keats moves easily from human bonds ('Men who live together have a silent moulding and influencing power over each other - They interassimilate') to the bond between self and environment ('Now the time is beautiful. I take a walk every day for an hour before dinner and this is generally my

walk')" (Bate 104). In that same letter, Keats also wrote, "I am not sure how I should endure loneliness and bad weather together" (qtd. in Bate 105). Here, Jonathan Bate rightly mentions that to ensure human survival, there is a need for both social and environmental networks, "Life depends on sociability and warmth: in order to survive, our species needs both social and environmental networks, both human bonds and good weather" (Bate 105).

Keats' contemporary and another Major Romantic Percy Bysshe Shelley, also, is ecologically important for modern-day researchers. Ecology activist Timothy Morton confirms this view in "Shelley's Green Desert", who writes, "An extraordinary number of figures in the writing of Percy and Mary Shelley deal with the economy of nature, human relationships with the natural world, and what we now think of as 'ecology'." (409)

To prove his point, Timothy Morton refers to Shelley's Vegetarian Note 17 to *Queen Mab* (1813) where there is a passage telling the hazards of chemical exhalations from industries. Morton also notices how Shelley sympathises with the lamb and how that sympathy shifts from one specific animal (the lamb) to animals in general. He draws an example from *Queen Mab*'s vegetarian passage, "No longer now/ He slays the lamb that looks him in the face" (ll. 211-12) which is changed in *The Daemon of the World*, "No longer now/ He slays the beast that sports around his dwelling" (ll. 443-44). Morton's opinion, in this respect, is, "If 'ecology,' as the *logos* of the *oikos*, is thinking about dwelling, then this vegetarian image is profoundly ecological" (409).

Thus, Shelley's desire to live in peaceful coexistence with nature's creatures and his concern for the preservation of the environment is reflected in Timothy Morton's work. This view is supported by Kevin Hutching who writes the following words in "Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies":

> Percy Bysshe Shelley went so far as to advocate moral vegetarianism not only to prevent the inhumane treatment of animals but also to protest against a carnivorous mode of human sustenance that promoted social inequity and the waste of agricultural resources. (187)

Jonathan Bate comments on the same topic in his book *The Song of the Earth*, “Percy Shelley, in his 'Vindication of the Natural Diet', developed a similar argument about how the eating of red meat creates bloodthirstiness and leads to war” (44).

In his article titled “Nature Embraced: An Ecocritical Approach to the Study of Selected Poems by P.B. Shelley”, Ibrahim Ali Murd claims that some poems of Shelley have strong relevance to modern-day ecocriticism. Although Shelley did not have “clear natural and wild backgrounds” as Wordsworth had, the ecocritical perspective of Shelley’s nature-thoughts can’t be overlooked. Murd writes:

> Percy Bysshe Shelley, the radical and revolutionary Romantic poet shares some of the good characteristics of what later came to be called environmental studies and some steps further received the more modern nomenclature of Ecocriticism. Without having clear natural and wild backgrounds such as Wordsworth's Lake District and Hardy's Wessex; Nature and its significance were firmly planted in his innermost and, necessarily, in most of his poems. (Murd 282)

Murd also observes how deeply nature influences Shelley and how Shelley is attracted to it as a result. In one of his poems “Mont Blank: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni”, Shelley writes, "The everlasting universe of things / Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves" (Greenblatt 770). Here, the natural scenery attracts not only the poet’s eyes which may be the case with many

other observers, but it “flows through” his “mind”. Thus, Murd notices the deep connection that Shelley establishes between himself and nature.

Shelley can also be an inspiration for naturalists and meteorologists. Like his contemporary naturalists like John Clare or Gilbert White, Shelly had a very close association with nature. Besides, he had a keen interest in various weather phenomena. Mary Shelley, Shelley’s wife, attests to this fact:

> "His life was spent in the contemplation of nature; he knew every plant by its name and was familiar with the history and habit of every production of the earth. He could interpret, without a fault; each appearance in the sky and the varied phenomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion" (qtd. in Murd 282).

Shelley’s interest in weather phenomena could be the reason he wrote poems like “Ode to the West Wind” and “The Cloud”.

Besides, Murad also draws a difference between Coleridge’s treatment of nature and the same by Shelley's. In “Mont Blanc”, Shelley addresses the river as a sublime one:

> Thus thou, Ravine of Arve-dark, deep Ravine
> Thou many-colored, many-voicéd vale,
> Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
> Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,
> Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
> From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne.

Shelley indulges in the overt fearful strength and power of the river. Besides, he is dealing with something real that is before him- the river. It matches Peter Barry's expression that the river Ravine is "actually present as an entity which affects us, and which we can affect if we mistreat it" (227). On the other hand, the river Alph in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" is not real but a part of the poet's imaginary vision. Besides, Coleridge is content only in describing the thrilling scene of the place and enjoying the appealing images of what he saw in his dream. However, from an ecological perspective, both approaches are significant. Through his depiction of Alph, Coleridge shows how a river like Alph, amidst wilderness, can enhance the beauty of a place. And this dream of Coleridge can only be realised when a river like Ravine is allowed to flow without being affected by human activities.

Finally, Murad also finds Shelly conforming to William Wordsworth's belief regarding the relationship between a poet and nature as Wordsworth writes in the preface to 1802 edition of *Lyrical* Ballads, "The poet considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and the most interesting qualities of nature" (qtd. in Greenblatt: 301). There is an interaction between the poet's mind and nature in "Mont Blanc". The mighty river heavily influences Shelley while his reaction to its existence and awful capacity could be considered as an acknowledgment by the poet of such capabilities. This ultimately results in a desire in the poet to join the natural wilderness and become a part of it. Thus, Murad proves that Shelley joins the other Romantics who embody- in one way or another- the ecocritics' beliefs in the overall ecosystem of which man is not the centre but an equal part like the other components, including nature.

Laurence Buell, in his famous book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (1995) remarked that any piece of literary work that deals with the environment or ecology must have the following characteristic: "the nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history" (7). Shelley's "Mont Blanc" undeniably meets this condition. The following lines may confirm this:

> The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
> Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
> Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain,
> Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
> The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
> Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
> Holds every future leaf and flower; the bound
> With which from that detested trance they leap;
> The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
> And that of him and all that his may be;
> All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
> Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell. (ll. 94-105)

The poem meets Buell's criterion of being an environmental text because nature as presented in the first eight lines does not exist only as a background or in Buell's words, as a "framing device"; but it is deeply connected with different crucial stages of human life. Thus, "Environmentalism"

or “Ecocriticism” in the context of literature, paves the way for a new understanding of Shelley’s poetry.

Finally, Lord Byron, too, made conscious efforts to understand this relationship between man and nature. Generally, research works dealing with major Romantics’ treatment of nature, ignore Lord Byron because Byron’s poetry often does not have nature at the centre. Yet, it occupies a dominant place in many poems of Byron. He saw nature as complementing both human emotions and civilisations. Gordon Todd and Kissel Adam believe, “to Byron, Nature was a powerful complement to human emotion and civilisation. Unlike Wordsworth, who idealised Nature and essentially deified it, Byron saw Nature more as a companion to humanity” (Todd and Kissel). So, Byron’s view of nature was more grounded and realistic which made it more suitable for ecological studies.

Byron was also aware of the apocalyptic consequences of injudicious or destructive activities done against nature. Based on this theme, his poem “Darkness” leaves a lasting impression on the curious mind in the field of Ecocriticism. Jonathan Bate considers the poem powerfully prophetic. In his view, the poem forebodes nuclear war and a world that is “seasonless, herbless and treeless” (98). Bate also writes how he was first introduced to the lines of “Darkness”, “It was in the early 1980s that I first encountered Byron's poem 'Darkness', of which these are the opening lines. I heard it quoted by the then leader of the British Labour Party, Michael Foot” (95). Michael Foot hailed Byron as a prophet who foreboded “that war would ultimately lead to global winter” (95). Foot even quoted the following lines from the close of the poem:

The world was void,

The populous and the powerful was a lump,

Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless—

A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.

The rivers, lakes and ocean all stood still,

And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths; (ll. 69-74)

Jonathan Bate supports Foot's view and adds that "Darkness" is both "contemporary" and "apocalyptic", "how far away the nuclear forebodings of the Cold War seem now, how near the vision of a world seasonless, herbless, treeless, the rivers, lakes and oceans silent". Bate concludes by calling Byron "the prophet of ecocide", "Byron may be reclaimed as a prophet of - to adopt Bruno Latour's word, cited in my previous chapter – ecocide" (Bate 98).

2.5 The Influence of Scientific Developments on Romantics

English Romantics like Coleridge and Keats were well aware of the developments in the fields of natural and biological sciences. James McKusick presents an interesting comparison between Wordsworth and Coleridge and credits the latter for his knowledge in the field of natural science:

> More than Wordsworth, Coleridge was attuned to the scientific controversies of his era, and by reading such works as Erasmus Darwin's didactic poem *The Botanic Garden* (1789-91), and his medical treatise, *Zoonomia*; *or, the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-96), Coleridge became steeped in the contemporary conception of the organism as an autonomous, cyclical, and self-regulating entity. (377)

Coleridge's understanding of these developments could have made him curious about the organic relationship between humans and non-humans. Besides, he was also interested in chemistry as Ian

Wylie confirms in his book, *Young Coleridge and the Philosophers of Nature* (1989): "Coleridge was well-versed in the scientific writings of this period and had fully internalized the broader implications of the new discoveries in chemistry and biology" (380).

Finally, Coleridge could also learn about "the holistic conception of the natural world" as a result of the "growing scientific understanding of the dynamic operation of closed systems, ranging from the individual organism to a more global scale" (McKusick 377). Earlier, in 1628, William Harvey had demonstrated that the heart works in a closed cycle pumping to circulate blood. This led to other inventions in the field of physiology the key to which was the realisation, "all higher organisms, including humans, are permeated by a cyclical process that distributes nutrients throughout all parts of their bodies" (378). From higher organisms, the focus was gradually shifted first to "microscopic organisms" and then to "the entire terrestrial globe" (378). And in almost all these inventions and discoveries, the most common aspect was their cyclical nature.

However, McKusick also observes that there were still a few key issues yet to be discovered. Firstly, eighteenth-century scientists could not possibly realise the extent of deleterious effects that human encroachment could have on nature. The understanding in this regard was, rather, "limited". Besides, there was still a gap between macrocosm and microcosm. Although scientists had already learnt about "the inner dynamics of organisms" and "the large-scale cyclical processes of the terrestrial environment", they did not integrate these theoretical perspectives. As a result, it was not yet explored "how particular plants and animals relate to each other within a regional context" (379). Finally, though there were new species described and catalogued, the ranges and habitats of these species and also their behaviours and life-cycles were not fully explored (379).

The impact of all these scientific developments on Coleridge was immense. Ian Wylie observes that Coleridge's fascination for the cyclical natural processes became the basis for a series of hymns to the elements. Moreover, his awareness of this scientific model led him to apply the same to his "Pantisocracy Scheme" which he planned with Robert Southey. Coleridge's purpose was "to create an 'Economy of Nature' on the banks of the Susquehanna River" and in doing so, Coleridge followed his political doctrine of Pantisocracy, "the equal government of all" while imagining the natural setting of the place, "Coleridge regarded the natural world as tending toward equality of condition in which each individual organism can develop unique potential" (381).

Keats' association with medical science left its marks on Keats' nature thoughts. Charles Ngiewih identifies this unusual aspect in some of Keats' works. He believes that Keats' thoughts about nature can even have therapeutic effects on readers and this is true for both his poetry and letters. Ngiewih examines Keats' poems like 'The Poet,' 'Sleep and Poetry,' 'I Stood Tip-toe Upon a Little Hill,' 'On the Grasshopper and Cricket,' 'Ode on a Nightingale,' 'Bright Star, would I were Steadfast as thou art,' *Endymion*, 'Epistle to Dear Reynolds,' and 'Ode to Autumn,' and finds "his apprehension of natural phenomena as therapeutic to human health" (6). Ngiewih refers to a few lines from Keats' 'I Stood Tip-toe Upon a Little Hill' to show the therapeutic effects of Keats' poems:

> The breezes were etheral, and pure,
> And crept through half closed lattices to cure
> The languid sick; it cool'd their fever'd sleep,
> And soothed them into slumbers full and deep.
> Soon they awoke cleared eyed: nor burnt with thirsting,

Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples bursting.

(ll. 221 – 226)

Next, Ngiewih also links Keats' medical training with these therapeutic effects. Keats had this training under the family's doctor Thomas Hammond, and later at Guy's Hospital. While Romantics like Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley looked at the breeze as imbuing them with creative imagination, Keats, on the other hand, expresses how the breeze influences his bodily health. In the words of Ngiewih:

> It therefore connects with physio- and psycho-pathology, which Keats had studied in his medical training, and points to the therapeutic or pharmaceutical importance of nature to the body and soul. (P?)

This eco-therapeutic perspective of Keats' work adds a new dimension to the ecocritical study of English Romantic literature. In fact, Keats's broodings over nature were, to some extent, shaped by his study of medical sciences. So, nature is important for Keats not only for its aesthetic value but also for its therapeutic function.

Another critic of English Romantics, Jonathan Bate, finds in Keats' works a direct correlation between man's relationship with the environment and man's bond with man which makes up society. In one of Keats' journal letters, written on 21 September 1819, Bate observes, "Keats moves easily from human bonds ('Men who live together have a silent moulding and influencing power over each other - They interassimilate') to the bond between self and environment ('Now the time is beautiful. I take a walk every day for an hour before dinner and this is generally my walk')" (Bate 104). In that same letter, Keats also writes, "I am not sure how I should endure loneliness and bad weather together". Here, Jonathan Bate rightly mentions that to ensure human

survival, there is a need for both social and environmental networks, “Life depends on sociability and warmth: in order to survive, our species needs both social and environmental networks, both human bonds and good weather” (Keats, as qtd. in Bate 105).

Like Charles Ngiewih, Jonathan Bate also recognises the medical benefit that Keats felt nature can give. In “To Autumn”, the wildflower that Keats names is the poppy. Bate believes that the flower is chosen not only for its aesthetic value but “also as a reminder of medical value. ‘The fume of poppies’ makes us think of opiates against pain and care” (Bate 106). A parallel is also drawn between Keats and ecologists:

> Spare the next swath with your reaping-hook, says Keats, and you might just gain medical benefit; spare the remaining rainforests, say ecologists and you might just find a cure for some present or future disease among the billions of still unstudied plant species you would otherwise annihilate. (Bate 106)

2.6 Anticipating Some Modern Branches of Ecology

Jonathan Bate also finds a core element of modern environmental philosophy called “Deep Ecology” in Keats’ thoughts. He observes that in poems like “Ode to a Nightingale” or “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, the human entity is “dissolved” into the ecosystem, “there is no 'I’ listening to a nightingale or looking at an urn: the self is dissolved into the ecosystem” (107). Thus, the poet is inter-assimilated with the environment. This non-anthropocentric view of Keats is found at the heart of “Deep Ecology”. The core principle of “Deep Ecology” is the egalitarian view that, human beings and all the other living beings have the same right to live and flourish. Thus, this branch of

ecological philosophy considers humankind not as the central but an integral part of the environment.

Keats seems to have anticipated another modern branch of Ecology, namely, “Ecofeminism”. Jonathan Bate cites examples from “To Autumn” to prove this point. According to Bate, the function of an ecofeminist is to “reappropriate and celebrate the idea of woman's closeness to the rhythms of mother earth” (107). In the poem, the human figures in the central stanza- winnower, reaper, gleaner and cider-presser- are all females and are mostly passive. They are not “working over” nature; rather, “suspended, immobile” (107) as Bate observes, “the winnower's hair is balanced in the wind, the gleaner balances herself in equilibrium with the eddies of the brook, the reaper is asleep under the influence of the poppy, the cider-presser is winding down in entropic rhythm with the oozings” (107). These images of wise female passivity and responsiveness to nature are prototypically “ecofeminist”.

Kevin Hutchings detects traces of Ecofeminism in Romantic Author Mary Shelley’s work *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1818). The general attitude of eighteenth-century scientists like Sir Francis Bacon or the father of empirical science and the great chemist Sir Humphry Davy was to maintain strong male dominance over the feminised nature. Referring to their rhetoric about gaining absolute control and dominance over nature, Hutching writes, “Mary Shelley best understood the adverse sexual politics informing the use of such rhetoric” (184). In line with Bacon’s or Davy’s masculinist philosophy, Shelly’s male scientist Frankenstein approaches nature “as a scientific conquistador, desiring, in a spirit of Baconian enterprise, to dominate and control nature for his own instrumental ends” and what he ultimately creates is a “monster who murders everyone he loves, leaving him destitute of family and friends (Hutching

184-5). In conclusion, Hutching comments, “Anticipating the early ecofeminist critique of masculinist rationality, Shelley’s novel thus allegorically correlates the scientific domination of nature and the violation of women” (185).

2.7 Romantics’ Big Organism Chauvinism Vindicated

English Romantic canon shaped positive attitudes towards animals by creating sympathy for nature’s creatures as various birds, as well as animals, feature in many Romantic poems. Some examples may be Coleridge’s albatross in “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, a nightingale in Keats’s “Ode to A Nightingale” or a skylark in Shelley’s “To a Skylark” while animals that Romantics sympathise with are the ass in Coleridge’s “To a Young Ass” or a hart in Wordsworth’s “Hart-leap well”. From an ecological perspective, these poems are important because they may resolve the controversy in the modern-day field of environmental ethics. Activists advocating animal rights generally focus their attention upon individual (and mostly domesticated) animals, a tendency which J. Baird Callicott calls “atomistic or distributive” discourse while environmentalists with environmental ethics tend to focus upon (mostly wild) animal species and biotic communities or ecosystems in which they have their being which Callicott calls “holistic or collective” (Callicot 59). According to David Perkins, Romantics mostly emphasised on domestic animals which they perceived as “individuals, each with a unique life history and experience” (Perkins 70). Wilson’s term “big-organism chauvinism” (178) may be applied to Romantics who, according to some critics, are not immune to such chauvinism. Luc Ferry supports this view when he accuses that Romantic naturalism “blithely disregard[s] all that is hateful in nature” retaining “only the harmony, the beauty and the peace” (Ferry 130). However, Kevin Hutchings defends this view by

saying, “the Romantic period was [not] impervious to the condition of wild animals”. Wordsworth, himself, and John Clare demonstrate in poems like “Nutting” and “The Lament of Swordy Well” “a holistic sense of care for the welfare of the ecosystems that support wild species” (Hutchings 188). Some more examples are William Blake- who celebrates the smallest of creatures like earwigs, maggots, fleas, tape-worms, and slugs (*Milton* p. 124, plate 27, lines 11–24) – and Robert Burns – who brings poetic attention to such unlikely creatures as mice and lice (Burns 135–7).

2.8 Returning to the State of Nature in Primitivism and Romanticism

In his seminal work “The Song of the Earth” Jonathan Bate explores how both Rousseau and Romantics chose to go back to nature or how it is assumed to be in Primitivism and Romanticism. Bate believes that there were three different ways which they adopted. The first path was to oust that very “institutionalised despotism” that makes society the opposite of nature. Rousseau, in his *Social Contract,* rests his hope on the storming of the Bastille while Romantics enthusiastically welcomed the French Revolution. This is called “social ecology” where the proponents believe,

> Capitalism and militarism are the sources of environmental degradation. Therefore, it will be impossible to harmonize humankind with nature until we remake society in a more compassionate and less competitive mould. (Bate 38)

Hence, the sustenance of the natural world is possible only if Marxism becomes the mode of ruling system. In the words of Bate, “Social ecology is Marxism with ecology added on” (38).

But the future of this transformation is ominous, as Bate observes in the legacy of Jacobinism and Marxism. What remains in the end is “the will of the tyrant,” and the law of nature reasserts itself:

“The fittest survive, might rules over right; Napoleon and Stalin rise to power from the ashes of the dream” (39).

Bate observes that both Rousseau and the Romantics followed two other paths to return to nature since the first path proved to be a dead end. The first path was to form a small group. In his second *Discourse,* Rousseau writes about having such a community of a manageable size in his birthplace, the independent republic of Geneva. Familiar locality and familiar people ultimately strengthen the bond of love that binds all together in a state of happiness. Romantics, too, formed or dreamed of forming such small communities. For example, William Wordsworth had it in the Lake District while Coleridge and Robert Southey dreamed of having one beside Susquehanna River as Bate writes,

> William Wordsworth thought he had found such a society among the yeomanry of the English Lake District; Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey sought one with their plan to establish a 'pantisocratic' agrarian commune beside the banks of the Susquehanna River. (40)

In such a stage, if the self is somehow excluded from society, the final path to return to nature is to be on one’s self. Bate considers this the “most characteristic, most intense - Romantic route back to nature” (41). In “Reveries of the Solitary Walker”, Rousseau “takes refuge in reverie; through memory, through imagination, through the reorganisation of his mental and emotional world, Rousseau creates his own ‘interior state of nature'. At the same time, when he walks and then dreams in solitude, he allows himself to be absorbed into an unpeopled external nature” (41). Romantics like Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley were often found creating this “interior state of nature” in their reveries amidst nature. This path is different from the second in that at this stage,

pantheism takes the place of philanthropy and the joy of communion with nature dispels the sense of social awareness. This was the reason Romantic poets often became the subjects of criticism for losing sight of social and even environmental issues. However, Bate disagrees with such accusations and expresses the opinion that "the Rousseauistic motions of reverie" (42) might lead one to environmentalism but may not affect "wholesale social transformation",

> we might say that the Rousseauistic motions of trance, of solitude and walking are conducive to what I shall call 'ecopoetic' consciousness but not necessarily to 'ecopolitical' commitment. They are motions that may lead to environmentalism - the desire to conserve green spaces (parks, wilderness areas) in which to walk, dream and find solitude - but their connection with radical ecology's project of wholesale social transformation is more abstruse. (42)

The idea of returning to the state of nature could be the key behind the Romantics' idea of the preservation of nature. Bate's observations pave the way for further research into the influence of Primitivism in Romantics and Romantics' influence in bringing about the second strand of Primitivism.

2.9 Ecological Awareness in the Lesser-Known Writers of the Romantic Period

Although overshadowed by the Romantic canon, the works of lesser-known writers are now being studied especially for their ecocritical importance. Among these, the works of John Clare are the most appreciated and studied. Unlike the major Romantics who often transcended nature in their reveries and indulged in philosophical musings, Clare's nature-thoughts were often confined

within the things surrounding him or to be closer to truth, which were absent from the familiar surroundings. Jonathan Bate writes, “Clare's world-horizon was the horizon of the things - the stones, animals, plants, people - that he knew first and knew best. When he went beyond that horizon, he no longer knew what he knew” (153). Bate also defends Clare from the allegation made by the late twentieth-century radical literary theorists that Clare’s bond with nature was strong because of his “retreat from social commitment, that it is a symptom of middle-class escapism, disillusioned apostasy or false consciousness” (164). Bate refutes this with the following argument:

> For Clare, the most authentically 'working-class' of all major English poets, social relations and environmental relations were not set in opposition to each other in this way. He viewed the 'rights of man' and the 'rights of nature' as coextensive and co-dependent. (164)

Again, from the perspective of literary aestheticism, Clare is not rated very highly by some Romanticists as they do his valuation based on Keats’ Egotistical Sublime and find “Clare merely describes nature” while “Wordsworth reflects self-consciously on the relationship between mind and nature” (164). They consider Wordsworth a “modern” whereas John Clare is a “primitive because he is a kind of Ab-original, because he is, in Schiller's sense, naïve” (164).

The possibility that Clare might have been influenced by the contemporary phenomenon of Primitivism may then be a reality. However, Jonathan Bate has a completely different view regarding Clare’s being just descriptive. He believes that Clare’s poems “might re-enact the world” (167). Reading his poems is “an experiencing of the world, not a description of it” and “Clare is above all a poet of the experience of miniature inhabited environments” (167). It is true that

Clare's technique of personifying the very victimised object of nature and making it narrate its own story gives the reader this feeling of "experiencing" "the world".

Finally, Bate concludes by sharing the opinion that Clare's strong bond with nature is a reflection of the first principle of ecology, "the survival of both individuals and species depends on the survival of ecosystems" (167). Clare broke down when he had to leave his birthplace Helpston for Northborough. He experienced depression as his bond with Helpston was snapped. Referring to James McKusick's belief, "an organism has meaning and value only in its proper home, in symbiotic association with all the creatures that surround and nourish it" (McKusick, as qtd. in Bate 167-8). Bate claims, "Clare foreshadows scientific ecology" (167).

Researcher Jeffrey Scott Dories thoroughly analyses Clare's works and finds how Clare expresses his sense of loss in most of his poems. She also compares Clare and Wordsworth to show how their attitudes towards nature differ. The poems she uses are Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" and Clare's "Helpston" and finds out the most conspicuous difference:

> A major distinction between the two poems is that Wordsworth celebrates the continuation and renewal of nature, while Clare mourns the loss of the landscape as he had known it and presents a method for remembrance. (Dories 3)

In other words, Wordsworth celebrates what is present while Clare mourns what is absent. This results in a change in the ultimate contents of the poems. Clare reminisces about nature that used to be there. His purpose is to record the scene for posterity. On the other hand, the speaker in "Tintern Abbey" cherishes the scene and grows philosophical, ideological and even religious. For example, Wordsworth muses that nature has restorative powers. He also philosophises that nature can bring the goodness out of a man. Clare's sense of loss narrows his focus to what was lost and

also, what caused the loss while Wordsworth's celebration of what has been preserved allows his mind to ponder endless philosophical possibilities.

It is common for Wordsworth to transcend philosophically the immediate location (or the setting) which is often the subject of the poem. Susan J. Wolfson calls it Wordsworth's "lofty contemplation" (Wolfson 114) and William Galperin understands Wordsworth's descriptive scenes in "Tintern Abbey", in part, a creation of the poet's mind- "both what they half create,/ And what perceive;" (ll. 108-9). John Clare, on the other hand, mourns the loss of an entire landscape because he experienced its destruction. As a result, his focus becomes preservation. And the ultimate function of his writing becomes a record of what was lost.

The purpose of this comparison is not to demean Wordsworth's position to either the ecocritics or the environmentalists. Rather, it is to claim that less known Romantics like John Clare who are often considered to be at the margin, actually complement the major Romantics in more recent studies on Romantics' roles in the preservation of nature. In the above comparison, Clare's concern and focus remain on his immediate surroundings while Wordsworth transcends them and indulges in his more philosophical and mystical thoughts.

However, writers like John Clare, James Thomson, Gilbert White, Charlotte Smith and Mary Shelley deserve a special place in this research work because of the overwhelming reception they got from the readers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries amidst a growing concern for the preservation of nature. Statistics show that many of their publications were immensely successful and sold in great numbers. For example, *The Seasons* by James Thomson became the best-selling book next to the *Bible* and *Pilgrim's Progress*. The book left a deep and lasting impression in readers across the cultural spectrum with its natural scenes that were intricately detailed. John

Clare sold thousands of books of poetry at a time when many other poets struggled to sell even a few hundred copies. The idea to present natural history in a poetic format thus became popular in the hand of Clare. Charlotte Smith also sold a large number of books. However, her more important contribution was to change the direction of poetry for the next generation of poets. She revitalised the sonnet in English poetry. There is an intermarriage of science and poetry in her works and she proved that biologically accurate nature poems could be both popular and well-accepted by the readers. Her works were admired even by William Wordsworth:

> Charlotte Smith [was] a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered. She wrote … with true feeling for rural nature, at a time when nature as not much regarded by English poets. (Wordsworth 522)

Gilbert White's works, also, were highly appreciated. He was considered the "father of English Natural History" by Jeffery Boswall. In his book titled *Birds for All Seasons,* Boswall praises White's ability to distinguish between birds through their songs though these birds otherwise look very similar. He also acknowledges that during his time which is after some 250 years of White, this is still the only way to identify certain birds in the tropical forest:

> Gilbert White, the gentle curate of Selborne and the father of English natural history was the first to sort out from one another three very similar-looking birds, by their songs, the willow warbler Phylloscopus trochilus, wood warbler Ph. sibilatrix and chiffchaff Ph. collybita. That was 250 years ago. Today in tropical forests virtually the only way to know which birds are about, is to know their songs and calls. (Boswall 254)

Besides, John Burroughs who himself was a famous natural historian, looked at Gilbert White as his ideological mentor. According to Burroughs, White "remembers only nature… There is never

more than a twinkle of humor in his pages, and never one word of style for its own sake" (Lutts 38). This reflects both the intense focus that Gilbert White had on nature and the accuracy of his description. Lutts also reveals that although Burroughs was highly critical of many naturalists, he "viewed White as the epitome of natural history writers because of the accuracy of his writing" (Lutts 39).

Finally, Gilbert White's works are more in line with the scientists than with the litterateurs also because, unlike many naturalists, White was not against the Linnaeus Classification System. Paul Foster confirms this in his article titled "The Gibraltar Collections". Foster studied the letters exchanged between White and his brother John White and found that John, at one point, asked him for advice regarding writing natural history. In response, Gilbert White sent him the following books: Linnaeus' *Systema Naturea*, Linnaeus *On Insects*, Lee's *On Botany*, Stillingfleet, Cleghorn, and Scopoli, all of which follow Linnaeus' systematic classification (Foster 32). Foster also finds that White knew well about the systemic classification of Linnaeus and used it in his experiments as well. However, he privileged qualitative descriptions and emphasised that qualitative natural history analysis was essential for an understanding of the natural world in its entirety:

> Although he [White] knew that a basic understanding of systematics was necessary, his whole being was primarily focused neither on the cabinet, nor in the laboratory but on what we might call the behavioural sociology of Nature or, to put this feature of his style and appeal in his terms – establishing a conversation with Nature. (Foster 42-3)

This research work also looks at Mary Shelley's famous work *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*. In his seminal book titled The Song of the Earth, Jonathan Bate writes how *Frankenstein* allegorically represents the "Enlightenment quest to master nature" (Bate 49). The

eponymous character is a chemist who makes a human-like creature by arranging body parts from dead bodies and inserting life into them. Although his noble intention was to create a beautiful human being, he ended up creating a monster. The monster is then maltreated for its ugly and fearful look by almost everyone that it meets. Out of its rage, it went on a killing spree and killed several people including Frankenstein's younger brother William, friend Henry Clerval and wife Elizabeth.

Bate's ecocritical study of the novel *Frankenstein* reveals the consequences of all those attempts to dominate nature allegedly by Enlightenment scientists. Bate claims that Mary Shelley read Sir Humphry Davi's *Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry* (1802) before writing this novel. Davy expresses the belief that chemists, in particular, have "almost" a creative power that gives them the authority to "modify and change" the things around them. And man, who is the master of nature should use his "instruments" to interrogate nature:

> An acquaintance with the different relations of the parts of the external world; and more than that, it has bestowed upon him powers which may be almost called creative; which have enabled him to modify and change the beings surrounding him, and by his experiments to interrogate nature with power, not simply as a scholar, passive and seeking only to understand her operations, but rather as a master, active with his own instruments. (Davy, as qtd. in Bate 50)

Mary Shelley shows the devastating result of this attitude towards nature through her novel. Victor Frankenstein violates nature's law by going against the natural process of generation. He tries to create a human being "without submission to the fecundity of a woman's womb" (Bate 51). It is tantamount to killing Mother Nature. Victor's terrible sufferings continue till he loses the most

loved ones in his life and meets his own end. The last words that he uttered before his death were, "to seek happiness in tranquility and avoid ambition" (Bate 53).

Frankenstein words echo what the writers of the English Romantic period, both the major and the marginal ones, emphasised and reemphasised through their writings- human activities for survival should not be such that threaten nature. Any civilisation continues to exist as long as it maintains its peaceful coexistence with the natural world.

2.10 Research Gap

The review of existing literature and scholarly debates surrounding the environmental concerns of the writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries proves that a wealth of literature exists on the interconnectedness between the human and the non-human in the realm of nature. The major Romantics, in particular, had concerns regarding the preservation of their natural surroundings. However, further research is required to glean more insights from their works. Besides, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies on the crucial role Primitivism played in shaping Romantics' perspectives of the natural world and their ideas about preservation. Moreover, most of the research has ignored the invaluable insights and environmental concerns of the lesser-known writers of the Romantic period. Adopting a new-historicist approach, this thesis explores these relatively less-studied areas through in-depth textual and contextual analyses to gain insights to contribute to modern-day environmentalism against the backdrop of the fourth industrial revolution.

CHAPTER 3

Individualism, Preservation and Conservation in Romantic and Primitivist Literature

3.1 The Romantic "Self" and Its Dissolution

One of the most fundamental traits that characterise English Romantics was their individualism or subjectivity. The shift from Neo-classicism to Romanticism was a shift from objectivity to subjectivity. With this, the writers' focus also changed from external facts to internal truths. In their works, they recorded mostly their individual subjective experiences because their individualism affirmed their personal freedom. Romantic writers did not only recognise individualism, they also celebrated it through their literature. They showcased various ways in which they could express their distinctions. However, one of the common aspects of all Romantics was that because of their individualism, the binaries were bridged, and the worlds of subject and object or the "self" and the "other" were mutually constructive processes for them. The major Romantics were able to erase the contradictions between binaries because they elevated the poet's status, considering him as a genius who had the eye to see the connections among apparently discrepant or even opposite phenomena and direct their perceptions about the world toward a comprehensive, unifying vision. As a result, nature, which had so far been seen as the "other" of mankind, became the extension of the "self" for these writers.

This personalised approach towards nature resulted in an exaltation of nature, which is frequently found in the Romantic canon. Nature, for Romantics, became the mirror of the inner self a

reflection of the soul. As a result, there developed a profound sense of interconnectedness and togetherness, and, of course, deep love for the natural world. As Levine writes, “This extremely personalized approach to creativity was usually blended with a deep love of nature” (554). A new understanding of the bond between human beings and nature gradually emerged. John Keats could realise this bond between himself and the environment. In one of his letters that he wrote to Fanny Keats around the time of the composition of “To Autumn”:

> The delightful Weather we have had for two months is the highest gratification I could receive - no chill'd red noses - no shivering - but fair Atmosphere to think in - a clean towel mark'd with the mangle and a basin of clear Water to drench one's face with ten times a day: no need of much exercise - a Mile a day being quite sufficient - My greatest regret is that I have not been well enough to bathe though I have been two Months by the seaside and live now close to delicious bathing - Still I enjoy the Weather I adore fine Weather as the greatest blessing I can have. (qtd. in Bate 104)

Keats believed that human happiness can also depend on the fulfilment of just some basic necessities: “good weather, clean water to wash and bathe in, unpolluted air in which to exercise” (Bate 104). It is nature that can provide all these and can thus be the source of happiness. Keats could easily move from human bonds to the bond between self and environment. In another letter to Geroge, Keats wrote the following in one place, “Men who live together have a silent moulding and influencing power over each other - They interassimilate” (qtd. in Bate 104), indicating the human bonds that Keats was aware of. In another part of the letter, he wrote, “Now the time is beautiful. I take a walk every day for an hour before dinner and this is generally my walk” (qtd. in Bate 104). This is a path from culture to nature. Hence, Keats’ letters emphasises the fact that

human beings need human bonds as well as the bond with nature or in the words or Bate, “life depends on sociability and warmth: in order to survive, our species needs both social and environmental networks, both human bonds and good weather” (105).

Keats’ poem “To Autumn” is about this network. The poem presents a well-regulated ecosystem where every species is believed to have its intrinsic value. The wildflower in the seventeenth line (“the fume of poppies”) may be seen as a waste in the cornfield in the agricultural economy. However, the harvester spared them, “while thy hook/Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:” (ll. 17-18), hinting, probably, at Keats’ realisation of their medicinal value. Besides, the harmful practices done in agribusinesses are avoided. Poppies and gnats survive as the farmers do not apply pesticides. Hedgerows are not considered wasteful, “Hedge-crickets sing;” (l. 31). Moreover, the poem is not confined to only human economy, but something larger than that as the bees in the poem exist to pollinate flowers, “later flowers for the bees,” (l. 9), not to produce honey to satisfy human taste.

Keats’ individuality also breaks through in the poem as it is in many other odes of his. However, one difference can not go unnoticed. In “To Autumn” there is no “I” listening to the nightingale or observing the Grecian urn. The “I” is dissolved into nature. Keats stuck to his ideal of inter-assimilation with the ecosystem, and in the process, justified the term “ecosystem” as opposed to “environment” where man is at the centre while an ecosystem is basically a network of relations.

This dissolution of the self happens in Wordsworth’s “Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey” as well. The following lines may be analysed:

Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,

That on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect

The landscape with the quiet of the sky. (ll. 4-8)

Observing the lines closely, one may detect Wordsworth's grammatical and phenomenological shift from the conventional way of expression. To begin with, the perceiving eye of the persona is the subject ("I behold"). But in the subordinate clause, the cliffs appear to be the subject. Next, the readers may also feel that "Thoughts of more deep seclusion" are in the mind of the persona, which is also logically conclusive. However, Wordsworth intends to present that the thoughts are impressed on the scene. The poet makes Nature capable of feeling. The "I" becomes immaterial or is written out. Or the "I" is dissolved into the scene. For the poet, "deep seclusion" is the absorption of the self into an ecologically connected organism.

3.2 From Individualism to Preservation of Nature

Individualism underlies almost all the views and beliefs of English Romantics. It was the catalyst that made them look at nature and feel about it differently, thus bringing about a radical change in the exploitative and dominating attitude towards nature as shown by their previous generation of writers and scientists. The sublime and sacred nature inspired them with a sense of awe and wonder. It became the ultimate motivation and the source of inspiration behind their canon. At the same time, discoveries and developments in the fields of natural and biological sciences before and during their time made them aware of the fragility of nature and the possible threats looming on it. In particular, they were concerned about the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of England and the social, political and religious evils that these caused. The urge to preserve nature

was a natural outcome of all these concerns. Through their works, they acknowledged nature's agency and assumed the stewardship of their natural surroundings. Many of their poems record this concern and have the idea of preservation as a general theme. As their characteristic individualism breaks in, such poems become crucial in the context of modern-day Environmentalism.

English Romantics wanted to establish an organic connectivity and a harmonious relationship with nature. Wordsworth felt that this connection had been lost because of the rise of materialism in that industrialised urban society. He mourns this separation of human beings from nature in his famous sonnet "The World Is Too Much with Us", "Little we see in Nature that is ours; / we have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!" (ll. 3-4). Materialism, which is a by-product of industrialisation, makes man insensitive to even nature's sublimity, "For this, for everything, we are out of tune;/ It moves us not" (ll. 8-9). The poet's emphatic protest against this shift of priorities in mankind overpowers his association with Christianity as he declares that he will convert into a pagan and embrace the mystic beliefs of worshipping nature:

> Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn. (ll. 9-14)

The poet's individualism keeps him away from materialism. Unlike others, he wants to continue his bond with nature. In "Ode: Intimations of Immortality", Wordsworth celebrates this continuous communion with nature:

> And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
> Forebode not any severing of our loves!
> Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might; (ll. 187-189)

Wordsworth also expects this bond with nature to be stronger over time:

> I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
> Even more than when I tripped lightly as they; (ll. 192-3)

At this point, in the presence of his sister Dorothy, Wordsworth acknowledges nature's agency and offers his stewardship. This will ultimately renew and further strengthen his communion with nature:

> I, so long
> A worshipper of Nature, hither came
> Unwearied in that service: rather say
> With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
> Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
> That after many wanderings, many years
> Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
> And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
> More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake! (ll. 154-162)

Wordsworth also believes that this organic connectivity should be carried through generations so that the bond between man and nature is never severed. So, he urges his sister to relive all those experiences with nature that the poet has himself learnt and relished:

> My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
> The language of my former heart, and read
> My former pleasures in the shooting lights
> Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
> May I behold in thee what I was once,
> My dear, dear Sister! (ll. 119-124)

William Wordsworth wants to preserve man's continuous communion with nature. In his own life, he intended not only to establish but also perpetualise this communion with nature as he took the crucial decision to live in London and shift to Dove Cottage on the edge of Grasmere in the Lake District in the year 1799. The poet had experienced disintegration or fragmentation as the result of his separation from nature which finds expression in some lines of "Tintern Abbey":

> "oh! how oft—
> In darkness and amid the many shapes
> Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
> Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
> Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
> How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
> O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
> How often has my spirit turned to thee!" (ll. 52-57)

It is only through this preservation of the bond, that man's soul is nourished and revived and he can ultimately experience the sublime 'blessed mood':

> Nor less, I trust,
> To them, I may have owed another gift,
> Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood, (ll. 36-38)

This experience is nourishing for the soul which realises, with the "power of harmony" and "deep power of joy", that every object of nature is endowed with a life of its own:

> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things. (ll. 48-50)

At a time, when industrialisation and urbanisation were causing disintegration and fragmentation both at social and individual levels in English societies, Wordsworth's effort to preserve the bond between human beings and nature was timely. This could be a way to preserve social structure as well as the natural world. The poet's exhortations to Dorothy emphasise that he did not only care for the bond between man and nature but also the bond between man and man. For the well-being of nature, it is important to have a good social structure with love, friendship and fellow-feeling among its members. Technology and modernisation often overpower these feelings and cause damage and destruction to the natural world.

Samuel Tailor Coleridge also understood the importance of this bond. Nature was immensely important for this Romantic. He might not have worshipped nature like Wordsworth, but he was well aware of its importance in the great chain of being. An ecocritical reading of "The Rime of

the Ancient Mariner" reveals that the ancient mariner severs this bond by killing the harmless albatross. The consequent sufferings that he and his fellow mariners go through is terrible:

> And every tongue, through utter drought,
> Was withered at the root;
> We could not speak, no more than if
> We had been choked with soot. (ll. 135-138)

The final consequence of this cruel and whimsical act is that all the two hundred sailors die almost simultaneously in the most dramatic way. Only the ancient mariner lives to suffer more physical and mental agonies.

In the end, God takes pity on the ancient mariner only when he feels love for God's creatures or water snakes in that particular instance:

> A spring of love gushed from my heart,
> And I blessed them unaware:
> Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
> And I blessed them unaware. (ll. 284-287)

This is an attempt to re-establish the lost bond with nature. It appears that his attitude towards nature changed from hatred and negligence to love and respect. The creatures who were so far been "slimy things" (ll. 125. 126 & 238) to his eyes are now "water-snakes" that he describes in glowing terms. Coleridge spends three stanzas to declare the beauty of these God's creatures:

> Beyond the shadow of the ship,
> I watched the water-snakes:

They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare: (ll. 272-283)

Those who accuse the major Romantics of "big-organism chauvinism" might take a lesson from the lines above. Romantics did not always go for daffodils or nightingales or tigers. Even water snakes can be so beautiful to the eyes that "no tongue/ Their beauty might declare:" (lines 282-83). One key lesson in the preservation of nature emerges here- we must love the thing we want to preserve. And nature's stewardship requires the heart that loves it.

The ancient mariner is immediately rewarded with God's blessings as well as the release from the punishment awarded to him by his fellow mariners:

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea. (ll. 288-91)

Not only that, the mariner is able to sleep and there is rain after a long drought. Finally, he returns to his homeland with the following realisation:

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all. (ll. 614-617)

This lesson is the key to preserving this bond between man and nature. He has become a man with a noble mission—sharing his story to make others realise the importance of preserving this bond.

> I pass, like night, from land to land;
> I have strange power of speech;
> That moment that his face I see,
> I know the man that must hear me:
> To him my tale I teach. (ll. 586-590)

In the poem, Coleridge adds a new dimension to the idea of preservation. Preserving nature is important from a religious perspective as well. Nature and every being there are creations of God. Hence, nature is often spiritualised and considered sacred by the Romantics. Such an entity must be attended to with care and respect. Many such Romantic poems promote believing in nature's agency and assuming its stewardship, which modern readers should learn.

3.3 The Idea of Preservation in Its Different Manifestations

Romantics' idea of preservation was not limited to preserving the bond between the human and the non-human. Preservation as an idea had always been there in the subconscious region of their mind. Their subjective approach to their works validates the claim that their poetry speaks their mind. In their poetry, it is not uncommon that the idea of preservation (not the preservation of nature) appears and re-appears in different forms. For example, William Blake writes in "Introduction" of "Songs of Innocence":

> Piper sit thee down and write
> In a book that all may read—
> So he vanish'd from my sight. (ll. 13-15)

Here, the child "on a cloud" requests the piper to write his "happy songs" instead of just singing the same. Writing it down "in a book" is basically an attempt to preserve them so that all can read. The piper complies with the request:

> And I pluck'd a hollow reed.
> And I made a rural pen,
> And I stain'd the water clear,
> And I wrote my happy songs
> Every child may joy to hear (ll. 16-20)

The purpose of preservation is to make the songs available to every child. The purpose is well-served as the songs are studied even today. Similarly, Coleridge also realised the importance of

preservation as the ancient mariner, in spite of being the sinner, is kept alive so that he can share his tale with others:

> I pass, like night, from land to land;
> I have strange power of speech;
> That moment that his face I see,
> I know the man that must hear me:
> To him my tale I teach. (ll. 586-90)

This is God's way of preserving the knowledge that the ancient mariner learns at the cost of so much pain and so many lives. God also gives him "strange power of speech" (l. 587) and the power to recognise that every man who "must hear me" (l. 589). Later, another form of preservation happens when the mariner urges the hermit to shrive him, "O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!" (l. 574) Through this atonement, the ancient mariner wants to liberate his soul and preserve the goodness in him. Finally, as the protagonist transmits his story to the wedding guest, the lesson is further preserved for spreading among mankind.

In Shelly's famous "Ode to the West Wind", the west wind acts as the preserver. It preserves the "winged seeds" that will germinate during the spring:

> The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
> Each like a corpse within its grave, until
> Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow (ll. 7-9)

Shelly even calls the west wind a "preserver":

> Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;

Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear! (ll. 13-14)

John Keats, the Romantic belonging to the second generation of poets, considered artifacts like the Grecian urn as a medium of preservation. In his "Ode on a Grecian Urn", he establishes the superiority of permanence over temporality. The urn which has been preserved by "silence and slow time" becomes a symbol of this permanence. The Grecian life in Tempe or Arcadi of ancient times has been preserved through centuries so that it remains unchanged on the body of the urn forever:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair! (ll. 15-20)

Keats believe that the urn, as an object of art, embodies truth and beauty. As a result, the Grecian urn serves dual purposes in terms of preservation. First, it preserves life in ancient Greece. Second, and in a more general way, it preserves the ideals like truth and beauty. Interestingly, even the poem is also a preserver. It records Keats' thoughts and as a vehicle, carries them through generations.

To conclude this discussion, we may return to William Wordsworth again to find how the idea of preservation appears in one of the poet's famous compositions "Tintern Abbey". In the poem, the poet returns to the bank of the Wye River after five years. In the first stanza, he uses the word

“again” several times to express his delight at the unchanged aspects of nature surrounding the river:

> Five years have past; five summers, with the length
> Of five long winters! and again I hear
> These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
> With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
> Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
> That on a wild secluded scene impress
> Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
> The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
> The day is come when I again repose
> Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
> These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
> Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
> Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
> 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
> These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
> Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
> Green to the very door; (ll. 1-17)

The farming has been done in an environmentally friendly mode, preserving the natural aspects of the place over a period of five years.

The idea of preservation finds expression in different ways in English Romantic Literature. It is not that English Romantics thought about preserving only nature which is by now well established. The purpose of the discussion here is that preservation as a phenomenon was there in the collective consciousness of English Romantics. To claim that English Romantics developed ecological awareness and also, environmental concerns, one should believe that the idea of preservation, discussed above, gradually evolved into a concern to preserve nature.

3.4 Mysticism and the Idea of the Other

Individualism was also at the root of Romantics' mysticism. Sometimes because of the corruption of the Church as William Blake repeatedly mentioned in his works and sometimes as the result of their intense observation of nature, they developed their own beliefs regarding God and Christianity ignoring or bypassing the Church or the authority of the priests. Primitivism where paganism or nature-worship was the basis of religious beliefs, also influenced the Romantics. Wordsworth's declaration to become a pagan, "Great God! I'd rather be/ A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;" (ll. 9-10) in "The World is Too Much with Us" is one such instance. Like primitives, Romantics also spiritualised nature looking at and celebrating its sacredness. While for primitive people, nature was with divine power arousing both fear and awe in them, Romantics, too, looked upon nature as sublime and were filled with awe and wonder at its grandeur. However, Romantics were also aware of nature's fragility and the potential threats like industrialisation as their contemporary primitivists were. Hence, there was an urge in them to preserve this divine entity. Preserving nature was not only preserving humanity but also preserving spirituality.

In English Romantics, orthodox Christianity was not always the dominant religious belief. The oppressive rule of the King and his manipulation of the Church sometimes kept them away from the institutional religion. This idea is echoed in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as the wedding guest, after being enlightened about God's love for every creature, ultimately turned from the church where the marriage ceremony was taking place:

> and now the Wedding-Guest
> Turned from the bridegroom's door.
>
> He went like one that hath been stunned,
> And is of sense forlorn:
> A sadder and a wiser man,
> He rose the morrow morn. (ll. 620-625)

Going away from conventional Christianity, English Romantics developed various mystic beliefs and linked their love of nature with these beliefs. They turned to nature not only for their love of it but also for spiritual nourishment. William Wordsworth, the "worshipper of nature", believed that a poet sees the truth in nature. He finds this truth in nature because it is available in nature in its pure subliminal form. A unique aspect of Romantic mysticism is the tendency of the poets to transcend themselves to meet the ultimate "Other" or "God". In "Tintern Abbey", Wordsworth writes about this transcendence of the soul to achieve the "blessed mood":

> Nor less, I trust,
> To them I may have owed another gift,
> Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,

In which the burthen of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world,

Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,—

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame

And even the motion of our human blood

Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body, and become a living soul:

While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,

We see into the life of things. (ll. 36-50)

This transcendence of the self is the essence of Romanticism. The writer pushes the limit of the ego and meets the sublime. There, he encounters truth and beauty which gives him an understanding of reality. In organised institutional Christianity, Bible is believed to be the ultimate source of truth and this was the Neo-classical position. Thus, the way to find the truth was vertical: from the Supreme Being God, comes the Bible. The King, God's representative on Earth, acts upon the Bible and the subjects of the King find truth through both the Bible and the King. On the other hand, English Romantics' way of finding truth was horizontal. As M.H. Abrams argues in his seminal book *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, these writers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries believed that like a lamp, they contain their fuel to

light upon their own. This idea finds expression in Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode". In the poem, the poet's mind is grief-stricken:

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear— (ll. 21-24)

In this state of mind, "To lift a smothering weight off my breast" (line 41), the poet feels the need to send for joy that comes from within:

I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within. (ll. 45-46)

The poet expects this joy to come from the soul and envelope the whole world:

Ah! From the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth—
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element! (ll. 53-58)

Similarly, William Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey" is endowed with the "blessed mood" that "lightens" the "unintelligible world":

Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight

Of all this unintelligible world,

Is lightened: (ll. 38-42)

The poet needs some inner light in the form of joy and a blessed mood to encounter the sadness. This is a paradigm shift from the 18th-century viewpoint of the writers. The belief that truth comes from the subject, shifted the whole focus of literature to subjectivity. The category, purpose and aesthetic of literature were reinvented.

The tendency to transcend to meet the "Other", the core of Romantic mysticism, took different forms in the hands of different writers. In "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the protagonist who is an English traveler, ventures out and reaches the Antarctic to understand the mystery of the world. He got an understanding of the connections between man and nature as well as the creation and the Creator through his leaving off the "self" (his own country) and his meeting the "other" (the hostile environment of the Antarctic, the albatross, the water-snakes, etc.). Possibly, he could not have this understanding sitting in the Scottish "kirk" or the Church. That is why, the Church is never a destination for him:

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,

Merrily did we drop

Below the kirk, below the hill,

Below the lighthouse top. (ll. 21-24)

Even the wedding guest's turning from the marriage ceremony which was, most probably, taking place in a Church, reinforces the idea.

3.5 Embracing the Other

For English Romantics, the 'Other' became an extension of the 'self'. Here also, individualism broke in. It was their subjectivity that made them look upon the "other" from a completely different perspective. They also felt a tendency towards Primitivism which was actually a process of othering by Europeans. Romantic primitivism upheld the idea of the 'noble savage' through its idealisation of non-European or non-western 'uncivilised' men. While the general attitude of the Europeans towards the non-Europeans was mostly hatred, most English Romantic writers, on the other hand, demonstrated a favourable attitude towards the non-Europeans. They sympathised with them and even looked critically at the Western dominance over the East.

Romantics loved the East because of its natural richness and the people who were close to nature. For example, Coleridge glorify the "savage place" (l. 14) in Mongolia where Kubla Khan ordered to build his pleasure dome. Blake imagined the Royal Bengal Tiger's "fearful symmetry" (l.4) roaming in the jungles of East Asia. And Lord Byron himself travelled to the Middle Eastern world and fell in love with the people and the grandeur of the place. Such experiences had an indirect but strong influence on the Romantics' thoughts of preservation. The non-Western life, culture and nature presented them with another form of Primitivism which they had already been acquainted with through Jean Jacques Rousseau. As they were able to overcome the distinction between the self and the other, they had the mind to learn from the strong and close bond which the Orientals had with nature. They were inspired by the pristine nature of those places that had not yet been corrupted by the invasion of industrialisation and urbanisation. The desire to see their own surroundings in that pristine form could have generated the idea of preservation in their mind.

Among all the Major Romantics, Lord Byron brings more Oriental or Middle-Eastern issues in his works than other Romantics. He was also the only one among them who travelled to the Ottoman Empire between 1809 and 1811; in the context of his Grand Tour, he visited today's Albania, Greece and the coast of Asia Minor. Because of his first-hand experience of the Orient, some critics praise the alleged “authenticity” or “objectivity” of his poetry. For example, A. R. Kidwai writes, "Byron's Oriental characters are, on the whole, true to life, subtly used, and reflective of his cross-cultural sympathies" (76). Similarly, Naji B. Oueijan speaks of the "genuine" Oriental elements in Byron's poetry, which, for him, belong to "Byron's Oriental scholarship" (71). For Mohammed Sharafuddin, Byron represents what he calls a "realistic Orientalism" and is interested in finding "the truth of the Orient' (220).

In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron mentions Greece using grandiloquent terms such as ‘ancient’, ‘august’, ‘might’ and ‘grand’:

> Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
> Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul? (ll. 2.10-11)

In another part of the poem, he empathises with the Greeks and attempts to reactivate the “spirit of the freedom” (lines 74.702) of the oppressed against the Ottomans:

> Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not
> Who would be free themselves must strike the blow? (ll. 76.720-21)

Byron also does not distort the truth regarding the position of women under the rule of tyrannical Ali Pasha:

> In marble-pav'd pavilion, where

soft voluptuous couches breath'd repose,

Ali reclin'd, a man of war and woes;

Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,

The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace.

Here woman's voice is never heard;

She yields to one her person and her heart,

Tam'd to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove. (ll. 11.541-48)

In the poem, Byron does not spare the Scottish Lord Elgin (Thomas Bruce), the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire: between 1799 and 1803:

The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?

Blush, Caledonia! Such thy son could be!

England! I joy no child he was of thine:

Thy free born men should spare what once was free;

Yet they could violate each saddening shrine,

And bear these alters over the long-reluctant brine. (ll. 11. 94-99)

Similar criticism of British rapacity and the imperialist project repeatedly resurfaces in Byron's poetry.

In another Oriental poem *The Bride of Abydos*, the richness of the East is reflected in Byron's description of the luxurious palace where Giaffir and Zuleika reside:

[...] round her lamp of fretted gold

Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;

The richest work of Iran's loom,

And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;

All that can eye or sense delight

Are gather'd in that gorgeous room - (ll. 5.78-83)

In *The Corsair*, Lord Byron shows the triumph of Eastern values over Western ones. The European corsair Conrad wishes to overthrow the Ottoman despot and slaveholder Seyd. Conrad and his European pirates storm the palace of Seyd and set fire to it. It is Conrad's generosity that he saves Seyd's concubines in the harem and later falls in love with Gulnare, Seyd's favourite concubine. Gulnare, of course, reciprocates this love and both share their views regarding how Seyd could be killed. Gulnare tells if Conrad wanted, he could kill Seyd in his sleep. In response, Conrad's words are as follows:

[I] came in [...] my bark of war,

To smite the smiter with the scimitar;

Such is my weapon - not the secret knife –

Who spears a woman's seeks not slumber's life. (ll. 8.362-65)

Here, Conrad's view is simply an expression of the Western code of honour which involves both mercy and fair play. Gulnare's response to this is, "That hatred tyrant, [...] he must bleed" (lines 8.319), and "soothes [s] the Pacha in his weaker hour" (ll. 11.14.461). John Alber compares both views and concludes, "With regard to the overthrowing of tyrants, Gulnare's Eastern/Oriental values turn out to be more efficient than Conrad's Western/Hellenistic code of honour" (Alber 119).

Lord Byron's attitude towards the Orient and the Orientals is noteworthy. It is more objective than subjective. And it is because Byron lived a part of his life among them and wrote about the political life of these Orientals from his first-hand experience. This also helped him to write freely about the reality that he himself witnessed without being overcome by any Eurocentric mentality.

However, there might be some counter-arguments regarding Byron's favouring the Orientals. The fact that Byron actually fought for the cause of the Greek against the Ottoman, reveals another side of the truth - he was concerned that the European civilisation was at stake. Besides, critics might even argue that his Oriental writings were merely a response to the sheer popular demand of Oriental settings and Oriental materials in literature during that productive period of his life. Byron once advised Thomas Moore:

> Stick to the East;- the oracle [Madame de Staël] told me it was the only poetical policy. The North, South, and West have all been exhausted …. the public are orientalizing, and pave the path for you. (qtd. in Roe 137)

It could be partially true that Byron, too, was drawn to the Oriental issues because of this popular demand. But the sheer enthusiasm about the Orient that Byron's poetry presents, is itself a proof that he had a genuine interest in their life, culture, politics and religion. Moreover, it was true that Byron was forced to leave England because of failed marriage, scandalous affairs and huge debts. This wretchedness to be away from the motherland could somewhat be compensated by looking favourably at another country, believing its life and people to be his own.

Byron's portrayal of the Orient and his attitude towards it can be compared with those of William Blake. Blake's poetry and visual arts were mainly reactions against his contemporary social, political and religious developments. He raised his voice against racism. He was an abolitionist at

heart and exposed the cruelty inflicted upon the Africans by the Europeans. His famous poem "The Little Black Boy" is an early representative of abolitionist discourse. Aidan Day confirms, 'The Little Black Boy' stresses the equality of souls between black boys and white English boys. The poem is written 'in the spirit of contemporary radical anti-slavery writing' (Day 8):

> My mother bore me in the southern wild,
> And I am black, but O! my soul is white;
> White as an angel is the English child:
> But I am black as if bereav'd of light. (ll. 1-4)

Blake calls for universal love and brotherhood and expresses the optimism that racism will vanish from this world:

> For when our souls have learn'd the heat to bear
> The cloud will vanish we shall hear his voice.
> Saying: come out from the grove my love & care,
> And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice. (ll. 17-20)

He also endows the little black boy with "the spiritual generosity" so that he imagines "helping the soul of the white boy to see the presence of God when both have lost white and black skin colours" (97):

> Thus did my mother say and kissed me,
> And thus I say to little English boy.
> When I from black and he from white cloud free,
> And round the tent of God like lambs we joy:

I’ll shade him from the heat till he can bear,

To lean in joy upon our father's knee.

And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,

And be like him and he will then love me. (ll. 21-28)

For the white English poet, the colour of the skin does not matter; it is the action of the black boy that is really significant. That he wants to help the white English boy, is enough for the poet to glorify him as a human being. In the words of Aidan Day, what really matters is “the assertion of spiritual excellence” (Day 18).

When it comes to visual art, Blake’s approach is more radical as an abolitionist. He produced images showing his strong opposition against slavery and his heart-felt sympathy for the slaves in Suriname. These images exemplify the atrocities and massacres, perpetrated first by the English and later, by the Dutch in this Caribbean coastal region. These gruesome but heart-wrenching images were probably more powerful than the lectures of Coleridge in creating a humane appeal and instilling a sense of moral responsibility in those who were scrupulous. One such painting is that of a young man naked but for a loincloth, still alive with unblinking eyes, hung from a hook that is roped around a bloody exposed rib. A scattering of bones and skulls litters the base of the gallows, as if at Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified:

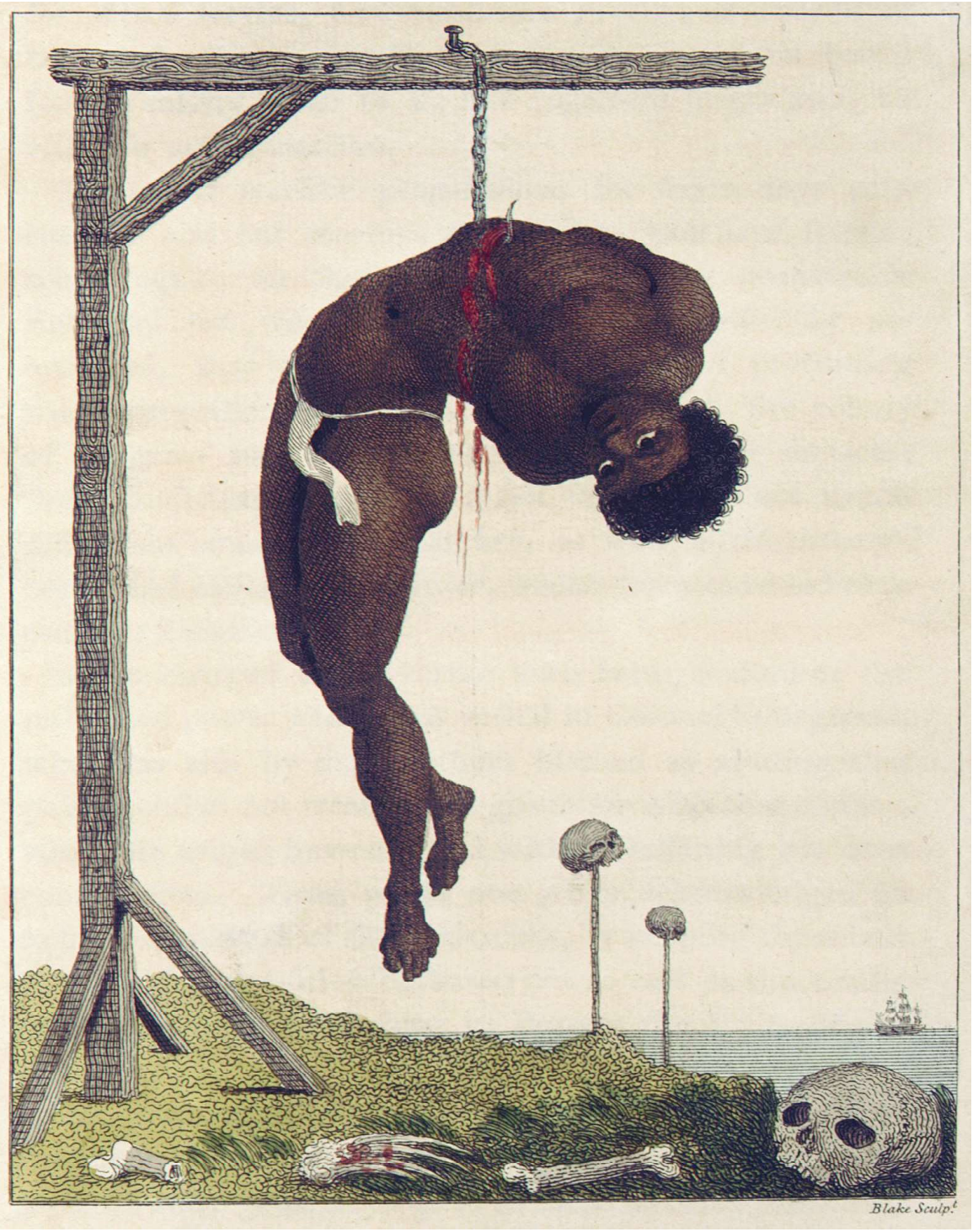

Fig. 1. "A Negro Hung Alive by the Ribs to a Gallows" (William Blake [1796])

Lord Byron and William Blake demonstrate two different ways of dealing with Oriental matters in their works. While Byron's works about the Orient are mostly aesthetic with a bias towards the Occident, Blake questions the moral justification of European dominance over non-Europeans, especially Africans. The works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge seem to combine both the aesthetic and moral considerations regarding the Orient. His poems and lectures where the non-Europeans feature, reflect both the Romantic Orientalism of Byron and the sympathy of Blake towards the Africans.

Coleridge should be studied for his non-Eurocentric attitude towards the East. European colonial enterprise provided the poet with a different sort of impetus that resulted in two of his greatest creations- "Kubla Khan" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". "Kubla Khan" is a great example of Romantic fascination for the exotic. According to Bygrave, "This is the greatest orientalist poem in English Literature" (qtd. in Kaya 100). Bygrave further glorifies the poem with the following words, "In its use of strange-sounding names, irregular stanzas, and lush sound effects, Coleridge is trying to evoke the "otherness" of this world so far away from the everyday existence of his readers--to evoke an otherworld and take his readers emotionally there" (qtd. in Kaya 101). Coleridge learnt about Kubla Khan from his reading of Marco Polo's account of the Mongolian emperor Cublai Can's (Kubla Khan) which was recorded in the travel account named *Purchas his Pilgrimage*. The opening lines of the poem are filled with exotic imagery:

> In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree:
> Where Alph, the sacred river, ran

Through caverns measureless to man

Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground

With walls and towers were girdled round:

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills,

Enfolding sunny spots of greenery. (ll. 1-11)

It appears that Kubla Khan, by ordering to build the pleasure dome amidst nature, seems to control and order his immediate surroundings. However, the second stanza that starts with “But” rather, tells that it is beyond him to control natural forces:

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted

Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!

A savage place! as holy and enchanted

As e’er beneath a waning moon was haunted

By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,

As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,

A mighty fountain momently was forced. (ll. 12-19)

There are different stereotypical images of the East presented in the poem. Kubla Khan’s pleasure dome seems to be an earthly paradise:

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;

And here were forests ancient as the hills,

Enfolding sunny spots of greenery. (ll. 8-11)

The song of the Abyssinian maid reinforces this idea of paradise:

A damsel with a dulcimer

In a vision once I saw:

It was an Abyssinian maid

And on her dulcimer she played,

Singing of Mount Abora. (ll. 37-41)

His genuine appreciation of the song is devoid of any Eurocentrism:

Could I revive within me

Her symphony and song,

To such a deep delight 'twould win me (ll. 42-44)

However, Coleridge is also aware of the exotic, magical and wild aspects of Oriental nature that, in many ways, characterises the Orient:

A savage place! as holy and enchanted

As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted

By woman wailing for her demon-lover!

And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,

As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,

A mighty fountain momently was forced:

Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst

Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,

Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:

And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever

It flung up momently the sacred river. (ll. 14-24)

The description of the fountain, in particular, reflects the vitality and exuberance that can easily be associated with Eastern life and culture.

The poem "Kubla Khan" establishes the fact that Coleridge was fascinated by the exotic otherness of the Orient. It was a place of passion, temptation and, at the same time, Pagan savagery. "Kubla Khan" also justifies, to some extent, why the Occidentals were so much attracted to the Orient, "Western man's curiosity of the other leads him to meet 'the threat'; or vice versa because the threat simultaneously arouses curiosity" (Kaya 101).

Next, there is a shift of setting from "Asian Tartary to African Abyssinia" (Bygrave 231) in the later part of the poem. At this point, Coleridge expresses his vision of the Abyssinian maid's singing of Mount Abora:

It was an Abyssinian maid

And on her dulcimer, she played,

Singing of Mount Abora.

Could I revive within me

Her symphony and song,

To such a deep delight 'twould win me,

That with music loud and long,

I would build that dome in air,

That sunny dome! those caves of ice!

And all who heard should see them there,

And all should cry, Beware! Beware!

His flashing eyes, his floating hair!

Weave a circle round him thrice,

And close your eyes with holy dread

For he on honey-dew hath fed,

And drunk the milk of Paradise. (ll. 39-54)

In spite of this change of settings, the attitude of pure appreciation for the exotic prevails and seems to be the dominant idea throughout both the parts of the poem. Bygrave's observation regarding this preference of setting is, "their interchangeability for the Romantic poet as exotic, oriental locales, rather than their actual geographical location in quite different continents" (Bygrave 231).To sum up, the Orient presented in "Kubla Khan" is a place of magical beauty, power and even danger.

There are other Romantic poems that bring racism and slavery to the fore and expose the inhuman nature of European imperialism. Coleridge's "The Rime of The Ancient Mariner" contains an anti-slavery overtone. His involvement in the social and political issues of his time is well-known as Debbie Lee writes, "when Coleridge composed 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,' he was thoroughly engaged in the social and political issues of the day, from the latest theories of epidemic disease to the debates on abolition and slavery" (676). Coleridge was an active abolitionist in Bristol. His "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is viewed by some critics as a combined result of

Coleridge's familiarity with travel literature and his concern with colonialism and the slave trade. Lee believes:

> J. R. Ebbotson is just one of a number of readers to view the poem as an indictment of British maritime expansion, where "the central act of 'The Ancient Mariner,' the shooting of the albatross, may be a symbolic rehearsal of the crux of colonial expansion, the enslavement of native peoples". Patrick Keane, in a recent book on Coleridge, has traced most of 'The Ancient Mariner's images to their sources in debates on abolition and emancipation. (677)

Empson has a similar view, "the guilt felt by the mariner after shooting the albatross might be a displacement of a more general guilt experienced by the Western maritime nations for their treatment of other cultures" (300). Until the late eighteenth century, most people in England accepted racial hierarchies. They believed that white Europeans are in a superior position to 'people of colour'. These hierarchies made the slave system not only natural but also justified to their eyes. However, in 1780s and 1790s, this notion started to change. The causes behind this change are still not very clear to the scholars as Deirdre Coleman writes:

> Many scholars still puzzle over the way in which eighteenth century Britain moved from being a society comfortable with slavery to one which vehemently spurned it. Where did the new humanitarianism of the 1770s onward come from? What is the crucial explanatory link between capitalism and humanitarianism? (qtd. in Roe 241)

Coleman also finds how people's minds were divided on this issue of slavery:

> For the self-interested, Britain's expanding colonial horizons might mean increased wealth and empowerment, but for the scrupulous and for those with powerful imaginations, the newly extended chains of moral responsibility generated by commerce and colonialism sometimes brought about an intolerable burden of guilt. (qtd. in Roe 241)

English Romantics like Coleridge and Blake with such "powerful imagination" raised their voices and their anti-slavery activities contributed greatly to effecting this change. People in England were gathering new knowledge about the slave trade, "from the storing and shipping of human cargo to the gruesome display of the trade's implements, such as whips, fetters, and iron masks for forced feeding" (qtd. in Roe 241). A reflection of this is found in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

> I looked upon the rotting sea,
> And drew my eyes away;
> I looked upon the rotting deck,
> And there the dead men lay.(ll. 240-243)

To start with, the poem seems to be a ballad about discovery and exploration, "We were the first that ever burst/ Into that silent sea" (ll. 105-106). However, the narrative swiftly moves to the performance of an act of evil, "And I had done a hellish thing,/And it would work 'em woe" (lines 91-92). What follows next is intense physical and mental suffering:

> Alone, alone, all, all alone,
> Alone on a wide wide sea!
> And never a saint took pity on

My soul in agony. (ll. 232-235)

Coleridge's sounds more passionate against slavery in his lecture, delivered in Bristol, three years before his composition of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", urging his audience to undermine the slave trade by boycotting slave-grown sugar and other West Indian products:

> A part of food among most of you, is sweetened with Brother's Blood. Surely, if the inspired Philanthropist of Galilee were to revisit Earth, and be among the Feasters as at Cana, he would not now change water into wine, but convert the produce into the thing producing. Then with our fleshly eye should we behold what even now Imagination ought to paint to us; instead of conserves, tears and blood, and for music, groanings and the loud peals of the lash! (qtd. in Roe 242)

This boycott campaign became highly popular and constituted a crucial intervention in Britain's global trading system. The lurid rhetoric of his lecture ultimately caused a growing awareness of moral and personal responsibility in consumers. There were explicit advantages taken of consumer guilt such as imaging sugar as 'loathsome poison', an (unholy) host 'steeped in the blood of our fellow creatures' (qtd. in Roe 242). Slavery was made even more hateful with minute calculations, "In every pound of sugar used we may be considered as consuming two ounces of human flesh' (qtd. in Roe 242). Interestingly, the idea of consuming human flesh destabilises the binaries of white and black, the 'civilised' and 'primitive' so that, satirically, the European consumer becomes that actual cannibal savage.

Coleridge also criticised his whole English nation in his newspaper *The Watchman* (1796). He characterised his nation as blackened because of the many evil connections with the empire. He believed that this damaged the collective psyche of the English irreparably as this black

complexion could not be disguised by the rhetorical 'cosmetics' employed by parliamentarians 'to conceal the deformities of a commerce, which is blotched all over with one leprosy of evil' (qtd. in Roe 242). The phrase "leprosy of evil" finds expression in the Gothic female figure, the 'Night-mare Life-in-Death' of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

> *Her* lips were red, *her* looks were free,
> Her locks were yellow as gold:
> Her skin was as white as leprosy,
> The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
> Who thicks man's blood with cold. (ll. 190-194)

In his "Lecture on the Slave Trade", Coleridge claims:

> Trade with the East Indies had cost eight million lives, 'in return for which most foul and heart-inslaving Guilt we receive gold, diamonds, silks, muslins and callicoes for fine Ladies and Prostitutes. Tea to make a pernicious Beverage, Porcelain to drink it from, and salt-petre for the making of gunpowder with which we may murder the poor inhabitants who supply all these things. (qtd. in Roe 243)

the works of English Romantics like Byron, Blake and Coleridge had the potential to bring about a massive change in the collective psyche of not only the British, but Europeans in general. Lord Byron impressed the minds of his readers about the oriental life and culture as he himself experienced. It seems, he was not concerned about the moral issues involved in the European dominance over the Orient. However, Byron's literature on the Orient helped to create a very positive impression and further curiosity in people's mind to know the East. William Blake's works, on the other hand, had the power to arouse the conscience of common people. They were

made to feel the cruelty perpetrated upon the African slaves. Coleridge combines and reinforces the views put forward by both Byron and Blake. His lectures exposing the hateful aspects of slave-trade and his poems where similar ideas are implicit in addition to the glorification of the Orient- all contributed greatly to the development of moral responsibility leading the vehement opposition to this malpractice. Coleridge himself was a well-respected vicar of St. Mary's Church. The religious overtone in his works is clearly discernible which might have inflicted people with the sense of guilt:

> An orphan's curse would drag to hell
> A spirit from on high;
> But oh! more horrible than that
> Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
> Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
> And yet I could not die. (ll. 257-262)

Such works add a new dimension to English Romanticism which has, so far been seen, only as an aesthetic movement. This is a sense of responsibility for the "Other" which, in the context of this aesthetic movement, may be termed as "aesthetic responsibility". These Romantic writers as mentioned above called for a change of attitude towards the "Other". They upheld the view that the Other cannot be a negation of the Self. They used their power of imagination to bridge the gap between these binaries- the self and the other. As a result, for them, the Other becomes an extension of the Self in their works.

3.6 Bridging the Binaries

One unique aspect of English Romantics is their tendency to bridge the binaries. They used their extraordinary power of imagination and love for all beings to connect the binaries. Often they ignored the contrast between the self and the other. There were other binaries bridged as well. In 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', the protagonist lives a life which is "life-in-death":

> *Her* lips were red, *her* looks were free,
> Her locks were yellow as gold:
> Her skin was as white as leprosy,
> The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
> Who thicks man's blood with cold.
>
> The naked hulk alongside came,
> And the twain were casting dice;
> 'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
> Quoth she, and whistles thrice. (ll. 190-198)

Thus, he finds himself in a state that is between life and death and he learns about both.

Similarly, some Romantics also combined science with spirituality. Coleridge does this in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. The poem is seen by many as a spiritual journey by a man who ultimately learns that God is pleased the most when man loves and serves His beloved creations:

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,

He made and loveth all. (ll. 614-617)

To illustrate this belief, he presents different occurrences that defy logic and belong to the realm of the supernatural like the arrival of the ship of Death or the rise of the dead. However, amidst all this supernaturalism and spirituality, he cannot ignore science altogether. At times, Coleridge gives scientific explanations of things that happened around the Ancient Mariner. One such instance may be the conversation between the two voices of the fellow daemons of the polar spirit where the high tide and low tide are explained:

Second Voice

Still as a slave before his lord,

The ocean hath no blast;

His great bright eye most silently

Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;

For she guides him smooth or grim.

See, brother, see! how graciously

She looketh down on him. (ll. 414-421)

Or, how the pressure of air or the lack of it makes the ship move so fast:

First Voice

'But why drives on that ship so fast,

Without or wave or wind?'

Second Voice

'The air is cut away before,

And closes from behind. (ll. 422-425)

Likewise, Percey Bysshe Shelley's interest in various weather phenomena is found in his poem "Ode to the West Wind" as well as in "The Cloud". In the former, the spirits of revolution, regeneration, birth, death and rebirth are combined with the west wind's role in carrying the 'winged seeds' to their 'wintry bed':

"O thou,

Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,

Each like a corpse within its grave" (ll. 5-8)

In the latter, he writes how the cloud is formed and how a storm with thunder and lightning occurs.

In John Keats, too, we find a combination of knowledge of medical science and an aspiration of immortality. He was an apprentice under a Doctor and gathered knowledge of medical science. However, in his famous "Ode to a Nightingale", the poet pays tribute to the "immortal Bird":

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down;

The voice I hear this passing night was heard

In ancient days by emperor and clown: (ll. 61-64)

When this beautiful literary expression confronts the reality, Keats compromises. The desire to be immortal changes into a wish for "easeful Death":

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy! (ll. 51-58)

The poet ultimately realises that the power of his imagination can transport him to a different world temporarily though he cannot defy the reality:

Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf. (ll. 73-74)

Finally, the most obvious binaries that Romantics bridge are human beings and nature or according to modern terminology, the human and the non-human. In fact, English Romantic writers often addressed this bond between human beings and nature. While for most Europeans, nature was the other of man, Romantic writers saw nature as parts of their own beings. Or, more accurately, it was the other way round, as they were the parts of nature. As a result, their love for nature was exemplary and their concern for its preservation was real. Kevin Hutchings realises the importance of the natural world for the Romantics, "Romantic literature often appears to value the non-human world most highly" (172). The way major Romantics articulated the relationship between humankind and nature, was exceptional or in many ways different from how a biologist, a geographer or even a green-activist does. For the poets, this relationship was rather, experiential;

not descriptive. Jonathan Bate also realised how much Romantics valued their bonds with nature. In his seminal book titled *The Song of the Earth*, he writes that poets "are often exceptionally lucid or provocative in their articulation of the relationship between internal and external worlds, between being and dwelling. Romanticism and its afterlife, I have been arguing throughout this book, may be thought of as the exploration of the relationship between the external environment and ecology of mind" (Bate 251-52).

3.7 Nature as Man's Other and the English Romantics

English Romantics' favourable treatment of the other and their tendency to bridge the binaries influenced the way they observed nature. A comparison between Romantics' attitude towards nature and how the Enlightenment scientists and litterateurs felt about nature may prove how a radical change in attitude took place in the hands of Romantics. To Enlightenment scientists, nature was, truly, the other. It was important for its instrumental value. That is, non-human objects and organisms of nature were important primarily for the useful roles they play. Besides, technological innovations made it possible to have human mastery over nature. Consequently, nature became a mere commodity devoid of any intrinsic value.

Enlightenment science demarcated the human subjective world from the external realm of objects. Not only that, it also placed human subjectivity in privileged opposition to the observable universe. This observable universe and its governing laws could be understood through observation and experimentation. This tradition was initiated by Francis Bacon's empiricism, Isaac Newton's physics, and René Descarte's philosophical concept of a mechanistic, clock-work universe. Their works promoted the belief that human beings are radically separate from nature and their proper

role is to dominate nature as its master. Joseph Glanville, the Baconian natural philosopher, put forward the view that scientific enquiry was done mainly to consolidate and extend "the Empire of Man over inferior Creatures" (188). Next, Enlightenment science will teach man how to use these objects of nature. Mark Lussier bolstered this view by claiming that Enlightenment science reduced "nature to inanimate matter, allowing it to function simply as grist for the mill of the industrial revolution" (49). This apartness from nature is what allows man to engage in harmful activities against nature in the name of development as Jonathan Bate writes in his seminal book *Songs of the Earth*, "man's presumption of his own apartness from nature is the prime cause of the environmental degradation of the earth" (Bate 36). So, the subject/object dualism that dominated the relationship between human beings and nature proved dangerous to nature.

English Romantics, in general, demonstrated a completely different attitude towards nature. Their tendency to see the other as the extension of the self and also, to bridge the binaries, radically changed the way nature had been treated by Enlightenment scientists. For example, William Blake recognised the intrinsic value of every creature and expressed the following idea as the central lesson to *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that "everything that lives is Holy" (qtd. in Hutching 181). William Wordsworth declares himself as the "worshipper of Nature" (l. 155) in "Tintern Abbey" and returns to its "service" (l. 156) believing that nature is endowed with "a motion and a spirit" (l. 102):

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:

A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,

And rolls through all things. (ll. 95-104)

This mystic belief makes the poet perceive the roles that nature plays in the life of a man who loves it:

well pleased to recognise

In nature and the language of the sense

The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,

The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul

Of all my moral being. (ll. 109-13)

The idea of this anthropocentric instrumentalisation of nature went through a further transformation with the advent of Ecofeminism. Ecofeminists are highly critical of instrumental rationality and its consequent dominion over nature. However, according to them, holding anthropocentrism responsible for the Earth's ecological despoliation is, rather, imprecise. After making a closer analysis, they suggest that the reason is actually androcentric or masculinist instead of anthropocentric, "such despoliation in fact has a crucial androcentric or masculinist philosophical and practical underpinning" (Hutching 183). They derive insights from traditional feminism, ecological science and environmental ethics to identify the similarities between the domination of nature and the oppression of women in patriarchal societies. They even believe that

the later influences the former as Kevin Hutchings writes, “the two processes as complexly linked and mutually enabling” (183).

During the early 18th century, scientific enquiry itself promoted and maintained the parallel subjugation of women and nature. A study of Carolyn Merchant shows that Bacon who was the father of empirical science, visualised nature “not only as feminine but as demonic, a secretive entity who could be compelled to reveal her knowledge to the masculine scientific inquisitor in a process of interrogation resembling the contemporary torture of witches” (Merchant 28). So, scientific enquiries done about nature was like dominating and forcing “her” to reveal her knowledge. This is why Bacon also used the phrase “*natura torturata*” (Rigby 19) occasionally in his writings. This process of interrogation is sometimes even explicitly sexualised as, for instance, when Bacon calls such practice a “penetration” of nature’s “womb” (Rigby 50, 100, 114).

Noted American feminist, Anne K. Mellor finds a similar tendency in Humphry Davy. The famous chemist looked upon nature as feminine and advised his fellow natural philosophers to adopt the approach of violator and not a researcher to gather knowledge about it. The inquisitive researcher will “interrogate” the feminised nature “with power, not simply as a scholar, passive and seeking only to understand her operations, but rather as a master, active with his own instruments” (qtd. in Mellor 93).

English Romantics changed this whole dynamic between man and nature. William Wordsworth, in his poem “Nutting”, expresses the remorse that his heart felt for violating nature. In this poem, the speaker retrospectively recounts his childhood experience of violating nature:

> The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
> Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,

And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,

And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash

And merciless ravage: and the shady nook

Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,

Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up

Their quiet being: and, unless I now

Confound my present feelings with the past;

Ere from the mutilated bower I turned

Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings, (ll. 41-51)

The boy thus destroys a "virgin scene" (l. 21) unaccountably. However, at a later stage, he realises the cruelty and torture he inflicted upon nature and is filled with a sense of guilt and remorse as a result of his environmentally destructive behaviour. His ultimate realisation is also the moral of the poem:

I felt a sense of pain when I beheld

The silent trees, and saw the intruding sky.—

Then, dearest Maiden, move along these shades

In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand

Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods. (ll. 52-56)

The poet, thus, imbues nature with a spirit and reverses the notion that had been established by Enlightenment scientists about the universe. For early 18th-century scientists like Descartes, the whole universe was a clockwork while for Wordsworth, it was endowed with a spirit giving it its inherent value.

There are other instances where William Wordsworth looked upon nature as a mother or a nurse. In "Book 2" of *The Prelude*, the poet expresses the belief that a baby feels secure in its mother's breast and "gather[s] passion from his mother's eyes" (l. 245). Then, gradually,

> Along his infant veins are interfus'd
> The gravitation and the filial bond
> Of nature, that connect him with the world. (ll. 264-266)

The poet feels a filial bond with nature. Nature is like his second mother now. A few lines later, he writes, "I held mute dialogues with my mother's heart" (ll. 268). Here, for the poet, both nature and the woman who gave birth to the poet, are his mothers.

Finally, in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality", Wordsworth again declares nature's role as a mother:

> Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
> Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
> And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
> And no unworthy aim,
> The homely Nurse doth all she can
> To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
> Forget the glories he hath known,
> And that imperial palace whence he came. (ll. 77-84)

Here, nature's role is that of a foster-mother who brings up her child "her Inmate Man" and prepares him for life in this world at a stage of life when a man is no longer in that blessed state when he could see the "celestial light" (l. 3) or he did not have the "freshness of a dream" (l. 4).

3.8 Global Apocalypse in English Romantic Poems

Global apocalypse has appeared as a theme in Western literature for a long time. It probably had begun with the catastrophic flood depicted in Genesis and the fiery doom foretold in the Book of Revelation. Every time, these apocalyptic events had been shown as inscrutable acts of God. Only during the Romantic period which was also the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, such catastrophic events were imagined as the result of indiscriminate onslaught on nature. In the early part of the nineteenth century, the manufacturing cities in England were disappearing into a thick haze of photochemical smog. Writers with strong imaginative faculties were able to imagine how new technologies of mass production could deteriorate the climate and go so far as to destroy the Earth's ability to sustain life.

Among the Romantics, William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron wrote narrative poems where the common theme was apocalyptic destruction. William Blake wrote "London" which is a critique of industrial capitalism. The poem presents London as a wasteland where even the Church is "blackening" (l. 10). It hints at the total collapse of a city including its environment. But these ideas are fully and coherently expressed in his two major prophetic books, *Milton* (composed c.1800-4) and *Jerusalem*. Although both are narrative poems and written in past tense, they actually describe the grim industrial landscape of Lambeth, on the South Bank of the Thames, during Blake's time. These poems depict two unavoidable consequences of the deployment of heavy industry in urban areas. The first is the abasement of the human spirit and the second is, of course, environmental damage.

Especially in plates 18-19 of *Jerusalem*, Blake presents an ominous picture of environmental damage. James McKusick narrates, "the skies over England are darkened with smoke, birds have

fallen silent, flocks have died, harvests have failed, apples are poisoned, and the Earth's climate is marked by scorching heat and devastating storms" (qtd. in Roe 208). *Jerusalem* is also seen as an allegorical representation of the destruction that industrial activities may wreak. Albion is the giant personification of England and Albion is self-exiled because of the devastation of his motherland. The children of Albion cry helplessly. In the poem, Eon is Albion's female companion. She weeps because she beholds such terrible destruction. Blake's habitual mention of stars as the agent of night and consequently oppression is in function here as well since the "Starry Wheels" of complex machines, and infernal iron-forges and coal-mines- all "belch forth storms and fire" (qtd. in Roe 208) In the end, Albion realises that his relentless drive to industrialise and his nonstop battles for imperial conquest, have not done any good to the Earth; rather, it is turning it into a wasteland.

The desolation caused by unsustainable environmental practices is a theme found in Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ozymandias" as well. On the surface, the poem appears to be presenting ironically the "vanity of political ambition" and "inevitable downfall of tyranny". But Shelley was probably well-versed in history (208) and knew that the ancient Mediterranean was once a place of fertility and abundance. Homer also wrote about the dense forest dominating the landscape. However, over many centuries, the forests were felled; and the cedars of Lebanon were destroyed. Vast arid areas were irrigated which caused toxic accumulation of salt in the soil. All these human activities converted these paradisal landscapes into barren deserts. In the poem "Ozymandias", the statue of Ozymandias lies shattered in the vast desert. The desert itself is proof that civilisations that try to dominate the natural world and indulge in unsustainable environmental practices, ultimately perish:

Round the decay

Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away." (ll. 12-14)

The poem presents a classic example of what has happened to many such civilisations in the world: "Nature will win in the end". (Roe 208)

Finally, Byron's poem "Darkness" (1816) also contains the theme of apocalypse in the form of an apocalyptic vision. The speaker has the vision of a world that is utterly destroyed, "The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars/ Did wander darkling in the eternal space," (ll. 2-3). With the fading of the last light; the starving people fight over the earth's few remaining resources. This brings out the worst aspects of human nature. Finally, in this dismal scenario, the whole earth freezes into a solid mass where all life is extinguished. Apart from showing the environmental consequences of indiscriminate onslaught on nature, the poem connects nature with human nature, too. With the destruction of nature, human-nature also plunges to its nadir. As darkness falls, desperate humans burn everything:

Forests were set on fire—but hour by hour

They fell and faded—and the crackling trunks

Extinguish'd with a crash—and all was black. (ll. 19-21)

At the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, Byron's contemporaries would have taken this poem as an admonition. And for modern readers who are well aware of issues such as climate change, the poem may offer a prophetic warning.

English Romantic literature of the late 18th and early 19th centuries is unique in that it promotes a holistic approach towards saving the environment. The importance of this approach in the modern-day environmental movement cannot be overemphasised. The key to this approach is to stop seeing nature as the other and merge one's self with the other. By bridging the binaries between the self and the other, most English Romantics erased this very "otherness" of nature. As a result, nature became a part of the self, the preservation of which is more a natural urge than anything else, especially for these Romantics. Besides, their mysticism which is a form of deistic nature worship elevates their love for nature to an extraordinary level. It is this elevated form of love that sets the Romantics apart among generations of writers that came before or after them. They could be considered defenders of nature for its value to humanity. William Wordsworth may be quoted in this regard:

> well pleased to recognise
> In nature and the language of the sense
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being. (ll. 109-113)

By establishing and re-establishing the bond with nature, human beings may find themselves physically, mentally and spiritually restored, as illustrated by both "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Tintern Abbey". The protagonists in both poems experience mental agony as well as spiritual crises, which they ultimately overcome by re-establishing their bonds with nature. In this modern world, a lot of efforts are being made to save the environment. However, what these efforts lack may be recompensated by the invaluable lesson English Romantics teach the world.

They teach mankind how to love nature. This love should not be only for the beauty that nature portrays or for its instrumental value. The mariners in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” loved the albatross because it “made the breeze to blow!” and suffered as a consequence. Again, he was blessed when the ancient mariner showed his unconditional love for the water-snakes. Since man is the one who brings despoliation to nature, a change of heart that believes in unconditional love for nature will stop that from happening. This will only strengthen the bond between mankind and nature, which will go a long way in preventing the degradation of the environment.

CHAPTER 4

Othering and Preservation in the Lesser-Known Romantics

4.1 Introduction

The non-canonical or lesser-known writers of the English Romantic period added new dimensions to the relationship between the human and the non-human. They also shared their concerns for the preservation of their natural surroundings. This chapter focuses on minor or lesser-studied writers of the Romantic period, such as John Clare, Gilbert White, Charlotte Turner Smith and Mary Shelley. They were concerned with primitivism or othering and its implications for preservation efforts in human-nature relationships. Although their works were overlooked by the canon, these might contain valuable ecological insights. The chapter will also compare these writers with major Romantics to identify unique perspectives and insights. These non-canonical writers of the Romantic period mainly focused on qualitative local descriptions of their environment. They were often physically close to their surroundings and sometimes even psychologically affected by the drastic changes in their familiar landscapes. Compared to major Romantics, they had a much narrower focus regarding the environment, enabling them to observe and illustrate many systems that existed in their respective localities. They applied the technique of anthropomorphising different elements of nature, from rivers to insects. Thus, by blurring the boundary between mankind and the natural world and having a narrower agenda to deal with, these authors successfully introduced strong empathy for the natural world in their readers' minds. This chapter analyses the texts of these lesser-known authors of the English Romantic period to prove that they

had a prescient grasp of basic ecology and also to draw ecocritical insights from their literature, which may prove crucial to the preservation of nature.

4.2 Influence of Primitivism on the Lesser-Known Romantics

Like the major Romantics, these marginal writers, too, could have been deeply influenced by Primitivism. Most of them had rural backgrounds, and many of their works reflected an urge to preserve their natural surroundings. They rejected modernity and development in favour of life amidst nature. For example, John Clare embodied the traits of primitivism in many ways. He was a farmer and lived mostly in his native village, Helpston. He expressed his vehement opposition against the Enclosure Acts, which aimed to convert swamps, marshes, forests, and scrublands into farmlands. Although it would benefit the community of farmers financially, John Clare was worried and broken when he observed that the natural landscape of Helpston was losing its purity. There are traces of Primitivism in his feelings for nature as Primitivism also rejects civilisation and modernity and advocates for pristine nature. McKusick also notices the influence of Primitivism in Clare. He compares John Clare's image with that of a "Noble Savage" (27) because Clare actually belonged to the lower social class, he had limited education and he worked in the natural world as an agricultural labourer.

Mary Shelley, too, shared thoughts prevalent in Primitivism. In her famous novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, there is one instance when the Creature requests Frankenstein for a mate with whom he will return to the state of nature:

> If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again: I will go to the vast wilds of South America. My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion will be of the same nature as myself and will be content with the same fare. We shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man and will ripen our food. The picture I present to you is peaceful and human, and you must feel that you could deny it only in the wantonness of power and cruelty. (qtd. in Bate 53)

Returning to nature and living a blessed life there is central to Primitivism. The Creature's desire to be one with the vast wilds of South America convinces Jonathan Bate about Mary Shelley's favouring Primitivism, "the Creature is thus identified with Primitivism, with the state of nature, Frankenstein with cultivation, the state of Enlightenment" (Bate 50). The way the Creature wrought havoc in the life of Frankenstein by refusing this wish of having a mate might allegorically be seen as the consequence of denying the state of nature in favour of technological modernity.

In a more general way, other non-canonical writers, too, exhibit characteristics that match with various traits related to Primitivism. In fact, these writers were closer to nature than their more well-known counterparts. Both in their lives and in their works, the conflict between Primitivism and Enlightenment is more obvious than it is in the case of Major Romantics. Most of them were from rural backgrounds and lived their whole lives in close association with nature. Nature was no longer the "Other" for them but an essential part of their beings. They lived the unsophisticated or simple lives that Primitivism promotes. Through the analysis of the works of these non-canonical writers of the Romantic period, this chapter will demonstrate how the philosophical views that

Primitivism promotes became the guiding principles in their treatment of nature and created the urge to preserve that very nature where they lived.

4.3 John Clare's Activism for the Preservation of Nature

Among these writers, John Clare's name should come first simply because of his intense emotion and sheer devotion to nature. In his first collection of poems, he introduced himself as "Northamptonshire Peasant", which is a bold assertion of his regional identity. Having only a limited education, he lived in poverty all his life and worked in the natural world as an agricultural labourer. Northamptonshire became a zone of ecological conflict because of the unequal struggle between the advocates of parliamentary enclosure and those helpless farmers who adhered to "the older, sustainable methods of open-field agriculture" (McKusick 77). In 1773, the Parliament of Great Britain under George III passed the Enclosure Acts, a law that enabled the enclosure of land while removing the right of commoners' access. McKusick presents the arguments advanced in favour of this act in *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*:

> The arguments advanced in favour of parliamentary enclosure during the early nineteenth century will sound familiar to contemporary readers still subjected to the insidious rhetoric of "progress": it was claimed that the enclosure of common fields and "waste" land would rationalise the existing patchwork of land ownership and enhance the productivity of agriculture by providing an incentive for individual farmers to exploit their newly consolidated plots with maximum efficiency. Swamps and marshes would be drained, streams would be rechanneled, forests and scrublands would be cleared, and subsistence farming, in general, would give way to capital-intensive agriculture. Overlooked in the

> arcane legal and political process of enclosure were the traditional grazing and gleaning rights of the poor and the environmental impact of this radical change in agricultural methods. Parliamentary enclosure proceeded by legal consensus among various classes of landholders. (McKusick 78)

These changes in the name of progress would affect the biodiversity and disturb the ecological balance of the place. Only a few voices were raised against this act. One such voice was that of John Clare, who published his first collection, *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (1820). Through the poems of this book, Clare denounced the changes in his local environment and evoked "with elegiac melancholy" how the common "fields, marshes, and "waste" lands" were disappearing and also lamented "the extinction of an entire way of life in harmony with the natural cycles of the day, season, and year" (McKusick 78). For Clare, this was just the beginning of his environmental advocacy, which more fully developed in his later collections of poetry, *The Village Minstrel* (1821), *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1827), and *The Rural Muse* (1835), and his numerous manuscript poems, letters, and journals. Clare wrote a big number of poems from the point of view of a local resident, often a peasant, shepherd, or woodman. And the rest of his poems are through the imagined consciousness of a plant, waterbody or native animal.

For several reasons, any textual analysis of Clare's poetry must posit "Helpstone" ahead of any other poem. Firstly, it is the first entry in Clare's initial volume *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (1820). And secondly, the poem demonstrates all the gifts of ecological vision generally expected from Clare. The poem was titled after the name of his native village "Helpston". The change from "ston" to "stone" was probably a punning reference to its solidity as a point of geographic and psychological reference. Appearing at the beginning of *Poems Descriptive of Rural*

Life and Scenery, the poem sets the tone for the subsequent poems in the collection. The general theme of this poem and many other poems in the collection is the sense of rootedness. In this poem, Clare uses personification to the best effect. First, he personifies the town "Helpstone", referring to it as "humble," "unknown to grandeur, and unknown to fame," and lifting "its lowly head" (ll. 1-3). The place needs an advocate because, at present, it is just an "Unletter'd spot," "unheard in poets' song," with "no minstrel boasting to advance thy name" (ll. 4-5). The poet seems to take up that role.

In the next stanza, Clare personifies the birds as he compares himself and the poorer classes of people with the plight and fragility of birds that are struggling to survive in the winter. Clare is not afraid to identify himself as a victim of the inhumanity that persists in the world:

> So little birds, in winter's frost and snow,
> Doom'd, like to me, want's keener frost to know;
> Searching for food and 'better life,' in vain; (Each hopeful track the yielding snows retain;)…
> First on the ground each fairy dream pursue,
> Though sought in vain; yet bent on higher view,
> Still chirp, and hope, and wipe each glossy bill;
> And undiscourag'd, undishearten'd still,
> Hop on the snow-cloth'd bough, and chirp again,
> Heedless of naked shade and frozen plain:
> Till, like to me, these victims of the blast,
> Each foolish, fruitless wish resign'd at last,

Are glad to seek the place from whence they went

And put up with distress, and be content. (ll. 17-31)

Both Clare and Birds face the same plight. Both are “Doom’d” and find “food” and “better life in vain”. Both birds and poor people like Clare fight forces that they cannot control. The result is that they keep pursuing life’s dreams in vain. But no matter how hard life is, Clare encourages the bird to continue to “chirp, and hope, and wipe each glossy bill” and finally to find contentment despite these hardships.

Here, Clare’s depiction of the bird differs greatly from the depictions of birds by major Romantics in their poetry. Bird-poems by major Romantics serve greater aesthetic purposes. For example, Percy Bysshe Shelley celebrates the song of the skylark in “To a Skylark”. The bird is the embodiment of happiness. The poet wants to learn from the bird its pure and delightful thoughts, “Teach us, Sprite or Bird,/ What sweet thoughts are thine:” (ll. 61-2). The bird is a blessed spirit that dismisses earthly matters and the poet believes that it possesses a skill which is greater than the “treasures” found in the “books”:

Better than all measures

Of delightful sound,

Better than all treasures

That in books are found,

Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground! (ll. 96-100)

In “Ode to a Nightingale”, the nightingale is also a bird that is characterised by its happiness. It is unknown to the afflictions of life, the pain and sufferings of different stages of life as John Keats wrote:

What thou among the leaves hast never known,

The weariness, the fever, and the fret

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs,

Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. (ll. 22-30)

The poet also wants to forget all these earthly troubles and sufferings. And he wants to live in this world with the nightingale. The darkness and the desire to die ultimately make him lose his self and be one with the grand and beautiful nature.

Finally, in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the albatross comes to the lonely and stranded mariners in the form of God's messenger. They experience a good time for being kind to the bird. However, the whimsical act of killing the bird causes terrible sufferings and deaths of two hundred sailors.

In all these three poems, the imagination and individualism of major Romantics make the birds serve larger aesthetic purposes. They are presented not only as superior beings to mankind but are also the vehicles to construct the Romantic Self. From a modern environmental perspective, such an approach is important. To save the environment, one must realise that one is nothing but a part of one's natural surroundings. If the Romantic canon teaches us this interconnectedness of the

organic connectivity between the human and the non-human, writers like Clare inspire the activism to save nature by loving nature's creatures and empathising with their conditions.

Next, Clare tries to find spaces that could refresh and vitalise his mental and physical faculties:

> Hail, scenes obscure ! so near and dear to me,
> The church, the brook, the cottage, and the tree :
> Still shall obscurity rehearse the song,
> And hum your beauties as I stroll along.
> Dear, native spot ! which length of time endears ;
> The sweet retreat of twenty lingering years,
> And, oh ! those years of infancy the scene ;
> Those dear delights, where once they all have been; (ll. 1-8)

However, the poem's tone suddenly changes and Clare's voice is heavy with a sense of loss. He declares that these spots on the "green" have "vanish'd" and that where once there was a brook, "now the brook is gone" (ll. 58, 60). It is a reference to the Enclosure Acts. Clare's advocacy of nature becomes more aggressive at this point and he vents his frustration through the following lines:

> To see the woodman's cruel axe employ'd,
> A tree beheaded, or a bush destroy'd:
> Nay e'en a post, old standard, or a stone
> Moss'd o'er by Age, and branded as her own,
> Would in my mind a strong attachment gain,
> A fond desire that there they might remain;

And all old favourites, fond Taste approves,

Griev'd me at heart to witness their removes. (ll. 72- 78)

The process of humanising trees and dehumanising people may draw the readers' attention. The tree is "beheaded" while "the woodman's cruel axe" wreaks havoc on the scene. Clare brought both the human and the non-human on the same footing- an act that anticipates modern-day "Deep Ecology". The final line probably expresses the poet's goal: to be a "witness" to this terrible destruction and pen it down so that the memory of the untouched places of his youth does not get lost completely and, in this way, future destruction may be prevented.

The next stanza portrays a lost scene of the poet's youth, which is imbued with life. The unique aspect of the stanza is Clare's personification which evokes more empathy in the readers' minds about the lost scene:

Thou far fled pasture, long vanish'd scene

Where nature's freedom spread the flow'ry green

Where golden kingcups open'd into view

Where silver daisies in profusion grew

And, tottering, hid amidst those brighter gems,

Where silken grasses bent their tiny stems

Where the pale lilac, mean and lowly, grew.

Courting in vain each gazer's heedless view

While cowslips, sweetest flowers upon the plain.

Seemingly bow'd to shun the hand, in vain : (ll. 89-98)

Clare personifies them in a manner that the flowers seem to be active. For instance, the green enjoys “freedom”, the kingcups “open,” the daisies “grow” and “totter” like children attempting to walk, and the grass “bends” as if, on its own, the lilac is “mean and lowly,” and the cowslips, “bow’d to shun the hand”. It seems that the flowers have agency. The readers might feel that the flowers are their fellow beings because of the poet’s anthropomorphism. While he personifies, he also makes the movement of the flowers look realistic. If the poet’s purpose is to draw readers’ empathy, this kind of personification can serve that purpose better. Besides, he seems to give importance to flowers, which are not generally featured in poetry. It is contrary to the poetic tradition, as writers have often focused on the part of nature that has been considered the most beautiful. Finally, the personification of the cowslips is, in particular, interesting because the flower seems to actively resist being picked, “While cowslips, sweetest flowers upon the plain./ Seemingly bow'd to shun the hand, in vain” (ll. 97-98). However, the effort seems to be a vain one in the end.

This pleasant phase does not last long. The poet returns to reality, to his present moment, with a start:

> But now, alas! Those scenes exist no more;
> The pride of life with thee, like mine, is o’er
> Thy pleasing spots to which memory clings,
> Sweet cooling shades, and soft refreshing springs…
> Now all laid waste by Desolation's hand,
> Whose cursed weapons level half the land.
> Oh! who could see my dear green willows fall,

What feeling heart, but dropt a tear for all?

Accursed Wealth! o'er-bounding human laws,

Of every evil thou remain'st the cause:

Victims of want, those wretches such as me,

Too truly lay their wretchedness to thee. (ll. 99-110)

The passage is a powerful one. Being someone from the lower class of society, Clare dares to blame the wealthy, “Accursed Wealth” and the Enclosure Acts, “o’er bounding laws” for the loss of the beautiful and lively scene. The attack on wealthy people could have ended his writing career because it meant an attack on his wealthy benefactor Lord Fitzwilliam, and the average readers of his poetry. He overlooked all these and did not shy away from the class-based conflict which according to Clare was one key reason behind the destruction of nature. By referring to the Enclosure Acts, he touches upon the other key reason. Finally, when he declares his oneness with the desolated scene, “The pride of life with thee, like mine, is o’er” (l. 100) or “Of every evil thou remain'st the cause: / Victims of want, those wretches such as me,” (ll. 108-9), Clare works upon the sentiment of the reader. He embraces a persona of victimhood to arouse empathy in the readers and it is a powerful tool that he applies throughout his poetry. He produces sustainable sentiment which he can return to at any time in his life.

In the penultimate stanza, the poet seems to compromise with the reality and finds solace in cherishing the memory of the lost scene:

Ye perish'd spots, adieu !

ye ruin'd scenes. Ye well known pastures, oft frequented greens !

Though now no more, fond Memory's pleasing pains,

Within her breast your every scene remains. (ll. 134-137)

Clare will preserve these scenes in his mind and pass them along through many generations with his writings. This process of recording and converting the descriptions of nature into poetry is a sustainable one that other writers can mimic and readers can follow to discover and rediscover nature.

And in the final stanza, Clare wishes to die so that he can be reunited with the lost scene:

When weary age the grave, a rescue, seeks.
And prints its image on my wrinkled cheeks,—
Those charms of youth, that I again may see,
May it be mine to meet my end in thee ;
And, as reward for all my troubles past.
Find one hope true — to die at home at last ! (ll. 173-78)

The lines may give the impression that Clare finally gives in and the poem is only his mourning for the loss. However, a closer look may prove that he has chosen the right avenue for a writer to protect and preserve nature. The job of a writer advocating for nature's preservation is to work upon the conscience of readers so that future generations can realise its true value and take necessary steps for its preservation. Besides, Clare's stewardship of and his attachment to his birthplace are examples to follow.

There are three other poems by John Clare included in this chapter. Two of them are his "Enclosure Elegies"- "The Lament of Swordy Well" and "Round Oak Waters," and the third is "Clock-a-Clay". One unique feature that is common in all three poems is that the narrators in all three are

other than human beings. In the first, the narrator is a quarry while in “Round Oak Waters,”, the narrator is a stream. In “Clock-a-Clay”, a ladybug speaks but it is easily comparable to Clare’s own persona as is the case with the other two. This poetic technique of using non-human elements as narrators is called “prosopopeia” where Clare’s attempt is to make the readers realise what nature would say if it could speak for itself.

Clare actually wrote two poems about Swordy Well which is a quarry area near his home. The first is “I’ve Loved Thee Swordy Well”. Clare expresses his love for wild flowers in the quarry through this poem. However, the point of discussion is the second, “The Lament of Swordy Well”. This is a more powerful poem and very relevant to this study because the poet shares his sorrow for the loss of nature of the area. According to Clare, it was the direct result of Enclosure Acts and exploitation of nature by human beings. The poetic technique called “prosopopeia” is powerfully and effectively enacted in the poem as the quarry speaks in the first person and speaks for itself. By definition, the poem is a dramatic monologue where the speaker, the Swordy Well speaks of its own exploitation in the vernacular of the region. At the beginning, Clare decries the “petitioners” as disingenuous and compares them to churchgoers who believe that they are better than “saints” (l. 8):

> Pe[ti]tioners are full of prayers
> To fall in pitys way
> But if her hand the gift forebears
> Theyll sooner swear than pray
> They're not the worst to want who lurch
> On plenty with complaints

No more then those who go to church

Are eer the better saints (ll. 1-8)

Next, the yet unidentified speaker blames the personified “profit” for the sufferings of the poor:

Where profit gets his clutches in

There’s little he will leave (ll. 13-14)

In the third stanza, the Swordy Well finally introduces itself as the narrator and shares its misfortune:

I'm Swordy Well, a piece of land

That's fell upon the town,

Who worked me till I couldn't stand

And crush me now I'm down (ll. 21-24)

The readers may empathise more as the words come directly from the victim, the Swordy Well, who is now devasted as a result of over-farming:

[But] cunning shares the gift

Harvests with plenty on his brow

Leaves losses taunt with me

Yet gain comes yearly with the plough

And will not let me be(ll. 26-30)

Next, the poet reminisces about the benefit he drew from the area. When he was working as a slave, he could visit this place to feel free from the challenges of his life. After that, it tells how it

used to provide sustenance for animals and free dwellings for the gypsies who roamed the territory. But as the land is now enclosed, there is space neither for animals nor for gypsies.

The language of the Swordy Well becomes strikingly blunt in the next section as it intensifies its advocacy for the preservation of the land by claiming the horrific effect of Enclosure Acts:

> In parish bonds I well may wail (l. 25)
> Harvests with plenty on his brow
> Leaves losses taunts with me
> Yet gain comes yearly with the plough
> And will not let me be (ll. 29-32)
> And me they turned inside out
> For sand and grit and stones
> And turned my old green hills about
> And pickt my very bones (ll. 61-64)

Swordy Well faces the enforcement of the "parish bonds" and it is the "gain" that "comes yearly with the plough" ultimately devastates the "old green hills". The image of the plough as a destroyer appears several times in the poem. The land finally turns "inside out" and is having his "bones" "pickt". It is a powerful image of abrasive physicality. In a way, it reflects the violent destruction that happened to the natural spaces through abuses or overuses in the most despotic way.

The deterioration of Swordy Well continues. It then laments how creatures are dying or suffering in it:

> The bees flye round in feeble rings

And find no blossom bye

Then thrum their almost weary wings

Upon the moss and die

Rabbits that find my hills turned oer

Forsake my poor abode

They dread a workhouse like the poor

And nibble on the road (ll. 81-8)

The death of bees has a much deeper significance than what it looks like on the surface. They don't find "blossom[s]" to pollinate which means there will be no more reproduction of plants and no more flowers. In fact, it was because of his love of the flowers that Clare fell in love with Swordy Well in the first poem. The death of bees eventually brings about the death of the plant-life in that place. The rabbit which has lost its home serves as an example of how a multitude of animals have lost their homes. Finally, it has also been shown that butterflies that used to frequent the place, have also met a similar unfortunate fate:

The next day brings the hasty plough

And makes her miserys bed

The butterflyes may wir and come

I cannot keep them now

Nor can they bear my parish home

That withers on my brow (ll. 91-6)

The land has now become inhospitable to these butterflies which symbolise beauty. So, the fact that the Well "cannot keep them now" tells us that it has lost its beauty to a great extent. Butterflies

symbolise beauty throughout the Western tradition and while Clare is writing about the reality of losing this insect, he is also lamenting the loss of the beauty of the scene. Swordy Well laments this loss of beauty throughout the poem. One such example can be a passage in the middle:

> "In summers gone I bloomed in pride
> Folks came for miles to prize
> My flowers that bloomed nowhere beside
> And scarce believed their eyes" (ll. 133-36).

The contrast between how the scene was in the past and how it is now should touch the heart of the readers and work upon their conscience. People came from faraway places to enjoy its beauty. They held it special and it was a place of recreation and admiration for the onlookers. But now, it is devoid of all its natural beauty and a victim of agrarian capitalism. From an ecological perspective, this means a total alteration of an ecosystem. Since, the animals will get either displaced or killed and there will be no more plants, the whole ecosystem will be changed for the worse.

Swordy Well then points at the greed inherent in men belonging to agrarian capitalism for its further destruction:

> And should the price of grain get high
> —Lord help and keep it low!—
> I shan't possess a butterfly
> Nor get a weed to grow,
> I shan't possess a yard of ground
> To bid a mouse to thrive;

For gain has put me in a pound,

I scarce can keep alive. (ll. 147-154)

It is the price of grain that holds the key. The higher it gets, the more destruction it causes to the area. John Clare applies his familiar technique of anthropomorphising animals and dehumanising humans where the objective is to further emphasise his advocacy for nature. He anthropomorphises Swordy Well and dehumanises the people. He animalises the men responsible for the demolition of Swordy Well by calling them a "greedy pack" who tore "the very grass from off my back" so that he has "scarce a rag to wear" (ll. 136-140). On the other hand, he humanises Swordy Well when he narrates that losing the grass was like hair being torn from its back. He reverses the human and animal binary in a way that animals appear humane and human beings seem like animals. This reversal may look radical, but describing characteristics in such an unusual manner could destabilise the anthropocentric mindset of his contemporary people.

Possibly, the strongest lines of the poem appear when the narrator attacks the Enclosure Acts directly, "Till vile enclosure came and made / A parish slave out of me." (ll.185-186). Because of the Enclosure, Swordy Well is no more than a slave now and this slavery is torturous and inhumane. The narrator finishes the poem with the premonition:

Of all the fields I am the last

That my own face can tell

Yet what with stone pits delving holes

And strife to buy and sell

My name will quickly be the whole

Thats left of swordy well (ll. 191-196)

Among all the fields there, Swordy Well is the only survivor. However, he will also be reduced to nothing but a name very soon.

Thus, Clare's use of personification; especially, the use of the technique called "prosopopeia", the intensity of his depiction and his deconstruction of the human and nature binary in "The Lament of Swordy Well" establishes it as one of his major poems advocating for the preservation of nature. There may not be any direct call made towards the direction of preservation. However, by giving the "other" a voice through the technique "prosopopeia", he successfully appeals to the readers' minds to have more sympathy for the natural world and to work for its preservation. Besides, throughout his poetry he argues that as a natural history writer, his responsibility is to bear witness to how the land was once and what the actions or events were that changed or destroyed it forever and also, to record them accurately through his writings. This may serve as a warning for all who care for the wellbeing of nature and who have the power to prevent such devastation from occurring again.

The other poem "The Lamentations of Round-Oak Waters" (1820) is also in the form of a prosopopeia. Here, the narrator is a waterbody. Although the poet as the first speaker introduces the poem, soon there is a change in the voice and a waterbody takes over as the narrator. The speaker complains about the inhumanity shown by the wealthy people of the society:

> For when my wretched state appears
> Hurt friendless poor and starv'd
> I never can withold my tears
> To think how I am starv'd
> To think how money'd men delight

More cutting then the storm

To make a sport and prove their might

O' me a fellow worm (ll. 17-24)

The lines are within parenthesis which may mean that they are unspoken and possibly, the thoughts of the first narrator. He feels that he is dehumanised into a worm by the "money'd men". The modifier "fellow" before the word "worm" is also important as it signifies that he feels more in common with worms than with these wealthy men. Besides, it may also refer to the idea that other parts of nature are also made to feel in the same way as he is by the wealthy. Such an inferiority complex gets even more intense in lines 26, 27 and 30 as the human-speaker decries that he is "melancholy," full of "sorrow" and in "misery". The second narrator, the water-body, offers some words of comfort. In its first stanza as the narrator, it shows compassion for the human-narrator and declares him as his "equal" (l. 44). This is extra-ordinary on the part of Clare as the writers of the Romantic era often personified nature and treated it as their equal whereas in this poem, nature (or the water-body), quite interestingly, addresses the human-narrator as its equal. Thus, Clare not only levels the difference between man and nature, he actually, takes nature to a superior position to human beings.

Like many other poems of Clare, there is an episode where the Round-Oak Waters reminisce about its beautiful past. There was a peaceful and mutually beneficial relationship between the waterbody and both animals and people. So, instead of showing any separation between land and humans, Clare advocates for a coexistence that is mutually beneficial and not exploitative. However, at present this richness and beauty of nature are gone. From line ninety-three (93), the Round-Oak Waters presents a grim scenario in its present state:

But now alas my charms are done

For shepherds and for thee

The Cowboy with his Green is gone

And every Bush and tree

Dire nakedness oer all prevails

Yon fallows bare and brown

Is all beset wi' post and rails

And turned upside down' (ll. 93-100)

Here, the word "charms" carries several contextual meanings. "Charms are done" denotes the loss of the resources from the land and also the end of the beneficial coexistence of man and nature. When the interactions between human beings and nature were sustainable and beneficial to both, there was a holistic and magical balance in their relationship. Another noticeable point here is that the shepherd and the cowboy were like parts of the environment. This signifies that nature does not antagonise with those who interact respectfully with it. As the Enclosure has fenced in the land, they, too, are barred from entering. Again, Clare anthropomorphises nature as he declares that "Dire nakedness" "prevails" all over nature because it is "stript" of all that both adorned and enriched it in the past. The imagery is powerful because, in the human world, forced stripping is seen as inhuman. And if such an act is done to nature, this should empathise the readers more with the land. As a naturalist, Clare sets himself apart as his language surpasses that of other natural history writers in terms of its radical intensity. This part of the poem also emphasises the appropriacy of using poetry as an avenue for protesting exploitation.

At this point, the poem takes a dark turn when the Round-Oak Waters tells about the losses that came with Enclosure:

> ‘The hawks and Eddings are no more
> The pastures too are gone
> The greens the Meadows and the moors
> Are all cut up and done (ll. 116-20)

It then identifies and accuses the greedy wealthy class of bringing this destruction to nature:

> Ah cruel foes with plenty blest
> So ankering after more
> To lay the greens and pastures waster
> Which proffited before
> Poor greedy souls-what would they have
> Beyond their plenty given?
> Will riches keep ‘em from the grave?
> Or buy them rest in heaven? (ll. 189-96)

The pointlessness of material gains at the cost of nature should appeal the readers who really care for nature. Clare brings back three of his common themes in these few lines. First, he dehumanises those responsible for the loss by calling them “Poor greedy souls”. This time, he does not animalise them as he did in “The Lament of Swordy Well” but he disembodies the people who have perpetrated crimes against the place. Second, he speaks of death as the ultimate class leveler, “Will riches keep ‘em from the grave? / Or buy them rest in heaven?” (ll. 195-96). He believes that death will level all differences. Rich people accumulate wealth all their life. But this wealth can neither

keep them from the grave nor take them to heaven. They also die and become dust as is the fate of poor people. Finally, the third theme is to accuse abstract concepts like profit and greed believing that they are the forces behind the changes in nature. In this respect, both Clare and nature have common enemies; namely the abstract concepts- profit and greed. It should not go unnoticed that Clare separates human beings from these abstract concepts possibly, to express his belief that these negative forces are not completely a part of the human spirit and they can be restrained. Through his poetry, Clare wanted to establish that nature is not subordinated to man; rather, they are equal and man must overcome these negative motivations to believe strongly in this equality.

There is another poem by Clare that encapsulates in a clearer language the theme of contrast between the past and the present. It is titled “Hepstone Green” where the speaker observes his surroundings and establishes the contrast between how the scene was before and how it is now:

> Ye injur'd fields, ye once were gay,
> When nature's hand display'd
> Long waving rows of willows grey,
> And clumps of hawthorn shade;
> But now, alas! your hawthorn bowers
> All desolate we see,
> The spoilers' axe their shade devours,
> And cuts down every tree. (ll. 1-8)

The “waving rows of willows” and “hawthorn bower” exemplify the lost beauty of the land. But the place is now “desolate”. Clare holds the all-devouring “spoilers’ axe” responsible for this

desolation. The wilderness of the place is gone forever. The whole land is ploughed. The familiar brook or tree is no more there:

> The well-known brook, the favourite tree,
> In fancy's eye appear,
> And next, that pleasant green I see,
> That green forever dear. (ll. 21-24)

The speaker reminisces about the happy time he spent amidst nature before the merciless onslaught caused by the Enclosure Acts:

> O'er its green hills I've often stray'd
> In childhood's happy hour,
> Oft sought the nest along the shade
> And gather'd many a flower;
> And there, with playmates often join'd
> In fresher sports to plan; (ll. 25-30)

The happy memories are no consolation for the despondency that grips the poet:

> Farewel, thou favourite spot, farewel!
> Since every effort's vain,
> All 1 can do is still to tell
> Of thy delightful plain; (ll. 49-52)

With a heavy heart, the poet bids farewell to his “favourite spot”. It is true that he could not save the spot from decline but he is aware that he can still “tell/ Of thy delightful plain;” which he will

continue to do through his poetry. The idea of preservation reappears at this point as the memory of Clare acts as the preserver which will continue to inform the future generation about this loss and the value of preservation.

Past memories intensify the poet's pain. However, his moral sense tells him (and it is an idea pervading many other poems of Clare) that like nature that has lost its charm, human beings also turn old and ultimately die:

> Reflection pierces deadly keen,
> While I the moral scan,--
> As are the change of the green
> So is the life of man:
> Youth brings age with faltering tongue,
> That does the exit crave;
> There's one short scene presents the throng,
> Another shows the grave. (ll. 57-64)

The familiar theme that death is the ultimate leveler appears again, but more importantly, Clare does not limit his thoughts only within mourning for the lost nature; he passes these to the readers whose conscience is thus aroused to feel for nature and resist such changes from happening in other places.

One unique aspect of Clare's nature-thoughts was that he was equally concerned and expressed similar kind of love even for the plants that are generally regarded as weeds. From the perspective of preservation, it is important because it creates the awareness of preserving the neglected species which may not be pleasant to the eyes or instrumentally useful, but crucial in any ecosystem. By

paying the same attention to the weeds, he questioned the established hierarchies between garden flowers and the flowers that are seen as wild. This was another step forward towards preservation. There are two poems where Clare unsettles the binary between the two. The first is "To An Insignificant Flower, Obscurely Blooming in a Lonely Wild,". The poet begins the poem by identifying himself with the listener, in this case, the "weedling" and writes, "wild and neglected like to me, / [t]hou still art dear to Nature's child / and I will stoop to notice thee" (ll. 1-4). He continues to draw more similarities as he says that they both wear "humble garb" and then unsettles the hierarchy as he declares that the "weed" is "as sweet as garden-flowers can be" (ll. 5-6). Clare further empathises with the wildflowers when he compares also his daughter with a weed directly fourteen times in the thirty-line poem. Even at the end of the poem, when he writes of his death, he refers to his friendship with the weed:

> Yet when I'm dead, let's hope I have
> Some friend in store, as I'm to thee,
> That will find out my lowly grave,
> And heave a sigh to notice me." (ll. 26-30)

The second poem where Clare again compares himself with a weed or a wildflower is "To an April Daisy" from *Poems Descriptive*. In natural history as well as in many flower guides, daisies were often considered weeds and nuisances. For example, Ada Eljiva Georgia writes in the book *A Manual of Weeds* (1914):

> Weeds cause a direct money loss to the farmer and to the nation In the first place the presence of weeds in such abundance as to attract notice reduces the selling value of the land. A prospective purchaser who sees meadows thickly spangled with Daisies and

> Buttercups or looks over fields … mentally subtracts the cost of cleaning the soil of these pests when estimating his offering price. And this is as it should be for before a profitable crop could be obtained from such ground much careful thought and expensive labor must go to the subjugation of its enemies. (6)

Georgia also calls plants like daisies "pernicious plants" that hurt the "fertility of the soil" and "reduce the crop yield" (6). Ignoring this commonly held belief, Clare begins his poem identifying himself with the daisy and calls it his comrade: "Welcome old Maytey peeping once again" (l. 1). Next, he "Hail"[s] the flower and mentions the unremarkable space where it grows: "Hail Beautys gem disdaining time nor place/ Carelessly creeping on the dunghills side" (ll. 5-6). Regardless of this very humble origin and the fact that it was just a nuisance for others, Clare continues to express his unconditional love for the flower. Several times in the poem, he personifies it, referring to it as a "[v]enturer" who is "fearless," a "messenger" who "smiles," gets "frost-bit" during winter, and many other references as well. Then again, Clare calls the flower daisy his friend: "Then like old friends or mates that's neighbours been/ Well part in hopes to meet another year" (ll. 20-21). At the end of "To an April Daisy", Clare weaves together the hopes and sorrows of both: "at thy exit from this changing scene/ Well mix our wishes in a tokening tear" (ll. 22- 23).

John Clare's repeated effort to identify himself with the April daisy may be judged from two different angles. Firstly, he thus challenges the established hierarchy in the world of plants and emphasises the importance of every living being irrespective of its instrumental value. This anticipates modern-day "Deep Ecology" which values any living being for its own sake and not because of what it does for mankind. Secondly, Clare binds the flower so tightly with his own identity, that it turns into a perfect match for his humble identity as a rural labourer – a poet who,

like the daisy, was from an unremarkable place. This authorial humility on the part of Clare can be an effective step towards preservation as he teaches mankind to see nature through the lens of Deep Ecology. Besides, by anthropomorphising the daisy plant and identifying himself with its flower, Clare deconstructs anthropocentrism. This makes the systematical destruction of nature for capitalistic gain more difficult. Moreover, when anthropocentrism is questioned, as Jeffrey S. Dories writes, "it is easier to view the world from an ecological point of view where all living things coexist in a series of complex webs and systems, an orientation that was not formally elaborated on until the twentieth century" (95).

John Clare established probably the closest bond with nature among all the Romantics and naturalist writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His love of nature emanated from the sense of loss he experienced and so intensely felt especially after the enactment of Enclosure Acts in his area. His narrow focus and keen observation made him see the creatures of nature as having individual agencies. Moreover, his humble origin and simple life as a peasant helped him to identify himself with non-human elements and also empathise with their fate. If William Wordsworth's poetry creates reverence in readers' minds for nature, Clare contributes by creating a kind of fellow-feeling that people must have if they want to save their environment. If human beings considered both the non-human and inanimate objects of nature as parts of their own beings, they would not indulge in all those malpractices for material gains that ultimately cause destruction to nature. That is why, Clare's thoughts and insights should be studied and analysed by future generations if they want to preserve their natural surroundings.

4.4 Gilbert White and the Birth of English Natural History

Although John Clare and Gilbert White were not contemporaries; they have often been compared by critics for the striking similarities in their attitudes towards nature. Naturalist Gilbert White died in Selbourne in June 1793 and John Clare was born one month later in a little town named Helpston, Northamptonshire- some one hundred miles away from Selbourne. White was highly regarded by his contemporary scientists for the detailed and powerful nature of his natural history writing. Famous ornithologist Jeffery Boswall called him the "father of English natural history" (254). Many well-reputed naturalists like John Burroughs considered White their inspiration. What really impressed them was the accuracy of White's writing as Lutt writes that White "remembers only nature. There is never more than a twinkle of humor in his pages, and never one word of style for its own sake" (Lutts 38). Burroughs and Theodore Roosevelt were highly critical of many other naturalists. Gilbert White, for them, however, was the epitome of natural history writers particularly because of the accuracy of his writings.

To begin with, some similarities of thoughts between White and Clare may be explored. Both writers acted as effective witnesses of the environmental degradation of their respective areas because of the intense focus they had on their immediate locations. John Clare's mind was almost solely concerned about the changes in Helpston that continued to take place throughout his life. Similarly, White intensely focused mostly on his hometown as a basis for his writing. In fact, such an approach allowed him to investigate intensely the natural spaces of his own locality. There was another common but strong feeling in both the writers that it was really important to record the intricate details of their respective natural surroundings. They did this with a mind to preserve the natural history of their hometowns against the backdrop of Enclosure Acts as well as governmental

projects. Finally, a common theme found in the works of both writers is their tendency to envision parts of nature as individual agents. Considering non-human elements with individual agency led them to believe that animals can communicate and they even have complex languages to do that.

However, it is the disparity between the two writers that brings White into this discussion. Clare admits in his book *Natural History* that in his teenage years, he drew his first inspiration to write natural history from White's *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* (1789). Here, the titles of both books may be linked with preservation or conservation as both serve the same purpose of preserving nature's history. However, a comparison between the two above-mentioned books may show that White's was thoroughly formed. In fact, White's *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* sold very well and became one of the most popular books of his time. Clare's book, on the other hand, was just a scattered series of fragments and letters at the initial stage. It was Margaret Grainger who finally compiled these into its present form in 1983. However, White and Clare, perhaps, differed more in their attitudes towards the classification and experimentation. It has already been mentioned that John Clare hated the Linnaean classification system which applies killing and dissection of plants and animals for the purpose of classification. White, on the other hand, adhered to this system realising its importance in getting accurate results of experiments.

This research work believes that Clare and White actually complemented each other in the field of ecology. It is a matter of debate whether White was one of the forebearers of the field but the popularity of his writing is a good indicator showing he was at least able to generate a kind of ecological awareness in the readers. McKusick, for example, acknowledges that White's *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* was "a landmark in the development of ecological consciousness" (McKusick 25). His observation about the book is:

> This delightfully rambling and anecdotal collection of informal letters seeks to encapsulate a complete "parochial history" of the district of Selborne, providing not merely a dry taxonomic description of its flora and fauna, but a detailed account of each species's habitat, distribution, behavior, and seasonal variation or migration. (26)

In addition to all these, White's use of vernacular to supplement the Latin words for genus and species, pioneers a new, more colourful and engaging kind of nature writing.

His identities may be summed up as a natural historian, a reverend and an occasional poet. Gilbert White's fame as a natural historian rests mainly upon his seminal book *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* which is a non-fiction and a natural history chronicle of a single parish called Selbourne. White recorded his decades of close environmental observation in the book. From 1768 to 1787, he studied his natural surroundings of Selbourne and published the book as an in-depth analysis of Selbourne's ecosystem in 1789. The *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* proved to be immensely popular. Since it was first published, it has never been out of print. Gilbert White accumulated three particular aspects of Selbourne's environment- botany, zoology and geology. His only epistemological tools for his research were close observation, basic measurement and epistolary narrative.

White may be credited with some of the most essential insights of modern ecological thought. Throughout his book *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*, he describes mostly the interaction between plants and animals throughout Selbourne and thus evoking the "economy of nature" on a local scale. White was one of those first naturalists that realised the essential role played by even the insects and reptiles in a food chain:

> The most insignificant insects and reptiles are of much more consequence, and have much more influence in the economy of Nature than the incurious are aware of; and are mighty in their effect, from their minuteness, which renders them less an object of attention; and from their numbers and fecundity. Earth-worms, though in appearance a small and despicable link in the chain of Nature, yet, if lost, would make a lamentable chasm. (qtd. in McKusick 26)

It was typical of White to express his fondness for such "despicable" creatures. Through his study of nature, he learnt to look at nature as a biological community where all organisms play their respective as well as essential roles. This made him both conscious and concerned about the attitudes of human beings towards nature, "White often questioned the value of human intervention in the natural world, mourning the loss of favorite trees to the woodcutter's axe and resisting the conversion of "waste" areas to farmland" (McKusick 26).

White's love and concern for all living creatures could have resulted from his close allegiance to the Christian religion as he himself was a parson. He was aware of his duty to mankind and also, to the non-human. As a parson, he shares his close observation about his parishioners in *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*:

> We abound with poor; many of whom are sober and industrious, and live comfortably in good stone or brick cottages, which are glazed, and have chambers above stairs: mud buildings we have none. Besides the employment from husbandry, the men work in hop gardens, of which we have many; and fell and bark timber. […] The inhabitants enjoy a good share of health and longevity; and the parish swarms with children. (White 50)

With this, White juxtaposes his love for the non-human denizens of Selbourne as well. He expresses his caring and concerned voice for the non-human elements of his parish. Heidi Scotte believes that White shows more affection for turtles, oaks and worms than for the "hordes of gypsies which infest the south and west of England" (179).

White believed in the pro-existent logic of the divine revelation for humanity. Pro-existence puts forward the idea that the existence of human beings in this world should be in harmony with the external universe. White extended it even to the realm of non-human creatures. He gives examples of cattle, insects and fish to show how they are tied in a web of inter-relatedness which, from a religious perspective, may be called pro-existent ties. When cattle go near water bodies to drink water, they enjoy the "coolness" and temporary relief from insects while "dropping much dung, in which insects nestle; and so supply food for the fish, which would be poorly subsisted but from this contingency" (White 21). Such an observation, if seen from philosophical and theological perspectives, may be called "eco-nomy" that carries the religious connotation of "acting in a way that is beneficial for all the agents and elements involved" (Jajtner 127). White ends this particular passage with an exclamatory sentence, "Thus Nature, who is a great economist, converts the recreation of one animal to the support of another!" (White 21). Such views laid the foundation of modern-day ecology which is all about the interdependency among all the living entities in nature.

White had strong faith in the traditional Christian doctrine that everything on the earth exists to serve mankind. So, he explored and evaluated how different species contribute to human existence. There is the example of swallows which, according to White, are:

> a most inoffensive, harmless, entertaining, social, and useful tribe of birds: they touch no fruit in our gardens; delight, all except one species, in attaching themselves to our houses;

> amuse us with their migrations, songs, and marvelous agility; and clear our outlets from the annoyances of gnats and other troublesome insects. . . . Whoever contemplates the myriads of insects that sport in the sunbeams of a summer evening in this country, will soon be convinced to what a degree our atmosphere would be choaked with them was it not for the friendly interposition of the swallow tribe. (134)

White often paid scrupulous attention to the living organism in its habitat. He observed the behaviours of birds and other animals in this way and recorded them using informal vernacular language which made his book comprehensible and popular among common people. Hence, there was the immense popularity of *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*. The book contains not only prose but also poems. In fact, White's discourse of observation and discourse of poetry are closely linked. Sometimes, his treatment of nature's economy is poetic. For example, White's observing eyes discover the invisible bond that connects and fits everything into the wonderful orchestra formed by various species of birds, led by "nice instincts":

> When day declining sheds a milder gleam,
> What time the mayfly haunts the pool or stream;
> When the still owl skims round the grassy mead,
> What time the timorous hare limps forth to feed;
> Then be the time to steal adown the vale,
> And listen to the vagrant cuckoo's tale;
> To hear the clamorous curlew call his mate,
> Or the soft quail his tender pain relate;
> To see the swallow sweep the dark'ning plain

Belated, to support her infant train;

To mark the swift in rapid giddy ring

Dash round the steeple, unsubdu'd of wing:

Amusive birds!—say where your hid retreat

When the frost rages and the tempests beat;

Whence your return, by such nice instinct led,

When spring, soft season, lifts her bloomy head?

Such baffled searches mock man's prying pride,

The GOD of NATURE is your secret guide! (128-129)

Like major Romantics, Gilbert White also looked at nature as sacred and his evaluation of nature's sacredness was mainly from his religious faith and his pure love for nature. White's main focus in his book was to present the balance and symbiosis present in the natural order of his little parish. David Allen notices the deep feeling and empathy that White had for nature. Allen also expresses the belief that White "supersede[s] his contemporaries in the detail and colour of the chronicle and pushes it towards Romantic sensibility" (50). That the book is predominantly about the harmonious and peaceful aspect of nature is also reflected in the following words of Allen, "For it is, surely, the testament of Static Man: at peace with the world and with himself, content with deepening his knowledge of his one small corner of the earth, a being suspended in the perfect mental balance. Selborne is the secret, private parish inside each one of us" (50-51).

However, the modern relevance of Selbourne is not because of the "eternal peace and reciprocal empathy" (Scott 8). as shown by White prevailing in nature's realm. Heidi Scott opines, "If Selborne were really a chronicle recording eternal peace and reciprocal empathy, it would be

functionally obsolete; a twenty-first-century visitor to the parish would find very little to recognise from White's account" (Scott 8). In the later part of *Selbourne*, White exposes the vulnerability of his parish to violent change and rapid degradation. He observed that human activities had resulted in the destruction of the peaceable web of species in Selborne where "the oak is felled, the intrepid mother bird is struck dead" (11); and "hunters are unreasonable in their kills, the partridges and red deer become rare or extinct, leaving a gap in *Fauna Selborniensis*" (22). He was completely aware of the crucial role played by earth-worms in protecting the land and making it fertile and cultivable:

> Worms probably provide new soil for hills and slopes where the rain washes the earth away; and they affect slopes, probably to avoid being flooded. Gardeners and farmers express their detestation of worms…But these men would find that the earth without worms would become cold, hard-bound, and void of fermentation; and consequently sterile. (196)

White regrets the fact that even the farmers and gardeners who make their living from the earth either ignore or are unaware of the contribution of these earth-worms. He successfully touched upon the essence of modern-day ecological science as Scott writes, "As White observes, nature's economy of interaction is a precondition to stability; when that economy is violated, surprising imbalances become manifest (Scott 11). White himself experienced these surprising imbalances as he noted that excessive hunting had eradicated local populations of partridges and red deer, and had caused the local "heath-cock, black-game, or grouse" to become "extinct" (White 21–22).

Gilbert White studied even the meteorology of Selbourn. He knew that weather phenomena could directly influence the plants and animals of a certain area. He was one of those very few naturalists who reacted to the unpredictable meteorological events of the 1780s. The most important of them

was the volcanic eruption of Laki Mountain. Laki eruption started on June 8, 1783 and lasted for about 8 months till early February, 1784. During this period, about 14 cubic km of basaltic lava and some tephra were erupted. It was reported that haze from the eruption had spread from Iceland to Syria. The whole of Europe suffered from extreme weather as a result of this natural disaster. Because of this haze or smoky sulfur dioxide pollution, the summer of 1783 was terribly hot and the succeeding winter was extremely cold. Thousands of Labourers in Europe who were exposed to the pollution and inhaled the poison died. In Iceland, the situation was even more tragic. A quarter of the population died there because of inhalation, exposure and also famine caused by the death of almost the entire livestock (by eating fluorine-contaminated grass) and crop failure (by acid rain).

Gilbert White was, in general, curious about the climatological anomaly and its effect on established ecological relationships. In *Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne*, White expresses both awe and fear at the unpredictable outcome of Laki eruption that he observed at Selbourne. He explicitly brings up the issue and writes:

> Since the weather of a district is undoubtedly part of its natural history, I shall make no further apology for the four following letters, which will contain many particulars concerning some of the great frosts and a few respecting some very hot summers, that have distinguished themselves from the rest during the course of my observations. (253)

In this later part of the book, when White refers to the very unstable and unpredictable weather conditions at Selbourne, he loses the calm narrative voice that he had earlier. He also uses some exceptional and unusual terms foreign to any writing describing the ecological balance of a place: paradox, severity, loathsome, amazing, tremendous, extraordinary, portentous, superstitious,

strange, prodigious, violent, deluging, convulsed, and fierce all appear as descriptors in the final series of letters (253-268). Heidi Scott shares some observations about the letter from where the quote (mentioned above) is taken:

> This letter, number 61 out of 66 total, opens an extended exposition of horrifying and sublime phenomena noted objectively as temperature and barometrical readings, but also attendant to the subjective psychological effect of the unusual, and even the unprecedented, in these surprising turns of natural history. (12)

The comment of Scott reflects that in White, there were both a scientist and a litterateur- "temperature and barometrical readings" were "objectively" taken as it is done by a scientist and as it is often the case with a litterateur, White experienced the "psychological effect" of the unusual weather phenomena. Scott further adds how the first four letters lead to White's ultimate point - the volcanic eruption of the Laki Mountain:

> The four letters that detail sudden and unseasonable extremes of warmth and cold prepare the reader for the last two entries, which detail the atmospheric effect of 1783's Laki volcano eruption in Iceland and the sublime thunderstorms that accompanied this many-leveled catastrophe. (12)

White was surprised to notice how the unexpected and unseasonal changes in temperature alter the biological character of an area throughout the year. It was because of the unprecedented cold weather, White, "would infer that it is the repeated melting and freezing of the snow that is so fatal to vegetation, rather than the severity of the cold" (253) and "thaws often originate underground from warm vapours which arise" and "cold seems to descend from above (255) and "author had

occasion to go to London through a sort of Laplandian-scene, very wild and grotesque indeed" (258).

Melting of the snow and freezing temperature- both were fatal to the vegetation and really uncomfortable and sometimes fatal to the humans and other creatures. Conversely, the terribly hot weather of summer also brings some unexpected and variable effects:

> The summers of 1781 and 1783 were unusually hot and dry. The great pests of the garden are wasps, which destroy all the finer fruits just as they are coming into perfection. In 1781 we had none, in 1783 there were myriads. (263)

White did not have any conceptual or quantitative tools to clarify how and why this population of wasps fluctuated. But through this observation, he acknowledged a problem that modern-day ecology addresses after some 200 years. Donald Worster sets the connection between the past and the present as he emphasises the importance of the letter which provides:

> an example of nature's irregularities that had continued right down to the present. The point was that species did not all exhibit the same demographic patterns. Some remained numerically constant over long periods of time, others oscillated greatly from generation to generation but always around a stable long-term norm, while still others fluctuated radically each year, with no apparent norm, even when weather conditions were steady, suggesting there was something chaotic in their genetic makeup or response to the environment…the variability found among species made the science of ecology far more complicated than had long been supposed. (413)

After this wasp-laden summer of 1783, there happened the Laki volcanic eruption in Iceland which made the season:

> an amazing and portentous one, and full of horrible phenomena; for, besides the alarming meteors and tremendous thunder-storms that affrighted and distressed the different counties of this kingdom, the peculiar haze, or smokey fog, that prevailed for many weeks in this island, and in every part of Europe, and even beyond its limits, was a most extraordinary appearance, unlike anything known within the memory of man…the country people began to look with superstitious awe, at the red, louring aspect of the sun; and indeed there was reason for the most enlightened person to be apprehensive… (265)

Being an Enlightenment natural historian, White's objective was to forward good observational, objective science. Nevertheless, this time, he had to acknowledge the "superstitious awe" in people and thus appeal to the forthcoming Romantic poetry that appreciates the awesomeness of natural forces. White turned to literary resources to describe this apocalyptic summer. Referring to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, he wrote, "Milton's noble simile of the sun, in his first book of *Paradise Lost*, frequently occurred to my mind…it alludes to a superstitious kind of dread, with which the minds of men are always impressed by such strange and unusual phenomena" (265). Here, Gilbert White actually shares the superstition that occurred in the mind of people that the ensanguined sun following the Laki volcanic eruption hinted at corruption and error. In *Paradise Lost*, the fallen angels organise in ranks and give off "A shout that tore Hell's Concave, and beyond / Frighted the Reign of Chaos and old Night" (ll. 542-543). Scott writes about this war-cry of the rebel angels, "the revolution itself is a principle of disorder set against divine cosmic harmony" (15). Likewise, the Laki eruption was a disorder in nature's realm that portended some more natural calamities yet

to come. Indeed, there were really some devastating consequences of the eruption that occurred later. For example, there were several earthquakes in Italy, sulfurous summer thunderstorms in Selborne and dusty, cold winters throughout the northern hemisphere.

White, as an observer, found all these strange events "reason for the most Enlightened person to be apprehensive" (265). White's tendency to observe the economy in nature did not blind him to the importance of extreme, unpredictable weather and its downstream effects through many seasons and across species. He was a Reverend with a uniquely secular reverence for the unpredictable as well as mysterious movements of nature. Modern ecologists and environmental scientists would do well to apply White's methods by closely observing weather phenomena and making them a part of their ecological awareness. His close observations amounted almost to empathy which, if applied by modern-day naturalists, may help them to learn more about nature's wild ways.

4.5 Charlotte Turner Smith and the Marriage of Literature and Natural Science

William Wordsworth wrote about the works of poet and naturalist Charlotte Turner Smith, "Charlotte Smith [was] a lady to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be either acknowledged or remembered. She wrote … with true feeling for rural nature, at a time when nature as not much regarded by English poets" (Wordsworth 522). Wordsworth's comment establishes Charlotte Smith's position as a true poet of nature and, also, one of the pioneers in the field. In this respect, she may be comparable with Wordsworth but the difference lies in the fact that Smith's poems were biologically accurate and she incorporated natural sciences into her poetry. Her contribution to her contemporary literature was that she revitalised the sonnet

in English poetry. But more importantly, she proved that biologically accurate poetry or poetry where natural science is incorporated can still be popular and well-received by common readers.

Charlotte Smith features in this research work because of her contribution in the field of ecology as James McKusick writes, "her [Smith's] poetry is essential to an ecological understanding of the [Romantic] period" (qtd. in Roe 205). In her writing, the affection for all the creatures of nature is evident. That is the reason she could not ignore even the lowly green-chafer and the humble hedgehog. For this love and affection for nature's creatures, the tone in her writing is intimate and her expression is deeply personal. With this, she combined her extensive knowledge of botany, taxonomy and ornithology and thus, initiated a new kind of writing where she converged between poetry and science. Smith's first publication was *Elegiac Sonnets* where she revived the Petrarchan sonnet form. But the sonnets are more important in that the imageries in them are often very precise and filled with intense emotion. There is a series of sonnets that address the nightingale where Smith's depiction of the bird is in the light of her knowledge of ornithology. She shows the actual presence of the bird and describes its plaintive sound at nightfall as the nightingale seeks its missing mate. One such sonnet is "The Return of the Nightingale" (1791) which is the fifty-fifth sonnet in the list:

> BORNE on the warm wing of the western gale,
> How tremulously low is heard to float
> Thro' the green budding thorns that fringe the vale
> The early Nightingale's prelusive note.
> 'Tis Hope's instinctive power that through the grove
> Tells how benignant Heaven revives the earth;

'Tis the soft voice of young and timid love

That calls these melting sounds of sweetness forth.

With transport, once, sweet bird! I hail'd thy lay,

And bade thee welcome to our shades again,

To charm the wandering poet's pensive way

And soothe the solitary lover's pain;

But now!--such evils in my lot combine,

As shut my languid sense--to Hope's dear voice and thine! (“The Return of the Nightingale”)

The nightingale is not only a traditional emblem of poetic inspiration but also an analogue for Smith’s own circumstances. She had been abandoned by her unfaithful and violent husband and was suffering from loneliness, poverty, misery and heartache. She took up writing as a means of supporting her twelve children. The sonnet reflects the yearning for her lost love and her intensely personal, introspective qualities. If a comparison is done between this sonnet and Milton’s “II Penseroso” (1645), a major distinction may be found. While Milton presents the bird as an emblem of melancholy, the nightingale, in this sonnet, has the “instinctive pow'r” to revive the Earth in springtime. Moreover, “the soft voice of young and timid love” and the “melting sounds of sweetness” are charming to the ears of any listener. McKusick comments on this transformation of the image of the nightingale from Milton to Charlotte Smith, “rescued from its melancholy Miltonic associations, the nightingale returns to English poetry as a redemptive female figure that embodies the seasonal cycles of nature and the healing powers of the earth” (qtd. in Roe 206).

Smith is regarded by most critics first as a poet and then, as a naturalist. It is mainly because her writings originated in literature and later moved towards incorporating science. In fact, she began with popular Romance novels and poetry. Her poems got recognition and high respect in the literary community. In the later part of her career, she became more interested in natural sciences and combined her scientific observations with her poetry. Her predisposition to natural science made her look at dissection and other scientific processes as acceptable.

Charlotte Smith's works were complex but these were more accessible to a large group of people. While her poetry contained history, classical allusions and other poetic devices, her approach was often scientific as she focused on intricate details and classifications. Often, she relied on local observations avoiding large generalisations and conclusions. Her localised focus produced some important results. In her most well-known poem "Beachy Head", many of these characteristics are reflected. There, she presents a scene with a finch and a linnet:

warrens, and heaths,
And yellow commons, and birch-shaded hollows,
And hedge rows, bordering unfrequented lanes
Bowered with wild roses, and clasping woodbine
Where purple tassels of the tangling vetch
With bittersweet, and bryony inweave,
And the dew fills the silver bindweed's cups-
I loved to trace the brooks whose humid banks
Nourish the harebell, and the freckled pagil;
And stroll among the o'ershadowing woods of beech. (ll. 347-356)

The lines show how the birds interact, where they eat, various dangers that they face, how they care for their eggs or a strange activity that they do with stones and many such details. Readers will find an intimate examination of the interaction of the birds which is as detailed as the description of a naturalist. However, it is also a poem with several characteristics typical for a poem like the use of similes, metaphors and alliterations are there. Besides, there are philosophical ideas such as the fragility of life, family occasions and cultural differences.

The source of the poem "Beachy Head" is actually a place by the same name. Beachy Head used to be the tallest and one of the most beautiful sets of chalk cliffs in Great Britain. Sailors on the English Channel looked at it as a prominent landmark. The poem "Beachy Head" focuses on the whole landscape. The exceptional aspect of the poem is the intricate local description which is biologically accurate because Smith maintained an intense focus on organic systems within the scenes. Besides, she picked up the style from the natural history book and followed it in her depictions of the natural world. One such example is her depiction of the wood sorrel:

> Who, from the tumps with bright green mosses clad,
> Plucks the wood sorrel, with its light thin leaves,
> Heart-shaped, and triply folded; and its root
> Creeping like beaded coral, or who there
> Gathers, the copse's pride, anemones,
> With rays like golden studs on ivory laid
> Most delicate: but touch'd with purple clouds,
> Fit crown for April's fair but changeful brow. (ll. 360-367)

Smith describes not only the flower but also its habitat after and thorough and close-up examination of both. The details about the wood sorrel that she gives are so exact that a naturalist could easily classify the flower. Just to confirm this point further, Smith's description can be compared with the one given in the book *Wild Flowers Worth Knowing* by Neltje Blanchen, et al in 1917. The author describes the flower as having "clover-like" leaves, a "creeping rootstock," and "conceal" themselves in the "moss from which they spring" (72). While Smith's description seems more accurate, she also provides a little more colour and intricacy to the flower.

Another idea that may be gleaned from Smith's "Beachy Head" is that, like Clare, she was equally curious and impressed by wildflowers, "An early worshipper at Nature's shrine, / I loved her rudest scenes" (ll. 346-7). Smith loves the "rudest scenes" or wildflowers as she loves those that were in gardens or manicured. In this poem, she also presents a mixture of wild and exotic flowers. It's interesting to observe that while writing about the wood sorrel, smith makes a botanical analysis of the flower using biological terminology; but a few lines later, when she writes about anemones, she poeticises them. For example, anemones have "rays like golden studs on ivory" (l. 365) and are a "fit crown for April" (l. 367). Besides, she goes on to describe the landscape in terms of bright colours like bright green, golden, ivory and purple and thus, verbally paints the landscape. It is no coincidence that Smith poeticises the exotic flower (Anemones) but keeps the more common flowers like wood sorrel more scientific and less poeticised. This combined effort of Smith may be termed as "botanic literary aesthetic" (Doris 89).

Such parallel approaches make Smith's writings both entertaining and informative. Smith should have drawn more readership through this unique style of her. Besides, readers, apart from having been entertained, should have been more convinced as they found her depth in natural science. As

the relationship between the human and the non-human in this world is both aesthetic and scientific, Charlotte Smith's style embodies both and keeps the interest of experts in both areas going.

It is common in most pastoral poetry that larger scenes are often presented in more general, sweeping language with hardly any exacting details. Smith's approach was different. She begins "Beachy Head" from a lofty vantage point and presents a vast landscape. But soon, she goes very close to nature and gives detailed descriptions of even the minute features of nature, as Stuart Curran points out, "the speaker becomes so radically close to nature that it presents an 'uncanny particularity' with the minute features of the natural world" (Curran xxvii). In addition, Smith uses literary terms like alliteration to poeticise the biological terms. In the passage about a finch and a linnet (mentioned earlier), the "tassels" are "tangling," the "bryony" is "bittersweet," and the "dew" fills the "bindweed" (ll. 351-353). Readers get the impression that the scene is naturally tangling. With this, the words are tangling also, through alliteration and the natural rhythm of Smith's writing.

As Smith does not ignore wild flowers or weeds, she also does not miss to highlight the dark areas in nature that are often hidden from humanity and generally ignored by writers. In the lines, "warrens, and heaths, / And yellow commons, and birch-shaded hollows" (ll. 347-8), "warrens and heaths" and the "birch shaded hollows,"- both areas are dark and unnoticed by humanity. However, these are contrasted with the bright and well-lit "yellow commons,". In the end, the section returns to the darkness in the "o'ershadowing woods of beech" (l. 356). Throughout "Beachy Head", her balanced attitude towards the noticeable and unnoticeable spaces of nature has made her

descriptions both sustainable and reproducible in a way that her poetry has drawn so many readerships.

One unique aspect of Charlotte Smith's poems is the presence of the speaker in various scenes. Throughout "Beachy Head", there is the frequent use of the pronoun "I". For example, the poem begins with the lines, "o'er the channel rear'd, half way at sea … I would recline; while Fancy should go forth" (ll. 2-4). These mark the beginning of her imagination. A little later, she writes that she "once was happy," "love[d] these upland solitudes," and that she "loved to trace the brooks" (ll. 281-283). The significance of this subjective approach is that she can connect her consciousness with her passion for nature. This approach was more common in major Romantic writers. Besides, when she writes that her memory "contrast[ed]" and "compar'd" the "polluted smoky atmosphere" with what she had seen or she could remember, she actually brings her consciousness to the foreground and compares the natural realities before her with her imagination and memory. This very presence of the speaker is a technique rare among natural history writers.

In other poems of Smith, also, the natural scenes presented are both localised and intricate. Besides, in some poems, she makes use of taxonomy. For instance, a poem titled "Flora" contains a lot of Latinised names of plants and flowers but it does not cause the poem to lose its poetic identity. "Flora" is instructive in taxonomy though not very rich in description. It contains names and short descriptions of enormous varieties of plants. A similar focus is found in another poem of Smith titled "Studies by the Sea". Smith presents the richness of sea life and includes many unusual aspects not often found in poetry. There is another poem by Smith titled "Horologe of the Fields" where she makes a survey of various species of plants in the fields and gives such detailed information rarely appear in poetry. For example, in her description of a Goarsbeard, she shows

the flower as spreading "its golden rays, / But shuts its cautious petals up, / Retreating from the noon-tide blaze" (ll. 40-42). The lines reflect the dichotomy of a flower that shies away from the "golden rays" of the sun because it blazes at noon; but also needs the sun to survive.

So, it is almost a common pattern of Smith's poetry that she begins from a popular and literary perspective though gradually, tries to incorporate her scientific observations into the poems. There might be dual purposes of this approach. Firstly, like other naturalists, she aims to write more biologically accurate poetry; secondly, she wants to be didactic in an amusing way so that her readers are both entertained and enlightened about even the minute details of nature. However, she expresses this didactic function more clearly in her works outside of poetry. In fact, she produced a number of prose works with a view to educating young people. The most mentionable among these is *Dialogues Intended for the use of Young Persons* where Smith expresses her desire that young people should take an interest in the field of natural history and the older ones should mentor them. A section of dialogue is presented below:

> Caroline: I hope she won't torment all the world with her knowledge, as Mrs. Tanfy does; who has been reading botanical books, till she fancies herself able to talk of such things with everybody, and worries one with something about petals, and styles, and filaments, and I know not what jargon.
>
> Mrs. Woodfield: It would not be jargon, if she understood it herself, and addressed it too; but, unhappily, neither of these is the case. She talks, as many other people do, in the hope of being thought wise; but of those to whom she happens to address herself, some suspect that she is mad, and all are sure she is tiresome… (Smith 85).

Caroline suggests that women can actually study subjects like botany and not "torment all the world with her knowledge". Smith, however, makes a bolder claim through Mrs. Woodfield that if women were educated and if they understood the language of the fields like botany, they would talk about it intelligently.

The book *Dialogues Intended for the use of Young Persons* is in narrative form. The dialogues are extended, didactic by nature and sometimes, even forced. Nevertheless, while learning natural history from a textbook might be boring for the children, learning the same from such dialogues should be entertaining for them. In the early part of the book, there is an example of a didactic dialogue:

> Henrietta: Mamma! Do you know, that, in my garden, there is a plant coming out, full of deep red blossoms; there are even one or two little flowers blown, and they smell delightfully.
>
> Mrs. Woodfield: It is the Mezerian; and is of the same species of plant as that beautiful Daphne Noruna, or garland…
>
> Henrietta: So it is mamma; I declare now I recollect they are very much alike. Oh! how delightfully every thing begins to spring in the hedges. Here are the golden cups!
>
> Mrs. Woodfield: No; it is a Pilewort. If you observe the leaves, they are more pointed than the flower you call a golden cup… (Smith 31)

This dialogue between Henrietta and Mrs. Woodfield is both informative and educational. Children may learn to identify and classify plants from the colour and shape of their leaves. They

may also learn about the species of these plants. Thus important information about certain plants is transmitted from the writer to the reader through a lively discussion.

The unique approach to use dialogues to classify dozens of flowers, identify how their habitats are and share many other natural history lessons make Charlotte Smith's *Dialogues* an exceptional kind of natural history writing. Such didactic writing helps young readers to enrich their minds with important concepts about nature. For example, they may learn to appreciate the importance of wild flowers or weeds from Smith's words, "all flowers are wild in some quarter of the world" and that "many of the most curious and beautiful plants" are considered wild (Smith 33). Therefore, Smith emphasises the intrinsic value of plants irrespective of how useful they are for mankind.

Charlotte Smith's work was crucial in ushering a new trend of studying nature. She wrote not only to satisfy those who loved nature but also for those who wanted to gain objective knowledge about nature. Her minute observations of nature, scientific analysis of flora and fauna and deep and subjective appreciation of the natural world make her writings suitable for all who love the natural world and are interested in the intricate working of its various organic parts. In doing this, she pioneered a paradigm shift in the field of natural science. Earlier, scientists had adopted a dominant and sexualised approach in their study of nature by applying "a masculine science founded on torture, cruelty, and rape" (Lussier 169). While Western science, through its masculine approach, had brought about the "death of nature" (qtd. in Hutching 185), Charlotte Smith revived it through her loving and caring observations of nature and inculcating in her readers what may be called informed love.

4.6 An Ecofeminist Study of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*

Mary Shelley, the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, was a novelist and one of the very few female writers of the English Romantic period. Among her novels, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) may be viewed as an allegory of the consequences of man's attempt to master nature. The writing of the novel was the result of a competition among Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron to see who could write the best horror story. Mary Shelley thought for days and finally had the idea of a scientist who created life and was horrified by his own creation. In the story, Victor Frankenstein is a scientist who excels in chemistry and other sciences and thus learns the secret technique to impart life to non-living matters. He undertakes the creation of a human-like creature by collecting old body parts of human beings. He works feverishly for months and ends up creating the Creature that is about 8 feet tall and proportionately large. Although Victor's initial purpose was to create something beautiful, the Creature turns out to be a hideous one. It had dull and watery eyes and yellow skin- so thin that it could hardly conceal the blood vessels underneath. Victor is both repulsed and horrified by the Creature and flees his home.

In spite of his ugliness, the creature had a conscience and a good mind to live a normal social life and do good things for others. Living secretly beside a family in a forest, he tries to help them by collecting firewood for them or clearing snow away from their path. He also rescues a child who falls into a river. But all these attempts only backfire as people react cruelly to his good deeds. His ugly and fearful look is the reason that he arouses hatred, horror and disgust in people's minds. Disgusted with his own looks, he holds Victor responsible for his wretchedness and vows revenge to make Victor's life miserable. He also develops a general antipathy against mankind and embarks on a killing spree mainly to make Victor suffer terribly. Thus, the Creature kills Victor's younger

brother William, Victor's friend Clerval and most importantly, Victor's finance Elizabeth. Victor also loses his father who cannot accept Elizabeth's death. However, the Creature would not go this far if Victor agreed to his request to create a female partner for him. Although Victor is first convinced by the Creature to create that female partner, he abandons the idea fearing the breeding of a race that could wreak havoc upon mankind. Finally, Victor decides to terminate his creation and pursue the Creature through Europe. He keeps chasing him up to the North Pole where he is just one mile away from his target. But things get worse as Victor falls sick and dies while conveying some words of wisdom to Captain Walton. It is Victor's ultimate learning that human beings should avoid ambition and find happiness in tranquility. Next, Walton sees the Creature mourning over his creator's body. He tells Walton about his immense solitude, suffering, hatred, and remorse. And Victor's death has not brought him the peace that he thought he would have. Rather, the crimes he has committed have made him even more miserable than his creator ever was. It is now time for him to kill himself and he departs for the northernmost ice to die.

In the novel, the Creature may be identified with Primitivism. As Walton has the first sight of him from a distance of half a mile, his immediate impression is that the Creature is 'a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered isle' (qtd. in Bate 50). In contrast, Frankenstein is a European with a cultivated mind. So, he may be identified with the state of Enlightenment. Since Primitivism is a key component of this research work, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* might reflect how nature reacts if the state of nature is violated. From the modern ecological perspective, this might be a call to strengthen the bond between human beings and nature. More importantly, the book might also anticipate the relatively new branch of ecology known as "Ecofeminism".

To begin with, Frankenstein has a Rousseauesque childhood amidst the beautiful nature of Geneva in Switzerland. But soon he falls into scientific knowledge and gradually becomes a scholar of Chemistry and some other sciences. His ambition to conquer nature may be compared with that of Sir Humphry Davy. Jonathan Bate believes that Mary Shelley probably read Davy's *Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry* (1802) where he writes how chemistry has gifted its practitioners the "almost" "creative" power and what the right attitude should be of its scholar towards nature. According to Davy, chemistry has bestowed upon man:

> an acquaintance with the different relations of the parts of the external world; and more than that, it has bestowed upon him powers which may be almost called creative; which have enabled him to modify and change the beings surrounding him, and by his experiments to interrogate nature with power, not simply as a scholar, passive and seeking only to understand her operations, but rather as a master, active with his own instruments. (qtd. in Bate 50)

Frankenstein's journey in the realm of science is from outdated alchemical fancy to skeptical Enlightenment (embodied in Krempe, his first university teacher) to chemistry (embodied in his ideal teacher Waldman). When he starts his higher education which is aimed at mastery over nature, his mother dies and he leaves his home. Through this, Mary Shelley sets science in opposition to maternity and natural landscape. In other words, Frankenstein's bond with his biological mother and mother nature is severed. This theme of separation from nature reappears when Frankenstein confines himself in his laboratory by cutting himself off from the Swiss Alps.

There are several ironies presented at this point. Frankenstein attempts to create a human being inside his laboratory. This is like creating a new nature by transgressing against nature. Besides,

Frankenstein often mentions the idea of light-bringing through his application of Enlightenment science. Quite contrarily, his final creation of the Creature happens on a dark and dreary night of November. Shelley also presents the first appearance of the Creature as the opening of the "dull yellow eye" that Frankenstein sees "by the glimmer of half-extinguished light" (Bate 51). Thus, Enlightenment turns out to be endarkening. The episode is just the beginning of all the consequences that Humphry Davy's so-called mastery over nature may bring in.

Immediately after this extraordinary event, Frankenstein has a nightmare. He dreams that he kisses his beautiful beloved Elizabeth but on kissing her, she, quite horribly, turns into the corpse of his dead mother. This might serve as another warning to Frankenstein that close association with Enlightenment science which aims at dominating and violating nature, can make man insensitive to it. Jonathan Bate offers an explanation for this scary dream of Frankenstein, "by going against the natural process of generation, by making a child of his own without submission to the fecundity of a woman's womb, he symbolically kills mother nature" (Bate 51). So, the act of creating a humanlike creature in his laboratory is tantamount to killing nature itself because it is "against the natural process of generation".

There are several occasions when Frankenstein has opportunities to return to the laws of nature, reverse the process of regeneration and stop all the damages from occurring. The Creature who represents the state of nature is not harmful at the beginning. He retreats to the forest where he lives on berries and shades himself from the sun- a life that reflects the life of Rousseau's natural man. Frankenstein re-encounters the Creature in the beautiful natural landscape of Chamounix where he declares, "There can be no community between you and me" (Bate 54). This definitely pushes the Creature to degeneration and malignancy. The denial of Frankenstein is also

reminiscent of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner who breaks the principle of community by killing the albatross and thus violating the contract of mutual dependency in nature's realm. There is a second chance for Frankenstein to save the Creature from degeneration when the latter requests a mate from his desire to form a community of his own and also to "become linked to the chain of existence" (Bate 53). What he requests to his creator is as follows:

> If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again: I will go to the vast wilds of South America. My food is not that of man; I do not destroy the lamb and the kid to glut my appetite; acorns and berries afford me sufficient nourishment. My companion 'will be of the same nature as myself, and will be content with the same fare. We shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man, and will ripen our food. The picture I present to you is peaceful and human, and you must feel that you could deny it only in the wantonness of power and cruelty. (Bate 53)

Thus the Creature, in a very moving manner, swears that he will do no harm to any species and live in the state of nature with his beloved partner. In summary, he wishes to live a life as prescribed by Coleridge and Southey in their ideal pantisocratic community.

Wavering between denial and approval, Frankenstein finally disapproves of the Creature's request and abandons his half-done project by dismembering the female-body of his second creation. This, not only is a denial of the Creature's urge to live a life of primitive man, but also a negation of the natural process of regeneration which the Creature and his mate would possibly do if the latter could come to life. This triggers the Creature's sense of vengeance and he reacts by killing people whose lives really mattered to Frankenstein. Allegorically, the Creature at this stage may be compared with a repressed nature that returns to wreak havoc upon the society that repressed it.

The Creature's acts of vengeance may be studied from an Ecofeminist perspective as well. Ecofeminism is defined as the "discourse which addresses the causes and effects, the strengths and the dangers, of the traditional personification of Nature as mother" (Bate 75). Frankenstein commits a crime against nature as well as womanhood when he makes a child "without the submission to the fecundity of a woman's womb" (Bate 51). The male scientist, thus, ignores the power of womanhood and suffers as a result of this. Next, Frankenstein literally represses women when he dismembers the female partner of the Creature. By repressing the female in this way, Frankenstein unleashes the destructive power lodged in nature. The Creature, as a repressed nature, also represents this destructive force of nature.

Moreover, the postcolonial concept of "Otherness" can also be used as a tool to evaluate the novel. Actually, the "self/other" binary is central to the novel's plot. For the Enlightenment scientist Frankenstein, the Creature who represents primitive nature is the other. Again, nature which is often seen as a female entity is the other for the male scientist. To almost all the European characters in the novel, the Creature is clearly the other because of his ugly appearance. One rare exception is De Lacy, the blind old man who is not aware of the Creature's appearance. The hearty conversation between him and the Creature makes the Creature feel secure as he delightfully says, "you raise me from the dust by this kindness; and I trust that, by your aid, I shall not be driven from the society and sympathy of your fellow creatures" (Shelley 113). However, when the Enlightened, those who can see (Felix, Safie and Agatha), return, things turn violent and they drive him out. Even Frankenstein himself is shocked and horrified seeing the Creature's overall appearance and abandons him. On another occasion, the Creature rescues a child who fell into a river. As a return to this favour, the girl's father shoots him in the shoulder because he apprehends that the Creature intends to harm them. Thus, the treatment that the Creature gets from all the white

Enlightened Europeans surrounding him mirrors the general attitude of the Europeans towards the Other. Mary Shelley probably wants to convey the message that such an attitude has been destructive to the Self as well as to nature.

To sum up, in *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, Mary Shelley touches upon some crucial points relevant to the field of modern-day ecology. The novel shares some crucial insights relevant to the relationship between man and nature. First of all, the progress in any particular branch of science should be in line with the laws of nature. Only then, the growth or development is sustainable. Violation of the laws of nature brings destruction to nature and to man himself in the long run. Second, the role of humans in the man and nature relationship should not be of dominance; it should rather be what may be called "peaceful coexistence". Treating nature as the Other and trying to dominate it, might prove harmful for both man and nature. And the last is the Wordsworthian view that "Nature" is the mother of man. This female aspect of nature must be loved and respected. Ecofeminism narrows down anthropocentrism to androcentrism as the ultimate reason behind the destruction of nature. So, any androcentric attitude towards nature should be reconsidered or stopped and man should proceed to deal with nature with love and respect as he feels for his mother or the women in his life. Only then, nature will continue to exist with all her beneficial influences on man.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

5.1 Key Findings

From an environmental perspective, the Romantic canon is essential to learning the interconnectedness between the human and the non-human. English major Romantics and also their contemporary lesser-known writers lived and wrote at a time when a lot had already happened or was happening in England and in other parts of Europe which had their bearings on nature. The Industrial Revolution was probably the most influential among them. Besides, the attitude towards wilderness had changed; anthropological and scientific developments had enlightened curious minds with new understandings about the natural world; Primitivism as a parallel phenomenon with Romanticism, was promoting the value of living in the state of nature, living conditions in cities was worsening because of urban sprawl, Church authorities were exercising political dominance to promote the interest of the king, and England, like many other European nations were establishing colonial dominance over many non-European nations. The writers were well aware of all these developments which influenced their treatment of the natural world in their writings. Besides, the organic connectivity that they developed with the natural world caused concerns for its well-being and an urge to preserve it. Actually, it was an era in the history of nature when the natural world was mostly in its pure and pristine form, although there were threats looming it. As a result, love for sublime nature and concern for its preservation equally dominated the Romantic mind.

5.1 (a) Primitivism and Romanticism

Among the influences mentioned above, Primitivism was unique in the sense that it, to a large extent, shaped Romantics' views about nature. Their deistic beliefs, their love for pure and pristine nature, their love for the past, and their rejection for modern, mechanical and materialistic life- all had their roots in Primitivism. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who practiced and promoted various traits of Primitivism, was the source of inspiration for most Romantics. He was behind the deistic beliefs of English Romantics. Gllbert F. LaFreniere recognises Rousseau's "contribution to the deistic nature worship which formed a powerful current in the Romantic Movement" (42). Romantics also learnt the value of the preservation of nature and its connection with humanity from Rousseau, "he [Rousseau] is recognized as an important defender of nature for its value to humanity" (LaFreniere 42). Finally, the exploration and celebration of human-nature relationship, so commonly found in Romantic canon also came from Rousseau as Sara Wellman writes in her doctoral thesis, "Even before the formal emergence of ecocriticism, studies of works like *Julie, Émile*, and *Les Rêveries du Promeneur Solitaire* noted how these texts moved nature into the foreground in unprecedented ways, redefining the human-nature relationship" (156). About fifty years later, English Romantics picked these up. In most of their works, nature occupied the central position and the human-nature relationship received new dimensions.

The point where Romanticism and Primitivism converge is love for nature. This thesis claims that English Romantics were deeply influenced by Primitivism. However, the nature of this influence was varied. For example, William Wordsworth embraced Primitivism in its literal sense. He took it from Rousseau. In fact, Rousseau had a general influence on all the English Romantics. But his influence on William Wordsworth, among all the Romantics, was probably the strongest. In

Romantic England, Peter Quennell writes how Wordsworth, at the age of 21, followed Rousseau "Wordsworth was both an enthusiastic republican and an ardent follower of Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (66). About Rousseau's influence on Wordsworth, he further adds:

> Wordsworth, though he discarded his social doctrines once the French Revolution had released some of those doctrines in a peculiarly violent form, never quite outgrew the influence of Rousseau's poetic sensibility. It haunts the pages of *The Prelude* and all his finest youthful poems. He, too, had known the mysterious state of being experienced by Rousseau on the Isle of St. Pierre. (171)

If Wordsworth followed Primitivism in a literal sense, John Keats embraced it in an aesthetic sense. His Hellenism is the result of his deep love for Greek culture and the Greek spirit that pervades many of his poems. Keats did not know the Greek language but he read the translations of Greek classics; for example, the translation of Chapman's Homer, the Classical Dictionary by Lempriere, and Greek Sculpture. The direct influence of his knowledge of ancient Greece is found in *Endymion,* "Lamia" and "Hyperion" as these poems are based on Greek legends. Besides, in "Ode to Psyche" and "On a Grecian Urn", the subjects are avowedly Greek. In "On a Grecian Urn", in particular, the poet transports himself to the time when "the leaf-fringed legends" (l. 5) of Greece as depicted on the urn were alive, The other poem "On Seeing the English Marbles" records Keats' awe at the sculptured wonders of ancient Greece. However, the strongest factor in Keats' Hellenism was probably the Greekness of his mind. Firstly, as it is evident from the art and literature of Greece that they were lovers of beauty, so was Keats. A passionate pursuit of beauty and the resultant sensuous joy is the soul of his poetry. Secondly, it is very rare to find any spiritual and philosophical messages in Greek poetry. Similarly, Keats' poems, too, are not often burdened

with any philosophical or spiritual messages. He drew unalloyed pleasure from nature through his senses. And his pure and intense sense of beauty overpowers all other aspects of his poems.

Finally, Coleridge and Blake also followed the ideals of Primitivism but in metaphorical senses. In the third chapter of this research work, their concerns for the "Other", especially the Africans have been elaborately discussed. Since their contemporary phenomenon Primitivism itself was an othering process, it could be that their sympathy for the primitive other was the reason behind their advocacy for the African "Other". So, the two hundred dead bodies of mariners lying on the deck in "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" can be a metaphorical presentation of the dead Africans brought as slaves to England. Or, the urge to be free from the white and black cloud in "The Little Black Boy" reflects Blake's vision of a society free from evils like slavery and racism.

Romantics also responded to the calls made in Primitivism to return to the state of nature. William Wordsworth practiced it in his own life by deciding to abandon city life and live at Grasmere in the Lake District for the rest of his life. Coleridge and Robert Southey planned to establish Pantisocracy, a small community to live in close affinity with nature, on the bank of the river Susquehanna. While there were such examples of embracing life amidst nature, there was also a similar urge shown by other Romantics through their works. Keats's desire to live the world with the nightingale or Shelley's urge to the west wind to imbue him with a new life- all are in the same direction to be in close communion with nature. The lesser-known writers also preferred to have lived very close to nature. John Clare and Robert Bloomfield were both peasants. Gilbert White devoted his life as the reverend of a parish Church and Charlotte Smith lived an impoverished life.

Romantics were known for their great receptive attitude. The abundance of non-European elements in their works is a proof of their non-Eurocentric mentality. This might have been linked with

Primitivism again. As a result of the English colonial projects in Asia and Africa, Romantics gathered direct or indirect experiences of Oriental life and people. For example, Lord Byron traveled to the East and had first-hand experience of Oriental life and culture. Other Romantics learnt about these naturally rich places from their readings of travelogues and the translations of Oriental literature. These provided them with another version of Primitivism which they appreciated, embraced and even glorified in their works. They were impressed not only by the natural richness of these places but also by their mystic beliefs centered around nature. Unlike most Europeans, Romantics sympathised with life, people and nature in all these places and this sympathy and appreciation found ways in their literature.

To sum up, Primitivism in its different manifestations continued to impress the writers of the Romantic period and deepen their love for the natural world. In their lives and in their works, they celebrated its sublimity, its purity, its sacredness and above all, its influence on the mind and the soul.

5.1 (b) Bridging the Self and the Other

The traditional way of considering nature as the "other" is the root cause behind environmental degradation and destruction. Jonathan Bate writes in *The Song of the Earth*, "Once nature is the "Other", man can advance with scant regard for it" (Bate 35). This was the prevailing attitude before the English Romantics. Pioneers or tradition-setters like Francis Bacon in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, through his empiricism, René Descartes, in the 17th century, through his philosophical concept of a mechanistic, clock-work universe inhabited by thinking subjects and Isaac Newton, in late 17th and early 18th centuries, through his physics and natural philosophy,

firmly marked off subjective world of human beings from the external realm of objects. They promoted the view that human beings are radically separate from nature and their proper role is to dominate nature and to become the masters and possessors of the natural world. This may result in sheer objectification and instrumentalisation of nature. Mark Lussier expresses this concern as he blames empirical science for reducing "nature to inanimate matter, allowing it to function simply as grist for the mill of the industrial revolution" (49). Jonathan Bate considers this apartness from nature as "the prime cause" behind "the degradation of nature" (Bate 36). So, the subject/object dualism that empirical science creates is really dangerous for nature.

This research work has explored the unique tendency of English Romantics to bridge the binaries. They used their imagination to connect their "self" with the "other". As a result, the subject/object dualism was completely removed. In some of the poems, the "self" is found to be dissolved into nature. This idea of being one with nature is in Keats and Wordsworth, and also in the nature-philosophy of Coleridge. It was the Romantics' way of acknowledging nature's superiority. Wordsworth's pantheism was a belief in the same direction. This highly individualistic way of othering made the Romantics judge the natural world from a completely different perspective. Nature became a part of their "self" or vice-versa. They considered Nature's well-being as their own well-being. Such belief was there in John Clare and Charlotte Smith as well. Clare personified different objects of nature and made them tell their own stories of victimisation. Smith, in her *Elegiac Sonnets*, wanted to overcome her personal sorrow and grief by being a part of Nightingale's life. By bridging the binaries, the Romantics assumed the stewardship of nature and took it upon themselves to speak for its preservation.

5.1 (c) From a General Sense of Preservation to the Preservation of Nature

In the third chapter of this thesis, it is shown how preservation as a theme appears and reappears in the Romantic canon. For example, the ancient mariner survives and acts as a preserver of the lesson he has learnt or the speaker in "Introduction" of "Songs of Innocence" writes down his songs so that all can read. The idea of preservation had been there in the collective mind of the major Romantics. The key behind this was their individualism which induced them to look upon and react differently to their contemporary social, political and religious developments. French Revolution and its failure, industrialisation, urbanisation and the corruption of the Church- all played on their mind and made them adopt a conservative attitude towards life. This general sense of preservation ultimately drew them towards the preservation of their natural surroundings.

The concern for the well-being of the natural world and the advocacy for its preservation are recurrent ideas in the works of both the major and minor Romantics. They had their distinctive ways of expressing these ideas. For example, Wordsworth's delight at the unchanged appearance of nature surrounding the Wye River, after a gap of five years, is evident in his repeated use of "again" in the first stanza of "Tintern Abbey". In fact, Wordsworth even raised his voice and attempted what may be called "environmental activism". In 1844, he conducted a campaign to keep the railways from entering and affecting the inner sanctum of the Lake District. The exact place was a mile above Bowness along the shore of Windermere. In addition to this physical protest, he also tried to touch the conscience of people and raise awareness in them through his sonnet "On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway":

> Plead for thy peace, thou beautiful romance
> Of nature; and, if human hearts be dead,

Speak, passing winds; ye torrents, with your strong

And constant voice, protest against the wrong. (ll.11-14)

Coleridge in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" emphasises the value of preservation, first, by allegorically presenting the terrible consequences of destroying nature's creatures. The sufferings of the sailors and their subsequent deaths were because of the killing of the albatross. Again, by demonstrating his heartfelt love for the water-snakes and deep appreciation for their beauty, the protagonist is finally able to re-establish the bond or the organic connectivity between himself and nature.

In John Clare's poems, the idea of preservation of nature features as the most dominant theme. Clare raised his voice in reaction to the enactment of the Enclosure Acts by the Government. His environmental activism was through his poetry. He adopted the unique style of speaking through the voices of the victims of this Government decision, such as his locality Helpston, an oak tree or a well. Such activism should have touched the hearts of the readers and created a similar urge to preserve every single object of nature irrespective of its instrumental value.

Finally, concern for the preservation of nature was magnified to the level of apocalypse by Romantics like Byron and Blake. Byron's "Darkness" and Blake's *Jerusalem* present bleak pictures of the global destruction of the natural world and mankind. The all-important message that both poems convey is that the apocalypse, which was earlier thought of as an inscrutable act of God, can also be the result of indiscriminate despoliation of nature by human beings. Both the poems serve as warnings for the future of mankind especially, if they do not care for the preservation of nature.

5.2 The Possible Contributions of this Study

Environmental degradation is now a global concern. In developed countries, technology and industrialisation are the two evils causing irreparable damage to the environment. In third-world countries, uncontrolled population growth, poverty and lack of management are polluting and worsening the environment. The rising sea level, greenhouse effect, and global warming- all have become major issues worldwide. It is true that scientific measures can prevent further deterioration of nature and efforts are being made in this direction as well. However, efforts done do not seem enough to stop this slide.

At this juncture, literature has a crucial role to play. The function of literature is to appeal to the heart and conscience of the reader. And, this is the need of the moment. Looking at the "horrendous environmental problems" (qtd. in Roe 199), James McKusick also felt that more than a "quick technological fix", the actual solution lies in "a fundamental change in human consciousness" (200). So, any literary research aiming at the preservation and conservation of nature can make a vital contribution to the environmental movement of the present world.

Since this research work brings both Romanticism and Primitivism under the same umbrella, it has more potential to address environmental issues. Romantic poetry as a genre and Romanticism as an aesthetic philosophy are timeless. Romantic poetry has been studied and re-studied by generations of readers and is being studied even today. Any message conveyed through it definitely has the potential to reach a greater audience than any other literature possibly has. Moreover, poetry, itself, is a genre with a unique quality which according to Heidegger is a "peculiar power to speak the 'earth'" (qtd. in Bate 251). Besides, because of its rhythmic and mnemonic intensity, a poem becomes an efficient system for recycling the richest thoughts and feelings of any

community. As it is read and re-read, the energy is renewed and spread through the community. Finally, the Romantics must be appreciated for the way they articulated the relationship between the internal and external world or between being and dwelling. The language is often exceptionally lucid and even provocative.

Primitivism complements Romanticism and teaches the readers the value of living in the state of nature. At the same time, it also makes the readers aware of the corrupting influence of civilisation. The objective behind including Primitivism is not to think of the impossible; that is to return to the primitive way of life. Rather, the inclusion of Primitivism is mainly to explore how it shaped the Romantics' idea of interconnectedness between the human and the non-human and how it led the Romantics to preservation. In fact, studying only the major Romantics will not give a complete picture of the nature-thoughts prevailing during that period. Primitivists and lesser-known writers should also be studied in conjunction with the canon to effectively address modern environmental issues.

5.3 Limitations of This Study

Since this study includes major Romantics, non-canonical writers and primitivists, the scope of research would be too vast to cover. Hence, I have narrowed down the scope and included only the major representative works of these writers. The research on minor Romantics is an emerging field. I could not access the archival manuscripts needed to justice to these other Romantics outside the canon.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

It is true that there has been a lot of research done on the works of major Romantics. However, the literature and the artworks of the primitivists and also the literature of the lesser-known writers of the same period are still two relatively unexplored areas. It is possible to do more research on them so that more ecological insights can be gleaned and modern-day environmental issues can be more effectively addressed.

WORKS CITED

Abrams, Meyer Howard. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. Oxford UP, USA, 1953.

Ackroyd, Peter. London: The Biography. London: Vintage, 2001.

Alber, Jan. "The Specific Orientalism of Lord Byron's Poetry". *AAA: Arbeiten Aus Anglistik Und Amerikanistik*. Vol. 38, no. 2, 2013, pp. 107–27. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43025854. Accessed 4 May 2024.

Allen, David Elliston. *The Naturalist in Britain*. London: Allen Lane Publishers, 1976.

Baine, Rodney M., and Mary R. Baine. *The Scattered Portions: William Blake's Biological Symbolism*. Athens, GA.: Distributed by the author, 1986. Print.

Bal, Reyyan. *The relationship between the individual and nature in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poems*. MS thesis. Middle East Technical University, 2004.

Bate, Jonathan. *Romantic ecology (Routledge revivals): Wordsworth and the environmental tradition*. Routledge, 2013.

Bate, Jonathan. *The Song of the Earth*. London: Picador, 2000.

Blake, William. "Introduction to the Songs of Innocence." *Poetry Foundation*, 2021, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43667/introduction-to-the-songs-of-innocence. Accessed 7 November, 2021.

---. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. Newly revised edition. Ed. David V. Erdman. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1988.

---. "The Little Black Boy." https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43671/the-little-black-boy. *Poetry Foundation*, 2020. Accessed 5 March, 2020.

---. Blake, William. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O127411/a-negro-hung-alive-by-print-blake-william/1796. Accessed 12 September, 2022.

Boswall, Jeffrey. *Birds for All Seasons*. London: BBC Publications, 1986.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995. Print.

Buell, Lawrence. *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2001.

Burns, Robert. "To a Mouse, On Turning Her up in Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785" and "To a Louse, On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church". *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period*. 8th ed. vol. D. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt and M. H. Abrams et al. New York and London: Norton, 2006, pp. 245-263

Bygrave, Stephen. "Versions of British Romantic Writing". *Romantic Writings*. London:

Routledge, 1996.

Byron, Lord. “Childe Harold's Pilgrimage”. Vol. 2. In: Jerome J. McGann (ed.). *The Complete Poetical Works*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1812, pp. 3-186.

Byron, Lord. “Darkness.” *Poetry Foundation*, 2020. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43825/darkness-56d222aeeee1b. Accessed 13 November, 2020.

Byron, Lord. “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage.” https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5131/5131-h/5131-h.htm. Accessed 12 December, 2023.

Byron, Lord. "Don Juan". Vol. V. In: Jerome J. McGann (ed.). *The Complete Poetical Works*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1819, pp. 1-662.

Byron, Lord. “The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale”. Vol. 3. In: Jerome J. McGann (ed.). *The Complete Poetical Works*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1813, pp. 39-82.

Byron, Lord. “The Bride of Abydos: A Turkish Tale”. Vol. 3. In: Jerome J. McGann (ed.). *The Complete Poetical Works*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1813, pp. 107-47.

Byron, Lord. “The Bride of Abydos.” http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/lord_byron/poems/6016.html. *Famous Poets and Poems*, 2022. Accessed 25 December, 2022.

Byron, Lord. “The Corsair.” https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-corsair/. *Poem Hunter*, 2023. Accessed 2 February, 2023.

Byron, Lord. “The Corsair”. Vol. 3. In: Jerome J. McGann (ed.). The Complete Poetical Works. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1814, pp. 148-214.

Byron, Lord. "Lara: A Tale". Vol. 3. In: Jerome J. McGann (ed.). *The Complete Poetical Works*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1814, pp. 214-56.

Byron, Lord. "The Siege of Corinth: A Tale". Vol. 3. In: Jerome J. McGann (ed.). *The Complete Poetical Works*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1816, pp. 322- 56.

Burns, Robert. “To a Mouse, On Turning Her up in Her Nest with the Plough, November, 1785” and “To a Louse, On Seeing One on a Lady’s Bonnet at Church.” *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period*. 8th ed. vol. D. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt and M. H. Abrams et al. New York and London: Norton, 2006 [1786]. 135–7.

Callicott, J. Baird. “Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair.” The Animal Rights/Environmental Ethics Debate: The Environmental Perspective. Ed. Eugene C. Hargrove. Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 1992. 37–69.

Clare, John. “Helpstone”. *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*. England: Taylor and Hessey, 1821.

Clare, John. *John Clare: Selected Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Merryn Williams and Raymond Williams. London: Methuen, 1986. Print.

Clare, John. "The Lament of Swordy Well". *Selected Poems and Prose of John Clare*. Ed. Eric Robinson and Summerfield, Geoffrey. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.

Clare, John. "The Lamentations of Round-Oak Waters". *Selected Poems and Prose of John Clare*. Ed. Eric Robinson and Summerfield, Geoffrey. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.

Coleridge, Samuel Tailor. "Dejection: An Ode." *Poetry Foundation*, 2023, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43973/dejection-an-ode. Accessed 10 December, 2023.

Coleridge, Samuel Tailor. "Kubla Khan." *Poetry Foundation*, 2023, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43991/kubla-khan. Accessed 6 November, 2023.

Coleridge, Samuel Tailor. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." *Poetry Foundation*, 2023, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43997/the-rime-of-the-ancient-mariner-text-of-1834. Accessed 5 November, 2023.

Curran, Stuart. *The Poems of Charlotte Smith*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Day, Aidan. *Romanticism: The New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Day, Brian J. "The Moral Intuition of Ruskin's 'Storm-Cloud.'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2005, pp. 917–33. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3844621.

Accessed 10 Apr. 2024.

Deatrick, Elizabeth Maria Przybylsk. *Lively Green and Desart Wild: Nature and the Human Imagination in William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (Master's thesis), 2014. doi: https://doi.org/10.14418/wes01.1.1098. Retrieved from https://digitalcollections.wesleyan.edu/object/ir-806. Accessed 23 November, 2021.

Dervin, Daniel. "His Brother's Keeper: A Psychobiography of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (Stephen Weissman) (Book Review)." *The Journal of Psychohistory.* Vol. 20, No. 3. 1993.

Dories, Jeffrey Scott. *An Ecocritical Examination of British Romantic Natural History Writing: The Literature of a Changing World*. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Doctoral Dissertation, 2010.

Empson, William. "The Ancient Mariner". *Critical Quarterly*. Vol. 6. 1964, pp 298-319.

Evelyn, John. *Sylva, or A Discourse of Forest-Trees, and the Propagation of Timber in His Majesties Dominions*. London: Royal Society, 1664.

Georgia, Ada Eljiva. *A Manual of Weeds*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1919.

Glanville, Joseph. *Plus Ultra; or, the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge Since the Days of Aristotle*. London: James Collins, 1668.

Glotfelty, Cheryll. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. University of

Georgia Press, 1996

Gordon, Todd. Kissel, Adam ed. "Lord Byron's Poems Themes". GradeSaver. <http://www.gradsaver.com/lord-byrons-poems/study-guide/themes> Accessed 8 September 2020.

Grant, Douglas. *James Thomson, Poet of The Seasons*. London: Cresset Press, 1951.

Greenblatt, Stephen. (ed). *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 9th Edition. Vol. D. London: W.W. Norton & Company. 2012. Print.

Hargrove, Eugene C. "Animal Welfare Ethics 'versus' Environmental Ethics: The Problem of Sentient Life." The Animal Rights/Environmental Ethics Debate: The Environmental Perspective. Ed. Eugene C. Hargrove.Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 1992. ix–xxvi.

Hess, Scott. *William Wordsworth and the Ecology of Authorship*. University of Virginia Press, 2012.

Ho, Y. C. *Wordsworth's Ecological Concepts* (Unpublished master's thesis), 2002. Retrieved From http://etd.lib.nsysu.edu.tw/ETD-db/ETD-search/view_etd?URN=etd-0902102-183055. Accessed 23 December, 2021.

Huntington, Carlisle. "Can Poetry Save the Earth: A Study in Romantic Ecology". Summer Research. 2017, *Summer Research* https://soundideas.pugetsound.edu/summer_research/295.

Hutchings, Kevin. "Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies." *Literature Compass*, vol. 4, no. 1,

Wiley, Jan. 2007, pp. 172–202.

Hutchings, Kevin. *Imagining Nature: Blake's Environmental Poetics*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002. Print.

Jajtner, Tomáš. *The Lessons of Selborne: Gilbert White's Ruminations on Nature, Humans and the World*, 2016. doi: https://doi.org/10.46585/absa.2022.15.2435. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366483107_Lessons_of_Selborne_Gilbert_White's_Ruminations_on_Nature_Humans_and_the_World. Accessed 4 April, 2024.

Kaya, Hilal. "Two Literary Reactions in the Romantic Period: Romantic Anti-Slavery Idea and Romantic Orientalism in Selected English Romantic Poems". AGATHOS. Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 91-105. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349725749. Accessed 25 February, 2022.

Keats, John. "Ode on a Grecian Urn." *Poetry Foundation*, 2023, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44477/ode-on-a-grecian-urn. Accessed 8 December, 2023.

Keats, John. "Ode to a Nightingale". *Poetry Foundation*, 2020, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44479/ode-to-a-nightingale. Accessed 5 May, 2020.

Kidwai, A.R. *Orientalism in Lord Byron's "Turkish Tales"*. Lewiston and Lampeter: Mellen UP, 1995.

LaFreniere, Gilbert F. "Rousseau and the European Roots of Environmentalism." *Environmental*

History Review, vol. 14, no. 4, University of Chicago Press, Dec. 1990, pp. 41–72. *Crossref*, https://doi.org/10.2307/3984813.

Labriola, Amanda. The Enclosure of Eden: John Clare and the Politics of Place and Past. In BSU Honors Program Theses and Projects. Item 151. Available at: https://vc.bridgew.edu/honors_proj, 2016.

Lee, Debbie. 1998. "Yellow Fever and the Slave Trade: Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'". *ELH.* Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 675-700. The John Hopkins University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030199. Accessed 23 June, 2022.

Levine, Robert. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. W. W. Norton and Company, 2017.

Li-Shu, C. C. "An Ecological Study of Wordsworth's Poetry", pp. 124-129. Retrieved from http://edoc.ypu.edu.tw:8080/paper/dae/. Accessed 30 September, 2021.

Liu, A. *Wordsworth: The Sense of History*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1989.

"Longman Dictionary." *https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/preservation*. Accessed 5 Apr. 2024.

"Longman Dictionary." *https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/conservation*. Accessed 5 Apr. 2024.

Lutts, Ralph H. *The Nature Fakers: Wildlife, Science, and Sentiment*. Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1990.

Malthus, Thomas R. *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970 [1798].

McKusick, James C. "Coleridge and the Economy of Nature". *Studies in Romanticism. Vol.* 35.No.3. Boston University, 1996, pp. 375-392.

McKusick, James C. "Ecology." *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, edited by Nicholas Roe, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 199-218.

McKusick, James C. *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Mellor, Mary. *Feminism and Ecology*. New York University Press,1997.

Mellor, Anne K. *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*. New York and London: Routledge, 1989 [1988].

Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. San Francisco: Harper, 1980.

Modiano, Raimonda. *Coleridge and the Concept of Nature*. Tallahassee:Florida State UP, 1985.

Morton, Timothy. Shelley's Green Desert. Studies in Romanticism. Vol. 35, No. 3. The John Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp. 409-430.

Morton, Timothy. *Shelley and the Revolution in Taste: The Body and the Natural World*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.

Murd , I. A. . “Nature Embraced: An Ecocritical Approach to the Study of Selected Poems by P.B. Shelley”. *Zanco Journal of Human Sciences*, vol. 24, no. 6, Dec. 2020, pp. 258-6, doi:10.21271/zjhs.24.6.19.

Nash, Roderick Frazier. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. Yale UP, 2014.

Ngiewih, Charles T. E. K. E. "John Keats and Nature, an Ecocritical Inquiry" 20th June, 2010. http://www.literature-study-online.com/essays/keats.html. Accessed 6 July 2019.

Oueijan, Naji B. *A Compendium of Eastern Elements in Byrons Oriental Tales*. New York [etc.]: Lang, 1999.

Perkins, David. *Romanticism and Animal Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003.

Pite, R. “Wordsworth and the Natural World”. In S. Gill (Ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth (pp. 180-195). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Quennell, Peter. *Romantic England*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1970.

Ramazani, Abolfazl, and Elmira Bazregarzadeh. "An Ecocritical Reading of William Wordsworth's Selected Poems." *English Language and Literature Studies.* Vol. 4. No.1, 2014.

Reno, Seth T. *Rethinking the Romantics' Love of Nature*. U of New Hampshire P, 2016.

Rigby, K. “Ecocriticism”. In J. Wolfreys (Ed.), *Introducing Criticism at the 21st Century* (pp. 151-178). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002.

Rigby, Kate. *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism*.

Charlottesville and London: U of Virginia P, 2004.

Roe, Nicholas. *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

"Ruskin's Warning to the Industrial World - Watercolour World." *Watercolour World*, 14 Apr. 2023, www.watercolourworld.org/learn-more/features/ruskins-warning-to-the-industrial-world.

Ruston, Sharon. *Shelley and Vitality*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Scott, Heidi. "Apocalypse Narrative, Chaotic System: Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne* and Modern Ecology." *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*, number 56, november 2009, p. 0–0. https://doi.org/10.7202/1001095ar. Retrieved from https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ravon/2009-n56-ravon1503285/1001095ar/. Accessed 10 March, 2024.

Sharafuddin, Mohammed. *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient* London: Tauris, 1994.

Shelly, Mary Wollstonecraft. "Chapter 15". *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*. Retrieved from http://www.literaturepage.com/read/frankenstein-113.html. Accessed 10 May, 2023.

Shelley, Mary. *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. Retrieved from www.gutenberg.org. Accessed 29-3-2020.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "Ode to the West Wind." *Poetry Foundation*, 2022,

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45134/ode-to-the-west-wind. Accessed 7 November, 2022.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "Ozymandias." *Poetry Foundation*, 2020, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46565/ozymandias. Accessed 13 November, 2020.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. "To a Skylark" *Poetry Foundation*, 2020, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45146/to-a-skylark. Accessed 7 November, 2020.

Smith, Charlotte. *Beachy Head, with Other Poems*. London: Printed for the Author, 1807.

Smith, Charlotte. "The Return of the Nightingale". *Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems.* London: Print, 1800.

Smith, Charlotte Turner. "The Horologe of the Field". *Allpoetry.com*. Retrieved from https://allpoetry.com/The-Horologe-Of-The-Fields. Accessed 13 July, 2023.

Smith, Charlotte Turner. *Dialogues Intended for the use of Young Persons*. England: A. Strahan, 1800.

Smith, C. U. M. "Coleridge's 'Theory of Life.'" *Journal of the History of Biology*, vol. 32, no. 1, 1999, pp. 31–50. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4331508. Accessed 7 Apr. 2024.

Schowalter, Timothy D. *Insect Ecology*. 5th ed. Academic Press, 2022.

Volney, C. F. *The Ruins of Empires and the Law of Nature*. Nalanda Digital Library. [1791]. Book

1, Chapters 1–3. <http://www.nalanda.nitc.ac.in./resources/englih/etext-project/history/ruins>, accessed on 2 Nov. 2006.

Weissman, Stephen M. *His Brother's Keeper: A Psychobiography of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Madison: International UP, 1988.

White, Gilbert. *The Natural History of Selborne*. London: Penguin, 1987 [1788–89].

Wolfson, Susan J. "Wordsworth's Craft." *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth*. Ed. Stephen Gill. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Wordsworth, William. "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798". *Poetry Foundation*, 2021, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45527/lines-composed-a-few-miles-above-tintern-abbey-on-revisiting-the-banks-of-the-wye-during-a-tour-july-13-1798. Accessed 23 March, 2021.

Wordsworth, William. "Nutting." *Poetry Foundation*, 2021, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45533/nutting. Accessed 13 February, 2021.

Wordsworth, William. "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood." *Poetry Foundation*, 2021, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45536/ode-intimations-of-immortality-from-recollections-of-early-childhood. Accessed 5 November, 2023.

Wordsworth, William. "On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway". *Internet Archive.* Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/ldpd_6412713_000/page/n1/mode/2up. Accessed

10 January, 2021.

Wordsworth, William. *The Collected Poems of William Wordsworth*. Vol. 2. England: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1995.

Wordsworth, William. *The Poems of William Wordsworth*. Vol. 2. Ed. Smith, Nowell Charles. London, Metheun and Co., 1908.

Wordsworth, William. "The World Is Too Much With Us." *Poetry Foundation*, 2021, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45564/the-world-is-too-much-with-us. Accessed 12 February, 2022.

Worster, Donald. *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995 [1977].