

**Reading of Charlotte Bronte's and Susan Hill's Fiction:
An Ecocritical Approach**

A Thesis

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Certificate

I feel great pleasure in certifying that the thesis entitled “Reading of Charlotte Bronte’s and Susan Hill’s Fiction: An Ecocritical Approach” by Shobha Rani has been successfully carried out under my guidance. She has completed the following requirements as per Ph. D. regulations of the university:

- (a) Course work as per the university rules,
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Abstract

It is a universal truth that the grand design of nature as well as the human society is always in a state of flux. It has always been an interesting task to examine, notice and acknowledge these changes. Recently, a paradigm shift has been observed in the field of contemporary literary studies towards ecological studies. In order to address the issues of endangered environment a new branch of vital literary theory namely Ecocriticism has emerged as a modern ecological literary study wherein the literary critics try to analyze how the association between the natural and the human world has been represented by the writers in their works. It has gained momentum as a result of the disturbing ecological changes and ensuing consciousness that the planet earth is in danger and there is an urgent need to safeguard it. Along with ecocriticism, ecofeminism has also emerged as a vital literary field that primarily focuses upon woman nature association.

The present ecocritical study seeks to explore ecocritical and ecofeminist assumptions in the fiction of the Victorian novelist Charlotte Bronte and the Contemporary novelist Susan Hill. An attempt has been made to explore the perception and interpretation of nature by these two writers. The main focus of this research has been to study the chief tenets of ecocriticism and ecofeminism which forms the theoretical background of this study. It also lays emphasis on the portrayal of man- nature - culture relationship along with man- woman- nature relationship in the fiction of these two writers. Finally, this study has been carried out with a view that as these two writers belong to two different eras so it will be an enlightening effort to examine how the presentation of nature has been taken up more than one hundred years ago and in the contemporary milieu.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism, Nature-culture clash, Woman-nature association

Declaration

I, hereby, certify that the work, which is being presented in the thesis, entitled “Study of Charlotte Bronte’s and Susan Hill’s Fiction: An Ecocritical Approach” in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, carried under the supervision of Dr. Vinita Shukla and submitted to the University of Kota, Kota, represents my ideas in my own words and where others ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. The work presented in this thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any other degree or diploma from any Institutions. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/ source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will cause for disciplinary action by the university and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Shobha Rani

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This is to certify that the above statement made by Shobha Rani, Enrolment No. RS/914/13 is correct to the best of my knowledge.

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Date:

Shobha Rani

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Chapter I

Conceptual Framework

Introduction

It is a universal truth that human society changes with the passage of time. As eras pass away views and ways of literary outputs also change. It is always an interesting task to examine, notice and acknowledge these changes. The present world is passing through serious ecological disasters and environment is now at stake mainly because of man's view that he is the centre of the universe and the natural world around him is the 'other', meant to be tamed and harnessed. The impending dangers of ecological catastrophe have drawn the attention of the global community towards the environment. In the last few decades thinkers, philosophers and critics have become more sensitive towards nature and are trying to focus upon the paramount role of ecology in the sustainable development of the human world.

The decades of 1950s and 60s witnessed a spurt in environmental consciousness among scientists and environmentalist due to widespread natural hazards. Ecological problems like the global warming, depletion of ozone layer, glacial melting, overlapping sea shores, wide spread diseases, population explosion, unmanageable industrial waste, blind colonization of land, reducing forest areas, vanishing flora and fauna, and over all impending nuclear war to which the world is prone sent warning signal to the think tank all over the world. These widespread natural hazards threatened the world and a medium was needed to communicate the situation. It was believed that these problems are anthropogenic. Across the world scientists and scholars showed their serious concern for these ecological changes and tried to save the environment. For this purpose several institutes and agencies came into being as for in 1951 World Meteorological Organization (WMO 1873) became specialized agency of United Nations and in 1957 Global Ozone Observing System was set up. 1957-58 was declared as International Geographical Year and in 1963 World Weather Watch was launched. World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1966 first used the word climatic change. Tropical Cyclone Project (1971), International Assessment

of Global Ozone (1976) and Integrated Global Ocean Services System (1977) was launched by WMO and UNESCO. These agencies played a vital role in raising environmental consciousness among the people.

Literary world was also anxious enough to contribute something towards ecological problems. 1970s witnessed a sudden rise in literary consciousness for environment. Writers wanted to contribute and ecocriticism became their weapon. For the first time William Rueckert broke the ground and coined the term “ecocriticism” in “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” which was published in 1978. He coined and defined ecocriticism and propounded the rules of ecological poetics according to which works of literature are to be written and judged keeping in mind ecological problems. Ecocriticism, no doubt emerged as a product of this dying out environmental scenario and which originated to be the part of solution instead of posing a problem. With this view the ecocritical field was established as a critical discipline in 1996 by *The Ecocriticism Reader* edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. This book inaugurated a section on “eco-theory” and contains path breaking essays which became signposts in the field of ecocriticism. This book calls for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature. Another seminal work which proved to be a milestone in this field was *The Environmental Imagination* (1996) by Lawrence Buell. It established milestone in American nature writing. These works gave birth to the field of ecocriticism, which has now become a recognized discipline. Along with ecocriticism, feminist ecocriticism has also played a significant role in spreading environmental awareness among modern technology driven human beings. Therefore, ecocritical studies in literary fields are seen as a response to the global ecological crisis.

Gradually, these environmental literary theories like ecocriticism and ecofeminism gained momentum as a literary and critical attempt to bridge the gap between the natural and the human sciences because of the segregation of the human from the non-human realm that proved detrimental to the life-support systems of the earth. Moving away from the homocentric model, ecocriticism scrutinizes the literary texts to regain a sense of the inextricability of nature and culture, earth and artifact and consumption and destruction. It views that the text is not a purely cultural object but it affects and is affected by the material conditions of the natural environment. Ecocritics advocate biocentrism and ecocentrism as

opposed to anthropocentrism and egocentrism. They have also tried to work out an eco-poetics or a rule book to analyze literature in environmental terms. Ecofeminism on the other hand seeks to find out the methodologies and framework to expose the various ways in which women and nature are exploited by the patriarchal society simultaneously.

This intersection of environmental study with literature has opened up new dimensions for interpreting literature. Ecocritical canons can be applied to different writers of diverse ages. So for the present study the selected novels of the Victorian novelist Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855) and the Contemporary novelist Susan Hill (1942-) have been taken up to scrutinize them from ecocritical perspective. Charlotte Bronte is hailed as a woman novelist of “intensity of passion and frankness of description” (Hudson, 260). In her work she has dealt with the issues of marginalization of women by raising her voice against their exploitation and suppression in a male dominated Victorian society. Whereas Susan Hill primarily known for her horror fiction, is one of the renowned novelists of the contemporary world. She is famous for “Gothic tales of mystery and doom, ghost stories and children’s stories” (Hill, Louise Mary 137). She is the award winning fiction writer who writes about the countryside village.

A close perusal of Bronte’s and Susan Hill’s fiction reveals that they are environment conscious writers. The novels of these two novelists belonging to two different eras are replete with ecological wisdom. It is the environment which engages their attention and which ultimately goes into the making of their fiction. Their works also foregrounds ecocritical concepts of culture/nature, city/country and male/female binaries. The fact that their works are the literary representations of the natural environment drew the interest of the researcher. Thereby, the idea that gained momentum was that their work can be studied and assessed in the light of ecocritical canons. It was also realized that it will be an enlightening and interesting task to undertake the comparative study of the novelists of two different eras to see that how the concept of environment has changed through the ages and how it has affected the natural and the human domain.

Charlotte Bronte was born in 1816 to Maria Branwell Bronte and Reverend Patrick Bronte. Her father was an Irish stock and was known for his picturesque, free-flowing speech, poetry and imagination. Her mother was a Methodist from Cornwall having literary tests. As sister of Emily and Anne Bronte she was the

third child in Bronte Family. Charlotte, like her sisters, attended the Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge, which forms the model for Lowood in *Jane Eyre*, and which Charlotte largely held responsible for her poor health. She was employed as a teacher from 1835 to 1838 and was subsequently a governess. In 1842 she went to study languages in Brussels, where during 1843 she worked as a teacher. In 1844 she returned to Haworth where she got engaged with a project for a school at Haworth Parsonage. She married Arthur Bell Nicholas in 1854. She suffered from tuberculosis and died before her pregnancy got mature in 1855. Charlotte Bronte's literary output has been quite small but influential. She pioneered the field of novel with *Jane Eyre* in 1847. *Shirley* came in 1849, *Villette* in 1853 and *The Professor* in 1857, posthumously. Her novel *Jane Eyre* has acquired the status of the most widely read English classics. In this novel she created one of the most unforgettable heroines of all the times. Her woman protagonist and other female characters like Bertha have attracted feminist critical attention especially that of Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert who jointly authored *The Mad Woman in the Attic*. Her significance is understood because she is searched through even today, after more than one hundred and fifty years of her death in 1855.

Susan Hill, the contemporary novelist, was born in Scarborough, England on February 5, 1942 to R. H. Hill and Doris Hill. She got educated at grammar schools in Coventry. She read English at King's College, at the University of London, received her B.A. degree in English in 1963, of which she became a fellow. Hill worked as a literary critic for five years for *Coventry English Telegraph* and as a reviewer for various periodicals. She got married to the Shakespearean scholar Stanley Wells in 1975. After this she stopped writing fiction and concentrated on composing radio plays and her monthly column "The World of Books" for *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper. Susan Hill resides in a Gloucestershire farmhouse, from where she runs her own small publishing company named Long Barn Books which edits and publishes the quarterly journal and books.

Her debut novel *The Enclosures* was published in 1961, *Then Do me a Favour* in 1963, *Gentlemen and Ladies* in 1968, *A Change for the Better* in 1969, *Strange Meeting* in 1972, and *The Bird of Night* (Whitbread Award) in 1972. She has to her credit three collections of short stores, including *A Bit of Singing and*

Dancing and a number of stories for children. Her recent work is *The Soul of Discretion* (2014). Susan Hill is known for her fiction *I'm the King of the Castle* which has won the Somerset Maugham Award in 1971, *In the Spring Time of the Year*, *The Women in Black* and *The Beacon*.

Objectives

The present study has been taken up keeping these objectives in mind:

- To study the theoretical background of ecocriticism and ecofeminism which forms the baseline of this research. The focus is on etymology, definitions, history and key concepts of ecocriticism as well as of ecofeminism.
- To explore man - nature - culture relationship in the novels of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill and to examine how anthropocentrism causes crisis of nature and culture
- To discover man's overbearing attitude and retribution of nature.
- To explore woman - nature association and to know how woman is more conscious of environment.
- To expose simultaneous exploitation of woman and nature by androcentric society.
- To study the role of ecology in the aesthetics of narrative art of writers under study.
- To compare the attitudes of the writers towards nature and to draw conclusions locating their similarities and dissimilarities.

Hypotheses

- It is hypothesized that Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill are ecology conscious writers.
- Their novels expose man's anthropocentric attitude towards nature which leads to nature culture clash.
- Their fiction present environmental justice.
- Their fiction presents association of women and nature.
- Their fiction portrays androcentric and patriarchal society that harasses both nature and women.
- Nature is inextricably linked with plot, theme and narrative technique of their fiction.
- Looking at the difference in their age of writing there may be significant similarities as well as differences in their treatment of nature.

Universe of the Research

The present study undertakes an extensive critical analysis of the following major novels of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill:

Charlotte Bronte's fiction:

Jane Eyre (1847),
Shirley (1849) and
Villette (1853)

Susan Hill's fiction:

I'm the King of the Castle (1970),
In the Spring Time of the Year (1974),
The Woman in Black (1983) and
The Beacon (2008).

Introduction to the Primary Sources

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, an introspective novel, was written under pseudonym Currer Bell. It is bildungsroman work recounting the growth of a girl Jane. Her troublesome journey starts at Gateshead hall when she is ten years old. She is mistreated and disliked by Reeds here. At Lowood she spent her time as pupil and somehow survives in the unhealthy atmosphere. Later she takes up occupation of governess at Thornfield hall. She falls in love with her employer Mr. Rochester, a brooding and melancholy figure who hurriedly tries to marry her though he has living wife Bertha. His deceit breaks Jane's heart. In spite of all his arguments she leaves him and goes to Moore house. Gradually, Jane matures and becomes a woman of determination. When John River tries to marry her she firmly denies him. She listens to the voice of crippled Rochester and paying heed to her conscience resolves to return to him. Finally she gets married and stays at Thornfield hall with Mr. Rochester.

Bronte's second novel *Shirley* was published in 1849 though set in the period of 1811-12, the time of depression and Luddite uprising in the textile industry. The novel is set against the backdrop of Yorkshire. In this novel the woman protagonist Shirley finances mill and appoints Robert Moore as in charge of the Hollow's mill. He tries to involve machinery in the mill. Enraged workers who are workless shoot him with pistol. In re-establishing the mill he fully ignores Caroline who loves him secretly. After a lot of upheavals she is married to Robert. On the other hand, wealthy and independent, Shirley is different from Caroline. She loves Louise Moore Robert's brother and marries him. The novel is

unsentimental and portrays love, class conflict and identity crisis. It depicts the tensions of a society facing social and industrial upheavals. It also sketches the impressions of Napoleonic war.

Bronte's third novel *Villette* is based on her own experiences as a governess in Brussels. Here, Lucy Snowe aspires a life in London but she resides at girls' boarding school at the town Villette under the eye of her watchful employer Mrs. Beck. She becomes increasingly isolated in the world governed by societal expectations and struggles to maintain her integrity. Her friend Graham marries Paulina. She faces the pangs of unrequited love. Paul leaves her alone after kindling some hopes in her deserted life. Along with social twists the novel is full of hurricanes and storms.

Contemporary Susan Hill's *I'm the King of the Castle* is a story of childhood cruelty and rivalry. In this novel Edmund Hooper, son of Joseph Hooper wants to dominate over the other child Charles Kingshaw. When the novel opens child Kingshaw comes to Hooper's house with his widowed mother Helena. The whole occurrences take place at decaying Warings, the house of Hoopers which is situated in low lying village Derne. Edmund bullies and taunts Kingshaw who falls weak pray to him. He locks him in a room. Kingshaw tries to leave the house but a crow attacks him. Though Kingshaw helps Hooper when they are caught in Hang woods but Hooper remains unchanged. Hooper blames Kingshaw for having pushed him from top of the Leydell castle. Helena and Joseph ignore rivalry between the two. They force Kingshaw to join Edmund's school which he dreads. Vulnerable and tormented child Kingshaw never likes the closeness of his mother and Edmund's Father who are going to be married. Desperate from everything he leaves the house in morning and drowns himself in the stream and thus commits suicide.

In the Spring Time of the Year (1973) opens with the death of Ben, husband of protagonist Ruth. He is killed by falling of a tree. The novel covers Ruth's eventual emergence from her grief. All through the novel she tries to make sense of Ben's tragic death. The onset of spring restores her mind. The view of the flowers makes her learn that she belongs to society. She rises to help others who are suffering. The novel ends when she has understood the necessity of death and has attained the calm.

The gothic novel *The Woman in Black* was published in 1883. The narrator Arthur Kipps, junior solicitor, is summoned to attend the funeral of Mrs. Drablow who resides in the Eel Marsh house situated at the end of causeway wrapped up in fog and mystery. He goes there and encounters the woman in black with deformed face. He finds out Mrs. Drablow papers in the haunted house. His companion is a dog named Spider. Both of them are caught in the boggy ground. Fog plays trick with him. Keckwick comes to take him from the haunted house. While coming back he comes to know that woman in black is the ghost of Jennet Humfrye whose illegitimate son was snatched and given to Mr. and Mrs. Drablow. Whenever she is seen nearby it is clear that child's death is near as a revenge motive. Terrified Kipps runs back to his home. After a gap of one year suddenly he looks at the woman in black and soon his wife and child are killed in a pony trap and thus the revenge of the woman in black is over.

The Beacon (2008) deals with country life and the issue of legacy of the house. Four Prime children Colin, May, Frank and Berenice are reared by Bertha and John Prime at North Country farmhouse the Beacon, they stay away from one another when they get mature. Colin and Berenice make their living in the local area. May goes to university in London to study. Terrified by the unidentified fears she comes back to settle in her native village. She never gets married. Frank leaves for Fleet Street for a career in journalism. He published a book about his childhood which destroys the reputation of his family. It also disrupts his relation with his siblings. At last he comes uninvited at the funeral of his mother at the Beacon who has left the legacy of the house for him. He decides to stay there for the rest of his life.

Research Methodology

This research is descriptive cum comparative so a close textual study of the selected novels of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill is taken up. Chief theories of ecocriticism and ecofeminism are studied and then applied to the texts of the novels under research. The analysis is carried out theme wise instead of novel wise. The strategy of close and critical perusal of both, the texts as well as the available criticism has been employed as the main research tool to highlight the main arguments of the study. After analyzing the arguments are validated by

valuable critiques. After studying these aspects differences are noted and conclusions are drawn. Documentation, punctuation and formatting of the entire thesis has been carried in accordance to MLA 8th edition.

Survey of the Related Literature

A detail survey of books on ecocriticism has revealed that there has been a spurt in the books on ecology. After 1990s ecocriticism bloomed and every year books were published having ecocritical aspect in them. Jonathan Bate discusses the role of romantics in bringing awareness about environment in *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991). Environmental considerations are also found in Raymond Williams's book *The Country and the City* (1973). Williams finds that to differentiate city from country has been traditional. Arne Naess coins the phrase "deep ecology" in "The Shallow and Deep Long Range Ecology". Naess refutes the idea that creature or beings can be ranked according to their relative value. *The Environmental Imagination* (1996) by Lawrence Buell explores crisis of imagination in representation of nature in the works of Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Carson, Silko and Edward Abbey. Jonathan Bate in *The Song of the Earth* (2000) reads Keats's "To Autumn" and Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" as historical weather recordings. Ecofeminist thinker Val Plumwood in *Environmental Culture* (2002) depicts that how the oldest and greatest fisheries of the world failed and how tropical forests and the agricultural land and its species were lost. Helena Feder in "Ecocriticism, Posthumanism, and the Biological Idea of Culture" considers that human culture collides with nature and it harms nature. In *Feminism and Mastery of Nature* Val Plumwood observes that how humans have brought the nature on the verge of ruin. *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism* edited by Greg Garrard has thirty four essays by prominent and recent scholars Daniel J. Philippon Patrick D. Murphy and Ursula Kluwick which ranges from Renaissance pastoral, Romantic poetry, the modernist novel, and postmodern transgenic art to the genres such as humour, old-time music, children's literature, and digital media and how climate change science exchanges to the public via nonfiction narrative forms such as the documentary, popular science books, and climate change manuals.

The book *Practical Ecocriticism* by Glen A. Love establishes environmental literature in the life sciences. He argues that the biological foundation of human

life plays a big role in the cultural imagination. It brings together the biologist, social scientist, humanist and the ecocritic. The book *Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* edited by Cheyrl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm has trend setter essays by William Rueckert, Annette Kolodny, Alison Byerly and Christopher Lanes. This book not only authorized ecocriticism as a separate, important discipline but also serves as the ground book for ecocriticism. In his book *Ecocriticism* (2004) Garrard Greg points out that new ecocritical canon should include writers like Annie Dillard, Terry Tempest Williams, Barry Lopez, Peter Mathiessen and Garry Snyder. These writers belong to the American ecocritical scene. Richard Kerridge in the essay “Environmentalism and Ecocriticism” evaluates the terms such as environmentalism, ecology, ecosystem, ecological niche, food chain, anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, nature, pastoral and romanticism. In *An Introduction to literary and Cultural Theory* Peter Barry acknowledges various literary and cultural theories.

Feminist Literary Theory edited by Mary Eagleton has essay by Virginia Woolf, Elaine Showalter, Adrienne Rich, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Kate Soper which became the miles stones in feminist literary critique. These essays have seen the place of woman from down trodden to an equal human being like man. *Ecofeminism Women, Culture, Nature* edited by Karren J. Warren has new perceptions on ecofeminist theory and practice which help to understand the power and promise of ecofeminism. Sherry B. Ortner in the essay entitled “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture” (1974) explains the presence of the idea in various cultures that women are subordinate to men as nature is to culture. Annette Kolodny seeks to study feminine conception of environment and gendering of land as female in literature in *The lay of the Land*. She examines constant repetition of the land-as-woman symbolization in American life and letters. *Women and Nature* by Susan Griffin (1978) confirms women nature closeness. Janet Biehl in *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics* (1991) considers that women nature closeness threats to lead the women to go back into the old humiliating position. The collaborative work *Ecofeminism* by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva brings together women’s perspectives from different countries on environmental degradation. They try to make a practical and philosophical approach about the environmental deterioration. They find link between male centric world and environmental destruction.

Harold Bloom's Updated Edition *Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre* contains different types of essays about Charlotte Bronte. It contains significant essay from Sally Shuttleworth, Susan Meyer, Susan Ostrov Weisser, Sandra M. Gilbert, Marianne Thormahlen, Jerome Beaty and Heater Glen. They discuss various aspects of Bronte's writing. Judith O'Neill's *Critics on Charlotte & Emily Bronte* provides the then reviews of the sister's novels. These reviews serve as a document of Victorian Society that how the pioneer novelists were received at that time. Novy Kapadia edited *Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre* provides important critiques by Terry Eagleton, Elaine Showalter and Susan Meyer. Shiv K. Kumar's *British Victorian Literature* provides critical assessments of the Victorian literature. Renowned critic David Cecil's views are expressed in *Early Victorian Novelists*. In this book he explores the writer likes Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot. His critique holds very significant position because it provides deep understanding of these Victorian writers.

Novelists on Novelists Edited by David Dowling has views of the important novelists like Arnold Bennett, T. S. Eliot, Henry James, D. H. Lawrence, Thackeray, Trollope and Virginia Woolf. They express their views on the literary outputs of Charlotte Bronte. Tim Horton in "*Characteristics of English Literature in Victorian Era*" opines that Charlotte Bronte is Wordsworthian in her depiction of nature. She has Sympathy with earth and her narrative technique is also influenced by the natural scheme. Mike Edwards' "*Charlotte Bronte: The Novels*" expresses views upon the various aspects of Bronte's fiction like narrators, characterization and other in his critiques. He established the fact that Charlotte Bronte borrows from the natural plan. Terry Eagleton's "*The English Novel: An Introduction*" expresses the views that Charlotte Bronte's works are caught between country and city. *Shirley* addresses various issues of the Victorian age. Her work is a stand in the shape of women's right to dream. Sally Shuttleworth in "*Charlotte Bronte and Victorian Psychology*" explores the Victorian psychology through Bronte's novels. Self expression was out of fashion for woman at that time.

Contemporary Authors volume 69 throws light upon the biographical and bibliographical details of contemporary writers. It gives significant details of Susan Hill's life. *Modern British Women Writers: An A to Z Guide* edited by Vicki K. Janik Explores the history of Contemporary British Woman Writers. There are

essays on the contemporary authors like Susan Elizabeth Hill, Anita Brookner, A.S. Byatt, Caryl Churchill, Doris Lessing and Virginia Woolf. This book has selected Bibliographical details about the editors and contributors. Sue Mongredien in *The Beacon by Susan Hill* discusses *The Beacon* in detail. Sue expresses her views on almost every aspect of the novel. She compares Susan Hill with Sadie Jones. Sue also comments on the art of characterization in the novel. Anita Sethi in “*I am the King of the Castle by Susan Hill*” says that this novel is a tale of persecution, punishment and exploitation of the weak by the powerful. Hill delves deep in the complex mind of the young people. She exposes vulnerability, tenderness, cruelty and malevolence. In “*The Woman in Black by Susan Hill*” John Mullan says that this is a ghost story and it starts with a storyteller. This novel has a narrative reluctance. Mullan comments upon the author’s art of turning the reader’s expectation into apprehension. “Book Reviews: *I’m the King of the Castle by Susan Hill*”, critique by Gemma Jackson centers around the skill of Susan Hill used in the novel where character of Kingshaw is constantly empathized and his downfall is predictable. In “*The Beacon by Susan Hill*” Hephzibah Anderson specially comments on the nature of all the siblings in the novel *The Beacon*. *Contemporary Women’s Writing* edited by Jane Eldridge Miller provides a bibliographical detail of the contemporary novelist. Review by Maryom “*The Woman in Black by Susan Hill*” opines that Hill’s plot is atmospheric. Contemporary Literary Criticism series (CLC) has the Yearbooks which focus in detail on a given year’s literary activity and highlights a larger number of present noteworthy authors. CLC 4 contains the critical responses to Susan Hill by Michele Murray, Margaret Atwood, Doris Grumbach and James Brockway. Contemporary Literary Criticism accumulated new and old critiques of Susan Hill’s works. CLC 113 has valuable critiques by K.R. Ireland, Mary Jane Reed, Ernest H. Hofer and Rosemary Jackson about Hill’s novels.

The above review of literature reveals that Bronte’s fiction has been examined as rich sites of feminist and realistic discourse and Hill’s fiction as gothic horror tales. A survey of literary works on Bronte and Hill reveals that there is no dearth of critical material available on Bronte but as far as Hill’s criticism is

considered not much work has been done on her. But, by and large *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley* and *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte and *I am The King of Castle, In the Spring Time of the Year*, *The Woman in Black* and *The Beacon* by Susan Hill have not been explored from the angle of ecocriticism. As this study focuses upon the ecocritical perspectives portrayed in the novels of these two writers, it will prove to be a new avenue of research on them. It will certainly add a new dimension to the field of ecocritical study.

Importance of the Present Research

This ecological study is of immense importance in the current scenario of damaged and exploited earth. Literature has always played a powerful role in the intellectual development and perception of a reader. The images of nature as represented in a text can be an important means to enhance our understanding of our relationship with nature. The present study becomes all the more important as it explores the two writers of different eras to examine how the presentation of nature has been taken up more than one hundred years ago and in the contemporary milieu. It also acknowledges the fact that even a creative writer can inspire to protect the flora and the fauna of region by making the reader conscious of their ecosphere.

Ecocriticism is a vital branch of study today hence this study at least, will be a small step in its development as well as a small contribution in the field of ecological research. It also confirms the fact that the field of ecology is not only open for the environmentalists and nature scientists but also for the writers, critics and researchers in humanities. The study highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approach in understanding the interrelationship of various theories and principles of ecocriticism and literature. Moreover, the study will serve the purpose of sensitizing the readers to the ecological issues and concerns.

Outline of the Chapters

Chapter I Conceptual Framework

This chapter contains introduction, objectives and hypotheses of this study. It acknowledges universe of the research and research methodology. It also has

survey of related literature, importance of the present research and outline of the chapters as already discussed in this chapter.

Chapter II Ecocriticism: Roots and Definitions

This chapter throws light on roots and definitions of ecocriticism as well as ecofeminism. It also focuses on the historical aspect of ecocriticism and ecofeminism. It also focuses on the need and applicability of ecological criticism.

Chapter III Man - Nature - Culture

This chapter deals with Nature Culture Clash. It also explores anthropocentric attitude of men towards nature and retribution of nature for its invincible spirit. It also throws light on the way the writers try to strike a balance of nature and culture in their novels.

Chapter IV Man - Woman - Nature

This chapter explores ecofeminist association of nature with woman. It also exposes simultaneous exploitation of nature and woman by androcentric cum patriarchal world.

Chapter V Aesthetics of Eco Narratives

This chapter focuses on the role of ecology in the making of the fiction of the writers under study. It focuses on the influence of geographical places and the influx of seasons in the development of the plot and the themes of these writers.

Conclusion contains the findings of this research as well as the suggestions.

Bibliography contains a comprehensive list of works cited.

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Chapter II

Ecocriticism: Roots and Definitions

Ecocriticism: Origin and Definitions

Etymologically the word “Eco” is derived from the Greek root “*oikos*”, which denotes house. Merriam Webster dictionary describes “eco” as “habitat or environment”. Oxford advance Learner Dictionary describes word “eco” as “combining form” which brings forth new words when other words are added behind it (“Eco” def.). Greek “*kritikos*” means “able to make judgments”. Oxford advance Learner Dictionary describes criticism as “the work or activity of making fair, careful judgments about the good and bad qualities of somebody/something, especially books, music, etc.” Primarily “eco” denotes relation with environment. Words like ecology, ecosphere, ecosystem etc. indicate towards the organism of nature. Word “ecology” designates scientific study of nature. But the word “criticism” indicates literary bent of the term. Therefore, ecocriticism denotes giving “fair, careful judgment” about the “house” or “habitat”. In other words it is environment discussed in literature.

Ecological dialogue gained momentum as a worldwide movement during the last three decades with the growing consciousness towards environmental studies. Amidst environmental hazards when scholars and scientists were working for the well-being of the environment William Rueckert opened the avenue for this new study. It was a sense of concern for environmental degradation and its reflection in literature that have given rise to this new branch of literary theory. In present scenario ecocriticism has reached new heights and have attained worldwide recognition. It has become a new critical theory along with feminism, post colonialism, structuralism and theory of deconstruction. Being an emerging field the scholars are still engaged in developing its nature and scope.

The word “ecocriticism” was coined by pioneer ecocritic William Rueckert in his path breaking essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” (1978) wherein ecocriticism has been defined as “application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature” (107). According to this definition literature must be interpreted in order to know that how ecology exists in

the works of literature. Cheryll Glotfelty aptly defines meaning and scope of ecocriticism. She says, “Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. . . . ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies” (Introduction xviii). Glotfelty’s definition seeks to study the relationship of literature with external environment apart from the mind of author. Richard Kerridge considers that “ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis” (*Writing the Environment* 5). By and large these definitions indicate that ecocriticism finds that how environment exists in literature and how it is responded within a text.

Though ecocritics view representation of nature but it is quite different from Romanticism. According to the views of leading critic Richard Kerridge, ecocriticism is a novel form of “environmentalism” which grew out of the enthusiasm for “wild” nature (*Environmentalism and Ecocriticism* 532). He believes that for an ecocritic concern for ecology is must. The Romantics take delight in nature but ecocritics are duty oriented. Expressing his views about the ecocritics and the Romantics Kerridge opines:

Ecologists set out to reveal the ways in which niches are created, and the chain of dependency that links even the creatures that seem most distant from each other; ecocritics to unmask the dependency between different niches in cultural ecosystems, so that nature will not be seen only as the space of leisure where we entertain Romantic feelings that we must leave behind when we return to work. (541)

In his views ecologists explain that how a perfect space (niche) is smashed for any species and how the creature are interrelated though they may look separate. Ecocritics do not accept nature as a place of mere leisure or solace where one is relieved from stress. The Romantics celebrate the gifts of nature while ecocritics are concerned to preserve nature.

The Romantic may believe in nature as a deity or a sublime power but ecocritics believe in the authentic existence of nature. For an ecocritic nature really exists. Neither it is a superficial entity nor is it reducible to a concept such as Eden, swamp or utopia. They reject the theory of discourse and discard the notion that everything is linguistically constructed. Ecocriticism negates that everything is textualized into discourse because “for the ecocritic, nature really exists, out there

beyond themselves, not needing to be ironised as a concept by enclosure within knowing inverted commas, but actually present as an entity which affects us, perhaps fatally if we mistreat it” (Barry 252). Environmental problems are really teasing and ecocriticism is authentic because it counts the truth of green losses that how far are they true. It finds out the truth of the ecological danger that whether it is a discourse or a truth. Nature really exists so its problems also really exist. Kate Soper asks, “It isn’t language which has a hole in ozone layer?”(151). Greg Garrard considers that it is really challenging for ecocritics to keep one eye on the facts “constructed” and the other on the point that “nature really exists” (*Ecocriticism* 10). So the earth not only exists but all its creatures enjoy equal rights in the eyes of ecocritics.

Ecocritics explore human attitude towards environment. They seriously look for the interconnectedness of the human and the natural world as expressed in a literary text. In other literary studies the critics try to analyze a text in relation to society but ecocritics are concerned not only with the social world but their sense of world includes the entire ecosphere. Glotfelty says, “In most literary theory “the world” is synonymous with society- the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of “the world” to include the entire atmosphere” (xix). Thus ecocritics believe in the interconnectedness of all lives.

Further, ecocritics believe that literature is capable in dealing with the problem of environmental crisis. Rueckert proposed “ecological poetics” and Glotfelty confirmed her beliefs in it (xxiv). They try to find out in what ways and to what effect the ecological crisis is seeping into contemporary literature. They strongly believe that literature can inspire people to improve the earth. Hence, literary ecocriticism offers ecological interpretations of texts to inspire people to resolve ecological issues.

Ecocriticism: Historical Overview

Every movement or discipline has its roots in history. For ecocriticism also it is believed that modern ecocriticism has two main branches. The roots of one are in America and of the other are in Britain. Greg Garrard in *Ecocriticism* gives historical details of American ecocriticism. In his view Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854) can be regarded as the terminus of old world pastoral in American literature because it strikes with both, the technology and the culture. John Muir, Thoreau’s disciple worked hard to establish American culture as representative of wilderness.

His literary work and personal activism resulted in the making of Yosemite National Park and the conservation named “Sierra Club”. He believes in the sublimity of nature and bows before “the vast display of God’s power” (75). He was friendly to flora and fauna and harsh critic of anthropocentrism. He never believed in the maxim that nature is meant to be used by man. For him every creature has intrinsic value. He believed that if war takes place between beasts and man, the lord of earth, he will find himself sympathizing with beasts. Twentieth century nature writing, according to Greg, includes the writings of Mary Austerlitz (1868-1934) Aldo Leopold (1881-1948) and Edward Abbey. Leopold argued, at the end of *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) for the formulation of a bio-centric land ethic which can change the role of homosapiens from conqueror to plain citizen of it. And a member must have respect for fellow members of it. In this community moral consideration is attracted by the community as a whole not by the individuals (80).

British branch of ecocriticism is believed to be descended from Romantics. Works of William Wordsworth, P. B. Shelley, John Keats and William Black gave birth to the nature writings. These were romantic poets who were reactionary against industrial revolution and colonization. They not only commented upon the soothing and healing touch of nature but also they also threw light upon changing lifestyle. According to Peter Berry, UK version of green studies, originates from British Romanticism of 1790s rather than the American transcendentalism of 1840s. Dawn figure on the British side is ecocritic Jonathan Bate, author of *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991). British ecologists also argue that many of their considerations were in existence even before the term ecocriticism was coined. In Raymond Williams’ book *The Country and the City* (1973) this concern is found (Barry 250).

It is beyond doubt that recent ecological observations and movements have their roots in history. Swarnaltha Rangarajan throws light upon rich ecological heritage in ancient Indian literature which is put up as “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” (Earth is a family) in literature, polity and cosmology. “*Prakriti*” (nature) is a source of “*Panchamahabhutas*” (five elements) which are earth, fire, water, air and sky. According to her in *Arthasastra* protection is common law (*Samanya Dharma*). In her view Indian literature provides rich insight into ecology during ancient times (529).

Indian seers and saints were so far sighted that they took steps of prevention even before the advent of problem. Great Saint Guru Jambheswar Maharaj in Rajasthan was deeply concerned with ecological and social life upon earth. He has preached a lot not only for spiritual zenith of human society but also for the material and spiritual significance of mutual coexistence. One of his preachings on the interrelatedness of life on earth goes as:

Taiyan sansu taiyan mansu
Ragtun ruhiyun kheerun neerun
Jyon kari dekhun,nyan andeshu
Bhula prani khi so karnon.
Same breath, same flesh
Same blood, same soul, same water and milk
So looking at this and knowing through wisdom
O mistaken man, what I say is worth doing

(my trans.; qtd. in Maheshwari 34)

Here the saint says that all of the creatures on earth have same breath, same flesh, same blood, same soul, same water and milk but man is mistaken so he should do what he says. Looking at his sayings it can be said that he had communication with all the species on earth which enabled him to understand the value of all lives. His 29 rules are ecopoetics in themselves. His 363 followers sacrificed their lives to save Khejri trees (acacia) in September 1730 against the orders of the Maharaja of Jodhpur Abhay Singh (“The First Chipko Movement, Khejri, 1730 AD”).

Moreover, this movement has gained an iconic status and is now cited as a highly successful example of grassroots environmental awareness in India. This movement is supposed to be the most prominent protest movement to save nature in the entire history of mankind world over. As analyzed above this ecocritical movement has wide spread roots hence it can be treated as a universal phenomenon.

However, the recent movement of ecocriticism originated with environmental problems which were recognized internationally. 1970s witnessed a sudden rise in people’s concern for environment. Climate change threatened the world and a medium was needed to communicate the situation. Ecocriticism originated when environmental problems attracted the attention of literary mind. There were environmental movements and protests. Clearing of forests for

industrial use and real estate sent a warning signal to the whole world. Dam projects were revolted all over the world. In this scenario individuals and scholars interested in environmental issues have been publishing environmentally aware works even before the outburst of environmentalism in late 1960's and 1970's. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) is credited for being the first text to trigger ecological thought. In this book Carson has emphasized that rural ivory is torn. This picture by Carson's work brought increased public awareness about pesticide pollution and it also resulted in development of less harmful chemicals.

Looking at the grave ecological problem literary world was also anxious enough to contribute something significant but the way was absent. At that moment William Rueckert broke the ground and coined the term "ecocriticism" in his path breaking essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" in (1978) wherein he coined and defined the term "ecocriticism". In this work Rueckert propounded the rules of eco-poetics according to which works of literature are to be written and judged. According to him Kenneth Burk was right to maintain that drama releases energy and raises all energy levels by creative verbal actions. So he was in favour of an "ecological poetics" which should write about "reading teaching and writing" applying ecological concepts (107). Emphasizing the first law of ecological drama, Rueckert quotes Commoner's principle: "Everything is connected to everything else" (108). Here nothing stands in isolation. In fact there is no other. The plot, themes and other formal aspects of the work beautifully form an integral part of the grand design of Nature. According to Rueckert, second principle of eco drama is that we are not free to violate the laws of nature. The third principal focuses upon the negative actions taken towards nature with "partial knowledge or often in total ignorance", without realizing their consequences. According to the fourth principle, "In ecology, man's tragic flaw is his anthropocentric (as opposed to biocentric) vision and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate and exploit every natural thing" (113). Here, man tries to abuse and exploit the earth.

The vision of a writer is taken as view of the age. And if a writer is unable to pay attention to the environment, which is primary need of life, then, future of such an age is uncertain. That's why every book conveys an idea or an attitude of reverence toward the nature, earth and environment. So "we need to make some connections between literature and sun, between teaching literature and the health

of the biosphere” says William Rueckert (109). He rightly remarks, “Where there is no ecological vision people will perish.”(114). Rueckert believes that biocentrism must be the end of any work of art and not only of art but also of criticism, learning and teaching. He asks, “As readers, teachers and critics of literature, how do we become responsible planet stewards? How do we ask question about literature and the biosphere what do we even ask?”(114). He finds it true that we cannot do anything without causing lots of side effects because everything is connected and nothing is isolated. So according to Rueckert, ecocritic examines the way how organizing principle organizes biocentrism, life, earth and nature. Rueckert’s work enthusiastically gave birth to a new critical ground yet unexplored. He gave ideas like “symbiosis” and “negentropy” to the world of literature. So ecocriticism emerged as a mean to provide solution of environmental crisis.

Glotfelty acquaints with the initial effort in the field of ecocriticism in her famous introduction “Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis” to *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (1996) after the coinage of the term by Rueckert. She acknowledges that in 1985 Frederick O. Waage edited *Teaching Environmental Literature: Materials, Methods, Resources*, which incorporated course descriptions from nineteen different scholars and tried to promote presence of environmental concern and awareness in literary disciplines. At that time special environmental issues of established literary journals appeared. Some universities included environmental literature courses in their curriculum. Some others installed new foundation or agenda in nature and culture, and some English departments began to offer minor contribution in environmental literature. There was no prearranged lobby group to emphasize these green elevations of literature, so these important works were spotted and given tags such as “Pastoralism”, “Human Ecology”, “American Studies”.

Till mid-eighties, when the field of environmental literary studies was fixed, scholars continued to carry out joint projects. In 1989 Alicia Nitecke instituted *The American Nature Writing Newsletter*, which looked forward to publish brief essays, reviews, classroom notes and information pertaining to the study of writing on nature and environment. MLA special session (1991) organized by Harold Fromm, entitled as “Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies,” and the 1992 American Literature Association symposium presided over by Glen

A. Love, entitled “American Nature Writing: New Contexts, New Approaches” were dedicated to ecological concerns.

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was set up in the United States in 1992. It came into being at the annual meeting of Western Literature Association and Scott Slovic was selected its first chairperson. Mission of this group was to promote the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to literature that considers relationships of human beings with the natural world. In 1993 Patrick Murphy launched a journal *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (ISLE). It aimed at to encourage new nature writing which may include traditional as well as inventive scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and inter-disciplinary environmental research. This also included ecological theory, environmentalism strain, conceptions of nature and their depictions, the human/nature dualism and other related concerns (Introduction xvii-xviii). Initially ASLE had fifty-four members who were inclined to American nature writing. In 2012 ASLE’s membership was highest and grown to one thousand, with nine international affiliate organizations – in the UK and Ireland, Canada, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand, and Europe. At present the field of ecocriticism is lead by ASLE.

However, it was after ASLE that ecocriticism emerged as an established discipline. It was authoritatively instituted by two determining works published in 1990’s. One was *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) edited by Cheryll Glotfelty. It was inaugurated with a substantial section on “eco-theory”. In this book there were trend setter essays which became milestone in the field of ecocriticism. Glotfelty argues in introduction to this book that ecocriticism is not a superficial discourse rather it is most important because: “Despite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it” (xix). Human and non-human world give and take with one another and literature can portray this give and take. She says that literature does not float above the material world in some aesthetic air but it plays a part in an immensely intricate global system, in which energy, matter, and ideas interact with each other.

Glotfelty adopts Showalter model of three stage feminism to chart the development of ecocriticism. First stage of ecocriticism concerns representation of nature in literature as swamp, Eden, utopia, wasteland and paradise. Second stage

involves recovery of nature writing and ecologically rich texts. Third stage examines symbolic construction of species in the works of art. It explores how literary discourse defines “human” as different from an animal. It questions that how western dualism separates meaning from matter, severs mind from body, separates man from woman, and humanity from nature (xxvii-xxiv). With this publication Cheryll Glotfelty established the canon of ecocriticism as recognizable environmental critical school. This book was welcomed warmly by literary world and soon it acquired the status of “foundational anthology” in ecocritical field (Garrard, x). Very often it is cited in ecological studies and became the rulebook in this discipline. One other book which brought environment to fore, in the same year (1996) was *The Environmental Imagination* by Lawrence Buell. He explored crisis of imagination in representation of nature in the works of Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Carson, Silko and Edward Abbey. He saw new ways of acquiring the link between human imagination and ecological truth. The book stimulated literary world. It established milestone in American nature writing.

In 1998 Barbara Adam stirred the world with her book *Timescapes of Modernity*. She suggested that environmental problems are frequently imperceptible and subject to drastic uncertainty. They cannot be represented by usual forms of narrative, verbal and visual. Humans do not care for environmental harm they do, because it takes place later and elsewhere. She says that culture, cannot find symbols, visual images, or stories of individual lives to give them ample demonstration because it is lacking multifaceted standpoint of time and space. She says that venture for ecocriticism is to invent new forms to help writers and artists. Jonathan Bate, in 2000 in *The Song of the Earth*, promisingly reads Keats’s “To Autumn” and Coleridge’s “Frost at Midnight” as historical weather recordings. Val Plumwood wrote in *Environmental Culture* (2002), about the massive course of ecological degradation and she depicted that how the oldest and greatest fisheries of the world failed and how tropical forests and the agricultural land and its species were lost gradually. Lawrence Buell in the essay entitled “The Future of Environmental Criticism” (2005) used the term environmental criticism instead of ecocriticism. He declared the former more appropriate and appealing than the latter. Stacy Alaimo in her book *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (2010) shaken the individual existence. She insisted that the matter itself is active and not passive. She defines trans-corporeality which means that

human bodies and non human nature are open to one another. So what damage is done to environment it is done to one's own self. For this book, containing scientific observation of ecological degradation she received ASLE Award for ecocriticism.

Recent developments in the track of ecocriticism is acknowledged by *Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism* (2014) edited by Greg Garrard. The handbook looks forward to twenty-first century ecocritics like Helena Feder, Ursula Kluwick, Timothy Morton, Catriona Sandilands, Rob Nixon, Stacy Alaimo, Cheryll Lousely and Joni Adamson including all the leading figures. Here ecological concepts are being applied on different disciplines like science and music. Recent trends in ecocriticism show remarkable overlapping of disciplines and genres and keeps count that how nature is hailed in the different cultural contexts. The handbook shows that how theories of Roland Barthes, Felix Guattari, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Fred, Harvey, Heidegger, Husserl, Karl Marx, Saussure, Gayatri Spivak have been applied in ecocriticism. Thus ecocriticism has a rich treasure of theory and critiques on ecological issues.

Ecocriticism: Key Concepts

As ecocriticism forms the theoretical base of this study so important tenets of ecocriticism are discussed here.

Wilderness:

It is natural that ecocritics are concerned with the question of the “wild” and “wilderness” and its representation in literature. According to Gary Snyder, “Wild is a valuable word. It refers to the process or condition of nature on its own: without human intervention. It is a process, a condition, not a place” (5). For Greg Garrard “Wilderness” means “nature in a state uncontaminated by civilization” (67). It is nature which is unperturbed by human society. It is a space of purity which is unsullied by civilization.

Concept of wilderness has been subject to change from ancient times. Greg Garrard in *Ecocriticism* says that the word “wilderness” is derived from Anglo Saxon “wilddeoren” which means wild beast. He says that in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the earliest document of western Eurasian civilization, wilderness is represented as a threat. It is viewed with ambivalence in Judaic scriptures. On the one hand it is thought to be the place of exile and on the other it is thought to be

more safe than the civilized place. Though, after the ejection from Eden, the wilderness is the place of exile yet Abraham tried to find a nation in wilderness; Moses found wilderness a more hospitable place than the civilized but enslaving Egypt. Wilderness is connected with Satan too. So in Judaeo-Christian wilderness is associated with trial and danger with freedom, redemption and purity (68).

In Bible the word wilderness is used repeatedly which is used to refer to wilderness as an uninhibited place, a place where animals graze and it also means desert. Biblical references to wilderness consider wilderness as a place uncivilized and full of danger. It is desolate wasteland or desert which is absent from mankind and corrupted by sin. Ecocritics explore Bible as a text which thwarts wilderness. However, there are scholars who proves that “wilderness” outside the garden is as fruitful as garden itself in the Genesis (Hamon 65).

Garrard believes that the concept of wilderness became prominent in eighteenth century. Wilderness narratives of this time share the motif of escape and return with typical pastoral narrative. It derives its meaning from Judeo-Christian history and culture. The Romantics found it sublime and wilderness became a place of purification. They adhered to ancient paganism as better than the industrial society. With the advent of science wilderness came under threat. It was there to be tamed and exploited (68). According to Isabella Rozendaal in her essay “Chasing the Wilderness Experience: An Ecocritical Approach to Representations of the Romantic Hunter” Americans enlivened wilderness. She says that rebirth of wilderness as a positive entity goes to Americans. European settlers urbanized America like European countries. At this time a new appreciation for wilderness emerged. Americans started to take pride in their national parks and reserves. With this the Americans felt their national identity and self-esteem. Thoreau, Emerson and John Muir revived nature writings and declared that wilderness is the place worth living (6-7).

Howsoever, representation of wilderness is the foremost question for ecocritics and they take into account that how the concept of wilderness has changed over time and represented in literature.

Nature Culture Clash

Nature culture clash is the central concern of ecocritics because it is man's cultural practices which lays foundation of dualism and separates the inseparables which are nature and creatures and man is one among such creatures. Ecocritics analyze the history of such concepts in an attempt to understand the cultural developments that have started taking place in 16th and 17th century and have consequently led to the present global ecological crisis. However, before the modern knowledge systems this nature culture divide was not there. Most of the people were connected with nature and lived in symbiotic relationship with her. The image of earth was that of an "organism". The earth was seen to be "alive, sensitive" and it was considered "unethical" to exploit and destroy her (Plant 214).

There was a concept of "The Great Chain of Being" where humans, animals, plants and natural material were in one overarching, hierarchical family with God as its head and angles taking place too ("The Great Chain of Being"). All of them existed peacefully without knowing dualism. In this family primitive man was hunter gatherer but his efforts were directed for his survival. However, in ancient times the discovery of fire and iron filled men with enthusiasm and an endless wish to hold the maximum land. Ecocritics like Greg Garrard consider that with the beginning of agriculture the Paleolithic hunter – gatherer turned into a Neolithic farmer. This crucial turning point is taken as a fall from primal ecological grace. As Garrard puts it: "Agriculture becomes both cause and the symptom of an ancient alienation from the earth . . ." (68). Gradually, the modern system of knowledge gave way to nature culture dichotomy. For some western Europeans "advent of the scientific revolution" has been the cause of fall from grace. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) Descartes (1596-1650) and Isaac Newton's views about the universe as great machine proved a great blow to the ancestral organic universe. These innovators changed the Paleolithic view of Magna Mater or Great Mother figure who was dominated by male Judaeo-Christian sky god. A belief of the Earth as nurturing mother was changed by the fact that the universe works according to its laws which only men can understand.

The nature culture divide emanated from a concept characterized by Descartes' most famous quote: "Cogito ergo sum" which means I think, therefore I am ("Cogito ergo sum"). This thought that humans are special because they think;

they recognize this as self asserted crown in the hierarchy of animal kingdom as a trait, that completely separates the human being from nature. His philosophy did not actually split man from nature, but it split mind, thought, and language apart from the nature of the human body and rest of nature. This Cartesian thought created a wide gulf between the conscious mindful human sphere and the mindless, natural one. Also Descartes and Bacon prepared a practical philosophy of force and action of air, water, fire, stars and the heaven. Thus reason became master over nature; universe and the animals became mechanomorphic – whose laws can be understood. Scientific revolution began to conceptualize nature as a thing to be dominated. The organic image of nature was replaced by the mechanical image. Material universe became a machine to be studied, reduced and fragmented. This anthropocentric vision that only human being endowed with reason and soul would possess to reign over the universe, creates an illusion that man is the centre of the universe and wrapped up in this dualism man creates an imaginary world where he is the master of the rest of the things. He tries to live this dream and makes the earth such a planet which cannot sustain the variety of lives. It is beyond doubt that scientific revolution indicated a greater shift in the positioning of both and provided a way to overpower the natural domain. For this reason science is hailed as “reductionist” by the ecocritics (*Ecocriticism* 68-69). Moreover, modern knowledge not only destroyed organic universe but it also disintegrated society and even the human body as it divided man/woman, mind/body, human/non human along with nature/culture.

In present scenario ecocritics view that man nature relationship is troubled and it has grown problem oriented. Man nature dualism or the state where man and nature exist as separate entities is examined by ecocritics. They question the feeling where one feels separated from the other. Even religion is seen by ecocritics biased in favour of the humans. Lynn White says, “Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia’s religions (except, perhaps, Zoroastrianism), not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” (10). Ecocritics discard this vision where man is supreme master and rest of the creatures move at his command. They demand for the same importance, status and rights for the non-human objects as ecocritic William Rueckert supposes “law” status for trees (108).

It is a matter of concern for ecocritics that in a universe in which man is a mere creature like others, important only as other creatures are, he has tried and become master of it. Ecocritics ask that how such system can exist. Glotfelty replies, “The answer lies in recognizing that current environmental problems are largely of our own making, are, in other words, a by-product of culture” (Introduction xxi). So ecocritics use this quotation as guideline for them and look for such passages into the text where the writer makes the culture of man supreme or vice versa. They analyze that how human culture, in the form of science, mechanization, modernization and development is posing a threat to nature which results in a crisis of nature and culture.

Apocalypse

Ecocritics explore the concept of “apocalypse” from ecological point of view. In Christianity there was a belief in religious apocalypse which was related to insight, vision or revelation of some truth. The modern connotation indicates towards the cataclysmic event which annihilates the world. In ecocriticism apocalypse means the apprehension that doom’s day is near and the earth is going to be smashed. Greg Garrard believes that Iranian prophet Zoroaster was first who believed in the concept of apocalypse. Not only Christian but Jewish, Nazis, Muslim Mahdists and even Japanese believe in the concept of apocalypse from a long time.

Ecocritics explore the way by which ecological “apocalyptic” thoughts have emerged in the mainstream literature. In 19th century D. H. Lawrence writings depict the apocalyptic vision. According to Garrard William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley and William Blake serve the purpose of apocalyptic rhetoric. T.S. Eliot and Wyndham Lewis have political revolutionary aims. Garrard cites examples from influential ecological forerunner “Essay on the Principle of Population” (1798) by Thomas Malthus who insisted that social policy must be guided by ecological necessity (102) and Paul Ehrlich in *The Population Bomb* says that over population is like cancer and failure to prevent overpopulation will result in the death of the world (101-113).

Apocalypse has resumed its power after Al Gore's award of Nobel Prize and his documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) in which he showed that apocalypse is underway in the shape of climatic changes. Ecocritics like Frederick Buell in *From Apocalypse to Way of Life: Environmental Crisis in an American Century* (2003) and Ursula Heise in *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet* believes that environmental apocalypse is not far.

Apocalypse is very important ecocritical concept. Lawrence Buell opines, "Apocalypse is the single most metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal" (285). He considers that it is the most influential metaphor to present contemporary environmental crisis. Greg Garrard finds that apocalyptic rhetoric seems a necessary component of environmental discourse. He says, "It is capable of galvanizing activists, converting the undecided and ultimately, perhaps of influencing government and commercial policy" (113). So ecocritics look for the portrayal of "apocalypse" in the works. They explore the works of literature which end pessimistically or in war, pestilence and famine from ecocritical point of view. They examine that how far human activities are responsible for such type of endings.

Thus, this connotation and denotation of theories proves that this mode of ecocritical literary criticism artistically deals with the serious problem of environmental hazards. Excess of industrial revolution and scarcity of livable, sustainable means has produced the crisis. Ecocriticism posits the solution. Previously the environment, without which it is impossible to breathe and which is primary need to live, was out of scene and discussion. In the present times of devastated and sullied environment, it goes to the credit of ecocriticism that it has invited discussion on pages about the solution of environmental trouble.

Feminist Ecocriticism: Origin and Definitions

Feminist ecocriticism is also known as ecofeminism. Word "ecofeminism" is a combination of two words eco and feminism. "Eco" is described in beginning of this chapter and "feminism" is derived from French "feminism" and Latin "*femininus*" which means "the state of being feminine" ("Feminism" def.). Merriam Webster dictionary describes it as "the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes" whereas ecofeminism is described as, "a theory that applies feminist principals and ideas to ecological issues". Ecofeminism as a

literary movement is based on the idea that exploitation of nature and women has been similar in history. Ecofeminists focus upon exploitation of women and they link this with exploitation of nature. They believe that both, women and nature have been the victims of aggressive patriarchal domination. According to Greta Gaard, “Ecofeminism’s basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature” (Living Interconnection with Animal and Nature 01).

It is evident that ecofeminists draw the connections between exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women. Men are the subject and women the objects. In a patriarchal society where women are silenced, “nature” is not spared, and rendered speechless. The natural flora and fauna is destroyed. Animals are also killed. So ecofeminists also talk about equalization of not only of man and woman but also of human and non human. Lori Gruen says, “I will suggest that an adequate ecofeminists theory must not only analyze the joint oppression of woman and nature, but must specifically address the oppression of the nonhuman animals with whom we share the planet” (Dismantling Oppression 61). In her view ecofeminists have attempted to eliminate hierarchies and undo the logic of domination. So ecofeminist theory seeks to show the connections between all forms of domination, including the domination of nonhuman nature. Karren J. Warren dismisses such an ecofeminism which does not take into account this important connection of women and nature. She opines, “Establishing the nature of these connections, particularly what I call women-nature connections, and determining which are potentially liberating for both women and nonhuman nature is a major project of ecofeminist philosophy” (3). In her view this connection can pave the way for liberation of both.

These definitions indicate that ecofeminism is the discipline which deeply explores relationship of women and nature. Ecofeminists try to expose oppressive social structure which suppresses both, women and nature.

Ecofeminism: Historical Overview

History of ecofeminism is equally interesting as that of ecocriticism. It can be traced back to the feminist movements of 1970s. *Chipko* movement of 1974 in India saved 12000 square kilometer watershed. The meltdown at Three Mile Island

in USA inspired the first ecofeminist conference which was named “Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Ecofeminism in the Eighties” (1980). Before this in 1976 women in Switzerland protested against the Seveso poisoning. Then in 1984, *Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan* reminded Indian government that no money of any amount can restore the health to victims. In Germany women protested against nuclear power and Russian women sought against industry after Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986 (Mies and Shiva 14-15). Gradually these movements organized conferences and called for world attention and their literary form came into existence as “ecofeminism”.

The term “ecofeminism” was coined by the French writer Françoise d’Eaubonne in “*Le Feminisme ou la Mort*” (1974). She considered that humanity cannot endure ecological consequences of disaster done by men. Here women and nature were joined through their common history of subjugation by a patriarchal culture. Sherry B. Ortner, in an essay entitled “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture” (1974), tried to explain presence of the idea in various cultures that women were subordinate to men as nature is to culture. Ortner discovers that women are looked closer to nature than men because of their physiology, regenerative capacities and menstruation cycle. Giving example from Simon De Bouvoire she articulates that because man cannot give birth he wants to invent through culture. He asserts “his creativity externally, “artificially”, through the technology and symbols” (75) and thus becomes aligned to culture.

It was in 1975 that the field was firmly established by Annette Kolodny. She used and popularized the term “ecofeminism” which seeks to study feminine conception of environment and gendering of land as female in the different genres of literature. In *The Lay of the Land* she examines constant repetition of the “land-as-woman symbolization in American life and letters” (preface, ix). She explores Philip Freneau, James Fenimore Cooper and John James Audubon where land became either a nurturing mother figure which exists to provide provisions, or stood there as submissive virginal form to be conquered physically. However, she dismisses these types of similarities which are according to her based on need and desire to exploit the land. She believes that land as female gratified the need of the colonizers in one way or the other.

Having been defused the ecofeminist field now there was abundance of such texts which explored ecofeminist concerns. *Gyn/Ecology* by Mary Daly

(1978) expressed a crossroad scrutiny of women and the environment. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* by Carolyn Merchant (1980) is a classic ecofeminist text. She finds that women nature closeness became a liability in mechanomorphic world which earlier was positive union. Janet Biehl in *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics* (1991) considers that by accepting women basically less estranged from nature than men risks leading women back into the old undignified position.

Ecofeminism (1993) by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva enlivened the field of ecocriticism by discussing the great role played by women in the conservation of biodiversity, although it is neglected by society as unproductive non-work. Shiva believes that women have indigenous knowledge of nature and its workings but male dominated society always tries to lead women away from natural routine. Shiva discloses the truth that how the so called learned “expertise” diminishes the value of actual labour. She maintains that “experts” and “specialists” manipulate the facts and project them as they wish. She says, “In contrast to the organic metaphors, in which concepts of order and power were based on interdependence and reciprocity, the metaphor of nature as a machine was based on the assumption of divisibility and manipulability” (23). She says that not only women’s labour and knowledge has been neglected but even their close link and love for the child which emerges from their own body has to be demonstrated by doctors and technicians.

Ecofeminism is dynamic discipline and voices within it sometimes differ from one another. Noel Sturgeon describes diverse stands of ecofeminism. She says that one position involves an argument that patriarchy equates women and nature for different reasons. For this position, “a feminist analysis is required to fully understand the genesis of environmental problems” (263). This position of ecofeminists sees that where women are degraded, nature will be degraded, and where women are thought to be eternally giving and nurturing, nature will be thought of as endlessly fertile and exploitable. Second position describes that a culture which is harmful for nature and which considers that culture is superior than nature, if such culture understands women as more “natural” or closer to “nature” this equalization “dooms them to an inferior position”. In such culture both will be degraded. Noel Sturgeon says, “A third position argues for a special relationship between women and nature using an historical, cross-cultural, and

materialist analysis of women's work" (264). These ecofeminists look at women's dominant roles in agricultural production, the managing of productive resources for household economies, cooking, and child care. This position considers that environmental problems are more quickly noticed by women and women's work is more seriously influenced by environmental problems. According to Sturgeon fourth position argues that women are "biologically close" to nature in that their "reproductive characteristics like menstrual cycles, lactation, birth etc" because of her biology women remain in touch with natural rhythms, both seasonal and cyclical, life and death giving. These ecofeminists feel that women "potentially have greater access than men" to sympathize with nature (264). As a result they are benefitted by nature more than the men. Ecofeminism also has spiritual dimension. So fifth position of ecofeminists "are interested in constructing resources for a feminist spirituality and have found these resources in nature-based religions: paganism, witchcraft, and Native American spiritual traditions". They find it appealing because such religions contain strong images of female power and rank female deities which stand as equal to male deities (264).

Ecofeminism: Key Concepts

Woman Nature Proximity

Ecofeminist consider that women are closer to nature than men. They have greater access to nature. It was not only Sherry Ortner who accepted that women are looked closer to nature but Susan Griffin emphatically states that not only women and nature are looked closer but they are close. Women have kinship with nature. In her famous work *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (1978) Susan Griffin writes, "Woman speaks with nature. That she hears from under the earth. The wind blows in her ears and trees whisper to her . . ." She further says that men exist distant and indifferent to nature. Commenting on this indifference she argues, "He says he is not a part of this world that he was set on this world as a stranger. He set himself apart from women and nature" (03). Ecofeminists believe that man considers himself apart from nature while an interconnected sense of self is more common in women.

However, this equalization is discarded by some ecofeminists. Annette Kolodny finds this equalization as basis for exploitation. In "Unearthing Her Story: An Introduction" (1996) Kolodny chronicles the speech of 1969 which up roared

in America thus: “The earth is our Mother/ The land/ The University put a fence around/ The land – our Mother” (170). She opposes land as female because aim of this equalization is exploitation. Further she says that advocates of People’s Park had asserted another version of land as feminine. She urges that man’s relationship with nature is harmonious because he treats nature as woman. He experiences land as “essentially feminine – that is, not simply the land as mother, but the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification – enclosing the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless and integral satisfaction (171). This association of women and nature is continuously seen as deteriorating by old as well as recent works. Theda Wrede in “Barbara Kingsolver’s *Animal Dreams*: Ecofeminist Subversion of Western Myth” (2014) does not see it as great or helpful. Rather it is taken as conspired. This association however sublime, is seen not as dignifying but it is a methodology to control both nature and women. Theda Wrede says, “At the same time, they allow the land to be treated like “the female”, to be subject to conquest and mastery” (42).

Subversion of Woman Nature Exploitation

All the ecofeminists whether they believe in women nature proximity or discard equalization of women and nature, unanimously call for an end to exploitation of nature as well as women. Ecofeminists not only expose the exploitation of nature and women but they call for a radical change in both, theory and practice. To explore the devastation of earth as well as women, ecofeminists call for a feminist analysis which is required to fully understand the base of environmental problems because patriarchy equates women and nature to hit at multiple aims.

Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen in an articles entitled “Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health” (1993) has drawn the “ecofeminist framework” (248). They laid out the hypothetical aspects of ecofeminist critique. They provided abundance of calculations in favour of their arguments. Val Plumwood in *Feminism and Mastery of Nature* says that women and nature were subjugated by three stages of “justification and preparation”, “invasion and annexation”, “instrumentalization and appropriation” which form over all dualistic structure. Final stage she describes is the “devouring the other” (192). She calls for an end to this “master story” (196) of man over women and nature. She asks to understand the patterns of exploitation and calls for a radical change.

Petra Kelley in the essay “Woman and Power” says that men’s domination of women is deep and systemic. It is accepted around the world by most of people “natural” and as something that cannot be changed (112) but ecofeminists do not accept male hegemony and they deny to be considered as weak, meek or docile. She further says, “Feminists working in the peace and ecology movements are sometimes viewed as kind, nurturing earth mothers, but that is too comfortable a stereotype. We are not meek and we are not weak. We are angry – on our own behalf, for our sisters and children who suffer, and for the entire planet – and we are determined to protect life on Earth” (114). Ecofeminists condemn the tendency of man where he wants to use both women and nature. Man’s utilitarian purposes reflect a lack of perception of the interconnectedness of nature that ecological feminism tries to attack. However, ecofeminists reject the notion that either land or woman is meant for the use of man. Betty Wells and Danielle Wirth in “Remediating Development Through an Eco-feminist Lens” consider that women by and large have been denied the benefits of development. They are half of the world’s population, but they don’t have world’s property in that proportion. They work more than men but receive only one-tenth of the world income and own less than one percent of the world’s property. They offer “ecological feminism” to counterbalance today’s dominant world view (300). So ecofeminists try to subvert the male hegemony upon women as well as they try to stop devastation of the earth.

After analyzing these views it can be said that ecofeminism is a critical discipline which focuses upon the link between the oppression of women and the domination of nature. It is another literary form of environmentalism. Ecofeminists are directed to unfetter the nature and woman from the male exploitation. Their enslavement is analogous and so will be their emancipation.

Ecocriticism: Need and Applicability

Ecocriticism originated because of newly endangered eco-consciousness that tomorrow is unsure. There are wide spread diseases, population explosion, unmanageable industrial waste, enhancing urbanization, vanishing flora and fauna, overlapping sea shores, volcanoes, tsunamis, floods, draughts, earthquakes and over all impending nuclear war that pose a great threat to today’s world. In the present times the world is standing on the darkling plain of market culture where

everything is a commodity. Man's cultural progress has brought the civil society at the verge of clash with the humans or with nature. If on the one hand ecological dangers are there then on the other hand, future cannot be imagined without advancements. As Mies in her introduction to *Ecofeminism: With a Foreword by Ariel Salleh* opines:

We are in the midst of an epic contest – the contest between the rights of mother Earth and the rights of corporations and militarized states using obsolete world-views and paradigms to accelerate the war against the planet and people. This contest is between the laws of Gaia and the laws of the market and warfare. (xix)

Ecocriticism tries to address this conflict and delves deep into the roots of the ecological problems. Ecocritics not only try to ascertain the responsibility and accountability of human beings, the so called supreme creature in environmental degradation but also lay emphasis on the sustainable and all inclusive development. Hence, ecocriticism is needed to save “the integrity of the wild” (Snyder 10).

It is all the more applicable as it is supposed to sensitize the people and build the social atmosphere required for ecological conservation. It not only makes people think about ecological problems but also provoke them to take action by creating an emotional identity with nature through the ecocritical interpretation of texts. Hence, as ecocriticism speaks for the muted earth it is the need of the hour to undertake and promote such literary criticism.

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Chapter III

Man - Nature - Culture

Nature Culture Clash

“Man” according to Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary is “an adult male human” and “Nature” is “all the plants, animals and things that exist in the universe that are not made by people” (“Man” def.). The word nature has several connotations. It denotes system of universe which includes all creatures, flora and fauna, people, mountains and seas. Ecological workings are also dubbed as natural process. Gary Snyder says, “Nature is all that is spontaneous in universe without human interference” (5). On the other hand culture is often thought as diverse thing than nature. It is thought to be made by man. Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary defines culture as “the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group”. Ecocritics considers that culture is all that is man-made and nature is all that is spontaneous in the cosmos. Expressing the views on culture as well as nature ecocritic Fredrick Turner in his essay entitled “Cultivating the American Garden” opines:

Culture means to a large extent technology; indeed, the latter might well be named more frequently as the opposite of nature. If nature, in our myth, is eternal, un-changing, pure, gentle, wise innocent, balanced, harmonious, and good, then culture (qua technology) must be temporary, progressive, polluting, violent, blind, sophisticated, distorted, destructive, and evil. (45)

It has been discussed in the previous chapter that in past nature culture divide was not there and man and nature existed in harmony without dualism but reductionist science and modern knowledge system has crudely divided them. The Cartesian thought established great gulf between conscious mindful human sphere and the mindless natural one. Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei and Francis Bacon conceptualized material universe as a machine to be studied, reduced and fragmented. The nurturing image was dismissed and science overpowered nature which resulted in unaccountable problems of colonization of land by destroying vast expanses of natural spaces, scarred hillsides, uranium mine tailings, poisoning rivers systems, toxic waste and creating innumerable problems which posed a

threat of collision of human culture with nature. This dualism led to anthropocentrism where man not only distanced himself from the non human world but also thought that he is the supreme power. He thought that he is worthy of everything even if he can get it at the cost of nature and in this duality he began to exploit, harass, devastate and overpower nature. This created ecological imbalances which created or destroyed “niche” or the perfect space for any species. This attitude of dominance and arrogance is severely condemned by the ecocritics. Helena Feder in the essay “Ecocriticism, Posthumanism, and the Biological Idea of Culture” has very aptly described the whole situation. She writes:

We imagine life after people because human sovereignty over the rest of life on earth intensifies exponentially, because we tell ourselves we are the world, the pinnacle of nature or “natura naturans,” even as we render it less and less inhabitable for ourselves and many other creatures. Such conflation of humanity and world makes posthumanism at once terrifying and potentially appealing for ecocriticism. (225)

It is beyond doubt that in the last few decades nature culture clash has drawn the attention of not only the environmentalists but the literary critics also. Literature has always been instrumental in raising the issues and spreading awareness among its readers. From time to time writers have tried to portray the burning issues of their times in their work. A close perusal of the fiction of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill depicts that their stories are replete with the ecological issues like nature culture clash, women nature association, retribution of nature, role of environment on human life to name some of them. The Victorian Age was the age of material advancement and mechanical progress. It was an era of industrialization and urbanization with growth in industries, mills, railroads, coal mining and cities. It was also an age of social unrest which gave rise to several legislations and social and political movements. Under the impact of machinery, man himself became mechanical in hand as well as in head and heart. The literary writers of this age like Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell and Thomas Hardy were drawn towards these changes and they have tried to record the milieu and ethos of their times in their work.

However, recently the works of these writers have been scrutinized through the lens of environmental studies. Literary ecocritics like John Parham and Joseph Carroll have begun to explore the connection between the Victorian writers

and environmental awareness. The critics are trying to expose the literary representation of the impact of industrialization on the Victorian ecology. It is discerned that the works of the Victorian writers seem to foreground the ecological disturbances brought about by the growing mechanization and materialism of this age. An in-depth scrutiny of the literary writings of this era reveals Victorian's perception and interpretation of nature. They have tried to register what John Parham has called "ecological impacts on the land" (29).

One of the Victorian novelists Charlotte Bronte, who was born and brought up in this era was also indisputably affected by the bad living conditions of the society due to industrialization and urbanization and was pained to see the loss of natural landscape in England. At first glance, Charlotte's fiction cannot be considered as rich sites of ecological discourse, as overtly they do not deal with the issues of environment but a close and comprehensive analysis of her novels reveals the Victorian perception and interpretation of nature. In her fiction nature is present in its full vibrant, colourful, soothing, peaceful and even fearful appearances. Like an environmentalist she has focused upon the interrelatedness of the human world with that of the physical environment as well as shown her concern for the ecological changes brought about by the hegemonic attitude of human beings towards nature. Her novels are replete with nature-culture clash and they seem to foreground that how the advancement of human culture in the shape of industrialization and urbanization has brought about a drastic change in man-nature relationship.

Charlotte Bronte's debut novel *Jane Eyre* focuses on the first person narrative of the orphaned Jane, her growth into maturity, and her eventual marriage to her lover Rochester. Primarily, it is a story about the Victorian woman's revolt against the accepted convention of her place in the routine of life, against the formalism and hypocrisy and the harshness and cruelty that she saw around her. The novel depicts Jane's growth at five different places namely Gateshead-hall, Lowood Institution, Thornfield-Hall, Moor-House and the manor-house of Ferndean. However, through Jane's journey to these five different places and her changing perception and interpretation of the varying natural world, the novelist has tried to redefine our relationship with the non-human world. She depicts a close proximity between man and nature.

Her concept of nature exceeds romantic limits and there comes to fore a strong and intimate relation between characters psyche and surrounding atmosphere in *Jane Eyre*. It is Bronte's reverence only towards nature that makes her feel that the nurturing power of nature is neither an illusion nor a deliberately conceived and trusted notion, rather it is a reality earnestly felt. Her world cannot exist without the biosphere. If atmosphere is excluded from scenes, characters cease to exist and circumstances fail to convince. She shows that presence and absence of the natural phenomena makes a big difference in the lives of her characters. There comes a rapid change in the behaviour of her characters when they are away or cut off from nature. Jane's response to nature changes as her location changes from urban to rural and rural to urban as she is intimately linked with nature. This changing response in the novel speaks for nature culture clash.

Through the varying response of Jane towards nature Bronte tries to bring to fore the onslaught of human culture over nature. She is aware of the adverse effects of culture upon nature. Notwithstanding the civilization, Bronte comments upon the affectation of nature by culture. The wilderness of rural landscape is contrasted with the artificial landscapes of cultured spaces like gardens and orchards. Jane's life begins at Gateshead hall in cold winter season. She finds the place distressing because of the oppressive atmosphere and oppressive attitude of people like Mrs. Reed and her children. The writer has tried to present nature - culture clash at Gateshead Hall by juxtaposing the cold violent and rageful nature with the idyllic world of nature of old England full of pristine beauty in old fairy tales and ballads. The natural world of Gateshead has no magical charm of the wild spaces. Jane finds that "the shrubbery was quite still; the black frost reigned, unbroken by sun or breeze, through the grounds". The place was "sequestered" and when she goes out for a walk she finds "no pleasure in the silent trees". The place is full of "the fallen fir-cones, the congealed relics of autumn, russet leaves, swept by past winds in heaps, and now stiffened together" (*Jane Eyre* 38).

Though she finds a little hope here but nature is not serene because the house has become a prison for her. To discover wild old England she reads *Gulliver's Travels* and regrets that the elves have left England because its wilderness has gone. She says, "I had at length made up my mind to the sad truth that they were all gone out of England to some savage country, where the woods were wilder and thicker, and population more scant" (21). The understatement tells

that England is overpopulated as well as its wilderness has gone. At present the house as well as nature becomes prison for her because they are not wild. The wild spaces of England have lost their idyllic charm due to the destruction of the woodlands and overpopulation and therefore, people are forced to live in the frozen landscape of Gateshead. The onslaught of culture in the form of destruction of woodlands and overpopulation has marred the beauty of idyllic Gateshead.

As Jane moves from Gateshead to Lowood she comes in contact with the beauty of natural surroundings of deep woods untouched by human culture. Jane articulates that “we ceased to pass through towns; the country changed; the great grey hills heaved up round the horizon: as twilight deepened, we descended a valley, dark with woods, and long after nights had overclouded the prospect, I heard a wild wind rushing amongst the trees” (42). But very soon as Jane reaches Lowood she finds that humans have mercilessly despoiled nature by transforming large tracts of land into an endless span of buildings. The novelist directly focuses upon the impact of human desire to despoil the pristine nature. At Lowood she presents the endangered landscape. Establishment of Lowood School is in the valley which has reduced the field of nature. Jane finds that the atmosphere at Lowood is very sullied and sickening. It is “darkened by a drizzling yellow fog” (49). Inside the Lowood school girls are kept in damp, cramp and small rooms where they are made to suffer. They are starved so that money can be saved. Here none cares for the well-being of nature or for the suffering girls. As a result an epidemic breaks in the institution. The inner atmosphere at Lowood institution becomes pestilence ridden. Jane pictures, “That forest-dell, where Lowood lay, was the cradle of fog and fog-bred pestilence; which, quickening with the quickening spring, crept into the Orphan Asylum, breathed typhus through its crowded school- room and dormitory, and, ere May arrived, transformed the seminary into an hospital” (77). Routine of classes is broken up. Managers and servants crave for life. They leave the place. None comes near the place. Tuberculosis causes death of several orphan girls including Helen Burns, the friend to Jane. It is true that attack on nature for economic profit not only reduces the space of nature but it also hazards the society. Critic Susan Meyer in her essay “Colonialism and Figurative Strategy” finds that the air at Lowood is drastically unhealthy which is outcome of economic injustice. The critic truly remarks, “The damp pestilential fog of Lowood charity-school is one of the novel’s most

drastically unhealthy environments; the atmosphere at this orphan institution where Jane thinks of herself as ‘a slave or victim’ is the direct result of cruel economic inequities” (459). Cunning treasurer leaves the place for a short time and little girls pay the price for his misdeeds. The place looks like a prison house with “a large building” (49).

In order to present effect of culture on nature Bronte contrasts the stifling nature of Lowood school with the untempered world of nature beyond the walls of Lowood. Jane finds these untempered woods full of joy and serenity. Expressing her joy she says,

I discovered, too, that a great pleasure, an enjoyment which the horizon only bounded, lay all outside the high and spike-guarded walls of our garden: this pleasure consisted in a prospect of noble summits girdling a great hill-hollow, rich in verdure and shadow; in a bright beck, full of dark stones and sparkling eddies (76).

As the story progresses further Jane Eyre moves from Lowood to Thornfield. She describes that this region is “more populous, less picturesque; more stirring, less romantic” (96). Jane has a keen eye and she can minutely perceive that how her surroundings are different than her previous abode. She finds that Thornfield is more in touch of human culture. She contrasts natural domain of Thornfield hall from Lowood. Jane describes, “Farther off were hills: not so lofty as those round Lowood, nor so craggy, nor so like barriers of separation from the living world; but yet quiet and lonely hills enough, and seeming to embrace Thornfield with a seclusion I had not expected to find existent so near the stirring locality of Millcote (100). She finds that the hills are “not so lofty” as those round Lowood and “nor so craggy” though they are “quiet and lonely” still. Town of Millcott is not very far so human civilization influence the serenity of nature and leaves it less lofty and less crazy.

The big mansion of Thornfield hall belongs to Mr. Rochester in which he has all modern means of decoration and convenience. The antique designed building has products of cultural decorations; all of them are made by hurting nature. Jane describes the architecture as well as beauty of furniture. She says,

The furniture once appropriated to the lower apartments had from time to time been removed here, as fashions changed; and the imperfect light entering by their narrow casements showed bedsteads of a hundred years

old; chests in oak or walnut, looking, with their strange carvings of palm branches and cherub' heads, like types of the Hebrew ark; rows of venerable chairs, high-backed and narrow; stools still more antiquated, on whose cushioned tops were yet apparent traces of half-effaced embroideries, wrought by fingers that for two generations has been coffin-dust. All these relics gave to the third story of Thornfield Hall the aspect of a home of the past. (106-107)

Jane finds that this place is not pure wilderness and it has cultivated gardens and orchards. The orchard is under the possession of Mr. Rochester who has bordered it with a wall. He uses it as he wishes. He smokes in the garden. In fact the orchard exists for his use. As the orchard is man-made so it stands as a symbol of culture. Again this place because of cultural pretensions of places like Rochester's huge mansions and cultivated orchard has lost the charm of pure wilderness.

Further when Jane reaches at Moor land she finds untempered nature. At Moor land she finds that the place has pure wilderness. She views "the purple moors" and "hollow vale". There are "the wildest little pasture-fields" (354). She finds that this place is situated in "a breezy mountain of brook in the healthy heart of England". She looks at the "sunset of the harvest-day" and quite "fields" where "birds were singing" (364). She describes:

The breeze was from the west: it came over the hills, sweet with scents of heath and rush; the sky was of stainless blue; the stream descending the ravine, swept with past spring rains, poured along plentiful and clear, catching golden gleams from the sun and sapphire tints from the firmament. . . . the hills shut us quite in; for the glen, towards its head, wound to their very core. (405)

Moving ahead Jane goes to Ferndean. Here she observes that Ferndean also has serene nature like Moor land and unlike Gateshead or Thornfield. She finds that deep buried woods at Ferndean are away from civilization and they are untrodden. At this "desolate place" (434) Jane says, "I found myself at once in the twilight of close ranked trees. There was a grass grown track descending the forest-aisle, between the hoar and knotty shaft and under branched arches" (435). She finds that this place is uncontaminated because it is "uninhibited and unfurnished". In contrast to Thornfield mansion it has "no architectural pretensions". She finds here the "sylvan dusk" amidst "interwoven stem, columnar trunk, dense, summer

foliage". She finds that this wild place is in contrast to the cultured orchard at Thornfield. She utters, "Entering a portal, fastened only by a latch, I stood amidst a space of enclosed ground, from which the woods swept away in a semi-circle. There were no flowers, no garden-beds; only a broad gravel-walk girdling a glass-plat, and this set in the heavy frame of the forest" (435).

Like her abodes, peoples and experience of Jane can also be contrasted with places. At wild Moor land Diana and Mary love her selflessly and truly. None mistreat her or dehumanize her like Reeds of Gateshead and Brocklehurst of Lowood. None deceives her like Rochester of Thornfield. At the sylvan Ferndean Rochester is also changed and treats Jane with love. In contrast to artificial places like Gateshead, Lowood and Thornfield the wild places of Moor land and Ferndean gives Jane strength and peace of mind. Adrian Tate observes, "Both locations stand apart from the society, in turn, both enable Jane to escape its conventions and realize her true worth" (35).

In this novel not only Jane contrasts the surroundings but Little Adela also shows ecological attitude more than anyone else. Though a child she is very sensitive and perceives the change of environment. She describes her voyage when she came to Thornfield. She says, "Sophie is my nurse; she came with me over the sea in a great ship with a chimney that smoked- how it did smoke! –and I was sick, and so was Sophie" (102). She goes on to describe the polluted city which came in her way to Thornfield. She says that their "ship stopped in the morning, before it was quite daylight, at a great city– a huge city, with very dark houses and all smoky; not at all like the pretty clean town I came from" (103). She recognizes that environment is polluted by the smoke. It becomes clear that Bronte is aware of the environmental hazard by modernization though the setting of the novel is very far from such cultural spheres.

Thus in this novel, depiction of shifting landscapes portrays collision of nature and culture where wilder places are contrasted with the cultured spaces and man-made constructions among enclosed gardens and orchards. Through the character of Jane, Bronte contrasts cultured spaces with the wilder places and her experience varies with the landscapes. On the one hand she is deceived and agonized on the civilized spots. On the other had she blooms in wilderness and finds her true self. Personality and development of Jane itself speaks for the nature culture clash. The depiction of shifting landscapes influencing Jane and other characters proves that Bronte indirectly portrays the conflict where she prefers wilderness over culture.

Charlotte Brontë's second novel *Shirley* undeniably speaks about the dualism between the human and the natural world. It is a perfect representation of the effects of anthropocentrism on natural and human life. In *Shirley* the narrator voices to preserve nature that is endangered by industrialization. The exploitation of nature and insensitiveness of human nature towards environment is exposed through this novel. It is set in Yorkshire in the period 1811-12, during the industrial depression resulting from the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812. The novel is set against the backdrop of the Luddite uprisings in the Yorkshire textile industry against the introduction of new machines resulting into mass unemployment, deprivation and hunger. Yorkshire constitutes a universe, a whole ecology in itself. It shows interdependence of lives in ecology. It shows that nature has endowed man with the gift of mind; man applies his mind in the creation of culture; then how this culture threatens the natural cycle of life.

The very beginning of the novel sets the tone of the story and hints towards the unpleasant nature. The opening sentence of the novel is reads thus: "Present years are dusty, sunburnt, hot, arid; we will evade the noon, forget it in siesta, pass the midday in slumber, and dream of dawn" (*Shirley* 01) hints towards the pervading sullied and damaged atmosphere in the Yorkshire valley due to the re-establishment of the cloth mill. The mill was established by Robert's grandfather. He tried to utilize earth to fulfill his commercial purpose. When he came here he acquired his ancestors' property like "warehouses in this seaport, and factories in that inland town, had possessed their town-house and their country-seat" among other possessions. But not satisfied with all this he tries "to rent a cloth-mill in an out-of-the-way nook of an out-of-the-way district; to take a cottage adjoining it for his residence, and to add to his possession, as pasture for his horse, and space for his cloth-tenters, a few acres of the steep, rugged land . . ." (27). Through his desire to possess more and more of land for all material gains Brontë hints towards the growing class of wealthy capitalists and mill-owners during the Victorian age. Later this cloth-mill was re-established by his grandson Robert Moore.

Once the Hollow's mill, a symbol of man-made culture, starts running it creates havoc in the Yorkshire valley. Brontë paints a very sorry picture of the valley. The atmosphere gets smoke ridden and the sky turns black. Its natural colour cannot be found. The narrator says, "The sky as it now appeared—a muffled, streaming vault, all black, save where, towards the east, the furnaces of Stilbro'

ironworks threw a tremulous lurid shimmer on the horizon—with the same sky on an unclouded frosty night” (16). The stars eclipse under the polluted smoke. Earth looks faded and pale. Air of the valley remains incessantly infected and dusty because of the effluents emitted by Stilbro’ Ironworks mill in nearby woods. Environment becomes gloomy and awful. Nature becomes angry because of the misdeeds done to her. The surrounding environment becomes sad and pale. The narrator says:

The breath of this morning was chill as its aspect; a raw wind stirred the mass of night-cloud, and showed, as it slowly rose, leaving a colourless, silver-gleaming ring all around the horizon, not blue sky, but a stratum of paler vapour beyond. It had ceased to rain, but the earth was sodden, and the pools and rivulets were full. (60)

Charlotte Bronte depicts polluted earth surface and shows that its brightness and splendour has diminished considerably. Further, the narrator describes that it was the month of February, even at the time of dawn “no colour tinged the east, no flush warmed it” rather “a pale ray” flung along the hills. There was no warmth in the sun’s rays and it seemed that “the sun’s fire [got] quenched in last night’s flood” (60). The pleasantness of nature is gone. Industrial dream of man causes great havoc to the earth and its vicinity. The planet earth is benign but human activity has shaken its serenity. The air is completely sulphur ridden around the mill. The narrator describes, “The breeze and sunshine entered freely; but the first visitant brought no spring perfume on its wings, only an occasional sulphur-puff from the soot-thick column of smoke rushing sable from the gaunt mill-chimney” (131). Unlike the serene and peaceful landscapes found in *Jane Eyre*, in Yorkshire the landscape described is most of the time sullied and destroyed. The peaceful atmosphere is blown away in the winds of culture. Industrialization of Yorkshire, situated in the valley, shakes the environment of the novel beyond repair.

Nature comes under the threat of destruction. Man carries on with his nefarious activities that ultimately infuse the atmosphere with “entropy” or “negentropy” which is negative energy in the universe as ecocritics interpret (Barry 264). In *Shirley* it starts working toward breakdown and disintegration of earth

which ultimately leads to famine and hunger in Yorkshire. Polluted atmosphere of dim sunlight, dusty wind and foggy weather lets the disease to spread rapidly in Yorkshire. Epidemic breaks and most of the characters fall ill. They are visited by hazardous diseases which remains unidentified and uncured.

In order to expose the harmful effect of culture over nature Charlotte Bronte juxtaposes the mill's atmosphere with the atmosphere of the nearby glen, where the serenity of nature is still saved from the harmful touch of culture. At a little distance from the mill there is deep solitude. There are trees which are not molested. The singing of many birds can be heard and they also make their nests there. Unperturbed environment is described in the following words:

Here the opposite sides of the glen, approaching each other and becoming clothed with brushwood and stunted oaks, formed a wooded ravine, at the bottom of which ran the mill-stream, in broken, unquiet course, struggling with many stones, chafing against rugged banks, fretting with gnarled tree-roots, foaming, gurgling, battling as it went (388).

The atmosphere here is in sharp contrast to the atmosphere surrounding the mill. The serene unsullied nature provides "a sense of deep solitude" (388) and is infused with the melodious chirping of the birds.

Later in the story, Robert Moore is not satisfied with the establishment of mill only but he wants to further exploit the earth by using a large stretch of dark ravine to set up a colony. He tells Caroline:

The copse shall be firewood ere five years elapse. The beautiful wild ravine shall be a smooth descent; the green natural terrace shall be a paved street. There shall be cottages in the dark ravine, and cottages on the lonely slopes. The rough pebbled track shall be an even, firm, broad, black, sooty road, bedded with the cinders from my mill, and my mill Caroline—my mill shall fill its present yard (674).

People like Robert Moore's are a great threat to ecology. He pollutes the wooded ravine and then makes a colony by devastating it fully. People like Robert Moore have no notion of equality with nature. In order to show their supremacy over nature, they subject nature to brutal exploitation and domination. They think that everything exist for their use. Eventually, Robert's industrial dream is realized.

Yorkshire is industrially developed and mill is also re-established in the place of wood ravine. The narrator comments:

I suppose Robert Moore's prophecies were, partially, at least, fulfilled. The other day I passed up the Hollow, which tradition says was once green, and lone, and wild; and there I saw the manufacture's day-dreams embodied in substantial stone and break and ashes—the cinder-black highway, the cottages, and the cottage gardens; there I saw a mighty mill, and a chimney ambitious as the tower of Babel. (676).

The novelist highlights that the mercenary society pays no heed to pure or ailing nature. It keeps working in its own way. Man's life is given by nature but he has created things such as 'culture' which shakes nature beyond repair. This indifference towards nature and man's selfish motives and greed to have more and more leads to nature culture clash.

Even the clergy in this novel is portrayed to be indifferent towards nature. The novel begins with curates enjoying each other's company and completely ignoring the plight of nature which is described as "dusty, sunburnt, hot, arid" (01). Without having a thought about endangered environment they enjoy their meal which has beef, bear and mutton. Critic Mike Edwards says that the end of the first sentence is "climatic" and sharpest in its negative implications. He says:

Recent times are described as 'dusty, sun-burnt, hot, arid'. There is no explanation for these images; they suggests thirst, and perhaps a thirst unslaked, for the shower which has fallen is no life-giving moisture, but a species of blight, and its abundance is no virtue. The conclusion must be that these curates are lazy and useless for the furtherance of God's purpose. (21)

Mr. Malone, the curate remains unaffected by the change in surrounding atmosphere. He is not a person given to the care of nature so he ignores it. The narrator says, "He did not trouble himself to ask where the constellations and planets were gone, or to regret the 'black-blue' serenity of the air-ocean which those white islets stud, and which another ocean, of heavier and denser element, now rolled below and concealed" (16). The novelist describes that even after knowing the plight of environment the church authorities do not take any pain to protect nature.

Further ahead, in this novel Charlotte Bronte has also thrown light on the drastic effects of mechanization on human community. The mechanical development jeopardizes not only surrounding environment but also disturbs social and economic set up of Yorkshire people. At first when Robert Moore decides to re-establish mill and bring machines he has to face a strong resistance from his workers. The workers have no regard for Gerard Robert Moore because he has nothing to do with the welfare of the workers. They hate him for his selfish motive of establishing the mill and machine application. They know he wants a career out of mill so he wants to employ machine for fast work. Robert's whole concern in life is the success of Hollow's mill and he is determined to install machinery to ensure success. Robert Moore is "resolved" (11) to re-establish the mill. He says, "Now I, if I know myself, should stand by my trade, my mill and my machinery" (22). He wants overall change. "His aim had been to effect a radical reform, which he had executed as fast as his very limited capital would allow" (27). The poor people hate these things because it reduces value of their labour. In fact, they know that they won't be needed because machine is going to replace them. Machines will snatch their morsel of bread. The narrator expressing their agony utters, "These sufferers hated the machines which they believed took their bread from them; they hated the buildings which contained those machines; they hated the manufactures who owned those buildings" (29). One night Robert listens to some noise. He suspects that it is Joe Scott, the leader of the workers. When he speaks, some people run but they leave a warning note for him against the implementation of machines in the Mill or face dire consequences. Starving workers warn the owner of the Mill and machinery. They leave a warning note:

Your hellish machinery is shivered to smash on Stilbro' Moor, and your men are lying bound hand and foot in a ditch by the roadside. Take this as a warning from men that are starving, and have starving wives and children to go home to when they have done this deed. If you get new machines, or if you otherwise go on as you have done, you shall hear from us again. Beware! (31)

The man of culture never listens to their woes. He is a stern businessman without any pity on his part. The narrator compares him with another stern character the Rector Mr. Helstone. It is said: "Both might boast a valid claim to the proud title of

“lord of the creation”, for no animal vice was lord of them; they looked and were superior beings to poor Sykes (137-138).

Both of them try to be “lord of creation” by suppressing the rage of workers. Personally, unfriendly to each other they come together to counter the attack of workers. Robert’s machines are destroyed by the enraged worker. He exchanges hot words with Mr. Barranclough and other leaders of workers who ask him not to employ machines. Robert is adamant and repeats that, “*I’ll never give in*” (144). Enraged workers also deter to give him a lesson but he keeps them off on the point of pistol. The helpless workers, humiliated and weaponless, go back but return with more fierce attack after some time. This heated incident is followed by the night of fight between the workers and the owners because the owners could not be awakened by their warning. This time the clash takes place at mill. The narrator thus describes the clash:

A crash– smash– shiver –stopped their whispers. A simultaneously hurled volley of stoned had saluted the board front of the mill, with all its windows; and now every pane of every lattice shattered and pounded fragments. A yell followed this demonstration– A rioter’s yell– a north-of-England a Yorkshire, a West-Riding, a west-Riding-clothing-district of-Yorkshire rioter’s yell. (358)

In this clash six workers are injured along with Robert. The anger never calms and months after this struggle an enraged worker shoots Robert by a pistol. He is seriously injured and his health doesn’t improve for a long time. He becomes like a skeleton. He is near death and survives with great difficulty. Eagleton rightly observes, “Shirley is explicitly set in a landscape of industrial manufacture, large-scale capitalist agriculture and working-class unrest” (127). Critic Melvin R. Watson also opines that in *Shirley* the Victorian novelist has turned to counter effect of “industrial revolution” (36) which undoubtedly brings to fore the nature-culture clash. This unhealthy give and take of nature and culture causes a lot of damage to both of them. Thus, *Shirley* highlights the truth that insensitive attitude of man towards both nature and the human society tends towards breakdown and disorganization of the human as well as the natural world. It not only destroys ecology but leads to disruption of society also.

Once again Bronte brings to fore the onslaught of culture over nature in the form of war. In *Shirley* Napoleonic war remains in background. Though war is

not portrayed directly yet Charlotte Bronte portrays after effects of war. War undeniably hurts nature. Rector Mr. Helstone tells the trio of Curates that Mike, the weaver at Hollow's mill has a sordid vision. In the vision he looks that there are soldiers. He views that a huge unhealthy smoke is emitted by a park of artillery. The smoke overwhelmed the environment and passes over the field and the road. When war is called upon the polluted nature causes miseries on earth and crops also fail. Failing crops cause famine which results in misery and starvation. Food riots follow and peace is destroyed. People of England starve and cry for food. National honour is hurt. Countries are cut off from one another. The narrator says:

War was then at its height. Europe was all involved therein. England, if was not weary, was worn with long resistance—yes, and half her people weary too, and cried out for peace on any terms. National honour was become a mere empty name, of no value in the eyes of many, because their sight was dim with famine; and for a morsel of meat they would have sold their birthright. (28)

Fraternity comes to an end. "Orders in council," provoked by Napoleon's Milan and Berlin decrees, destroys peace and trade in whole of England and especially in Yorkshire. The narrator mentions that local fights take place in the other provinces of England like Yorkshire. Empire of England becomes entangled in fights because of the onslaught of culture upon nature in the form of war.

In this novel anthropocentrism causes a lot of miseries to human and natural life but human beings cannot understand the causes of its anger and illness from where it is ailing and why. Nature becomes angry because of the misdeeds done to her. Yorkshire shows symptoms of "entropy". Its social set-up disorganizes and breaks for a period of two years. Workers have no work so they have no money and, hence no food. There is bloodshed in the novel. Excessive human exploitation of nature results in ecological imbalance. Ailing nature causes diseases. Failing of crops brings famine. By presenting nature culture clash and man's predicament novelist has strongly tried to put forward the ecocritical view that no matter how much powerful humans may think themselves to be, they may go on to attack nature but the hard fact is that they cannot survive without nature. If nature is tempered with, human life is also bound to suffer. By this association Charlotte Bronte throws light on the interconnectedness of the human and the natural communities and highlights that they cannot be segregated. It is the united

universe where one cannot be separated from the other. Surface isolation may persist in the physical world but total alienation is impossible. Thus, Bronte makes a sincere attempt to portray the shifting human relationships along with environmental changes in the Victorian age.

Not only in *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* but Bronte in her third novel *Villette* also carries forward the theme of nature culture clash but with a difference. In this novel clash is not at a physical level but the persona of the protagonist Lucy Snowe becomes the site of clash. The novel describes the ups and downs of a lonely girl Lucy Snowe. Lucy aspires to live a life in London but she is forced to live in a town called Villette. Her tastes are slightly refined than Jane Eyre and she is more inclined to culture than nature.

When the novel opens Lucy is residing in the town of Brettons. Soon Brettons and Lucy leave the place for unspecified reason. However, Lucy comes to reside with Mrs. Marchmont in a countryside house. Lucy has strong infatuation for London and always longs to go there while she lives with Miss Macrhmount in the country side in the lap of nature. One night when she takes a walk in a clear frosty night her mind yearns for city. She says, “Gazing from this country parish in that flat, rich middle of England, I mentally saw within reach what I had never yet beheld with my bodily eyes—I saw London (*Villette* 40). Very soon her wish is fulfilled as she gets an opportunity to leave for London the very next day.

She enjoys every thought of being in a big city and she discards the life in the hamlets in following words: “I did well to come,” I said proceeding to dress with speed and care. “I like the spirit of this great London which I feel around me. Who but a coward would pass his whole life in hamlets, and forever abandon his faculties to the eating rust of obscurity” (44). She fully feels the “elation and pleasure” of being in London. There she is all alone but still enjoys the city life and finds city far better. She says:

Descending, I went wandering whither chance might lead, in a still ecstasy of freedom and enjoyment; and I got, I know not how— I got into the heart of city life. I saw and felt London at last. I got into the strand; I went up Cornhill; I mixed with life passing along; I dared the perils of crossings. To do this, and to do it utterly alone, gave me, perhaps, an irrational, but a real

pleasure. Since those days I have seen the West End, the parks, the fine squares; but I love the city far better. (45)

She is in high spirits on being in London and enjoys every moment of her life there. Though she gets pleasure in being in the heart of the city yet she could not stay there for a long time. It was difficult for her to stay in a big city like London without any support so she is forced to leave the city with a burdened heart. She boards the ship and leaves London without knowing where it will lead her to go.

Soon, when she is in a state of indecision the ship reaches at a place called Villette. The dilemma of her life was that she longed for London but she goes to Villette which is a small town. Lucy's mind remains struggling for life in city but she has to stay in the town. She feels sorry for leaving London. She feels that nature does not agree with her thoughts. Cold air and the night itself rebuke Lucy when she is on the ship to Villette. Lucy says:

I was sorry-yes, I was sorry. My resting-time was past; my difficulties-my stringent difficulties-recommenced. When I went on deck, the cold air and black scowl of the night seemed to rebuke me for my presumption in being where I was. The lights of the foreign seaport town, glimmering round the foreign harbour, met me like unnumbered threatening eyes. (53)

Now onwards her mind becomes the battlefield where nature and culture collide with each other. The cold air and black scowl of the night appears to rebuke her. The lights of the foreign seaport town send alarm to her mind and she feels threatened. She felt ecstatic when she was in London but finds herself surrounded by difficulties when she leaves the city. According to Terry Eagleton: "The Brontes were caught between country and city" (126). This clash of nature and culture in the mind of Lucy seems to have an autobiographical undertone. Lucy is drawn towards culture and she has no deep love for nature like Jane.

Being a materialistic woman, Lucy suffers an internal yearning for city life. Her persona becomes full of upheavals. Even when she resides at Villette she shows her preferences for the cultural sphere. She likes the school and never longs for country. She likes to go to the musical concert. She goes to theatre. She says, "I liked to visit the picture galleries . . ." (192). She is very "happy" when she visits

art gallery with Graham. She observes the paintings, portraits and sketches. Though she tries to find happiness in such things but she fails to be a “unified mental entity” as critic Shuttleworth opines. The critic says, “Bronte offers, in *Villette*, a thorough materialization of self” (240).

Further, Bronte presents that this material life severed from nature gives no satisfaction to Lucy and she suffers internal traumas. Lucy remains suffering in her life. She is a woman given to culture so she rarely communes with nature. Graham is busy while Paul remains on voyages. In dark illusion threatens her. The town knocks down lonely Lucy. She suffers from ill health. She is scared of the visions which may or may not exist. She is in contrast to Jane who longs to be in the company of nature to seek happiness. Lucy is alone but as she is drawn towards culture she cannot integrate with nature. Hence, instead of Jane’s “trance” she suffers “traumas”.

By depicting Lucy’s dilemma Bronte once again tries to bring to fore nature culture clash. Moreover, Bronte tries to warn that a life cut off from nature is a materialistic life which in itself cannot provide total satisfaction. In this regard Leila S. May views, “Bronte’s understanding of her mission would better be described as one similar to Descartes’—viz., that of waging a rear-guard action to preserve spiritual interiority from an onslaught by modernity” (54).

The above analysis of Charlotte Bronte’s fiction reveals the writer’s serious concern for the environment. She has tried to focus upon the fact that how humans have tried to conceptualize nature as separate from, and subordinate to, culture and thereby tried to attack nature. Culture in the form of urban landscapes, industrial developments, and wars has caused a great havoc to the natural world. In *Jane Eyre*, her first novel nature culture clash becomes visible in the portrayal of varying landscapes where urban nature disturbs while serene nature integrates. Her second novel *Shirley* draws purely on the loss of natural landscape due to industrial and material development. In this novel Bronte highlights that industry and machines are useful for the development but they also have a broader social impact. She has shown that industrial and mechanical development jeopardizes not only nature but also disturbs social and economic set-up of the society. In *Villette* the clash of culture with nature in the mind of Lucy shows that a life which is full of culture and away from nature, cannot provide satisfaction and integration.

The contemporary novelist Susan Hill, writing after a gap of almost one hundred and four years after Charlotte Bronte, also focuses upon ecological issues in her fiction. Though, primarily she is famous as a writer of crime fiction and short stories yet when analyzed from the perspective of environmental concerns her fiction seem to foreground modern men's attitudes towards nature. Her famous novels are *The Woman in Black* and *I'm the King of the Castle*. It is really interesting to note that she writes about nature in the present materialistic times, when it is the most ignored thing.

The impact of urbanization on nature and humans forms the base of nature culture clash in her novel *I'm the King of the Castle*. The novelist portrays that people are more inclined towards sophisticated urban life. In this novel Edmund Hooper, son of Joseph Hooper wants to dominate over the other child Charles Kingshaw who comes to Hooper's house with his widowed mother Helena. The whole occurrences take place at Warings, the house of Hoopers which is situated in the low lying village Derne. Though this novel is a story of childhood cruelty and rivalry yet Susan Hill throws ample light upon the drastic effects of growing urbanization which leaves this village barren. The narrator describes that when Senior Hooper's father came here this place was a village. Slowly village got shrunk because people preferred to live in town instead of village. They sold their lands and went to city for commercial activities and the rural land was sold bit by bit for money. Gradually the village became deserted. It lost its shape as a village. The narrator comments:

The house, which was called Warings, had been built by the boy's great-grandfather, and so it was not very old. In those days, there had been a large village, and the first Joseph Hooper had owned a good deal of land. Now, the village had shrunk, people had left for the towns and there had been few new-comers, few new buildings. Derne became like an old busy port which has been deserted by the sea. All the Hooper land had been sold off, piece by piece. But there was still Warings, built on a slope leading out of the village, some distance from any other House. (*I'm the King of the Castle* 9-10)

The passage clearly indicates a trend when people leave for towns and desert villages. Man's preference to move towards city life is a great threat to rural landscape as well as man's traditional way of living and thinking. Village Derne

wears a deserted look and looks like a port deserted by sea as people have left for the more sophisticated urban spaces. The village Derne loses its shape as a village. It is an extreme instance of the attack of culture upon nature which proves detrimental to nature.

The narrator tells that the ancestors of present Mr. Joseph Hooper were very much interested in the city life. The first Joseph Hooper built a very big house to impress his friends in “City”. He craved for cultivated city life and didn’t hesitate from using the land he owned for personal gains. He sold the land in pieces to afford a high profile life. Present Joseph tells, “The first Joseph Hooper had been a banker, and rising in the world, when at the age of thirty, he had built the house. . . . And indeed, he had spent more on it than he could well afford. He hoped to grow into it, as a child grows into over-large shoes. He was an ambitious man” (10). He was a man of culture who sold his land for sophisticated life. He decorated the house with not only architectural pretensions but also with well decorated furniture. The narrator tells, “Inside the house, everything was predictable, the high ceilinged room, with heavy, sashed windows, the oak wall panelling and the oak doors, and the oak staircase, the massive furniture” (11).

Present Joseph’s mind reveals that first Joseph Hooper was the hunter of animals for fun. His ambition was unfulfilled even after possessing the Warings. He decorated the “Red Room” with the bones of dead animals. He felt no pangs of conscience in killing the innocent non human creatures. About the “Red Room” he thinks:

Above the wooden panelling of the Red Room were the animals, the stag’s head with antlers branching out over the doorway, and the caches of grey fish, against their painted background of weed and water, the stuffed bodies of weasel, stoat and fox, glass eyed and posed in stilted attitudes. . . . in the manner of a sporting person. (14)

Present Joseph’s memories tell that the first Joseph Hooper was a man driven towards culture. In order to satisfy his refined taste he had no guilt in selling his land or even hunting the mute, innocent animals. He did everything which satisfied his whims.

The son of Hooper the first was Senior Hooper. He was father to present Joseph Hooper and grandfather to child Edmund. Senior Hooper was also inclined towards culture. Under the tag of science his activities harmed nature. Joseph

recalls that he was a lepidopterist. He collected moths and butterflies and studied them. He studied moths for name and fame. He was proud of his works and wanted to become world famous. He wanted to achieve name and fame by studying nature. He caged moths and butterflies in jars and studied them. His collection was just like a museum of various insects (12). Telling about his father, Joseph Hooper tells his son Edmund: "He was known and respected the world over. This collection is worth a great deal of money" (13). This shows that how man harms nature in the name of science. Commenting upon the harm done by man to nature ecocritic Helena Feder opines: "Although we are not the only species that use culture to alter our environment, we are at the moment the only ones endangering the existence of a *great many others*" (234). Joseph's memories recall that how senior Hooper inspired such actions of Joseph to make him world famous. He used to say that he was an "international man". He also used to say that "let me see you make a name for yourself, in some way or the other" (13). Senior Hooper became renowned by his knowledge of insects and trained present Joseph Hooper to pursue the same by becoming a man of culture who inevitably follows him. He makes his child Edmund also learn the same things. Thus, Hill presents that the Hooper family since the generation of the first Hooper to the present Hooper were all inclined towards culture and had no guilt in destroying nature.

Present Mr. Joseph Hooper also tries to be a man of culture. He arranges cocktail parties (56). He always thinks to find the ways to become influential in his social circle. He feels himself as a failure because he has been unimpressive. All his thoughts revolve around culture. He neglects nature in every way. He never thinks about nature when he is at Warings. Nothing he does for plants or animals at his house. When he goes to London with Mrs. Helena and Kingshaw he never comments on the natural landscapes which comes in his way nor is pained to see the reduced natural spaces in the city. Though Kingshaw, who is sitting on his opposite side, keeps looking at gardens in the area but Hooper is untouched. Hooper talks to the taxi driver about Strand, Trafalgar Square, Mall and Buckingham Palace. Though the driver answers that he knows everything yet "Mr. Hooper did not listen, he recited the names of streets and buildings because of his belief in the usefulness and fascination of such facts" (196). His son Edmund also learns all the sophistication of an urban life through his ancestors. Thus, in the

novel all the Hoopers succumb to the onslaught of culture brought about by modernity.

Moreover, Hill also presents the effect of culture and nature upon human psyche by portraying conflicting relationship between the two little children in the novel, Edmund Hooper's and Charles Kingshaw's characters respectively. Edmund Hooper represents sophisticated and cultured society while Charles Kingshaw represents wilderness. Being born and brought up in a sophisticated culturally inclined family Edmund Hooper has learnt all the diplomatic tactics to bully the vulnerable child Kingshaw. On the other hand, child Kingshaw is innocent and naive. In the novel through Edmund and Kingshaw's strained relationship Susan Hill presents nature culture clash at a metaphorical level as it is a clash of cunningness versus innocence. Child Kingshaw comes to live at Warings with his widowed mother. Throughout the story Edmund takes advantage of his vulnerable position. He bullies Kingshaw. He is a clever and tactful child who knows all the ways to harass Kingshaw. Hooper, like humans, is mindful of all the actions of Kingshaw. Kingshaw thinks, "[Hooper] was not like the usual bullies he had known at school. He could cope with them. They had simple, and transparent minds. In any case, they rarely bothered him, now. He had ways of dealing with them. But Hooper was unpredictable. Clever. Inventive" (36). He is a "methodical planner" (49).

On the other hand, Kingshaw is innocent and inactive in comparison to Edmund. Kingshaw is still like the earth. He is vulnerable and cannot protect himself like the physical environment. Kingshaw is harassed and sullied. He is tortured by Edmund who has all the mediation to chase him like the sophisticated people. Kingshaw is pitiable and in a position to be bullied. He cannot retort because he is at his mercy. He is powerful than Edmund but cannot exercise his power upon him. Edmund frequently applies his mind and reason but Kingshaw cannot do so.

At Warings Edmund bullies him by saying that the house belongs to him and Kingshaw is not wanted there. He looks from the top of the house when Kingshaw is attacked by a crow. He teases him by saying that he is dreaded by the little bird. Edmund develops friendship with Fielding who was first acquainted with Kingshaw. Kingshaw hates the Warings and wants to get away from here. "When he got to the fence, leading into first field, just beside the copse, he looked

back. The house seemed very large, seen from here, with all its windows shuttered and blank, like closed eyes. Kingshaw thought, I hate, hate, hate it (62). He hates the Warings because it is Edmund's possession.

Edmund stealthily follows Kingshaw when the vulnerable child takes shelter in the woods. He hides in Hang woods where Hooper finds him tearing the wilder woods. The narrator says, "Just as he was going to get up and come out from behind the bush, the tree branches parted, and there was Hooper" (72). Edmund teases him by saying: "Fathers are better. Anybody who hasn't got a father is useless" (113). When both of them are lost in Hang Woods Kingshaw still helps Hooper. He saves his life when he was drowning. He gives him shirt to wear but all his kindness has no effect on Hooper. Moreover, after they have been recovered, Edmund blames Kingshaw for having him pushed into the water (127). Kingshaw cannot acquit himself from such a deceit. Edmund also charges him for having pushed him from the top of the Leydell castle. Kingshaw becomes helpless and wordless. He finds no way to counterbalance Edmund's treachery. When Kingshaw goes to the shed Edmund locks him and he is caged. It is cold, damp and dirty and there is no way out. He lies down on sacks but feels insect crawling over his hands. The narrator describes, "He retched, and then began to vomit, all over the sacks, the sick coming down his nose and chocking him. It tasted bitter. He bent forwards, holding his stomach. When it finished, he wiped his mouth on the sleeves of his shirt. He was shivering again" (140).

Throughout the story Kingshaw is bullied by Edmund Hooper. Even Kingshaw's mother Helena cares more for Edmund. She slaps Kingshaw for disturbing Edmund's things in his absence. Mr. Hooper neglects their rivalry and wants Kingshaw to join Edmund's school which appears appalling to the child. Kingshaw's personal space is attacked throughout and as a result he finally decides to be extinct bringing about an easy end of his ecological "niche". He finally decides to stealthily run away from Warings:

He only knew that he had to run, to get away from Hooper. The house was no good. He ran up and up, and along every corridor, and whichever room he chose, he dared not stay there, Hooper would find him. He stood on the dark landing outside the attic, his chest hurting with trying to get his breath. More than anything else, he wanted to go back into the

wood, now, deeper and deeper, with all the branches of the trees closing back together behind him, to conceal himself. He wanted to find the stream.

But he would never reach the wood. Hooper would come after him, over the fields, crashing through the undergrowth, hunting him down. (136) For him no security is possible in this world of Hooper's. He is "motionless" (155). He runs for protection and shelter in the natural world. Here Kingshaw is like those immigrant birds which leave their own land for life but still are not out of oncoming dangers. Kingshaw becomes a metaphor for land or for species those are in danger of existence.

Kingshaw's space and peace is dominated by Edmund. At last, finding everything and everyone hopeless, vulnerable Kingshaw commits suicide and merciless Hooper is shown exultant. The narrator says, "When he saw Kingshaw's body, upside down in the water, Hooper thought suddenly, it was because of me, I did that, *it was because of me*, and a spurt of triumph went through him" (222-23). Thus, Hill presents a metaphorical conquest of sophisticated culture over wilderness where latter is seen destroyed.

Further ahead, Susan Hill portrays the link between anthropocentrism and environmental destruction in her another novel *In the Spring Time of the Year*. In this novel man's attitude of dominance and oppression against nature brings about 'ecocide'. The vast expanse of natural space is destroyed because of deforestation. Human desire to have more and more has led to merciless cutting of trees. In this novel nature is occupied by man and he borders it under the names like Ditcher's copse, Laker's Woods and Rydal Woods. The owners have full authority over the land. They are free to inflict the atrocities upon the earth in the area under their custody and none questions it. By carrying on the trade of cutting of trees the Rydals have become rich and rest of the village suffers from poverty and cut trees as hired labourers of Rydals.

Chief Rydal is a big landlord. He owns woods at Helm Bottom. He is a rich man and Ruth, the female protagonist, thinks, "Rydals owned half the villages and woods for miles around, they could not be poor" (*In the Spring Time of the Year* 20). Rydal's main occupation is to clear the forest. He clears the natural space by the help of local people. For this he has hired people like Ben, Colt, Potter and Heykes. He is a typical anthropocentric man who has no reverence for nature and uses it for his mercenary purpose. He has created a web in which everyone is

caught because he gives handsome money for felling trees. The narrator says, “He was a rich man, and respected, the blue-bound wage book was thick with the list of men who worked for him, and none of it counted, none of it had value” (94).

Though Rydal is sixty years old yet he exercises his power over nature. He himself cannot cut the trees but willingly watches merciless cutting of trees. He enjoys the scene of violence against nature. When Ben cuts trees,

Rydal had liked to go and talk to him, say some words about the state of the trees, the weather, vermin, anything, he had liked to stand watching the young man at work, because he exuded some sort of contentment and strength, some satisfaction with the world which Rydal knew that he himself had lacked, perhaps ever since he was born (93).

It is the moment of intense happiness for him. When Ben works he stands by him to talk to him and enjoys nature being struck.

It is thought among common people that it is good to work with the Rydals. People around him feel lucky because they find opportunity under him whether as an employee or a contractor. It is said:

People around here were lucky, they said to have Rydals for an employer or an landlord, he paid good enough wages and kept the houses in repair – though he worked the man hard, but that had only been his nature, he had hated to be idle, could never rest, even at home in the evenings, though he had been up and out at half past six, and not home again until seven – or later in the summer. (21)

But the earth under his control was unfortunate because he continuously destroyed it. He never cares for the loss his workmen have afflicted on the earth. He never sows the trees again after his acts of violence. After clearing woods he uses this land for further use. He has made a big house. The cultivated land he uses for farming to make more money and cares for nothing in the process.

As a businessman Rydal takes orders from people for logs of woods. Then he hires people on wages to cut the trees. After cutting he sells them and gets money. Potter tells Ruth about an order he has taken. He says, “Rydal was wanting a couple of trees down, big ones, he’d an order for a ton of logs. And there was still a lot of clearing and thinning out to do” (192). So there is no end to his greed and the indiscriminate destruction of the physical surrounding goes on and on.

Once, while cutting a tree Ben is crushed under a tree. Mercenary anthropocentric Rydal is temporarily shocked by his death. He has a sense of remorse because Ben died while working for him. He thinks, “They were his woods, it had been his tree, and so he was to blame, though they had contradicted him, Potter, and Heykes, the farm manager, they had all of them been to inspect the fallen elm (93). He wants to compensate Ben’s widow Ruth by giving her money. He oscillates between the thought to give or not to give the money to her. The narrator describes, “Rydal, in his office, lit and re-lit a pipe, used up match after match, and sought to attend to his paper work and could not, nor could he think what money he should offer to Ruth Bryce, or whether she would even accept it from him” (93).

It is not only Rydal who harms nature but Ben himself is interested in knocking down the trees. Ben started tearing of trees when he was only fifteen years old, not because he needed money but “for the pleasure of it” (93). Felling of trees is business for Rydal while it is pleasure for Ben. At his own cottage also Ben wants to cut trees. Instead of them he wants to grow there more useful plants or trees. Quoting what Ben had said the narrator says:

Cut them down, Ben had said, and we’ll have firewood enough for years – for apple wood was good, it burned sweetly and left a soft, clean ash. Then he would plant saplings, more apple and pear, too, and a quince, and meanwhile, until they grew up, there would be an open view, straight down from the cottage to the meadow and the beech woods beyond. (14)

Potter tells Ruth that he and Ben enjoy chopping of trees. Potter also tells Ruth that there is a process of cutting trees. They work on the rhythm of axe while cutting trees. He says, “When you start on a tree, start up with the axe or the saw, there is a movement and it disturbs everything. . . . I’d heard the axe strike. There’s a rhythm to it, everyone has his own. You work to a rhythm” (193). At Rydals Ben works for money which he can use for any purpose. Then he thinks that woods at his cottage can be utilized for firewood. Nature has no importance for these anthropocentric men. They always treat nature as an object to be used and destroyed as per their wish. If they cut, it is for their purpose. If they grow plant, it is also for some purpose and if they sow it is for purpose. Their attitude toward nature shows that human mind cannot think of nature except beyond its use for their own benefits.

Response of people towards Rydal's network shows that none cares for nature in the anthropocentric world. People take advantages where ever they can. They look upon nature as an opportunity. Clearing the woods is an accepted trend in this novel. After Ben's death Jo also wants to take up the job of clearing the woods. He thinks that he is Ben's brother so he should become like him. He thinks, "In a little over a year he would leave school, and then he would go and work for Rydal, train as a forester or a gamekeeper" (250). Thus, knowingly or unknowingly the author has created a storyline which exposes the arrogant attitude of men towards nature.

Susan Hill has not only exposed the extreme case of man's selfish and exploitative nature towards the inhuman destruction of the natural world in the form of felling of the trees but also the clash comes to fore in the form of brutal killing of the animal world. The novelist portrays link between anthropocentrism and the destruction of the animal world. Jo, the brother - in- law to protagonist Ruth, kills the animals for fun. He admits that he saw a rabbit which was not very far away and it didn't move. He shot it and heard it squeal. He very happily tells Ruth:

When I was seven, I killed a rabbit. There was a boy I knew – he lived at Hedgely – and he borrowed his father's gun – or took it. He said he knew how to shoot and I didn't. I never would. It made me angry. I said I could, I could do anything he did, anything in the world. So I had to show him, and he gave me the gun. It was very heavy. I didn't think guns were so heavy. It hurt my arm. But I saw a rabbit – it was'nt very far away and it didn't move. And I shot it. I heard it squeal, I . . . And that was the only truly wicked thing [. . .]" (111-112; 1st ellipsis in original).

Jo performs this "truly wicked thing" for fun. So what is done is a conscious act to cross nature's territory without the realization that animals are also an inherent part of our ecosystem and they also have a right to live. His boasting that he killed a rabbit with a gun reflects a culture that equates masculine behaviour with the victimization of other beings. His recreational approach towards killing of rabbit undermines the severity of the oppressive act itself. He performed it to prove that he can do anything. Moreover, by hunting the innocent beings he tries to show his superiority over nature and thus makes anthropocentrism prevail. Jo says, "He said he knew how to shoot and I didn't" and "I could do anything he did" (111) and the

killing of rabbit proves his strength, his manhood, his pride, in fact his everything. The phrase “anything he did” shows that his fellow boy also does the same act. Both of them seek joy in killing the innocent animals. They are there to entertain them. He says with pride that he once killed the rabbit when he was seven years old and again, when he was fourteen. Man’s wilful violent act, without any shame, owes to the Biblical notion that everything exist for his use and welfare, a situation that ecocritics severely criticize.

Not only Jo and his fellow boy perform this act of hunting to show their masculinity but often other people also do such unmerciful acts to seek pleasure. Ruth hints about the unlawful activity of hunting. She says, “In the field she saw pheasants, the clever and lucky ones who have escaped the gun, and were free now, the shooting season over” (164). It shows that shooting is the common trend in society. None questions or thinks about the unlawfulness of such acts. Even shepherd Mooney who appears to be thoughtful, does not hesitate from killing the mute and innocent creatures for his use. Soon after preaching about the death of Ben he catches a grouse from the hedge of Rydal, poaches it and eats it. Poaching and eating of animals has been considered as an act of power and control over others. Anthropologist Nick Fiddes relates man’s desire for hunting, more specifically meat-eating to “environmental control” (45).

In this novel Susan Hill reveals her true ecological spirit and shows her resentment for the destruction of the natural world. Humans have no right to encroach upon the natural world. It is interesting to know that the selling of human being is an offence but the selling of woods and animals is a profession. In a bipolar world everything is for man. He is the doer; he is the giver; he is the taker; he is the offender; he is the lawyer and he is also the judge. He gets justice in court but there is no law and justice for nature and animals. None on earth can understand their woes. Non humans cannot express themselves in a world where language, system and laws are all man-made. Hence man, who considers himself to be the most intelligent and superior being on earth, can use and smash everything on this planet.

The novelist has explicitly drawn the clash of nature with culture in the shape of deforestation and hunting. Ben as well as Jo reminds the reader that not only our past was brutal but the present is even more dangerous. Hunter gatherer destroyed nature for food and shelter but now when there is enough food and more

than sufficient means for man's survival, "he" is clearing the forest for profit and carrying on hunting for fun. Hence, the human society ceases to be human and it creates havoc on the non- humans in an utterly inhuman way. This dehumanization of the non human world by the human world appears to be very troubling and problematic for the very well being of life on earth and has been vociferously addressed by the ecocritics.

In another gothic novel *The Woman in Black* Susan Hill throws light upon the situation where nature and culture stands apart. Here too the novelist exposes the squalor and pollution in a metropolitan city which is caused by road mending. Arthur Kipps, the protagonist, passes through London in a cab while going to his home from the firm in which he works. He sees the spoiled heart of the city. He comes across the artificialities of the built environment of urban life. There are pools "of sulphurous yellow light" and "red hot pools of light from the chestnut-sellers on street corner". There are "road menders who spurted and smoked an evil red smoke" because of boiling cauldron of tar. Because of the pollution the workers need a lantern held high to see and work. Even in the day time they can't do without a lantern (*The Woman in Black* 24).

No doubt when a city comes into existence man destroys nature and denude open spaces to build huge buildings, rails, houses etc. But it is also true that human society is also not untouched. It has to pay the price in the form of ill health as Kipps' next observation portrays the image of disastrous hell created by the lord of civilization. He observes:

In the streets, there was a din, of brakes grinding and horns blowing, and the shouts of a hundred drivers, slowed down and blinded by the fog, and, as I peered from out of the cab window into the gloom, what figures I could make out fumbling their way through the murk, were like ghost figures, their mouths and lower faces muffled in scarves and veils and handkerchiefs, but on gaining the temporary safety of some pool of light they became red-eyed and demonic. (25)

There is all noise and pollution in the atmosphere of London. Kipps description of the London city shows that excessive use of scientific development hazards the environment. Though man knows the outcome of this development but he deliberately ignores its side effects. In portraying the London scene, Hill, like a true ecocritic shows her concern for the environmental degradations. She is

conventional to the core in depicting the polluted and the affected city people by the harsh atmosphere of the place.

In this novel Kipps visits the funeral of Mrs. Drablow who was a client of the firm in which he works. He becomes very happy when he has opportunity to travel in the train. Kipps enjoys the convenience given by science to society. He says, "I was barely twenty-three years old, and retained a schoolboy's passion for everything to do with railway stations and journeys on steam locomotives" (24). Hill gives a realistic picture of overcrowded places at Kings Cross Station. This place too is filled with the hip hop of city's life. He says that here all was ringing and tolling. In this enjoyment he ignores the noise and air pollution. He comments, "Here, all was clangour and the cheerfulness of preparations for departure, and I purchased papers and journals at the bookstall and walked down the platform beside the smoking, puffing train, with a light step. The engine, I remember, was the Sir Bedivere" (33). Down the platform there is "smoking, puffing train" which makes its way through "Gapemouth tunnel" in the womb of the earth (39). The train running through the womb of the earth is a clear instance of culture violently encroaching upon the world of nature.

Kipps feels no pain when he looks at the growing urbanization, the overpowering of nature by the culture. The creation (culture) of the creation (man), affecting the creator who is the earth and the nature, goes on invariably without realizing its drastic consequences. Kipps' views and comments regarding London explicitly reveal that he is also a man more inclined towards city life. He seeks joy in city where culture prevails. The unnatural life in city helps in exercising man - nature dualism and he finds himself alienated and opposed to nature.

Before reaching on the occasion of funeral at Eel Marsh House Kipps stays at a small town called Gifford Arms. Here the novelist exposes defacing of nature due to growing urbanization. At this place human activities again seem to overpower nature. He is cheerful to see the advancement in the town area and shows no regret for the loss of the natural space. He says, "The wind had died down or else could not be heard in the shelter of the building around market square" (42). He is happy to see the growing market and noise pollution is not irritating for him. Overcrowded place where "the houses were huddled together" gives him immense pleasure (47).

It is remarkable to notice how Kipps' attitude and thoughts express and promote man-nature dualism though unconsciously. He looks at the compact market square, stalls, carts, wagons and listens to the cries of man and finds, "It was as cheerful and purposeful a sight as I could have found to enjoy anywhere, and I walked about with a great appetite for it all" (47). Kipps interestingly describes the upcoming market at Crythin Gifford:

I wandered about, discovering the pattern of the place – a number of straight narrow streets or lanes lead off at every angle from the compact market square, in which the hotel was situated and which was now filling up with pens and stalls, carts, wagons and trailers, in preparation for the market. From all sides came the cries of men to one another as they worked hammering temporary fencing, hauling up canvas awnings over stalls, wheeling barrows over the cobbles. (47)

At Crythin Gifford he is delighted to see the expansion of the city and nowhere laments for the loss of the natural spaces. Not only Kipps but his fellow mourner Mr. Jerome is also allured by the hip hop of the London city. Kipps remarks, "At the sight and sound of it all, I noticed that Mr. Jerome was looking better and, when we reached the porch of the Gifford Arms, he seemed almost lively, in a burst of relief" (59).

The physical environment presented in this novel is in contrast to Wordsworth's romantic and spiritual nature which gives the blessed mood. Here the glamour of the city life has blinded the mind's eye. They have no time to get along with nature and if they do so they only think to exploit it. Human beings have got so accustomed to city's humdrum that they feel better and take a "burst of relief" there. Their conscience is not pricked at the loss of the natural phenomena. It seems that they do not belong to this natural world rather they feel themselves separate from nature and thus touch the territory of man nature dualism. Kipps appears to be thoughtful but his mind is blank for the beauties of nature, rather he enjoys the duality. He is one man for culture and quite another for nature. Susan Hill portrays that dualism prevails in his thought. In spite of his apparent civility he is a dualist who promotes culture.

It is quite evident that the contemporary novelist Susan Hill is very keen to show nature culture clash in her fiction which may be the cultural preferences of man in the shape of urbanization or pollution and squalor in the metropolitan city. Human civilization seems to overshadow the natural domain.

Falling in line with *I'm the King of the Castle* and *The Woman in Black* Susan Hill's another novel *The Beacon* also focuses on the dualism between nature and culture. This novel presents nature culture clash in two ways. First, nature and culture collide with each other in the mind of the characters when they show preference for culture and neglect nature but cannot sustain it longer. After suffering a lot they choose to return to nature and thus culture is defeated. Second, the clash again appears in the form of mechanization.

In this novel the story revolves around four Prime children Colin, May, Frank and Berenice. All of them grew up in the North Country farmhouse which is called the Beacon. May went to university for her studies but came back without a degree. She goes to London but her mind turns against the artificialities of the city. Cultural critic Raymond Williams believes that "the contrast of the country and city is one of the major forms in which we become conscious of a central part of our experience and of the crises of our society" (289). The Creation (culture) of the creation (man) reacts strongly against the characters in *The Beacon* when May and Frank go to the city. Fed up of materialistic life they return back to rural life.

Unlike Arthur Kipps of *The Women in Black*, protagonist May is stroked by the terrors of the London city. Hill portrays May's encounter with the city life. As soon as she leaves for London she gets conscious of her dress. The narrator says, "She had set off on the train wearing the beret and gloves, but when she had arrived and found her way through the terrifying melee of the city to the college gate, she had felt a sudden movement of certainty that a beret and gloves would give a false impression and pulled them off" (*The Beacon* 38). She gets afraid of crowd in city. Later, when she reaches London a sense of discomfort prevails upon her. She comes across all the hip hop of city life. She finds the environment very discomforting. The narrator says, "She stood and watched the buses and taxis and cars and people stream past her and smells of fog and petrol" (39). City atmosphere irritates her.

Initially she prefers the ease and comfort of the city life for a very short time. She feels convenient to be served by the British Road Service (49). At first it

gives her comfort but then comes another side of the coin. Soon she gets “confused and unhappy” because of “The smell of smoke and fog on cold air and the faces of strangers looming at her suddenly in the streets” (51). The urban space does not impress her. She becomes fearful of London. Her mind is flooded with all sorts of terrors. She is deeply “tortured” by the mechanization of the city. One day she looks at the newspaper printing machine which appears to be “inferno of noise” and very terrifying. She had felt the “machines were about to lift steel claws and draw her down into them and had turned away and run without looking where she ran so that she was almost killed by a bus”. The bus appears as a “red dinosaur lit up inside and roaring” (58). The narrator conveys her terror in the following words:

The first had come when she was waiting at a crossing in the strand, and before the lights changed from red to green she saw the whole stream of traffic as a thunderous army menacing her and the people walking past as hostile enemies with starring eyes which bored through her body and into her soul. . . . she stood with her hand on the wall, and the wall seemed to be about to crack and crumble. (52)

Again the terror returns at night and she feels that “the large ants were crawling over her body and eating the skin away” (52). She tries to sleep but she saw the “trees with branches that curled upward and inward and turned to ash and blood-covered beaches dotted with mounds of sand-covered snakes which stirred and coiled and uncoiled” (53). Her heart beats slowly and she feels herself as a balloon. She keeps awake all night. The terror again appears after four days. This time “it took the form of extremely thin men without faces who walked sideways and could slide themselves into her body like cards in to a back and talk to her in obscene language” (55). Even in the examination hall she finds the paper “was written in a menacing and unfamiliar language which contained threats and abuse”. Instead of strengthening her character city panics her. Everything turns against her. She cannot sleep. Unlike Kipps she is not drawn towards the city. Moreover, she finds her life menacing. She comes to know that “her mind would have turned to sawdust with the boredom of the jobs available in town, in shops or offices” (61). She becomes fearful of London and realizes that nothing in the city can be her saviour from the fears. She is torn between the natural environment of her childhood and the artificialities of the man-made environment of urban life. She

feels suffocated by the materialistic city life and finally decides to leave the place and returns back to the countryside in the lap of nature where she finds peace and solace. Once she reaches the farmhouse, the Beacon the novelist writes that no terror ever terrified her, highlighting the fact that too much of culture not only harms natural environment but also sullies human mind. The narrator accepts:

But nothing fitted May. Besides, while she was at the Beacon the terrors stayed away. Sometimes she could barely remember them or understand the power they had had over her. Here she felt safe. She was aware that in lingering at home, perhaps waiting for something to happen, something that would solve the problem of her future for her, she was betraying herself and everything she had once wanted and might have had. She dared not defy the terrors which she knew perfectly well would overcome her if ever she made a second attempt at independence. (62-63)

Further, in this novel nature culture clash is exposed through May's brother Frank whose mind remains dwindling between nature and culture. It is beyond doubt that the mind setup of Frank is also disturbed by his stay in the city. He suddenly leaves his homeland and goes away for years. He goes to Fleet Street and publishes a book which tears apart his relations with his siblings. The name and fame gained by Frank in his cultural sphere of city turns against him. His hard earned fame and the whole lot of letters of appreciation received from people turn against him. "Letters began to arrive and it was hard at least at first" (123) for him to read and reply. At first, "he replied" (124) but soon he is tired of the piles of the letters and then "he skimmed them and before long ceased to read them at all but tore them up or burned them immediately, and certainly he no longer answered". He felt distressed and it becomes impossible for him to go anywhere. People stared at him and followed him. They try to talk to him, to thank him or to pour out their stories. He becomes tired of all this and prefers to be a wanderer and goes abroad to Europe and to South Africa. He feels aloof and alienated and separated from his siblings. He recalls the memories of his childhood at the farmhouse (126). He is disturbed by the voices at night (127). Frank's mind is polluted by city culture.

It is indicated in the course of the novel that when he was a child and sinless he loved "open spaces" but as he grows up open spaces have no charm for him. It is said: "He had long since sold the flat by the sea, and now he hated the open spaces that had once spelled freedom" (127). During his stay at London his

mind setup is disturbed and he dislikes the “Open Spaces”. There is clash of nature and culture in his mind. He wishes never to visit the Beacon again.

Though, Frank makes all the claims but he cannot stand by his own decision of staying away from the Beacon. When his mother dies he reaches there without any formal information. As he stays there for some days he again comes into the contact of his childhood environment. The “open spaces” of Beacon compels him to come back and he decides to stay there for the rest of his life. All his fascination for the urban life is wiped away by the touch of pure rural nature. He looks at “the fields baking in the sun. The parched grass. The cracks in the mud around the gate. . . . swallows flying in and out He knew” and he decides to stay there forever (150). The novel has a message that human beings may be drawn towards culture but any alienation is sure to cause a disturbance in their lives, moreover, a life lived in harmony with nature can only be a blissful one.

Susan Hill alludes to the destructive effects of mechanization also in this novel. Nature and culture clash in the form of new inventions. Arrival of human culture is indicated in the shape of mechanization. The novelist indicates towards the increasing trend of mechanization and people’s happy response to it. May remembers that mechanization have been speeded up after the world war second. Even the remote places like Beacon shows increasing trend towards mechanization. They happily accept machines because they facilitate them and make the work easier. May says, “After the war they stopped using horses and brought a tractor and the milking gradually became more mechanized” (9). They use machinery for farming. Colin is very happy to show his farms and machines to Janet Fairley (30). At Beacon May also brings a car and “she was relieved. She liked driving car. Liked being alone and free of everyone” (91). Her sister Berenice’s husband Joe Jory also has a “dilapidated van” (65). The technique has fast developed and Beacon has telephone facility also. May frequently talks to her siblings on phone.

In the course of the novel it is known that the father of May’s friend Janet Fairley runs a garage. He sells petrol and provides service to the farm vehicles. He also works through his private car. It is indicated that he makes a good earning in his profession. He has good income so he enjoys big home and status. The narrator says, “Her father ran the garage, selling petrol and servicing the farm vehicles and the private cars that more people were now acquiring” (29). It indicates towards

the increasing trends of mechanization in the novel. It is clear that though the place is remote and hilly but culture is enforcing its way in such places and posing a great threat to the rural and conventional way of life.

Susan Hill portrays the city as the centre of human culture. It is the place where only culture grows and people have no concern for natural surroundings. Growing cities have given rise to the problem of over population, pollution and several health hazards but humans have no regrets for all this despoiling of the face of nature. On the contrary, they enjoy and celebrate this situation. It appears to them “prettier” than before. When Frank passes near the town in his way to the Beacon he thinks, “He recognized the town well enough, though it had spread out; there were the usual blocks of houses where fields had been, but the little he saw of the centre was familiar. The town was built on a hill that slopes down to the river. It was prettier than he had remembered” (138). The place has progressed. Frank who is back after spending years in London could not recognize it. He says, “The taxi driver took a new road to the village and now, because there were only the hills and fields and small clumps of woodland, sheep and stone walls he quickly lost sense of where he was and none of it was familiar. He might never have been here in his life before” (138).

Thus, Susan Hill has portrayed nature culture clash in various ways. Onslaught of culture has been shown in the form of mechanization or may be in acquisition of private vehicles or may be in growing city culture or in the enlargement of the towns. The clash may have any shape but the bitter truth is that it has callously despoiled the beauty of the non human world.

The above comprehensive analysis of the fiction of Bronte and Hill depicts that man’s language of desire and use has prepared the earth for irreparable suffering. The stories portray anthropocentric behaviour of men and address the issues of ecological destruction brought about by human interventions. They highlight how men’s endless wish to conquer nature has invited numerous attacks on nature which in turn has resulted into great ecological destruction. Onslaught of culture in the name of modernization, mechanization or urbanization has resulted in the dilapidation of nature which has made the earth a less inhabitable planet. Moreover, nature culture clash has not only harmed nature but human nature as well. In this connection ecocritic Oppermann views, “Our connection with the natural world, however remain tenuous as we continue to temper with environment for short term pay offs” (307).

Looking at the novels of both the novelists it can be safely inferred that man has forgotten that he is the one creation of nature among others, rather he considers himself to be the lord of all. His authoritative behaviour creates problem for his fellow creatures. Vandana Shiva rightly opines, “One could say that a new religion, a new cosmology, a new creation myth is being put in place, where biotechnology corporations like Monsanto replace creation as ‘creators’” (Mies, Preface XVIII). By exploiting the other species man challenges the Supreme Power. It seems he is in a search to become the birth giver, the protector and the god of death but in fact he is proceeding to commit unanimous suicide.

Retribution of Nature

Stillness of nature is a matter of wonder. In spite of all the acts of violence against the earth it is calm and munificent. Nature is a provider and preserver but in case of its overexploitation it can act as a destroyer also. A gross negligence and over use of nature will be backfired on humans only leading to his apocalypse. Reaction of Nature against human activities to trespass the limit is inevitable in real life. It is seen repulsive in the shape of earthquakes, floods, overlapping seashores, melting of ice, irregular rainfalls and storms. Man’s guess of being the best creation of God has no base in ecocritical assumptions. For ecocritics nature is no longer an environment; it is an autonomous agent that can exact its will on living beings. Ecocritic Marshal views, “This pride and assertion are indeed very small when compared to that of ecological power and many a time man has realized his helplessness in the face of nature’s fury even though he claims to be the master of the scientific world” (14).

Ecocritics find that earth is a mighty being and it can take revenge. They fear the reactions of nature because they reckon nature to be a powerful force that has the potential to frequently change its guise to award or avenge the human society. They fear that man’s lordship is going to end soon. In the essay “From Transcendence to Obsolescence: A Route Map” ecocritic Harold Fromm believes that man’s supremacy is an assumption and this illusion is going to smash. He opines:

But while all of this newfound mental assurance has been building up, when man has finally found a home in the world, when he feels he is lord of all he surveys, when he no longer needs to have his spirit stroked by the

right hand of God – a new “trouble” (which I put in quotation marks because it is thought by some to be purely imaginary) rears its ugly head: man’s nurturing environment threatens to stop nurturing and to start killing.
(34)

So ecocritics do not accept the hush of nature and look for the passages where nature revolts against the inhuman atrocities hurled upon it. Literary imagination also treats nature as an overpowering force which is uncontrollable and can smash everything in a second.

Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill were advanced enough to comprehend the give and take of the human and the non-human world. They perfectly perceived the interrelationship of the human sphere with the non-human sphere. In their fiction they have tried to focus on the environmental justice. Man believes himself to be superior to the other life forms that inhabit the earth. He brutally harms them. But like true ecocritics the novelists try to reiterate the fact that if we try to destroy nature, it will definitely take its turn. Their fiction portrays the harassed, conquered and bewildered earth which revolts for its invincible spirit.

Charlotte Bronte has presented the revenge of the earth in a metaphorical manner in *Jane Eyre*. Mr. Rochester, the protagonist has huge mansions and premises at various locations which show his obsession for land. He likes to possess things, natural and artificial. He has all of the means in his possession and holds a high status in society. By building huge mansions he has harmed nature and used the earth as his colony. He is the owner of a great mansion called Thornfield hall which is spread over a vast expanse of land. He is also the owner of the cultivated “orchards” which exist for his entertainment. He also possesses manor-house of Ferndean which was purchased for the sake of game covers like shooting by his father (JE 435). He has no reverence for nature as he uses it for activities like shooting. Nature for him is a thing to be used and enjoyed. His mansions are the result of his wealth and possession.

Critic Susan Meyer is quite sure of his wealthy past from which he wants to get rid of for which he remains absent from the Thornfield. But Bertha who is his wife and has been ill-treated by him is obstacle in his way of clearing this sinful history. She is kept locked in the attic by Rochester. Bertha becomes metaphor for

land, reminds him of his oppression, misdeeds and miseries inflicted upon the earth. Critic Susan Meyer comments:

Yet despite all the cleaning, the presence remains in Thornfield that makes Rochester call it 'a great plague-house' (p. 175). What Rochester needs to have cleaned out of his house as he is trying to attain Jane's love is the black-faced wife in his attic, that wife whose 'breath (faugh!) [once] mixed with the air [he] breathed' (p.392), and who represents his sullyng, inegalitarian colonial past. (460)

In the end of the novel the reader comes to know that Bertha who is symbolic of earth sets the Thornfield Hall at fire which is "the locus of colonial oppression" (Meyer 459). She ends Rochester's tyranny and dominance. She turns his mansion into blackened ruin. She destroys herself in fire and damages Mr. Rochester and his servants. She destroys her exploiter, harasser and torturer and takes her revenge. She jumped into the fire and in an effort to save her Rochester is half burnt. His eyesight is gone. The critic again remarks, "The ending of the novel severely punishes Rochester both for his figurative enslavement of women and for his acquisition of colonial wealth" (Meyer 466). She dies leaving Mr. Rochester disabled, blind and handicapped.

Further, in the other novel *Shirley* Charlotte Bronte refers to the rage and reaction of nature over human activity of possession of natural spaces for commercial purposes. As already analyzed above in nature culture clash in *Shirley* establishment of mill has done a lot of harm to both nature as well as human community. Moore's family desire to possess more and more of land for economic purposes have been avenged by the tortured earth. Jeopardized earth predicts a sordid doom for humanity. The atmosphere of Yorkshire gets polluted and people also suffer from ill health. In *Shirley* industrialization affects the surroundings. The pale earth and black sky could not be understood properly so human community could not escape the resulting miseries. Polluted atmosphere described as "dusty, sunburnt, hot, arid" (01) lets the disease to spread rapidly in Yorkshire. Epidemic breaks and most of the characters fall ill. They are visited by hazardous diseases which remains unidentified and uncured. Caroline is in the danger zone and the novelist aptly gives the title of the chapter 24 "The Valley of the Shadow of Death" (SY 435). Not only Caroline but Louis Moore and Shirley also fall ill. The

Yorkshire people endure immense hardships because they fail to decipher the working and warnings of nature. They have to face bad harvest, famine, hunger and deprivation.

The novelist also presents the erosion of human values and loss of goodwill and brotherhood. The workers fight with the mill owners. There is bloodshed and the landscape becomes “unromantic as Monday morning” (01). Maria Frawley views, “Promising her readers in the opening passage of the novel ‘something unromantic as Monday morning’, Bronte looks back for her material to the winter of 1811-12 when a bad harvest converged with inadequate or faulty government intervention to seriously depress the economy in manufacturing areas of the country” (462). It focuses upon the fact that the effects of mechanization presented in the novel are not mere imaginary creations of the author but are drawn from her real experiences. It not only shows her acute concern for nature but also highlights nature’s rage against its overuse at the beginning of the so called advancement of the human world.

In this story the most avenged person is the anthropocentric and patriarchal chief Robert Moor. Throughout the novel he has been presented as the agent of culture whose sole aim in life is to re-establish the Hollow mill and expand his business. He neither bothers for the physical landscape nor his workers. He is depicted as a true representative of a typical Victorian industrial man, too busy in his industrial pursuits. He is simply not ready to coexist with earth. A career is must for him and not the ecology. He is the culprit of both human beings as well as nature so he cannot remain unpunished. Months after the night of struggle with his workers, an enraged worker shoots him by pistol. He is seriously injured and his health doesn’t improve for a long time. He becomes very weak. He struggles for life and becomes like a skeleton. He is near death and survives with great difficulty. Throughout his life Robert has neglected and exploited both nature and the human beings, therefore he is severely punished. Critic Shuttleworth is also of the view that Robert is punished for his deeds. She opines, “Robert’s illness, by contrast, is externally inflicted. He is shot in retribution His proposal, however of even greater paternalism, is met by the requisite response: attempted murder” (216).

Thus the novel portrays that man might consider himself to be superior and destroy nature but he cannot protect himself from the wrath of nature. Sullen earth

is bound to destroy peace, health and social relations. Unwholesome environment will cause diseases and miseries which will adversely affect the quality of human life, emotions and relations.

Nature exists as a retributive character in the novels of Bronte. It warned Rochester in *Jane Eyre* and Robert in *Shirley* against their exploitative and selfish motives. In *Villette* nature exists as selfless mitigating body which punishes for not only the misery inflicted on earth but also for the unjust treatment of society because human beings are also nature's children. Justice is inevitable so Paul is to be punished for his colonial treatment towards earth and Lucy.

Paul's attitude towards Lucy is of arrogance. He behaves as if he is a born superior. He gives no solace to Lucy and expects that she will do what he wants. Patriarchal Paul does not care for Lucy's emotion. He enters in her life when he desires and leaves when he wishes. He is responsible for making her life miserable.

His conduct is colonial and secretive in respect to earth. What he really possesses it never comes out. But some of his possessions are disclosed towards the end of novel. He is sure that none knows about his secretive places. He never tells anyone that he has "a pleasant old house in a pleasant old square of the Bass-Ville" (VT 39). He is not satisfied with this possession and tries to get more. He secretly buys one more house in Villette before leaving for the foreign country. He desires to possess earth but shows no interest in its care. He remains busy in sea voyages for reason he cannot tell. He gives no reason for his unjust treatment, but the justice is done by nature and he is not given time to show his aggressive outlook.

Autonomous Paul is sure that none can know about him but he is wrong. Nature is a mighty being that cannot be fooled. It is capable of knowing as well as rewarding for the acts of mankind. Oppressive attitude of Paul toward Lucy and earth enrages nature which furiously takes its toll. Weather becomes hostile and surroundings become angry because nature reacts fiercely when he is to come back after three years. When his sail is near the coast, the wild nature becomes more violent. It starts its game of death. Lucy thus describes the vagaries of weather and the appalling scene:

The skies hang full and dark— a rack sails from the west; the clouds cast themselves into strange forms— arches and broad radiations; there rise resplendent mornings—glorious, royal, purple as monarch in his state; the heavens are one flame; so wild are they, they rival battles at its thickest—so

bloody, they shame Victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky; I have noted them ever since childhood. God, watch that sail! Oh, guard it!
(483)

Lucy is quite apprehensive about this rage of nature. She knew deep within her heart that God is trying to punish men for his misdeed. This fury of nature continues and stops only after Nature's vengeance is complete. Lucy says:

The storm roared frenzied for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks; it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full of sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder, the tremor of whose plumes was storm.

Peace; be still! Oh ! a thousand weepers, praying in agony on waiting shores, listened for that voice; but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it—till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some! (483-84)

And Paul can never return. The sail is piled with the dead bodies. It shows that nature has avenged against the whole society. He along with other people becomes the victim of the revenge of nature. Nature severely avenges against his possession. Such a person with secret motives could not be spared by nature and he meets his doom. Interpreting this scene critic Tim Horton in his book *Characteristics of English Literature in Victorian Era* writes: "We all recall that mysterious storm in which *Villette* darkly closes, and with it the expected bridegroom of Lucy Snowe—The wind takes its autumn moan; but—he is coming. The skies hang full and dark And into that night Lucy's master, lover, husband has forever passed (372). Thus, Paul becomes the victim of the wrath of nature which at once grows stormy and swallows the life of the exploiter and cruel possessor.

Like Charlotte Bronte Susan Hill also presents nature as retributive in her novels. In *The Woman in Black* Hill presents the revenge of the earth figuratively. In this novel Jennet Humfrye, the ethereal ghost woman can be said to be a castigating symbol of nature. Her worn out face becomes the sign of consequences of men's atrocities inflicted on earth. Her spiteful manifestation makes Arthur Kipps shudder for he has intruded her sphere.

In this novel it is known through Kipps, that Jennet Humfrye's child was forcefully snatched from her. The child was dead. Grief ridden mother makes humanity responsible for it and erects her vengeance upon it. After her death she becomes a ghost and serves as metaphor for nature. If she is seen in surroundings areas it becomes an ill omen. It is assumed that a child's death is near. She does so with Mr. Kipps who loses his wife Stella and the child Joseph.

At Eel Marsh house Arthur Kipps is treated as an intruder. In the territory of nature whenever he is in trouble, nature nowhere helps him rather it has joined hands with "the woman in black" to erect its revenge. The spectral woman in deepest mourning clothes appears as an apocalyptic pictogram of nature because her mission of revenge is welcomed by nature. Her wasted face is the icon of the result of man's wrong deeds to earth. Vengeance and wrath towards the humanity shows that her mind is full of malignity. Her malevolent appearance creates fear in the mind of Arthur Kipps though he, at first cannot decipher any meaning out of it. It is important to note that at Eel Marsh house nature causes disturbances in human affairs. It is especially true for Arthur Kipps. At Eel Marsh house "dykes" and "ditches" (WB 61) filled with water and the marshes welcomes him. "Emptiness" and "harsh, weird cries from birds near and far" strikes his ears. His way is "submerged" and "untraceable" (68). He finds that because of sun light reflected in water it was difficult for him to see. He says that "it was so bright that it hurt my eyes to go on staring at it" (68). When he goes ahead, he feels "amazement" and "winter wind" and then a "strange sensation, an excitement mingled with alarm" and "loneliness" (69) too. Kipps feels a call from this evil place. He says:

And yet, there was a strange fascination in looking out over the wild wide marshes, for they had an uncanny beauty, even now, in the gray twilight. There was nothing whatsoever to see for mile after and yet I could not take my eyes away. But for today I had had enough. Enough of solitude and no sound save the water and the moaning wind and the melancholy calls of the birds, enough of monotonous greyness, enough of this gloomy old house. (82-83)

By and by Kipps comes to understand that the earth, the sky, and the water in fact the whole nature has turned indifferent towards him. He takes the path to Eel Marsh house and mentions the reaction of earth in the following way "I had never been quite so alone, nor felt quite so small and insignificant in a vast landscape

before, and I fell into a not unpleasant brooding, philosophical frame of minds, struck by the absolute indifference of water and sky to my presence” (85). Not only “indifferent” but soon after this he feels that nature has turned hostile. When he is out of house though not very far away, treacherous game of weather starts with him. He gets startled to find that Eel Marsh house has become “invisible” not because of the darkness but because of a “thick damp sea-mist that had come rolling the marshes and enveloped everything, myself, the house behind me, the end of the causeway path and the countryside ahead”(85). Kipps feels “confused” and “teased”. He says:

I felt confused, teased by it, as though it were made up of millions of live fingers that crept over me, hung on me and then shifted away again. My hair and face and the sleeves of my coat were already damp with a veil of moisture. Above all, it was the suddenness of it that had so unnerved and disoriented me. (86)

To come back to the Eel Marsh house becomes a “nightmare” to him. The rising water tide hinders his way. He is “baffled” by “shifting mist”. He prays to reach the house but the prayer is unheard by the Providence or nature, unlike Jane Eyre. The nature instead of providing him shelter and warmth, strikes him with cold, damp air and hostile mist. Here the ghost shakes hands with the nature instead of any divine grace of Charlotte Bronte. No aid is provided from the providence and Kipps is given to the horrors created by nature and ghost. It is wonderful to speculate that no geographical obstacle can hinder the way of ghost but the same is present for Kipps. Interpreting the situation critic Val Scullion writes: “The particular horror of *The Woman in Black* is that the ghost is not laid to rest. In the last pages she is still at large, having ranged freely across two centuries, unbound by geographical constraints and driven to bring misery to families again and again”(298). In this caught up and anguished situation, the wind plays the trick and he listens to the sound of a pony trap. To enhance his absurdity, the noise of trap is accompanied by the whinnying of a horse in panic (87). Then a child’s cry greatly disturbs him. With great difficulty and strife he fumbles blindly to the door of the house through tide and mist and finds “despair” and “fearfulness” there. Not only once but many times in the novel Kipps indicate that it was a “treacherous place” (95,184), “dreary weather” (137), “desolate spot” (160), “treacherous quicksand” (162), “haunted” (179), “Untraceable” (68), “mysterious, shimmering

beauty, to smell the strange” (71), “bleakness and eeriness of the spot” (74), “bound to be permanently damp” (80) and “wild wide marshes” (82). Thus reactionary nature turns hostile, uncompromising, awesome and deceiver and provides complete freedom of space and time to the ghost. At last the woman in black avenges Kipps. To the grief of Kipps her “skirts rustling as if to step into the pony’s path” and the cart collided against a tree trunk. His son died on the spot and wife after ten months suffering. Very apt are the remarks of the critic Val Scullion who opines:

Hill’s novel offers a variation of this familiar Gothic trope. For example, Jennet Humfrye, during her lifetime, refuses to be ostracized from ‘respectable’ society, often returning to her sister’s house in an attempt to reclaim her son. Later in the form of a ghost, she has complete freedom of space and time in which to wreak vengeance against other parents by causing the death of their children. (295)

Here the bad weather, the tide and the sea mist becomes a barrier for Kipps though not for the ghost and he cannot move because of that. Neither can he help anyone nor he can be helped by anyone and nature proves to be unsympathetic as well as an “obstruction” joined not by the “Providence” but by the ghost very unlike Jane Eyre. Thus nature through the figure of ghost exercises its revenge upon Kipps.

Further ahead revenge of nature is very harsh in the novel *In the Spring Time of the Year*. Fretful nature avenges against protagonist Ruth’s husband Ben who works in Rydal woods. He is in the profession of clearing the woods and constantly cuts the trees, hence he offends nature. But eventually the earth avenges upon him. A tree falls upon him and he gets killed. Nature does not give him time for any move and he becomes the victim of the earth’s anger. There is no room for forgiveness. The earth takes its vengeance and makes society learn a lesson.

Ben’s death is neither forgettable nor common. It becomes one of the unforgettable deaths. The novelist writes: “Potter could not forget, the creak and crash of the falling tree and the silence which has followed. It was what had come over him as he bent down and knew that the man was dead. In that moment, he had discovered some great, clear truth and that truth changed him” (ISTY 86). He found out the reality that death is inevitable and it can occur anywhere. It is also remarkable that Ben somewhere in the deep subconscious of his mind knew that he is the offender of nature. He admits his wrongs done to the earth by cutting the

earth cover and knew that “he had had to die” (163). Keeping this knowledge in his mind he is waiting for the outcome which is the apocalypse.

The above study of the novels of the Victorian writer Charlotte Bronte and the contemporary novelist Susan Hill throws light on their ecological consciousness. It brings to fore the fact that their fiction is replete with nature culture clash and subsequent retribution of nature. After going through their fiction it can be safely concluded that literature has been instrumental in presenting the reprisal of nature. It shows that nature is not silent though man has tried to silence it. Both the authors have sensitively tried to portray the invincible spirit of nature. They elucidate that overuse of the earth is bound to call its unhappy reactions. The revenge of the earth forecasts that dooms day may not be far if the attacks are continued on nature. Like true ecocritics the novelists have conveyed the message that if nature turns against human beings they cannot survive however, supreme they might think themselves to be. Thus, the novelists have emphatically portrayed the supremacy of nature over culture. They have tried to show that men cannot exist in an isolated world devoid of nature. Hence, mutual co-existence is not only a necessity but a compulsion also. If human beings try to ignore this truth then they should be prepared to face the apocalypse.

Striking a Balance

Besides presenting nature culture clash and subsequent retribution the novelists, particularly Charlotte Bronte also try to focus upon a harmonious relationship between the human and the natural world. It is noticed that natural empathy influences a lot in the novels of Charlotte Bronte. In the novels of Charlotte Bronte towards the end the benevolent nature seems to be in harmony with the human beings. The surroundings help every character and bring the novels towards a happy and optimistic ending. *Jane Eyre* ends when Jane gets united to Mr. Rochester. Their re-union is brought about by nature. Jane listens to Mr. Rochester’s voice from miles away and she is compelled to return to Mr. Rochester. Nature drops back its barrier of space and time for Jane and she is able to connect to her lover even though he is miles apart from her. There is a sort of telepathic communication between the two lovers. Despite the long distance she is

able to listen to his voice in night “Jane! Jane! Jane!” She replies, “I am coming!’ ‘Wait for me! Oh, I will come!’” (JE 425). She is able to listen to the voice of Mr. Rochester’s conscience. Jane is fully sure that it is not an illusion. She speculates over her plight and decides to return to Mr. Rochester. The novel ends when Jane is united to Mr. Rochester and henceforth they are shown to live a blissful married life.

In *Shirley* also compassion of nature towards all the characters is noticed at the end of the novel. Change of season clears every obstacle in the novel and proceeds toward a happy end. With the onset of the spring jubilant earth pardons its exploiters. Robert has been an oppressor of nature yet nature has been lenient towards him. When he is hurt by the shot of pistol nature heals him up in its lap away from the city. Nature pardons him and finally he gets married to Caroline. Everything settles down happily in the heart of summer. The narrator says, “The winter is over and gone; spring has followed with beamy and shadowy, with flowery and showery flight. We are now in the heart of summer—in mid-June—the June of 1812” (SY 664). Nature is happy so it conveys benevolence. Human relationships get better. Louis and Shirley also get better and they are also wedded. Workers and owners of mill also resolve their conflict. By the happy ending Bronte conveys the message that though man has tried to overpower nature because of his dualistic thinking and has often been punished for it by nature yet nature has been lenient towards its oppressors.

On the other hand, Susan Hill’s fiction does not hint towards any harmony between anthropocentric men and benevolent nature. Moreover, nature is stubborn and takes the guise of a witch to avenge the wrong doers. As compared to Bronte Susan Hill’s fiction has no happy ending. The male exploiters like Arthur Kipps in *The Woman in Black* and Ben Byrce in *In the Spring Time of the Year* are not shown any compassion by nature and are severely punished for their misdeeds. Susan Hill’s texts maintain that the exploitation and harassment of nature which has just begun in the Victorian age has now reached its zenith so there is no ray of hope for the contemporary men. He is bound to meet his doom as he has overused nature. Her novels emphatically portrays that apocalypse is not impossible rather it is at hand.

To sum up, Bronte and Susan Hill can be safely adjudged as the eco-conscious writers in the light of the above exhaustive and critical analysis. Their presentation of nature culture clash and retribution of nature exposes the truth that culture should not be made to flourish at the cost of nature. The novelists convey the message that human beings may think themselves to be the “lords of creation” and feel proud of their progress but their creation is always secondary. They may exploit and deface nature but cannot overpower it. If they try to dehumanize or overuse nature it will not pardon them. The Supremacy of nature remains unchallenged and unquestionable.

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Chapter IV

Man - Woman - Nature

Woman Nature Association

“Woman” according to Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary is “an adult female human” (“Woman” def.). In the social context the word “woman” indicates a feminine figure full of love, care and tolerance. Women are seen as being gentle, graceful, pious, humble and domestic whereas men are seen as hard working, rational, assertive, industrial, independent and proud; none of which is seen to connect with nature. Nature is also hailed as bounteous, all giving, forgiving, benevolent and nurturing. In almost all the civilizations of the world nature is feminized as both nature and woman share certain common attributes.

A glimpse into ancient times reveals that women have been associated with nature in many civilizations all over the world. The personification of nature as Goddess can be traced back to ancient Greece where the earliest written references occur in *Mycenaen* as *Ma- Ka* or mother Gaia. In Greek mythology Persephone or Kore is daughter of Zeus and harvest goddess Demeter. Jenny March in *Cassell’s Dictionary of Classical Mythology* defines, “Gaia as mother nature, personifies the entire ecosystem of planet earth”. She says Gaia as “Mother nature is always working to achieve and maintain harmony, wholeness and balance within the environment. Mother nature heals, nurtures and supports all life on this planet and ultimately all life and health depend on her” (324). In Southeast Asian Indochina countries of Cambodia, Laos and Thailand earth (terra firma) is personified as “*Phra Mae Thorani*” and Hinduism regards earth mother as goddess “*Prithvi*” (“Phra Mae Thorani”). North American natives (Algonquian) believe that beneath the clouds lives the Earth Mother from where water for life, plants animals and humans is derived. The Romans identified Persephone as Prosepinna with their fertility goddess “*Libera*” (“*Libera*”). Thus from Greece to Rome Mother Earth was held in high esteem.

This interrelatedness of nature and women has found frequent references in literature also. A peep into the early literary history reveals that Roman Epicurian poet Lucretus (99 BC-55 BC) opens his didactic poem *Derurum natura*

by addressing Venus as veritable mother of nature. Milton's Eden is inextricably linked to garden. William Wordsworth always addresses nature as a woman in his poetry of nature. Not only ancient, medieval or romantics but the postmodern writers like William Joyce also depict Mother Nature as a character in his series of childhood stories. It is often noted that not only in the western literature but in the east also a close association is found between women and nature. Draupadi in Indian ancient epic *Mahabharata* wandered in forests with Pandvas. In *Ramayana*, Ravana abducted Sita from a forest and kept her in a garden. Nature associates with women and listens to and responds to the pathos of women. Jai Shanker Prasad in his *Kamayani* also expresses this strong bond between woman and nature where Shraddha makes Manu understand the natural and the spiritual world.

However, under the influence of western dualistic thinking since 16th century onwards this exalted view of nature got shattered. Western dualism not only separated man from nature but it also established man as master of both women and nature. Gradually development in the name of capitalism and industrialization thwarted the position of both the women and the nature. Commercial farming, logging and mining invaded nature and destroyed the traditional way of the life of women. Both were harassed, sullied and exploited alternatively. However this segregation of man-woman -nature was strongly perceived and exposed by ecofeminists who consider it as a product of science. Mies and Shiva opine:

As activists in ecology movements . . . we began to see that the relationship of exploitative dominance between men and nature, (shaped by reductionist modern science since the 16th century) and the exploitative and oppressive relationship between men and women that prevails in most patriarchal societies, even modern industrial ones, were closely connected (3).

According to Noel Sturgeon ecofeminists consider that there is a special relationship between women and nature. To explore this they use historical, cross-cultural, and materialist analysis of women's work. They look at women's dominant roles in agricultural production, the managing of productive resources for household economies, cooking, child care and other related fields. Ecofeminists also consider that environmental problems are more quickly noticed

by women and women's work is more seriously influenced by environmental problems. They also argue that women are biologically close to nature in that their reproductive characteristics like menstrual cycles, lactation, birth etc. because of her biology women remain in touch with natural rhythms, both seasonal and cyclical, life and death giving. Ecofeminists feel that women potentially have greater access than men to sympathize with nature. As a result they are benefitted by nature more than the men (Sturgeon 263-64).

Ecofeminists examine the text to the degree to which they present women-nature closeness and their equal harassment by men. They consider that the analysis which does not study woman nature interrelationship cannot be called ecofeminist. Karen J. Warren in "Taking Empirical Data Seriously: An Ecological Philosophical Perspective" is so serious for the connection between woman and nature that she opines, "Ecological feminists claim that any feminism, environmentalism or environmental ethics which fails to take these connections seriously is grossly inadequate (3). She believes that to establish the nature of these connections and to determine the way which can be potentially liberating for both woman and non-human nature, is a major project of ecofeminist philosophy. So wherever nature serves as companion, healer or teacher or it serves any other purpose in literary works it is of utmost interest to ecofeminist. They try to find out whether nature and women are complementary or contrary to each other.

A look into Charlotte Bronte's fiction reveals that though written much before the emergence of ecofeminism her novels are replete with ecofeminist thoughts. Her fiction not only focuses upon man - culture - nature dualism but it also portrays that women are closer to nature and they are more conscious of their surroundings than men. Her novels have been instrumental in raising questions and criticizing the indifferent attitude of men towards women and environment. During Victorian age, if on one hand, anthropocentrism has caused a great havoc to the natural scenario of England than on the other hand, androcentric society carried on the suppression and oppression of women. It was a time when women were relegated to a place of subordination along with nature because of patriarchal mindset. They were given secondary status and limited rights. Houses were paternal. Women were given to marriage and patriarchy was "colonial marriage bureau" as historian Martha Vicinus calls it (57). Industry, market and

business were not meant for them. The exploitative society left no way except that women have their space only in the lap of nature. Women were suppressed on every front while nature was sullied with every new technique. The society was progressing but nature and women were both at the back foot. If capitalism gave rise to nature's degradation then patriarchy to women's exploitation. It was a peculiar situation where men yoked nature and women together for exploitation and women coupled themselves with nature because they had no space of their own except nature. This led for equalization of women and nature in literature which can be read under ecofeminist canon.

Being a female, Charlotte Bronte has perceived the gender prejudices in her society from a close quarter. In her androcentric Victorian society, where male always had the lead she too could not escape gender biases. But defying such discriminations through her fiction she has tried to give vent to her experiences and pent up feelings at a time when expression of women was ignored, denied or even dismissed. Though her novels actually do not fall into the category of ecofeminist text yet they can be considered as progenitor of ecofeminism as they invariably focus upon the connection of womanhood with ecology and also throw light upon the maltreatment of both the women and the natural environment which results from an overarching, patriarchal and hegemonic value system.

Her classic novel *Jane Eyre* candidly captures women-nature association. The story of *Jane Eyre* revolves around the growth of Jane Eyre, the female protagonist, who moves to five different places. Nature at these five places impacts her development in diverse way. Throughout the story Jane's psyche is inextricably linked to external landscape. In fact external nature seems to internalize Jane's inner force of character and personality.

The novel opens at Gateshead Hall amidst the penetrating rain. Dreary weather depicts Jane's troubled mind. At the very outset, teasing weather welcomes the child Jane to face irritating relations. The place becomes a prison and forces her to stay indoors. Jane comments, "There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; . . . the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further outdoor exercise was now out of the question" (JE 07). Awful winter weather peeps in her psyche. Agitated child

Jane looks at rain beating against the casement and finds no way out. She reads Bewick's *History of British Birds*. Harsh outside weather is a clear reflection of Jane's mental agony and torture. It speaks for the callous treatment meted out to Jane by Reeds. Her dreary mind says, "I was a discord in Gateshead-hall: I was like nobody there: I had nothing in harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children, or her chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them" (15). Her aloofness from nature and society hurts her and she finds herself in deep pain.

Soon agitated Jane views shrubbery which invites her to come out of the irritating house. A view of the silent shrubbery makes a move further in her life. Outside she finds "the silent trees, the fallen fir-cones, the congealed relics of autumn, russet leaves, swept by past winds in heaps, and now stiffened together"(38). Here she seeks a little peace and shelter which saves her from social agony. A walk in plantation provides her a short spell of happiness away from her sufferings and inner tumult. Jane describes:

I leaned against a gate, and looked into an empty field where no sheep were feeding, where the short grass was nipped and blanched. It was a very gray day; a most opaque sky, 'onding on snaw,' canopied all; thence flakes fell at intervals, which settled on the hard path and on the hoary lea without melting. I stood, a wretched child enough, whispering to myself over and over again, 'What shall I do? - what shall I do?' (38-39)

Though she is not greatly relieved but this company gives her some thrust to alter her position. She gets ready to accept the change in her wretched life. Commenting on the link between nature and Jane's mood critic Mike Edwards opines:

The opening is a good example. The wintry weather expresses Jane's feelings, as we have noticed, but also reflects the hostile family environment in which she lives. The words 'cold' and 'sombre', and the reference to 'penetrating' rain, cast their shadow over the scene that follows. The walk in the 'leafless shrubbery' tells us that the action takes place after leaf-fall; but it also encourages us to feel a scene of loss or deprivation or even desolation – a feeling which is appropriate to Jane's loveless situation. (9)

At Gateshead she learns to remain alone. She seeks nature's company instead of society as society gives her pain while nature at least listens to her. She has no company at Gateshead except the silent shrubbery and prefers not to have any at further places.

Further, nature mirrors her psyche as well as associates with her and plays an important role in the growth of her personality at Lowood institution. It is a place where Jane gets education for next eight years, six years as a pupil and two as a teacher. At Lowood Mr. Broklehurst is interested only in money making and is totally averse to both, the suffering girls as well as contaminated environment. He makes no arrangements for the betterment of both of them. When Jane's friend Helen Burns dies because of tuberculosis she becomes friendless and helpless. In her isolation when she finds opportunity to walk into woods and garden and nature becomes her sole relief. Jane's real experience of nature, as part of her consciousness, starts at the Lowood. She has zeal for life and nature becomes part of her thought which inspires her to grow. She comes in direct contact with nature when she comes out of the confinement of the Lowood institution. She expresses her communion with nature in the following words:

I lingered yet a little longer . . . it was such a pleasant evening, so serene, so warm; the still glowing west promised so fairly another fine day on the morrow; the moon rose with such majesty in the grave east. I was o[u]ting these things and enjoying them as a child might, when it entered my mind, as it had never done before:—

‘How sad to be lying now on a sick-bed, and to be in danger of dying! This world is pleasant—it would be dreary to be called from it, and to have to go—who knows where?’ (79-80)

She attains maturity due to this experience of comprehensive existence shared with nature. She gets important messages and comes to know the worth of life. She dispels all negative feelings from her mind and overcomes all hurdles in her day-to-day life. This experience teaches her the worth of life and keeps her healthy while other girls are suffering from tuberculosis. Nature preoccupies her mind and inspires her to live on. She develops reverence for life as a result she very stoically bears the shock of the death of her friend Helen Burns. After Burns' death she becomes friendless in the social context of the world. But in fact, she is fearless and is fully assured that she is not friendless. She always desired for a

friend so, now onwards, nature becomes her friend, philosopher and guide who always resides within her consciousness. Critic Fuller also views, “Jane who appreciates wilderness and freedom of the woods, is not affected by disease but instead strengthened by her time in nature” (156). Her friend nature transforms her from a passionate child to a tolerant and steady girl. Now onwards firmness, consistency and fortitude are her constant companions. She becomes a teacher and some new colours are added to her personality here and her growth is enriched. She learns lot of things at Lowood from Miss Temple. She learns from her how to have more “harmonious thought”, “regulated feelings” and “allegiance to duty and order” (85). She is now quiet, contented, disciplined and subdued. From a child she grows into a fine young woman. Though she is not unhappy or inactive but she feels limited to Lowood skirts and needs the right direction to follow. She longs for freedom. Once again the wild nature is in tune with her desire for liberty. Jane reflects:

I went to my window, opened it, and looked out. There were the two wings of the building; there was the garden; there were the skirts of Lowood; there was the hilly horizon. My eye passed all other objects to rest on those most remote, the blue peaks: it was those I longed to surmount; all within their boundary of rock and heath seemed prison-ground, exile limits. (85)

Earlier nature provided her space and protection, but now onwards it becomes a source of inspiration for freedom. Jane is tired of her routine at Lowood but she does not know what to do. At last nature comes to guide her. A view of nature from the window guides her for future path (85). Jane thinks “for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seems scattered on the wind then faintly blowing. I abandoned it, and framed a humbler supplication; for change, stimulus: that petition, too, seemed swept off into vague space; ‘Then’, I cried, half desperate, ‘Grant me at least a new servitude! (86). To her surprise she feels that her petition has been submitted to nature by the speedy agent of “wind”. Now nature comes in the shape of a kind fairy who asks her to advertise (87) and helps Jane to get the job at the Thornfield Hall.

By the brainwave of nature Jane advertises and gets a job as a governess to the little girl Adele, the ward of Mr. Rochester and her inspiration which is nature, is again with her to reflect her concerns. Her introduction to calm natural

surroundings at Thornfield points towards a smooth carrier. She says, “My faculties, roused by the change of scene, the new field offered to hope, seemed all astir” (99). Physical landscape inspires her to work happily and dutifully. One fine calm day she accidentally meets Mr. Rochester in the skirts of Thornfield hall. Their relationship develops and she becomes ready to look forward because of this changed place. She hopes for a good relationship with her pupil, Adela and Mrs. Fairfax. Jane looks “out afar over sequestered field and hill” (110) and wishes to experience the world beyond. She has a sole relief in walking along the corridor of third storey upstairs from where she observes nature. She thinks about the mysterious laugh. Landscape of Thornfield appears to her “gloomy” and mysterious from the upper storey. She ponders:

I could see into the interior; and both my eyes and spirit seemed drawn from the gloomy house—from the gray hollow filled with ray less cells, as it appeared to me— to that sky expanded before me,— a blue sea absolved from taint of cloud; the moon ascending it in solemn march; her orb seeming to look up as she left the hill tops, from behind which she had come, far and farther below her, and aspired to the zenith, midnight-dark in its fathomless depth and measureless distance: and for those trembling stars that followed her course, they made my heart tremble, my veins glow when I viewed them. (117-118)

Jane is very quick to notice and accept the impact of nature upon her mind. Here she completes her journey from “gloom” to “glow” by viewing nature. In silence and solitude of the place, she allows her mind to dwell upon what it imagines. At Thornfield Hall Jane always remains in touch with nature. She keeps taking walk in nature from time to time and spends enough time there as a result she feels physically and mentally elevated.

The author has presented the impact of the healing and soothing touch of nature on woman through Jane’s changing mood. Jane is benefited by the touch of nature, distance from nature causes havoc to those who are denied of this contact. Alienation from nature causes great harm to Grace Poole and Bertha. Grace Poole, who serves Bertha, remains away from nature and has only occasional glimpses of nature. This causes loss to her physical and mental health. She cannot receive the health waves from nature. So she becomes “enigmatic”, “mysterious”, “uncomely”, “dry” (158) and “strange” (286). Mr. Rochester’s mad

wife, Bertha is a prisoner in the attic of the upper side storey. Her existence is limited to the attic only. She continuously remains locked here and has no dealing with the natural world. This alienation from nature has disturbed her mental and physical health. Bertha is completely cut off from the rest of the environment so she has turned “discolored”, “savage”, “red eyed”, “fearful and ghastly” (286) and “purple” (296). This detachment from nature has affected her body as well as her psyche. She was already mentally disturbed and this alienation has caused a void in her life. She is mad and uncontrollable now. She yells and fiercely screams like a wild animal and attacks everyone who comes near her. Bertha is never allowed to communicate with nature outside, while Grace Poole has some occasional glimpses of nature. This estrangement has adversely affected both Grace Poole and Bertha.

Further, the story reveals that Jane’s life was devoid of love. Human society abhors and oppresses her. She was always treated harshly by people with whom she came in contact. But nature fosters love in Jane. She learns how to love earnestly and teaches Adele with love and care. Though in childhood she swears never to visit Mrs. Reed and never to call her aunt, but now she knows what is right. She visits her dying aunt though she finds her “unchanged, and unchangeable” (233).

Jane is intimately associated with nature while Mr. Rochester is totally indifferent to nature. Nature becomes Jane’s freedom, her hope and inspiration while it is nothing for Rochester. At Thornfield Jane is free to wander in the surroundings which arouse her fancies about love. She falls in love with Mr. Rochester. Earlier Jane was never loved by anyone in her life so she has a fear in her mind which comes out through nature. She looks at the chestnut tree which was rejoicing before Mr. Rochester’s proposal but it at once ailed after this. Before the proposal Jane refers three times to chestnut tree as “horse-chestnut” (254) but soon after it the night’s beauty is gone and chestnut is ailing. The ailing of chestnut tree brings out Jane’s dreaded mind about love, life and hope.

Identification with nature is an important aspect of ecofeminist thought. Women are considered to have greater access to nature. In her famous work *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* Susan Griffin writes, “Woman speaks with nature. That she hears from under the earth. The wind blows in her ears and trees whisper to her . . .” (03). As Jane’s psyche is one with nature, she

identifies herself with nature and does what it says. Profound experience of oneness with nature occurs to her. Hopeless and torn within, after Rochester's deceit she tries to sleep. A "trance", and not the slumber, visits her (324). She sees a vision which is all inclusive. Separateness and division of the objects of nature is dissolved in her vision. Her childhood is mingled with her present. She is lying in her room whose roof ceases to be away from the sky and clouds. The moon and the night itself come to talk to her and she is addressed as "daughter". Her soul answers to that unknown power as "mother". Jane thus describes her experience of night:

I watched her come—watched with the strangest anticipation; as though some word of doom were to be written on her disk. She broke forth as never moon yet burst from cloud: a hand first penetrated the sable folds and waved them away; then, not a moon, but a white human form shone in the azure, inclining a glorious brow earthward. It gazed and gazed on me. It spoke, to my spirit: immeasurably distant was the tone, yet so near, it whispered in my heart—

'My daughter, flee temptation!'

'Mother, I will'.

So I answered after I had waked from the trance-like dream. (323-24)

In this vision like a mother, nature advises her to avoid the temptation. Jane gives heed to nature's advice and decides to leave Thornfield Hall. This experience cannot be dismissed as mere imagination because Jane is in deep pain. Before this trance her mind is agitated and irritated with the accident. She is not in a mood to imagine anyway. This is no hallucination for Jane as she is detached from fears and illusions. It is surely an experience of her consciousness which is one with nature, the rare experience which is available to very few people. However, it may be interpreted that this experience is an exercise in raising consciousness as after this Jane feels mentally strong and collected. She does not bow to the compulsions as it would be degradation. She feels that she must abide by what her true self, which is nature, has bid her to do. As critic Fuller says, "Nature itself tells Jane she cannot remain at Thornfield Hall and must try yet another form of interaction" (159). She follows the path shown by her mother nature and decides to leave Mr. Rochester.

Jane gets transformed because of her strong ties with nature. After leaving Mr. Rochester's domain, she gets agitated and finds her strength shattering down. She spends a night under the sky, in the lap of nature. Once again she tries to get assistance from heaven. Physical objects of nature are no obstacle rather they help her and become "signs" for Jane. She says, "Oh, providence! Sustain me a little longer! Aid—direct me!"(334). At this point John P. Farrell comments in "A Message for Miss Eyre or Jane in Wonderland":

Jane struggles up a hill. As her eye roves over the moor edge, she sees a solitary light at first she thinks it is an ignis fatuus. Then when it does not vanish, she interprets it as a bonfire. But it does not spread. At last, she believes it is a candle. Jane, here, is making and correcting sense perception. But almost immediately, the narrative begins to render the material objects of sense as "signs". (260)

The critic says that Jane Eyre is a reader of secret messages from the providence. According to him sign, sympathy and presentiments enable her to read the spiritual messages. He points out: "all three modes of signification point to the individual's ability to transcend the boundaries of verbal discourse. What is most important, however, is Bronte's emphasis on the union of the three modes. They form a mysterious metalanguage to which humanity has not found the key" (260). So Nature has "metalanguage" which is different from human language. Nature is able to communicate if human beings have strong urge to communicate with nature. And, because Jane has inborn capability to understand the language of nature, she is able to talk to nature.

When the world has deceived Jane and she is left defenseless, nature comes to her help. She is hungry, homeless and hopeless. Her mind is haunted by uncertain thoughts. She wishes that none should see her. She feels herself alienated from the society. She is tired of worldly pursuits and seeks a safe motherly lap where her sorrows can be mitigated. She now seeks shelter in a nearby warm and dry heath. She finds nature "benign and good". She feels her warmth. She cries and calls for her only relative, the universal mother. She says, "Not a tie holds me to human society at this moment – not a charm or hope calls me where my fellow creatures are – none that saw me would have a kind thought or a good wish for me. I have no relative but the universal mother, Nature: I will seek her breast and ask repose" (327).

She feels herself related only to Mother Nature. She forgets everything else in the world except “Mother Nature”. Her “relation less” position in respect to human society is commented by the critic James Buzard in the essay “The Wild English Girl: Jane Eyre”. He comments, “The relation less liberty imagined to be found outside of human culture would be a condition without past and future, an atemporal unconsciousness such as Wordsworth ascribed to the hares “running races in their mirth” (213). Her dissociation from society and kinship with nature comforts and relieves her. This contact with nature brings transformation in the character of Jane. Her diminished soul exalts. She passes through a miraculous change and emerges as an independent and fearless woman after her intimate communication with “Mother Nature”.

This new Jane thinks about God who can exalt her diminished power more and more. She believes that space is not empty but it is filled with the presence of God. She takes shelter in the heath and ponders, “We know that God is everywhere; but certainly we feel His presence most when His works are on the grandest scale spread before us: and it is in the unclouded night-sky, where his worlds wheel their silent course, that we read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence” (328-29). David Cecil very appropriately remarks, “Natural beauties, the glowing sky, the wild waving woods, she admired passionately; for, as the direct work of God, they conveyed to her heart celestial intimations” (104). She confirms her divine faith in nature. Jane feels the presence of God in different manifestations of nature.

This sublime nature teaches her a lot. At once she grows in mind. The divine Nature gives her rebirth. Now Jane is far stronger than her previous self. She sees bilberries and eats them. Her night is blissful. She looks at the sky, then falls asleep and forgets all worries and burden, and becomes free of all agony. This short stay with nature enlivens her whole being. Next morning she says:

Hopeless of the future, I wished but this—that my Maker had that night thought good to require my soul of me while I slept; and that this weary frame, absolved by death from further conflict with fate, had now but to decay quietly, and mingle in peace with the soil of this wilderness. Life, however, was yet in my possession; with all its requirements, and pains, and responsibilities. The burden must be carried; the want provided for; the suffering endured; the responsibility fulfilled. I set out. (329)

“Mother Nature” is sublime and powerful and it transforms her. Before this sweet encounter with nature Jane was crude, miserable and weak. Hope and happiness had no place in her life. She was alone and an aimless wonderer. She left Thornfield hall without any aim. She wished that she should see nobody. But this night-long stay in the lap of nature, completely transforms Jane. Now only peace prevails in her soul in the wilderness of night. The idea of death is defeated and life-force has won. Nature teaches her with love, to bear the pain and to carry out the responsibilities. Her benevolent guide “Nature” suggests her that life is not just a pot of joy but there are also responsibilities and duties to be carried out.

Later at Moore house wilder nature builds her character. She peacefully lives there with Moor family and shares her fortune with them. Though Jane’s life has not remained joyous and hopeful for her but her view of nature is never saddened. She loves nature even if her mind is in a state of agitation. She likes the Moor family and loves and responds to nature. After going through turmoil Jane now seeks peace which she finds in the serene wilderness of Moor land. Its loneliness, wild colouring, moss, breeze, sunrise, sunset, clouded nights raises her faculties. Jane Eyre says:

I saw the fascination of the locality. I felt the consecration of its loneliness: my eye feasted on the outline of swell and sweep – on the wild colouring communicated to ridge and dell, by moss, by heath-bell, by flower-sprinkled turf, by brilliant bracken, and mellow granite crag. These details were just to me what they were to them – so many pure and sweet sources of pleasure. The strong blast and the soft breeze; the rough and the halcyon day; the hours of sunrise and sunset; the moonlight and the clouded night, developed for me, in these regions, the same attraction as for them – wound round my faculties the same spell that entranced theirs.
(354)

In the peace of the place she becomes a woman of courage. Her inner strength increases by the healing touch of nature. It is the wilderness of moor land where Jane finds her true self which seeks enjoyment in serving others. She instantly divides her fortune among Moor family and becomes ready to serve Mr. Rochester.

In the end also nature is in tune with Jane so it is all help and positive force for her who drops its barriers of time and space and she is capable to talk to

Mr. Rochester from hundred miles distance. Not telephony but a sort of telepathy is seen between them. She communicates to Rochester from miles away without any electronic instrument. She is able to listen to Mr. Rochester and the voice of his conscience (425). Jane is fully sure that it is not illusion. She speculates over her plight and decides to return to Mr. Rochester. The novel ends when Jane is united to Mr. Rochester. Nature drops back its barrier of space and time which could obstruct the path of communication. So the space and environment is not a barrier for her. Here “natural sympathies” ultimately unite her with Mr. Rochester (Buzard 197). Because of these natural sympathies she is able to vault the space of hundred miles between her and Mr. Rochester.

Her close kinship with nature throughout her wandering life at different places ultimately brings Jane to a long cherished peaceful life. She finds that Ferndean Manor house is “deep buried in woods” and “uninhabited” and “unfurnished” (435). It has “sad sky cold gale, and continued small, penetrating rain”. Jane watches and describes nature for blind Rochester. She is so enthusiastic for nature that she is never “weary of gazing for his behalf, and of putting into words the effect of field, tree, town, river, cloud, sunbeam - of the landscape before us; of the weather round us” (456). She blissfully lives with Rochester where a child is born to them. She is fully blessed and never sad there. Having seen all the adventures at different places she concludes that life in the lap of nature is best. At Ferndean she finds the life she has been looking for earlier. She lives pastoral life in the pristine wilderness of Ferndean which reduces the gap in her imagination and reality.

From an ecofeminist perspective *Jane Eyre* reflects how females think and interact with their natural environment. It is clear that nature is in deep kinship with Jane. It reflects her psyche as well as provides her opportunities to grow physically, mentally and spiritually. It is her own space where she thinks and does what she wants. It comes to guide and protect her on every crucial moment of her life. As the novel reverberates with Jane’s interaction with nature and subsequent transformation of personality, it can be considered as an ecofeminist text.

In Bronte’s novel *Shirley* also ecofeminist aspects can be found at length. This novel also speaks for the association of women and nature like *Jane Eyre*. Nature proves to be a women’s space in the industrialized and traumatized society. When patriarchy doesn’t hear her woes, nature is there to listen to her and

lessen her grief. In this novel Caroline is very close to nature. External nature becomes a reflection of her mindset and provides her strength like Jane Eyre.

Caroline resembles ailing earth in autumn. Changing weather seriously impacts her health. When she is neglected by Robert Moore, her pain knows no bounds. Her patriarchal uncle prohibits her outdoor visits. She can't protest but feels very sad. She grows restless, troublesome, uneasy and tired. She starts ailing like the valley of Yorkshire in autumn. She comes out at night and the scene in nature seems to reflect her sorrow. She finds,

It was a still night—calm, dewy, cloudless; the gables, turned to the west, reflected the clear amber of the horizon they faced; the oaks behind were black; the cedar was blacker. Under its dense, raven boughs a glimpse of sky opened gravely blue. It was full of the moon, which looks solemnly mildly down on [her] from beneath that sombre canopy (SY 198).

Caroline in her moods of depression moves towards nature which turns out to be her best friend. Sorrow unites her with nature because she is very sure that nature is the best companion for woman when they are in trouble. Both are the muted groups so there is a wordless communication between the two. No dialogues are required for understanding each other. Through Caroline Brontë tries to depict that the women have secret bonding with nature and external nature is in tune with internal nature of women. The narrator remarks, "She felt this night and prospect mournfully lovely. She wished she could be happy: she wished she could know inward peace" (198). She cannot eat. She becomes weak and pale. It is assumed in society that she is caught in fever but nobody precisely knows what ails her. Everyone notices the change in her appearance and most of the people say that she is going to die. She yearns for the company of nature which she used to have at Hollow's Cottage. The narrator says, "If she had dared, too, she would have declared how the very flowers in the garden of Hollow's Cottage were dear to her . . . how she longed to return to it, as much almost as the first woman, in her exile, must have longed to revisit Eden" (259-60). On the other hand patriarchal Robert has no time for nature and no love for Caroline. What he knows is business instead of nature. In contrast to Caroline nature has no importance for him and he fully ignores it. He never longs for the company of nature. He has no time for such business.

However, this situation prolongs and Caroline has strange feeling “on waking the next morning she felt oppressed with unwonted languor: at breakfast, at each meal of the following day, she missed all sense of appetite: palatable food was as ashes and sawdust to her” (435). She cannot bear separation from nature, Hortense and Robert. Caroline becomes mentally sick and then ails physically also. In the autumn when earth is not jubilant it gives her fever. “She wasted like any snow-wreath in thaw; she faded like any flower in drought” (438). Caroline’s physical health deteriorates. She keeps sleeping when awake and waking when asleep. Her mind is disturbed like the environment of Yorkshire. She mutters incredible prayers. She asks Providence for faith. She fancies that she is wondering in the glen and garden with Robert. She cannot differentiate whether it is day or night. But none on the earth knows what she is suffering from. Her inner plight is reflected by her outer surroundings. The earth like her is also pale and dull as it is afflicted in autumn. The narrator describes:

It was a peaceful autumn day. The gilding of the Indian summer mellowed the pastures far and wide. The russet woods stood ripe to be stripped, but were yet full of leaf. The purple of heath-bloom, faded but not withered, tinged the hills. . . . Fieldhead gardens bore the seal of gentle decay. On the walks, swept that morning, yellow leaves had fluttered down again. Its time of flowers, and even of fruits, was over; but a scantling of apples enriched the trees; only a blossom here and there expanded pale and delicate amidst a knot of faded leaves. (499-500)

Autumn affects earth and Caroline in a negative way. There are diseases and struggles on earth for life. In the same way Caroline also struggles for life.

However, these troubles are caused by autumn and as the earth changes its guise with the arrival of winter Caroline also gets better. The narrator describes, “At length the latter autumn passed; its fogs, its rains withdrew from England their mourning and their tears; its winds swept on to sigh over lands far away. Behind November came deep winter—clearness, stillness, frost accompanying” (589). With the onset of winter, the earth starts feeling improvement, and gradually, with the arrival of summer every matter settles down. Cheerful summer makes Caroline also happy. It embalms her and there is a new hope of life for her. She recovers from her illness and is restored to her mother Mrs. Pryor who had

left her when she was a child. Martin comes like a soothing wind for Caroline after autumn. He makes a way possible by which Caroline is able to meet ailing and alienated Robert Moore. Robert who had earlier turned cold towards Caroline now talks to her in a soothing manner. They again develop a cordial relationship and get married. By this literary association of nature and women Bronte depicts that lives on earth are strongly connected and they cannot be separated. On the one hand Bronte depicts that women are more sensitive so they associate better with earth. On the other hand men remain too occupied in business like Robert so they miss the bliss in nature.

Besides depicting Caroline's strong ties with nature Bronte has also depicted Shirley's association with the natural landscape. Shirley too gets energy and joy when she is in the company of nature. She is a business woman who owns Hollow's mill. She manages her occupation in such a way that she has sufficient time available with her for nature. Nature gives her joy and energy and frees her from weariness and burden of business. She is cheered like a little child in the company of nature. The narrator says, "She stood quietly near the window, looking at the grand cedar on her lawn, watching a bird on one of its lower boughs. Presently she began to chirrup to the bird: soon her chirrup grew clearer; ere long she was whistling; the whistle stuck into a tune, and very sweetly and deftly it was executed" (216). So glimpse of nature fills her with joy.

Shirley and Caroline have full access to nature. While Shirley has burden of business on her mind, Caroline is neglected and separated from Robert. Again and again they keep going to nature to enliven themselves. Nature is a refuge for them. It provides them peace and solace. It is the force which keeps them charged. They visit Nunnely Common which is woodland and forget their sorrows. It is a place which truly belongs to them. Nunnely Common has an ameliorating effect on them. Caroline has a good knowledge of this natural area. She says:

I know where wild strawberries abound; I know certain lonely, quite untrodden glades, carpeted with strange mosses, some yellow as if gilded, some of sober gray, some gem-green. I know groups of trees that ravish the eye with their perfect, picture-like effect—rude oak, delicate birch, glossy beech, clustered in contrast; and ash trees stately as Soul, standing

isolated; and superannuated wood-giants clad in bright shrouds of ivy.
(220)

They look at the green brow of the Common. They wander in the deep valley. They look at the sole remnant of antique British forest. They cheerfully look at the horizon that was tinted like silvery blues, soft purples and rose shades, all melting into fleeces of white cloud. Touch of nature restores their peace. It gives them their space away from tumult where they try to find their own self. Shirley could feel the soothing effect of the environment there. She ponders, “They had passed a long wet day together without *ennui*. . . . all was tempest outside the antique lattices, all deep peace within” (232).

Close friendship with nature beacons them for further communication. They again and again seek for the company of nature. They find an opportunity to wander day long with Mrs. Prior. This time they go to the narrow end of the Hollow. This place is rarely visited by people. They find that the place is untrodden and the “freshness of wood flowers attested that foot of man seldom pressed them”. The place was overgrown with “the abounding wild roses looked as if they budded, bloomed, and faded under the watch of solitude. “Here you saw the sweet azure of blue-bells, and recognized in pearls-white blossoms, spangling the grass, a humble type of some starlit spot in space” (389). In contrast to male society both the women are drawn towards nature and could feel the real presence of it.

Bronte’s women bracket intensely with nature. Deep bond of women with nature inspires more proximity between them. Good time in nature inspires Bronte’s women to exalt their relation with nature. In addition to being a close friend of women nature comes to acts as their mother. It results in a profound union which is at par with humanity. This closeness soon turns into the identification of nature as mother. Nature sympathetically becomes their mother which exalts their diminished souls.

Nature becomes maternal figure not only for Shirley but also for Caroline. Both of them feel gratitude in the loving lap of nature. Both of them go for a prayer in church but they stay in the yard with nature. Caroline asks Shirley to move inside the church but Shirley prefers to stay in the yard. She dislikes the long speech of Dr. Boulton and hammering Curates. Shirley personifies the earth as mother. She tells Caroline about the way nature talks to her. She says:

I will stay out here with my mother Eve, in these days called Nature. I love her—undying, mighty being! Heaven may have faded from her brow when she fell in paradise; but all that is glorious on earth shines their still. She is taking me to her bosom, and showing me her heart. Hush, Caroline! You will see her and feel her as I do, if we are both silent. (335-36)

When Shirley asks Caroline to be silent in order to experience the presence of nature, Caroline follows her advice and tries to feel nature's benign presence like a mother. Now only nature provides a place where their souls can exalt. Nature becomes an embodiment of happiness because of its soothing and healing power. Both of them feel better in the company of nature. Such bonding with nature automatically prepares them to live a life with purity and goodness in heart. Commenting upon the high esteem given by Shirley and Caroline to nature critic Mike Edwards opines, "Nature has moral significance: it is always good in Shirley's eyes, and usually in Caroline's, too: what is natural is what is best in human nature. Nature is touchstone throughout the novel" (77).

For the company of nature Shirley defies clergy and becomes ready to face their wrath for staying in yard and for not attending the prayer. Shirley says that clergy is "dreary" and they cannot understand her but nature understands and takes her to its bosom (335). She personifies nature by calling her Eve and Eve is her mother. Caroline and Shirley connect to nature but male society is deaf to it. Men neither try to connect nor they have any respect for their bonding. Within the church yard, before prayer, wrath of Mr. Helstone tries to break their rhythm with nature while second time they listen to a "noise on the road" which "roused Caroline from her filial hopes and Shirley from her Titan visions. They looked . . . six soldiers rode softly by" (336). They were connected to nature but torn from it by the ride of the soldiers. This difference in the action of man and woman towards nature clearly indicates that man is indifferent towards nature while woman is more akin to it. According to critic Mike Edwards, "Shirley's conclusion is remarkable in identifying nature with Eve, and through her, with the nature of women. Men, she implies, are rationalists, driven by argument and conflict, like the clergy in the church; women, on the other hand, are at one with the natural world, and more at ease with their own nature" (76-77).

Women nature relationship is not superficial in assumption of Charlotte Bronte rather this relation has a strong spiritual overtones. She moves further

from the idea of nature as mother and reaches to a divine principle of nature. Charlotte Brontë's religious upbringing made her believe that God is present everywhere in the different manifestations of nature. Nature and god are one for Charlotte Brontë. She believes that god has created nature and nature has created life on earth. In her novel *Shirley* the protagonist Shirley Keeldar is a mentally strong, practical and down-to-earth woman. Her idea of god is closely related to nature. When Shirley celebrates the twilight sky, her eyes gleam with joy. Her pleasure is described as:

A still, deep, inborn delight glows in her young veins, unmingled, untroubled, not to be reached or ravished by human agency, because by no human agency bestowed—the pure gift of God to His creature, the free dower of Nature to her child. This joy gives her experience of a genii-life. Buoyant, by green steps, by glad hills, all verdure and light, she reaches a station scarcely lower than that whence angles looked down on the dreamer of Bethel and her eye seeks, and her soul possesses, the vision of life as she wishes it. (405)

Because joy is not bestowed by any other earthly creature but by “God” himself so this joy becomes divine automatically. This is the reason that she expresses great admiration and respect for nature. Nature is sacred for her and she believes that its holiness should not be disturbed. Moreover, here she believes that joy is free dower of “Nature” to her child. Men or women are the creation of nature. Nature is the other name of God for her. She directly states that nature is one who gives while humans are who take these gifts. Here Brontë's females think like an ecofeminist as they never consider themselves to be superior to nature rather they accept that “Nature” gives “dower” while mankind accepts the gifts.

It is clear that Brontë depicts women as nearer to nature in *Shirley*. In addition to portraying Caroline's psyche it gives her strength to gather herself in an anthropocentric society. By associating nature with woman and differentiating it from clergy Shirley presses the intimacy of the two and indicates the fact that man has been deaf to woman's woes while nature has a keen ear for her. Nature is most humane to her while the male human is inhuman to her. Brontë's concept of nature shows that how ahead she was of her time in portraying her zeal for ecology.

Further, inextricable interconnection of nature with women's psyche is also depicted in *Villette* like *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*. Lucy's inner dual is brought about by the external weather conditions. She suffers traumas whenever the weather is hideous outside. Her psyche portrays the tumultuous weather on a seaside town which disturbs her in particular and society in general.

The weather process in *Villette* corresponds to the mind of Lucy. Most of the time Lucy Snow refers to autumn because her own life is deserted like autumn. Her saga of life revolves around the pain of unrequited love. She becomes increasingly "isolated" and is left for autumn of life so there is no scope for blooming springs on the pages. In the beginning of the novel Lucy gives the vision of her life. She ponders:

In the autumn of the year—I was staying at Bretton, my godmother having come in person to claim me of the kinsfolk with whom was at that time fixed my permanent residence. I believe she then plainly saw events coming whose very shadow I scarce guessed, yet of which the faint suspicion sufficed to impart unsettled sadness, and made me glad to change scene and society. (VT 02)

As long as Lucy is in countryside she remains healthy and happy though she craves to change scene and society. While living in countryside at Marchmont's house the wind tells her what she wants to listen. The wind is there to speak for her. Lucy says, "I drew in energy with the keen, low breeze that blew on its path. A bold thought was sent to my mind; my mind was made strong to receive it". "Leave this wilderness," it was said to me, "and go out hence" . . . I mentally saw within reach what I had never yet beheld with my bodily eyes—I saw London" (40). The breeze inspires her to go to London. As soon as she enters in the cultured sphere of London air again pours her mind out and starts rebuking her for leaving it. At countryside it inspired her while in London it rebukes her. She says, "When I went on deck, the cold air and black scowl of the night seemed to rebuke me for my presumption in being where I was. The lights of the foreign seaport town, glimmering round the foreign harbour, met me like unnumbered threatening eyes" (53).

At *Villette* weather mirrors her inner loneliness and mind full of imaginative hunger. Town atmosphere gives her no solace rather it enhances her aloofness. Her ailment starts with the tumultuous climate. She is marred by the

sea town atmosphere. Protagonist Lucy describing the dread of furious weather says, “At that time . . . certain accidents of the weather, for instance, were almost dreaded by me, because they woke the being I was always lulling, and stirred up a craving cry I could not satisfy” (105).

Lucy describes that how the weather creates panic in people. Whole society is affected by the abrupt turns of the weather. Thunderstorm shook the people. Thunder peals “too terribly glorious, the spectacle of clouds, split and pierced by white and blinding bolts”. Lucy stays in the town called Villette whose climate is insecure and nothing can be predicted in this area. She says, “Villette owns a climate as variable, though not so humid, as that of any English town. A night of high wind followed upon that soft sunset, and all the next day was one of dry storm-dark, beclouded, yet rainless; the streets were dim with sand and dust whirled from the boulevards” (112). This variation in the mood of the atmosphere at Villette doubtlessly moves the life of Lucy. Her life becomes unsmooth like that of the turns of the weather. Turns of weather cause many threats to her health.

Unsheltered Lucy stays at the house of Madam Beck who is her distant relative. She is very severe, watching and unrelenting. Most of the times Lucy remains in pain however, arrival of summer gives her happiness but for a very short time. Lucy describes that Madam Beck’s house became as marry a place “in the ripest glow of summer” (124). In this pleasant weather people around her use to keep folding-doors and the two-leaved casements stood wide open because “sunshine seemed naturalized in the atmosphere; clouds were far off, sailing away beyond sea, resting, no doubt, round islands such as England—that dear land of mists—but withdrawn wholly from the drier Continent” (124). All teachers and children stay more in the garden than under a roof. In pleasant season they celebrate good weather and feel a “pleasant sense of summer freedom” (126). Though Lucy is alone yet she tries to be at peace in summer. When autumn comes change of weather again leaves her restless. Depressed Lucy gazes admiringly at cheerful family of Madam Beck and thinks “But all this was nothing. I too felt those autumn suns and saw those harvest moons, and I almost wished to be covered in with earth and turf, deep out of their influence; for I could not live in their light, nor make them comrades, nor yield them affection”(153). Dreary seasons and society makes Lucy suffer. She feels

depressed, falls ill and takes to bed. Nature also turns wild and there is no respite for her. She comments:

About this time the Indian summer closed and the equinoctial storms began; and for nine dark and wet days, of which the hours rushed on all turbulent, deaf, dishevelled, bewildered with sounding hurricane, I lay in a strange fever of the nerves and blood. Sleep went quite away. I used to rise in the night, look round for her, beseech her earnestly to return. A rattle of the window, a cry of the blast, only replied. Sleep never came. (154)

The storm makes Lucy senseless and she falls seriously ill for a long time. She is alone and storm worsens her plight. Her sensitive mind cannot endure loneliness and she moves towards physical illness along with the internal sufferings. She describes, "If the storm had lulled a little at sunset, it made up now for lost time. Strong and horizontal thundered the current of the wind from north-west to south-east; it brought rain like spray, and sometimes a sharp, a hail-like shot; it was cold, and pierced me to the vitals" (158). She suddenly feels colder than before, and more powerless than before. She tries to reach the porch of a great building near, but the mass of frontage and the giant spire turned black and vanish from her eyes. Then "Instead of sinking on the steps, as I intended, I seemed to pitch headlong down an abyss. I remember no more". Lucy becomes unconscious and admits that she never knows that where her soul has been gone during this span and when she wakes up there is again "gloom of raw and blustering autumn" which burns all her hopes of friendship and love (162). Next day she is "half dreaming". Now Graham comes in her life. Arrival of Graham amidst the autumn itself indicates that he is not going to share her isolation. She herself admits that during the first days of her stay at the terrace, Graham never took a seat near her. He is initially drawn towards Ginevra Fanshaw and later towards Paulina with whom he gets married also. Lucy is left alone. After a lapse of few days, when autumn still continues Paul Emanuel comes in her life. Again coming of Paul in autumn is indicative of the fact that Lucy's sufferings are not going to end. Her life becomes "bitter and dark as was this January Day" (265). Lucy is affected by the "austere fury of the winter day" and she feels "an awing, hushing influence" (283).

Other women in this novel are also influenced by the awesome weather. They feel the stress of weather with "the snow-blast" and "wildest storms" (273).

At the La Terrasse all the women used to wait for their husband, brothers or fathers with a worried hearts because of the uncertain ups and downs in nature.

Lucy is again temporarily relieved with the change of season. The summer sunlight arouses new hopes in Lucy's minds and reflects her psyche like crystal. She says:

On the contrary, the sun rose jocund, with a July face. Morning decked her beauty with rubies, and so filled her lap with roses that they fell from her in showers, making her path blush. The hours woke fresh as nymphs and emptying on the early hills their dew-vials, they stepped out dismantled of vapour; shadowless, azure, and glorious, they led the sun's steeds on a burning and unclouded course. (460)

She now has Graham as her friend. She becomes healthy. Paul also comes in her life. Paul and Lucy come nearer. Their relationship develops and he gives Lucy a home at Vilette where she may run a school. After showing Lucy some dreams he goes abroad for three years.

At the end of the novel Lucy indicates that the weather is again tempestuous. Storm takes its autumn moan and Lucy is ready to face the dreadful. Storm at the end depicts Lucy's apprehensive mind. She dreads the storm and fears that something unpleasant is going to happen. Soon her fears prove to be true as the storm brings about final catastrophe. The ship, presumably carrying Paul, gets caught in the storm and gets sunk. Paul is supposed dead leaving Lucy again barren like autumn scene. She becomes like a land which has suffered tempest. Lucy has to once again live a dreadful alone life.

In this novel Bronte has presented a striking similarity between Lucy's frustrated life and tumultuous surrounding nature. It is clear that Lucy's inner tumult is well represented by the twists and turns of nature. Weather is full of upheavals so she also experiences the ups and downs in her life. In fact spring never bloomed in her life.

A close analysis of women nature association in Bronte's fiction exposes her strong connection with ecofeminist views. All the females in her novels whether it is Jane, Caroline Shirley or Lucy are specifically affected by the physical world around them. The tremendous power of the atmosphere bears an important presence on these female characters. Moreover, in her fiction natural images express the alienation, loneliness, insanity and neurosis of her heroines.

The association between women and nature is a universal and eternal truth. It was there in the past and can be seen even today. In the present times though women have changed a lot yet their bond with nature remains unshaken. Still women can be seen sharing her joys and sorrows with nature. A close perusal of Susan Hill's fiction authenticates this truth. In fact in the treatment of women nature relationship there are striking similarities between the Victorian novelist Charlotte Bronte and the contemporary novelist Susan Hill. When scrutinized through the angle of women nature association Susan Hill's novels also present a close and intimate bonding between the two of them.

Her protagonist Ruth, in the novel *In the Spring Time of the Year* belongs to nature. Change in nature reflects change in her psyche as well as provides her space to grow, away from the society like Jane Eyre. She looks towards nature for solace which totally transforms her thoughts.

Whenever human beings are in pain or grief they seek the company of their dear and near ones. Ruth in the story, in her grief and pain always finds herself in the lap of nature. She retreats from the society but she feels associated with nature. She feels herself cut off from the society but connected to nature. She lets none to come near her when her husband Ben is dead. She never remembers her parents except grand God mother Fry who is dead. In the dearth of loved ones on whom she can cling to in her distress she runs towards the exile and embraces nature's company with both hands. She wanted to go to sea and for that defied Byrce family because they believed that no widow should go on a picnic so soon after death of her husband. But for nature's company she cared for none. Very soon after the death of Ben she compels Jo to go to Hadwell Bay in the sea as she knows nature will heal her wounds.

The atmosphere at Hadwell Bay calms her. For her "it was a magic world and time went on forever" (ISTY 114). She finds the air around the sea very invigorating that refreshes her body, mind and soul. She is conscious of the presence of nature. She listens to the sound of the waves. She notes every movement of the sea and the animals there. Her mind is fully receptive. She felt washed clean by the "salt air and sunlight" (115). Her diminished soul gets exalted by the sight and sound of the water and she feels "vividly awake," and finds that her "every nerve was vibrating" (115). Earlier she has lost all her courage to face the society but the sight and sound of sea at Hadwell and the

effect of living nature there counsel her sympathetically and peacefully. There is no doubt that the condolences of nature are heartfully accepted by Ruth and at once she feels happy and energetic. K. R. Ireland in the critique entitled "Rite at the Center: Narrative Duplication in Susan Hill's *"In the Springtime of the Year"*" confirms association of Ruth and nature in these words: "Only her excursion to the sea with Jo . . . has brought the slightest relief from despair. At Helm Bottom, however, Ruth now becomes soothed and quietened by happy memories of the past, in contrast with the storm of emotions aroused at the graveyard" (174-75). She casts off her veil of mourning and dares to face Ben's parents with a new enthusiasm. She insists to face them though Jo never permitted her to do so. Ruth learns two things at sea. First, that she should not run away from Byrce family and second that by death of Ben "the pattern of nature" is complete (119).

Further, the view of flowers in church on Easter Sunday matures the mind of Ruth. Before spring she is very sad and hopeless and wants to avoid society but her mood gets altered with the "the approaching spring" (126). As the spring ripens her mind becomes full of new hopes. When she looks at the flowers like primroses, cowslips, marigold daffodils, celandines, dandelions etc. they remind her that they are "beautiful enough for any grave" (152). At the church yard she looks at vivid nature which is changing every second. View of flowers gives her a direct promise that she belongs to human society. She gets "the reassurance" that "she truly belonged" and that "these people were part of her life" (167). She realizes that there was no need for her suspicion and hostility, her pride and fear, these were all dangerous, cancerous and could, in the end, destroy her. She prepares herself to face the reality and determines to accept back the people. She says, "I shall never do wrong again. I shall not weep out of pity for myself, or doubt what is true or fail to be grateful. I shall be well. I shall be well.' And it seemed impossible that it should not be so, she was so full of strength and purpose and assurance, so far away from the nights of bitterness and despair" (167). In this way a great association between the protagonist Ruth and nature is maintained. This association not only invigorates Ruth but enlightens her also. Nature teaches her the lesson of truth and wisdom. She resumes more spirited than earlier. Ireland remarks, "The scattered epiphanies of the past now reinforced by her experience at Helm Bottom, prepare the way for her spiritual illumination on Easter Sunday, when she feels for the first time ever that she is the part of the life around her" (177).

Susan Hill through Ruth's transformation categorically highlights the power of nature over women. View of nature matures her mind. She is able to unite with the social order because of her intimate link with nature. No human being could ever make her understand that she is the part of society because she did not let anyone come near her. It is only the tremendous power of nature that could bring her out from her gloom and inculcate in her the feeling of love for the human society. Thus a trustful alliance between the protagonist Ruth and nature is maintained and through this bond the novelist portrays how nature can be the best refuge for the mankind even in the most adverse situation of life. She gives a clear message that a life lived in close proximity with nature is a sustainable life.

Decay in the realm of nature makes her learn about death as spring has taught her about life. Now, she comes to term with her husband Ben's death. She watches the "trees darkened to rust and brown, or paled to topaz yellow, though some lingered, a dull green" (203). She goes to woods "which was still, very dark and smelling of decay" (204). At river there "was no longer any singing, only the low, peevish chatter of the jays and magpies. Wood pigeons huddled silent among the dying trees and grasshoppers hid in silence, close to the ground". She is "half-afraid of the sweet smell of decay" (206). But the sight of decay in nature makes her think that death and life are the cyclic parts of nature and human life. She feels that there "had been spring and there would be winter. But then spring again. Death and a new life" (207). In nature she finds "[w]hat had been growing and full of sap, sprouting and erect, taking over the world, had been overcome and was shrivelling back within itself, there was mould and corruption and fading, things dried and fell, and were gradually blotted up by the moisture from the earth (208). She experiences death and a new life in the same way. She says:

She could feel both within herself, as though the old blood was drying out, and giving way to new, though the process had hardly begun. It was change, and she could only let it overtake her, without knowing what might be to come, what emotion and beliefs and experiences would replace those of the past. But they could only grow up out of the soil of that past. So everything had been necessary. (208)

She watches "paleness" of the woods and "dried up" stream where decay prevails with the time. Like a stoic she learns that death is a universal truth. The sight of decay in nature strengthens Ruth. She comes to know that fatality prevails

everywhere. She understands the great philosophical truth that one who is born is bound to die. Death is not something to be abhorred.

In her times of distress Ruth in this novel is afraid of society she at once turns towards the woods which provides her not only peace but also provide her courage to face “life” and “death”. Nature, woods and flowers becomes her most cherished relievers and hiding places. She learns that sea, stream, woods and birds are as much necessary as human society. Moreover, the natural world acquaints her with the philosophy of life and death. Like cyclic patterns of nature sorrow and happiness is there in human life. Autumn and spring make her realize the truth of death and life and she decides to live.

According to Serpil Oppermann: “Nature finds its best expression in text that supposedly, transparently reflects, feeling, doing and participating as constituents of human experience”(307). As in the novel *In the Spring Time of the Year* nature not only “reflects” Ruth’s feelings but it is actively “participating” in her “doing” and getting “experience” about life and death so in the light of Oppermann’s view this novel can be treated as a perfect representative of ecofeminist thought. The above ecofeminist analysis reveals that if Bronte’s Jane finds “liberty and safety” in the mythic “wildness” of woods as Fuller opines (151) then Susan Hill’s Ruth finds the truth that “she is the part of the life around her” as Ireland confirms (177).

Further ahead, woman nature association is also illustrated in Susan’s another fictional work *The Beacon*. The novel explicitly focuses on women’s mental and physical health in association with nature. This is true in respect to the protagonist May. She goes to London for higher education but there terrors strike her mind and she is greatly disturbed. Her studies and life are greatly influenced by the absence of nature. She is compelled to leave all her dreams and return to her farmhouse, the Beacon in the lap of nature to lead a peaceful life.

In London as she is away from nature she gets adversely affected by the stifling metropolitan atmosphere. She finds no attraction in the materialistic city life and her mind is baffled. Her nights are haunted and she cannot sleep. She feels that large ants are sprawling on her body. She is terrified by trees with branches that curled upwards and inwards and turned to ash and sand-covered snakes which stirred. She sees white translucent shapes like boils which pulsed and began to exude thin trails of greenish pus. The narrator describes:

There was nothing on her skin, but she inspected her arms and legs closely for any sign of bites or marks. When she lay down again she saw strange shapes behind her eyes, trees with branches that curled upwards and inwards and turned to ash and blood-covered beeches dotted with mounds of sand-covered snakes which stirred and coiled and uncoiled. (TB 53)

When she is obsessed by the unidentified fears in city, she is helped only by nature. She finds no help in the city till four days. On the fourth day when she goes to the kind river Thames she gets some refuge and her grief lessens to some extent. In this huge city she could only associate herself to the river Thames which gives her safe heaven to resume her mental peace. When terror strikes her she rushes towards the river. The narrator says:

She turned and ran down the corridor . . . she knew that the stream was flowing behind her and gathering strength like a tide. She ran outside and through the gates and, dodging the people on the pavement, into a side street which led to the river. It was only when she was there, leaning on the Embankment wall looking at a huge barge going slowly past on the water, that she felt safe, for somehow the other tide had dried up and shrivelled back on meeting the great flowing Thames. (53-54)

Only at the river “she felt safe”. She is peaceful as long as she is with the river but as she leaves it the terrors again grip her.

May is so disturbed that she cannot decide what to do. She is sent to doctor who prescribes sleeping pills for her. She again tries to settle down but the terrors do not leave her. They follow her down the escalator of the underground station and onto the train. This time it takes the form of extremely thin men without faces who walk sideways and can slide themselves into her body like cards into a pack and talk to her in obscene language. She gets out at next stop and starts running. Next time terror attacks her when May is walking through the park and sat on benches where “pigeons flocked into her table for biscuit crumbs, but the pigeons had running sores and red gimlet eyes which saw into her soul and she was forced to cross to the other side of the city, miles and miles of walking to get away from them” (55). Terrors keep striking her as long as she is in London. She finds no respite. Her plight so worsens that people take her for beggar and offer their help. Unable to withstand the “city terrors” she leaves London and her studies and comes back to her farmhouse the Beacon where “the terrors had not come home with her and she slept as deeply and dreamlessly as she had as a child” (60).

May realizes that she can remain happy only in the lap of nature and she cannot do with the city jobs (60). No city or no study can free her from terrors. Aloofness from nature disturbs her peace. She comes to know that “her mind would have turned to sawdust with the boredom of the jobs available in town, in shops or offices” (61). Hence, she leaves London for primitive life. She leaves all the attraction of city’s humdrum and prefers to live a secluded life at the Beacon. May being a child of nature returns to her rural life for a return to nature. She is attached to the place in such a way that everyone thinks, “May was not fit to be away” (59). May profoundly associates to Beacon. The narrator remarks, “It was the place she would miss and the loss of it would affect her no matter where she went next . . .” (20).

At Beacon “She felt ageless and suspended in time and wished for nothing, hoped for nothing, simply was, quietly there” (61). She is very happy in the natural locale of the Beacon. She takes night walks for self-fulfillment in the lap of nature. Now she is afraid of nothing. That fact that she is at her place gives her certainty. One of her night walks is described thus:

It was a dry summer and the nights were sweet and cloudless, the stars brilliant. When she was out like this, her detachment became an intense sense not so much of happiness as of rightness and satisfaction that she was here, in this place. She went a long way, up onto the high hill among the sheep, whose pale eerie faces appeared out of the darkness close enough for her to feel the warmth of their breath on the night air. (60-61)

At Beacon May glories in ecological life. “She grew plants on the window ledges and washed the covers and curtains and scrubbed the tiles on her hands and knees” (90). She finds pleasure in growing plant and scattering crumb to bird. She feels contented. The narrator remarks about her: “She was putting out some scraps of bacon rind and crumbs from the board and, as she did so, noticing the touch of sun on her face” (91). She seeks self-fulfillment in ecological life instead of social or matrimonial. She believes in green life which she shares with trees and animals. She realizes the truth that life in harmony with nature is a bliss and any alienation from it is sure to cause a disturbance in her normal course. Hence, she lives in harmony with the non human world. Narrating her routine the narrator says:

She liked life to be even and uneventful, she needed the routine of days and to know that it would be winter and spring, that it would be dark early and late and then light in the mornings with the long-drawn-out summer evenings. She looked for the return of the swallows and house martins and swifts to their nests and the frogs crossing the yard on their way to the pond and waited for the berries to ripen and the nuts and leaves to fall, feeling each small repeated change as her security. (96-97)

Through *May Hill* illustrates that human beings can find their independence and satisfaction only in company with nature. Because May is closely associated to nature and habitual of such peaceful life so marriage never matters for her and she remains unmarried. Nature loves her and shelters her. May never leaves her native village again. She feels intensely happy and strong when in village unlike her brother Frank whose mind is corrupted by city life. When in city he hates open spaces which he had liked earlier. He spoils reputation of his home and never wishes to come there. In contrast to him May finds satisfaction that she is at her right place.

Coming back of May to *The Beacon* from London throws light on the writer's strong view regarding the connection between women and nature. She renders that a life in close proximity with nature makes women more strong physically as well mentally and makes their lives more sustainable. Besides a life in harmony with nature is a great solace to a disheartened soul as it provides impetus to the zeal of life.

Women nature association is so profound in Susan Hill's another novel *The Woman in Black* that nature helps Jennet who is dead and becomes a ghost. Mr. Kipps in the novel describes that Jennet Eliza Humfrye was full of malevolence and hatred towards humanity because the society had snatched her illegitimate son, who died in his childhood. So she directs her wrath towards humanity. Nature helps her to take revenge against the patriarchal capitalist society which snatches her son from her because she is poor. Nature helps her and her disgust is so dissolved in the very environment that the air becomes "haunted" and haunts those who come in its contact. Arthur Kipps thus describes the outskirts of the house:

The only other things I knew that the boy's mother, Jennet Humfrye, had died of a wasting disease twelve year after her son, that they were both

buried in the now disused and tumbledown graveyard beyond Eel Marsh House . . . and that his mother haunted the place. Moreover, that the intensity of her grief and distress together with her pent-up hatred and desire for revenge permeated the air all around. (TB 179)

It is the close association of nature with woman that it shakes hands and gives full support to the dead Jennet Humfrye's ghost but never helps living Kipps. Kipps remains terrorized all the time.

It is a noticeable fact that strange Mrs. Drablow, who lives alone, is never reported to be afraid of the rising tide or sudden mist joined by the ghost. It can be called woman-nature bonding. After the death of Mrs. Drablow, Kipps reads piles of Drablow's papers. But no evidence is found which indicates that Mrs. Drablow was haunted by the wild nature around her dwelling place joined by the ghost. Association of nature and woman is indicated and admitted by Kipps himself. He wonders that how lonely Mrs. Drablow could reside in such a lonely surrounding. Kipps admits that he could not have lived in such a place. He must have gone "mad" (82). The friendship of nature and woman is so deep that the "sadness, gloom malevolence" (150) of Jennet is carried by the atmosphere itself. To help the ghost, to take its revenge the weather takes abrupt turns many times in the novel. "The sky was swollen and streaked with rain clouds, everything looked drab and without colour and the estuary was running high. But the wind had died down, the air was lighter and very cold" (159). Here nature, joined by the ghost of Jennet Humfrye, affects both Kipps and the bitch, Spider. No object of nature helps him. "The water was swollen and murky", "the tide of the estuary was now high, running across the marshes themselves" and "fast moving stormy sky" (161), all are averse to him. Spider runs and then it is caught by the "boggier" ground. Nature provides all the freedom to the ghost. Critic Val Scullion notes the liberties of "place and time" taken by the ghost of Jennet. She observes, "Her excessive revenge knows no compassion, nor the boundaries of place and time" (292).

The woman in black, Jennet, is identified as ghost and the nature at Eel Marsh house shakes hands with the ghost and turns ghastly. Because Jennet is freakish, witchlike or haggish and takes the liberties of space and time so location also appears freakish, witchlike or haggish especially to Kipps. Nature seems to be in perfect communion with woman. It internalizes woman's grief and sorrow.

Even if woman is dead she is more close to nature. Nature also prefers a dead woman more than a living male. It is because of their bonding only that both come together to punish Kipps who symbolizes mankind.

In this study glaring difference has been noticed in the presentation of nature by Bronte and Hill, while going through women-nature association in their novels. Bronte's women characters Jane in *Jane Eyre* and Caroline and Shirley in *Shirley* hail nature as mother and a sublime power. It is viewed that though Susan Hill's May in *The Beacon* loves her countryside home yet she is unable to connect with nature like Jane Eyre. Ruth in the novel *In the Spring Time of the Year* spends time with nature but she does not accept nature as her teacher or guide to her soul. Company of nature proves a healer for Hill's women protagonist but it loses its designation and reverence as mother. Study of Susan Hill's novels proves that in the present times the sublime faith in nature has been smashed. Nature ceases to be sacred as a deity. The deep bond that is found between nature and women in Charlotte Bronte's fiction is not so strong in Hill's novels. They live in the lap of nature but the feeling of being completely lost in the world of nature is not visible in the females of Hill. They never go in a trance like situation. Their experience of nature is not so absurd like Samuel Beckett but it is also not a vital spiritual experience like Bronte.

Ecological Consciousness of Woman

Further, ecofeminists believe that environmental problems are more swiftly noticed by women because of their close proximity with nature. Women can distinguish torments of nature because they have a more sensitive heart. Noel Sturgeon in "The Nature of Race: Discourse of Racial Difference in Ecofeminism" opines that an ecofeminist "maintains that environmental problems are more quickly noticed by women and impact women's work more seriously" (263) and "women potentially have greater access than men" to sympathize with nature and "will benefit themselves and the environment by identifying with nature" (264).

An ecocritical text focuses not only on women nature association but it also presents women as caretaker and preserver of nature. Women associate with nature and show ecological concerns, while men remain engrossed in their self-centered activities. Women are more sensitive and prompt to recognize ailments of the earth.

Strong ties between women and nature enhances women's consciousness for nature in Charlotte Bronte's novels. Her female characters have keen eyes for the changes in nature and she minutely observes nature. Though Charlotte Bronte was not aware of any thoughts regarding ecofeminism however, an exploration of her novels reveals her female protagonists as saviour of nature. Her stories highlight that if women fall back upon nature in times of their trouble then they are also more conscious for nature when it is in trouble. They also take step for social harmony. In her novels male protagonists show androcentric behaviour while female empathize with nature.

In *Jane Eyre* Bronte has presented her women as more sensitive towards nature. Even the slightest change in nature is better perceived by women characters in this novel. They are not deaf to the rejoicing as well as the ailment of nature. Her female characters are able to contrast between unruffled atmosphere and one that is disrupted by the onslaught of culture.

Jane, unaware, celebrates the beauties of nature. Jane is very quick to notice the nature's ailment, if any. This happens when she goes to shrubbery. She notices that "trees" were "silent" and "shrubbery was quite still; the black frost reigned, unbroken by sun or breeze, through the grounds" (JE 38). She very minutely perceives changes in nature. She is quick to notice that nature is not very blooming. Little Jane is aware enough to notice the ailing atmosphere at Lowood. She finds that Lowood institution was surrounded by an unhealthy fog and due to fog the place was the "cradle of fog and fog bred pestilence" (77). However, she talks about the human touch upon nature in the institution. Jane describes that the Lowood region abounded in nature's beauty but human touch has made it a "close abode of sickness" (81). Little Jane plants roots which shows her ecological zeal. She says, "I stayed behind a few minutes to plant in my garden a handful of roots I had dug up in the forest, and which I feared would wither if I left them till morning" (79). Little Jane's heart is full of love for nature and for her fellow girls who are suffering. She looks after Helen with a kind heart. She never fears from infection. Her heart aches when she is dead. On the other hand, the patriarchal head of the institution Mr. Brocklehurst whose duty is to take care of the girls ignores them and goes away to save himself from infection.

Ecofeminist Ariel Salleh in *Ecofeminis as Politics: Nature, Marx and the Postmodern* (1997) advocates "eco-socialism" which advocates that means of

production should be occupied by the society not by the individuals (“Eco-socialism”). Allied to this view Jane takes a big step for social harmony and she instantly divides her money among her cousins. As soon as she comes to know that Moors are her cousins she at once divides her money among them so that they may also live comfortably. She says:

Those who had saved my life, whom, till this hour, I had loved barrenly, I could now benefit. They were under a yolk: I could free them; they were scattered,—I could reunite them—the independence, the affluence which was mine, might be theirs too. Were we not four? Twenty thousand pounds shared equally, would be five thousand each,—enough and to spare; justice would be done,—mutual happiness secured. Now the wealth did not weigh on me: now it was not a mere bequest of coin,—it was a legacy of life, hope, enjoyment. (390)

Thus Jane in *Jane Eyre* minutely observes nature. She has eager eyes for the changes in nature. She is green by heart and really cares for nature. Jane is more insightful towards her natural surrounding and society in comparison to Brocklehurst and Rochester.

Her novel *Shirley* seriously comments upon the loss of the natural scenery. Establishment of the mill in the silent valley of Yorkshire disturbs the environment. The very first paragraph of the novel shows the concern for the degraded atmosphere in the district. She depicts the “dusty” picture of the district (SY 01). Along with the faded portrayal of nature she also draws attention to the indifference of patriarchy which includes religious as well as common people. Through the vision of Mike, Bronte shows apprehension for the endangered environment. The novelist portrays that how the furnaces of Stilbrow Ironworks throw a great deal of smoke on the horizon.

Mrs. Prior, who is a minor character in this novel, shares ecological knowledge with Caroline and Shirley when trio of them go to the narrow end of Hollow. Mrs. Prior is familiar with the changes in nature brought about by culture. She is subdued and exploited so she understands that how man has encroached nature and occupied the earth. She knows that “he” has seized what is natural and left the earth barren like “her”. The narrator says:

Having reached the head of the ravine, they sat down together on a ledge of gray and mossy rock jutting from the base of a steep green hill which

towered above them. She looked round her, and spoke of the neighborhood as she had once before seen it long ago. She alluded to its changes, and compared its aspect with that of other parts of England, revealing in quiet, unconscious touches of description a sense of the picturesque, an appreciation of the beautiful or commonplace, a power of comparing the wild with cultured, the grand with the tame. (390)

Mrs. Prior has ecological knowledge of the area. She fully apprehends the wrongs done to nature. She shows sensitive heart for the loss of nature. It is ecological information in that age when none especially no woman ever thought of such matters. A subdued woman could see what the cultured society even the curacy could not see.

Caroline wilfully speaks upon the loss of the natural phenomena. Though weak, meek and docile yet many times she questions the excessive business activity of Robert Moore. She is agitated to find that his mind is only occupied with the thoughts of mill and market. Caroline is so concerned to preserve nature that she comes to water the plants even on the day of her marriage (668). When Robert talks to make a colony by destroying the wilderness Caroline at once resists his wish. He says, "I can line yonder barren Hollow with lines of cottages and rows of cottage-gardens" and the copse shall be "firewood". He expresses that the beautiful wild ravine shall be a "smooth descent" and the green natural terrace shall be a "paved street". He dreams that there shall be "cottages in the dark ravine, and cottages on the lonely slops. The rough pebbled track shall be an even, firm, broad, black, sooty road, bedded with the cinders from my mill" (674). Caroline is shuddered to listen to this. She remarks, "Horrible! You will change over blue hill-country air into the Stilbro' smoke atmosphere." Then he talks to "pour the waters of Pactolus through the valley of Briarfield" and she remarks that she likes "the beck a thousand times better". Business headed Robert does not stop here. He talks to get an "Act for enclosing Nunnely Common, and parcelling it out into farms." Caroline is fully disturbed to listen to his industrial plan. Agitated she says, "Stilbro' Moor, however, defies you, thank heaven! What can you grow in Bilberry Moss? What will flourish on Rushedge? (675). This conversation shows the great love and concern of Caroline for the wild life. She becomes troubled and disturbed and tries to inspire him not to destroy the wood ravine. Caroline's urge for the preservation of wild life shows Charlotte's

ecological vision. Through Caroline's efforts for the preservation of nature the author seems to give a message to the anthropocentric world to give heed to the preservation of nature for their sustainable development. Very aptly critic Danielle Coriale remarks, "Bronte does more than textually preserve a world altered by enclosure and industrialized expansion; she illustrates the human relationship that form through the mutual study of the living world" (123).

Women characters are more concerned for the sustainable development in comparison to men in Bronte's novel. They vision a world where none should suffer. Robert Moore is careless for the preservation of nature and welfare of poor. On the other hand, Caroline is always concerned for social justice. She remains agitated by misery of the underprivileged people. She tries to make selfish Robert understand the poverty of the workers. Through Coriolanus' character in *Coriolanus*, the play by William Shakespeare, she makes Robert understand that pride, insensitiveness or aggressiveness can lead to man's fall. Telling him about Coriolanus fall she tells Robert, "It was a spice of all; and you must not be proud to your workpeople; you must not neglect the chances of soothing them; and you must not be of an inflexible nature, uttering a request as austere as if it were a command" (95). She tries to make him understand that his pride should lead to his fall. Caroline shows a sensitive heart for poor wretched and starving people.

Like Caroline, Shirley, though being a business woman has a sensitive heart. She never utters a word against the poor though she is a mill owner and action of attacking machinery by workers affects her business. She gives money for children's feast (299). Her project of charity shows her comprehensive vision. She also likes to feed the poverty stricken people. Thus Bronte presents her women with a more humane heart in comparison to her male protagonists.

Further, Bronte was quite aware of the drastic effects of war upon nature as well as human beings. Bronte was not in favour of Napoleon's marches on the old Masco because it was hazardous to nature's beauty. Through the narrator she has presented her anger against this despoiling of nature. The narrator says, "It is done. The earth is scorched with fire, the sea becomes "as the blood of a dead man" the islands flee away, the mountains are not found" (665). She disapproves of those activities which may hazard nature may be it is a business or an industry or a war.

Thus *Shirley* presents that women are more conscious for the hazards of the natural scenery. The absence of nature is deeply felt by women characters like Mrs. Prior. Caroline is more mindful for the environmental losses and serious for the conservation of nature than the men.

Contemporary Susan Hill's women characters develop a sensitive heart for the world of nature and they recognize environmental degradation quickly like Bronte's heroines. They are more vigilant and responsible for the preservation of nature than the males. Susan Hill's woman protagonist Ruth in her novel *In the Spring Time of the Year* is full of concern for the preservation of nature. She is ecologically driven and shows a more responsible attitude towards nature's conservation. Once grief stricken she abandons society but never forsakes her care and love for nature. She returns to society and also cares for its well being.

Ruth's husband Ben is in the business of felling of trees. Ben loves to cut trees but his wife Ruth wants to preserve the trees. After Ben's death she feels oppressed because of his memories but at the same time she feels satisfied that now the trees will be saved. She thinks, "Now, the trees would stay. For even if one of the local men had been willing to fell them for her, she would never ask. She asked nothing of anyone, had vowed not to do so, the first day. Besides, the trees, like Balaam, were part of the old life, of everything she now wanted to cling to" (ISTY 14). Though trees are overgrown and distracts her way while walking even then she is not willing to cut them. It is not a mere sympathy but she truly loves them. With them she feels strengthened. She never feels alone when she is among trees.

It is not only trees for which Ruth shows comprehensive attitude but she believes in mutual coexistence. She is far from the thought of using nature for personal gains. She loves the natural world more than the social. She is merciful for the donkey Balaam whom Ben has brought as a present for her, and for himself. She is worried to look at the worn out look in the eyes of the innocent creature and treats it very sympathetically. She thinks, "It had taken weeks, weeks of patience and gentleness, of speaking to the animals as she came down the path of daring to put her hand, for a second or two, on the coarse, sore neck" (12). In addition to donkey Balaam there are hens also but Ben is not full of care for them and laughs at Ruth who cares for the hens. Ruth seeks happiness in the company of hens. She thinks that the hens knew her (14). The narrator remarks:

The pleasure she took in caring for the hens was the only thing that had never left her, and she had clung to that. This nightly journey down the garden had been one thing, the only thing, to which she looked forward each day. The hens knew her. They were trusting. And reliable themselves, too, . . . she put her hand round each one firmly, and felt the softness of feather, and the sinewy wings, and, coming through them, the blood-and-flesh warmth. (14-15)

Soon after the death of Ben she escapes society but she continuously visits the hens and looks after them. She feels that the hens knew her while human society appears alien to her.

Ruth's heart is full of compassion for the animals. She shows great concern for the innocent creatures, which are killed mercilessly for food. Jo brings a rabbit for cooking but she could not eat it. The narrator says, "Ruth had wept, then, out of shame and guilt at the waste of the food, and for the pity of the rabbit, which had been living, and then shot dead, and all to no purpose" (19). She cannot bear the violence towards animals. She is greatly disturbed for the pity of the rabbit which is a living creature. She feels that the rabbit is shot dead without mercy and without purpose. Her feeling of shame and guilt reveals her ecological concern. In her eyes even an animal like a rabbit is no less than a human being. According to Lori Gruen "an adequate ecofeminist" always cares for "nonhuman animals with whom we share the planet" (61), in this respect Hill is a true ecofeminist in presenting Ruth as a great lover of the non human world.

Ruth as a true human being also acts for social well being. Though she herself has got a blow because of her husband's death yet she shows strength of character and a pious zeal for the welfare of society. After getting condolences from nature she shows comprehensive vision. She consoles the "demented" curate after the death of his little daughter (212). She also looks after curate's wife who is in "shock" and calms her weeping daughter (215). She stays and serves them "for whole of the following week" (219). Ruth also helps her sister- in- law, Alice, who is pregnant and unhappy because of her partner Rob Foley. Ruth knows that "what she must do now" and she takes care of Alice (243). She tries hard to bring the Byrce family together that had fallen apart after Ben's death.

When the novel ends, Ruth's house is a perfect example of mutual coexistence. She accepts a life which is not alone. Along with the human society

she accepts the non humans also. She looks after apple trees and hens. She cares for donkey Balaam. She loves trees and even cares for the tree trunk. The narrator says:

Ruth went out of the back door and walked half way down the garden, to stand, just between the apple trees She was quite alone. But not alone. She was the same person. Ruth Bryce. But not the same. . . . Alice waited for the birth of her child (253). She let her hand slide down the tree trunk, and fall to her side, and shivered. And walked up the path to the house, which was no longer empty, no longer hers alone. . . . she saw a fox slip down the garden . . . hens were locked away The donkey Balaam stood still Ruth closed the door. (254)

Ruth closes the door and the novel ends with her vision of life full of biodiversity, where hens, donkey, trees and fox all reside in harmony with each other. Susan Hill delivers the message that mutual coexistence is necessary for a sustainable and peaceful life. At Ruth's cottage there are more animals than the humans. By this conclusion Susan Hill conveys the message that a life full of biodiversity is blissful. It is not only good for the non -human world but it comes out as a boon for the mental and social harmony of human beings also. Ruth's concern for the animals as well as other natural being explicitly brings to fore Hill's ecological message in a world facing grave ecological crisis.

Susan Hill's another environment conscious protagonist May in *The Beacon* has keen eyes for the alteration of the atmosphere in her dwellings. She is able to contrast the environment of polluted London city from the peaceful environment of The Beacon. Though May's brother Frank also lives in London but he is not ecologically driven. Because of indifference towards nature he cannot differentiate between the harmful or the healthy environments. As May's place changes she comes to feel the difference between the healthy and the polluted surroundings. She goes from a hillside dwelling Beacon to London. She finds that the city atmosphere is not at par with environment of her unperturbed village. May distinguishes between full-blown market and remoteness of the Beacon. She looks at all the hip hops and pollution in the city. She watches the buses and taxis and cars and people stream which leaves smells of "fog and petrol" (TB 39). Huge "traffic" panics her mind (52). She gets afraid of crowd in city. At London a sense of loss prevails upon her. She says, "No, it was not

London” (51). But it was the same London she had been dreaming for but on reaching she finds it menacing. Her imagination about London as a city of her dreams shatters.

Further, as soon as she resides there she comes to know that there is lack of space for everyone in this huge big city in contrast to her homeland which is spacious. When she suffered terrors she was put into a small cabinet. The narrator says, “May was put into a small cubicle on the top floor with a window so high that it allowed her no view except of a grey dishcloth square of sky” (55). She knows that city atmosphere is disastrous and her mind would turn to sawdust there. After coming back to the Beacon May becomes happy while working in the open fields with her father. She becomes so unhappy when she thinks of her time in London. She desires “it was as if that year had never been” (59).

It is May’s ecological inclination only that she is able to contrast a natural lifestyle with an unnatural routine. She knew that life in city is unhealthy. Her own mental peace was threatened by city and she could not adapt herself to the city. It is said, “She did not enjoy living with other people in the honeycomb of college hall, where she made no friend because she could not learn the language of late night gossiping and early romances (51). Haunted by city terrors she comes back. She feels at peace in her natural routine at her home. The narrator says, “She had drunk the hot sweet tea quickly and slipped out of the house carrying her shoes in case her mother should hear and stop her, and they had travelled together on a golden morning when the sun was already hot as it rose and the larks spiralled up out of sight, singing, singing” (59).

May chooses a life of interrelationship with nature where she has enough space for the non human world. May’s dismissal of a cultured life and decision to live at the Beacon is a fine example of the choice of ecological life away from the modern advancements in a twenty first century technologically advanced world. She could marry if she wanted to but it was not her choice. She chooses a life where she serves her parents and communes to nature. Her dream is natural rather than cultural. May’s working for garden in the convent after returning from London shows her ecological zeal for the preservation of nature. The narrator says, “For seven months, May cycled the six miles to the convent and back everyday and when she was there she was perfectly content. She did not mind manual work” (86).

May's actions are truly ecological. She decides to live a biocentric life in the lap of nature. She does not need a male for her security but nature is enough to secure her. She is more ecological than Jane because she lives alone like a hermit. Jane has Rochester, a child and one or two servants but May's lone companion is nature. Her time is spare for reflections of nature. Hill gives the message that it is the life one can opt for. Running after the whole lot is not necessary. She approves a life like Thoreau communing to farm animals and night sky.

It is amazing that May prefers to live peacefully at the Beacon and leaves all other dreams. She never makes social propaganda for nature's care though she is ecologically active and prefers a life which is full of biodiversity. Such choices of Hill's protagonists surprise the critics. James Brockway in the essay "Old as the Hills" views:

Is it not almost past belief that a serious writer should achieve such success in our age . . . a concern with such fundamentals as life and death, the need for love, the absence of it, fear, longing and the death of hope? And also: a most sensitive and receptive awareness of life and of things outside man himself: of animals, birds, of woods and fields, of the sea and the shore, of shells, razors, conches, mere pebbles in the sand. (228 CLC vol. 4)

By doing so Hill surpasses those romantics who praise nature as deity and mother and then leave it in a single minute for cultural life. She disparages those who create a world of speeches where they care for nature while practically do nothing and stick with society.

Thus, Susan Hill is environmentally sentient novelist. Her protagonists are removed from romantic strain and never claim to be high priestess of nature but their actions are truly ecological. They seriously care for nature and animals and take care to preserve them. They are capable to differentiate between degraded and healthy environment and their impact on mind. Hill's women are not only green by heart but they are also ecologically active and heed to a bio centric life where existence is collective and this is what the present generation need to know.

This extensive textual evaluation of woman and nature relationship in the novels of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill divulge an intimate and profound

association between woman and nature. Women are depicted as closer to nature while patriarchy is detached from nature. It is observed that women protagonists of Bronte strongly correspond to nature. The psyche of Jane Eyre, Shirley, Caroline and Lucy is inextricably linked and influenced by the turns of weather. The tremendous power of the atmosphere bears an important presence on these female characters. Moreover, in her fiction natural images express the alienation, loneliness, insanity and neurosis of her heroines. Women's consciousness is linked with nature in trance. They consider nature as mother and the guide of soul. They feel the presence of god everywhere in different manifestations of nature. They show a sense of reverence for "Nature" and it becomes their hope of heaven. By associating strongly women with nature Bronte conveys the message that life on earth is interrelated. It is literary association which shows that everything is connected to everything else.

Women-nature proximity is also true for contemporary Susan Hill. Her heroines move away from humanity but they consider themselves allied to nature. Mental and physical health of her protagonists is strongly connected to nature while males are unaware and unmindful for nature. Women cannot stay away from nature. This alliance makes them comprehend the crucial truths of life which matures their minds. Their lives convey the message that a life away from nature is difficult to live. It is full of terrors and tensions while natural life is peaceful and worth living. It conveys the truth that man is not in a position to stay away from nature however intelligent he may pose to be. Woman nature bond is so strong that nature helps a harassed woman's ghost to retaliate against her exploitation by human society. In contrast to Victorian Bronte, contemporary Hill nowhere depicts nature as mother figure. Susan Hill's idea doesn't correspond to Bronte in presentation of nature as sublime power or dower of gifts.

Moreover, Bronte and Hill bestow their females with an ecological mind setup and they seem worried for the loss of natural landscapes. Their male characters show anthropocentric and andocentric behaviour where as females show an attitude of love and compassion towards nature. They have an innate zeal to safeguard the natural world. They heed towards a life of mutual coexistence. They perfectly understand the need of ecological life and choose an all inclusive life. Whether it is Bronte's Jane, Shirley or Caroline or Hill's Ruth or May, they are all more insightful towards the natural as well as the human world in

comparison to males. They equally care for social harmony and take steps for that. Further, the connection between womanhood and the environment is especially fascinating considering the common division of humanity and nature in both the Victorian and the contemporary age. The writers by associating their womanhood with the physical environment try to bridge the gap between nature and humanity. By portraying the inextricable link between femininity and the natural atmosphere they try to show womanhood's inherent and timeless connection to nature. They also subvert the anthropocentric argument that humanity is somewhere disconnected from the natural world and there is a fixed divide between the human and the natural world. By making women more conscious about the environmental hazards and preservation both the novelists convey the message that the non human world is as much valuable as the human society. They depict that humans must be sensitive for the preservation of nature like women. Thus, both the novelists have true ecofeminist zeal as their women protagonists have "vision of a society benevolent towards nature, women, children and men" (Shiva 20).

Exploitation of Nature and Woman

In addition to the presentation of close association between women and nature Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill also present their simultaneous exploitation by anthropocentric cum androcentric society. Along with close association of nature and women they also have a relation of common exploitation by the same patriarchal society. Ecofeminists look for close link between violation of the nature and subjugation of the women. Karren Warren believes that there are important connections between "domination of women, and other human Others, and non human nature, the historical pervasiveness of patriarchal domination of women and nature . . . suggest that androcentrism (male centered thinking) is the root cause of environmental destruction" (*Ecological Feminist Philosophies* 22). Just as women are not treated as equal to men and they are made to face the brunt of abuse in the name of class, race and gender, similarly nature also had to face the aggression of man in the name of industrialization, modernization and development. Ariel Salleh views that there is a "parallel in men's thinking between their 'right' to exploit nature, on the one hand, and the use they make of women, on the other" (*Ecofeminism as Politics* 9).

Ecofeminists find that their harassment is equal as women are viewed as more symbolic of nature than men. Both of them have been paired down for utilization. Man considers woman lower on the scale of transcendence than man and nearer to nature. Sherry Ortner opines:

Because of women's greater bodily involvement with the natural function surrounding reproduction, she is seen as more a part of nature than man is. Yet in part because of her consciousness and participation in human social dialogue, she is recognized as a participant in culture. Thus she appears as something as intermediate between culture and nature, lower on the scale of transcendence than man. (76)

As man considers women lower than him so the issues of power, control and suppression are very vital to ecofeminists. However, recently this oppression and dehumanization of women and nature has come into lime light and is exposed by the ecofeminists. They show their resentment against the hegemonic society and condemn the repressive and manipulative behavior of man not only towards nature but also women. Ecofeminists try to expose the notion of man's superiority and absolutism in men-women-nature relationship and try to subvert it. Ecofeminist believe that as earth is invincible in the same manner woman also cannot be treated as an object to control. So they challenge patriarchal hegemony and try to equalize man, woman and the non human.

The Victorian epoch was the beginning of the feminist movements. Historian Martha Vicinus describes that there were issues like marriage, immigration, prostitution, education and sexuality in debate and there was "a widening sphere of moral and social activities" (ix). It was an age when women suffragette and challenges to other discriminations had started surfacing up in the society. Women were trying to come out of typical androcentric structures. Women authors have started writing but their way was not so simple. Patriarchy was there to crush the voices of women. Press, print and criticism of literary works were in the hold of masculine power. Women were severely criticized and ridiculed for their minor faults so they never dared to make their voices heard and even if they did patriarchy was there to punish them in one way or the other. The glaring example of the biased attitude of andocentric Victorian society was that the trio of the Bronte sisters wrote under the masculine names of Ellis, Currer and Acton Bell as authoresses were liable to be looked upon with prejudice. The

success of these women writers was not well received by the society. Herbert Read views that “average minds of time experienced a sense of shock” (292). The women novelists were censured harshly like George Eliot for morality and Jane Austen for her narrow territory. Charlotte Bronte was also criticized for “coarseness”. However, genius of Charlotte remained unsubdued and she has questioned the pre-determined cultural formulations and has boldly asserted the role of the single women exploring her ambivalent position in society in the 1830s and 40s. She has established herself as one of the earlier feminist thinkers. Her novels stand as stalwart pieces of women’s voice for liberation.

No doubt, Charlotte Bronte has very categorically raised the issues regarding women’s exploitation but while going through her novels for this study it was surprisingly revealed that her novels not only portray conflicting man woman relationship but also portray a striking affinity between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature at the hands of the hegemonic patriarchal males in the society. In *Jane Eyre* Bronte not only portrays but also subverts the issues of suppression and exploitation of woman and nature. She dismantles that man tries to subjugate woman and enjoy possession over nature assuming that it is his birth right. He hails nature and women as taken for granted which is there to be used. The Lowood forest dell is commercialized by mercenary Mr. Brocklehurst. His ancestors constructed this institute by tearing the womb of valley. Now, he uses Lowood Institution’s building to make profit and earn money. The orphan asylum is worsened by his greed. As he uses the site for money making agenda in the same way he also uses little girls to pour out his frustration. Patriarchal head Mr. Brocklehurst tortures little Jane. After talking to Mrs. Reed, he declares that Jane has “deceit” in her character and “it is akin to falsehood” and she must be “watched” (JE 34). The treasurer at Lowood says that, “She shall be placed in that nursery of chosen plants and I trust she will show herself grateful for the inestimable privilege of her election” (35). He chides Jane but never lets her to defend. He frustrates all hopes of friendship for Jane. After publically declaring her as a “liar” he warns other girls in the following words: “It becomes my duty to warn you, that this girl, who might be one of God’s own lambs, is a little caste away: not a member of the true flock but evidently an interloper and an alien, you must be on your guard against her” (67).

Mr. Brocklehurst is all in all for Lowood Institute. None can question his supremacy. He not only oppresses Jane but he is very rigid and harsh towards the other girls also. If a girl makes a minor mistake, he gives her stern punishment. He makes the girls sew in cold and damp rooms with low light. He keeps the girls in unhealthy environment but his own daughters enjoy all the luxuries which can be acquired. They visit the institution with pomp and show. Critic Maria Frawley very appropriately observes: "Bronte is merciless in her representation of the Evangelicalism of Mr Brocklehurst, the hypocritical head of the Lowood School who dictatorially crushes anything smacking of pride or vanity and subjects the girls to numerous privations while parading his own well-fed and highly ornamented daughters (490). Being treasurer at Lowood he makes no sufficient arrangements for the girls suffering from diseases. Helen Burns becomes victim of his bad arrangements. She is attacked by consumption and there is no one to look after her. Her life indicates all the pathos of a poor girl child in the Victorian society. In the eye of the tormenter Brocklehurst both nature and women are to be tortured and used for personal gains only.

Mr. Rochester another patriarchal head appears very different from Mr. Brocklehurst but there is a lot of difference between appearance and reality. Mr. Rochester of *Jane Eyre* is both the possessor of land and suppressor of woman. He has many places in his possession just as he has many women under his control. He has under his possession a big mansion of Thornfield, its premises and orchards. He also has distant lands and manor house of Ferndean under his possession. The qualification that he is the owner of the house has provided him with ample right to abuse all the women characters in his domain. Rochester appears as the real "master" as he keeps woman as governess or housekeepers. First he owns huge Thornfield house and surrounding premises and orchards and then he has opportunity to employ keepers for them. He marries Bertha who is mad and hires Grace Poole to look after her. He had an affair with French woman Celine and has a daughter named Adela. He becomes her guardian and then keeps Jane as her governess. So women are keepers either of his children or of his big house. Sharing her view on division of work Nancy C. M. Hartsock in the essay entitled, "The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism" opines, "Women's work in every society differs systematically from man's . . . on the basis of an account of the sexual division of labour, one should

be able to begin to explore the oppositions and differences between women's and men's activity and their consequences for epistemology" (355).

In relation to Jane also Rochester speaks the language of mastery and possession. He talks to Jane occasionally and never takes her seriously or as equal to him. Rochester shows off his prospect as if he is going to marry Blanche Ingram but he is not really serious about it. By pretending his affair with Blanche he uses her to know the depth of Jane's love for him. To check her honesty he disguises as a "fortune teller (198-204). In conversation, he compares Jane with natural objects. He says, "I see, at intervals, the glance of a curious sort of bird through the closest bars of the cage: a vivid, restless, resolute captive is there; were it but free, it would soar cloud high" (140). He calls her "elf" (247), "fairy" (248), "wild frantic bird" (256), "unearthly thing" (257), "mermaid", "as slippery as eel", "as thorny as briar rose", "as fair as lily flower", "my pet lamb"(218), "simpleton" (219), "fixed star" (219), "my little friend" (219), "angel" (262) and "skylark" etc.

Just as he tries to objectify women who are subject to his control, he also utilizes nature for his selfish motives. He has no respect for women as a dignified human being and no reverence for nature as sovereign entity. He uses orchard to propose Jane and attic to lock Bertha. He smokes in orchard and equally enjoys the song of the nightingale and speaking of Jane. He asks Jane to go abroad and then not to forget him. Suddenly he asks, "Jane, do you hear that nightingale singing in the wood? —Listen!" (254). After proposing Jane he tries to marry her hurriedly, hiding his living wife, Bertha. But the secret is disclosed and marriage could not be performed. His bigamy shows his arrogant attitude towards woman. He wants to possess Jane as an object. Though he becomes Jane's offender yet he is not sorry for his blunder. Instead of regretting he tries to arouse her sympathy by showing mad Bertha. He uses the trick of "justification" to complete his "master story" over Jane (Plumwood 192). When Jane feels shocked he expresses his grief in following words:

Jane, I never meant to wound you thus. If the man who had but one little ewe lamb that was dear to him as a daughter, that ate of his bread and drank of his cup, and lay in his bosom, had by some mistake slaughtered it at the shambles, he would not have rued his bloody blunder more than I now rue mine. (302)

His mental imagery strongly corresponds to the phenomena of earth. He interchanges woman and earth. He now fears that she will turn cold to him like “ice” and hard like “rock” (304). It is true that “Bronte constructs the trope in *Jane Eyre*, the yoking between the two terms of the metaphor turns not on shared inferiority but on shared oppression” (Meyer 440).

Rochester’s relationship with Bertha, his mad wife, is altogether horrible. She is a burden for him. He keeps her fettered like an animal. He feels fully justified in dehumanizing her by hiding in the attic. He calls her “mysterious lunatic” and “mad” (294). He shows Jane his mad wife Bertha, wrestles with her, masters her arms and bound her to the chair “amidst fiercest yells, and the most convulsive plunges” (296). His attitude towards Bertha, Jane and nature is same. He uses garden for smoking and proposing because he wants a little fun. In the same way he fetters Bertha for he is tired of her while proposes Jane for he needs her for happiness. In fact he loves exercising his authority over nature as well as over women.

Though Bronte’s presentation of man woman relationship is of dominance and subjugation yet she has presented Jane as a woman who dares to express her thoughts and desires. In the end the once physically and economically inferior Jane is no longer under any overbearing patriarchal figure, nor is she obliged to submit to anyone. She has potential to negotiate with patriarchal figures around her may be Brocklehurst, St. John Rivers or even Rochester. She denounces aunt Reed, defies the bullying teacher and proudly refuses Rochester’s shoddy compromise plan to make her his mistress. Though homeless Jane lives in the androcentric world of Rochester but she never lets hegemonic attitude of society to overcome her person. As mistress of her own mind she thinks that “women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties ... they suffer from too rigid a restraint ... it is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex” (111). When he tries to dehumanize her she retorts: “Do you think I am an automation? —a machine without feelings?. . . I have as much soul as you—and full as much heart! (255). She emphasizes that she is “equal” to him. When he compares her to a “frantic bird”, she blasts: “I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will; which I now exert to leave you” (256). She shows that she cannot be emotionally fooled. Though Rochester

tries to suppress her freedom but she cannot be thwarted. She asserts her thought whenever he tries to subdue her. After he had deceived her, she left him in spite of all his arguments and efforts. She denies to be exploited. She thrusts her freedom once again when she refuses to marry St. John River and returns to Rochester only when she has ample money. She comes back not because she is weak but she thinks it lawful and right.

Not only through Jane but Bronte tries to subvert male hegemony even through the character of mad Bertha. In the course of the narrative Bertha unsuccessfully tries to burn her husband in bed that he doesn't share with her. She grievously attacks her brother, shreds Jane's wedding veil and in an act of fitful vengeance, burns Thornfield to the ground and destroys herself in the process. In so doing she burns down Thornfield Manor house—the very symbol of masculine domination and oppression

Thus the character of Rochester exposes that his treatment of women as well as nature is that of dominance and suppression. He has no reverence for nature and utilizes it as his possession. His attitude towards Bertha, Celine, Blanche and Jane shows that he uses them as objects. He is not concerned to know what they think but he imposes his wish upon them. Though he is a persecutor yet as earth remains unconquerable, in the same way Jane, in spite of all his diplomacy, shows exaltation and asserts her freedom from his domineering attitude. Bertha punishes him for his misdeeds and Jane also leaves him for his unjust treatment.

In Bronte's novel *Shirley* as already analyzed in previous chapter Robert Moore, an acute representative of culture, is bound to re-establish the mill without showing any concern for the environmental loss. Heedless to natural hazard, he also wants to replace wood ravine by colony. His mind is always occupied with the thoughts of business and mill affairs. As a staunch businessman he is indifferent to the affairs of the earth as well as to the welfare of workers. Not caring for the woes of breadless workers he introduces radical changes by employing machines which outworks the poor labourers. He cares only for his mill.

Robert sees land as his career and violates it for mill. He is averse to earth and has no reverence at all for her. Similarly he is the least concerned for women. His attitude towards women is full of arrogance and he dehumanizes them. His

relationship with Caroline and Shirley is full of tensions and imbalances. Caroline's heart is full of love for Robert but his cold attitude causes her grief. His conduct towards Caroline is not consistent. He treats her as he wishes. She feels hurt but can't say anything. Caroline keeps asking him why he is always concerned for his mill and never for the society, workers or physical landscape. He replies, "No more questions. You are mistaken if you think I am anxious to curry favour with rich and great people. I only want means—a position—a career" (SY 86).

The story exposes that oppressive people like Robert turn to the beauties of nature only to enjoy them. About him the narrator says that "he occasionally turned his head towards the window; he looked at interval at his watch; in short, his mind appeared preoccupied. Perhaps he was thinking of the beauty of the weather—for it was a fine and mild morning for the season—and wishing to be out in the fields enjoying it" (131). He uses both nature and women according to his whims. At first he plucks flowers and offers them to Caroline, next day like an oppressor he plucks her heart and behaves very coldly and indifferently towards her. Bronte presents Caroline to be a docile and self-effacing woman, destined to be destroyed at the hands of men, may be her torturer Robert Moore or her uncle Mr. Helstone. But howsoever, docile, she has inner capacity to think about the plight of women. She thinks that woman is weighted only by the success in married life. Caroline ponders over the plight of spinsters who become victim of hegemonic attitude. Oppressive androcentric structure of society makes their lives very miserable. Caroline ponders:

They are never well, and their minds and views shrink to wondrous narrowness. The great wish, the sole aim of every one of them is to be married, but the majority will never marry; they will die as they now live. They scheme, they plot, they dress to ensnare husbands. The gentlemen turn them into ridicule; they don't want them; they hold them very cheap. They say—I have heard them say it with sneering laughs many a time—the matrimonial market is overstocked. (409)

Through the ponderings of Caroline, Bronte tries to communicate the dilemma of the Victorian women in which they were trapped by patriarchy. On the one hand women were weighted only if they got married and on the other hand they were ridiculed if they tried to do so. They have forgotten to know what they want.

Shuttleworth comments, “The passage clearly articulates the double-bind in which women are placed: deemed of social value only if they succeed on the marriage market, but considered worthless if they are seen to be trying to achieve that end” (195). Women’s existence is not accepted as complete so they are weighted if they get married to a male and become a “relative being” as Simone de Beauvoir says (45). Marriage thus becomes a social status for patriarchy while a compulsion for women.

Robert Moore not only emerges as an exploiter but is able to overpower both the land and woman in this novel. In spite of his indifferent and selfish behaviour, Robert Moore marries Caroline. He establishes the mill in the end of the novel by subduing and consuming the deep woods and raising a “colony” there (676). He has utilitarian purposes towards women and earth. He is portrayed as a typical patriarch who enjoys the exploitation of both women as well as nature. Thus Robert reigns Caroline by marrying her and overpowers land by destroying wood ravine. In doing so he destroys feminine spaces. Critic Anna Lepine believes that “marriage is associated with industrialization, and both lead to the destruction of female spaces in England” (128).

Through the narrator Bronte indicates that women’s plight can be no better in an anthropocentric community which destroys nature and which believes in female subordination. Woman is considered fit for home. Her outside activities are considered to be abnormal. “She” is discarded through discourse as “the sex” (409) and “she” is fettered. Caroline is oppressed not only by Moore but also by Mr. Helstone. He stops her visits to Hollow’s cottage and then compares her with rose. When he sees ailing Caroline he thinks “The rose had dwindled and faded to a mere snowdrop: bloom had vanished, flesh wasted; she sat before him drooping, colourless, and thin” (199-200). Caroline feels sad because she cannot visit her cousins Miss Hortense and Robert Moore. Though Caroline is docile yet shows greater fortitude and tolerance. She meekly follows the commands of her uncle. She thinks that outside world is not for her. Elaine Showalter very aptly remarks, “The middle-class ideology of the proper sphere of womanhood, which developed in post-industrial England and America, prescribed a woman who would be a Perfect Lady, ‘an Angel in the House’, contentedly submissive to men, but strong in her inner purity and religiosity, queen in her own realm of the Home” (13).

Moreover opportunities for limited occupations project that Victorian society believes in female subordination. Some specific professions wait for women's destiny like teaching, housekeeping and of governess. Hortense takes up the job to teach Caroline. Mrs. Prior has no house to live so she takes up the employment as a governess which was too usual to Bronte and the Victorian society. All of the married women like Mr. Gale, Mrs. Whipp, Mr. Yorke and Mrs. Hogg do household chores and look after their children. All of these women whether married or unmarried do sewing whenever they have time. Shirley and Caroline's conversation shows that patriarchy has divided feminine and masculine works. Caroline wants to work "but hard labour and learned professions, they say, make women masculine, coarse, unwomanly" (237). So women are expected to be "womanly" in the realm of home. Their femininity will be lost if they come in the so called masculine professions.

Though, the Victorian society was oppressive yet woman had started to raise her voice against male hegemony. In this novel through Shirley's assertive character Bronte has tried to present the emerging emancipated woman. She is an heiress and enjoys an equal status as males in the society. She is a mill owner and hires Robert Moore as in-charge of the mill and he is "her tenant" (242). She donates money when she finds it proper to give. She has right to be angry and she discards Mr. Donne from her home. She declines proposal of marriage from Robert Moore strongly. In spite of her uncle's pressure she also "refused" to marry Sir Philip Nunnely (571). She marries Louise Moore only when she herself desires. Shirley's character shows that if given opportunity and wealth women are also capable in handling any profession.

It is clear that male society in this novel especially Moore and Helstone believe in the ideology of subordination and oppression of women and nature. If on one hand they have tried to sully nature on the other hand they have tried to exploit women also. But Bronte has also focused upon the subversion of male domination and oppression. As nature revolts against exploitation for its invincible spirit so women like Shirley also asserts her freedom from the authoritative behavior of man.

Paul too, in *Villette* cannot escape from repressive as well as neglecting attitude with respect to nature and women like that of Robert of *Shirley* and Rochester of *Jane Eyre*. He is totally indifferent towards nature so he fails to

understand the vagaries of weather. Neither he shows reverence for nature nor does he show any interest in its care. Like an autocrat he never thinks about earth and remains busy in sea voyages for reason he cannot tell. His conduct is possessive in respect to earth. He has a house in Bash Ville but he is not satisfied with this possession and tries to get more. He secretly buys one more house in Villette before leaving for the foreign country.

Paul neglects the importance of nature as well as he violates the dignity of Lucy. Just as he has forgotten the existence of earth in the same way he fails to assume the worth of Lucy. His attitude towards Lucy is that of dominance. He dehumanizes Lucy and treats her like an object to be raged upon, and not as a being equal to him. He pours all his frustrations upon Lucy. He talks to her rudely and she thinks that he is “stern, dogmatic, hasty, imperious” (VT 394). She listens to all his “morbid fancies” (399). In spite of all this Lucy looks toward him for love and life. So Bronte’s novel indicates that how men were callous towards women in that age. He gives her pain by showing his readiness that he is going abroad. When he is close to Lucy he torments her because of his stern behaviour and then leaves her grieving never to return. He, after arousing some hopes in her troubled mind goes abroad for ever. None is there to listen to her pathetic plight. Passionate Lucy is left bereaved in the male subjugated Victorian society where nothing but tolerance will help her. It is sure that Bronte’s men mistreat and ignore women just as land in their possession. Treatment of Bronte’s men changes alternatively for women just like colonizers treated colonies under their control.

To become a governess or a teacher or a housekeeper is very natural in Bronte’s fiction. In *Villette* also homeless Lucy looks after Paulina for a short period at the house of Brettons. Then she becomes caretaker of Mrs. Marchmont. Finally she becomes teacher in Madam Beck’s school. Towards the end of the novel Paul buys a house, offers it to Lucy and says that “you shall live here and have a school; you shall employ yourself while I am away; you shall think of me sometimes; you shall mind your health and happiness for my sake” (475) and she answers, “I will be your faithful steward,” and “I trust at your coming the account will be ready. Monsieur, monsieur, you are too good!” It is evident that Paul is the real possessor and he obliges Lucy by offering stewardship of the house. His mastery and Lucy’s shelter less position provides

him with enough courage to give her such an offer. Commenting upon this situation in Bronte's novels critic Terry Eagleton opines, "The wretchedness, desire, hunger, repression, punitive discipline and spiritual hunger which mark the Brontes' fiction, intentionally personal though they are, also speak of a whole society in traumatic transition" (127).

Like Rochester Paul never cares for his house at Bash Ville and this time he gives care of the house to Lucy. Androcentric society never gives any other service than being a caretaker or governess to women. Cruel patriarchy snatches their every right to work freely and equally. Bronte has been daring in portraying the truth that women were given work only inside the houses and not outside the houses as women's work had meant work for others and any work for self development was in direct conflict with the subordination and repression inherent in the feminine ideal. Elaine Showalter says that women's work in the Victorian society "either were based in the home or were extensions of the feminine role as teacher, helper, and mother of mankind" (13).

Like *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* in *Villette* also Bronte shows oppressive patriarchal structure and Paul is the part of such structure. Lucy is harassed and treated as an inferior being for she is a female. She is never esteemed in her dignity. She is treated like a colonized land. Paul's attitude shows that men have no notion of equality either for women or for land. Nowhere is Lucy in a position to retort against his maltreatment. She stoically bears all the pains given by him.

Bronte has successfully demonstrated the endangered earth and female subordination prevalent in her orthodox Victorian society. By destroying nature man destroys women's space. Authoritative man has learnt the moral that he is the master of both, the earth as well as the woman. She depicts that patriarchy leaves women with very limited professions of governesses, teachers or tutors. They are destined to do what the oppressive structure expects, bids and lets them do. Terry Eagleton remarks that plight of Jane as well as Lucy "speaks eloquently of the situation of all women of intellect and aspiration in a stiflingly patriarchal order" (129-30). However, in spite of oppressive society Bronte's maturing heroines assert their freedom. *Jane Eyre* as well as *Shirley* show a capacity for emancipating speculations and invoke a change in the patriarchal domain. They dare to desire and show strength of character to fulfil the same.

In contemporary milieu when it is believed all over the world that equal rights have been given to women, harsh truth persists that still women have to face the brunt of class, race and gender discrimination in the so called modernized contemporary society. Through her fiction Susan Hill shows that in spite of all talks and claims the societal structure has still not changed and the harassment of women and nature runs side by side. Attitude of domination over land and women is inherited from fathers to sons in *I m the King of the Castle* by Susan Hill. First Joseph Hooper was though a banker yet he hunted animals for fun. He decorated the “Red Room” with the bones of animals (IKC 12). He occupied a large chunk of land in Derne. Present Joseph’s views reveal that first Hooper wanted to hit at multiple destinations by his authority over woman and nature. He wanted to make a house. For this purpose he married and sold the land. His character is described in these words: “He was an ambitious man. He had brought the younger daughter of a minor baronet here, as his bride, and set about founding his family, consolidating a position, so that he could afford the house he had built. He had succeeded with no margin, so that, bit by bit, the surrounding land which belonged to him had been sold” (10). He had grown trees outside the Warings not for anything else but to make a “show” of the house. “He had planted the rhododendrons, too, not at all for their brief, dramatic show of colour in May and June, but for their dark green, leathery leaves and toughness of stem, their substantial look. He liked their gathered shapes, seen from the end of the drive” (10). All his deeds of marrying to set about a family, of owning land to build a great home on it, of growing trees to make a show off, shows that he uses land as well as woman to get his whims fulfilled. He knows nothing except exploitation.

Joseph Hooper, son of senior Hooper, is a conscious exploiter of women. Senior Hooper made present Joseph Hooper learn the value of what he has inherited from his older generations, which he fully comprehends and applies in his life. He is well lessoned that he is going to possess the Warings. The narrator says, “Yet now, at the age of fifty-one, he admitted that he was a Hooper, his father’s son, so he had come to admire the solidity and the gloom. He thought, it is a prepossessing house” (11). Real sense of possession he enjoys when his

father dies. “But now, with his father gone, he could stand before this house, and have it lend him both importance and support, he could speak of ‘Warings – my place in the country’, it would make up for a good deal” (11). His father used to say, “‘This will all belong to you’ his father had said, ‘you must learn the value of what you are to inherit’” (13).

He is a man of culture so becomes conscious of possession over land but he ignores its care. He tries to be socially influential but never cares for nature surrounding the Warings. He fulfils his whims of possession after becoming the master of Warings and soon he wants to fill the void of his life through exploitation of woman. Six year after the death of his wife, now as master of Warings, he needs an “informal housekeeper” (16). When he advertises, he has subtle plans in his mind for the forthcoming “informal housekeeper”. His plans reveal that what type of man he is. His cunning relation with Helena is centre of condemnation. Joseph Hooper’s sense of possession becomes deeper when Mrs. Helena Kingshaw comes to stay in his house. His new mastery of the Warings encourages him to dominate Helena. The narrator describes: “Joseph Hooper felt a new man. He planned to call in the decorators, and to turn out the attics, even to give a Sunday morning cocktail party, marking the beginning of his era as master of Warings. His friends would come down from London, and he would make contact with country neighbours, he would consolidate his position in the area” (56).

To act out his shrewd plans he uses the methodology of “preparation” for “devouring the other” (Plumwood192). He gives her a status of “something more than a housekeeper” (199). He takes her to the market to oblige her more, so that he can seduce her. It is doubtless that Mr. Hooper thinks sexually about Helena and admits “I am an intensely sexual man” (203). He “regrets” that he had been “indecisive” and “worried” and failed in “taking steps” and admits that while advertising for a housekeeper he had “something more” in his mind. He looks at women as a sexual object. No doubt he plans to possess Helena physically. The narrator describes that, “He thought with excitement that a physical marriage to Mrs. Kingshaw would not be like what he had had with Ellen, for Mrs. Kingshaw would answer to him, without the niceties and restraint, she would bridge the gap between fantasy and life” (204). To possess Helena he even ignores the bitter

relationship between his own son Edmund and Kingshaw, Helena's son. He pressurizes Kingshaw to accompany Edmund for schooling which Kingshaw never likes. Critic Mary Luisa Hill rightly remarks, "Thus *I m the King of the Castle* could be seen as an indictment of an inept patriarchy. Despite his mediocrity, Joseph Hooper is still the head of the house, the man whom Helena knows she needs for security, the father that Charles desperately wants, and the decision maker" (138). He not only becomes master of Helena Kingshaw but he consciously holds the legacy of the Warings at the end of the novel. Uncertain Joseph in the beginning of the novel becomes fully certain to possess the Warings. Infirm to persuade Helena at first, Joseph becomes confirm at last to master and finance the lady at his mercy.

Homeless Helena Kingshaw is harassed by society. She has no place of her own. None is there to help her to take care of her son Charles Kingshaw. She is a widow and seeks shelter from Mr. Joseph Hooper at the Warings. Her shelterless position like that of Jane of Bronte and Joseph's inherited sense of possession in relation to the Warings like that of Rochester, prepares the base for Helena's further exploitative life. As a widow and single parent she has to meet all the challenges of an exploitative patriarchal society. She has no option except to follow Joseph Hooper. Very miserable and teased by society, soon she lets Joseph to decide her fate.

Like Rochester of Bronte, Hill's Joseph Hooper, in this novel shows Victorian mentality when he hires Mrs. Helena Kingshaw and gives her the work of housekeeping. She is hired for multipurpose exploitation. In addition to house maintenance Helena has to look after two difficult children, her own son Kingshaw because his father is dead and Edmund because his father pays her for that. Thus, this novel portrays that cultured man like Joseph finds subtle ways to exploit woman and his attitude is no different than the Victorian patriarch. For this he adopts well thought off strategies and becomes successful. Helena's body as well as labour is the target for exploitation. She is harassed and can find no better job except to become "something more than a housekeeper". This exploitation leads to destruction of her mind and dignity. She is no better than Bertha, the mad woman in the attic of Bronte who cannot raise her voice against her inhuman subjugation. Rosemary Jackson truly remarks, "*I m the king of the Castle* (1970) is a carefully structured narrative along these lines of conflict

between 'female' and 'male', resulting in the acquiescence of the 'female' part, which is reluctant to assert itself on male terms" (290).

In Hill's another novel *The Woman in Black* also women and nature face multifaceted exploitation. Arthur Kipps, though overtly neither attacks nature nor women but indirectly he takes delight in the gifts or services provided by both of them. He takes enjoyment in using means of convenience and ignores the harms done by them to nature. Like the curates in *Shirley* by Bronte, Arthur Kipps of Susan Hill feels no pricks of conscience when he enjoys the meal at Crythin Gifford. When Samuel Daily's wife offers meal, he says, "and his wife made my mouth water in anticipation of the supper she proposed – home made broth, sirloin of beef, apple and raisin tart with cream, and some stilton cheese. While I ate heartily, I mused about the type of small house we might afford to live in after our marriage" (WB 43). He enjoys and eats "heartily" the food made from the flesh of animals and served by Samuel Daily's wife. All that he eats come from the animals and prepared and served by woman, so his joy is based on exploitation either of nature or of woman. Non-human world serves the purpose of joy and decorum for anthropocentric human world.

Further ahead when Kipps goes for a walk he becomes very happy to see the enhancing market square at the town of Crythin Gifford. Kipps again eats at the market with "four dozen or so farmers". He describes the occasion when "half a dozen girls passed in and out bearing platters of beef and pork, tureens of soup, basins of vegetables and jugs of gravy, and mugs of ale, a dozen at a time, on wide trays (61). Beef, pork, soup etc. is served by girls to attract more customers. Double edged exploitation is again indicated when in market not only the beef, pork and soup are sellable but the girls too. Along with all of these things women are treated as objects to decorate the market and to enhance the sale.

It is not only Kipps who ignores nature but none in the anthropocentric society care for nature at Crythin Gifford. All the male society is entangled in their own assignments. Jerome, a resident of this place is concerned about his business only. Samuel Daily is reported as a "large landowner" (62). Mr. Daily has "a biggest house for miles around it" still he is not 'very much at ease' (117) and wants to possess more. Kipps describes, "He listed the acres and properties he owned, the number of men in his employ or who were his tenants He talked about his son and his young grandson too, for both of whom he was building up

this empire. He might be envied and resented, I thought, particularly by those who competed with him for the purchase of land and property” (118). He tries to become “the biggest landlord in the county”. Along with that he is interested in giving his possession to “son” and “grandson” not to daughter or granddaughter. The fact that Mr. Daily is envied and competed for purchase of land shows that whole of the anthropocentric society is interested in possession over land.

As these males possess and ignore the land in their possession, in the same way they also became unsympathetic towards women. Jennet is physically and mentally exploited by Keckwick. It is known in the course of the novel that Jennet loved him and conceived a child from him but he could not marry her and left her bereaved. Not only Keckwick but whole of the community turned indifferent to her. To torture Jennet patriarchy opts for the method of “invasion and annexation” (Plumwood 192). Society invades on her right to have her son with her and the child was forcibly given to capable Mr. and Mrs. Drablow. She suffers from wasting disease but none cares to cure her. She could not rebel against patriarchy and dies and becomes a ghost. Her painful story shows indifference of androcentric community towards women. She loses her personality, her body and her soul because of exploitation. She dies with a broken heart which is full of malevolence against all the society. Jennet could not avenge while she was alive. Only after her death she becomes a ghost and casts her wrath upon society.

Just as women assert their freedom in Bronte’s novels Hill’s women also try to assert their individuality and raise their voice against oppression. In *The Woman in Black* Jennet becomes a ghost after her painful death. She takes this form because patriarchy cannot deal with it. She avenges androcentric society by killing their children. Whosoever sees her gets panicked out of fear and comes to believe it will kill his child. Dominating, harassing, exploitative and torturing patriarchs like Samuel Daily and Jerome turns pale at the mention of her name. Kipps who intrudes in her territory is severely avenged and his wife and child are killed. Hill by presenting the transformation of Jennet into a ghost and her revenge against patriarchs exposes the assertion of women against male hegemony. Malevolent ghost of Jennet punishes androcentric society for their misdeeds. Her retaliation towards Kipps shows that “she” is not weak and can punish him for his offense in any form.

In this novel just like the androcentric society of the Victorian age, women are given the secondary work of house holding. Most of the female characters in this novel are not assigned any important work except the house holding. Trade, market and all other important assignments are performed by males. Kipps does all the outside work while his wife Esme remains at home. She is very busy and lost in her children. She thinks nothing except serving Kipps and children. His relations with his wives have never been in trouble because both of his wives have been “dedicated” and “caring” (09). Never have they questioned Arthur Kipps for his long journeys or unreasonable anxiety. All of the women including Stella, Mr. Daily’s wife and Mr. Jerome’s wife are house wives bound to home duties. No outdoor duty is given to them. They do child bearing and rearing at home.

Thus, this novel projects that expedition of harassing woman is running unnoticed. Women are not expected to come out of home and make radical changes. They have come in market as commodity not as dignified personality who may show uplifting of the race. Women and nature are used to fulfill the aim of androcentric society.

In the series of *I’m the King of the Castle* and *The Woman in Black*, exploitation of nature and woman is also present in Susan Hill’s novel *In the Spring Time of the Year* though it is not quite apparent. Here anthropocentric society is shown carrying on with the utilization of women, nature or other non human creatures. Both women and nature are “subject to conquest and mastery” (Wrede 42). Rydal, Ben and Potter all are engaged in clearing the forest. Ben is a forester and pours all his violence upon nature by cutting trees constantly. He enjoys felling of trees. He does not have any responsible attitude towards nature as well as other creatures. It is known that he does not like hens and calls them stupid creatures. They made such graceless darts and bobs of movement which he never likes. To him they all looked the same “dull russet-coloured” and, along with that they had “no character” (ISTY 15). He has no respect for their existence and he detests them. Jo, Ben’s brother kills animals for fun. He shot a rabbit and heard it squeal. Jo himself admits that it was a “truly wicked thing” even then he commits it for fun (111-112). Both the brothers owe no reverence for the nonhuman world. Their enjoyment is based on the exploitation of nature. They are egotistical and they don’t believe in totality of existence.

In this novel Potter is also a forester like Ben. He has not been married and “never taken a wife” (189). He has dog Teal as his companion. He uses garden as his companion and works on it. He grows plants for their “scent” and “use” as he tells Ruth when she visits him. He tells her about herbs that “Miss Fry would have known. They have more scent than a good many flowers. I grow them for the scent - and the show they make. I don’t have much use for them” (188). He also advises Ruth that she should make a fresh start with “cuttings and plants” for she is alone after Ben’s death and needs a company. Thus for Potter nature serves as a “use”.

In the course of the novel it comes out that though Ben directly never harasses Ruth, but he has completely occupied her mind. Ruth’s married life spans only for one year and Ben, in this very short time appears to be assertive and introvert and wants to be accepted whether one likes him or not (134). He reigns upon her brain so that she thinks what he thinks and she desires what he desires. Her mind is so occupied by his thoughts that she has totally effaced her own personality and forgotten her own existence. Ruth has surrendered to dominance of Ben and she never tries to come out of his spell when he is alive. Death of Ben emancipates her mind and she thinks about life and death. She never weeps bitterly and keeps her self-respect. It is only after his death that she frees herself from her limited existence and gets an opportunity to experience the outer world and develops a faith in herself. Comments the critic: “Ben’s death releases her to be herself. . . . She is not a radical female figure. But she does come to realise that her passivity had been related to her conditioned dependence upon a father or a male protector (Jackson 294). Finally she seeks solace in the company of nature and gathers strength to live on her own terms. She starts afresh, without the shelter and protection of any male partner and dares to live all alone.

Further ahead in *The Beacon* also nature and women face indirect attack of man. Nature faces attack in the shape of mechanization and urbanization. The modernization of London breaks dreams of May and forces her to run back to her homeland. Remote areas like the Beacon face attacks on its conventional lifestyle. In this novel woman dehumanization is indicated in an indirect way. At the Beacon availability of farm-labourers and girls is noticed because of war. It is told that “war brought nothing very much worse, and indeed, in some ways it was

easier because it brought extra help on all the farms, in the shape of prisoners of war and even land girls The Prime family were better off for food than many others - the men shot rabbits and there were always fruit and mushrooms for those who knew where to look (TB 07-8). It is indicated that prisoners and “girls” are also available easily because of war. Hence girls are available or unavailable according to positions of war. It shows that woman has become a commodity which can be transported anywhere. Man uses scheme of “instrumentalization” of woman as commodity (Plumwood 192). When war is there flora and fauna is destroyed. The above quote shows that animals are killed because there is food crisis. Non human world is used by its “appropriation” as human food. So women and nature have to suffer in war. Man entangles in war for his greed while nature and women have to suffer without any purpose. They suffer only to fulfill the purpose of this “man”.

In this novel May asserts freedom by doing what she wants. She goes to London for higher education and comes back when she wishes. She dares to live without a male protector. Unlike Bronte, Hill’s May shows that matrimony is not the goal of women’s life. It is patriarchy which considers it important that woman must be a “relative being” to male. May goes against the norms of patriarchal world and never sacrifices her freedom. Not only this, she looks after her parents instead of her brothers.

Overarching hegemonic attitude of men in Hill’s novels shows that the silencing of woman and nature that has begun long before continues unabated in the present times also. Men try to neglect welfare of both nature and women. They use their intellect and power to exploit women and nature for social status, profit or for sport. They find subtle ground to exploit women and treat them like an object to be used. Hill’s portrayal of her female protagonists like Ruth and May staying independently without any male sustenance shows women’s assertion in a patriarchal world. Thereby the author tries to subvert the established equation of dominance and submission between men and women.

To sum up the above comprehensive study of man -woman- nature relationship in the novels of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill reveals an intimate and dynamic association among man woman and nature. Women are depicted as closer to nature than men. It is observed that women protagonists of Bronte strongly correspond to nature. Their psyche is inextricably linked and influenced

by the turns of weather. Bronte's women find nature as a healer, as "Mother Nature" and feel God's "presence" in the "unclouded night sky". They consider that "delight" is the free "dower of Nature to her child". Reverence of Bronte for nature as mother is not a hollow notion but it is her ecofeminist plea to know that nature deserves a dignified place.

Susan Hill's heroines move away from humanity but they consider themselves allied to nature. Mental and physical health of her protagonists is strongly connected with nature. They find in nature "reassurance" and safety. This alliance makes them comprehend the crucial truths of life which matures their minds. Their lives convey the truth that human beings are not in a position to stay away from nature however intelligent they may pose to be. Woman nature bond is so strong in Hill's novels that nature even helps a harassed woman's ghost to retaliate against her exploitation by human society. In contrast to Victorian Bronte, contemporary Hill nowhere depicts nature as mother figure. Susan Hill's idea doesn't correspond to Bronte in presentation of nature as sublime power or dower of gifts.

Bronte and Hill bestow their female protagonists with ecological mind setup and they are zealously aware about environmental fatalities. They equally care for social harmony and take up step for that. Women are more insightful towards the natural world as well as the human world in comparison to males. In all the stories of these two novelists the male characters show anthropocentric and androcentric behaviour whereas females empathize with nature. In doing so they reflect a true ecofeminist view: "Based on the shared experience, women must speak up for nature because nature cannot speak for itself or at least is generally not "heard" when it does" (Theda Wrede 41). As women and nature are intimately connected, the onus to liberate both nature and humanity from domination lies on women in order to create a new healthy society. By making women more conscious about the environmental hazards and showing their zeal for the preservation of nature both the novelists convey the message that the non human world is as much valuable as the human society. They depict that men must also be sensitive for the preservation of nature like women. They must try to ascertain integrity of life and should have a biocentric vision for a sustainable life.

Moreover, their fiction not only portrays interrelatedness of women and nature but it also portrays the victimized status of women along with nature in the

so called advanced patriarchal world. Their novels are instrumental in understanding how the treatment of both women and the physical natural environment results from overarching, patriarchal, hegemonic value system. Their fiction also projects that just as earth remains unconquerable by anthropocentrics, women also cannot be subjugated by the androcentrics. Through their novels the writers seem to present an urge to look beyond the dualistic thinking and to stop subordinating women and nature as their inferiority is neither universal nor natural rather it is imposed.

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Chapter V

Aesthetics of Econarratives

Ecocritical Lens: Narrative Art

The term “narratology” was coined by Tzvetan Todorov in *The Grammar of Decameron* in 1969. The term implies the tactics of telling a tale or the art of narration. Narration is the art of describing a tale with one’s own point of view. Narratology not only makes possible to analyze individual texts but also text patterns in them. Tzvetan Todorov and Arnold Weinstein in another essay entitled “Structural Analysis of Narrative” explain that the narration is a methodology to attain some destinations. They further say, “In poetics as elsewhere, discussions of methodology are not the minor area of the larger field, a kind of accidental by-product: they are rather its very center, its principal goal” (76). The narratives have immense power to reshape reader’s thinking. Peter Brooks, a scholar of comparative literature also finds a close connection between a literary work and its influence upon the readers. He suggests that there is “a correspondence between literary and psychic dynamics, since to an important degree we define and construct our sense of self through our fiction” (36). Thus, exploring narratives help to understand and describe how they create their effects.

However, the art of narration plays a vital role in eco narratives also. Recognizing the value of narrative process second wave ecocriticism emphasizes upon the narrative aspects of a literary work. It is considered that ecocriticism has been biased in favour of realistic fiction so it lacks methodologies to interpret texts. Ecocritic Ursula Kluwick says that venture for ecoriticism is to invent new forms to help writers and artists to write about the environment. She opines, “Ecocriticism needs to develop tools for determining the effects of narrative strategies and structures on readers and their behaviour” (513). They try to bring an ecological analysis of a narrative to the level of its structural framework and try to focus on how a work is structured to reshape individual and collective environmental imaginations. In this background James Erin also yokes ecocriticism and narratology to assess the texts from an environmental view. She says:

Econarratology embraces the key concerns of its parent discourse—it maintains an interest in studying the relationship between literature and the physical environment, but does so with sensitivity to the literary structures and devices that we use to communicate representation of the physical environment to each other via narratives (23).

In other words econarratology is an analytical approach to stories that unites the interests of both ecology and narratology.

It is a noticeable fact that the narrative aesthetics of ecocritics differ significantly from the other formal concerns of aesthetics because the chief aims of ecocritics are not to study the formal aspects of the creation of art but they examine the role of ecology in the creation of plot, theme and other narrative techniques. They look for how the structure of a narrative organizes interconnections of nature within the framework of any literary work. In the works of literature plot is the study of the interrelationships of incidents and ecology takes into account the interrelationships of lives in ecosphere. So there is a close connection between plot and ecology. According to ecocritics the plot, themes and other formal aspects of the work should beautifully form an integral part of the grand design of nature. For this Rueckert tries to make an “ecological poetics” according to which ecological drama must be written (107). Ecocritics try to seek that how nature is textually embedded in the structure of a literary work in order to highlight ecological concerns. In simple terms in econarratology the focus is on how the writers have used their art of narration to convey ecosystems. For ecocritics the employment of ecology in a text is not a mere framing device but they consider that it is a moral duty of a writer to raise awareness about environment among readers.

Plot is the chief organizing principle so it is of great importance to one who evaluates a work of art from eco aesthetics. Cheryll Glotfelty says that ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies so the plot becomes significant for ecocritics. They ask, “What role does the physical setting play in the plot of the novel? (xix). So an ecocritic would always be curious to know the role of physical setting in the structure of a work of art. Ecocritics like Marshal denies that ecology is a mere framing device. The critic opines:

Ecocriticism poses the challenge that human accountability to the environment should be the major part of a text’s ethical frame work and that the non-human environment which is present in a text should not serve merely as a framing device but should serve as an imaginative presence that

makes the reader understand that human history definitely relies on natural history (4).

In this light it is natural that ecocritics look for the scope of ecology in progression of plot or “arrangement of the incident”. They show that structure of art is influenced by surrounding nature. An ecocritic finds a significant role of nature in the development of plot and theme of a work because ecology definitely influences them. Ecocritic Joy Kennedy admits that “interconnectedness between nature and people supports the full spectrum of structural balance in the work” (15). Hence, the question of setting is of utmost importance in the development of plot by ecocritics.

Theme stands in equal importance with the plot. It is the theme for which the plot is needed. In the theme of a literary text, an ecocritic would look for the ecological wisdom. “Are the values expressed in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it?” (Glotfelty xix). They examine how nature, environment, weather, flora and fauna of a particular region influence the theme in a novel or a drama. He argues, “In addition to race, class and gender, should place become a new critical category?” (xix). Therefore, in the aesthetics of eco narrative ecology plays a significant role in giving it a textual shape.

Ecology: Settings and Characters

Though the Victorian novelist Charlotte Bronte was unaware of the concept of econarratology yet she was sure of the impact of nature in the creation of her art. She truthfully depicts a writer’s relation with the surrounding landscapes which brings to fore her sense of eco-aesthetics. While writing, nature delves deep in her mind and which in turn is reflected in her work. In her fiction *Jane Eyre* the aesthetics of econarratives can be found at length. The novel is shaped in three volumes and she employs the first person narrative to build up her tale. Place, i.e. the physical setting forms an important part of her aesthetics and figures importantly in her novel. It has a remarkable influence on the plot, action and character of this novel. The plot of *Jane Eyre* contains five different settings namely Gateshead Hall, Lowood Institution, Thornfield Hall, Moore house and Manor house of Ferndean in England, all of which have a tremendous influence on her characters. At first action takes place at Gateshead hall which indicates the mood of silence and unbelonging. This aloofness of house corresponds with the

alienation of Jane Eyre. The house is “orphan” because its owner Mr. Reed is dead. Jane is also like this orphan house because her parents are dead. The imagery of “frozen” landscape (JE 30) “silent trees”, “fallen fir cons” (38) is used to describe the loneliness of Jane and they also symbolize that all relations of little Jane are frozen. At Lowood institution Bronte uses imagery which is harmonised with the setting. “Fog” lets the disease bloom and many girls die because of disease. Here Bronte uses wide imagery of “elm, ash and oak skeleton” which emphasize her friendlessness whereas “beck” (76), “hills”, “forest dell” (77), woods and garden flowers within and outside of Lowood school which enhances the theme of Jane’s growth. When she looks at these things she thinks about liberty and adventure in life. Further, the next place of her journey Thornfield is enveloped in “the sheet of ice” (113). Ice causes a slip for Mr. Rochester and his horse. They fall down and Jane reaches to help them. Thus their first meeting is caused by geographical feature of the place. Imagery of “field”, “hills” (110) “twilight”, “crow trees”, “thorn trees”, “sunbeam” (189) “dusk” (191) “oak” (213) and “birds” (217) is also sought to enhance Jane’s understanding of the world. Setting of orchard in Thornfield premises lets the love to bloom. At “dusk” there is Rochester; there is Jane and scent of “jasmine flowers” amidst swinging of “chestnut tree”. Then the “song of nightingale” is “like the notes of a violin, quickens the scene to a lyric rhapsody, in which the scent of the jasmine flowers, the chestnut tree with its waxen candelabra, the storm that mutters in the distant sky, join to convey and symbolise the passion that animates the two beings who move among them (Cecil 111).

At Moor land and Ferndean wild imagery is used by Bronte. Moor house is a place of wilderness. Here nature is wild and peaceful. The “breeze” blows mildly and the “sky” was of stainless blue, “rains” are plentiful and clear (405). The serene nature fills the heart of Jane with love like that of King Lear. She looks at pious nature and she listens to Rochester. She decides to return to him and now the plot is turned to Ferndean. At Ferndean Jane meets “sylvan dusk” and all is “set in heavy frame of the forest” (435). She finds that Rochester has become humbler and his tyranny stands nowhere in the wild setting. Once again, calm and unperturbed woods of Ferndean prepare her for a peaceful life. She finds love and contentment in her life with Mr. Rochester.

In this novel the location keeps changing for Jane but nature at these five places impacts her development in various ways. All these five places in *Jane Eyre* are thoroughly cultivated by gardens, orchards or woods around them. Throughout the story Jane's psyche is inextricably linked to external landscape. In fact external nature strengthens Jane's inner force of character and personality. Five sites have opened new avenues for Jane Eyre. Without this imaginative use of landscape, plot would not have been flawless; theme of Jane's growth, loneliness or love would not have been so rich in meaning. Extensive imagery of flora and fauna is recalled by Charlotte Bronte in her novel which is interrelated with plot.

Further, Bronte employs third person narration in *Shirley*. In this novel the omniscient narrator comments upon the impact of industrialization in the valley of Yorkshire. In this novel geo-physical setting indicates province of Yorkshire in England. It is clear that setting of *Shirley* has provided an ecologically rich theme of industrial revolution and corresponding changes in the natural and the social world of Yorkshire. Unlike the physical setting of *Jane Eyre*, Yorkshire described in *Shirley*, is not situated in peaceful atmosphere. The valley is disturbed by Stillbro Ironworks. It is blown in the wind of culture. Smoke of mill welcomes the reader in this novel instead of birds or animals.

Smoky picture of atmosphere causes great havoc to earth and its environs. Real sky is "a muffled, streaming vault, all black" because of the Stillbro Ironworks mill. None asks that where the "constellations and the planets were gone" (SY16). No sweet breeze is there as in *Jane Eyre* but here is "sulphur-puff" from the gaunt mill chimney (131). Devastation of landscape by Robert Moore provides Charlotte Bronte, an exciting prospect for the novel *Shirley*. Interconnection of valley, mill, workers, failure of crops, famine and food riots with setting makes plot proceed and brings forth the desired theme of natural loss. The critic truly remarks, "Setting is far from decoration here. It is deeply felt, and integral to the texture of the novel (Edwards 78). The natural and the social community come together and influence each other reciprocally. It is clear that the setting of *Shirley* has provided an ecologically rich theme of industrial revolution and corresponding changes in natural and social world. Industrial development and polluted atmosphere clearly shows Bronte's ecological vision entangled in crises.

This novel also like *Jane Eyre* ends happily. Circumstances improve on the pacified earth. Louise, Shirley and Caroline become healthy with the jovial nature.

Robert Moore who is shot by pistol also heals up in a house which is in the lap of nature. He is slightly changed by the change of setting. He begins to treat the workers in a better way that he has ruthlessly neglected. He also behaves with Caroline in a soothing manner and eventually their relations also get cordial.

It is true that Bronte's intelligent use of landscape gives her an opportunity to speak upon nature-culture dualism. Deep seated natural devastation in the mind of Bronte has to do a lot in the creation of plot and theme. Had it not been situated in Yorkshire, the novel would have taken a different shape. If Hollow's mill would have been in any industrial city, landscape of the novel would have vanished. Then, absence of natural phenomenon would not have required Charlotte Bronte's comments.

In her another novel *Villette* narration is given to protagonist Lucy to speak and narrate in first person. She describes everything in detail along with pouring out her own mind. Setting of the novel *Villette* is also at various places like *Jane Eyre*. At first Lucy lives at the town of Brettons, then with Miss Marchmont. She visits London and finally goes to Villette. Setting at Villette has opened new curves in plot movement. She had no time to think about love while living at Rue Fossette in Villette. She has work, work and work only. Then she says: "Behind the house at the Rue Fossette there was a garden—large, considering that it lay in the heart of a city, and to my recollection at this day it seems pleasant . . . how precious seems one shrub, how lovely an enclosed and planted spot of ground ! (VT 102). The first note of exclamation and happiness is brought about by none but a garden. This proves that earlier Lucy felt very alone. Her longed heart is pacified in giving details of the garden (102-105). A walk into the garden provides Lucy to think about love (107). Garden is not superficially added in the story but it has sufficient structural value. Mike Edwards also views: "The discussion of the setting at anything beyond the simplest level is impossible to divorce from theme and character. The description of the garden opens important elements in the plot, touches on several themes in the novel" (79). Not only the garden but whole setting at Villette gives momentum to the plot of the novel. Here she meets her old acquaintance Brettons and Paul also comes in her life. This place makes her life move on. The house and the school of madam Beck opens new avenue in the life of Lucy because she gets work and shelter here.

Further, Bronte is wise enough in the choice of imagery. She employs those images which suit her settings and bring out theme of Lucy's suffering. Image of "sea" (54) is always in the background where storms keep striking again and again. Most of the time Lucy refers to "night" which shows her restlessness (39). Very few "moonlit night[s]" show that there is lack of love in her life (479). Often Lucy describes high "wind" (53) in town which brings out her dread about future. These themes recur in the course of the novel and intensify the theme of loneliness.

Setting of the town Vilette near sea invites sea storms which play pivotal role in the plot of novel. They integrally get blended within the framework of the novel. Because of storms weather changes and change of weather leaves Lucy restless. Lucy falls ill and the plot takes a turn. A "storm" is stroked (158) and Lucy loses her senses. Even the terror of "death" hovers around her. She becomes unconscious in that night of storm. In morning she finds that all was again changed. She looks at the "beating rain on the casement; sure by the "wuther" of wind amongst trees, denoting a garden outside; sure by the chill, the whiteness, the solitude, amidst which I lay" (162) and becomes sure that she is at the school. She falls ill and because of illness she has to spend a fortnight on La Terrasse. So setting is changed for a fortnight at La Terrasse where plot takes a new turn. She becomes hopeful of future because she is given to a little freedom. However, seaside village is never calm and invites storm which take plot to final catastrophe. Once again "storm" strikes and Paul is dead. So not only the authorial process as well as the life is influenced by the setting in Vilette. Robert A. Colby observes, "This subtle interpenetration of nature and art really informs the entire novel, binding together the loosely woven first two-thirds of the story with the more taut and tense latter portion" (40).

It is seen that in *Villette* Bronte chooses sea side town and corresponding imagery which is effective as well as dreadful. Images of high wind and sea storms intensify the loveless situation of Lucy and bring out the theme of her loneliness. Storms collect to bring Lucy's trauma to the final point which is unconsciousness. Storms bind the plot in a whole as they are constant throughout the novel.

Thus the setting play pivotal role in the plot of the novels of Bronte. Physical landscape provides the theme which is enhance by the use of corresponding imagery. Place equally effects or affects the lives of the characters. They are benefited or marred by the setting which makes the story move further.

Contemporary novelist Susan Hill is surely aware of the role of ecology in the authorial process. Her novels depict a close relationship between the relationship of environment and the creation of literature. This is the reason that the question of setting is always important from structural and thematic point of view for her. For *I'm the King of the Castle* she admits that she has first chosen the setting and then plot for *I'm the King of the Castle*. She says "The setting affected me. The places always do, and my antennae were pricked, taking in every detail of the countryside, the weather, the whole atmosphere" (Afterword, IKC 224). The novel is set in village Derne. Hill thrusts an omniscient narrator in *I'm the King of the Castle* who undoubtedly describes the story in the third person narrative. Describing the location the narrator says, "Derne was low-lying, and the air that summer was close and still" (12) in which Kingshaw and Hooper are bound to share the place Warings. It is admitted that the house Warings was "ugly and entirely graceless". It is said: "At the front and on both sides, there was the lawn, sloping downwards to a gravelled drive, and then into the lane, and without any tree or flower-bed to relieve the bald greenness. Up the drive, and at the back of the house, bunched between the Yew trees, were the great bushes of rhododendron" (10).

The impact of Warings upon Kingshaw is negative and he never finds peace and comfort there. Hill refers to imagery of specific flowers and trees in garden at Warring which makes hopelessness to prevail in the novel. It includes "yew" (10) trees which usually appear in graveyard. There were great bushes of "rhododendron" which are dark and heavy and seem like burden. These symbolize the theme of isolation of child Kingshaw and of the house from rest of the world. Imagery of glass cabinets filled with the "moths" (11) is frequently used to symbolize the decay of Hooper dynasty. Hooper torments Kingshaw again and again by showing him dead moths. He compels him to pick them up and calls him coward when he cannot. When Hooper shuts him in the shed the imagery of crawling insects shudder not only him but also the reader.

Kingshaw is tormented by Edmund Hooper as well as from the place itself. Tired of Hooper's bullying when he comes out he find no solace. At cornfield "crow" (30-31) attacks him. "Hang Woods" (200) also offer no help to him. There damp and rotten nature has sickening effect upon him. Any place or anything like cornfield, crow, Hang Wood or friendship with Fielding, can neither soothe nor

shelter him. Ernest H. Hofer observes, "Setting, 'place', always figure importantly in her works". As place has the negative impact upon Kingshaw so the critics again remarks, "Hardy might have been an influence here" (321).

Macabre setting makes ending of Hill's novels dark and gloomy. The novel *I'm the King of the Castle* ends with the death of child Kingshaw. During his residence at the Warings, Kingshaw is neither helped nor guided by nature like Jane of Bronte. Change in the setting, from Warings to wilder Hang woods can bring no change in the hopelessness of the child. No Wordsworthian bliss is imparted to the child by woods and his mind remains equally burdened even after his contact with nature. He comes to believe that he has to face his predicament alone, without any help. No west wind of Shelley can cool him down. In this negative universe he has no option but to die. His existence becomes absurd and he feels himself as the "other" and alienated from the setting. He feels "trapped" (185). Kingshaw commits suicide because nobody helps him not even the mother-nature. Theme of estrangement not only from society but also from the world of nature is brought to realization with the help of negative setting. So dark and gloomy setting undoubtedly affects the end of this novel and it does not offer any hope to Kingshaw. Personal apocalypticism occurs in this novel which is very painful and pitiful.

Further ahead, Hill very deftly employs the third person narrative in her novel *In the Spring Time of the Year*. This novel is divided in three parts. Setting of this novel is in such a place where Ruth's cottage is very near to meadow and also not far from Foss Lane where her in-laws reside. Both of the houses are so near to each other that they can hear the braying of donkey from meadow. Both of the houses are on uphill place. Down there is Helm bottom where Ben cut trees for Rydals. From their house they can see that "Hadwell Bay curved out in front of them, the sea far, far out, the sand flat and pale and, closer to them, the rocks glistening wet, with small, secret pools hidden in their clefts, as though cupped between two hands" (112). This setting near woods and sea provides move to plot. Protagonist Ruth is immensely helped by the specific imagery of the place. Scenery of new life in the chosen setting awakes new hope in decaying Ruth. She looks that "the sun was rising" and "gold and green world" (148). Her eyes are opened because of new life in nature. She saw vivid imagery: "the haze of green, like an openwork shawl laid over the tops of all the trees, where the buds were

unfolding into first leaf. . . . the emerald of the larches that fringed the beach woods, and the yellowish-green early poplars, ash green willow leaves and the pale, oaten-olive tinge of the young wheat” (150-51). Ruth looks that buds were unfolding into first leaf and comes out of dejection. Prospect of new-fangled life in nature makes plot move and Ruth grows. K. R. Ireland writes that “the thematic as well as structural centrality of the scene is emphasized, and the new season is contrasted with the physical detail of the dead leaves remaining from the old year (175).

Setting at church yard blooming with flowers also enriches the theme of her growth. As spring arrives, Easter comes and she gathers fresh flowers for Ben’s grave. In churchyard imagery of “newly sprinkled plants” and “fresh flowers” is used to convey her wisdom to face sorrows and pains without much reaction to them. The natural objects like “sun” and “flowers” restores her accuracy that nothing in human world will change for her (171). The narrator says, “She dozed, and remembered the flowers in the churchyard, and seemed to be on the brink of some very simple, very great truth which would explain everything about her own life and about Ben’s, about his death and all the life and death of the universe” (172-73). Imagery of “new life” in nature develops reflective thinking in Ruth. It illumines her with a philosophical truth that “neither joy nor mourning, pleasure or pain seemed to have any final meaning” (171). She concludes to live afresh. Imagery of “trees darkened to rust” (203) and decaying “woods” (204) tells her about the inevitability of death.

Death of a bird Cock Robin also makes Ruth learn about universality of death. Mourning Ruth visits graveyard where she looks social act of mourning is parodied by some children over the death of a bird cock Robin. They come to graveyard in complete white dresses. Children are not just comically imitating for enjoyment. Their faces are solemn and they truly express sorrow. Not only they are grieving but they also indicate towards the pain of bird and natural community over the death in following song:

All the birds in the trees
Fell a-sighing and a-sobbing
When they heard of the death
Of poor Cock Robin (127).

This long episode in the novel (126-129) is of utmost importance to ecocritics. Ruth sees a striking similarity between the bird and herself because of this incident of death of the bird and mourning song. Ruth understands that death prevails everywhere. K. R. Ireland calls this episode as “mise en abyme” or play within the play which is enlightening and illuminating. He comments, “The nursery rhyme embedded in this brief scene offers like, the dumb show in *Hamlet* and the allegorical poem in *Usher*, a second internal mirror, or rather echo, of the larger events, and is especially appropriate in this context” (176). Hill silently suffuses the message that human heart must be sensitive towards nature also. Because it also has its own ups and downs.

Apart from the cock Robin episode this novel is replete with imagery of bird and animal life. Hill uses hens to show Ruth’s love while Ben’s hate for the natural world. Dog teal symbolizes man’s domination over the non human world. The imagery of flowers and the braying of donkey bring back Ruth from her past to “present” (10) and make her realize the “truth” (68). Mary Jane Reed observes, “Hill’s precise imagery portrays nature as a backdrop to human suffering. ‘The donkey’s bray and the smell of sweet stocks’ pierce Ruth’s empty dead world” (75).

Thus the study of the plot establishes the fact that the settings most appropriately work to bring out theme. Occurrences are brought together by the settings where sea, stream, wood work for the enrichment of plot and bring out the desired theme of Ruth’s learning. Interaction of Ruth’s mind with imagery of nature makes her fully grown woman who has true ideas about life and death, good and bad, joys and sorrows which forms the main theme of this novel.

Further, in *The Woman in Black* Susan Hill bestows narration to protagonist Arthur Kipps to speak out in first person narrative. In this novel Hill uses the technique of flash back of memories. Here also the settings hint towards the story of the novel. In the very beginning, Arthur Kipps’ lone house indicates that something mysterious and gloomy is going to happen. Kipps leaves for Eel Marsh house because he is summoned to attend the funeral of Mrs. Alice Drablow. On the way to funeral he takes shelter in town Crythin Gifford which is nearby Eel Marsh, house of dead Mrs Drablow. The place is described by Samuel Daily who says, “‘Aye, frets. Sea-frets, sea-mists. They roll up in a minute from the sea to land across the marshes. It’s the nature of the place. One minute it’s as clear as a June

day, the next . . .’ he gestured to indicate the dramatic suddenness of his frets. ‘Terrible. But if you’re staying in Crythin you won’t see the worst of it’” (35).

At Eel marsh house progress of the novel depends on its setting. It is lone house among the wild wide marshes. Sea water usually covers the earth surface when there is tide in the nearby sea. Air remains damp and sudden fog envelope the house without warning. Imagery of sea, water, fog and damp air is used to depict ill setting. “Across the causeway” setting takes negative turn against protagonist Arthur Kipps and helps the ghost of Jennet who has turned against society because her son was snatched from her. This turn is positive for the movement of plot. Kipps many times feels hatred and malevolence in “air” and environment. “The sound of a pony and trap” and cries disturbs him altogether. He comes out of the house but find nothing but “out on marshes, all was still and silent; save for that movement of the water, the pony and trap might never have existed” (89). To walk back to house proves a nightmare to Kipps. “Mist” and “darkness” play trick with him and he somehow fumbled “blindly to the door of the house” (89). He is misguided by sudden “fog” and “damp air” and thus becomes sure of the hidden dwelling of the woman in black at Eel Marsh house. Agitated he leaves the place. He is unable to define that was it fog, atmosphere or the woman in black who frightened him (102).

Still and lonely Causeway attracts and calls him (111). He comes again there with dog Spider. He examines Drablow papers. Something in the airs of Eel Marsh house prevents Kipps from doing his work of collecting papers. He listens to “someone whistling” and becomes perturbed (160). Dog “Spider” also listens to the whistle and runs. It is caught up in boggy ground. It seems that the dog will die. Kipps says, “I felt a second of pure despair, alone in the middle of the wide marsh, under the fast moving, stormy sky, with only water all around me and that dreadful house the only solid things for miles around” (163). Kipps puts all his efforts to pull the creature out of mud. He narrates:

I could have summoned up, born of terror and desperation; and after an agonizing time, when we both fought for our lives against the treacherous quicksand that tried to pull us both down into itself. . . . I strained as hard as ever I could to drag my body backward onto firmer ground. As I did so the dog’s body suddenly gave and the tug of war was over as I fell back, holding her tight, the two of us soaked with water and mud . . .” (162).

He feel “suddenly so faint and weak and lost in the middle of the marsh” and immediately after it, to enhance his fear and misery, he spectacles the woman in black directly gazing on him. He becomes unconscious out of fear. When consciousness returns to him he finds himself in town. Dreaded and torn with fatigue he leaves the place.

Thus setting enriches plot by hindering the way of Kipps and turning his mind from his own business to the woman in black. Kipps at Eel Marsh house finds himself caught in evil eerie marshes and moaning winds. Setting at the Nine Line Causeway appears as a malevolent and sinister force accompanying the woman in black and prepare Kipps and the reader, for catastrophe. Ernest H. Hofer very aptly remarks, “Fantasy thus turns into reality; the phantoms of the misty causeway turn tragically into the confrontation of death in reality” (327).

End of *The Woman in Black* is also dark and gloomy. It ends with the death of the child and the wife of Mr. Kipps because of the woman in black. At Eel Marsh house ill setting hinders the way of Kipps and causes troubles in his way. It plays trick with Kipps to intensify the theme of fear and revenge. Nature becomes absent in the last chapter of novel and gives space to the woman in black. Nature never comes to help the little child or father but the woman in black appears at once in the way of pony when his son and wife are riding in a pony trap. It collides against the tree and Kipps’ son dies on the spot and the wife dies after suffering for ten months.

In *The Woman in Black* setting and imagery rely on a suspenseful build up. Kipps dreaded mind draws a negative universe which leads the plot towards doom. Imagery and Plot development of this novel without any doubt portray relation of creative process with external environment of the place.

In her another novel *The Beacon Hill* employs third person narrative which seeks help from the world of nature. The narrator uses frequent flash back of memory and plunges into past. The novel is set at farmhouse the Beacon which is situated on “distant and uphill place” (TB 09). The theme and the plot of *The Beacon* are again enriched by its settings. It draws on the theme of growth of May. Setting greatly helps Growing of May’s mind. “Open spaces” at the Beacon make May to understand reality of things. Indifferent and “huge and impersonal” sky reminds May of her duty when her mother is lying dead. She is only “conscious of the minutes passing” (26) and she becomes ready to accept everything in life and

feels that “she would have to open her arms to the time that was coming when everything would change”. It is not only once that May understands reality of things with objects of nature. Her experience of world is explored regularly through natural objects. When she visits Patricia Hog’s cottage darkness of outside world reminds her of her own inner darkness. Darkness inspires in her philosophical thoughts. She thinks, “The Dark. The fact that outside world seemed to be inside too” (17). She does not like Hogg’s house. Homeland the Beacon dwells so firm in her mind that she does not like to stay away from the Beacon even for a short period. How her life depends upon the house, she comes to know when she is away from it. She is the protagonist and such deep attachment with setting provides plain momentum to the plot.

However, it is not only May whom the place beacons but Frank also comes back to the house. May returns soon and Frank after thirteen years. During these years he remains happy in city however not untouched by the call from nature and the call from homeland “The Beacon”. He admits before his wife that “I lived in the country’ ‘I lived on a farm. I lived among open spaces” (74) and expressed his wishes to live among open spaces and they bought a flat in such open space near by the sea (74). At the close of novel he reaches at the Beacon uninvited, when his mother dies, and remains there forever. Almost all the incidents take place at the Beacon. Coming back of Frank establishes the fact that the setting at the Beacon, no doubt influences the character as well as structure. Though earlier he was firm to not to come here but once he comes on the occasion of death of his mother, he is caught by the land. He decides to stay there for rest of his life. May also decides to stay there for her whole life. House beacons them, lures them to come back. Their return realizes the theme that none can ignore the call from nature and call from homeland.

In this novel geography of the site sits deep in the minds of characters. They cannot stay away from the place. Their actions are controlled by the place which becomes structurally and thematically important.

It is discerned that creative process of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill is built up by the external nature. It has been observed that particular settings have direct bearing on the theme, plot, character and action in their novels. Geographical setting determines the role of various movements in plots of their novels. Setting decides the destiny of their inhabitants. Change of place introduces turn in plots

and incidents are aroused by these places. Both of the novelists heavily rely on imagery of the non human world. Bronte has no male protagonist in the novels under study while Hill's novels end in death where the protagonist is a male. Bronte's male characters, though they are not protagonists, seem slightly improved by the change in setting which brings change in the plot but settings can bring no reversal of plot or transformation in the male characters of Susan Hill. Rochester in *Jane Eyre* and Robert Moore in *Shirley* are changed to some extent with the changed settings while predicament of Kipps in *The Woman in Black*, and Kingshaw in *I'm the King of the Castle* remains the same. Hill depicts that universe is adamantly negative and ending are passive because setting can bring no change. Bronte's males are indifferent to setting and they do not react towards it. Hill's male characters react and find that it is hostile and malicious which gives no hope to them. They call it "eerie", "rotten", "treacherous" and "malevolent".

Narrative Progression: Influx of Season/Weather

In the aesthetics of econarratives not only the locale or the physical setting but the influx of weather and seasons also play a significant role. Richard Kerridge opines, "If a new commitment to environmental care does spread through modern culture, it seems likely that an essential part will be renewed willingness in industrialized societies to find social and personal meaning in seasons, landscapes, and the drama of life and death in nature (Ecocritical Approaches to Literary Form and Genre 372).

Victorian Charlotte Bronte very promisingly connects narrative process with the influx of season and weather. Weather and seasons add more dimensions to narrative beauty of her novels. Nature becomes humane friend of Jane that works as a prophet in the narrative process. Changing seasons give impetus to the narrative while weather predicts forthcoming circumstances. The narrator Jane is immensely aided by seasons and weather.

The novel opens in "drear November day" (08). As there is winter "shrubbery" is "leafless" amidst "cold winter wind" (JE 07). The narrator represents weather as a benevolent prophet who indicates towards future and warns against forthcoming incidents. The "penetrating rain" predicts bad luck for the child. Jane looks at rain beating against casement and she becomes apprehensive that something bad is going to happen. Her cousin John comes like storm. His

sisters find Jane out of curtains. He chides her and strikes her by the book with full strength. It hits her, her head strikes against door. She becomes unconscious. Prophecy of nature proves true. Her Aunt Reed and cousins, John, Eliza and Georgiana, all scorn her and their hatred is hastened and deepened by dreary weather. Cathleen Tillotson comments that it “is the opening of a poetic novel; season, scene and character are interpenetrated” (28). Winter is narrated as “raw and chill” (41) so it causes its peculiar pains and happiness. Jane is “whirled away to unknown” (42). It is remote and mysterious regions of Lowood where “rain wind and darkness filled the air” (43). At Lowood she wakes to “hear the wind rave in furious gusts and the rain fall in torrents” in morning (45). This climate indicates that nothing is going to be well. Tuberculosis enters Lowood and many girls die of this disease. Jane’s friend Helen Burns also dies. Jane is shocked and becomes friendless.

Bronte’s narrative becomes lively in spring. Jane becomes thoroughly conscious of the impact of atmosphere in spring season upon earth and its creatures. At Thornfield Hall Jane describes, “The kitchen, the butler’s pantry, the servants’ hall, the entrance hall, were equally alive; and the saloons were only left void and still, when the blue sky and halcyon sunshine of the genial spring weather called their occupants out into the grounds” (183-84).

Bronte’s technique makes the life in this novel aligned to the seasons. When at Thornfield Hall summer arrives, Jane goes to meet her aunt. After visiting her at Gateshead Hall, Mr. Rochester proposes Jane for marriage in this summer. At Thornfield hall tumultuous weather warns Jane against treachery in her relationship with Rochester. Jane looks at the orchard just a moment before Mr. Rochester has proposed her. It blooms with “flowers” and “horse-chestnut” (250). After proposal she looks that night’s beauty is gone and chestnut tree was ailing. Astonished she says, “But what had befallen the night? The moon was not yet set, and we were all in shadow: I could scarcely see my master’s face, near as I was. And what ailed the chestnut tree? It writhed and groaned; while wind roared in the laurel walk, and came sweeping over us” (258). Jane guesses that something inauspicious is about to happen. But she could not guess what it was. She is happy but nature continuously warns her. She feels wind, “with a sullen and moaning sound” (284). She doubts still weather but she cannot become fully sure. It appears like the calm before the storm to her. In the next morning she finds that chestnut

tree is struck by lightning and split in two-halves which predict that the future of her relationship with Mr. Rochester is going to be disturbed. Splitting of chestnut tree as an antecedent to Jane's relationship with Mr. Rochester is put up by critic Mike Edwards. He says, "Superficially it appears destroyed Under a blood red- moon, Jane apostrophises the cloven parts of the tree in a passage which we may perhaps view as a gloomy precursor of her final relationship with Rochester" (71). She cannot understand and becomes ready to marry Mr. Rochester. Apprehension proves true and the living wife of Mr. Rochester is discovered thwarting the proposal of marriage of Jane with Rochester.

At Moor land weather appears calm which assures her of some good omen. Prediction proves true and she is very kindly treated by the inmates of Moore house. She establishes a good friendship and cordial relationship with Mary, Diana and St. John. In the season of autumn, Jane lives away from Mr. Rochester. His house is set on fire by his mad wife, Bertha and she is burnt alive. Mr. Rochester lost his hand and eyesight in an attempt to save her life. As spring approaches span of miseries is over (404). Jane has a telepathic communication with Mr. Rochester. She decides to join him again. She goes to him and marries him. The critic opines, "Throughout the novel, the narrator shows a strong sensitivity to natural world . . . the relationship between human events and nature is used in a creative and flexible manner" (Edwards 9).

Thus cycle of season has a great significance in *Jane Eyre's* narrative method. Seasons introduce changes in the flow of narration. Weather predicts and warns Jane about forthcoming incidents.

Bronte's narrative skill endows nature with all the sensitivity of human beings in *Shirley*. In the narrative scheme of this novel nature is given the role of a foreteller and prophecies of nature are equally true in it as they were in *Jane Eyre*. It begins with atmosphere which signifies that everything is going to be morose and awful nature predicts sorrowful future. Weather changes according to season and narrative takes its move accordingly.

Phases of seasons, along with weather, influence the narrative process and the society in this novel. In the very opening of the novel, the narrator promises that narrative is going to be "unromantic as Monday morning" (SY 01). Vision of Mike proves a prediction for the forthcoming crisis. The smoky and foggy weather in this vision signifies, as Mr. Helstone says "bloodshed and civil conflict" (14).

Through this vision of Mike, Bronte gives authentic details of atmosphere which warns against struggle and bloodshed. The Stilbro Ironworks throws a great deal of “smoke” on horizon which grows “black and bleak” (16). These sordid pictures of environment become precedent of natural calamity of famine, thrust of war, rebellion and riots. In the course of the novel destruction of crops, failure of relationship, smashing of love and end of fraternity are witnessed. A “bad harvest” follows and hungry public indulge in food riots (28). Food riots generate misery and hate. Chaos prevails all around famine cuts short the national honour and goodwill. So prediction of nature proves true.

Winter challenges happiness of Caroline. Her uncle stops her visits to Hollow’s cottage and she is separated from her friends Robert Moore and Hortense. She starts wasting away in winter. Bronte’s skilled narrative shows nature and society are alike in different seasons. Summer takes its turn from winter and Caroline gets acquainted with Shirley. She feels elated in her company. Both of them get joy in the loving lap of nature (221). Shirley hopes for improvement of industry. Narrative shows that as the earth is angry so summer becomes unromantic. Summer do not give any warmth instead it burns. Hot weather burns down the water of humanity as it evaporates into atmosphere. Robert Moore is cold like ice and workers are hot like iron so exact opposites hit each other. They struggle in summer night (359) and the narrative indicates that appropriate atmosphere is ready for autumn in advance. Autumn brings with it a bagful of sorrows. Not only the human beings but the earth also undergoes a lot of sufferings in autumn. The narrative pictures autumn scene which pictures a “faded” earth (499-500). When a house is infected, its inhabitants can’t remain unaffected. Life is jeopardised in this unrelenting weather and narrative truly becomes unromantic as Monday morning. However, these ailing tones are caused by autumn and they end with the arrival of winter. “Clearness” (589) of winter is stressed so it wipes away every obstacle in novel and proceeds toward a happy end. With the onset of winter narrative moves forward towards happiness and as spring arrives there is overall change. The narrator says, “The winter is over and gone; spring has followed with beamy and shadowy, with flowery and showery flight. We are now in the heart of summer—in mid-June—the June of 1812” (664). The narrator’s stress on the word “heart of summer” makes nature glow and the whole province of Yorkshire rejoices. Nature is happy so it conveys goodwill. Mill is re-established

and workers are happy and satisfied. Robert and Caroline get married. Relationship between Louis and Shirley also get better and they are also wedded. The conflict between the workers and the owners of mill gets resolved.

It comes out that the seasonal pattern plays an important role for the progress of the narrative of *Shirley*. It shows that the process of creation of art is inextricably linked with nature. Autumn affects earth and her inhabitants in a negative way. There are diseases and struggles on earth for life and for death. The whole province appears bright in pleasant summer breeze. Peace and harmony returns to the natural and the social world.

Bronte links seasons, especially autumn to the narrative process in *Villette* which predicts grave social relations. The narrative of the story proves that weather is not less than a character. Weather in *Villette* remains tempestuous and like an evil character it predicts that the society will have to suffer. The adverse effect of vagaries of weather upon human society and how it changes their way of action, is narrated by Lucy. When Lucy and other residents of Chateau at Villette are waiting, the bad weather predicts awesome situation which lowers their heart. She narrates how “heart and imaginations” of women and girls are “doomed to divorce from the comforts surrounding their persons” because of “stress of weather, to contend with the snow-blast . . . in wildest storms, watching and listening to see and hear the father, the son, the husband coming home (VT 273). When Dr. Bretton and Count de Bassompierre arrive on horses, trio of waiting ladies, Mrs. Bretton, Lucy and Paulina want to meet them because they have been away for a long time. Lucy says, “The asperity, the violence of the weather warranted our running down into the hall to meet and greet the two riders as they came in; but they warned us to keep our distance” (273). Because both were “white” because of “snow”, so they ask the ladies to stay away. Thus not only the psyche but the behaviour of the characters is also controlled by weather in this novel as it is in real life. The prediction of harsh weather proves true and society remains worried.

It is Bronte’s technique of narration only that every reference to upheaval in nature precedes new adversity in the life of Lucy. Lucy’s sufferings are made believable by reference to outside tumultuous weather which gives no relaxation to her. Raging autumn tells that she is deserted like the season itself. Her loneliness and traumatic mind is depicted with the aid of turbulent nature. Robert A. Colby is of the view that Lucy and Paul are “closest to *rude nature*, with her fierce energies

and her unpredictable changes. They encompass light and darkness, calm and storm. Their destinies therefore are poetically suitable . . . amidst the turbulence of nature's elements" (40).

External weather on the pages is linked with authorial process and it becomes precursor to incidents in Susan Hill's novels also. In *I'm the King of the Castle* narrator builds an environment of ill being and mistrust where nature helps the narrator but not the characters.

Weather in this novel is drab and austere. It forecasts bad luck for child Kingshaw. When Kingshaw arrives at Warings, weather outside is hideous. The narrator describes, "The Sky was the colour of dirty sixpences. The rhododendrons still shone with wetness, all down the drive"(IKC 21) and just after this brief description of grim nature, Hooper and Kingshaw entangles into a brief scrap which is "wordless" and "violent" and rivalry is sown between them. Hill uses "Sun" and "dust" to anticipate unfriendly relationship. The narrator says, "The sun shone in straight through the tall windows, making the dust dance, and falling into odd shapes, on the floor boards. Everything smelled old and dry and hot" (35). This "dry and hot" situation gets penetrated into the mind of Kingshaw and throughout the novel he is troubled by outward and inward fear. Crow and Hooper haunts him, his plight becomes "queer" just like outside dawn (62). He leaves the house and "when he came towards the cornfield, the mist seemed to be much thinner, and he could just make out the dark shapes of the edge of Hang Wood, on the far side. The corn was a curious, dirty beige colour in the early light, and very still" (63). Still and uncooperative nature tells that he is still to suffer. He passes "queer coppery green" earth and "ditches". His situation is "odd" (70) and finds no help in woods. "The Twigs and dead holly hurt his knees. The wood looked different from here, the leaves seemed higher and much farther away, and the trunks were at an odd angle. It made him sick to look up at them, sideways" (78)). The "quiet" in woods irritates him and look of woods makes him "sick" and "a feeling of tension inside the wood" makes sufferings of Kingshaw convincing. Through the "rotten" description of nature Hill prepares the readers to hold the terror. Astonished reader reads the following lines when he leaves finally for woods: "Outside, it was cool and the air felt moist, though it had stopped raining and the wind had dropped. . . . grass was thick and wet. . . . the sky was smooth and pale. . . . The outer edges were fringed with yellow and brown, but inside, it

was dark green and thick, the leaves hadn't started to fall" (221). Apprehension proves true and he drowns himself into stream and his body is found "upside down in the water" (222) and the novel ends here.

Thus nature throughout pervades the story of this novel. Incessant ill weather helps the narrator to move towards unhappy ending of this novel. It makes the unnatural death believable. Strange and sickening woods never help the child though it helps the narrator who is successful in creating an environment of ill being. Rotten nature takes the narration towards cruel death of the child.

Hill's third person narrative *In the Spring Time of the Year* is immensely helped by the influx of seasons. Ruth's reaction to death of her husband Ben changes as per the phases of season. When Ben dies season is autumn and Ruth's reaction to his death is very fierce and dry like autumn. The narrator says, "Everything was dry now, for three weeks the sun had shone. It tired her. . . . weather, heat or damp or cloud, night or day, things which existed outside her own self, her own misery. But they had been like burns or abrasion that never healed, irritating her, intruding (ISTY 01). She lets none to come near her and remains alone like faded leave. Nobody can console her because she is always annoyed. Then the season of spring arrives and it indicates changes in narrative because "there was something in the air, something, a new smell, the beginning of growth, and as she had walked she had felt a great happiness spurt within her" (30). She looks at new life in nature and wants to sing. It seems to her that the earth belongs to her. She becomes giddy with happiness. Expressing her joy the narrator comments that "she looked out upon a gold and green world, upon spring. It was the end of April, it was Easter Saturday; and she understood that forgiveness had come" (148). Thus the onset of spring makes narrative move further and spring time induces her with a pious zeal of doing something good. In autumn sun "tired" her (01) but in spring it is "warm" (172) to her so narrative moves like seasons. When autumn comes the narration is decay ridden and Ruth smells of "decay" (204). She experiences "fetid" (207) smell and narrative makes her believe that "everything had been necessary" (208). Once more winter changes the tone of narration and "The last, sweet-rotten death-smells of autumn were being driven out, to make way for the first, cold, clear airs of winter" (243) and there is overall change in Ruth and she welcomes life. Review in the *Times Literary Supplement* views, "The whole, year-long process takes place in a countryside that seems first

oppressively quiet and empty. Only gradually do its rhythms begin to assert themselves and make human sense, so that Ruth comes back to life with the return of spring, and dares to believe that her husband is living too” (“Weathering the Calm” 280). It is seen that this narrative of seasons walks in beauty because seasons themselves become narrative. Seasonal plan is mandatory for Susan Hill’s modus operandi. Hill’s narrative method runs according to seasons.

Again in *The Woman in Black* first person narrator is immensely helped by the weather to build negative atmosphere. In flash back memories of Kipps weather comes to help him and serves as precursor to incidents. When gap in thought is around, narrator fully makes uses of elements like darkness, fog and sun etc. in narrative. Narrator Kipps begins introducing preparation for Christmas Eve. Immediately after it he describes “eerie”, “sad”, “ugly” or “gloomy” nature. He portrays gloomy nature:

I like to look about me at the sky above my head, whether there are moon and stars or utter blackness, and into the darkness ahead of me; I like to listen for the cries of nocturnal creatures and the moaning rise and fall of the wind, or the patterning of rain in the orchard trees, I enjoy the rush of air towards me up the hill from the flat pastures of the river valley (WB 1-2).

This gloomy description is enough to guess that he is proceeding towards grave situation. This depressing atmosphere drags Kipps into the thoughts of his dark past. Dreaded of this awesome atmosphere he turns to the company of children in house where they force him to tell ghost story which disturbs him completely.

Fog immensely helps narrator in the starting of novel and “a mist that lay low” comes to exist very soon (02). Author portrays ill weather on Monday afternoon in November. Kipps says, “It was a yellow fog, a filthy fog, evil-smelling fog, a fog that choked and blinded, smeared and stained” (WB 22). It creates a feeling of ill being and fear. For instance he narrates, “It was a fog that had come three days before, and did not seem inclined to go away and it had, I suppose, the quality of all such fogs – it was menacing and sinister” (23). The fog plays the role of a character and it also suffuses the silent message of some mystery when Kipps talks to Mr. Bentley about his visit to Eel marsh house. Kipps asks if there would be children at Eel Marsh. Mr. Bentley falls silent and “the fog loomed,

yellow grey, and thicker than ever” (28). Hill describes outside fog which fills the gap in conversation. Hill uses description of fog as a remedy for pause which occurs when Mr. Bentley falls silent. Fog is spread not only in his home and office but it is also in London (35).

At Crythin Gifford fog is with him with sea-frets as Samuel Daily tells Kipps. At causeway of Eel Marsh house every time, when the woman in black is visible, morbid description of tense nature wrapped up in foul mist antecedents her arrival. Kipps describes mysterious environment. The walls ended in a heap of dust and rubble where lay the grey water of the estuary. Describing eerie atmosphere he says, “As I stood, wondering, the last light went from the sun, and the wind rose in a gust, and rustled through the grass. Above my head, that unpleasant, snake-necked bird came gliding back toward the ruin, and I saw that its beak was hooked around a fish that writhed and struggled helplessly” (73). He becomes suddenly “conscious of the cold and the extreme bleakness and eeriness of the spot and of the gathering dusk of the November afternoon . . . I saw again the woman with the wasted face In the greyness of the fading light, it had the sheen and pallor not of flesh so much as of bone itself” (74). The mist and dampness in weather start to imprison Kipps. Dreaded he steps out of the house but water begins to seep nearer. He says, “I wondered how deeply the path went under water when the tide was at height” (85). He finds back the house but “Eel Marsh House, too, was invisible, not because of darkness of evening had fallen but because of a thick, damp sea-mist”. Walking back he “was at once baffled by the moving, shifting mist” (86). With the help of marsh, land, sea water and fog, narrator is successful in making reader believe that “marsh and estuary, land and sea, had been shrouded in that sudden fog, and I lost in the midst of it – they, too, had not been real, not there, present, not substantial, but ghostly also” (97).

So weather excessively helps the narrator. Because of unpredictable nature Eel Marsh house does not appear to Kipps as a peaceful greenery but as “deserted”, “desolate” and “mourning house”.

In the novel *The Beacon* third person omniscient narrator uses frequent flash back of memory and plunges into past. Hill’s narrator is helped by the weather. Her narrator finds that nature is sufficient to introduce the scene. On the very first page of the novel it is mentioned that when Bertha is going to die, the sky

is already “gathering” (01) to prepare the situation for her death. Soon after her death when May plunges into memories of her happy past with her mother, father and siblings and references to natural objects are increased. She remembers pet animals like chicken, geese, beehives and seasons of summer, winter and “torrential rain” and weather (2-3). May remembers cheerful days when her mother and father had chickens, geese etc. She remembers lanes and fields near the Beacon.

Susan Hill’ narration moves according to seasons. Rotation of season impacts characters too. As the house the Beacon enjoys a very important status so its plights in summer, winter and autumn are described. Narrator describes that it was a dry summer and nights were sweet and cloudless and stars were brilliant. The narrator says, “The summer drew on and the days passed by, the swallows soared over the roof of the Beacon and the house martins nested under the eaves. The barn owls reared young and flew, cream-faced and on silent wings, past her window at night” (60). This passage describes attachment of May with the house in summer. “The summer drew on and the days passed by” and “The barn owls reared young and flew” tells that her time flew rapidly because she was happy at her house. Change of season changes the routine of life in this novel. With the arrival of the harsh winter weather, the difficulties of people are projected. The narrator says:

At the end of seven months, just as the cold of winter was beginning to ease, Bertha Prime slipped in the yard and broke her leg, and a week later, had a slight stroke.

May left the convent. She would be welcome back whenever she could go, they said, when she could be spared from home. But she never would be. May knew that (87).

“Cold of winter” indicates harshness of season which makes one believe in hardships in life. Bertha’s leg is fractured while May leaves convent and comes to home. These two short paragraphs are example of Hill’s narrative technique. In text they are separated as in this quotation. By separating them Hill narrates impact of season which indicates toward detachment of May from convent because of winter season. Change of seasons not only imparts impetus to narrative and it moves further but it makes reported situation convincing also. A reference to “bitter winter” turns May toward feeling of “shame and guilt that their lives were

so hard” (89). Still winter is lingering and “they were repairing the fences after winter” (92) her father fell and died there and then and “the future she had always dreaded would begin” (93).

Frank’s detachment to house is made convincing by referring to dried up autumn. He returns back to the Beacon in autumn which shows that he is not going to belong to this place as well as his siblings and the narration follows: “He returned to the Beacon towards the end of that long golden autumn and took over the attic rooms, but left everything else as it was, as it always has been. Once or twice in spring he said that they should move out this or decorate that and May supposed that he was right” (152). By forcing fierce weather conditions Hill indicates that relations among siblings are not sweet. They are together because they are destined to be there. Towards the end of the novel Susan Hill narrates stretched relations and lack of conversation between them by referring to change of season as: “The autumn slipped down into one of the harshest winters for years so that they had no time or energy left for argument and scarcely any for conversation” (153). They are cut off from rest of the world by “snow and blizzards, the ice and gales, and later the floods as the thaw came, and it was as though they each lived surrounded by an invisible, impenetrable bubble, almost entirely unaware of one another”. Phrase like “harshest winters” indicates towards lack of energy in the latter part of the sentence. It also indicates towards harshness in relations. Sentence like “snow and blizzards, the ice and gales, and later the floods as the thaw came” indicates not only toward weather but also towards snow in relation of brother and sister. It makes one believe the tension in the novel. So in this novel Hill’s narrative depends on the change of seasons. The story will become monotonous and crumble down if seasons are drawn back.

It has become clear that the pattern of seasons confirm Charlotte Bronte’s and Susan Hill’s faith in the design of nature. Narrative process is interlinked with the seasonal process of surrounding nature. Their settings, situations and actions change with this cycle. It is noticed that most of the times spring brings with it happiness and health, while autumn is quite opposite. It brings miseries, diseases, death or separation with it. Winter is for frozen and awesome situation while summer is kept open for introducing thrill in relations. By introducing this seasonal plan Susan Hill and Charlotte Bronte conveys the idea that human life closely corresponds to the patterns of nature. It has as many colours as nature has. The

seasons add variety to human life. Life suffers from its own summers and winters. Game of pain and happiness not only encounters human life but it also influences natural life. As arrival and departure of seasons influence earth in the plan of nature, in the same way varying flavours of year imparts flow to the narrative of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill.

The above thorough analysis of the narrative techniques of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill reveal that novels of these writers are deeply rooted in ecology. Landscapes in these novels are the projection of their vision of nature. Their settings, themes and plots are pouring out of their internal landscape which is no doubt the product of the external landscape. Study of plots of both of the novelists discloses that their settings are interrelated with specific imagery of specific place. Imagery goes in the making of a particular landscape in the novels which arouses actions of characters. Action of characters goes into the making of plot and helps in the realization of the desired theme. The analysis reveals that the novelists create a matrix of image which pictures human as well as non human world. The setting decides the future of their people. Landscape and society effect and affect each other.

Moreover, their narrative draws on weather and season. Changing season provides a move in narrative and imparts flow to it while weather predicts future of inhabitants in case of Bronte while it serves as precursor to Susan Hill's. In their novels, this cycle of season indicates pattern of nature which has a different bearing on human life. So nature is never inactive or powerless. She enjoys a status, almost equal to a living character. It can be asserted that the natural images sit deep in the mind of these writers which come out in the creative process and confirm their relationship with ecology. They wisely make a coherent whole of their internal landscape with the literary devices like plot, theme, setting, imagery and narrative technique.

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Conclusion

In today's highly advanced and technology driven world ecological studies have come to occupy a significant place in the arena of environmental as well as literary studies. Incessant desolation of the non human world has drawn the attention of the environmentalist and the literary scholars across the globe towards this grave ecological threat. As a result literary studies have taken a decisive turn and a paradigm shift from contemporary literary studies to environmental studies is witnessed. To explore green consciousness has become a very crucial and appealing field as it has enabled the literary critics to raise issues and create awareness among its readers towards current environmental problems. Nowadays, these studies have gained momentum as a result of the disturbing ecological changes and ensuing consciousness that the planet earth is in danger and there is an urgent need to safeguard it.

In the last few decades new branches of vital literary theories like ecocriticism and ecofeminism have emerged as modern ecological literary studies. These studies came into being as a fictional vital endeavour to link the breach between the natural and the human sciences, which besides segregating the human from the non-human realm has proved disadvantageous to life-sustaining organism of the planet. Ecocritical learning in literary fields is seen as a reaction against the recent global ecological crisis. Stirring away from anthropocentric model, ecocriticism analyzes literary texts to recover a notion of interdependence of - nature and culture, earth and artifact and consumption and destruction. It views that text is not a purely cultural object but it affects and is affected by the material conditions of the natural surroundings. Ecocritics try to find out in what ways and to what effect the ecological crisis has seeped into contemporary literary work. They try to examine the relationship between writers "texts" and the "entire ecosphere". Hence, ecocriticism advocates biocentrism and ecocentrism as opposed to homocentrism and egocentrism. Literary ecocritics have also tried to work out an eco-poetics or a rule book to write and analyze literature in environmental terms.

Using the lens of ecocriticism this thesis focuses on the literary portrayal of nature by the two writers of different eras- the Victorian novelist Charlotte

Bronte and the contemporary novelist Susan Hill. An effort has been made in this study to discern how the writers have perceived and interpreted nature and how they have tried to portray the relationship between man and nature and women and nature, Through this study an expanded view of ecology is drawn and certain similarities as well as dissimilarities have been observed in their attitude towards nature because of a considerable gap of time in their writings.

Modern knowledge system has enhanced man nature dualism. Scientific revolution has segregated man from nature. The organic image of nature that once explained everything was replaced by the mechanical images. These images were of controlling and dominating; having power over nature. Cartesian thought also established a great gulf between the conscious, mindful human sphere and the mindless, natural one. As human reason came to occupy the central position it led to anthropocentrism that posed a great threat to nature. Extreme anthropogenic attitude towards nature resulted into nature clash. This man - nature - culture dualism is condemned by ecocritics. Like ecocritics the dualism between men and culture is minutely observed and portrayed by both the authors though its mode of appearance differs in their fiction.

Though at first glance, Charlotte Bronte's fiction may not be considered as rich sites of ecological discourse, as overtly it does not deal with the issues of environment but a close and comprehensive analysis of her novels provides an insight into the views that Victorian held towards nature. In her fiction nature is present in its full vibrant, colourful, soothing and serene appearances. Her description of nature is vivid and authentic and like an environmentalist she invariably focuses upon the connection of environment with society and portrays how degradation of ecology results from an anthropocentric and exploitative culture. In her *Jane Eyre* the clash of nature and culture is not explicit. However, through protagonist Jane's journey to five different places and her changing perception and interpretation of varying natural world, the novelist has tried to redefine human relationship with the non-human world. Wilderness of rural landscapes is contrasted with the artificial landscapes of cultured spaces like gardens and orchards. The Persona and maturity of Jane itself speaks for nature culture clash. If on the one hand Jane is deceived and agonized at civilized spots like Gateshead, Lowood and Thornfield then on the other hand she blooms in the wilderness of Moor land and Ferndean. Through varying depiction of landscapes

Bronte has indirectly portrayed nature culture conflict where Jane finds her true self in pristine nature of Moor land and final abode in uninhibited woods of Ferndean both wilder than her previous dwellings.

Her second novel *Shirley* also proves the hypothesis that her fiction abounds in nature culture clash. In this novel Charlotte Bronte has explicitly brought to fore the clash of nature with culture by portraying the exploitation of nature and insensitiveness of human nature towards environment. The valley of Yorkshire is disturbed by industrialization. Dream of Robert Moor to re-establish mill and to apply machines becomes reason of natural as well as societal clash between the workers and the mill owners. The mill not only pollutes the environment leaving it full of “sulphur puff” but the application of machinery has also confiscated the livelihood of mill workers that has led to deprivation and hunger. Due to the onslaught of culture over nature chaos prevails in the novel. Yorkshire of Bronte is wrapped in bloodshed. This place and situation is very much similar to the house of Usher in the tale “The fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allen Poe where dystopia is at hand. Bronte also keeps Napoleonic war in the background of the novel to emphasize the impact of culture over nature. In fact *Shirley* by Charlotte Bronte is a saga of collision of human development in the shape of industrial establishment and war with the natural environment that results into natural calamities like failing of crops, famine along with the disruption of human values. Here the novelist has also raised a strong voice to preserve nature that is endangered by industrialization.

Further, it has been scrutinized that in her third novel *Villette* also Bronte carries forward the theme of nature culture clash but with a difference. In this novel the clash is not at a physical level but the mind of protagonist Lucy Snowe becomes the site of clash. She longs to live in the city of London but is forced to leave it. As she longs for city life she cannot find integration with nature. She lives in town of Villette away from the physical touch of soothing wilderness. She prefers cultural sphere so she rarely comes in contact of nature. This material or cultural life cannot give her satisfaction and she suffers internal traumas. She also suffers ill health. By depicting Lucy’s dilemma Bronte once again tries to present nature culture clash where woman protagonist suffers because of cultural onslaught on her mind. Moreover, the novelist warns that a life cut off from nature is a materialistic life which in itself cannot provide total satisfaction.

An in depth analysis of fiction of contemporary novelist Susan Hill's also proves the supposed fact that the writer is not unresponsive to the ecological problems of the present world. She may not be a propagandist but she has thrown ample light upon current environmental problems. In *I'm the King of the Castle* nature and culture clash is visible where men prefer sophisticated and cultured life in city and go on to destroy nature in order to satisfy their whims. Hill portrays how culture has engulfed the village Derne and it is left deserted as people have been drawn towards life in city. She discerns how all the Hoopers, from first Hooper to present Mr. Joseph Hooper have succumbed to cultural onslaught of modernity. All of them try to live a life full of luxury at Warings. Moreover, Hill has also presented the effect of culture upon human psyche through the characters of child Edmund Hooper and child Charles Kingshaw. In this novel the relationship between Edmund and Kingshaw presents nature culture clash at a metaphorical level as it is a clash of sophistication versus wilderness. Edmund, inspired from all the sophistication of Hoopers, represents culture while innocent Kingshaw stands for nature. He constantly tries to attack Kingshaw and ultimately tired of endless bullying by Edmund, Kingshaw drowns himself in a stream and Edmund is shown triumphant. It is a metaphorical conquest of sophisticated culture over wilderness where the latter is seen destroyed.

Further, nature culture dualism is again foregrounded by Hill in *The Woman in Black*. Here, once again preference is given to the urban space upon the rural one. She has drawn that urbanisation has disconnected man from nature. City culture has troubled the mind set up of the protagonist Kipps who has a sense of being a metropolitan resident. He feels a great relief when he gets back to humdrum at Crythin. Through his "burst of relief" Hill presents modern men's preferences for culture. Here human civilization seems to overshadow the natural domain. The novelist has brought to fore the squalor and the pollution in the metropolitan city London, which has made the atmosphere very stifling. In spite of being harmful for both mind and body it has become an unavoidable part of human life and none stands against it.

It has been discerned that Susan Hill has portrayed link between anthropocentrism and environmental destruction in *In the Spring Time of the Year*. The novel reminds of the ancient times when hunter gatherer had started clearing of woods. In this novel man's attitude of dominance and oppression brings about

ecocide i.e. destruction of vast expanse of natural spaces because of deforestation. In this novel clash also comes to fore when man crosses nature's territory and tries to overpower it for his multiple use. Knowingly or unknowingly, Susan Hill has tried to highlight the callous attitude of humans towards animals through Jo. Rydal, Potter, Ben as well as Jo remind that not only our past has been brutal but the present is even more dangerous. Hunter gatherer destroyed nature for food and shelter but now when there is enough food and more than sufficient means for survival yet man is clearing the forest for selfish gains and carrying on hunting for fun. Hill has depicted that human society ceases to be human and has violently created havoc on the non-humans.

Moreover, nature culture clash has also been noticed in her another novel *The Beacon*. Protagonist May and her brother Frank suffer an inner dual where culture tries to overpower their mind but cannot sustain for a long time. Both of them go to London for higher studies and a career in journalism respectively. They cannot stand by their decision and return to their homeland Beacon. The unhealthy atmosphere of the polluted city life stifles them and leaving behind the materialistic life they return to their countryside home, the Beacon to lead a peaceful life in the lap of nature. May not only comes across the artificialities of the built up environment of the urban life but she also faces the terrors of the increasing mechanization. Hill also shows the attack of culture in the form of mechanization even in remote areas which throws a threat to traditional way of living.

The comprehensive analysis of the fiction of Bronte and Hill establishes them as true ecocritics for their concern with environmental issues. They depict that man's language of desire and use has prepared the earth for irreparable sufferings. The stories portray anthropocentric behaviour of men and address the issues of ecological destruction brought about by human interventions. They highlight how men's endless wish to conquer nature has invited numerous attacks on nature which in turn has resulted into great ecological destruction. Onslaught of culture in the name of modernization, mechanization or urbanization has resulted in the dilapidation of nature which has made the earth a less inhabitable planet. Moreover, nature culture clash has not only harmed nature but human nature as well.

However, like ecocritics both the novelists consider earth as a reacting living being. In their fiction nature is not passive and works as a mitigating body which takes its toll if attacked greedily. It thrusts its justice if man has crossed his limit in natural or social arena. In *Jane Eyre* Mr. Rochester has been retaliated by nature for its overuse. He abuses women and servant under his control. In the end of the novel it is depicted that Bertha who is a metaphor for earth sets Thornfield Hall at fire and ends Rochester's tyranny and dominance. She avenges him because of his overuse of land and subjugation of women and turns his mansion into a blackened ruin. She destroys her exploiter, harasser and torturer leaving him disabled, blind and handicapped.

In *Shirley* also Charlotte Bronte refers to rage and reprisal of nature over human activity of possession for industrialization and imposed war. Polluted atmosphere which is "dusty" and "arid" enrages nature and it lets the disease to spread rapidly in Yorkshire. Epidemic breaks and most of the characters fall ill. They are visited by hazardous diseases which remains unidentified and uncured. Caroline, Louis Moore and Shirley fall ill one by one. Yorkshire people endure immense hardships because they fail to decipher the workings and warnings of nature. Furious earth makes people face bad harvest, famine, hunger and deprivation. There is erosion of human values and loss of goodwill and brotherhood. Robert is the culprit of both men and nature so he cannot remain unpunished. He is shot by an enraged worker and is seriously injured.

Falling in line with Rochester and Robert, Paul in *Villette* too is penalized for his colonial attitude toward earth and women. He torments Lucy and never tells what he possesses and what he does. Enraged nature proves to be a mighty being and punishes Paul for his oppressive attitude. When his sail is near the coast, nature becomes violent. There is a feral storm and Paul is supposed dead.

It is observed that nature metaphorically evens the score in *The Woman in Black* by the contemporary Susan Hill. Spectral Jennet's mission of revenge is welcomed by nature. Her wasted face is a metaphor for man's misdeeds. At Eel Marsh house Arthur Kipps is treated as an intruder. A man representing culture, interloping in the territory of nature, is never pardoned and whenever he is in trouble, nature nowhere helps him. At the end of the novel the woman in deepest mourning cloth, at once appears, her skirt rustles as if to come in the path of pony and the cart collides against a tree trunk. Mr. Kipps loses his wife Stella and his

child Joseph. The woman in black shows her fury and retaliation and symbolically avenges Kipps in the cruelest way. The vengeance of earth is found to be very harsh in Susan Hill's novel *In the Spring Time of the Year*. Nature avenges protagonist Ruth's husband Ben who works in Rydal woods. He has taken to clearing the woods and constantly cuts trees. He too becomes the victim of nature's fury. A tree falls upon him and it crushes him. Nature does not give him time for any move and he is killed by earth's vengeance. There is no room for forgiveness. Earth takes its vengeance and makes society learn a lesson.

It is distinguished that Bronte's presentation of reckoning of earth is harsh but not as vigorous as that of Hill's. Bronte's nature shows "mercy amidst judgement" while Hill's nature never pardons. Charlotte Bronte was writing at a time when nature was sullied but not so much as it is in the present times. In Bronte's age as modernization has just begun - the sully and destruction of nature has just started, there was still a ray of hope for coexistence of nature and culture. So in her novels nature avenges but shows some mercy also towards her harsh anthropocentric oppressors like Rochester and Robert and her stories proceed towards happy end. But in the present times as the sully and destruction of nature has crossed its utmost limit the apocalyptic danger looms large. Hence, in Hill's fiction nature avenges and there are no signs of mercy. It is differentiated that Charlotte warns but she doesn't disturb utopia but Susan Hill does so. *Jane Eyre's* nature spares man while *Jennet* or *The Woman in Black*, symbolic of earth severely punishes them. In Bronte's *Shirley* nature pardons Robert but in Hill's *In the Spring Time of the Year* it avenges Ben and takes what has been taken from her. Hill's nature is not flexible and lenient like that of Bronte's. It is stubborn and adamant until its revenge is over. Susan Hill clearly indicates that nature cannot remain unnoticed. She categorically reinforces that dystopia is not impossible rather it is at hand. Nature's soothing presence is overused so consequent apocalypticism is the destiny waiting for its spoilers.

This study projects that by depicting the clash of nature and culture, as well as the environmental justice and consequent doom of humanity both the novelists try to establish the fact that in nature there exists a complex interrelationship among organisms to keep up a certain balance within an ecosystem. This interrelationship is marred by anthropocentrism whereby man separates himself from nature by subordinating and conquering it. Human intervention causes a

threat to the natural world including both the human as well as the nonhuman. His cultural activity has brought war and famine in history as evidenced in these novels. An in-depth analysis of Bronte's and Hill's fiction has demonstrated that crossing the line is strongly revolted by nature. Only possession cannot work and it invites unhappy reactions of the earth. Nature makes ecological balance by these activities of life and death. Human beings see only the necessity of life but nature sees necessity of both, life and death. One cannot exist without the other. Hence, like a true ecocritic both the writers argue that mutual co-existence is not only a necessity but a compulsion also.

This research further exposes that by showing nature's retaliation both the novelists ardently prophesize the ecocritical truth that in spite of all his mastery, man cannot change the fact that he is not "the lord of creation". He has no right to dehumanize or overuse nature. He needs a therapy to acquaint himself with the truth that he is as important as other species are in the scheme of the universe. He has to understand that the non human world is also an inherent part of our ecosystem and it also has a right to live. It will be better if he tries to use his rationale for the sustenance of the cosmos otherwise the dooms day is not far away which will acknowledge his trivialness. The texts under study compel to think that man's achievements stand nowhere if apocalypse is truly realized. Like Satan he cannot wage a war against nature, and if he dares to he is bound to 'fall' from his grace.

Further, this ecological study proves the supposition that the fiction of both Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill presents an inextricable link between women and nature. According to ecofeminist Sherry Ortner and Vera Norwood women are depicted as closer to nature while patriarchy is detached from nature. It is observed that women protagonists of Bronte strongly correspond to nature. They celebrate their joy and sorrows with nature. Nature appears to be their best refuge even in the adverse situation of their lives. The psyche of Jane Eyre, Shirley, Caroline and Lucy is inextricably linked and influenced by the turns of weather. They consider nature as the mother and the guide of their soul. They feel the presence of god in different manifestations of nature. *Jane Eyre* has a Wordsworthian attitude towards nature as she finds nature to be omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. In moments of her repose she goes in "trance". Nature communicates with her conscience when her mind and senses are in a state of tranquility and this

communication glorifies her being. Above all Jane realizes her true self in the serene wilderness. In *Shirley* Caroline is also linked with nature. Jubilant earth sends happiness to Shirley also. She says that nature's "delight" is the "dower of Nature" to her child. In *Villette* Lucy's loneliness is intensified by the uneven climate of her physical surroundings and she never feels free and healthy. It can be safely concluded that in Bronte's fiction the tremendous power of the atmosphere bears an important presence on her female characters. Moreover, in her fiction the external landscape and the corresponding atmosphere express the alienation, loneliness, insanity and neurosis of her heroines.

It is discerned that women-nature proximity is also true for Susan Hill. Her heroines move away from humanity but they consider themselves allied to nature. The mental as well as the physical health of her protagonists is strongly connected to nature while males are unaware and unmindful for nature. Women cannot stay away from nature. This alliance makes them comprehend the crucial truths of life which matures their minds. In *the Spring Time of the Year* after the death of her husband, protagonist Ruth at once turns towards nature, sea, woods and flowers which become her most cherished relievers and hiding places. Her close proximity with nature sustains her. If Bronte's Jane finds her true self in nature, Hill's Ruth finds truth of life and of death in nature. In *The Beacon* May's life conveys the message to humanity that an artificial life is difficult to live. It is full of terrors and tensions while natural life is peaceful and worth living. It conveys the truth that human beings are not in a position to stay away from nature however intelligent they may pose to be. However, the novelists give the message that life in harmony with nature is a bliss.

The probe into women nature association has brought to fore the fact that there are remarkable differences in the perception and interpretation of nature in the novels of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill. In contrast to Victorian Bronte, contemporary Hill nowhere depicts nature as mother figure. Susan Hill's idea does not correspond to Bronte in the presentation of nature as a sublime power or Nature as an agency which provides gifts and joy to mankind. Hill's women protagonists do not show bond of consciousness with nature as those of Bronte. The concept of nature as mother earth, guide and guardian of the soul are entirely missing. Though May in *The Beacon* loves her home yet she is unable to connect like Jane Eyre. Even Ruth in *In the Spring Time of the Year* spends time with

nature but she does not accept nature as her teacher or guide to her soul. Though company of nature proves a healer for Hill's women protagonists but it loses its designation as mother. A probe into Susan Hill's novels proves that sublime faith in nature has been smashed in the contemporary world. Nature ceases to be sacred as deity. Though Hill's women are closely connected to nature yet their experience of nature is not a fruitful or an enlivening spiritual endeavour like Bronte.

Further, it is divulged in this study that Bronte and Hill bestow their women protagonists with an ecological mind setup and they seem worried for the loss of natural landscape. Their male characters show indifferent, anthropocentric and androcentric behaviour whereas females show an attitude of love and compassion towards nature. They have an innate zeal to safeguard the natural world. They make a heed for a life of mutual coexistence. Bronte's Jane, Caroline and Shirley take steps for social harmony. Hill's May serves her parents and Ruth works for the social well being. Hill's protagonists Ruth and May also seek happiness in the care of animals. Both the novelists project that women are more insightful towards the natural world as well as the human world in comparison to males.

Moreover, an exploration of their fiction highlights that by associating women's psyche with nature, the novelists show that all lives are interconnected and separation is not possible. This ecofeminist evaluation unfurls that by making women more conscious about environmental hazards and preservation both the novelists try to establish a truth that society must be sensitive to the planet. Like women men should also understand the value of the non human world and must try to ascertain integrity of lives. Natural boon has been utilized and it is high time when everyone should think and strive to make this planet a sustainable place.

The study further proves the supposition that the fiction of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill is replete with ecofeminist view that androcentric and anthropocentric man has learnt the moral that he is the master of both, the earth as well as women and has every right to carry on their degradation and dehumanization. Bronte successfully depicts the endangered earth and female subordination in the orthodox Victorian society. By destroying nature man destroys women's space. *Jane Eyre* projects that Rochester masters and dominates nature and women to satisfy his selfish gains. In *Shirley* Robert is responsible for female's subordination and nature's devastation. In *Villette* Paul is also a tyrant like Robert and Rochester. These novels project that androcentric society has fixed

specific occupations for women like that of governess, teachers or housekeepers. They are not given any other job outside home. Cruel patriarchy snatches their every right to work unreservedly and equally.

However, in spite of oppressive societal structure Bronte's maturing heroines assert their freedom. After Rochester had deceived Jane, she leaves him in spite of all his arguments and efforts. Jane thrusts her freedom once again when she refuses to marry St. John River and returns to Rochester only when she has ample money. She comes back not because she is weak but she thinks it lawful and right. In *Shirley* through Shirley's assertive character Bronte has tried to present the emerging emancipated woman who is capable of handling any profession. She declines proposal of marriage from Robert Moore and Sir Philip Nunnely and marries Louise Moore only when she herself desires to get married. Jane Eyre as well as Shirley show a capacity for liberated speculation and invoke a change in the patriarchal domain. They dare to desire and show strength of character to fulfill the same. The novelist tries to reveal that the once physically, socially and economically inferior females are no longer under any overbearing or patriarchal figure nor are they obliged to submit to anyone.

It has been unveiled in the study of Susan Hill's novel that the exploitation of woman and nature that has begun long before continues unabated in the present times also. Men try to neglect welfare of both nature and women. They try to exploit women and nature for social status, profit or for sport. They find subtle ground to commodify and exploit both nature and women. The novel *I'm the King of the Castle* shows that first Hooper and senior Hooper believe in both anthropocentrism and androcentrism. Joseph targets Helena's body as well as labour for exploitation. It is seen in *The Woman in Black* that in androcentric and patriarchal society none take notice of nature or women. The novel projects that the harassment of Jennet has forced her to lose her body, voice and personality. She becomes malevolent, not as woman but as ghost. In the novel *In the Spring Time of the Year* anthropocentric society exploit nature as well as woman. Ben, Jo and Potter all exploit nature. Women and nature face maltreatment in *The Beacon* at the hands of men. When war is there women and nature are exploited and dehumanized.

Besides, it has been discerned in this study that women in Susan Hill's novels are also denied career outside the household. All important professions and

assignments are reserved for men. All of the women in *The Woman in Black* including Stella, Esme, Mr. Daily's wife and Mr. Jerome's wife are house wives and stick to household duties. They do child bearing and rearing at home. Mrs. Helena Kingshaw in *I'm the King of the Castle* has to take care of two difficult children like Kingshaw and Edmund. Mr. Hooper shrewdly hires her as housekeeper. So women in Susan Hill's novel are holding the house for men or are keepers for them.

In spite of all this harassment and discrimination Hill's women like Bronte's assert their freedom. The ghost of Jenet punishes androcentric society for its misdeeds. She retaliates against oppressive society and takes a form which is out of the control of man's domain. Ben's death without any doubt frees Ruth from her limited existence and provides opportunity to experience the outer world. She comes to know for the first time that there may be a life without a male. Unlike Bronte, Hill's May in *The Beacon* shows that marriage is not the ultimate goal of woman's life. Hill's portrayal of her female protagonists staying independently without any male sustenance shows women's assertion in a patriarchal world. Thus the author tries to subvert the established equation of dominance and submission between men and women. They can decide for themselves and break the hegemonic norms of patriarchal structure.

Thus, their fiction not only portrays interrelatedness of women and nature but also portrays the victimized status of women along with nature in the so called advanced patriarchal world. Their novels are instrumental in understanding how the treatment of both women and the physical natural environment results from overarching, patriarchal, hegemonic value system. Moreover, their fiction projects the ecofeminist view that just as the earth remains unconquerable by the anthropocentrics, so women also cannot be subjugated by the androcentrics. Through their novels the writers seem to present an urge to look beyond the dualistic thinking and to stop subjugating women and nature because their subordination is neither universal nor natural.

This study initiates that by representing exploitation of earth and woman simultaneously, both the novelists urge for a radical change. They show that exploitation of nature and woman runs parallel and it can be stopped simultaneously. Freedom of one is impossible without freeing the other. Dominion upon nature can be reversed if dominion upon woman can be broken. It is desirable

to first stop the dominion over women and treat women as equal to man as she has equal powers. When “he” can reign with his power “she” can rebel with hers. They should make sure that their voices must be heard and acted upon. Neither women nor nature is weak and they can shake anthropocentric cum androcentric structures. Women who constitute half of the population and nature which is provider of gifts cannot be ignored, dehumanized, sullied or exploited crudely and insensitively. Patriarchal powers have to regret for what they have done.

Further ahead the research subtly unearths the aesthetics of the narrative art of Charlotte Bronte’s and Susan Hill’s fiction. It is observed that their creative process is deeply rooted in ecology. Environment in these novels is the projection of their vision of nature. It has been observed that geographical settings have direct bearing on the theme, plot, character and action in their novels. The natural and the social community come together and influence each other reciprocally in their novels. Change of places gives momentum to the storyline of these writers. Study of their plots discloses that their physical settings are interrelated with specific imagery of specific place. Imagery goes in the making of landscapes in novel which has direct influence on the actions of the characters. The action of characters goes into the making of plot and that help in fostering the theme forward. Bronte and Hill create a matrix of images in their fiction which pictures human as well as non human world. Natural images sit deep in their mind which comes out in the creative process and confirm their relation with ecology.

Besides giving importance to ecology in the framing of plot and theme of their fiction both the writers have given utmost importance to the patterns of season in putting forward their point of view. It has become clear that patterns of season confirm Charlotte Bronte’s and Susan Hill’s faith in the design of nature. Narrative process is interlinked with the seasonal influx of surrounding nature. It is noticed that in their fiction most of the time spring brings happiness and health, while autumn brings miseries, diseases, death or separation. Winter is for frozen and awesome situations while summer is kept open for introducing thrill in relations among characters. Their narratives heavily draw on weather and seasons. Changing seasons provide a move to a narrative and imparts flow to it while weather predicts future of inhabitants in case of Bronte while it serves as precursor to Susan Hill. By introducing this seasonal plan Susan Hill and Charlotte Bronte conveys the idea that human life closely corresponds to the patterns of nature. It is

full of vibrant colours like nature. The seasons add variety to human life. Life suffers from its own summers and winters. As arrival and departure of seasons influence earth in the plan of nature, in the same way varying flavour of year imparts flow to the narrative of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill. It has been observed that environment is not only a physical and psychological need but it is also needed by the creative writers for the creation of their literature.

An analysis of the narrative art of these writers has shown that for Bronte setting works as an agent of change for the realization of the plot as it did for Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Her novels end happily with pacified settings which pave the way for the climax of the plots whereas Susan Hill is unconventional and her plots are doomed to end in pessimism even if the setting changes. Her novels do not take U turn after the characters are exposed to wild setting. Bronte's Robert and Rochester are slightly changed with the change in their settings but predicament of Kingshaw and Kipps remains the same before and after the change in settings.

It is analyzed in this study that fiction can be an effective tool in portraying the transformation of a society. It is observed that modernization and globalization has changed the physical makeover of a place as well as the thought and lifestyle of people. There is a lot of difference in the description of the city of London by Bronte's Lucy and Hill's May. Lucy finds that London has "rush" but May finds it has "terrifying melee" and is smoke ridden. The difference in perception of Lucy and May provides sufficient proof to visualize the environmental degradation in a span of hundred years of human advancement. Effects of globalization are more profound in Hill's novels. Bronte depicts simple life away from the advanced means of communication as well as convenience in the Victorian society whereas Hill's characters enjoy wider world because of modern gadgets in the contemporary society. So it has been discerned that fiction can serve the purpose of presenting modernization of society and subsequent environmental degradation in this race.

This study also unearths that in Hill's novel traditional lifestyle has come under the attack of modernization. Characters like Kipps, Frank and all the Hoopers in Hill's novels show preference for the city life. Their preference for culture shows that in spite of all environmental talks and globalized debates the present world is still more prone to urbanization which will be more detrimental to

the traditional way of living. Strokes of culture upon nature are going to increase. Hence, through this study an attempt has been made to acquaint people that no doubt ecocriticism has raised this pertinent issue of ecological problems but still genuine human efforts are required along with literary efforts to save our mother earth. The Glitter of metropolitan cities has dazzled the mind's eye of the present generation but they need a green spectacle to watch the world with.

Hence, in the light of this comprehensive analysis Bronte and Susan Hill can be safely adjudged as the eco-conscious writers because their fiction has been instrumental in raising environmental consciousness. The characters and the settings in Charlotte Bronte's and Susan Hill's works have meaning beyond the context of the fiction itself, as they help us gain a clear understanding of some aspects of human as well as natural life. Both the writers ardently seem to prophesize that no doubt variety exists in the scheme of nature but man has no right to destruct or reduce it for his personal gains. Like true ecocritics they believe that human beings are mere part of this wide existence and not the masters to dominate over it.

To conclude, this study has a humanistic approach. Today, when we are placed in an increasing urban world the critical analysis of these two Eco conscious writers will play a vital role in teaching us to value the natural world. It will compel us to focus on the tenets of Indian philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* that treats the whole earth as a family and lays emphasis on mutual coexistence. Definitely man has to redirect himself for deciding the aims of his life. He has to understand that nature really exists and it exists mightily. Moreover, this study also urges to understand the fact that development and modernization can make life convenient but they cannot provide the basic needs of life. If apocalypse looms large over man's life because of his anthropocentric duplicity then he cannot sustain himself for a long time. He has to understand that whatever is Man-made is always secondary and the supremacy of nature remains unchallenged and invincible. As a final say it can be categorically stated that the fiction of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill can be treated as ecocritical texts as they are deeply rooted in ecocritical assumptions and play a powerful role in disseminating these tenets for a sustainable life in today's crisis driven world.

Finally, for the future researchers it can be suggested that as this study presents the interface between ecology and literature of writers belonging to two

different eras it will open up avenues for more such comparative studies between other eco conscious writers. This ecocritical study is in fiction so it can inspire similar efforts in different genres of literature. This study has unveiled that modernization is changing the lifestyle and preferences of human society so further research can be taken up to know that how the change in lifestyle affects nature and how it is reflected in literature.

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Summary

In the present times of grave ecological crisis to explore green consciousness in creative works has become a very crucial and appealing field in the world of literary criticism. In order to address the issues of endangered environment literary critics have come to occupy the forefront and have tried to analyze how the association between the natural and the human world has been represented by the writers in their works. Through these studies ecocritics have tried to raise issues and create awareness among its readers towards current environmental problems. Such studies have also provided opportunities to link with nature in addition to contribute something significant towards the protection of our Mother Earth. With this view the present research has been conducted on the topic: **Reading of Charlotte Bronte's and Susan Hill's Fiction: An Ecocritical Approach.**

It is a universal truth that the grand design of nature as well as the human society is always in a state of flux. It has always been an interesting task to examine, notice and acknowledge these changes. Recently, a paradigm shift has been observed in the field of contemporary literary studies towards ecological studies. A new branch of vital literary theory namely Ecocriticism has emerged as a modern ecological literary study. It has gained momentum as a result of the disturbing ecological changes and ensuing consciousness that the planet earth is in danger and there is an urgent need to safeguard it. In an ecocritical analysis of any literary work the critics not only focus upon the inextricable bond between the human and the physical world but also emphasize upon the destruction caused to nature by the changes which have taken place in the modern world for most of which man is directly responsible. Ecocritics advocate biocentrism and ecocentrism as opposed to anthropocentrism and egocentrism.

In tune with ecocriticism, movements of women of diverse race and classes who were associated on issues like environmental hazards as well as gender, race and class gave impetus to activities, theory and discussion which established the field of ecofeminism. Ecofeminists focus on the interconnectedness of woman and nature. They argue that there are important connections between the domination and oppression of women and domination and exploitation of nature because of

patriarchal methods and attitudes. They also fight against anthropocentrism and androcentrism. At present ecocriticism and ecofeminism are firmly established critical fields amidst feminist, postcolonial and deconstruction theory.

The present study is aimed at finding out the environmental issues in the fiction of the Victorian novelist Charlotte Bronte and the Contemporary novelist Susan Hill. Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853) and Susan Hill's *I'm the King of the Castle* (1970), *In the Spring Time of the Year* (1974), *The Woman in Black* (1983) and *The Beacon* (2008) have been taken up for this study. As this study explores the two writers of different eras to examine how the presentation of nature has been taken up more than one hundred years ago and in the contemporary milieu so it is felt that it will be an enlightening effort in the arena of ecocritical studies.

The main objectives of this research have been to study the chief tenets of ecocriticism and ecofeminism which forms the theoretical background of this study. It focuses on man- nature - culture relationship, anthropocentric attitude of man toward nature and nature's retribution. It also examines man- woman- nature relationship and simultaneous exploitation of women and nature. It also explores the aesthetics of the narrative art of the writers under study. Finally it compares the attitudes of the writers towards nature and draws conclusions locating their similarities and dissimilarities.

The present study is divided into following chapters:

Chapter I Conceptual Framework : This chapter contains introduction, objectives and hypotheses of this study. It acknowledges universe of research and research methodology. It also has survey of the related literature, importance of the present study and outline of the chapters.

Chapter II Ecocriticism: Roots and Definitions: This chapter contains roots and definitions of ecocriticism and ecofeminism. It also acquaints with the need and applicability of ecological criticism.

Chapter III Man - Nature - Culture: This chapter deals with nature culture clash. It explores anthropocentric attitude of men towards nature and retribution of nature for its invincible spirit. It also throws light on the way the writers try to strike a balance of nature and culture in their novels.

Chapter IV Man - Woman - Nature: This chapter explores ecofeminist association of nature and woman. It also exposes simultaneous exploitation of nature and woman by androcentric cum patriarchal world.

Chapter V Aesthetics of Eco Narratives: This chapter focuses on the role of ecology in the making of the fiction of the writers under study. It focuses on the influence of geographical places and the influx of seasons in the development of the plot and the themes of these writers.

Conclusion contains the findings of this research as well as the suggestions.

This research is descriptive cum comparative so a close textual study of the selected novels of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill has been conducted. The strategy of close and critical perusal of both, the texts as well as the available criticism, has been employed as the main research tool to highlight the main arguments of the study.

The first two chapters contain the frame work and theories related to present study. The details of which are given above in chapterization scheme. In the third chapter **Man - Nature - Culture** relations have been explored. It is illustrated that the concept of organic universe and the “Great Chain of Being” was replaced in 16th and 17th century by the modern knowledge systems which gave central position to human reason. Anthropocentrism became prevalent posing threat to nature which created a clash between man and nature. Ecocritics bring out this clash whether it is evident or hidden in the texts. Through textual analysis of Charlotte Bronte’s and Susan Hill’s fiction this nature culture clash is brought to surface.

Though, at first glance, Charlotte’s fiction may not be considered as rich sites of ecological discourse, as overtly it does not deal with the issues of environment but a close and comprehensive analysis of her novels reveals the Victorian perception and interpretation of nature. It is divulged in this study that in Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* the portrayal of nature and culture clash is not direct. However, through protagonist Jane’s journey to five different places and her changing perception and interpretation of varying natural world, the novelist has tried to redefine human relationship with the non-human world. Wilderness of rural landscape is contrasted with artificial landscapes of cultured spaces like gardens and orchards. On the one hand Jane is deceived and agonized on civilized spots like Gateshead, Lowood and Thornfield, on the other hand she blooms in the

wilderness of Moor land and Ferndean. In this novel the transformation of Jane's personality and her attainment of maturity speak for nature culture clash.

It is perceived that in the second novel *Shirley*, Charlotte Bronte has explicitly depicted nature and culture dualism. Dream of Robert Moor to re-establish mill and to apply machines becomes reason of natural as well as societal clash between workers and mill owners. The natural charm and peace of the valley of Yorkshire is disturbed by industrialization. Bronte keeps Napoleonic war in the background of the novel which worsens nature culture crisis. In fact this novel is a saga of collision of human development in the shape of industrial establishment and war along with natural environment which results into calamities like failing of crops the famine and disruption of human values.

It has been scrutinized that in her third novel *Villette*, Bronte carries forward the theme of nature culture clash not at a physical level but persona of protagonist Lucy Snowe becomes the site of clash. She desires life in city of London but she is forced to leave it. She lives in town of Villette away from the physical touch of soothing wilderness. She prefers cultural sphere so she rarely comes in contact of nature. This material or cultural life does not give her satisfaction and she suffers internal traumas and ill health. By depicting this clash Bronte again tries to present nature culture clash where women protagonist is suffering because of cultural onslaught on her persona. In her fiction Bronte makes an honest and sincere attempt to portray the shifting human relationships with nature in the Victorian age.

An in depth analysis of the fiction of the contemporary novelist Susan Hill has also proved the supposed fact that the writer is not unresponsive to the ecological problems of the present world. In *I'm the King of the Castle* nature and culture clash is visible where men prefer sophisticated and cultured life in city. Hill comments that how culture has engulfed the village Derne and it is left deserted as people have been drawn towards life in city. She portrays how from first Hooper to present Mr. Joseph succumbs to the cultural onslaught of modernity. In this novel the relationship between Edmund and Kingshaw presents nature culture clash at a metaphorical level as it is a clash of sophistication versus wilderness. Further, nature culture dualism in *The Woman in Black* has been depicted by Hill where preference is given to the urban space upon the rural one. Kipps feels a great relief when he gets back to humdrum at Crythin. Through his "burst of relief" Hill

presents modern men's preferences for culture. The novelist has brought to fore the squalor and the pollution in the metropolitan city London, which has made the atmosphere very stifling.

It has been discerned that Susan Hill has portrayed link between anthropocentrism and environmental destruction in *In the Spring Time of the Year*. In this novel, man's attitude of dominance and oppression brings about ecocide i.e. destruction of vast expanse of natural spaces because of deforestation. Susan Hill has tried to highlight the violence of humans towards animals through Jo. Rydal, Potter, Ben as well as Jo remind that not only our past has been brutal but the present is even more dangerous. Hill has depicted that human society ceases to be human and has violently created havoc on the non-humans. Moreover, nature culture clash has also been noticed in her another novel *The Beacon*. Protagonist May and her brother Frank suffer an inner dual where culture tries to overpower their persona but cannot sustain for a long time. The unhealthy atmosphere of the polluted city life stifles them and leaving behind the materialistic life they return to their countryside home, the Beacon to lead a peaceful life in the lap of nature. May not only comes across the artificialities of the built up environment of the urban life but she also faces the terrors of the increasing mechanization. Hill also shows the attack of culture in the form of mechanization even in remote areas which throws a threat to traditional way of living. The novel has a message that human beings may be drawn towards culture but any alienation is sure to cause a disturbance in life.

The comprehensive analysis of the fiction of Bronte and Hill establishes them as true ecocritics for their concern with environmental issues. The stories portray anthropocentric behaviour of men and address the issues of ecological destruction brought about by human interventions. They highlight how men's endless wish to conquer nature has invited numerous attacks on nature which in turn has resulted into great ecological destruction. Onslaught of culture in the name of modernization, mechanization or urbanization has resulted in the dilapidation of nature which has made the earth a less inhabitable planet. Moreover, nature culture clash has not only harmed nature but human nature as well.

However, like ecocritics both the novelists consider earth as a reacting living being. In their fiction nature is not passive and works as a mitigating body which takes its toll if attacked greedily. In *Jane Eyre* Mr. Rochester has been

retaliated by Bertha who is a metaphor for earth. She sets Thornfield Hall at fire and ends Rochester's tyranny and dominance. She avenges him because of his overuse of land and subjugation of women and turns his mansion into a blackened ruin. She destroys her exploiter, harasser and torturer leaving him disabled, blind and handicapped. In *Shirley* also Charlotte Bronte refers to rage and reprisal of nature over human activity of possession for industrialization and imposed war. Polluted atmosphere which is "dusty" and "arid" enrages nature and it lets the disease to spread rapidly in Yorkshire. Caroline, Louis Moore and Shirley fall ill one by one. Yorkshire people endure immense hardships because they fail to decipher the workings and warnings of nature. Furious earth makes people face bad harvest, famine, hunger and deprivation. Robert is the culprit of both men and nature so he cannot remain unpunished. He is shot by an enraged worker and is seriously injured. Falling in line with Rochester and Robert, Paul in *Villette* too is penalized for his colonial attitude toward earth and women. He torments Lucy and never tells what he possesses and what he does. Enraged nature proves to be a mighty being and punishes Paul for his oppressive attitude. When his sail is near the coast, nature becomes violent. There is a feral storm and Paul is supposed dead.

It is observed that nature metaphorically evens the score in *The Woman in Black* by the contemporary Susan Hill. A man like Kipps, representing culture, interloping in the territory of nature cannot be pardoned. At the end of the novel the woman in deepest mourning cloth, at once appears, her skirt rustles as if to come in the path of pony and the cart collides against a tree trunk. Mr. Kipps loses his wife Stella and his child Joseph. The woman in black shows her fury and retaliation and symbolically avenges Kipps in the most cruel way. In the novel *In the Spring Time of the Year* Nature avenges against protagonist Ruth's husband Ben. He cuts trees constantly and nature punishes him for his violent attitude. A tree falls upon him and it crushes him and it does not give him time for any move. He is killed by earth's vengeance and it makes society learn a lesson.

It is distinguished that Bronte's presentation of reckoning of earth is harsh but not as vigorous as that of Hill's. Bronte's nature shows "mercy amidst judgement" while Hill's nature never pardons. Charlotte Bronte was writing at a time when nature was sullied but not in the worst way as it is in the present times. In Bronte's age as modernization has just begun - the sullyng and destruction of nature has just started, there was still a ray of hope for coexistence of nature and

culture. So in her novels nature avenges but shows some mercy also towards her harsh anthropocentric oppressors like Rochester and Robert and her stories proceed towards happy end. On the contrary in the present times the sullyng and destruction of nature has reached its zenith. Hence, in Hill's fiction nature avenges and there are no signs of mercy and the danger of apocalypse looms large. It is distinguished that Bronte warns but she does not disturb utopia but Hill does so. Hill's Kipps and Ben are severely avenged. Hill's nature is not flexible and lenient like that of Bronte's. She categorically reinforces that dystopia is not impossible rather it is at hand. Nature's soothing presence is overused so consequent apocalypticism is the destiny waiting for its spoilers.

This study projects that by depicting the clash of nature and culture, as well as the environmental justice and consequent doom of humanity both the novelists try to establish the fact that in nature there exists a complex interrelationship among organisms to keep up a certain balance within an ecosystem. This interrelationship is marred by anthropocentrism whereby man separates himself from nature by subordinating and conquering it. Human intervention causes a threat to the natural world including both the human as well as the nonhuman. His cultural activity has brought war and famine in history as evidenced in these novels. An in-depth analysis of Bronte's and Hill's fiction has demonstrated that crossing the line is strongly revolted by nature. Only possession cannot work and it invites unhappy reactions of the earth. Human beings see only the necessity of life but nature sees necessity of both, life and death. One cannot exist without the other and nature makes ecological balance by these activities. Hence, like a true ecocritic both the writers argue that mutual co-existence is not only a necessity but a compulsion also. By trying to become the lord of the creation man is inviting the rage of the earth which he is not capable to endure. With his anthropocentric duplicity he is proceeding towards the unanimous suicide of the human as well as the non human.

In the fourth chapter **Man - Woman - Nature** relationship has been analyzed from the angle of ecofeminism. Ecofeminists believe that woman nature identification or bonding is not new rather it has been defined and redefined in the works of literature. They believe that women are closer to nature and they are conscious of their surroundings than the men, so ecofeminists look for woman nature association in the texts.

Further, this ecological study proves that the fiction of both Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill presents an inextricable link between women and nature. It is observed that women protagonists of Bronte strongly correspond to nature. They celebrate their joy with nature. Nature appears to be their best refuge even in the adverse situation of their lives. The psyche of Jane Eyre, Shirley, Caroline and Lucy is inextricably linked and influenced by the turns of weather. They consider nature as the mother and the guide of their soul. They feel the presence of god in different manifestations of nature. *Jane Eyre* has a Wordsworthian attitude towards nature as she finds nature to be omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. In moments of her repose she goes in “trance”. Nature communicates with her conscience when her mind and senses are in a state of tranquility and this communication glorifies her being. Above all Jane finds her true self in the serene wilderness. In *Shirley* Caroline is also linked with nature. Jubilant earth sends happiness to Shirley also. She believes that “delight” is the “dower of Nature” to her child. In *Villette* Lucy’s loneliness is intensified by the uneven climate of her physical surroundings and she never feels free and healthy. It can be safely concluded that in Bronte’s fiction the tremendous power of the atmosphere bears an important presence on her female characters. Moreover, in her fiction the external landscape and the corresponding atmosphere express the alienation, loneliness, insanity and neurosis of her heroines.

It is discerned that woman-nature proximity is also true for Susan Hill. The mental as well as the physical health of her protagonists is strongly connected to nature while males are unaware and unmindful for nature. Her heroines move away from humanity but they consider themselves allied to nature. This alliance makes them comprehend the crucial truths of life which matures their minds. *In the Spring Time of the Year* after the death of her husband, protagonist Ruth at once turns towards nature, sea, woods and flowers which become her most cherished relievers and hiding places. Her close proximity with nature sustains her. If Bronte’s Jane finds her true self in nature, Hill’s Ruth finds truth of life and death in nature. In *The Beacon* May’s life conveys the message to humanity that an artificial life is difficult to live. It is full of terrors and tensions while natural life is peaceful and worth living. It also conveys the truth that human beings are not in a

position to stay away from nature, howsoever, intelligent they may pose to be. However, the novelists give the message that life in harmony with nature is a bliss.

The probe into women nature association has brought to fore the fact that there are remarkable differences in the perception and interpretation of nature in the novels of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill. In contrast to the Victorian Bronte, the contemporary Hill nowhere depicts nature as mother figure. Susan Hill's idea does not correspond to Bronte in the presentation of nature as a sublime power or Nature as an agency which provides gifts and joy to mankind. Hill's women protagonists do not show bond of consciousness with nature as those of Bronte. The concept of nature as mother earth, guide and guardian of the soul are entirely missing. Though Hill's women are closely connected to nature yet their experience of nature is not a fruitful or enlivening or a vital spiritual endeavour like Bronte.

It is observed in this analysis that Bronte and Hill bestow their women protagonists with an ecological mind setup and they seem worried for the loss of natural landscape. Their male characters show indifferent, anthropocentric and androcentric behaviour whereas females show an attitude of love and compassion towards nature. They have an innate zeal to safeguard the natural world. Environment conscious novelists' female protagonists cherish an environmental zeal to protect the natural world and in doing so they reflect a true ecofeminist view. In their novels women speak up for nature because nature cannot speak for itself or generally it is not heard when it does. As women and nature are intimately connected, the onus to liberate both nature and humanity from domination lies on women in order to create a new healthy society.

Furthermore, ecofeminists believe that harassment of nature and woman has run parallel in the history of mankind. The study further proves that the fiction of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill is replete with ecofeminist belief that androcentric and anthropocentric man has learnt the moral that he is the master of both, the earth as well as of woman and has every right to carry on their degradation and dehumanization. Bronte successfully depicts the endangered earth and female subordination in the orthodox Victorian society. *Jane Eyre* projects that Rochester masters and dominates nature and women to satisfy his selfish gains. In *Shirley* Robert is responsible for female's subordination and nature's devastation. In *Villette* Paul is also a tyrant like Robert and Rochester. These novels project that androcentric society has fixed specific occupations for women like that of

governess, teachers or housekeepers. They are not given any other job outside home. Cruel patriarchy snatches their every right to work unreservedly and equally.

However, in spite of oppressive societal structure Bronte's maturing heroines assert their freedom. After Rochester had deceived Jane, she leaves him in spite of all his arguments and efforts. Jane thrusts her freedom once again when she refuses to marry St. John River and returns to Rochester only when she has ample money. She comes back not because she is weak but she thinks it lawful and right. In *Shirley* through Shirley's assertive character Bronte has tried to present the emerging emancipated woman who is capable of handling any profession. She declines proposal of marriage from Robert Moore and Sir Philip Nunnely and marries Louise Moore only when she herself desires. Jane Eyre as well as Shirley show a capacity for liberated speculation and invoke a change in the patriarchal domain. They dare to desire and show strength of character to fulfill the same. The novelist tries to reveal that the once physically, socially and economically inferior females are no longer under any overbearing or patriarchal figure nor are they obliged to submit to anyone.

It has been unveiled in the study of Susan Hill's novel that the exploitation of woman and nature that has begun long before continues unabated in the present times also. Men find subtle ground to commodify and exploit both nature and women. The novel *I'm the King of the Castle* shows that first Hooper and senior Hooper believe in both anthropocentrism and androcentrism. Joseph targets Helena's body as well as labour for exploitation. It is seen in *The Woman in Black* that in androcentric and patriarchal society none takes notice of nature or women. The novel projects that the harassment of Jennet has forced her to lose her body, voice and personality. In the novel *In the Spring Time of the Year* anthropocentric society exploits nature as well as woman. Women and nature face maltreatment in *The Beacon* at the hands of men. Besides, it has been discerned in this study that women in Susan Hill's novels are also denied career outside the household. All important professions and assignments are reserved for men. In spite of all this harassment and discrimination Hill's women like Bronte's assert their freedom. The ghost of Jennet punishes androcentric society for its misdeeds. She retaliates against oppressive society and takes a form which is out of the control of man's domain. Ben's death without any doubt frees Ruth from her limited existence and

provides opportunity to experience the outer world. She comes to know for the first time that there may be a life without a male. Unlike Bronte, Hill's May in *The Beacon* shows that marriage is not the ultimate goal of woman's life. Hill's portrayal of her female protagonists staying independently without any male sustenance shows women's assertion in a patriarchal world. Thus, the author tries to subvert the established equation of dominance and submission between men and women. Women themselves can decide the definitions of right and wrong and break the hegemonic norms of patriarchal structure.

Thus, their fiction not only portrays the interrelatedness of women and nature but it also portrays the victimized status of women along with nature in the so called advanced patriarchal world. Their novels are instrumental in understanding how the treatment of both women and the physical natural environment results from overarching, patriarchal, hegemonic value system. Moreover, their fiction projects the ecofeminist view that just as the earth remains unconquerable by anthropocentrics, so women also cannot be subjugated by the androcentrics. Through their novels the writers seem to present an urge to look beyond the dualistic thinking and to stop inferiorizing women and nature because their subordination is neither universal nor natural.

Further ahead the fifth chapter **Aesthetic of Eco Narratives** subtly unearths the aesthetics of the narrative art of Charlotte Bronte's and Susan Hill's fiction. It is observed that their creative process is deeply rooted in ecology. It has been observed that geographical settings have direct bearing on the theme, plot, character and action in their novels. The natural and the social community come together and influence each other reciprocally in their novels. Change of places gives momentum to the storyline of these writers. Study of their plots discloses that their physical settings are interrelated with specific imagery of specific place. Imagery goes in the making of landscapes in novel which has direct influence on the actions of the characters. The action of characters goes into the making of plot and that helps in fostering the theme forward. Bronte and Hill create a matrix of images in their fiction which pictures human as well as the non human world.

Besides giving importance to ecology in the framing of plot and theme of their fiction both the writers have given the utmost importance to the pattern of seasons in putting forward their point of view. Their narrative process is interlinked with the seasonal influx of surrounding nature that confirms Charlotte

Bronte's and Susan Hill's faith in the design of nature. It is noticed that in their fiction most of the time spring brings happiness and health, while autumn brings miseries, diseases, death or separation. Winter is for frozen and awesome situations while summer is kept open for introducing thrill in relations among characters. Changing season provides impetus to narratives while weather predicts future of inhabitants in case of Bronte while it serves as precursor to Susan Hill's. By introducing this seasonal plan Susan Hill and Charlotte Bronte conceptualize that human life closely corresponds to the pattern of nature and it is as vibrant and colourful as nature. Just as arrival and departure of seasons influence earth in the plan of nature similarly varying flavour of year imparts flow to the narratives of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill. It has been observed that environment is not only a physical and psychological need but it is also needed by the creative writers for the creation of their literature.

Conclusion

In this ecological study an effort has been made to have an expanded view of ecology in the novels of the Victorian writer Charlotte Bronte and the contemporary author Susan Hill. It has been observed that there are some striking similarities as well as dissimilarities in the depiction of nature in their novels because of a considerable gap of time in their writings.

Bronte and Susan Hill can be safely adjudged as the eco-conscious writers in the light of the above exhaustive and critical analysis. Their presentation of nature culture clash and retribution of nature exposes the truth that culture should not be made to flourish at the cost of nature. This research further exposes that by showing nature's retaliation both the novelists ardently prophesize the ecocritical truth that in spite of all his lordship, man cannot change the fact that he is not "the lord of creation". He has no right to dehumanize or overuse nature. He needs a therapy to acquaint him with the truth that he is as important as other species are in the scheme of the universe. He has to understand that the non human world is also an inherent part of our ecosystem and it also has a right to live. It will be better if he tries to use his rationale for the sustenance of the cosmos otherwise dooms day is not far which will acknowledge his trivialness. The texts under study compel to think that man's achievements stand nowhere if apocalypse is truly realized. Like Satan man cannot wage a war against nature, and if he dares to he is bound to fall from his grace.

Further, this ecological study discerned that Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill present an inextricable link between women and nature while patriarchy is detached from nature. By making women more conscious about the environmental hazards and showing their zeal for the preservation of nature both the novelists convey the message that the non human world is as much valuable as the human society. Moreover, they have shown oppression of women by men on one hand and on the other hand by portraying their assertion for freedom they have tried to subvert the notion of hegemony prevalent in their society. This study initiates that by representing exploitation of earth and woman simultaneously both the novelists urge for a radical change. Both the novelists show that exploitation of nature and woman runs parallel and it can be stopped simultaneously. Hence, it is desirable to first stop the dominion over women and treat women as equal to man as she has equal powers. When “he” can rein with his power “she” can rebel with hers. They should make sure that their voices must be heard and acted upon. Neither nature nor women are weak and they can shake anthropocentric cum androcentric structures.

An in depth analysis of plot and narrative technique of Charlotte Bronte and Susan Hill reveals that geographical settings have direct bearing on the theme, plot, character and action in their novels. Narrative process is interlinked with the seasonal process of surrounding nature so it is discerned that environment is also needed for the creation of art.

It is analyzed in this study that fiction can be an effective tool in portraying the transformation of a society. It is observed that modernization and globalization has changed the physical makeover of a place as well as the thought and lifestyle of people. Lucy found that London has “rush” but May found it has “terrifying melee” and is smoke ridden. This difference is enough to visualize the environmental degradation in a span of hundred years of human advancement. Effects of globalization are more profound in Hill’s novels.

This study also unearths that in Hill’s novel traditional lifestyle has come under the attack of modernization. Their preference for culture shows that in spite of all environmental talks and globalized debates the present world is still more prone to urbanization which will be more detrimental to the traditional way of living. Hence, through this study an attempt has been made to make people aware that ecocriticism has raised this pertinent issue of ecological problems but still genuine human efforts are required along with literary efforts to save our mother earth.

In the light of this comprehensive analysis Bronte and Susan Hill can be safely adjudged as the eco-conscious writers because their fiction has been instrumental in raising environmental consciousness. They ardently prophesize that variety exists in the scheme of nature and man has no right to destruct or reduce it for his personal gains. In their view like ecocritics human beings are mere part of this wide existence and not the masters to dominate. This analysis compels to focus on the tenets of Indian philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* that considers the whole earth as a family and lays emphasis on mutual coexistence. Definitely man has to redirect himself for deciding the aims of his life. He has to understand that nature really exists and it exists mightily. This study urges to understand the fact that development and modernization can make life convenient but they cannot provide the basic needs of life. If apocalypse looms large over man's life because of his anthropocentric duplicity then he cannot sustain any longer. He has to understand that what is Man-made is always secondary. The supremacy of nature is unchallenged and invincible.

To conclude, this study has a humanistic approach. The characters and the settings in Charlotte Bronte's and Susan Hill's works have meaning beyond the context of the fiction itself, as they help us gain a clear understanding of human as well as natural life. Today when we are placed in an increasing urban world, this study will help in teaching and sensitizing the readers to value the non human world.

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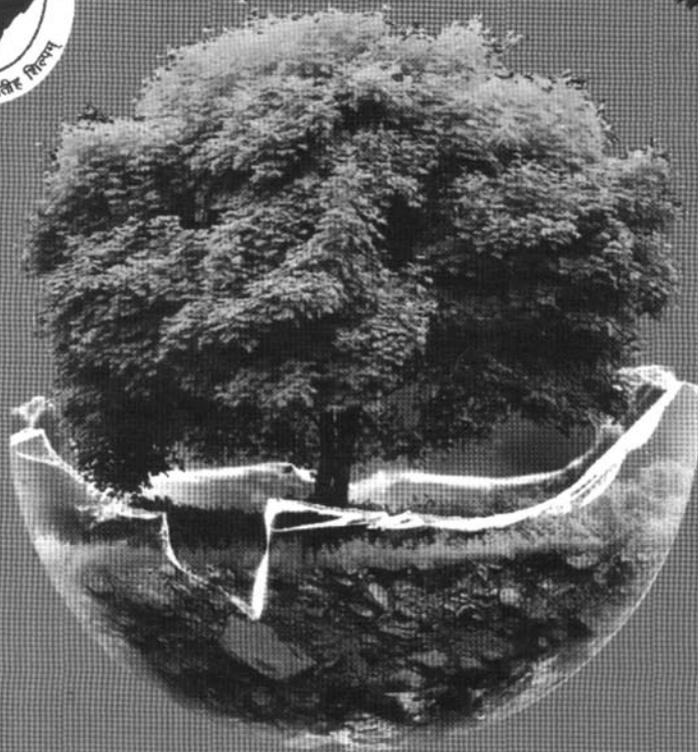
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TITLE: ECOLOGICAL AWARENESS THROUGH ECOPOETICS, ECOCRITICISM AND ECOFEMINISM

Abstract: The paper throws light upon the contemporary mode of environmentalism in literary theory. It shows that how the literary theory can contribute in solving the problem of the hour. Rueckert's eco-poetics must be given central importance while writing any work of art and literature can be written by keeping in mind Commoner's principle that 'everything is connected to everything else.' Ecocriticism and ecofeminism are important disciplines to emphasize the value of ecology for a writer because ecocriticism examines the role of ecology in the writings and ecofeminism, as Annette Kolodny says, explores the close connection between women and nature.



Shobha Rani

Keywords: Eco-poetics

Ecocriticism

Ecofeminism

Rueckert

Fathers of destruction

Vasudheiv Kutumbkam

Oedipus Complex

Methodology: Extensive study of the ecocriticism and ecofeminism and descriptive exploration of the chief ideas keeping present environmental needs in view.

Text: It is an established fact that environmental degradation has drawn the attention not only of the environmentalists but also of the social activists and reputed literary figures who accept the nature as a primary need to our survival because "Where there is no ecological vision people will perish"¹. So William Rueckert suggests the need of an eco-poetics which should write about 'reading teaching and writing', applying ecological concepts. In this connection Kenneth Burk was right to maintain that drama releases energy and raises all energy levels by creative verbal actions. Today's harmed natural scenario calls for a need to write an ecological drama suggested by Rueckert to bring out the real action to raise a conscience for nature.

Emphasizing the first law of ecological drama, Rueckert quotes Commoner's principle that 'Everything is connected to everything else' (113). Here nothing stands in isolation. In fact there is no 'other'. If we separate something from the rest, plot should be scattered. The plot, themes and other formal aspects of the creative work should beautifully form an integral part of the grand design of Nature. According to Rueckert, the second principle of eco-poetics is that we are not free to violate the laws of nature and 'partial knowledge or total

ignorance' of the consequence of their negative action towards the nature exemplify the third principle of ecological drama as suggested by Rueckert. The fourth principle of ecological drama, in Rueckert's view is, "Man's tragic flaw is his anthropocentric vision and his compulsions to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate and exploit every natural thing." (114) Here man tries to 'abuse' and exploit the earth. He is indifferent towards other things and affairs. Now the time has come when drama should be written keeping these rules in view. Only then the remedy is possible.

An ecocritic believes that biocentrism must be the end of any work of art. It is very important to underline the close connection between the development of plot and the theme embodying ecological vision. Nature should play folded roles. Sometimes she should be given the role of a living character. She should be prescribed the role of natural foreteller. She should also become an agent who upsets human affairs and human designs so that her power can be felt. Northrop Frye says that writers represent fury of nature through man. Thus the environment engages attention that ultimately shapes the movement of the action of the novel.

Theme stands equal in importance with the plot. It is the theme for which the plot is needed. In the theme of a literary text, an eco-critic would look for the ecological wisdom. An eco-critic asks such questions: Does the ecology correspond to the feeling and emotion conveyed through texts? How far the atmosphere is responsible for the theme development? Peter Barry has this to say about ecocritics "They extend the applicability of a range of ecocentric concepts, using them of things other than the natural world - concepts such as growth and energy, balance and imbalance, symbiosis and mutuality, and sustainable or unsustainable uses of energy and resources."²

Victorian writers gave sufficient attention to ecology in the development of themes in their novels. In some Victorian works of literature Nature enjoys the status of a living character. The planet earth is a living being and she becomes an active participant in the lives of characters. It influences more than the characters influence each other. Sometime the characters address directly to nature. The earth is able to communicate i.e. sends and receives messages. The earth is not passive or inactive. It responds just as human beings do. When it is pleasant in the beginning and in the end, it conveys goodwill; when it is sullied and exploited, it sends the message for the impending sorrows. Sometimes nature seems to be the cause of trouble in human affairs. Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre* explores the theme of growth of the protagonist Jane at five different places. The physical environment helps Jane to grow. Another novel *Shirley* deals with the theme of industrial development and the polluted atmosphere which clearly shows Bronte's ecological vision. People of Yorkshire suffer due to natural calamity of famine which is an outcome of man's greed for the maximum exploitation of the natural resources. Clash of nature and culture reaches to its extreme. Man's obsession

with 'industrialization' and war ultimately results in the destruction of nature. Natural calamities bring starvation and put an end to the healthy and harmonious relationship between Man and nature. Man destroys nature and in turn gets destroyed by it. In Richard Kerridge views romanticism is a "great reaction against the philosophical and industrial rationality that had separated humanity from nature"³ but he believes that for an ecocritic "the Romantic joy must be combined with ecologically informed practice". He further says, "Ecologists set out to reveal the ways in which niches are created, and the chain of dependency that links even the creatures that seem most distant from each other; ecocritics to unmask the dependency between different niches in cultural ecosystems, so that nature will not be seen only as the space of leisure where we entertain Romantic feelings that we must leave behind when we return to work".

Human being owes to nature for existence because life originates from there. Northrop Frye maintains that literature imitates the total dream of man and nature figures very prominently in the dreams experienced by Man. M.S. Nagarajan makes an interesting observation:

The natural world and the human world are brought together by the human imagination. Poetic thought is categorical, mystical, and so powerful in its impact on human mind that in our innermost being the natural world is assimilated to the human world.

From the other end, the deductive one, one can discover in works of literature analogies of the recurrent rhythms of the natural cycle.⁴

Nagarajan further describes the concept of 'mythoi' given by Frye which categorically classifies genres of literature corresponding to the four natural seasons such as comedy to spring, romance to summer, tragedy to autumn and satire to winter. In literary works, this cycle of season corresponds to these emotions. Natural world and society rejoice if spring is in full bloom. They lament when autumn arrives. Autumn leaves the sign of destruction and life is scattered like leaves of a tree. Summer stands for romance. Cycle of season has exactly the same influence upon human society as it has on natural community. And because literature imitates the total dream of man so it is quite natural for skilled authors that nature becomes the central concern in their works. In the hands of a Victorian writer like Charlotte Bronte, nature becomes omnipotent and omniscient power which support and sustain human life.

Ecofeminism by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva is an extensively dedicated work in the field of ecofeminism. In this book they share their views about women labour and its neglect by the experts and learned society. Vandana Shiva discusses the great role played by women in conservation of biodiversity. Although it is neglected by society as unproductive non-work. "Not only has women's labour and knowledge been negated, but even their intimate link with and love for the child which emerges from their own body

has to be demonstrated by doctors and technicians."5 Maria Mies postulates some methodologies and guidelines for feminist research. She calls for a conscious partiality which should enable widen the consciousness of both the researcher and the researched. Feminist research should 'view from below' not a 'view from above'. This means that women must have a new orientation regarding areas and objectives of research. Women's research should actively participate in actions, movements and struggles for woman's liberation, research must imply the change in the status of woman. Maria Mies mentions Carolyn Merchant who, in *The Death of Nature* (1980) exhibits that modern natural science is based on the destruction and subordination of nature as a living organism that is female and raw material. The production of weaponry has reduced the fear of revenge by the mother earth. Mies explores that Evelyn Fox Keller who considered that the fathers of natural science take nature as an evil woman who must be dominated by the mind or intellect of man. Maria Mies clearly says that "Since Bacon and Descartes, modern natural scientists have been 'fathers of destruction' (Easlea, 1986). If we take our responsibilities towards life, women, children, the future, Mother Earth and our own dignity seriously, we must first clearly state that this science is irresponsible, amoral, immoral, and second, that we no longer want to go along with this game of a double moral standard- one set for the laboratory, another for the private or political life. What the scientist would not do to himself, neither should he do to any other being"(51). Thus she calls for a new science which must have different ethical and methodological principles. It should be kept in mind that we are a part of nature and dependent on mother earth. It should reject the moral double standard.

In Kerridge's view environmentalism grew out of the enthusiasm for wild nature. Environmentalists deal with the threats that not only wildlife and wilderness faces but also faced in the area of human health, food and shelter. Kerridge defines that "ecology is the scientific study of natural interdependencies: of life forms as they relate to each other and their shared environment." (535), further Kerridge says 'Ecosystem is a local set of conditions that support life' (535) Ecological niche means the perfect 'space' or place for every species. This niche can suddenly disappear due to some reasons. Food chain means the way of energy circulation in an ecosystem. Nature, in Kerridge's view is what earth is and does without human intervention. It is in opposition to artificiality. Natural wilderness is the land which is never altered by human action. Pastoral is a retreat or a flight from urban peril which relieves their troubled minds and refreshes them to return to city.

All in all we can say that Ecocriticism builds a ground for environmentalism. It brings out that environmentalism is far ahead than being mere dream or nostalgia. It brings to the fore that neither environment is for entertainment only nor to be exploited for our needs. It establishes the fact that environment is part of our existence without which our existence is half and half existence

is no existence. Ecocriticism discusses that how we have forgotten which was our part. This scholarly discussion compels us to rethink our existence and rethink our Indian philosophy which says 'Vasutheiv Kutumbkum' means the whole earth is a family. This has been interpreted through ages as a slogan for fraternity but the phrase has more applications. In fact not the Earth is our part rather we are part of it. We are part of earth. Within her family we, the human beings, have damaged our family members and neighbors for our profits and facilities. Our neighbors are so patient and forbearing that they haven't revolted still. The mother earth is crying our her mistake which she committed when she gave more powers to humans than he really deserves. Ecocriticism is that impulse of humans which warns one before committing an offense. It is matter of happiness that the impulse is heard and caught. If it is acted upon it will be 'the return of the native' to one's land otherwise this 'Oedipus complex' against motherland will cause not only 'her' but also 'his', death.

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युगरिाल्पी

(साहित्य, कला, संस्कृति, मानविकी एवं समाज विज्ञान की अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय शोध पत्रिका)

लेखकों के लिए सामान्य सूचना

1. शोधपत्र पर टंकित दो प्रतियाँ एवं सॉफ्ट (सी. डी. बनाकर) अवश्य भेजे। टंकण विधि : A4 साईज में 1.25 इंच चारों तरफ छोड़कर तथा Helvetica (size 11) नारद या आटेकस्ट में 13 साईज ऑटो लीडिंग, पेज नम्बरिंग सहित केवल पेजमेकर (किसी भी वर्जन में) में टाइप करके भेजे अन्य किसी सॉफ्टवेयर में टाइप करके भेजने पर लेख स्वीकार नहीं किया जाएगा साथ ही अपना पता एवं फोन नं. अवश्य लिखें।
2. शोधपत्र की स्वीकृति हेतु अपना पता लिखा पोस्टकार्ड संलग्न करें।
3. शोधपत्र में संदर्भ का स्पष्ट उल्लेख करें, तथ संदर्भ में अंकों का प्रयोग करें एवं उसे सुपर स्क्रिप्ट में रखें। जिसका क्रम इस रूप में रखें :- नाम का आखिरी शब्द, शेष नाम, सन्, पुस्तक/पृष्ठ संख्या, यदि जनरल है तो पत्रिका / शोध शीर्षक का नाम, प्रकाशक, अंक, स्थान का उल्लेख करें।
4. टिप्पणी और संदर्भ का उल्लेख शोध पत्र में अंत में करें।
5. शोध-पत्र के साथ इस आशय का घोषणा का पत्र अवश्य संलग्न करें कि यह पत्र मौलिक है तथा इसे कहीं अन्यत्र प्रकाशनार्थ प्रेषित नहीं किया गया है और इस शोध-पत्र में किसी व्यक्ति विशेष, किसी धर्म, सम्प्रदाय, जाति, राजनीतिक पार्टी, किसी सरकार आदि पर विपरीत टिप्पणी नहीं है। यदि कहीं पर ऐसा हुआ है तो स्वयं लेखक जिम्मेवार होगा। इसका हस्ताक्षित पत्र साथ होना चाहिए। अन्यथा शोध पत्र प्रकाशित नहीं किया जायेगा।
6. लेखक/लेखिका अपना फोन नं. तथा पता - पत्र व्यवहार हेतु स्पष्ट लिखें।
7. शोध पत्र अस्वीकृत किए जाने की स्थिति में वापिस नहीं किया जायेगा। अतएव उसकी एक प्रति अपने पास अवश्य रखें।
8. शोध-पत्र भेजते समय आप स्वयं भी गम्भीरता से उसका अवलोकन कर लें कि उसमें भाषामत दोष, प्रूफ अथवा संदर्भ आदि में त्रुटियाँ नहीं हैं।
9. शोध पत्र के साथ अपने पासपोर्ट साईज के दो फोटो अवश्य भेजे।



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ECOFEMINISM : DEVASTATION OF EARTH AND RUKMANI' S SUFFERINGS IN NECTAR IN A SIEVE



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ABSTRACT:-The paper expose the ecofeminism strain in the Nectar in a Sieve. Exploitation of earth and the protagonist Rukmani runs hand in hand. Rukmani is thoroughly conscious of the loses the modernization, urbanization and development causes to her and to her village.- Page No- 27

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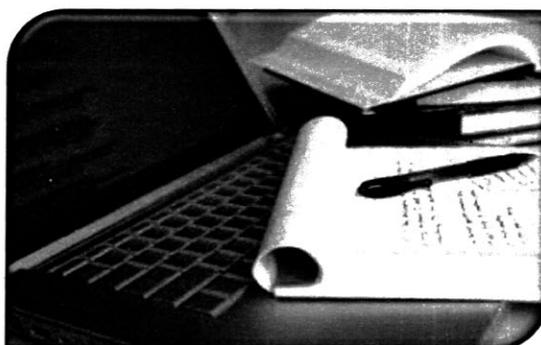
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ECOFEMINISM : DEVASTATION OF EARTH AND RUKMANI' S SUFFERINGS IN *NECTAR IN A SIEVE*

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ABSTRACT

The paper expose the ecofeminism strain in the *Nectar in a Sieve*. Exploitation of earth and the protagonist Rukmani runs hand in hand. Rukmani is thoroughly conscious of the loses the modernization, urbanization and development causes to her and to her village.

KEYWORDS: Ecofeminism , Biodiversity Conservation , simultaneously homogenizes and fragments.

INTRODUCTION –

Text: Ecofeminism, the term first used by Françoise D' Eubonne, echoes that woman and earth are equally treated by man. This relation was proved by Annette Kolodney. *Ecofeminism* by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies is a milestone in the woman and nature studies. They heralded a new segment in literature where



prominence is given to women's contribution. In the essay "Women Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation" Shiva recognizes women's role in biodiversity preservation. They clear the aim of the book one by one:

One is to make visible the 'other' global processes that are becoming increasingly invisible as a new world order emerges based on the control of people and resources worldwide for the sake of capital accumulation. Another is the optimistic belief that a search for identity and difference will become more significant as a platform for resistance against

the dominant global forces of capitalist patriarchy, which simultaneously homogenizes and fragments (02).

She accuses 'modernization and development' for being responsible for degradation of nature. She says that diversity is women's expertise which is 'displaced by progressive technologies that destroy both diversity and people's livelihood.' (165) She discards the general opinion that diversity based product system has low productivity. She also indicates that in spite of their hardwork women could not be recognized as farmer. She calls

woman as 'custodian of biodiversity'. She also finds rituals and festivals as preservatives of biodiversity which is different from experimental science. For these reason her book is named as '*Ecofeminism*' which echoes that woman and nature are close and equally harassed by progressive science and industry. Maria Mies believes that catching up development path is myth and it only leads to ecocolonialism. This idea of development can never be realized. This idea creates the words like self-determination, self-interest and if we apply self-interest to the ecological problem only and only lead to the intensification of the ecological crises. Mies cites an example of a woman who says to Mies that mother's milk is poisoned in Germany. She suggests a solution that a special nullet ragi which grows on Deccan Plateau should be

processed and canned as baby food. It should be imported to Germany. It will solve the problem of desperate mothers in Germany and money paid for this nullet to the poors in South India will become a source of income and it will contribute to their development. Thus Mies explains that ragi will enter in world market and it will not be a cheap food and become costly. Pesticides will be applied to get more production. The woman answered that ragi production should be controlled by those who guarantee that it will not be polluted. Thus she evolves a new eco-colonialism because she sacrifices poor people for mother's need. Poor people need only money and not healthy food. Healthy food is bought by those who have money. But it is interesting to note that when those poor people will have the money from where they will get healthy food which they now have free of cost. She says "This example clearly shows that the myth of catching- up development, based on the belief of the miraculous workings of the market, in fact leads to antagonistic interests even of mothers, who want only to give their infants unpolluted food." (68).

The paper seeks to outline the, ecofaminism in *Nectar in a Sieve* by Kamala Markandaya. In this novel she portrays the problems of rural India especially of Rukmani. When the novel opens we see Nathan and Rukmani are happy in an idyllic village. She shows more reasonable attitude towards the loss of nature than that of the men. She always opposes urbanization which ruins her life.

'Not in the town, where all that was natural had long been sacrificed, but on its outskirts, one could still see the passing of the seasons. For in the town there were the crowds, and streets batted down upon the earth, and the filth that men had put upon it; and one walked with care for what might lie beneath one's feet or threaten from before or behind; and in this preoccupation forgot to look at the sun or the stars, or even to observe they had changed their setting in the sky : and knew nothing of the passage of time save in dry frenzy, by looking at a clock. But for use, who lived by the green, quiet fields, perilously close though these were to the town, nature still gave its muted message. Each passing day, each week, each month, left its sign, clear and unmistakable (115).

The growing urbanization snatches their happiness. Their sons Arjun and Thambi are taken by plantation in Ceylon. Murugan goes to city to work. They never return to her she expresses her filings in the following words: 'From the day construction began on the hospital Selvam ceased to belong to us. During the preparations, while the site was bought and cleared, and a contractor engaged to find men and material, he spent his time with Kenny, and what they discussed I do not know, but sometimes he came home elated and sometimes he was mcrose and dejected; and it was clear enough that the many delays they encountered irked his spirit beyond the telling (122).'

The tannery established in the village ruins her life. It also disturbs the life of Kunthi and Janaki. Kunthi is also disturbed by the industrialization her two sons are taken by the tannery. Janaki is also suffers because of the increasing competition in shop keeping.

Attraction for city life and crop failure also causes havoc to Rukman's life. She notes that her third son, Murugan, who was a servant, married a girl from the town in which he worked. They had not seen her, nor did they know her family, and the marriage, in the second year after Sacrabani's birth, was solemnized at her parents' house without either of us being present.

Rukamni is concerned for animals and non human world throughout the novel she is happy to see the bullock unyoked. She is happy to have given them water and hay. She notices the change in the behavior of bullock. She walks them that they 'began stepping, jauntily again'(3) great upheavals come in her life but she is always concerned for the well being of the animal. Her eyes quickly caught the ailment of the animal. She has compassion for every suffering creature. Thus she is aware of marginalization may be it of anyone. She shows concern for the cart man who is overworking. Anywhere in the mind she believes that animals are exploited by the humans and in Possession she declares that animals are not created for man.

There is one more similarity between earth and her life. She like earth knows that she needs patience and stoicism. She needs endurance like earth. She knows that nothing but God and stoicism will work. Not only Rukmani but we see Kunthi and Ira are also suffering. At this movement Rekha Jha comments:

Rukmani thereby explains the need for stoicism. There is no pessimism in this but a deep-rooted faith in God's mercies. When Kali's hut is destroyed in the storm she is thankful that at least "it stood until the worst was

over." Rukmani too is of the same faith. When her barren daughter Ira is forsaken by her husband, she consoles her saying "we are all in God's hands and He is merciful. These are the vicissitudes of life just as a good harvest follows a drought to give us another chance of belief in His mercy. Nothing is unbearable and man's indomitable spirit can help him surmount those tribulations by endurance." (59)

Death of Nathan is stoically tolerated by Rukmani. She like muted earth speaks no word against anyone when he dies. She thus describes his pathetic death "And so I laid my face on his and for a while his breath fell soft and light as a rose petal on my cheek, then he sighed as if in weariness and turned his face to me, and so his gentle spirit withdrew and the light went out in his eyes." (188). Her life, aspiration, hopes and happiness really appear to be out of her hand. K.R. Shrinivas Iyengar "Calm after storm, spring after winter-such is the unending cycle. One must hope, and one must persevere even if one is engaged only in trying to discover 'nectar in a sieve'!" (439).

Rukmani is also gender conscious. She believes that the earth is also possessed by men. Land, like women, is harassed by men. She comments "Ira and I did what we could ; but the land is mistress to man, not to woman : the heavy work land is mistress to man, not to woman : the heavy work needed is beyond her strength"(129).

Industrialism ruins Rukmani's family as well as her village. The encroachment of industry causes the decay of natural beauty, plays havoc with village economy, uproots a tenant-farmer and brings in social degradation and the loss of traditional and human values. The traditional set up is overtaken by a change of far reaching consequences. The coming of Tannery is the beginning of this change in the life of Rukmani and her village. She records that the change which came into her life, into all lives, blasting its way into village, seemed wrought in the twinkling of an eye. The tannery is a symbol of Rukmani' sufferings and also of the suffering of the land.

Apart from Markandaya if we look for the concern for biodiversity perseverance in literature we find Shiva true because the first lady to earn her livelihood by stage writing "Aphra Behn, in her novel *Oroonoko* (published in 1688). Already pondered what the increasingly intense clearing of the Caribbean forest would mean for the indigenous people and animals relegated to the diminishing woods". (Gebert, 345).

Thus we see that Shiva's stand is upright because the losses of Rukmani and the nature are same. With industrialization and tannery nature loses its beauty and property and becomes mistress of Englishman. In the same way Rukmani loses her bread because their land is snatched and her husband and sons are dead. Her daughter era becomes mistress of men from tannery. Rukmani just like the earth is left destitute and utterly alone. Shiva is also right when she says that women show a more responsible attitude towards the use of nature. Rukmani's stand and radical thoughts against industrialization remind us that "Based on the shared experience, women, must speak up for nature because nature cannot speak for itself or at least is generally not "heard" when it does" (Wrede, 41).

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