People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of 8 Mai 1945 / Guelma
Faculty of Letters & Languages
Department of Letters and English Language

جامعة 8ماي 1945 / قالمة
كلية الآداب واللغات
قسم الأدب واللغة الإنجليزية

Option: Literature

John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" & "To Autumn":

An Ecocritical Inquiry

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture

Board of Examiners

Chairwoman: Dr. Nadjiba BOUALLEGUE	**(MCB) Université de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma**
Supervisor: Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL	**(MCB) Université de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma**
Examiner: Ms. Meriem BOURAGAA	**(MAA) Université de 8 Mai 1945/Guelma**

Submitted by:

Ali Djazil ZIOUCH

Supervised by:

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL

June 2022

Dedication

Grace to thee who kept us warm and unified us like a cage bone

He who with an eye of pity hath looked upon our tragedy;

and rejoiced our souls when he doth said

“No fear shall be on them neither shall they sorrow.”

Acknowledgements

Plead

On the periphery brink with a bewildered glance, I gazed upon the tenebrous end ... So silently, it seems a beam of light
I cannot handle myself upright when I beheld the Knights reaching in sight
A hissing sound awakened from the extremity Asking why have I never pen'd a Line to thee?
I swiftly retorted, probably my thoughts were never free
crawling shape intrudes with a cloak awaited to deliver the terminal decree
My heart ached, with drowsy numbness pains
Hand me the hemlock of Keats or land me to lethe so I can fly with thee and break loose with this plea
Down the furrow of earth he lies, his rotten body is never in disguise for the delight he bestows and the heaven he expose
him who in the love of Nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language. She has a voice of gladness, and a smile and eloquence of beauty, and she glides into his darker musings, with a mild
And healing sympathy that got we perplexed in an uncanny telepathy
make us heirs of all eternity ... I exclaimed
Madame Sorceress suddenly appeared in thin air to quench the wakeful anguish of the soul, asking if I'm sure, yet be careful what thou wish for
To go on this journey into the temple of delight
I agreed, and it seemed so right....
Yet there is a rampart I've got to fight, and that he dwells with Beauty and beauty must leave this diabolic world into me heart where he dwells for eternity where there is no tomorrow and there is no farewell
Darkling I listen ... cease the moment instead and glorify the womb that got you to excel
In breathless darkness I fetched my shield, and held a burnt sacrifice of verse
Let us proceed back and rehearse, on the nightingale hump we shall transverse
Down to the marrow of the bone from the time of Ruth past the still streams of winter dawn to modern age
There is nothing left, yet I have memorised every inch of them in the hope that when they go our souls in one shall grow…
The pillars of the darkened gloomed room alighted with souls whom I loved the most, alive and deceased ... Liebe macht blind
My dear Flame of Fate dares not be extinguished and my pen shall never be dry for this brief sprint
Once more into the fray, live and die on this day
This is our fort to defend, The vanquished are doomed and WE the victors court death to be our friend.

[Original]
Djazil A-Z

Abstract

This study investigates the representation of the natural world in John Keats' odes: "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819) and "To Autumn" (1820) from an ecocritical lens. It analyses the poet's understanding of both the value of developing a connection with nature and the ramifications of its deterioration during the Industrial Revolution, notably in Britain. Furthermore, this research investigates the significance of nature vis-à-vis the bond that may exist between it and Keats in his two odes. Moreover, this dissertation reveals Keats' eco-consciousness exposing his mastery of fusing the natural elements with imagination to breach the physical boundaries existent between man and nature. As a result, this research highlights the strengths of imagination and the proclivities of escapism, which are a direct result of his past filled with tragedy and death, to reach his aims through the two poems. Finally, this study follows up Keats' journey from frivolity to his quest for identification and self-realization. Indeed, nature permanently inspirits him for his love, veneration, adulation, and dedication leading him to his eventual maturity and later to his metaphorical death. Later on, Keats' connection with nature is manifested again when he suffers for her pain and dies with her death

Keywords:

Ecocriticism, ode, Keats, death, nature, imagination, escapism.

Table of Contents

Introduction

For the uninitiated, nature may refer to the blissful environment around them. But for writers and philosophers, it refers to a source of inspiration; for them nature is both the pain and the ease, the healer and the maimer, the giver and the taker. Joseph Campbell preached for the same notion that nature is not only around yet within stating that: “The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the universe, to match your nature with Nature” (118). These captivating words, however, are not as simple to attain and realise regarding that the concept of nature and our relationship to it is often a disputed matter and a difficult question that has been debated since the dawn of humanity. Indeed, from the beginning before even men figured out how to exploit the soil beneath their feet, they questioned their surrounding to understand what their relationship to it was. In reality, nature is the natural world as it exists in the absence of humans or civilisation. Nevertheless, nature does not always exist apart, when exposed to humans and human conduct it is labelled as the environment. In short, the environment is all that exists around us and encompasses all of the entities that we can see and feel. The success of this nature-environment relationship is massively dependent on human conduct and behaviour.

Now because literature is an imitation of life and highly human-related, it has played a unique role in transcribing history allowing people to take an insight into the past, have a better understanding of the culture, trace back events, and obtain a greater grasp of human place, its characteristics, and human refinement in such a place. The literary theory interested in nature, humans, and the environment relationships is undeniably ecocriticism. Accordingly, such approach can also examine the attempts to comprehend existence and other elements beyond human cognition such as oblivion or death vis-à-vis human-nature relationships. Since ecocriticism is a relatively new critical theory, it appears to differ from previous theories in which it seeks to consider the representation of nature, the participants’ relationship to it,

environmental concerns while also engaging in an investigation with scientific and economic ecological approaches. Since this study is premised on the interaction between the natural environment and poetry, the term ecocriticism becomes relevant and important to our discussion. Cheryll Glotfelty in *The Ecocriticism Reader* defines it as: “Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (9). Launching from this definition, the keyword is relationship. Most pieces of literary works take place in a setting that could be either nature or the environment. The key function of ecocriticism is to search, find, highlight, and then attempt to explain what, how, and why the characters behave in that manner with regard to their surroundings. Humanity's cultural, or specifically literary, conceptualisation of its relationship with nature has a long history of positioning the natural world as both a tangible and an intangible object of possession for material and abstract use. For this reason, the intertwining of literature and nature has been a viable area of research. To put this study in proper literary perspective and to observe the evolution of the awareness of the natural environment today, one needs to see how literary concepts gradually grew from nature conscious individuals to organised literary groups that have come to be associated today with ecocriticism or green studies.

Romantic poets who were true admirers of nature enjoyed the great substantial amount of diversity and beauty of the external world of nature. Nevertheless, they considered nature to stand for more than that. For them, it was the intangible object of possession that they returned to for inspiration, for self-realisation, and for power. For some others, nature was a divine entity, a goddess to worship. Therefore, the ecocritical approach is suitable for the study of the body of works of writers who composed amid the shade of autumn leaves and pouring clouds. Considering the shared characteristics of their bodies of works, Romantic writers represented a similar conception of imagination. They consolidated nature and its connection to man, and had roughly a particular style and patterns depicting the recurrent

themes of nature (fauna and flora) with precision and sensuous nuance unseen by previous writers. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, however, M. H. Abrams introduces a claim that seems to give more insight to the romantic poets, which were obviously known for their keenness to nature, arguing that:

> It is a mistake, however, to describe the romantic poets as simply "nature poets." While many major poems by Wordsworth and Coleridge -and to a great extent by Shelley and Keats- set out from and return to an aspect or change of aspect in the landscape, the outer scene is not presented for its own sake but only as a stimulus for the poet to engage in the most characteristic human activity, that of thinking. Representative romantic works are in fact poems of feelingful meditation which, though often stimulated by a natural phenomenon, are concerned with central human experiences and problems. (178)

He implies that romantic poets utilise nature as a stimulus to manifest their feelings about matters such as life and death. In other words, nature can provide a faculty for romantics' higher minds; it can take a shape beyond itself.

Keeping on the same track in the sphere of English Romantic poetry, John Keats (1795-1821) has been a towering figure whose works show a massive dependency and use of natural elements proving his mastery. The second-generation poet wears this medal primarily for the virtuosity of his language. His death from tuberculosis at a young age of twenty-five in the prime of his writing life certainly contributes to his portrayal as the ultimate Romantic poet. Many people believed that if he had more time to live, then he would have had surpassed any other poet in history. Even though he published his first piece five years before his death, and despite the fact that his poems did not gain much traction in taking off, he was one of the primary figures of the second generation of Romantic poets alongside Lord Byron

and Percy Bysshe Shelley. After his death, better than not at all, Keats became one of the most admired of all English poets. He had a significant impact on a wide range of poets and writers. Writer Jorge Luis Borges reports that: “his first encounter with Keats was the most significant literary experience of his life” (qtd. in Vavra and Spencer x). Today, his poetry and letters are one of the most widely read and studied works in English literature.

The deterioration of the ecosphere has been growing throughout human civilization through the current age. In his *Environmental Education*, V. Ravi comments on the initial phase of human awareness towards ecological crisis: “Awareness of this environmental crisis has grown since the 1970s, partly as a result of the prominence given to major so-called 'environmental' disasters such as the Sahelian droughts of the 1970s and 1980s and the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986” (102). Climate change, pollution, and energy transition are just a few of the concerns that have gained a lot of attention around the world. Another one is related to the fact that all scientific data imply that ecological construction, or the sustainable building of a safe natural environment, is equally vital. Surprisingly during his brief life, Keats composed several poems with ecological themes with particular emphasis on the richness of the natural world, and to a minor extent its deterioration, in addition to letters in which he expressed his notions on humanity, nature, and the environment. Keats considers nature as beauty, charm, elegance, and a sanctuary from the pains and pressures of life. And as a poet who exalts the five senses, nature fulfills his cravings especially his visual appeal. This is why, he describes the natural world with great precision. In brief, Keats' ecological ideas can be summed up in three main points: Keats believes that humans are part of nature, he believes that humans must return to nature, and he believes that nature must be preserved and celebrated. Since the relatively new ecological concerns trace back to the industrial revolution, or the time of Romantics and it was the first breaking point of imbalance between nature, the environment, and man, Keats tackles such issues in his unique way of beauty and

imagination. This has resulted in his exceptional works of art that embody nature as a vessel while tackling the deepest notions of existence and other elements beyond the existential world.

Keats' poetry has been a viable area of research and a considerable amount of literature has praised his works' complexity of notions, the incarnation of senses, and the use of natural elements. In "Keats's "Men of Genius" and "Men of Power"", John D. Margolis quotes T. S. Eliot's words: "Some of Keats's sayings come with a Delphic assurance: they need not have been fully understood by the man who uttered them; no process of reasoning enters into them; and they require to be interpreted by those who have the wit and patience to do so" (333). Indeed, the works and letters of Keats need "wit and patience" to be deciphered, as T. S. Eliot puts it, regarding the finesse of words, the choice of diction, and the countless probabilities. Studying Keats is the same as dropping the veil on hundreds of layers; each layer demands hard labouring to reach the core of its secrets and flavours. The critics who have had the passion and patience to do so, like Richard Harter Fogle in "Keats's Ode to a Nightingale" reaches the conclusion about "Ode to a Nightingale" as follows:

> Keats gets his effects in the Nightingale by framing the consummate moment in oppositions, by consciously emphasizing its brevity; he sets off his ideal by the contrast of the actual. The principal stress of the poem is a struggle between ideal and actual: inclusive terms which, however, contain more particular antitheses of pleasure and pain, of imagination and commonsense reason, fullness and privation, of permanence and change, of nature and the human, of art and life, freedom and bondage, waking and dream. (211)

This sheds the light on an important matter in this particular poem where Keats juxtaposes two different worlds, on the one hand, there is the human or mundane world, and on the other hand, there is fantasy, a world of imagination. Keats exhibits the two worlds in such a

delicacy that the reader no longer feels he is describing a non-existent entity. These ideas formed a common ground for critics to present the poet as someone who took advantage of his dark social context to amount to glory.

Sanjai Kumar and Suman Singh discuss the group of Keats' odes ending on the same note. They assert that the images, emotions, and thoughts that reoccur in the first six odes echo and reinforce one another. Keats witnessed the deaths of most of his family members when he was young, so any death or catastrophe was like a bad dream that would end eventually. Because of these multiple deaths, he became an extremely fierce combatant who was not afraid of death. If death came, he would gladly accept it. Keats believed that there was no greater negation of the negation of suffering than death; he believed that life went on and got better. Keats' beautiful and extremely distinctive technique is that he listened to sounds in a different way than others. He never sought significance in the things around him, yet he was sensitive from the beginning. Keats, like all other romantics, seeks solace in the past. He ventures back in time to the ancient Greeks and the Middle Ages. He is a well-known enthusiast of beautiful natural landscapes and settings. He adores nature entirely for its own sake and paints it with his imagination rather than reason; he is content with expressing it through the senses. Keats is unquestionably no one's slave except his own; exposing himself to the influence of the senses and the past, he sees clearly and memorably but with his own eyes. He is a visual poet, a writer of sensations and emotions, but his poems and letters provide eloquent witness to the calibre of his mind (1-3). They also refer to a crucial point of death. Arguably, literary works should be studied regardless of the author, but it is somewhat impossible in the case of Keats, mainly because death played a large and overpowering role in John Keats' life. He lost all his family for variable reasons, the most fatal one is tuberculosis the same disease that killed his mother, brother Tom, and later Keats himself. These losses added up to his certain realisation that he was going to die. This made Keats more vividly and

sensitively aware of the significance of both death and life. Thus, the misfortunes to which Keats speaks both fuel and nourish his sorrow. “We can, perhaps, now understand why the death of the poet is so essential for the determination of the textual status of the poem: since death will at least at one level effectively break the circle of speculation, the poet will not be able to see himself in an act of seeing. The burden will then be the reader's” (Donato 973). Indeed, readers of Keats’ poetry should bear in mind that the group of poems are not a result of luxury but a direct consequence of Keats’ upbringing and life. In this manner, the portals of the poem would open up other facets of Keats’ poetry that would not have been reached by keeping the poet’s background with death away.

Sonia Sikka elaborates on this idea of death, despair, and mortality in “On the Truth of Beauty: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Keats” showing how Keats finds his outlet through nature, truth, and beauty stating that the divine and immortal beauty behind the curtain of separation, loss, conflict, tragedy, and death is the essence of Keats' poetry. Behind this bleak and depressing reality is the truth that heals and resolves various forms of imperfection. The romantic view of beauty points towards reality and truth. On the one hand, Keats realises the misery and imperfection of ephemeral life, and on the other, the consoling and healing power of art. The power of poetry and imagination is put into doubt in the last lines when Keats tragically realises that with the bird's disappearance, his imagination also vanishes; and he knows that aesthetic imagination generated by the song is merely a deception. The concluding lines do not indicate disillusion, but rather an uncertainty. In the end, the mystery remains unsolved. It is articulated in the form of an inquiry; which begs the question of what is more important: truth or beauty? His goal as a poet is not to conclude but rather to register impressions. It represents Keats' opinion that no intellectual or scientific research can ever produce the truth. Such uncertainty is not a symptom of sentimentality, but rather an honest and realistic stance, at least for someone who no longer believes that metaphysics can solve

the mystery (253-60). This solution of consolation in nature and beauty that is perfectly articulated by Keats through his poetry serves him, yet it has opened the door for more criticism. A great proportion of critics labels this solace seeking as escaping or escapism. In *The Odes of John Keats*, Helen Vendler examines the notion of escapism in one of his odes. She states that: “The Ode to a Nightingale, in attempting an escape from threatening sorrow by a deliberate averting of the eyes from human suffering, and, formally speaking, by its flight from representation, is a poem of wish and will, where Keats's "yearning and fondness ... for the Beautiful" (Letters, I, 388) are forced into assertion” (82). The attempt of escaping the miserable reality and daily sorrows is thoroughly justified by Yi Hsuan Tso in “Keats’s Skepticism about Poetry’s Therapeutic Power”. He links escapism from mundane troubles to the healing power of poetry. He mentions that Keats' poetry creates a deceptive dream-like universe in which the reader not only temporarily escapes the stresses of reality, but also experiences a moment that elevates the reader's mind to a higher level of tranquil mediation. Keats' notion of poetry's healing power is shown in his odes. A great poet, according to Keats, should produce poetry that soothes the spirit. The healing efficacy of these poems stems from their beauty, which is infused with a dreamlike illusion which softens the shock of the final awakening from the dream world. Through figurative language, sensuous imagery, and romantic illusions, Keats casts a veil of dream over his description in these poems setting his dreams in Arcadian pastoral scenery. The dream's final awakening and parting creates a tremendous sense of sorrow. According to Keats, the therapeutic power of poetry is proportional to a poet's ability to commiserate; only when the poet can delve into the miseries of life, can high-minded poetry be created (1-4). This is the remit of research and major areas in which Keats has been studied, mainly his unfathomable admiration for nature and his escapist tendencies from the dark reality he had to undergo seeking refuge in nature.

Previous critics have read major literary works of Keats from an ecocritical perspective, with particular emphasis on the representation of the natural world canonising Keats for foregrounding nature as a major part of his poems. The works of these eminent researchers stand as the building blocks of this dissertation launching from all of the elements referred to in the review of related literature to reach novel dimensions and interpretations. Indeed, none of these researchers explored Keats' metaphorical death, which inevitably leads to his literal downfall. Keats is traumatised by his family's tragedies, which makes death a dominant subject in this research. Nature is unquestionably the other important focal point of this dissertation. It examines the ways Keats sees and deals with nature. Hence, his admiration, unfathomable love for nature, and worship make him inspirited by it leading him to self-realisation in a journey that holds more than just Keats' death, but also the poet's development from immaturity to a ripening fruit, his epiphany. The latter is the main reason for settling down on the two poems "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819) and "To Autumn" (1820). Generally, people attain their epiphany and awake their insight during the low moments of life specifically death, when they reflect upon themselves and realise they need to change. Death, however, could not do it for Keats. With the departure of almost all of his family members, followed by the death of his beloved brother Tom, he still kept the same patterns in almost all of his poems such as immaturity, escapism, disdain, dramatic personality, and the dominant presence of the poet. "Ode to a Nightingale" was expected to be rendered in the same manner as in the preceding poems because the first half of the poem reflects the same aforementioned aspects, but there is a radical change in its second half. The reason why "Ode to a Nightingale" is a significant poem in his life that marks the beginning of change towards growth, while "To Autumn" is the last poem that drops the curtains on his career that depicts Keats in his peak of maturity.

The two poems, then, explore the relationship between poetry and nature demonstrating nature as a source of literary creativity and further characterise its representation as an object of human-caused degradation and devastation. The study investigates how nature is used in Keats' works mainly his dependency on the natural elements such as the nightingale in "Ode to a Nightingale" or a whole season as in "To Autumn" to understand, escape, confront his reality, and finally attain self-realisation by solving the mystery in the former and achieving serenity in the latter. This research uses ecocriticism to explore the depiction of imagery of nature and the representation of the natural world in the aforementioned odes of John Keats. It also investigates the depiction of his awareness of both the significance of establishing a bond with nature and its destruction throughout the industrialization period, particularly in England. Moreover, this dissertation explores the significance of nature stressing the possible link that may exist between it and man in these odes. Furthermore, it reveals the disturbance of ecological equilibrium produced by man's exploitative activities that have harmed the natural environment by merging the poet's life, the social backdrop, and the previously mentioned poems. This research appraisal of Keats' eco-consciousness brings forth the hidden dimensions of his art essentially Keats' power of using nature adding his touch of senses, and embellishing the whole with imagination to breach the physical boundaries with nature that provides him with maturity. As a result, this investigation attempts to elucidate both powers of imagination and escapism in the two poems.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is a theoretical one; it is divided into four sections. The first section tackles the historical background of Britain in relation to man, nature and the environment in which interests of human beings in owning land and its exploitation are traced back before the Agricultural Revolution onwards. Likewise, the second section introduces the twisting event in humanity's history: the

Industrial Revolution in Britain, its origin, and the factors contributing to its establishment. It also tackles the ramification of human greed and the impact of industrialisation on nature and the pejorative outcomes resulting in an ecological crisis. The third section provides an overview of the Romantic Movement and its two generations with particular emphasis on John Keats. This section gives insights into the significance of Keats' background, his story of death and its significance in understanding his poetry making him different from other Romantics. The last section is devoted to the theory utilised in this study. It provides a brief historical overview of the field regarding its relative newness and broad scope of inquiry. Finally, this section offers a set of concepts to be used in this dissertation.

The second chapter is analytical and divided into two main sections. The first one looks at how the natural world is represented in "Ode to a Nightingale," with a specific focus on the nightingale. It gives insight into the functions of the nightingale in this poem displaying Keats' ecological awareness. The second chapter delves into the representation of Keats' eco-conscientiousness, as well as what nature genuinely signifies to him. As a result, this section elucidates Keats' implicit responses to the exploitative actions that contributed to the destruction of the environment throughout the industrialization period, notably in England. Furthermore, this section focuses on the relevance of nature in the ode emphasising the probable link between it and man. Finally, Keats's powers of imagination, escapist tendencies, and the bond with Mother Nature finally lead to his reward in the form of self-realisation through a journey beyond conventional boundaries while simultaneously making him aware of his impending mortality.

The third chapter is the other analytical chapter that serves as complementary to the previous one. There are three sections to it. The first section examines the major natural elements that Keats uses in "To Autumn". This section demonstrates how much Keats admires and worships nature and longs for the simplicity of the pastoral life. The second part

focuses on Keats's maturity and his mastery of manipulating the use of spatial-temporal patterns in a magnificent setting enriched with his imagination. The third section attempts to provide a new reading of “To Autumn” in relation to his biographical and social contexts in order to highlight that the poem is a representation of his own cycle of life. The latter interpretation coordinates with the previous chapter to form a complete image that supports the claim that Keats actually does transcend to the core of Mother Nature.

Almost all of Keats' poems, particularly the two odes chosen for this dissertation, acknowledge and add material to Keats' unfathomable love for nature. Though he left the world at a young age, his keenness for nature is curiously very much in line with the modern green movement. Indeed, one may suspect that if Keats had been a contemporary poet, he would have been a key figure of ecocritical studies and a main driver of eco-consciousness in all forms of artistic expression.

Chapter I: The Collision of Industrial Revolution and Romantic Age in Britain from an Ecocritical Standpoint

The first chapter is a theoretical one; it is divided into four sections. The first section explores Britain's historical background in relation to man, nature, and the environment, tracing human interests in owning and exploiting land back to before the Agricultural Revolution. Similarly, the second section introduces a decisive event in human history: the British Industrial Revolution, its origins, and the factors that contributed to its establishment. It also addresses the consequences of human greed, the impact of industrialization on nature, and the harmful repercussions that result in an ecological crisis. The third section provides an overview of the Romantic Movement and its two generations, with a greater emphasis on John Keats in particular. This section gives insights into the significance of Keats' background, his story of death and its significance in understanding his poetry making him different from other Romantics. The last section is devoted to the theory used in this study. It provides a brief historical overview of the field regarding its relative newness and broad scope of inquiry. Finally, this section provides a set of concepts to be used in this dissertation.

I.1. Britain's Historical Background: Man, Nature, and the Environment

Human society has recently reached a tipping point in its connection with both nature and the environment. In the sense of making it inappropriate for humans and other living species, the devastation of the planet has evolved to the point that it now risks the existence and growth of much of nature and society itself. John Bellamy Foster in his *The Vulnerable Planet,* which is a quite delicate work about the history of the environment around the industrial revolution, has the breath to name a massive list of the world's major problems today stating that:

> The litany of ecological complaints plaguing the world today encompasses a long list of urgent problems. These include overpopulation, destruction of the ozone layer, global warming, extinction of species, loss of genetic diversity, acid rain, nuclear contamination, tropical deforestation, the elimination of climax forests, wetland destruction, soil erosion, desertification, floods, famine, the despoliation of lakes, streams, and rivers, the drawing down and contamination of groundwater, the pollution of coastal waters and estuaries, the destruction of coral reefs, oil spills, overfishing, expanding landfills, toxic wastes, the poisonous effects of insecticides and herbicides, exposure to hazards on the job, urban congestion, and the depletion of non-renewable resources. (11-2)

These ecological problems are accelerating with a high ratio in different places in the world resulting in huge complexities that became threatening to life on earth; nevertheless, all these issues have causes that are rooted deep in history. Péter Szabó mentions two alternative approaches to studying the evolution of historical ecology in his article “Historical ecology: past, present and future”. The first is to focus on self-conscious historical ecology, that is, to investigate the emergence and development of works that were expressly identified as historical ecology by their authors. The second is to trace the history of investigations that mirror the ideas and methods of present historical ecology as deeply as possible in the past (2). The latter approach seems suitable for this inquiry regarding that it offers a more focused pattern to track history, mainly to retro back to the ecological conditions before the industrial revolution.

Beginning with the development of agriculture 10,000 years ago, as foster suggests in his book, all kinds of social production organisations have contributed to environmental degradation. Accordingly, the human relationship with nature has not been consistent. The relationship between nature and society has evolved as production has progressed. Thus,

broad “ecohistorical periods” can be distinguished - periods in which “human activities have led to (relatively) uniform changes in nature over vast areas” (Williams 302). Such ecohistorical periods can be defined by the degree to which humans have “liberated themselves” from subjection to their environment, on the one hand, and by their destructive impact on that same environment, on the other. Hence, what differentiates the ecohistorical period of capitalism from the ecohistorical period of pre-capitalism is not environmental degradation or the prospect of ecological collapse -both of which occurred previously, at least on a regional scale- but two characteristics unique to capitalism. First, capitalism has been so successful in “conquering” the world over the previous few centuries that the area of action for its destruction has shifted from a regional to a planetary level. Second, the exploitation of nature has become progressively universalized, as the elements of nature, as well as the social conditions of human existence, have increasingly been brought within the sphere of the economy and subjected to the same measure, that of profitability (34-5).

The interrelationship of men and nature started to worsen when the notion of owning land came to being. In “The History of Landholding in England”, Joseph Fisher asserts this idea of claiming property to land stating that “The earlier races seem to me, either by reasoning or by instinct, to have arrived at the conclusion that every man was, in right of his being, entitled to food; that food was a product of the land, and therefore every man was entitled to the possession of land, otherwise his life depended upon the will of another” (100). Doubtlessly, this idea started small merely to provide food, yet from one generation to another landholding became a sign of independence as well as a sign of wealth. Gary Richardson and Dan Bogart in “Institutional Adaptability and Economic Development: The Property Rights Revolution in Britain, 1700 to 1830” deliver a detailed historical overview of landholding in Britain in which they reflect on the notion of owning and bequeathing land. They state that it can be traced back to adaptable property rights started in Britain around 1700 when

Parliament established a forum for landholders and communities to reform rights to specific plots of land. Before the establishment of this Parliamentary process, the property-rights regime inherited from Britain's mediaeval past shared characteristics with landholding systems in developing nations, both past and present. Most plots of land were subject to a complex spectrum of overlapping rights (common, communal, clerical, feudal, familial, statutory, and royal) enforced by a variety of courts (manorial, county, clerical, and royal). These courts lacked consistent records and a consistent framework for determining ownership, transferring rights, and resolving disputes. The rights of families and ancestors received prominence over the rights of individuals and descendants. Rights were secure and marketable in many ways. Individuals may transfer the right to use the land for traditional purposes. However, rights were inflexible (1-2).

This mediaeval system created difficulties for people attempting to reallocate resources toward more productive uses, particularly opportunities arising from unanticipated technologies in the distant past. Estate holders could not mortgage, lease, or sell much of the land under their control. Many types of tenure holders could only transfer property to specific individuals or members of a local community. Residents were frequently forced to keep land for traditional uses. They could not use resources in new ways, improve infrastructure, or repackage rights without reaching agreements with all other parties with interests in a parcel, and such agreements could not be enforced by law in most cases but could be challenged in court in many cases (Richardson and Bogart 2).

Britain's antiquated property system also hampered localities from providing public goods, particularly those that extended beyond the boundaries of traditional communities or that were necessitated by the growth of commerce and cities. Communities lacked revenue-raising mechanisms and eminent domain powers. Communities struggled to overcome free-riding, which hampered the provision of public goods, and hold-outs, who withheld resources

required for public projects unless exorbitant fees were paid. Market transactions may have alleviated these inefficiencies. But in most cases, the necessary transfers and contracts could not be consummated or enforced due to the rights regime's restrictive nature, which valued tradition and stability over innovation and flexibility (Richardson and Bogart 2).

Richardson and Bogart explain that the landholding system was befuddled until the end of the seventeenth century when Parliament embraced novel ideas about the property and began processing petitions from groups hoping to reorganise rights to land and resources. Parliament reviewed requests from individuals, families, and communities and, after taking into account the interests of all parties involved and the general public, rewrote rules governing property use and ownership. These agreements were enshrined in three types of acts enacted by Parliament: estate, statutory authority, and enclosure. Individual and family rights were altered by estate acts, which removed restrictions on the uses of property, allowed for the sale, mortgage, and leasing of land, and made contract enforcement easier. Acts establishing statutory authorities established new organisations responsible for constructing, operating, and maintaining infrastructure and public services. Statutory authorities now have the authority to collect tolls, levy taxes, issue debt, and purchase land. Traditional rights, such as the right of burgesses to travel throughout the realm free of tax and toll, had been enshrined for centuries in town charters and the Magna Carta. Enclosure acts disbanded collectively-managed common-field villages and assigned rights to specific pieces of property to individuals. They also repurposed commonly held agricultural land for new purposes, such as the construction of housing and workshops near growing towns and cities. All three types of acts reflected the public's desire to reorganise rights and reallocate resources to more productive uses (2-3).

During the mercantilist period, Foster asserts that Britain developed a commercial, agrarian, and mining capitalism that had surpassed the Netherlands as the most sophisticated

capitalist economy by the eighteenth century. Profits from the trade-in spices, sugar, tea, coffee, tobacco, gold, furs, and slaves fuelled a post-feudal English social order manifested in the countryside by what Raymond Williams referred to as “the country-house system of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries” (qtd. in Foster 50). This system, in which landlords in huge houses held enormous estates operated by tenant farmers and laboured by agricultural wage-labourers, had been made possible by the agricultural revolution that had occurred under mercantilism. England was unique among European countries in that the traditional peasants vanished quickly owing it chiefly to the enclosure process. The percentage of English agricultural land enclosed by stone walls and hedges, to be more systematically monopolised by rural landowners, increased from 47 per cent in 1600 to 71 per cent by 1700. In the seventeenth century, an additional 6 million acres were enclosed. By the end of the seventeenth century, 40 per cent of the English population had shifted away from agriculture to industrial activities. By the end of the eighteenth century, 5,000 families owned about half of England's cultivated land, while a mere 400 families held nearly a quarter (Foster 50-1).

Despite its inherent inequity, Foster concludes, this system was more productive than anything that had come before it. By introducing new crops, improving cultivation methods, and bringing additional land under cultivation, the agricultural revolution increased domestic agricultural output in England between 1550 and 1750 sufficiently to feed a population that doubled during the same period, while decreasing agriculture's share of total employment leading many workers to move from the farm and seek jobs in the towns' industries (51).

Britain has a shared history with change. Indeed, men’s exploitative activities did not become noticed during the Industrial Revolution, but even with the beginning of agriculture around 10.000 years back. This led to the emergence of novel concepts and notions. Capitalism was the prevailing one. It has grown so strong that exploitation of nature has become increasingly universalized, and the principle of profitability became the standard. For

Britain's landholding system, it was radicalized and liberated from the harsh rules of property ownership to a loose set of rules that were drafted by the parliament and most of the restrictions were taken off. The agricultural revolution made of Britain an exceptional country among others. Nevertheless, this hastened change was a foreshadowing for something bigger: the Industrial Revolution.

I.2. Industrial Revolution in England: The Dawn of Change

The latter circumstances according to Foster, mainly the growth in the agricultural sector that made more human power flux into the industrial sector that laid the groundwork for the Industrial Revolution, which began in the late eighteenth century in England. The Industrial Revolution heightened capitalism's relationship with its surroundings. Although the mercantilist period's commercial and agricultural revolutions had begun to change the human relationship with the earth on a global scale, mercantilism was primarily a long phase of development bringing about changes through a process of ecological takeover rather than ecological transformation. The advent of machine capitalism enabled the true enslavement of the basic sources of wealth, the soil, and the worker to capital. Driven by its inner logic to commodify such essential elements of industry as land and labour, but unable to do so without destroying the natural and human grounds of existence, capitalism finds itself more at odds with its environment (51-2). Considering this, the consequences of the industrial revolution, as Foster points out, were fatal to both nature and the environment. However, a thorough study of the phenomenon is required in order to reach that conclusion, so what is the industrial revolution?

Haradhan Mohajan answers the question in his article "The First Industrial Revolution: Creation of a New Global Human Era" asserting that the First Industrial Revolution began in England around 1750–1760 and lasted until around 1820–1840. It is regarded as one of the most significant turning events in human history. During this time,

human and animal labour technology evolved into equipment such as the steam engine, spinning jenny, coke smelting, puddling, and rolling processes for making iron, and others. The Industrial Revolution was being resurrected in order to boost global economic growth and expand output and consumer spending. The transportation communication infrastructure via canals, roads, and trains had developed. Banking and other financial systems were also enhanced to help industries and businesses run efficiently (2). Basically, the Industrial Revolution was the process of transition from an agricultural and handicraft-based economy to one centred around industry and machine production. These advancements provided new methods of working and living transforming society profoundly.

Some scholars and historians debate the origin of the Industrial Revolution in terms of change, success, and impact, or more precisely to which country the Industrial Revolution should be labelled to. In his article "Provincializing the First Industrial Revolution," Patrick O'Brien clarifies that:

> Although claims have been made for the Netherlands to be recognized as "the First Modern Economy", nobody disputes that Great Britain became the first national economy to complete a transition to an industrial economy. For more than two centuries the realm's famous transformation has been narrated and explained under such labels as The First Industrial Revolution, the First Industrial Nation or simply as The Industrial Revolution…[It] was a more pervasive and universal achievement, than say the Florentine Renaissance, or the French Revolution. Almost from its inception, the Industrial Revolution has been represented not only as a profound discontinuity for the history of the Hanoverian kingdom but also as a conjuncture of trans-national significance for the future of the world economy, which positioned and periodized European, American, Asian and African histories into a "before" and "after" The Industrial Revolution. (3)

The Industrial Revolution was a more consistent and widespread success than the Florentine Renaissance or the French Revolution, which makes Britain the birthplace and incubator of the industrial revolution. This is also, what Robert C. Allen mentions in his in-depth study of *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* that: "[t]he Industrial Revolution, in short, was invented in Britain in the eighteenth century because it paid to invent it there, while it would not have been profitable in other times and places" (2). This confirms that Britain had had the power as well as resources to make it the right place and time for industrialization to happen. In addition to this, Allen argues that the prices that drove these profitability considerations were the outcome of Britain's success in the global economy after 1500; the Industrial Revolution can be viewed as the sequel to that first phase of globalisation (2). Is Globalization not a relatively novel concept? Indeed, Jim Dator et al., define Globalization in "What is Globalization" as:

> [The] full range of forces and factors that are sweeping across the globe totally unhindered, or barely hindered, by the boundaries and policies of the nation-state. Thus factors in globalization include jet planes, supertankers, and container ships; migratory labor; electronic and genetic communication technologies; anthropogenic global climate change; air, water, and ground pollution; new and revived diseases; religions; criminal and terrorist activities and their countervailing state-terrorist, police, and paramilitary forces; mass media; popular culture; and sports. Globalization also includes the spread of certain ideas, values, and practices, such as "democracy" and "human rights," and "best practices" in all of the factors listed above. (13)

Thus if the definition is seen from the broader perspective of the emergence of new technologies, novel concepts, and a different lifestyle is adopted then indeed the industrial revolution completely covers the first step of globalization pushing people toward change and new trends.

Speaking of change, all the countries that participated deliberately or undeliberatly in the process of industrialization their history is cut into two halves before and after the industrial revolution, and Britain was no exception. Before the Industrial Revolution, people lived in small settlements, walked long distances or rode on horses, and illnesses were widespread regarding the lack of food and health care. James R. Farr in his *World Eras* explains how things were prior to the industrial revolution. People used to work at home or in tiny workshops before the Industrial Revolution. Factories as concentrated manufacturing facilities where numerous jobs were conducted under one roof were uncommon. The light industry like textile production in the cottage industry employed nearly as many people as agriculture did before the industrial revolution. Preindustrial employees' workdays could be as long as those of early factory workers up to fourteen hours (145-9). Nevertheless, all these circumstances changed with the occurrence of the Industrial Revolution. Farr again demonstrates how big, profound, and massive the shift that was brought by the Industrial Revolution in the economy, social life, and politics. He states that between 1750 and 1914, practically every area of European life underwent a tremendous change ushering in the modern age. The Enlightenment's new system of thought, combined with a new economy centred on industrialism, laid the framework for the modern era. Enlightenment thinkers embraced secular reason, concluding that they could change and enhance the human situation by discovering the natural principles that governed the cosmos. The concept of progress that emerged from this fusion of logical optimism and belief in natural rules was nothing short of revolutionary, and it continues to influence Western thought to this day. As Europeans increasingly used machines powered by new energy sources to manufacture a variety of items, industry-driven revolutions occurred. The transition to industrialization was so profound that it reorganised all of the human experience, influencing how Europeans went about their daily lives. Changes in labour and consumption patterns influenced how men and

women perceived themselves and the social groupings to which they belonged. Furthermore, economic transformation in Europe was witnessed around the world as Europeans maintained their global expansion in both official empires and informal economic hegemony. A wave of fundamental political transformation and reform occurred concurrently with the Industrial Revolution. The French Revolution demolished absolute monarchies and promoted the political concepts of liberty and equality. Answers to the questions of what these ideals meant and to whom they would apply would have long-term consequences for political, social, and intellectual growth in the twentieth century (xxvi).

I.2.1. Change on the Expense of Nature: Ecological Crisis

Until now, the industrial revolution seems to have brought only fortune and prosperity to Britain. However, the shining side of industrialization overshadows a dark truth. Theodore L. Steinberg, in his “An Ecological Perspective on the Origins of Industrialization,” highlights that despite all of the academic attention, there is one aspect that has gone unnoticed. The environment's transformation, arguably the most apparent evidence of industrial development, has not been a focus of historical inquiry. The industrial revolution changed the face of the globe transforming the underpinnings of an agricultural society and putting it on the path to contemporary economic development. The human bond with the natural world was severely damaged. New sources of energy and technology were produced and new farming and feeding methods, all of which accompanied the transition to the industrial mode of production. The industrial revolution was part of a massive ecological reorganization, a new and major chapter in the history of the planet's environment (261). Industrialization is unquestionably a significant historical movement that has happened in local, regional, national, continental, and global contexts. While it encompasses social, cultural, political, and geopolitical elements, its consequence may be captured as an economic transition from an

agrarian to an industrial economy and society. In nature, however, the effect was so negative because of the industrial revolution; that nature was changed into a factory.

The fact that the Industrial Revolution harmed the whole ecosphere was recognised from the start. James Hall Nasmyth was a Scottish engineer, artist and inventor famous for his development of the steam hammer. Ironically, In his *James Nasmyth Engineer: An Autobiography*, which is an autobiography where he delivers a vivid description of the situation back then that is second to none. The reader of his lines feels the particles of dust in their noses, and with heavy breaths, their chest tightens, he proceeds:

> The Black Country is anything but picturesque. The earth seems to have been turned inside out. Its entrails are strewn about; nearly the entire surface of the ground is covered with cinder heaps and mounds of scoriae. The coal, which has been drawn from below ground, is blazing on the surface. The district is crowded with iron furnaces, puddling furnaces, and coal-pit engine furnaces. By day and by night the country is glowing with fire, and the smoke of the ironworks hovers over it. There is a rumbling and clanking of iron forges and rolling mills. Workmen covered with smut, and with fierce white eyes, are seen moving about amongst the glowing iron and the dull thud of forge-hammers. Amidst these flaming, smoky, clanging works, I beheld the remains of what had once been happy farmhouses, now ruined and deserted. The ground underneath them had sunk by the working out of the coal, and they were falling to pieces. They had in former times been surrounded by clumps of trees; but only the skeletons of them remained, dilapidated, black, and lifeless. The grass had been parched and killed by the vapours of sulphureous acid thrown out by the chimneys, and every herbaceous object was of a ghastly gray the emblem of vegetable death in its saddest aspect. Vulcan had driven out Ceres. In some places, I heard a sort

> of chirruping sound, as of some forlorn bird haunting the ruins of the old farmsteads. (163)

The Industrial Revolution was propelled by the combustion of coal, and large industrial cities began emitting massive amounts of pollution into the atmosphere. Foster writes that: “Its principal elements were the growth of the factory system, the expansion of wage labor, the increased reliance on machine production, and the rise of the modern industrial city” (53). The definition of an ecological crisis is a situation that arises when the environment of a species or a population undergoes critical changes that destabilize its continuity (Hornby 399). Thus, by definition, the industrial revolution was a massive conjuncture in history.

Foster keeps on preaching in favour of ecology stating that because of the changing conditions brought about by the industrial revolution, Karl Marx argued that nature was increasingly being subordinated to capital. He claimed that the industrial revolution's capitalism disturbed the ecological basis of human existence. All progress in capitalist agriculture is progress in the art of robbing the soil, not just the worker; all progress in improving soil fertility for a short time is progress in destroying the long-term sources of that fertility (63). This drastic change was felt by people of beauty and art to lament reality; Anna Seward writes:

> So with intent transmutant, Chemists bruise
>
> The shrinking leaves and flowers, whose streams saline,
>
> Congealing swift on the recipient’s sides
>
> Shoot into crystals. (lines 77-80)

The economic shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy and society is referred to as industrialization. The Industrial Revolution took place in Britain and had such a severe impact

on nature that it was transformed into a factory. Indeed, Industrialization is undeniably an important historical process that occurred under a variety of circumstances. This event, however, affected the lives of many people. It lured artists and captivated the reaction of others. They were divided into pro-industrialists where people supported the advancement in machinery and the overall development. In addition to the anti-industrialists, specifically poets of that time who lamented nature for the fatal irreversible damage caused by industrialisation.

I.3. The Age of Romanticism: Early Environmentalists

Perhaps the word "change" would not be enough to reflect how radical the change was brought by the Industrial Revolution; satirically the name holds all the meaning: It was a Revolution. Nevertheless, Literature had the power to contain, transcribe, and express the change in forms of art. Richard Hoggart explains how literature imitates and illuminates society in "Literature and Society." He states that: "literature provides in its own right a form of new and distinctive knowledge about society" (277). British Literature of the time indeed reflects society with its virtue and vice. It has a reflective corrective function in which it mirrors the inconveniencies so they are realized and eventually may be corrected. This is why this literature can be considered one of the first disciplines of art to be influenced by the change brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

The literary scene at that point in history was dominated by the Romantics. In fact, the Romantic Movement or Romanticism arose in Britain as a result of, and in some ways in response to, the Industrial Revolution. In the early nineteenth century, several English philosophers and thinkers at that time saw industrialisation as harsh and brutal; they rebelled against what they saw as unpleasant and unnatural. Peter J. Kitson, in his "The Romantic Period, 1780–1832," argues that the significant social, political, and cultural trends that happened between 1780 and 1832 had an impact on the literature created by the men and

women who lived during that period. The latter saw enormous political and social upheaval, with such political events and social processes as the American and French Revolutions, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, the prosecution and criticism of the transatlantic slave trade, the Great Reform Act of 1832, the Industrial Revolution, and much more. Indeed, the Romantic Age saw a significant shift in how many people lived, which was mirrored in the culture of the time (1). However, before delving into the literary movement, a throwback into the history of the word is required. In his *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction,* Michael Ferber endeavours to answer all the questions regarding the romantic era, one is: What is the origin of the word? Ferber answers:

> romantisch became nearly identified with 'modern', or 'Christian', as opposed to 'ancient', while sometimes it was narrowed to a sense connected to Roman as 'novel' and meant 'novelish' or 'novelic', the novel being a characteristically modern genre. Thus launched as a term for a trend in literature, 'Romantic' within a decade or two was received and passionately debated throughout Europe. It is worth remembering, in view of the indelible label later generations have given them, that in Britain neither the exactly contemporaneous 'Lake School' (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Lamb) nor the next generation (Byron, Shelley, Keats, Hunt) nor anyone else called themselves Romantics at the time. (24)

The word "romantic" may elude common readers to think it connotes romance, while it is used to signal what those literary figures of the times believe in and stood against the old principles of neoclassicism. Another important matter to bear in mind is that no intellectual participant in the Romantic Movement labelled themselves as romantics, yet this term was later coined and labelled to them, instead.

There is no consensus on a single definition of Romanticism because there are no defined criteria to restrict the definition of the term for several reasons, such as the meaning of

the word is uncertain, and there is quite a diversity of themes and styles among romantic writers. Despite this, scholars still attempt to offer an inclusive definition like the case of Ferber, when he mentions that Romanticism was a European cultural movement, or a collection of related movements, found in an internalized and symbolic romantic plot, a vehicle for self-discovery and one's relationship with others and with nature. It privileged imagination as a faculty that is higher and more encompassing than reason, which seeks consolation or reconciliation with the natural world, which "detranscendentalize" of religion by treating God or divinity as inherent in nature or soul replacing theological doctrine with metaphors and sentiments. Romanticism glorified poetry and all art as the highest of man's creations and has rebelled against the established rules of neoclassical aesthetics and social norms as well as the policies of the nobility and bourgeois advocating more individual, introspective and emotional values (27). Most certainly, it was a philosophical movement with far-reaching ramifications for sentiments, affections, imagination, and contemplation. Romanticism appeared to restore order to the chaos and to encourage people back to themselves as well as to break from the old traditional notions. Hussein Oroskhan and Esmaeil Zohdi comment on the time in which romanticism came into being stating that: "Romanticism is commonly known to be started by Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems, a collaborative work by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and ended dramatically by the tragic death of its second generation's authors including Byron, Shelly and Keats" (30). Moreover, Peter J. Kitson confirms with more insight, that traditionally, Romanticism was thought to have begun around the time of the French Revolution and to have resulted in specific stylistic and linguistic developments. These advances can be found in the writings of a variety of authors. During the 1790s, William Blake created his prophetic and apocalyptic illuminated books. Many saw Blake's personal vision, conveyed in highly symbolic language and structure as ushering in a new era of revolutionary writing. Similarly,

Wordsworth and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads were published in 1798 (24). These artists shifted their focus away from the classicism of the Age of Pope towards nature, country people, and simplicity of expression.

Romantic poets, despite the mostly shared characteristics, are divided into two generations based on their time of existence. Michael Ferber makes a distinction in which he classifies: “[the] First generation – Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge [and] the ‘second generation’ of poets – Keats, Shelley, and Byron” (55). However, there is a struggle over who to be considered the founding father of romanticism Blake or Wordsworth. Kitson solves this controversy when he adds Blake to the first generation. Much of the first generation of Romantic poets' work arose against the backdrop of the French Revolution and the debate it sparked. In 1789, Blake's illuminated “Songs of Innocence” was published. To accompany his lyrics, Blake created a technique of engraving and printing his own designs. While, in the late 1790s, other famous poets of the first generation of Romantic writers emerged. The renowned collection of *Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems* includes much classic Romantic poetry, such as the earliest version of Coleridge's “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, Wordsworth's major Romantic lyric “Tintern Abbey”, and ballads such as “The Thorn”. Wordsworth's criticism of the eighteenth-century poetic diction, with its ornateness and artificiality, distinguished both his and Coleridge's poetry from that of some of their contemporaries, particularly Blake. During the annus mirabilis of their partnership, 1797–8, Coleridge and Wordsworth wrote much of their most celebrated poetry, including the “Ancient Mariner,” Coleridge's “Conversation Poems”, “Kubla Khan”, and the first half of the unfinished Christabel. Wordsworth also began work on the long poem that would become “The Prelude” after his death, and which many consider to be the ultimate Romantic poetry, in 1799 (30). “William Blake is associated with the Romantic Movement, but chronologically does not belong to it [he belongs to] “Pre-Romantic Poets”, writes Rafaella Vasconcellos (22).

This means that Blake attempted to launch the wave, yet he ended up paving the way for Wordsworth and Coleridge to establish Romanticism without excessive decoration and with a precise delicate choice of diction. The second generation is most of the time not debated. Kitson states that while keeping many "Romantic" views such as the value of passion, the celebration of sublime nature, and spontaneity in poetry, the younger generation of Romantic poets born following the French Revolution rebelled against the elder writers in a variety of ways. In contrast to their forefathers' claimed apostasy, this generation was linked with liberal or radical beliefs (32).

These writers stood up and wrote significantly against the social, psychological, and ecological effects of the newly industrialised Britain believing that unbridled industrialization was completely antithetical to the human soul and men's natural rights. They advocated for powerful imagination, subjectivity, and liberalism that defined this period in their writing. Martin Schutze explains the patterns used by the romantic poets, their perspectives, and their inner beliefs asserting that:

> Reality is exclusively inherent … in the "inner" consciousness, which manifests itself in acts of immediate apperception or intuition. This "inner" consciousness is the Romantic essence of personality. It is spiritual in fact, regarded as an integral part of the spirit of God. This inner being, like objective reality, has three principal parts, the intellectual, the emotional, and the ethical …The term Vernunft, meaning the "highest reason", occurs frequently in Romantic speech. It is always interpreted as incompatible with the Verstand, the analytic understanding, the specific organ of the rationalism of the "enlightenment"… The Romantic Vernunft is thus the intelligent faculty in which the "soul", the "heart", and the "absolute will" attain identity. This use of Vernunft, apart from the Romantic development of the term "emotion." (57-8)

The Romantics were not related to the Industrial Revolution merely because of their temporal existence or because they happened to coincide with the time of the revolution. It is much bigger than this, many Romantic thinkers and artists felt that the modern industrial world was cruel and dulling to the senses and soul, and they urged for a return to nature. Schutze explains again that:

> The "inner" being, in all and in any of its terms, including Vernunft, finds its complete embodiment in “Nature”. And in the same manner, in which the individual “soul” or “spirit” is an integral part of the “soul” or “spirit” of God […] Nature is thus the symbol of the soul. Romanticism is nature animism. It follows from this that “nature” offers the complete and sufficient tangible evidence of the soul. The laws of nature, therefore, must be the laws of the inner being. Nature embodies and manifests all the fundamental truths, motives, and standards of conduct. Nature thus, in the Romantic view, is not primarily part of external or objective reality, but merely the outer or sense-form of the “inner” or spiritual reality. It is inner being in terms of sense. “Nature” and “inner”, or “inmost” being become interchangeable. (58-9)

Since the Industrial Revolution is a threat to nature, there was a conflict between the romantics and the massive urge to correspond to the necessities of that age achieving economic advancement through the exploitation of the soil, hence nature.

I.3.1. Keats: With Difficulty there is Ease

The fact that poets lived and wrote during the Romantic period, Wordsworth and Keats, for instance, used conflicting techniques and aesthetic notions in their poetry. Sara Cossu puts this matter into question in her “Of Daffodils and Nightingales: The Dialectic between Poet and Poetical Object in Wordsworth and Keats.” She claims that if critics do not succumb to the temptation to view the Romantics as a cohesive group of poets who shared the

same ideas about writing poetry, then they should admit the fact that "Romanticisms" exist rather than just one “Romanticism,” a term that unfairly erases the significant differences between its protagonists. Wordsworth and Keats' “Romanticisms,” for example, represent two entirely opposite thoughts on poetry and, most crucially, the duty of the poet, despite the fact that they may often build on the same issues such as the essential motif of nature (3). In her conclusion, Cossu adds a crucial point about Keats’ tendencies in literature and writing. Despite the fact that Keats looked up to Wordsworth as a mentor and was undoubtedly inspired by his poetry, they adopted contrasting poetical approaches in their writings particularly with the dialectic of the poet and its poetical target (9). Nobody can deny the substantial weight of Wordsworth’s poetry on Keats. This explains the propensity and the temperamental orientation of Keats towards nature regarding his love and affection for his predecessor, which urged him to walk the same path and amount to his level. However, this does not mean that the two cannot differ on an aesthetic level. According to Keats' aesthetics, the poet does not impose himself on the object he wishes to describe, but rather empathetically transforms himself via self-annihilation. This made Keats a towering figure.

To better identify the man, Hillas Smith provides the abridged biography about Keats in his article “John Keats: Poet, Patient, Physician”, he mentions that John Keats, the child of an ostler, was born in London in 1795. Despite an early interest in literature, he was apprenticed to an apothecary and pursued his medical education at Guy's Hospital, earning the Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries in 1816. He never laboured in medicine. His early poems were not well accepted, and life was difficult for the young poet with limited income. Tragedy was added to the difficulty when tuberculosis, which had already caused the death of his mother and uncle, became visible in his brother Tom, whom Keats nursed through his sickness when the brothers were living together in Hampstead. Following that, Keats developed the disease, but despite its swift progression, he managed to compose some of the

finest lyrical poetry in the language in a single year of 1819. He journeyed to Italy in the hopes of finding a cure, but he died in Rome in 1821 at the age of 25. Medicine clearly helped the man, but it also helped Keats, his training, family history, and personal experience with tuberculosis testify for themselves. More subtly, his medical experience influenced to some extent his beliefs and even his choice of diction (390). However, this piece seems to be missing an element that defines Keats as a poet. In addition to his social predicament and his health problems, there is his unfathomable love for nature that contributed to the perfection of the deep melancholic nature of his poetry.

Nature was one of Keats' most significant sources of inspiration declares Paola Bertolino in her seminar paper. Keats had a cult for nature like Wordsworth, but unlike him, he saw other forms of beauty that he could translate into poetry without the use of memory; he just embellished it with his Imagination. While Wordsworth believed that “sweet melodies are made sweeter by distance in time”, Keats believed that “heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter”, which means that beauty imagined is supreme to beauty perceived because the senses are more limited than the Imagination and its creative power. While Wordsworth's love of nature is clearly explained by the fact that he grew up in the Lake District, thus inspired by the intriguing landscape, Keats' love of nature is more difficult to comprehend because he was a city man. As a result, unlike Wordsworth, who had a spiritual affinity with nature, Keats looked at nature with an aesthetic eye reproducing the physical universe including all living things (3). Keats simply could see within the heart of things. Driven by his miserable upbringing, he was conscious of the physical finitude and aware of the spiritual permanence. Consequently for him, art is the appreciation and portrayal of that eternal component of nature. Keats’ poetry is the true expression of reminiscence about man’s separation from nature, or better say, Mother Earth.

I.4. Ecocritical Approach: From Egoism to Ecoism

Probably the most quoted definition of ecocriticism is that of Cheryll Glotfelty in her introduction to the *Ecocriticism Reader*, where she defines ecocriticism as: "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (9). It is uncanny to deliver such a small definition to a field of study that normally requires a widely-known set of assumptions, doctrines, or procedures, which the lack of them will obviously open the door for endless interpretations as well as criticism. Glotfelty divulges: "I am toying with words, in the hope they will raise some questions about ecocriticism and its future" (53). Seemingly, that is the objective after all. Pippa Marland provides a more narrowed definition in her article "Ecocriticism" as follows:

> Ecocriticism is an umbrella term for a range of critical approaches that explore the representation in literature (and other cultural forms) of the relationship between the human and the non-human, largely from the perspective of anxieties around humanity's destructive impact on the biosphere. Other terms for the field include "environmental criticism" and "green cultural studies", the latter term reflecting the increasing diversity of the field's remit. (846)

This definition serves the best interest of the first one regarding that it sets so few boundaries against the development of the field. Marland mentions two other terms to be used interchangeably as it appears "environmental criticism" and "green cultural studies" to refer to ecocriticism. Again, it is very blurry because of so many alternatives, so what is exactly ecocriticism? The short answer is that there is no consensus on what ecocriticism really is. In fact, it is more of a self-identifying interdisciplinary movement. Nirmal Selvamony asserts that: "ecocritics are not agreed on what constitutes the basic principle in ecocriticism, whether it is bios, or nature or environment or place or earth or land. Since there is no consensus, there is no common definition" (qtd. in Buell 88).

Lawrence Buell in *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* defines the term ecocriticism as an umbrella word for the study of literature with an emphasis on the environment. When compared to terms like literature and environment studies (which do not explicitly signal a "natural" environment) or environmental criticism, ecocriticism may be thought too limited to encompass the actual range of critical practises because it gestures toward biological science and the "natural" as opposed to the "built" environment (which better implies the wide interdisciplinary range of methods so-called ecocritics employ) (138). This idea of the "natural" and the "built" is quite common in Keats' works. In an attempt to make obscurities clearer, Peter Burry in *Beginning Theory* endeavours to distinguish between two terms "Ecocriticism" and "Green Studies." Basically, it is a matter of origin. The literary roots of ecocriticism in the United States can be traced back to three major nineteenth-century American writers whose work celebrates nature, the life force, and the wilderness as manifested in America: Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). All three were members of the transcendentalists, a group of New England authors, essayists, and thinkers who constituted the first significant literary movement in America to gain cultural independence from European models. In contrast, the British version of ecocriticism, or green studies, is based on British Romanticism of the 1790s rather than American transcendentalism of the 1840s. Jonathan Bate, author of *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*, is a pioneering figure on the British side. British ecocritics also argue that many of their issues are expressed (before the word "ecocriticism") in Raymond Williams' book *The Country and the City* (1973) (161-2). Lawrence Buell validates the same idea as follows:

> Ecocriticism began around 1990 as an initiative within literary studies, specifically within English and American literature, from two semi-coordinated and interpenetrating epicenters: British romanticism, with a genre focus especially on

> poetry in that tradition (including its twentieth-century Anglo-American filiations), and U.S. nature writing (ditto), with a genre focus especially on the Thoreauvian imprint. (89)

The infrastructure of ecocriticism in the UK is less developed than that in the United States. The emergence of two separate national variations of the ecological approach points to a situation in which British cultural materialism and American new historicism are clearly related in their methodologies and goals, but differ in focus and 'ancestry. The preferred American term is “ecocriticism”, whereas “green studies” is more commonly used in the UK. American writing has a tendency to be celebratory in tone (occasionally degenerating into what harder-left critics disparagingly call “tree-hugging”, whereas the British variant tends to be more 'minatory.' That is, it seeks to warn us of environmental threats emanating from governmental, industrial, and neocolonial forces (Burry 161-2).

Today, less than a century later, our race's impact on the environment has grown so powerful that it has transformed in essence. When the first cannons were fired in the early fourteenth century, they had an impact on ecology by sending workers scurrying to the forests and mountains in search of additional potash, sulphur, iron ore, and charcoal, resulting in some erosion and deforestation. Hydrogen bombs are a different breed: a conflict with them may alter the genetics of all life on Earth. By 1285, London had a smog problem caused by the burning of soft coal, but our current use of fossil fuels threatens to affect the chemistry of the entire global atmosphere, with repercussions, we are only now beginning to understand (White 5). Even though “The word ecology first appeared in the English language in 1873” (5), as White states, the interest in environmental issues took time until the 1960s to launch as a scientific field entirely concerned with environmental studies and reoccurring ecological problems. The 1960s are often regarded as the beginning of the type of environmental

consciousness that serves as the backdrop to ecocriticism. In fact, Glotfelty elaborates on the fact that the coinage of the term of "ecocriticism" is equally recent:

> The term ecocriticism was possibly first coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (reprinted in this anthology). By ecocriticism, Rueckert meant "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature."Rueckert's definition, concerned specifically with the science of ecology. (10)

Actually, the release of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 was heralded as the beginning of "modern environmentalism" (Garrard 1). Although other works that were considered as embodying early elements of ecocritical practice emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, the movement was sluggish to establish itself. The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, the first professional organisation of ecocritics, was founded in the United States in 1992, followed in 1993 by the establishment of its magazine, ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment. In 1998, a sister organisation in the United Kingdom (now encompassing the UK and Ireland), with its own journal *Green Letters*, first published in 2000. One element affecting this delayed progress was probably the humanities' reluctance to engage in what was often viewed as a scientific problem and the province of the environmental sciences. Another difficulty was speaking for the earth itself regarding that it is nearly impossible to represent and speak on behalf of a silent entity. Yet, if the voice of the latter entity is actually put into words, are those really the real words of it? Furthermore, other schools of theory that were gaining traction in the 1970s, such as feminism and post-colonialism, delayed the emergence of ecocriticism due to their preoccupation with giving voice to the repressed by challenging the political and social discourse of the time (847-8).

Ecocriticism, according to Pippa Marland, came in four waves. The first wave, which this dissertation utilizes and Keats' poems revolve around, is entitled "Reinstating the 'Real'."

It was particularly in the United States, focused on the depiction of the world beyond the text in literature giving much of its attention to the quest for forms of literary expression that could best convey an environmental message (848). In the second wave called "Debating 'Nature'," Buell stipulates that Second-wave ecocriticism has attempted to go far beyond the first wave's restrictions of genre, region, and historical period. By the early twenty-first century, environmental criticism has begun to encompass the entire scope of Western literary history from antiquity to the present. It has also spread throughout eastern and southern Asia, as well as Anglo-Europe and the Anglophone diaspora (qtd. in Marland 851). Marland labelled the third wave as "Eco-Cosmopolitics." It was defined by Scott Slovic and Joni Adamson who welcomed the emergence of ecocriticism's third wave in 2009 as a development that: "recognises ethnic and national particularities and yet transcends ethnic and national boundaries," exploring "all facets of human experience from an environmental viewpoint" (qtd. in Marland 854). For the fourth and last wave of ecocriticism marked as "Material Ecocriticism: Post-Human and Post-Nature," Marland states that: "The fourth wave should be regarded as co-existent with rather than superseding the third (or indeed the other strands of ecocriticism) and has only very recently been identified" (855). It is a new branch of material ecocriticism.

With nature and environment being two of the primary themes of ecocritical theory, it is not surprising that the Romantic era is quite important to the ecocritical reader. Kevin Hutchings expresses it this way:

> Because Romantic literature often appears to value the non-human world most highly, celebrating nature as an beneficent antidote to the crass world of getting and spending, and lamenting its perceived destruction at the hands of technological industrialism and capitalist consumerism, Romanticism has provided much fertile ground for ecocritical theory and practice. (172-3)

In his *Ecocriticism*, Greg Garrard states that it is important to note that the questions offered by ecocriticism in Glotfelty's narrative follow a defined trajectory. For example, the first inquiry is fairly restricted and literary favouring the student of Romantic verse. Thus, analyses of Wordsworth and Shelley were two of the most important works of study for ecocriticism in the 1990s (3-4). In fact, Romantic poetry excelled at extracting and describing the natural elements. “To a remarkable degree external nature—the landscape, together with its flora and fauna—became a persistent subject of poetry, and was described with accuracy and sensuous nuance unprecedented in earlier writers [Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats]” (Abrams 178). Garrard mentions pastoral as another important aspect of Romantic poetry that has profoundly influenced our conceptions of nature. The former has resulted in the Romantic Movement’s artistic reactions to the Industrial Revolution (33). Indeed, the rise of the pastoral concept came into being as Kevin Hutchings explains it: “ [I]t was during the Romantic era, which witnessed a sharp rise in urban populations and an increasingly industrialized economy, that environmental problems became much more severe and noticeable, taking on a new sense of urgency” (175). This intertwining of both Romanticism and ecocriticism offers diverse perspectives on the environment and how humans engage with it. Each Romantic figure has a unique perspective on nature allowing the ecocritical reader to examine Romantic literature from a variety of perspectives. One of the most relevant common grounds between ecocriticism and Romanticism is that during the romantic period writer returned to nature in their writing, while ecocritics found nature in different pieces of literature, which they used to tackle aspects like ecology and environment. Consequently, the Romantics can be considered one of the early movements that has introduced humanity to nature with its beauty signalling men’s exploitative activities throughout the Industrial Revolution in pieces of art, notably poetry.

The term “nature” holds the essence for ecocritics yet ecocriticism is more than just the study of nature as it appears in literature. It holds a large remit of analysis where it extends to include history, social background and more:

> Ecocriticism, therefore, is not simply the study of Nature or natural things in literature; rather, it is any theory that is committed to effecting change by analyzing the function—thematic, artistic, social, historical, ideological, theoretical, or otherwise—of the natural environment, or aspects of it, represented in documents (literary or other) that contribute to material practices in material worlds. (Estok 14)

So as a concept, it is a challenge to define nature and reach a consensus about it. However in a study conducted by Fehnker et al., they attempt to settle on a definition for the word nature. In their survey, half of the respondents settled on these definitions of “nature as being something of which neither humans, nor human influence or activities, are a part of”, “nature is anything that humans have not touched”, “nature is anything that is not human”, [and] “nature is anything that has not been created by humans” (365). Anil Kumar attempts to define the environment stating that: “[It] generally refers to the ‘natural surrounding’, that is, it covers the physical surroundings that are common to all living beings” (314). In reality, however, there is no nature alone and environment apart, which makes the solitary definition of both terms hard to realize in the real world, yet the two concepts intertwine to form the surroundings or in other words, the world.

The study of Keats’ poetry from an ecocritical scope necessitates some ecocritical terms to assess the depth to which Keats relies on natural elements to project his concerns and attitudes. The first concept is ecological consciousness (eco-consciousness):

> In general terms the ecological consciousness is understood as a reflection of the psyche of a variety of man's relationship with nature, which mediate its behavior in the

> "natural world", and express axiological position of the subject of consciousness in relation to the natural world. And studies show that environmental consciousness is a complex mental education, which includes cognitive, regulatory, emotional, ethical, and other aspects. (Panov 380)

The second concept is the term deep ecology. Buell suggests that:

> Deep ecology envisages, then, a relational understanding of selfhood "based on active identification with wider and wider circles of being" (Mathews 221). This biospherical inclusiveness, together with deep ecology's rapid transformation from a philosophical position to a movement that has tended "to avoid philosophical honing" (Hay 42), has been responsible for its being sometimes used as a synonym for ecocentric persuasions generally. Yet the emphasis deep ecology typically attaches to realization of (a transformed) self through identification with nature has provoked some to argue that it is actually anthropocentric relative to ecosystem-based or respect-for-nature ethics (Katz 2000). (137)

And the last concept is Pastoral. Buell defines pastoral as:

> [P]astoral, anti-pastoral, post-pastoral Traditional pastoral, dating from the poetry of Theocritus, is a stylized representation of rusticity in contrast to and often in satire of urbanism, focusing in the first instance on the life of shepherds. In the early modern and romantic eras, as in seventeenth-century English country house poems and in Wordsworthian lyric, pastoral becomes more mimetically particularized, and more given over to representation of country ways that are being displaced by enclosure and/or urbanization. A concurrent instance of this turn from fictive Arcadia toward material referent was for the sites of European colonization to be conceived in pastoral terms, as areas of natural and even edenic possibility. (144)

These terms are applied to Keats' poems to highlight their different natural dimensions and to understand the depth of his sense of ecology and close relationship to nature.

Britain and change have a common history. Indeed, men's exploitative acts were not only witnessed during the Industrial Revolution but also before agriculture had begun some thousands years ago. This accumulated to result in the birth of new conceptions and beliefs mainly capitalism which was the novel dominant ideology of the time. It has grown so powerful that exploitation of nature has become increasingly widespread, and the profit concept has become the norm. Britain's landholding system was radicalised and released from the hard laws of property ownership to a flexible set of norms written by the parliament, with most limitations removed. Britain became a unique country among others as a result of the agricultural revolution. Nonetheless, this accelerated shift foreshadowed something significantly larger: The Industrial Revolution. Industrialization refers to the economic transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy and society. The British Industrial Revolution had such a negative influence on nature that it was obliterated. Indeed, industrialization is a significant historical development that took place under a range of conditions. This tragedy, however, had a significant impact on the lives of many people. A small proportion of these people were called the Romantics. The Romantics formed a movement that is now known as the Romantic Movement. At the time of the Industrial Revolution, their writings and style prevailed. Their main source of writing revolved around nature. These writers spoke out strongly against the social, psychological, and environmental consequences of the newly industrialised Britain arguing that unfettered industrialisation was entirely opposed to the human spirit and men's basic rights. In their works, they advocated for imagination, subjectivity, and liberalism, which distinguished this age. The Romantics were not linked to the Industrial Revolution just by their temporal presence or because they happened to exist at the same time as the revolution. Many Romantic philosophers and artists

believed that the new industrial society was harsh and dulling to the senses and spirit, and they advocated for a return to nature. Since nature is at the core of their beliefs, ecocriticism is the primary theory that concerns itself with different views about nature. Ecocriticism is the interdisciplinary study of the relationship between literature and ecology in which scholars evaluate texts that show environmental concerns among others and investigate the many ways literature approaches the subject of nature. In this inquiry, Keats' poems are under investigation using the ecocritical approach.

Chapter II: "Ode to a Nightingale": A Journey, an Epiphany, and a Resurrection

The second chapter is analytical and divided into two main sections. The first section discusses how the natural world is represented in "Ode to a Nightingale," with a strong emphasis on the nightingale. It gives insight into the functions of the nightingale in this poem displaying Keats' ecological awareness. The second section delves into Keats' eco-spirit[1] representing his eco-consciousness, as well as what nature truly means to him. As a result, this section elucidates Keats' implicit responses to the exploitative actions that contributed to environmental destruction during the industrialization period, particularly in England. Furthermore, this section underlines the value of nature in the ode, emphasising the possible connection between it and man. Finally, Keats' powers of imagination, escapist proclivities, and affinity with Mother Nature eventually lead to his reward in the form of self-realisation through a journey beyond conventional boundaries while also making him cognizant of his imminent mortality.

II.1. The Representation of the Natural World but Ode For a "Nightingale"

Nature has always been highly valued in Romantic literature. Indeed, Romantic poets regarded nature as their source of inspiration offering adoration of beauty, sought comprehension of the world through it, and simultaneously criticised the dominance of Britain's rising industrialisation. They are fond of nature's mystery, which led them to find nature to be a never-ending source of poetic ammunition. It provided Romantic poets with much more than merely an exhibited entity, but a dwelling in which they engage with their

[1] This is a concept coined by the writer of this research to mean individual identity based on the active conscious identification with nature. Eco-spirit is used to refer to what is beyond ecocentrism. The latter is defined as: "The view in environmental ethics that the interest of the eco-sphere must override that of the interest of individual species. Used like the semi-synonymous biocentrism in antithesis to anthropocentrism" (Buell 137). Eco-spirit is meant as the last phase of deep ecology where humans no longer see themselves equal to nature but part of it. It is about making nature as an intrinsic feature of anything; nature as the innate entity and an internal driving force that governs the universe, consequently humans. In a rather genuine way, the earth is identical to us. It is neither a source of survival, nor a venue for our business. Once one is inspirited by nature, it becomes a dynamic, important, and actual component of our existence. We become one!

spiritual essence allowing their imaginations to run wild. These feelings towards nature and the propensities toward beauty were presented in the form of odes. In his *A Glossary of Literary Terms,* M. H. Abrams defines the Ode as: "A long lyric poem that is serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure … The prototype was established by the Greek poet Pindar, whose odes were modeled on the songs by the chorus in Greek drama" (198). The ode has, then, its roots in the Greek drama. It is a poem of praise that is dedicated to something meaningful. Usually, this "something" is ephemeral such as love, beauty, and death. Abrams also emphasised the Romantic poets' use of this form stating that: "[they] perfected the personal ode of description and passionate meditation, which is stimulated by (and sometimes at its close reverts to) an aspect of the outer scene and turns on the attempt to solve either a personal emotional problem or a generally human one" (198). Nature, according to Abrams, provided the stimulus for those writers to delve into another world in an attempt to comprehend human existence.

John Keats as a romantic was no different. Nature was Keats' most essential source of inspiration. He simply saw, unlike commoners, another form of beauty that he could transform into poetry without the aid of memory; he simply embellished it with his imagination. Keats preferred the ode genre and excelled in using it to meet his own needs as Heidi Scott explains in "Keats's Ode to a Nightingale" that: "The ode form is appropriate for prolonged mental excursions, yet the momentum remains alive with the tight, regular meter and rhyme, the footprint of his ode stanza" (139). This was Keats' manner to depict the subject-object harmony attained between an individual and nature. This unity with the natural world is what inspires him to produce art propelling him higher up the evolutionary ladder and further to the eternal bliss; Keats felt that he could only be found through this kind of poetry. His odes bring us to the enchanted world of nature's mysterious theatre where the reader gets the chance to see beyond the static images to behold the vividly moving elements

of nature. Nasser Ud-din Sofi in “Treatment of Nature by Romantic Poets” refers to Keats’ keenness to nature and the depth of his emotions towards its sites and melodies stating that:

> Keats expresses the beauty of both real and artistic forms of nature. Everything in nature for him is full of wonder and mystery-the rising sun, the moving cloud, the growing bud and the swimming fish. His love for nature is purely sensuous and he loves the beautiful sights and scenes of nature for their own sake. He believes that a thing of beauty is a joy forever. He looks with child-like delight at the objects of nature. (81)

Indeed, this reveals Keats’ heightened sensibility and the aesthetic values he was well-known for. He was one of nature's most ardent lovers and admirers. All of this was manifested in his series of odes written in 1819. “Ode to a Nightingale” is one of the most admired regular romantic odes in English literature. It is the second of six odes: “Ode to Psyche”, “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, “Ode on Melancholy”, “Ode on Indolence”, and “To Autumn”.

II.1.1. The Nightingale: Between Truth and Fantasy

In this particular ode, the reader can experience a series of impressions when the poet is enchanted and immersed in the nightingale's melody. The whole scenery stimulates the author’s senses in which he can perceive the beauty in nature and contemplates life, death, and how poetry can transcend time. Specifically, how poetry provides images that can lead to deeper insight. Heidi Scott turns to the time of the composition of the ode with its specificities declaring that:

> In May, Keats embarked on the “Ode to a Nightingale,” a Horatian ode extemporaneously composed in the garden at Hampstead Heath. The Horatian ode is meditative and restrained; it is not so much a celebration of its subject as a deep contemplation sparked by some externality. It provides the most regular stanzas of any

> of his odes, with a rhyme scheme (ababcdecde) that is, in actuality, the quatrain of a Shakespearean sonnet joined with the sestet of a Petrarchan sonnet. It forsakes the rhyming couplets, with their jocular but irreverent and "pouncing" effect. (139)

"Ode to a Nightingale" is famous for its natural elements and scenery, the quality of evoking a keen sense of sadness and sympathy, and the ability to find appropriate expression for the poet's thoughts. George W. Whiting, in "Charlotte Smith, Keats, and the Nightingale," asserts that the poem is a moving piece of art stating that: "In the vividness of its imagery, in the poignancy and intensity of its emotion, in what Forman calls the "absolute felicity" of its phrasing, Keats's ode is unique" (7). James O'Rourke in *Keats's Odes and Contemporary Criticism* mentions that Charles Brown, Keats's close friend, recalls the poem's composition, stating that "Keats returned one morning from sitting on the grass under a plum tree with some scraps of paper in his hand...[that] contained [Keats'] poetic feeling on the song of the nightingale" (174). In fact, the initial setting brought about the revelation to the whole poem. Throughout the ten stanzas Keats wrote, there are varieties of elements of nature that exist such as the "beechen green", "Hippocrene", "Moon", "starry Fays", "The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild", "White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine", "violets cover'd up in leaves", "musk-rose", and the "valley-glades." From an ecocritical standpoint, this reflection of Keats upon the natural elements and the feeling of amazement those lines project proves his eco-consciousness. However, the title of the ode foretells how the whole piece revolves around the central position of the bird amongst all other natural elements of the poem. In the midst of nature, the nightingale throws Keats off balance into a state of oblivion as if he had a drug. The bird calls Keats through his divine melody to mark the opening of Keats' imagination into a joyful, carefree, and a soft residence to be away from all the troubles of the mortal world into an immaculate immortal world of the nightingale. George W. Whiting comments, "Keats, who was moved by real sorrow … achieved in his ode a memorable

expression of his melancholy mood. Transported on the wings of poesy, he sought in imagination surcease from sorrow. But the beauty of nature and the charm of the song of the nightingale brought only temporary relief" (7).

What Whiting describes as a "temporary relief" was actually to Keats, a journey of shifting from one state to another. LokRaj Sharma, in "Representation of Natural World in Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale'," mentions that the poet grew restless waiting to hear the nightingale's song. He became drowsy as if he took a significant amount of hemlock or another sleep-inducing substance. He finished drinking the water from Lethewards. The latter is a river in the underworld in Greek mythology. When people drink its water, they forget! The water of Lethe-wards is thought to have intoxicating properties that allow the poet to forget the harsh realities of life. He took the nightingale as a light-winged Dryad of the trees. In Greek mythology, a wood nymph, also known as hamadryad, is a nymph or nature spirit who dwells in trees and assumes the form of a beautiful young woman. Dryads were originally oak tree spirits (drys: "oak"), but the word was later given to all tree nymphs. It is presumed that they live only as long as the trees live (55). In fact, Keats in all of his poems keeps a similar pattern of having a female entity that his poetry revolves around. Helen Vendler in *The Odes of John Keats* draws the conclusion that:

> Once again Keats must find a female divinity to worship, and we ask whether it will be a classical goddess-like Psyche, or allegorized motives like Fame, Ambition, and Poesy, or an artwork like the unravished bride-urn, or an allegorized emotion like Melancholy, or a tragic Muse like Moneta, or a figure from nature like the nightingale. (233)

Margaret Homans also reflects on the same notion of the sex of the bird but with a propensity towards the human psyche and what could a poet possibly utilize a female entity for. She argues that:

> A female figure promises a dissolution of the poet's identity … the poem begins with empathy with a female figure (the nightingale is a "dryad" and inevitably embodies an allusion to Philomela) and the pleasurable loss of identity, in a scene of gorgeous darkness … the speaker is returned (if painfully) to his "sole self", while she continues down the dark passages he has resisted. (355)

Feminising nature is actually quite common in the western discourse, scholars and critics usually address nature as Mother Nature. Similarly, Keats sees nature as a mother. Critics have tackled Keats' poem from a diversity of perspectives mainly about the sex of the bird as an element of nature. However, what they have failed to perceive is that the nightingale serves much more than what they have deciphered. Indeed, the bird's voice transcends and breaches the boundaries existing between nature and humankind.

This research argues that the nightingale has two main functions. For the first half of the poem, there is a unity between the bird and Keats. The first five stanzas revolve around the whole process of being separated from the bird in a mundane human state, then evolving with the bird shaping what Keats referred to as "wings of poesy." In this manner, Keats keeps the words inspired by nature and beauty (poesy) and acquires the "wings" that belong to the bird. This capacity allows Keats to enter the world of the nightingale saying "away! away! for I will fly to thee" (line 31), where he finds: "The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;/ White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;/ Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves" (lines 45-7). From an ecocritical perspective, this unity with the bird or the association of the human kind with nature can be read as a proof of Keats' deep ecology, which is also a rejection of the notion of anthropocentrism. The latter suggests a human centred point of view in which human beings are dominant in the hierarchy of earth, but Keats totally rejects this idea and considers himself equal to the bird. Reflecting back on the Industrial Revolution, which was the first step into nature's death, Timothy W. Luke in his *Ecocritique* asserts that: "deep

ecologists turn to repressed, ignored, or forgotten visions of ecological living, which persist beneath, behind, or beyond the existing structures of industrial society" (4). From this, we can also conclude that the high sense of ecological consciousness Keats shows in this poem makes him a deep ecologist.

The second function of the nightingale in the poem serves a metaphorical purpose. The bird is the voice of nature through which Keats is called upon. To Keats, that melody of the nightingale is the soft tone he has longed for quite some time, a voice of a mother. Luke gives deeper insight by asserting that self-realization is defined as spiritual development or the blossoming of one's inner essence. This begins when we stop understanding or seeing ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos and begin to identify with other humans beginning with our family and friends and progressing to our species. However, a deep ecology sense of self necessitates further maturation and growth, an identification that extends beyond humanity to incorporate the nonhuman world (6). With the reoccurring deaths in his family, Keats sought refuge in Mother Nature and she had him in her lap taking him away to numb his pains through the nightingale's song, offering her final moral lesson into a journey of self-realization.

II.2. Keats Eco-spirit: An Inspirited Man

II.2.1. A Balance of Opposites: Human World vs. Fantasy World

Keats' poem heavily relies on common literary techniques and devices. Together, the application of these poetic techniques can help one poem stand out from another to draw the readers into the rich pictures of it and help them realise the actual essence of his works. They also convey profound insight, emotional intensity, and rich imagery. For the latter to be achieved, one technique Keats opens up the poem with is opposition. He employs opposition not merely to signal a conflict but to build rhetoric. David Goodwin, in "Toward a grammar and rhetoric of visual opposition," states that: "Clearly, opposition is one of the key terms, if

not a governing principle, of classical rhetorical theory and practice" (92). Then proceeds with defining opposition as: "Opposition is a binary relation characterized by marked, qualitative differences whose paired terms display linearity, symmetry, contrariety, commutation, and contrariety on any one of a variety of levels: difference, distinction, division, or conflict" (95). It is then often compulsory to consider poetry in terms of style and the kind of balance of opposites that exists between the poem's negative and positive aspects. Therefore, the examination of Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" from this lens would establish a valid ground for the analysis. A detailed examination of the poem's opening stanza results in a noticeable contrast between the negative terms in the first half of this first stanza and the positive words in the second half. More than that, the negative words all refer to the poet, whilst the positive terms all refer to the Nightingale. However, it goes far beyond that. Some quite distinct differences between these two groups of words can be detected. The most basic difference is probably between the words "aches" in the first half of the poem and "ease" in the second half. Some other additional contrasts such as "dull" and "light", "emptied" and "full", and "Dryad" represent the spirit and "sense", the world of the physical body.

Because of this, Keats describes sinking with an overpowering sense of uneasiness into a trancelike state after hearing the nightingale's voice in the first lines of "Ode to a Nightingale," the poem opens:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk (1-4)

The opening lines immediately push the reader to feel the gradual shifting mood described in the first Stanza. Juxtapositions, as explained above, emerge from the combination of "ache"

"numbness", and "pain" as though the speaker is imprisoned between two distinct states of existence, one of suffering "ache" and the other of acute senselessness "numbness". The following comparisons to hemlock and opium, on the other hand, abandon the "pain" and instead emphasise the connection to senselessness. Indeed, in ancient Greece, hemlock was traditionally employed as a method of execution as Colin Wells describes in "The Mystery of Socrates' Last Words" that: "Athens' ever-curious philosophical gadfly had been tried and convicted by an Athenian court, which condemned him to death for impiety and corrupting the young. As he awaited execution, which would come in the form of a cup of hemlock" (137). Enid Bloch in "Hemlock Poisoning and the Death of Socrates: Did Plato Tell the Truth?" carries on stating that: "Plato describes a slowly ascending paralysis, beginning in Socrates' feet and creeping steadily up his legs toward his chest" (1). Keats depicts a sense of creeping numbness in the first few words of the poem, yet the reference to hemlock even furthers the label beyond the stanzas, connecting the speaker to classical periods. Similarly, opium was utilised in medicine as a rudimentary type of anaesthetic and pain relief, and it was also used as a medicine to induce a trancelike state of blissful forgetfulness. Stefano George B, et al. in "Reciprocal Evolution of Opiate Science from Medical and Cultural Perspectives," mention some of the consequences of opium noted by a welsh physician. The effects are ""alienation of the mind", "loss of memory", "cold sweats" and "vomiting", as well as "death", and notes that many of these non-lethal outcomes are similar to "drinking a great quantity of wine in a short time" (2891-2). The medical memory of Keats seems to be serving him right as he is in total accordance with science. These aforementioned substances the hemlock and opium are used by the speaker to sink further reaching "Lethe-wards" into oblivion. Spyros Syropoulos, in *A Bestiary of Monsters*, affirms that in Greek Mythology: "[The] entrance to the underworld … Lethe [is the] river of forgetfulness" (86). Thus, the first

lines have an archaic feeling of despair and longing which establish the tone for the rest of the poem.

In the coming lines of the first stanza, it is unclear if the nightingale's song generates a pleasant or a painful experience. “Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, but being too happy in thy happiness” (lines 5-6). John P. Fruit, in “Keats's Ode to Nightingale,” inquires: “How many times do you suppose Keats had taken some ' dull opiate ' to sink ' Lethewards' from physical pain? Most naturally this is the source of the figure by which he would express the effect of being too happy in the happiness of the ' light-winged Dryad of the trees” (194). He suggests that the “pain” is caused, at least in part, by pleasure. The “ache” thus appears to relate to both pleasure and pain at the same time where a profound yearning and a painful happiness is caused by the nightingale's song. Fruit further explains that: “[Keats is] longing to be with the sweet-voiced bird ' in some melodious plot of beechen green” (194). These two lines, however “'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, / But being too happy in thine happiness,” (lines 5-6) carry a deeper significance. Keats in the middle of the first stanza foreshadows the existence of two different worlds. A world of human beings or environment and a world of the nightingale or nature. The poet is having conflicting sentiments about the nightingale and there is a sense of amazement of the ecological harmony existing between the nightingale and his world. Once again, this previous idea proves Keats’ ecological consciousness as well as his jealousy to establish an ecological harmony with nature same as the bird. The nightingale, “in shadows numberless, Singest of summer in full-throated ease” (line 10). This is because “Ode to a Nightingale” was written in and inspired by spring, the bird serves as a bell for the coming season which is summer. However, this contradiction of happiness and sorrow shows what Earl R. Wasserman, in *The Finer Tone: Keats' Major Poems,* describes as an instability stating that: “The juxtaposition of the two empathies excites the instability of the poet’s condition, for the perfection of the nightingale’s happiness

underscores the uneasiness of the poet" (188). The first stanza concludes with the speaker realising that his pleasure is dependent on being united with that of the bird. This realisation leads to another revelation, which is the lack of the pure bliss that the nightingale possesses. In fact, the poet longs for it.

II.2.2. The Nightingale: Voice and Dwelling

In the second stanza, the speaker yearns for: "O for a draught of vintage! ... Tasting of Flora and the country green, / Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!" (lines 11-14). He wishes to be free of his grief and instead feels "mirth" and joy. This escape, unfortunately, implies sinking into deeper oblivion similar to the one caused by drunkenness of wine. The latter, according to Wasserman: "is a symbol of the misguided effort to engage in the sensory essence of nature without pain; a beguiling hope of penetrating to the inwardness of the sensory in such a way as to be at ease in empathy; a worldly illusion that fellowship with sensuous essence is only a distracting pleasure" (191). This "vintage", on the other hand, is in its basic form a product of nature, which Keats resorts to its potent ability to get back to and unite with nature. However, "wine has the illusory appearance of being a means of gaining the bird's easeful empathy" (Wasserman 191) yet, "I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination. What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth" Keats writes to Benjamin Bailey (Letter [22 November] 54). Here despite the desperate attempt to join the bird: nature, Keats' intention is another sign in of his eco-consciousness striving for ecological balance. Claire Pace, in ""Numi de' poeti, e della musica": Claude Lorrain's Minerva Visiting the Muses," states that: "[In Greek mythology] the fountain Hippocrene, the source of artistic inspiration, which was created when the winged horse Pegasus struck a rock with his hoof" (125). The speaker then longs for love, poetry, and inspiration. He aspires to "drink, and leave the world unseen,/ And with thee fade away into the forest dim [with the nightingale]" (lines 19-20). Helen Vendler explains this

rhetoric of leaving “the world unseen” and “fading away” as: “his decision to leave the world behind, Keats had banished human beings from his poem; at that point, consciousness had seemed the grimmest cause of sorrow” (93-4). Indeed, it conveys Keats' wish to discreetly depart from the world he is currently in while also establishing another contrast within the poem's diction, a parallel tolerance of and escape from nature. These “shadows numberless” and “forest dim” that exist beyond the universe reflect the world of death. Wasserman describes this contradiction by stating that:

> the result is that the [second] stanza is an organic poetic unity perfect in itself but inconsistent with the total poem. Moreover, there is a violent inconsistency in the poet’s struggle in the two stanzas that make up this unit. In his present position he is with the nightingale, above the level of the mutable world, and “yet still confined ” because his pain results from his being drawn earthward by his own mortal nature. (205)

Consequently, the only way for Keats to embrace both his mortal nature and a life with the nightingale, is for his two parts, his concrete physical body and abstract soul to subdivide upon death same as Ronald Sharp explains in “"A Recourse Somewhat Human”: Keats's Religion of Beauty” that: “the only reality from which human suffering is absent is death. Yet despite the impossibility of transcending the mortal condition, the urge to do so is deeply human” (33). As a result, the poet is referring to a massive ecological split in the human-natural world, which is primarily due to industrialisation. In fact, the first two stanzas portray the speaker's strong but ultimately futile attempts to unite with the bird and, through it, with nature, which emphasises Keats’ urge for ecological harmony, and nature as a crucial aspect of his life.

The third stanza tackles the space that separates Keats and the nightingale. He feels tied to earth rather than liberated by it and longs to “fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget/

what thou [the nightingale]...hast never known, the weariness, the fever, and the fret" (lines 21-23). Keats appears fatigued by the "fever" and the "fret." Wasserman argues that: "the bird is now outside the context of physical nature it has never known the weariness, the fever, and the fret which are inextricable from the world of extensions. But this is only a negative distinction; we know only that the nightingale now seems to belong to an order of things which is not the poet's" (197-8). These qualities "fever" and "fret" torment people, so Keats longs for dissolution to end his earthly existence by allowing his spirit to flee into thin air and beyond the veil of human existence. He is still disappointed with the natural processes of ageing, particularly the eventual withering of beauty itself, which Keats treasures above all else.

Once again, there is a clear distinction between the positive and negative sides of the poem. However this time, it is not just the nightingale and the poet who are opposed to each other but rather their whole two worlds differ. The words "mirth", from the second stanza, and "sorrow", from the third stanza highlight the key opposition between them. Similar to the first stanza, there are some very particular contrasts and oppositions. The "dance" and "song" of the world of the nightingale contrast specifically with the world of the poet, where "men sit" and "hear each other groan". Equally, the world of the nightingale is a colourful world with its green and purple; and this again sits in a specific contrast with the world of the poet, which is grey and pale. As Wasserman puts it: "the dance opposed to the palsy and weariness; the coolness and the warm South opposed to the fever; the green floral countryside, the blushful wine, and the purple-stained mouth opposed to the leaden eyes, the pallor, and gray hairs; mirth opposed to sorrow; Provencal song opposed to groaning" (208). As a final example is the temperatures in the two stanzas. In the world of the nightingale, the wine is "cooled"; it is a "beaker full of the warm south", whereas in the world of the poet we have the uncomfortable temperature, "the fever."

At the near end of his life, his friend Joseph Severn, who accompanied him to his death in Rome, reported to William Haslam on 15 January 1821 that: “this noble fellow [Keats] lying on the bed is dying in horror: no kind hope smoothing down his suffering, no philosophy, no religion to support him” (502). This implies that Keats is not religious and never was. Ronald Sharp questions this fallacy stating that: “In a dozen other contexts Keats would be invoked immediately: the role of the imagination, the function of the artist, the aesthetics of sensuality, of sympathy, of suffering. But never as an important figure in our developing conception of spirituality, never as a poet deeply concerned with the central issues of religion” (22). Indeed, there is so little attention particularly given to Keats and religion by critics. Sharp carries on explaining that: “Religious issues are not only of interest to him; they are absolutely central to his poetic vision, and a proper understanding of his religious attitudes alters one's interpretation of the whole body of his work” (22). So, what exactly is a religion to Keats? Nature, beauty, and truth to Keats are aspects he passionately believed in beyond everything. In a letter to Benjamin Bailey, Keats wrote “I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart’s affections and the truth of Imagination. What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth —whether it existed before or not” (Letter [22 November] 54). Keats declares his utter conviction of beauty as the summit of truth. He even elevates it to godly status defining it as divine. Helen Vendler affirms that: “The nightingale reaches the status of divinity as it is hailed as immortal” (103). Keats perceived beauty with the same regard and devotion that one would give to God. From this latter notion, the eco-conscious of Keats can be felt implicitly. If whatever imagination perceives as beauty is a truth, then all the beauty must be coming from the natural world which stimulated it in the first place.

The poet characterises the world he lives in at the end of the third stanza as one “where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, / Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow” (lines 29-30). Nevertheless, “If not in life, at least in the truthful allegorical representation of our

idealism, "For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!" (119-120), Vendler asserts to mean that beauty in our world dulls as it loses her "lustre," and love is ephemeral not lasting "beyond to-morrow" unlike in the idealistic world of Keats and the nightingale.

Keats simply refers to his surroundings as "Here" to manifest the ramifications of losing beauty and truth in stanza three:

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;

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

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

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs. (lines 24-28)

In the biography of Keats, as previously referred to in Chapter One, he bore heavy losses in his family which made him acquire an acute sense of death. The death of his brother Tom preceded the penning of "Ode to a Nightingale". In fact, there is a sense of his brother's incident in this stanza that youth grows pale and fades into nothing or dies. Keats is disdained with his reality "Here" that contains all the sorrow, the lines describe a general weariness with the world and all of its sufferings. However, the lines of Keats also imply that men groan because of the exploitation of nature and the chase for wealth, which eventually make them question what men made of men realising that distancing themselves from nature causes alienation. In "The Ecocritical Analysis of Ode to a Nightingale by John Keats," Fating Kong suggests roughly the same idea stating that:

> Because of the exploitation of nature, the persecution of nature and the desire for wealth, human's inherent value and moral standards, such as the intuitive love to nature, the harmonious relations with nature, the love and brotherhood among people,

> are replaced by the competitiveness, indifference and acquisitiveness of material society. The harmonious relationship between man and man vanishes with the spread of industrial civilization and the break of ecological balance. (102)

The idea of Kong suggests that Keats is already refuging in nature, yet trying to distance himself from the other people, whom he categorized as “nature exploiters”. Keats affirms that breaking the ecological harmony and system would cause men to be lost away from nature which would later cause a bigger loss of the relationship between men and men regarding their growing ambitions and greed.

Adding injury to insult, the condition of Keats worsened not so far from the time of his brother’s death; he started exhibiting the first signs of the same disease. He expressed his engraved sorrow and lack of fortune in an emotional letter to Charles Brown on 1-2 November 1820: “O, that something fortunate had ever happened to me or my brothers! Then I might hope, but despair is forced upon me as a habit” (480). Feeling the rising threat of his doom from a similar disease that took both his brother and mother, he confesses to being habitually in hopelessness trying to refer to death as a commonly associated aspect of his life. Actually, the emotion in his letter reflects a life of suffering and despair he had to live. Thus, the agonising speech of “Ode to a Nightingale” pursues to expose itself as having significant grounds in the poet's life.

II.2.3. Keats’ Imagination and Escapism: A Story of Death

In terms of the poem itself, Allen Tate believes that: the ode “at least tries to say everything that poetry can say” (168). However, it is more accurate to state that “Ode to a Nightingale” reflects less on what poetry as an art form can deliver and more on what the poet himself can say. Keats conveys his perspective on human mortality and his constant yearning

for poetical immortality. The poem appears to dwell on a careful exploration of what remains basically human: death.

With this in mind, it is only possible to completely comprehend Keats' poem by referring back to his background, notably the months preceding May 1819 when “Ode to a Nightingale” was written. Keats writes about death and the sufferings of his life in a letter to Benjamin Bailey the year before: “I have two Brothers, one is driven by the “burden of Society” to America, the other, with an exquisite love of Life, is in a lingering state. My Love for my Brothers from the early loss of our parents and even for earlier Misfortunes has grown into an affection “passing the Love of Women” (Letter [10 June] 129). Joan W. Miller, in *Keats' Concept of Death*, affirms that death played a massive and excessive part in John Keats' life. His father died when he was only eight years old, and that was followed, less than a year later, by the death of his child brother, Edward, and his grandfather. Keats lost a beloved uncle in January 1809, and only a year later, he lost his mother, one of the most painful losses to bear. His grandmother Jennings died in December 1814, and four years later, Keats stood by the bedside of his terminally ill brother, Tom. Keats died from the same disease that killed Tom less than three years later. The result of these losses added up to his certain insight that he was going to die. This made Keats more acutely and sensitively aware of the essence of death, and likewise of life. Thus, the misfortunes to which Keats refers both fuel his anguish and sustain his sense of the sorrows of mortal life especially because his brother’s death occurred shortly before the production of “Ode to a Nightingale.” This is why, Keats’ poetry shows a preoccupation with death that is less a product of the Romantic attributes, but more a result of his own personal misery and the effect of death on a sensitive nature (3). Because of what happened in the course of Keats’ life, it is critical then to remember how it affected his worldview both in general and specifically in this poem. According to Ronald Sharp in *Keats, Skepticism, and the Religion of Beauty*, the anguish

depicted in the nightingale's renowned opening words derives from Keats's own emotions, and that failing to remember that: “Keats's ideological system will not open the poem to us” (185). Nature, on the other hand, can actually do so. Indeed, it signifies several things to him. It is a healing power, a source of inspiration, and most importantly a refuge from the artificial world. Muhammad Asim, et al. assert that Romantic poets consider: “nature as a healing power for human, nature as a source of subject and image, nature as a refuge from the artificial constructs of civilization in the real materialistic world and, including artificial language--the prevailing views accorded to nature the status of an organically unified whole” (43). Likewise, nature is indeed presented by Keats as a piece of art crafted by his divine imagination and transcribed in an illustrative language. He perceives nature as an organically unified whole where trees, landscapes, and the nightingale are personified with which Keats escaped his reality full of death accompanying these characterised elements in his poetry. Simultaneously, he devotes more effort and attention to precisely describing the natural occurrences with clarity capturing all the senses.

Keats’s situation is more complicated regarding that the only source left for him to reside in is showing serious symptoms of death because of industrialization. As previously mentioned in chapter one, the Industrial Revolution in England hastened the pace of urbanisation in the nineteenth century, with direct consequences for environmental degradation. Man's utilitarian endeavours to transform and exploit the world had resulted in alienation and destruction of nature which Faten M. Hafez labels as “early signs of environmental manipulation and identifying the attitudes and practices that led to the ecological collapse of early nineteenth century England” (4). In his lines, Keats implicitly tackled ecological issues that were brought about by industrialization and simultaneously emphasised the desire for ecological balance. Joan W. Miller insists that:

> This subject of Keats' preoccupation with death· is a difficult and elusive one. It defies organization because of its very abstract, intangible nature. The subject does not fall into a neatly arranged pattern nor does it show a clear-cut development in one direction. In fact, there are two distinctly contradictory lines of thought in Keats' concept of death, both of which occur in his poetry and letters throughout his life. (3-4)

The first, and most essential, is the linkage of death with nature, a unique thought of itself, and the true reason for this argument. The second, less distinctive but no less essential, is the linkage of death with his own life. The poem perfectly presented both ideas in an intertwining manner.

The fourth stanza indicates the beginning of a significant change from discussing human existence to an examination of Keats and immortality. Poetry, according to Keats, instead of providing a quick escape from life same as hemlock or wine, is what will eventually connect the poet with the immortal entity: the nightingale. “I will fly to thee, / Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards, / But on the viewless wings of Poesy,” (lines 31-33) he writes to the nightingale. Because Bacchus in Greek mythology is a nature god of fruitfulness and vegetation especially known as a god of wine and ecstasy. In “Individual and Group in Euripides' Bacchae,” A. J. Podleckl states that: “Dionysus. He is the Bacchantes' thiasos-leader, giver of grace, potential liberator, who gives joy in feasts, and loves Peace” (148). Keats, however, rejects the temptation expressed in the previous stanzas to be liberated by “a draught of vintage.” Wasserman argues that: “The poet is at first emotionally absorbed in his wish for wine and then is determined to fly on the wings of poesy” (202). Indeed, Keats dismisses the notion of reaching liberation through wine, declaring that he shall reach immortality through the “wings of Poesy.” In fact, poetry will lift him away from the mundane sorrows and struggles of existence to reach the nightingale. The rest of the stanza

analysis shows that Keats stays true to his beliefs by referring to his devotion to nature; the lines continue with:

> Already with thee! tender is the night,
>
> And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
>
> Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
>
> But here there is no light, (lines 35-37)

Vendler argues that Keats sets the moon and her stars as an exception stating that:

> Nothing here can be seen or identified; in this tender night, only inference and guess are possible. Classical presences- the Moon and her starry Fays, remembered from Milton's Nativity Ode - are excluded, not by dismissal as belonging to the embittering world of those quasi-human beings palsy, youth, Beauty, and Love, but by being put gently by. (90)

She argues that in this stage nothing can be seen or identified but Keats is depending on sensation instead where he gently made an exception for the “Queen-Moon” and “Starry Fays”. Wasserman answers that: “the Queen-Moon, the immortal ideal, illuminates that darkness” (211). Keats however uses “tender” to depict the night. The meaning of tender is loving, compassionate, and caring, much like a mother, with the moon ruling the sky as a “queen.” This might as well be a reference to Demeter, the harvest goddess who rules over the earth's fertility as Mara Lynn Keller, in “The Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone: Fertility, Sexuality, and Rebirth,” recounts that:

> The story of Demeter and Persephone, mother and daughter nature goddesses, provides us with insights into the core beliefs by which early agrarian peoples of the Mediterranean related to "the creative forces of the universe"-which some people call

> God, or Goddess ... Mother Earth religion celebrated her children's birth, enjoyment of life and loving return to her in death. The Earth both nourished the living and welcomed back into her body the dead. As Aeschylus wrote in The Libation Bearers: Yea, summon Earth, who brings all things to life and rears, and takes again into her womb. (27)

This cycle of life and death resembles what the moon does on a daily basis. Furthermore because nature and poetry were so tightly linked to Keats, the image of nature as a caregiver serves his view of poetry as a therapeutic power. Keats uses the notion of "Mother Earth" to highlight his helplessness and inferiority in this poem. This image of Nature is consistent with his view of the earth's eternal beauty, and it evokes feelings of humility, respect, and longing. The poet sees the moon, guarded by her many stars so far above and out of range, that the light it emits cannot even reach where he sits in his restricted, mundane mortal world: "here".

In a group of letters sent to George and Georgiana Keats in 1819, he wrote: "Though a quarrel in the streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine; the commonest man shows a grace in his quarrel. By a superior being our reasonings may take the same tone; though erroneous, they may be fine" (Letter [14 February - 4 May] 271). Keats has the ability to spot beauty and fine energies and to neglect the negative side of a matter, which made him so little bothered by the darkness. In fact, the sublime world he is trying to discover and to reach, where no soul has ever been before, the "Queen Moon" and "Starry Fays," has put him in a position of awe and amazement from nature. Wasserman states that: "The tense optative force of stanzas two and three has weakened, and the splendor of the nightingale in the light of the moon and the cluster of stars is described with a degree of awe" (211-2). The poet's feeling of inferiority does not affect his admiration of the power of nature surrounding him. In fact, the more aware he is of nature's beauty and power, the more appreciative he becomes of

it. Keats writes: “Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown/ through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways” (lines 38-40). Vendler states that:

> The mythological must be refused in this poetic world so purely restricted to a fragrant blind hearing … or almost no light. The faint beams which blow with the breezes serve only to define the glooms of the encompassing bower. The brief glance back to sight and touch in the verdurous glooms and mossy ways is preparatory to the true underworld venture of the poem. (91)

Despite the gloom's pejorative connotation, he characterizes it as “verdurous”, which means rich in verdure, freshly green, or verdant. This short period of sight in the pitch black surrounding Keats refers to it as freshly green; it proves his humility and the ability to detect the poetic beauty of nature even in the dark.

The fifth Stanza refers back to the spreading numbness of the poem's beginning providing an amount of visual detachment from the actual world carrying a deep feeling of disappointment because of what Keats found was contrary to his expectations. He writes “I cannot see what flowers are at my feet, / Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs, / but in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet” (lines 41-43). Even though Keats is surrounded by nature and vivid sensory stimulation, such as “flowers” at his feet and “incense” dangling above him, he cannot visually perceive it. Wasserman questions that:

> there would be no meaning in the poet’s complaint that “ here there is no light ” and that he cannot see the flowers at his feet, for if he is with the bird he should be able to see into essence as vividly as the bird can sing of summer, and he should be as much in the presence of the Queen-Moon as he supposes the bird is. (198)

Indeed, if Keats is accompanying the bird then he would get the same vision as the bird. He initiates by breaching nature's central principle, its full essence, and overcoming the

temporality of the mortal world to reach brut nature. Vendler is not so confident of the place where Keats is speaking from either, she argues that: “His first task is to define the boundaries of his darkened space-and those boundaries give the trope of reiteration, as we see it in the bower, that structural firmness it had earlier lacked. First, Keats points low to the flowers at his feet and high to the soft incense on the boughs above” (91). Wasserman attempts to solve the controversy by stating that:

> I am convinced, therefore, that Mr. Clyde S. Kilby is right in suggesting that the exclamation mark after “thee” is not terminal—although I would not accept his proposal that it should be removed in our reading of the line. The exclamation mark must be introduced only to underscore the word “thee” and thereby to emphasize the contrast between “with thee” and “here” (38), which, like the “Here” of line 24, designates the physical world. (198-9)

She suggests that the word “thee” employed by Keats to refer to the nightingale should not be considered the same as “with thee” because Keats is apparently not joining the bird exactly everywhere, which is why the speaker is not having the same vision as the bird.

Broadening the scope of analysing this particular stage of the poem would suggest that probably the true reason of not seeing the flowers at his feet is because of the Industrial Revolution and the rupture it made. James Hall Nasmyth, in his *James Nasmyth Engineer: An Autobiography*, describes some of what the process of industrialisation did to Britain:

> The ground underneath them had sunk by the working out of the coal, and they were falling to pieces. They had in former times been surrounded by clumps of trees; but only the skeletons of them remained, dilapidated, black, and lifeless. The grass had been parched and killed by the vapours of sulphureous acid thrown out by the

> chimneys, and every herbaceous object was of a ghastly gray the emblem of vegetable death in its saddest aspect. (163)

The latter are some images of the world of Keats, this world forces him to depend on his imagination instead to fulfil his unity with nature away from his broken ecological system. While hearing the nightingale's song, he disconnects from the material realm and dwell in oblivion. For imagination to work perfectly it needs little stimulus, yet the broken nature where Keats resides leads him into a liminal place not having achieved his place within the poetical immortal world that the nightingale portrays, nor finding happiness in simply living his mortal life. Trapped on the soil, he is cut off from the world of the nightingale who flies way above him and out of reach. The word "embalmed" sets up a particularly intriguing image. Erich Brenner in "Human body preservation – old and new techniques" states that: "embalmment is defined as the 'treatment (of a dead body) – with special chemicals – so as to protect from decay'" (317). This indicates Keats' knowledge and close relationship to death, yet further indicates his deep and strong desire to protect his legacy and work overtime from decaying, thus himself.

Keats expresses the process of decaying just as the "seasonable months" (44) referring to the transition of the seasons. Vendler affirms:

> The "seasonable" month of May, endowing all her child-vegetation with different sweets, is the predecessor to the maternal Autumn loading and blessing the vines with the vegetation of her season: Both govern realms where inexorable times and seasons obtain; in this ode Keats forsakes all hope for the timeless mythological bower… Like his seasonable month, Keats touches with his unseeing but unerring vision each beauty in turn. (91)

Keats relies on the succession of the seasons from development in the summer to prosperity in the fall and finally death in the winter to mean that life eventually leads to death. Keats proceeds in the fifth stanza:

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;

White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;

And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,

The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. (lines 45-50)

In his state of oblivion, Keats portrays a realm which Andrew J. Kappel in “The Immortality of the Natural: Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale"” depicts: “This garden Fancy grows is the time-blind nightingale's haunt and home where death and the whole temporal order it presupposes, the march of the seasons, for instance, is unknown. The poet has joined it there, his ontological transformation won” (275). It exists in both spring and summer at the same time representing an escape from the rigid reality and the natural order. Wasserman explains that: “The setting (and date of composition) of the poem is mid-May, the time to which the hawthorn belongs; but the fast-fading violets belong to April and are now disappearing, and the musk-rose is mid-May’s eldest child, to be born in June” (211). Indeed, Keats imagines a location wherein flowers bloom regardless of the seasons like the “eglantine” and the “muskrose.” Andrew J. Kappel states that:

> Sight aside, the imagination seeks through the senses of taste ("each sweet," "dewy wine"), hearing ("murmurous haunt offlies"), smell ("embalmed darkness," "musk-rose") and even touch ("violets cover'd up in leaves") to achieve the intense

> engagement that will afford to the consciousness now living predominately through its physical senses the collapsed temporal focus that permits obliviousness to transience. (275)

At this stage of the poem, Keats has transcended to the core of nature where he is fully immersed in the lap of nature where it takes him away on a journey of discovering another self.

The sixth stanza portrays death, like the abovementioned escape from the earthly realm or mortal world, as captivating and desired while continuing with another allusion to the senses in an ongoing sequence. Vendler suggests that: “To listen to music, with all one's other senses laid asleep (the next line, where even the soft incense is forgotten, is “Darkling I listen”), is, for Keats, very nearly to be dead. The focusing power of aesthetic experience, its concentration in the enrapturing of a single sense, entails the temporary “death” of the other sense faculties” (85). The attention here returns to hearing; the nightingale's exquisite song is made more appealing by the poet's lack of other senses. Vendler echoes Keats: “Darkling I listen, Keats reminds us-but we have forgotten him as listener, since the blind space of the bower has been actively substituting for the bird, as its objective correlative” (92). Even with his other senses lost, he can still listen to the nightingale's singing in the darkness; it penetrates past his curtain of darkness and obscurity with a piercing intensity. To express his unmistakable affinity for death, he writes:

> …for many a time
>
> I have been half in love with easeful Death,
>
> Call’d him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
>
> To take to the air my quiet breath; (lines 51-54)

The word “death” is given weight. Keats alludes to it affectionately confessing that he becomes “half in love” with death addressing it with “soft names.” Wasserman argues that: “there is reason to believe that something of the original pattern of the pleasure thermometer still lingers in Keats’ mind. For the poet addresses death in terms of love: he has been half in love with death; and in tenderly worded poetry, addressing him by “soft names,” he has, like a lover, begged him to take up the poet’s spirit” (193). Keats abandons his poetic references and allusions to fully approach the concept of death. Vendler explains that:

> The motion of the bower stanza, as it sketches its upper and lower boundaries and then pauses exquisitely on the sparely named and untroubled beauty of its grass, thicket, and trees before allowing the violets to fade and the musk-rose to open its cup, is managed with absolute sureness and order, literary and psychological, culminating as the murmurousness of the flies modulates into Keats's own murmur to Death, calling him soft names in mused rhyme. The bird's “melodious numbers” have been simply the void on which Keats has projected those internal images which must stand, in art, for the riches of human sense-receptivity. (92-3)

In his pinnacle of sensuousness, Keats has penned “many a mused rhyme”, as a poet might compose love poetry to his lover, death in this particular point serves as his “muse”. In line 58, the word “ecstasy” refers to a joyous victory, the polar opposite of the agony and sufferings portrayed in the previous stanzas, while the word “easeful” indicates an easy escape from them. Vendler argues that:

> It is a mark of Keats's intensity of linguistic gift that the language of the absence of the visual is itself so sensually luxurious. The night is “tender,” Keats is “half in love” with a Death so “easeful” as to be related to the “ease” of the nightingale's song; he has called Death “soft” names, and it seems "rich" to die while the nightingale pours forth not its song but its soul, in ecstasy. (101)

The picture of death snatching the poet's vital air from his lungs allows him to sink into oblivion because Keats is acutely aware that the nightingale is in fact the voice of Mother Nature. Keats writes: “Now more than ever seems it rich to die,/ To cease upon the midnight with no pain” (lines 55-56). Andrew J. Kappel states that:

> At this point in the poem death comes to the poet's mind as the possible preserver of Fancy's garden, as a way of making the transformation irreversible. It is, recalling earlier terminology, an ultimate and irrevocable forgetfulness, far greater than inebriation or night, and it seems “rich to die” because this more secure forgetfulness promises a freer field for Fancy and a richer garden of delight. (275-6)

The poet professes to long for death and the “painless” destiny it promises. “Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—/ To thy high requiem become a sod,” (lines 59-60) Keats refers for the very first time to his corporeal, mortal body alluding to the decaying body having worthless ears that can no longer receive the bird's song. In “Keats and Adversity,” Martha Hale Shackford explains that:

> Man's life so brief, so transitory, so full of beauty desired but not attained is sad and defeated, while the nightingale's is the very voice of triumphant happiness. The melody, the beauty, to which struggling Keats wished so intensely to attain in his art, are the birthright of a mere nightingale, whose song has outlived many generations, bringing swift, lovely fancies to far-away, solitary dreamers. Men indeed, as a race, survive, but the individual, with all his hopes, his aspirations, his identity', his potential power of creation, passes, becoming again an integral part of nature, a sod. (479)

Wasserman reflects on the same notion stating that the body will be buried and become a “sod,” or part of the earth's dirt and plants. The bird's singing becomes a funeral memory for Keats, as a “requiem” is by definition (especially in the Roman Catholic

Church) a mass (religious ceremony) at which people say prayers for the soul of a dead person or the souls of dead people (Hornby 1084). Wasserman clarifies that the poem has entirely inverted itself within the first six stanzas: the ease of the nightingale's delight, which the author craves for himself, swells until it becomes a pleasure-pain selflessness, an ecstasy-requiem. And the poet's numb pain has faded with the thought of “easeful Death” and the loss of his now “silent breath,” to become “no pain,” indeed, “no sensation at all,” for he now has ears in vain and has become a sod (206).

Keats has a shared history with death, his misfortunes both feed his pain and perpetuate his awareness of the misery of mortal life; he is not feeling at ease in the world he is currently residing in. As a defence mechanism, Keats developed the escapist tendency to run from his reality using the primary tool of imagination. The latter is manifested in his “Ode to a Nightingale,” which was considered by many critics, as a direct reaction to his brother’s death. His sensitive nature allowed him to perceive beauty in every aspect around him, yet he chose nature above all. His complex words of poetry reflect all the resentment and pain he holds for this mortal world, which he gets rid of by transcending with the nightingale into a world beyond human creation where he gets to be with his most beloved entity, nature.

II.2.4. The Inevitability of Suffering

Keats has undergone a drastic change in his worldview together with a sensible nature as a human being, he seeks resolution in contradictions and deeply believes that many objects in this life intangible, whether they were or not, extract their beauty from the notion of finitude. In “Keats: The Poet-Healer and the Problem of Pain,” Michael E. Holstein asserts that: “suffering represents a purifying rite of passage, labor pains that deliver a soul from a lower to a higher spiritual order” (35). In fact, Keats sees how the existence of pain, suffering, and misery highlight and impose the existence of joy, happiness and delight. Indeed, a dynamic contrast develops in the seventh stanza between the physical decomposition and the

concept of reaching immortality. Keats finds his epiphany as A. W. Crawford in “Keats’s Ode to the Nightingale” argues that:

> Keats was now passing from the stage of the youthful poet and lover of beauty to the philosophic age in which he was no longer content merely to enjoy and glory in the fulness of life and the unimpaired beauty of the world as seen through his poetic imagination. His development had been exceedingly rapid, and he had passed almost unobserved even by his friends from the poet to the philosopher, but not without knowing it well himself. (479)

Keats now understands the crucial distinction between himself and the nightingale. The bird is immortal in the sense that it does not alter; succeeding nightingales will keep singing in just the same manner because they lack originality, whereas there is always one John Keats. Wasserman explains the contradiction that is eventually revealed and expressed by the poet:

> the poet who had hoped for death that he might truly live only to find that this death can have no meaning in the world and who had discovered it is the visionary bird who has this true life even within the confines of the physical world, now discovers that in the spatial fabric of things it is the Ode to a Nightingale bird s song that becomes “ buried ” in the next valley glades. (220)

Nature has the ability to be immortal in ways that humans do not. Although the bird's song is consistent across decades, Keats realises he will become a sod: “Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain To thy high requiem become a sod” (lines 59-60), so this no longer comforts him. He will eventually “become a sod” because humans are not as fixed as the nightingale. Initially, the immortality of the nightingale implies optimism, however, human beings are subject to a different set of variables; such as “palsy” and disease. Kappel reflects on this idea declaring that: “The poet's experience, his uneasy union with the nightingale, finally snaps at

the end of an analogical comprehension of that experience that allows it validity only on a level of reality, the supernatural realm of magic and charms, that is far removed from the one on which it was achieved in the first place, the natural" (278-9). As a result, nature provides a form of immortality, but not something that fulfils the young poet's needs and desires; he must embrace what the mortal life holds, and must thus count on poetry to leave his own everlasting song. This epiphany of Keats is credited to Mother Nature which has taken Keats on a full journey to make him realise that the narrow view he had about immortality is a faulty one and that every cloud has a silver lining. Keats in return awakens his insight to eventually grasp the whole truth about existence.

The nightingale's song is inspirational in its power to influence generations of people. Keats praises this ability to inspire others, writing, "No hungry generations tread thee down;/ the voice I hear this passing night was heard/ in ancient days by emperor and clown:" (lines 62-64). At this moment, he felt bonded to those who came prior to him; the references to both the emperor and the clown illustrate how everyone, no matter how high or too low in position, is susceptible to the nightingale's lovely, inspiriting melody. Kappel argues that even though Keats may straddle the fence beautifully at the end of the poem, neither denying nor confirming, his parallels trace a progressive approach to an awareness of the experience's apparent fraudulence and his own delusion in stanza seven. In stanza seven, Kappel elaborates on the idea of David Perkins and Walter Evert who interpret Keats' literary career as a gradual rejection of the visionary imagination (and agree with that rejection). To begin with, the emperor and the clown are figures apparently from the past. The picture of Ruth represents a shift toward the fictive; the Biblical account mediates between the historically-based monarch and the fantastical "magic" casements of faeryland, or what Evert refers to as the "never-never land of the imagination, an illusion similar to Lamia's fabrications. This transition from the historical to the legendary to the wholly fictive is critical speculation worth considering

since it reveals the logic and inevitability of the poem's final turn (278). Thus, the poet ponders how the everlasting nature of the nightingale's singing crosses the temporal gap, bringing him closer to those who came before him. The mentioning of “faery lands forlorn”, “magic casements”, and “perilous seas” (lines 69-70). Wasserman explains that:

> In the world of decay the nightingale creates this vision by living its heaven on earth, and thereby gives man a glimpse of the promise that the future holds out. It makes magic the casements (“ magic ” is proleptic in line 69) just as the magic union of Porphyro and Madeline opened the doors of the castle; and it opens them to the mystery, the elfin storm, for the beauty-truth song it sings is itself the mystery which permeates human life. (217)

Thus the nightingale's singing, veiled in a mystical mystery, not of this realm yet exists in it, remains to captivate both readers’ and poets' imaginations.

II.2.5. From End of the Journey to Resurrection: A Poet Reborn

The abrupt departure of the nightingale in the eighth stanza causes the poet confusion and disorientation while his contemplation of other locations has reminded him of the misery of his earthly existence, and he rises from the depths of his coma to return to himself “Forlorn!” (71), he exclaims. Wasserman argues that: “The fairy lands are “forlorn” because they must be lost to man so long as he is in the mortal world. They are the mystery, but they cannot be peopled by mortals, for human existence involves an ignorance of the mystery even though the mystery is the central principle of man’s life” (218). The repetition of the utterances “forlorn” and “Adieu!” acts as a literary bell on the page to transcend the poet back to his mortal barriers. “The very word is like a bell/ to toll me back from thee to my sole self!” (lines 71-72), these lines mark the end of the standards which are reversed in the beginning and then in the end. Wasserman states that:

> This reversal of standards is brilliantly caught up in the ambiguity of the word “toll.” The recollection of his isolation from man as a result of travelling “ Beyond the sweet and bitter world ” summons the poet back to his own self so that he is once again self-contained, no longer participating in essence, and therefore merely a mortal. But the tolling of the bell is both a summons of his soul back to his self and also the announcement of a death. The nightingale lives its death, dying being its true living; the poet has found that, from an earthly point of view, his own death is merely to become a meaningless sod. And yet there has been a death, for only during the vision has his soul truly been “living,” as the nightingale has truly been “living” by pouring forth its soul on earth. (219)

Indeed, the departure of the nightingale marks the end of Keats' trance and unearthly experience; he regretfully confesses, “the fancy cannot cheat so well” (line 73) demonstrating how his thoughts and needs and desires alone cannot move him into the immortal world of the nightingale as well as reflecting his novel mind-set. Ronald A. Sharp in, *Keat, Skepticism, and the Religion of Beauty*, argues that: “man must continually endeavour to alleviate the load of mystery, and because an act of volition can seize only the external nature of things ... he is battling against his mortal bounds” (182). Keats refers to the constraints of willpower here attempting to break free from his mortal chains.

The nightingale, like the stars before, is now out of sight and out of reach leaving the poet alone in the midst of his thoughtful reverie. The bird's “plaintive anthem” fades away as Wasserman explains that: “The poet had hoped to fade away from the mutable world into the shadows numberless in order to avoid the inherent fadingness of mortal man; but in the physical, spatial inversion of the vision it is the bird’s song, the poet finds, that “fades”” (220). The word “plaintive,” however, also refers to the speaker's own sense of failure and sorrow at the loss of the song that has formerly comforted and has empowered him. Finally,

he laments the loss of his ability to reach solace in the song's “immortality”, as he now recognises that he, as a human being, is unable to achieve the exact form of immortality as the nightingale. The poet is still perplexed; he asks, “Was it a vision or a waking dream? / Fled is that music: Do I wake or sleep?” (lines 79-80). Wasserman suggests that: “Was it a true perception into the beauty-truth that is to come a penetration into that immortality that man calls “death” ? or was it only a fiction of the inventive faculty ? “Do I wake or sleep ?” The poet knows only that perhaps the same song was heard by Ruth. If it was the same, he has had a vision; if not, only a waking dream” (221). Keats is unable to distinguish between dream and reality regarding that what he had just experienced is so vivid but it cannot be true to others. Keats then is left to his own grief and uncertainty fully aware that he is losing his final refuge to industrialization, as well as losing himself to tuberculosis. Nature has given him a valuable lesson through an incredible journey in which he turns from facing his agonies through imagination and escaping reality like a trembling teenager to a man in all his immaculate maturity. Wasserman summarizes this journey to epiphany stating that: “interpretations and values of the death that begins with the burial of the wine in the “ deep-delved earth ” and ends with the bird’s song “buried deep ” in the valley glades—that begins with the poet’s desire to fade from fadingness and ends with the fading of the song of the bird that a moment before was seen as immortal” (221). A philosopher that eventually attains immortality through his poetry. What nature offers to Keats is beyond valuation or realisation from a human entity, she gives him immortality, authenticity, and most importantly another self. Vendler affirms that: “echoing the true joyous sound that he actually hears, he will gain poetic authenticity from nature, and his fame should share in Nature's immortality” (81). The love and affection Keats holds for nature makes him fulfil her will and testament then dies with her death.

The quest of Keats to attain truth, beauty, ease, and immortality is all a direct consequence of a dark suffocating history filled with death. With a painful present at hand and a torpid future beyond reach, Keats does not yet have the faintest idea neither on how to face his fears nor how to launch towards attaining his desires. His present tantalisingly stares back at him, with a sentimental immature self that condemns him to vividly relive all the painful memories of death and loss of his family members, notably his brother Tom, whose death was prior to the composition of this ode. Near the edge of breaking down, a blissful tone breaches all boundaries into Keats' ears to drop him off balance and to set him in a world of oblivion. In his ten stanzas body of work, full of natural elements most noticeably the nightingale as the poem title suggests, Keats experiences a trancelike phenomenon beyond human common sense to fully fathom. Throughout the whole poem, the change of the spatio-temporal dimensions, as well as the change of senses, do not only mark a shift in the settings but a change towards Keats' final epiphany. He moved from aspiring to escape his reality and attain immortality through various aspects such as wine, poison, death, or the bird itself to fully comprehend that his life is most certainly not the worst and the life of the nightingale has its flaws. Keats eventually perceives that the nightingale is in much darkness as he was, the darkness of mystery, while Keats is in the darkness of ignorance and disdain. The light of the two entities, which is the first epiphany, is where Keats returns to the mortal world without the initial ignorance, yet he comes back as a philosopher. Later, Keats realises that the same voice of the nightingale is the melody of the tongue of Mother Nature revealing the mystery about it. In addition, nature accepts his residence under her shield. All in all, his ecological consciousness and his unfathomable love for nature to which he seeks refuge in the darkest moments of his life leads to Keats getting inspirited. All that void of pain, loss, and sorrow has to be filled with something and Keats chooses to make nature part of his body and soul. Accordingly, Keats is inspirited by nature so he suffers for her suffering, and dies with her

death. Not only that, but Mother Nature gives Keats what was more expensive than an escape, a refuge or beauty. She gives him philosophy, a journey towards self-realisation where he discovers the brut reality. First, the immortality that he longs for can only be achieved through poetry because the human being will always fail to be physically immortal. Second, he has an acute sense of his near end because of showing some symptoms of tuberculosis, but most importantly he is acutely aware of Mother Nature's near end due to the process of industrialization.

Chapter III: "To Autumn": A Fall Without a Fall

The third chapter is an analytical chapter that supplements the preceding one. It is divided into three sections. The first section examines the main natural elements employed by Keats in "To Autumn." This section demonstrates how much Keats admires and worships nature and longs for the simplicity of the pastoral life. The second section focuses on Keats' maturity and mastery in manipulating spatial-temporal patterns in a spectacular atmosphere enhanced by his imagination. The third section attempts to provide a new reading of "To Autumn" in relation to his biographical and social contexts in order to highlight that the poem is a representation of his own cycle of life. The latter interpretation works in tandem with the previous chapter to provide a holistic picture that supports the claim that Keats does actually transcend to the core of Mother Nature.

III.1. John Keats' Depiction of Nature: Beyond Forgery or Imitation

Keats found his closure to the series of six odes in "To Autumn" as the last major poem that brought the curtains down on his journey as a poet. "To Autumn" was composed in 1819 and published in 1820 in his collection "Lamia," "Isabella," "The Eve of St. Agnes," and other poems the next year. At some point in that time when Keats penned the poem, he was residing in Winchester, Hampshire in southern England. He had a habit of promenading for an hour every day before supper. John Creaser in "From 'Autumn' to Autumn in Keats's Ode" states that: "The poem was inspired by a solitary walk among stubble-fields on Sunday, 19th September, 1819, during a stay of several weeks at Winchester, and was complete by Tuesday the 21st" (191). He went for walks along the river and over the meadows in beautiful weather. On September 21st 1819, he sent a letter to his friend J. H. Reynolds in which he detailed how "To Autumn" came to be:

> How beautiful the season is now, how fine the air, a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather, Dian skies. I never lik'd stubble fields so much as now—Aye, better than the chilly green of the spring. Somehow a stubble plain looks warm—in the same way that some pictures look warm—this struck me so much in my sunday's walk that I composed upon it. (345)

The vivid description and the connotation of this area that is now labelled as the place which Keats composed "To Autumn" about it. Winchester authorities took the situation to their advantage and created the full journey of Keats as Richard Marggraf Turley et al. mention in their "Keats, 'To Autumn', and the New Men of Winchester" that:

> For those wishing to 'walk in the poet's footsteps', Winchester Tourist Information has produced a leaflet on 'the landscape which inspired the ode To Autumn', mapping out what it calls the 'Keats Walk'[3]. This circuit takes us in a southerly direction from Keats's lodgings beside the Cathedral in Market Street, past Winchester College (St Mary's College, in Keats's day), along the River Itchen to St Cross Hospital and back again. The itinerary is informed by the sixth and final route outlined by Charles Ball in his Descriptive Walks (1818), a guide to the history and topography of Winchester that Keats is thought to have consulted. (797-8)

The year 1819 marked the pinnacle of Keats' literary productivity. Hillas Smith states in "John Keats: Poet, Patient, Physician" that: "[Keats] managed in a single year -1819- to produce some of the finest lyrical poetry in the language" (390). Indeed, the six odes were penned in 1819. However, only a month after finishing "To Autumn" he got critically ill with tuberculosis, a disease that seemed to run in his relatives. Subsequently, "Keats developed the disease … He went to Italy in the hope of obtaining a cure but died in Rome in 1821, aged 25" (Smith 390). His health gradually deteriorated in 1820. He left England for Italy in September expecting that the warmer temperature would help his condition. He stayed in

Rome but never recovered. Keats died on February 23, 1821, and was laid to rest in Rome's Protestant Cemetery.

For Keats' odes, they lured critics from different backgrounds and for wide-ranging objectives except for "To Autumn", which has received a relatively less attention. Allen Tate in "A Reading of Keats (I)" attempts to justify this absence of studies where he praises "Ode to a Nightingale" and disregards "To Autumn" claiming that:

> "Ode to a Nightingale" - in my opinion Keats's great poem in spite of its imperfect detail, greater than "Ode to Autumn," which because of its purity of tone and style Bridges ranks first among the odes. "Ode to Autumn" is a very nearly perfect piece of style but it has little to say. Because I believe that "Ode to a Nightingale" at least tries to say everything that poetry can say. (58)

Studying "To Autumn" as opposed to the group of odes written by Keats, Tate then compares "Ode to a Nightingale" with "To Autumn" in matters of tone, style, and dramatic personality. Agreeing with Tate, B. C. Southam in "Ode "To Autumn"" argues that it is quite expected and fully comprehended that "To Autumn" has appeared only marginally in the criticism of Keats' poetry because if contrasted to the other odes of 1819, "To Autumn" does not appear to give fertile ground for discussion or interpretation. The three stanzas poem is instantly appealing for all levels of readers with a vivid description of the season, and its phenomena are presented delicately in unchallenging lines. There are no critical or literary obstacles, nor are there any historical or technical references that require explanation. Here, if any place, is a wonderful poetry that can be comprehended by the average reader without the use of a large number of footnotes or explications (91).

Other critics, nevertheless, mainly Helen Vendler in *The Odes of John Keats* asserts that: "Keats had compared his fertile brain to a field of corn; after eighteen months of

meditation on that symbol (Keats's mind was never far from Ceres), Keats returned to it for his finest ode, To Autumn. In the sonnet, Keats is, paradoxically, himself the field of grain and its reaper-gleaner" (234). She suggests that the poem revolves around Keats' life same as in the other odes. In fact, Keats gives reference to himself in the poem. Indeed, the poem contains Keats' most contemplative vision of creativity and art not least because it springs from so many previous poems, both Keats' and his predecessors', but also because it is crafted through experience and furnished with Keats' vision of beauty. Therefore, Vendler considers "To Autumn" as the "finest ode" (234) of Keats regarding that it was the product of experience and of a journey. Creaser, however, attacks Vendler declaring that she has deceived readers to think that the poem has a conflict about the presence of the poet:

> FOR GENERATIONS, readers permitted themselves to be deluded by what Helen Vendler has surprisingly and yet aptly termed the 'asceticism' of Keats's 'To Autumn', that is to say, the austere simplicity of its structure and rhetoric ... Despite the poem's unique sense of fecundity, the range of poetic effect is limited, and much of the vivid Keatsian repertoire is absent. For the first time in the odes, Keats refrains from allusion to classical mythology and art, even though when writing to J. H. Reynolds of the poem's occasion he referred to 'chaste weather-Dian skies'. He also forgoes historical and literary allusion - at least, echoes which are so specific as to constitute an allusion. For the only time in the major odes, there is no struggle to charge poetry with abstract thought, and there is hardly a trace of propositional language. Dramatic personality is muted, and there is not a single first-person pronoun. (190)

Unlike Vendler, he claims that Keats for the first time does not burden his poetry with abstract thoughts; it is free from his dramatic personality, and there is no single trace of the presence of the poet. This conflict over the presence of the poet would be resolved in the later stages of the work.

"To Autumn" consists of three stanzas of eleven lines each, which Sara Constantakis delivers an overall analysis. The poem valorises fall detailing its richness, harvest, and transition into winter, and it employs vivid sensual imagery to heighten the transitory beauty of the season. The first stanza opens with a basic explanation of autumn's qualities. Autumn marks the culmination of nature's growing cycles "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness" (line 1). Everything has reached a mature stage of development, but growth continues. Beginning in the second line and continuing throughout the first stanza: "Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;/Conspiring with him how to load and bless/ With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run" (lines 2-4), the season of fall is portrayed as collaborating with the sun to bring about this condition of maturity in nature. The vines that cling to the eaves of the thatched roof homes are blooming. Apples are weighing down the trees "To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees" (line 5), and the fruit is all ripe "And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core" (line 6). Vendler affirms that: "the imagery of pregnancy and fruitfulness suggested the first stanza of the ode; the mention of three seasons in an autumn poem is repeated by Keats" (238). The poet employs verbs that express imagery of development and fullness as applied to gourds and hazelnuts, provides more examples of ripeness "To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells" (line 7). Flowers carry on to bloom "With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,/And still more, later flowers for the bees" (lines 8-9), offering a seemingly infinite supply of honey or pollen for the bees to collect. "Until they think warm days will never cease,/For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells" (lines 10-11) (Constantakis 296).

Srimanta Das, in "John Keats' To Autumn: an Ecocritical Reading", states that: "Being a Romantic poet and a poet who has made a name for himself for being a worshipper of beauty, Keats is very much aware of the significance of beauty in human life" (2). He finds his beauty and true self in nature. Constantakis explains that the poem, particularly the first stanza, conveys a sense of the richness of the natural world. Nature is whole and perfect at

this time of year, autumn. The earth and the sun work together to create wealth. Everything is at its peak. Nature is, in fact, nearly pulled down by its own abundance. The vines that run over the thatched roofs of the cottages are loaded with fruit, and the apple trees are so heavy with apples that the branches are bending. The fullness depicted is not a static state; everything is continuously growing and filling out, as the depiction of the gourd and hazelnut in the first stanza emphasises: “To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells” (line 7). The flowers are still blooming, and the use of the word “more” in the first stanza: “With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,/And still more, later flowers for the bees” (lines 8-9) conveys a sense of eternal richness. The term is used to define the blossoms, but it also applies to all of the natural processes described in the poem's first line. Nature is so densely packed that even the bees struggle to maintain their hard work (297).

Keats in the second stanza addresses autumn explicitly. Autumn is personified as a lady, possibly a goddess figure, as evidenced by the use of the pronoun “thee” to address her. Here, Vendler and Creaser who have conflicting views over matters of visibility of the poet are now agreeing on the gender of nature giving the same explanation. Vendler states that:

> [I]n Keats's version, the sky-god is Apollo the sun, the earth-goddess is Autumn, and their mutual relation is euphemized as one between "bosom-friends." She, all mists and mellow fruitfulness, and he, the maturing agent, conspire together, he breathing warmth, she moisture. In this allowing of the "lower sense" of sexuality into his poem, Keats gives full credence to the sexual origins of all "teemings" - those of art as well as those of nature - and permits, at least in the natural and mythological order. (248-9)

While Vendler refers back to mythology setting the sun as a god and the earth as a goddess, Creaser gives the same occurrence a religious interpretation stating that:

> The figure of Autumn completes the earthly paradise by evoking intimations of divinity. Even though the manifestations in stanza ii hint at both male and female, the 'conspiring' of season and sun in the opening verse suggests ancient myths of the sun joining in sexual union with our mother earth. Their conspiration is no conspiracy but an intimate sharing of breath for the benefit of man, reminiscent of God's breathing the 'breath of life' into Adam in paradise after the mist has watered the face of the earth (Genesis ii 6 -7). (199)

Both Vendler and Creaser agree that earth is a female, yet Creaser argues that earth is a female used for a greater purpose: the benefit of man as mentioned in Genesis. Constantakis peruses with analysing the second stanza. The lines “Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?/Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find” (lines 12-3) state that she is frequently visible to everyone who chooses to look. The emphasis in this stanza is on harvesting rather than growth. Autumn appears in four different guises. First, “Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,/Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind” (lines 14-15) she could be found sitting on the floor of a granary, her hair flying in the breeze. Then this female autumn figure could be discovered sleeping, “Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,/Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook” (lines 16-17) lulled to sleep by the odour of poppies, in a furrow of a partially harvested field of grain. As autumn sleeps, the poet imagines a brief moment when harvesting comes to a halt “Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers” (line 18). Autumn appears in a third guise in “And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep” (line 19), this time as a gleaner going across a brook with a burden on her head. A gleaner is someone who collects grain that harvesters have left in the field. Autumn appears in yet another guise in “Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,/ Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours” (lines 21-22). She sits back and watches a cider press make cider from pulped apples (296).

In the third stanza, Keats maintains the direct address to autumn for the first two lines, according to Constantakis. The first "Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?" (line 23) contains a hint of sadness, as the gone sounds of spring are mentioned twice, yet the poet states in the coming line "Think not of them, thou hast thy music too," (line 24) that the passing of spring is not anything to be regretted. Autumn has its own sounds, which are said to be valuable and beautiful. The remainder of the stanza evokes these autumnal noises. "While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day," (line 25) the poet describes a gentle autumn evening during which the stubble on harvested fields turns a scarlet tint. The sound of gnats can be heard at that time of day similar to a choir performing a melodramatic tune. The hum of gnats is heard in the soft breeze as it rises and falls from the sallow trees beside the river "Among the river sallows, borne aloft/Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies" (lines 28-29). A willow tree with broad leaves is known as a sallow tree. "And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;/Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft" (lines 30-31) refer to additional sounds that can be heard in autumn: lambs bleating and crickets singing in the bushes. Finally, "The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;/And gathering swallows twitter in the skies" (lines 32-33) to round out the range of natural noises, the poet invokes the songs of the robin with its red breast and the swallows as they congregate in the skies before migrating for the winter (296-7). Since this last poem of Keats is the result of his experience and a reference to the works of his predecessors, Vendler affirms that in these specific lines: "Keats borrowed from Shakespeare the orphans and the diminished birdsong he used to close the ode [with]" (238).

Creaser comments on the three stanzas of the poem suggesting that Keats excels in portraying the season as well as referring to the divine entity which Keats labels as a goddess:

> The first two stanzas evoke an earthly paradise within our fallen world and create an ideal relation between nature and man. Nature is perceived with a loving fullness and

> intimacy-we sense the very weight of ripeness —and, far from perpetuating meaningless cycles of birth and death, nature is 'store' to be harvested for man. All is there to be safely gathered in; apples do not fall and rot, they are pressed into juice for fermentation. Even the untamed creatures of the final stanza have chosen to live in proximity to man. (198)

Indeed, the vivid images of the natural world presented through Keats' poetry and diction are beyond imagination. In addition to that, Keats is very conscious of the processes of growth and ripening establishing a close intimate bond with nature. From an ecological perspective, this bond could be interpreted in two ways. The first is how Keats is conscious and amazed by all the natural processes taking place in his presence. The second is how nature caters for men and their dependence on it for survival. In fact, his awareness of the harmonious relation existing between man and nature is a proof of Keats' eco-consciousness. Tate who criticizes "To Autumn" for having nothing to offer has to recognize the immaculate amount of art declaring that: ""Ode to Autumn" is a very nearly perfect piece of style" (58). Now regardless of Keats' style and elevated language, what one can infer from the lines of this poem is the absence of urbanisation and modern life. The whole setting revolves around a rural area where crops are harvested and fruits are plucked from their trees. Not only that, the speaker is feeling at ease witnessing all the processes of autumn in that pastoral life. The latter actually captivates all of Keats' senses and provides revelation to pen down his last poem. Additionally, the embrace of the pastoral life could also be seen as an implicit reaction to the hastening process of industrialization, or else why would Keats refuge in a place that resembles the old time for inspiration?

Despite that Keats existed long before the film industry, his poems offer a set of exceptional visual sequences containing nature as a whole and the season. Vendler argues for two major types of motions. The first major motion is temporal. As the poem begins, we see

the earth's ripening fruits followed by (in a flashback) the flowers that preceded them, and finally, the proto-harvest of nectar from the flowers, done by the bees, the first harvesters. The second stanza depicts the second harvest of grain and fruit (the fruit harvest is the consequence of the fruit harvest), and the third stanza depicts the stubble plains. From blossoming flowers to deforested landscapes, we move in unison but with peculiarities along the way that we will return to. The ode's second main organising motion happens in space: The poem begins in a vast veil of mists and developing sun, an overview or panorama that is not returned to until the ode's final stanza. There is a wonderfully precise topography inside the body of the ode beginning with the human abode, the thatched cottage, and the grapevines ringing its eaves—the first and closest of many concentric plottings of space. Beyond the cottage, we proceed through the apple orchard, the kitchen garden with its gourds and nut tree, and the beehives (which are usually found under the cottage trees)—all of which are in the immediate vicinity of the central home. The next stanza takes us "abroad," to the outbuildings, the granary, the threshing floor, the structure holding the cider press, and the wheat and poppies-filled cornfields. We also learn that in order to get from cornfield to granary, the gleaner must cross a brook. As his notes to "Paradise Lost" demonstrate, Keats was already acutely aware of the benefits to be gained by meticulous "stationing" of all details at this point. In the third stanza, we perceive and speculate on regions further away. We can glance to the horizon and see barred clouds, and we can think beyond the stubble plains (with their included tributary brook) to the river (one of the farm's natural boundaries). To the mountainous bourn' of sheep pasturage (another natural barrier), to hedgerows (placed when a river or a hill did not separate one farm from the next), and eventually to a croft (perhaps a far corner of the farm). After this meticulous positioning of the perimeter on a plane, the space of the poem becomes three dimensional, and we lift our gaze up to the heavens, the top "border" of the farm in a sudden expansion of direction (244-5).

Similarly, Constantakis affirms that the poem opens with a cinematic distant shot of a misty autumnal countryside followed by a movement in the field of imagery of the sun. Following this comes what may be described as a close shot with vines growing around the eaves of thatched cottages and apple orchards. The visuals of nature then become smaller and smaller as though revealed in a series of recaps and close-ups. The reader is carried from one dimension of apple trees through gourds and hazelnuts, flowers and bees, and eventually to overfilled bee cells: a comprehensive image that completes the picture of nature's fullness (297). Indeed, this contributes to the fact that nature is the most important source of inspiration for John Keats. He essentially sees another sort of beauty that he can translate into poetry by simply enriching it with his sensations. Keats can breach the existential boundaries to find the core of nature, keen to claim it for his own. In short, "To Autumn" is Keats' final work of art in which the reader is bewitched by the world the poet is depicting with such mastery.

III.2. Passage of Time and Imagination: Reality or Illusion

To many critics, "To Autumn" is a perfect piece of art that describes the joys of autumn in an elevated style. Keats in this particular poem, indeed, decides not to keep the usual pattern of his other spring odes. He does not allude to time passage or insert any time reference for two-thirds of the poem, and the whole poem gives the feeling that the speaker is merely describing the setting around him. In the 22nd line of the poem, however, Keats inserts the first time reference, a line before the last stanza "last oozings hours by hours". The next line is: "Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?" (line 23); it serves as a spatio-temporal marker to single the end of a phase and the beginning of another. Taking Keats' health condition into account, then the first phase in the two first stanzas is about subconscious and imagination not being able to tell if the time has passed regarding the

absence of a time reference. The second phase in the last stanza is where the poet goes back to himself asking a rhetorical question as a marker that signals reality and consciousness.

Autumn is a transitional season between summer blossoming and winter hibernation. Things are ending and after the harvest is over, there will be nothing left to do except to relax until the next season. Much of the poem's transition occurs between stanzas rather than inside them. Fruits and gourds, for example, are expanding before being picked in the first stanza. The harvest is done, or almost so, by the second stanza, and the ripe apples have been turned into a thick sweet cider. The third stanza focuses on a single transformative event, the transition from autumn towards winter. James Lott, in “Keats's To Autumn: The Poetic Consciousness and the Awareness of Process”, states that: “[“To Autumn” ’s] movement from early to middle to late autumn and from morning to afternoon to evening, reveals an awareness of the relationship of beauty to transience and an understanding of what one commentator calls "fruition and fulfilment in the process of time"” (71). Indeed, there is an underlying flow from morning to afternoon and into darkness as the poet's attention moves through autumnal processes. In “On the cyclical movement in John Keats’s “to autumn”,” Yingjie Duan argues that:

> Keats’s “To Autumn,” a short poem dedicated to the season of autumn, implicitly exhibits the cyclical movement of one day and four seasons, manifesting Northrop Frye’s definition of “process of life.” As the speaker’s focus shifts from autumnal fruitfulness to autumnal labor and to autumnal sound, there is also an implicit progression from morning to afternoon and into dusk. Parallel to the diurnal cycle within the poem, there is a transition from early autumn to mid-autumn and then to the heralding of winter. The cycles of one day and four seasons epitomize the single great circle of life in general. (119)

He suggests that Keats in this poem uses the succession of the day periods and the progression of seasons from summer to autumn moving to winter to allude to the whole cycle of life. Even in the state of oblivion, being conscious of death, finitude, and transience become a quality of Keats. What is different however is the relaxed tone and atmosphere. Indeed, there is a sense of relaxed acceptance of nature's activity, particularly in the line “Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,” (line 1) which describes Keats' mental state. He just enjoys natural activities without question or remorse:

> [Keats] employs as a poetic device a perceiver who is highly receptive throughout the poem to concrete images of autumn, but who is limited for two-thirds of the poem in his ability to reflect upon those images and assess their significance in indicating temporality. The first two stanzas show the speaker fully and empathically responsive to the external world in autumn, but at the same time they reveal the speaker to be so occupied with his celebration of and participation in autumn as to be unaware of temporal process. (Lott 72)

He suggests that Keats appears as a speaker who is open to tangible pictures of autumn throughout but restricted in his ability to meditate on them. The first two stanzas depict the speaker being fully and empathically receptive to the external environment in autumn, but they also show the speaker being so preoccupied with his involvement in autumn that he is unconscious of the temporal process.

At the opening of the third stanza, Keats tries to cheer up the personified figure of autumn by encouraging her not to be sad about the lack of spring noises since she, autumn, has her own sounds that are as valuable. However, the poet expresses his personal acceptance of life and death in this way. All in nature is ephemeral, yet there is no cause for ache; there is a time for ascent and a period for decay (Constantakis 297). This is a clear sign that Keats got back to himself sensing the temporality: “In the final stanza, however, the speaker modifies

his empathy with autumn by the recognition of his literal separateness from it, and emerges as a person fully conscious of temporality" (Lott 72). Through the figures and scenes in the poem, Keats attempts to allude to time passage, yet he is entirely receptive to the surrounding factors in the autumn. The latter reveal that the speaker to be extensively preoccupied with his enjoyment and engagement in autumn that he is unconscious of temporal processes. Moreover, Southam tackles the same ideas expressing that: "The process of seasonal change through these three stages is rendered with a movement so delicate that it is almost imperceptible" (93). In fact, the delicacy which Keats renders the poem makes many critics, as well as readers, discard the amount of complexity there is in the poem. Indeed, pointing out where the complexity lies is a key element in understanding the whole piece.

In "To Autumn" the speaker describes the pleasant benefits of autumn. The first line's long, soft syllables, "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," (line 1) ease the reader into the poem. The speaker lingers at the moment, striving to prolong it as long as possible. Lott explains the actions of early autumn that are divided into three categories. First, vines and trees are filled with fruit "Conspiring with him how to load and bless/ With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;/To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees" (lines 3-5). Second, the fruit is ripped "And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;/ To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells/ With a sweet kernel; to set budding more" (lines 6-8). Third, fresh flowers are brought to bud "And still more, later flowers for the bees,/Until they think warm days will never cease," (lines 9-10). In nature, this sequence would be reversed: first the flowers, then the ripening of the fruit, and last the appearance of the ultimate result—vines and apple trees filled with fruit. However, Keats has not considered the natural order of things at this moment, and the scene is portrayed entirely from a visual standpoint with no consideration for the veracity of the temporal sequence of the elements. Even what cannot be actually seen, such as fruit ripening, is made to appear immediately visible; an effect induced by the

personification of autumn and the resulting reduction of any desire to think of ripening as a slow and invisible process that requires time (72-3). He suggests that Keats is describing from a visual standpoint even the processes that cannot be witnessed by the human being because they take time like fruit ripening. This indicates Keats' urge to extend the time of his presence among these natural elements without return.

Keats ponders where the actual core of autumn may be found in the midst of the season's early joys in the second stanza. The poet moved from describing the occurrences of autumn to taking part in it. Lott explains that Keats depicts in the second stanza that the embodiment of autumn as the "bosom-friend of the... sun" (line 2) shifts in the second stanza to the association of the season as four human characters labelled with harvesting: a winnower, a reaper, a gleaner, and a person observing a cider press. However, while the shift in personification implies that some moment has elapsed between the first and second stanzas, there is no evidence that the speaker is aware of what is going on. Considering that three of the four figures are related to grain harvesting, the reader could anticipate some attention to be paid to the order of the activities: reaping first, then gleaning, then winnowing. While there is no reversal of natural order here, as there is in the first stanza, no particular attention is paid to the fact that time is passing; the speaker continues to speak within a visual frame of reference, describing images as they might "some time" be seen, rather than as they would occur in sequence. Keats has maintained a contrast between his indication of time passing (the movement from early autumn in the first stanza to middle autumn in the second) and his speaker's lack of awareness that the scene he is describing necessitates any perspective other than the purely visual up to the last line of the second stanza (73).

The speaker concludes in the last stanza of the poem with a reflection on the passage of time drawing on the strongly sensual imagery of stanza one and autumn's personifications in stanza two. "The second stanza depicts certain very typical scenes of autumn. It gives some

of the most vivid pictures in English poetry. Keats pictorial quality is really at its zenith in this stanza. We see autumn season as a being, personification. We see reaping, Winnowing and gleaning and the autumn itself seen doing all these seasonal activities" (Khan and Jabeen 129). Using music as a metaphor to differentiate between autumn and spring, Keats reconciles the seasons' contrasts by rejecting to contrast them. He considers spring and autumn as two inevitable, unavoidable seasons, each with its own set of virtues, flaws, and truths. Lott reflects on the third stanza stating that: "It is at this very point, however, when the speaker's loss of all awareness and total subjection to time seem inevitable, that the first reference to the passing of time occurs, for the phrase "hours by hours," despite its seductively soothing sound, introduces into the poem a temporal frame of reference" (77).

The question that immediately follows, "Where are the songs of spring?" (line 23), unlike the solely rhetorical question that opens the second stanza, "Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?" (line 12), calls for reflection and an answer, which is emphasised by a second iteration of the question: "Ay, where are they?" (line 23). The opening phrase of the third stanza, then, accomplishes two tasks. First, it exposes the speaker looking for what is not perceptible in the scene before him for the first time. Second, it reverses the speaker's march toward unconsciousness by displaying the speaker's sudden realisation that time has passed. The answer to the query is not that there is no time, which has been the speaker's naive attitude up to this point; rather, autumn has its own song. The fact that the speaker thinks of autumn and spring in comparative terms, noting their differences as well as similarities, emphasises this new knowledge and displays a waking from the mentality that enabled a true mistake between autumn and summer in the first stanza (Lott 77). The concluding lines of "To Autumn" show the sensibility of a man who has moved beyond his empathy for autumn to a knowledge of his separateness from the season and of time's power over the season. The flow of events in "To Autumn," however, does not partake in the same pattern of other Keats'

spring odes in which the sensibility of the climax and the final resolution whether it existed or not are felt. In “Ode to a Nightingale”, Keats’ realisation echoes breaking the metre with a resonating sound when he says: “Darkling I listen”. Here instead, there is a subtle smooth motion towards realisation:

> We have arrived instead through a seemingly effortless effort at a native, temperate, idiomatic place of mellowing in which the light of day and the ripeness of the season pass imperceptibly away. At this stage in a tragically brief career the poet has achieved the serene tone of a new music, and in its renunciation of old tension has defined a new poetics at the final threshold. (Macksey 855)

Keats has reached the peaceful tone of new music, as he has discarded old tension in its renunciation. He has arrived at a temperate realm of mellowing, where the light of day and the fullness of the season fade away gradually. The speaker merely recognises autumn's unique beauty towards the end of the poem. Why lament the rich landscapes of spring and summer when, as he claims, autumn has its own music?

The aforementioned criticism leads to a further questioning of imagination regarding “To Autumn”. In a group of letters, Keats wrote to George and Georgiana Keats in 1819 about the days of composing this poem: “I want to compose without this fever. I hope I one day shall” (letter [17-27 September] 376). Considering the advanced condition of Keats’ illness whilst composing the poem would open the door for other interpretations. Even though imagination is an indisputable aspect of romantic poetry that is prominently present in all of Keats’ poems, in this particular poem it is often debated. Ernest J. Lovell, Jr. states in “The Genesis of Keats’s Ode “To Autumn” that:

> The chief qualities of the poem, then, which are for the most part obvious to any careful reader, may be summed up as follows: (1) the complete absence of

> philosophical content, ideological or personal conflict, and verbal ambiguity or complexity, (2) a setting in actuality, with no hint of dream or vision … (4) the suppression of the poet's identity as such. (208)

He suggests that: “any careful reader,” imagination is nowhere to be found in the poem. However, a deeper inquiry into Keats himself suggests otherwise. In a group of letters sent to George and Georgiana Keats in 1819 during the days of composing “To Autumn”, Keats addressed his way of writing stating that: “You speak of Lord Byron and me. There is this great difference between us: he describes what he sees, I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task. You see the immense difference” (letter [17-27 September] 368). In “Editing Keats's Marginalia,” Beth Lau tackles one of the poet’s used techniques: “Keats's note in Paradise Lost discussing Milton's genius for “stationing or statu[a]ry” has been shown to reflect Keats's interest in pictorial or sculpturesque imagery” (338). The depiction that changes from stanza to stanza supposedly represents the passing of time.

This poem spans the full autumn season, from its overripe beginnings at the end of summer to its decay at the start of winter. The swelling gourds and “…plump the hazel shells” (line 7) in the first stanza represent this ripeness. The “granary floor,” (line 14) the “halfreap'd furrow,” (line 16) and the “final oozings” (line 22) of the cider press are all mentioned in the second stanza, which focuses on the Autumn harvest. “The soft-dying day” (line 25) and “gathering swallows,” (line 33) among other images, herald the beginning of winter in the last stanza. So while the poem remains rooted in one environment, the setting traverses across time in the poet's imagination. Lott explains that:

> Not only do the first two stanzas reveal that the speaker does not perceive die scene in temporal terms, but they also suggest that through his participation in the season and his failure to understand that time is passing, the speaker moves toward loss of the power of reflection and loss of consciousness. The movement toward such a state

> involves in the first stanza the peculiar effect of the synesthetic imagery and in the second stanza the incorporation of the speaker himself into the scenes of lethargy he describes. (74)

According to Lott, Keats loses the power of contemplation and consciousness as a result of his engagement in the season and his failure to recognise that time is passing. Indeed, This lack of time reference can only mean that the poet is immensely delved into the season. Adding to his health condition, Keats is really half-conscious of what is in front of him. Or else, how could it be possible for someone to move in time yet still describe what is in front of him without the aid of imagination?

This research argues that in the last stanza, there is a moment of return to the "sole self" equivalent to the ending of "Ode to a Nightingale". The speaker asserts this abrupt realisation of the speaking voice in what appears to be similar to waking up from a trance and asking the question "Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?" (line 23). This first line of stanza three contradicts what the whole poem is supposed to be revolving around. However, reality to Keats is always furnished with his imagination. The glorious autumn Keats is describing and taking part in in the first two stanzas is not fully imagined, but took all of the autumn elements and he imagined the whole process of "ripeness to the core" and other processes that are supposed to take time. Imagination made the time stop while the space proceeds in the first two stanzas making them fully visual and concrete images. Stanza three instead focuses on hearing. Hearing unlike the vision means the receptor is fully aware and conscious of his surroundings like the singing crickets, bleating lambs, and "wailful choir" of gnats not only announce the end of the day, but also the inevitable passage of autumn into winter against the backdrop of a rosy sunset. The shift corresponds thematically to death, which is a recurring theme in Keats' poetry. But, thanks to Keats' soft, delicate words in the last stanza, we realise that the end autumn brings is gentle: it's harmless, and everything does

not seem to die as much as they dissolve or evaporate, quietly moving from one state of existence to another. Once again, Keats proves he is a romantic poet through the various proportions he delivers in every poem. Southam argues that:

> As we have seen, a vivid apprehension of time lies at the heart of the ode. There is, of course, at one level, the simple temporal progression, which, like the dimension of space, must exist in the poem in order to enforce its imaginative reality. I have tried to show that Keats controls this element of sequential progression very strictly, keeping our attention fixed upon activities or scenes, while accelerating, or emphasizing, the temporal progression. (97-8)

Keats rigorously regulates this aspect of sequential progression directing the attention of the reader to events or scenes while speeding or intensifying the temporal flow making him an absolute genius. He is a typical romantic valuing imagination over logic and sensation over thought. He, like Wordsworth and Blake, feels that the imagination supplied a more full comprehension of truth than the rational mind alone.

III.3. Not Just a Poem: A Cycle of Keats' Life

"To Autumn" is the last poem of Keats because of which he is criticised for writing a piece that does not have something significant to say. It is merely a beautiful description of the season and nothing more. Indeed, many critics have noted that this poem lacks many aspects of depth. However, others have highlighted the abundant presence of imagination in it. It also utilizes various techniques that work on shifting the spatiotemporal settings. Once again, this research's point of focus revolves around the claim that the whole poem is not meant for highlighting the beauty of the season. Albeit, it can be read as an allusion to the life cycle of Keats. In fact, this autumn he is addressing is not the season yet the poet himself reaching an immaculate degree of maturity. Furthermore, the maximum level of ripeness

resembles the level of Keats' mastery. The consciousness of his near death leads him to paint autumn the season as the final autumn of his life where he unites with nature for the last time then each dies from a malicious disease. The former with tuberculosis and the latter with industrialisation.

A comparison is the only way the majority of critics have tackled the group of Keats' odes. They usually reach a final standpoint in which they subtly and implicitly compare the odes; of course, they do not declare that "To Autumn" is a bad poem, yet one gets a feeling of inferiority as if there is something missing about "To Autumn". Douglas Bush writes: "To Autumn is Keats's most perfect poem, but it has none of the tensions of the Nightingale and the Grecian Urn … It is less a resolution of the perplexities of life and poetic ambition than an escape into the luxury of pure-if now sober-sensation" (qtd in Lindenberger 126). Southam comments on this stating that: ""To Autumn" is here treated as a more elegant, but less interesting elder brother to the "Nightingale." And the reputation of the later ode has never recovered from this damning praise. From Bridges, 1895, we turn to Allen Tate, 1945, in "A Reading of Keats." Fifty years have passed, but the assessment is identical" (92). Southam seems to be one of the few readers of Keats' odes who mind the limited critical attention given to "To Autumn".

One of the interesting flaws that critics have left out when studying "To Autumn" in relation to the other group of Keats' odes is its title, which is the first thing that captivates the eye. When compared to Keats' other great odes, "To Autumn" appears to be lacking the critical repeated word: "ode." The title is expected to be "Ode to Autumn" just like all those that preceded it, but it is not. Nonetheless, the poem is actually by definition an ode since it is a lengthy lyric verse with a formal pattern made up of multiple stanzas. It has a sophisticated tone and vocabulary, as many critics have proven. Moreover, the lines of Keats' ode demonstrate the formal, exquisite diction that is characteristic of the ode genre. However, "To

Autumn" without "Ode" in it appears to alter the meaning as well. To start with, the aforementioned analysis proves "To Autumn" as a small replica of the cycle of life and death. Keats' use of patterns, symbolism, and themes leads the readers towards grasping the essence of the poem as an understanding of the seasons in nature in relation to this cycle in which he refers to the basic principle of life growth, change, and eventually decay. The poem honours the autumn period for its bounty, blessings, music, and beauty. Keats uses a number of poetic methods to illustrate the intrinsic beauty of nature, but is this written solely for autumn as a season, or does the poet refer to a segment of his own life? Now if the poem is really about the autumn season, a man of Keats quality would not neglect what mostly symbolizes autumn: the fallen leaves. But he actually neglects them for a reason. In his, "John Keats: To Autumn," Patrick Swinden has roughly the same remark arguing that:

> But where are the falling, or fallen, leaves? Remembering Thomas Hood's 'Autumn' ('Where is the pride of Summer, - the green prime, - / The many many leaves all twinkling?') or Gerard Manley Hopkins's 'Spring and fall', and a host of other poems on the subject of autumn, we ought to find this surprising; and it is a tribute to Keats that in reading his poem we ignore such a gaping hole at the centre of his treatment of its subject. I think it is important to our understanding of the poem that we ask ourselves why Keats has omitted the falling leaves, and how it is that we fail to notice he has done so. (57)

Swinden then suggests that the falling leaves as an assigned characteristic of autumn should not be neglected regarding that the question it leaves unanswered may alter the whole understanding of the poem.

This absence of the falling leaves, however, would be naturally justified with the speaker talking about the early autumn, but Keats with the three stanzas reached almost wintertime. Another interpretation of this absence can be that fallen leaves symbolize decay,

the things that does not go with the poem's optimistic tone. Nevertheless, Keats introduced decay conveniently as well in his final stanza. Going back to the first stanza:

> Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
>
> Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
>
> Conspiring with him how to load and bless
>
> With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
>
> To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
>
> And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core; (lines 1-6)

Keats employs the word "season" to deceive the readers and keep them on the track of the season, while he is referring to a particular time in his life where "he (the fruit) was filled with ripeness to the core". Keats is well conscious of his growth, that he has reached the peak of his mastery of poetry, challenging everyone who criticized his immaturity, dramatic personality, and the massive presence in his poems. Moving on to the second stanza, the line "Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?" seems missing a character; most critics suggest that the speaker is addressing the autumn as a goddess, while Keats is addressing himself. Vendler mentions the goddess in the second stanza and precises that it is a "vegetation goddess" (258). In the previous analysis, Keats in the second stanza is participating and not only describing. It is Keats' last unification with nature, where he expresses his appreciation, awe, and amazement. Vendler delivers an accurate interpretation of the situation when she asserts that nature's harvest resistances are acknowledged ranging from forceful (the fume) to obstructive (the brook) to pitiful (the slowness of the last oozings); yet, all resistance is futile. The threshing will be finished after the thoughtless repose, after the noonday rest, the latter half of the furrow will be reaped, and the final basket will be carried across the brook; and the

last oozing will be “pent in walls of glass” as summer's distillation. Cultivation, in its agricultural triumph, signifies the death of nature (282). Keats dedicates the second stanza to Mother Nature as a recognition and an appreciation. From an ecocritical standpoint, he talks about a real bond between man and nature in which man is fully dependent on it. He gives hints about industrialization stating that after the harvest there is the death of nature and that it is a matter of time before earth is consumed and nature is depleted “Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours” (line 22). Accordingly, Keats unites with nature, for the last, time to show his deepest delight for her and for the lesson he gets through her in which he changes from a naïve immature young teen to a wise mature philosopher. This is also an example of deep ecology. He craves being united with nature and does not consider himself a superior entity in addition to his utter rejection of the urban life regarding that only nature can fulfill what he aspires for.

In the third stanza, Keats is awakening from his union with nature in a mood of bittersweetness when the tale is nearly wrapped up, it can feel sugary and phoney. It might be sad when everything ends in dread and gloom. However, this perfect bittersweet finish feels round, genuine, and just as rewarding. Farewells are delivered and now he is back to his “sole self” fully conscious, deeply aware that this is the autumn of his life. The first line of the third stanza “Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?” (line 23) is an indicator that Keats is fully perceptive that the spring of his life is over, and now the winter has come. Susan J. Wolfson concludes: “To Autumn writes up the wistfully complicated interval between [life and death]” (123). Keats simultaneously sees autumn as a liminal season that straddles the line between prosperity and decay. The weight of the apples causes tree limbs to “bend,” gourds to “swell,” and flowers to “set budding more…[and] more.” The fruits are tastiest and juiciest when they are ripe “to the core.” In a way, they have reached the pinnacle of growth since they are on the point of rotting. Equal to those of the first stanza, he used

“full-grown lambs” to refer to himself in the third stanza as attaining the highest peak of growth, yet decay is a short distance away.

The poem is frequently seen as a piece that depicts the gorgeous life-filled season that is frequently overlooked by spring and summer especially when Keats wonders about the song of spring in his final awakening “Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?” (line 23). Underlying this joyous occasion, though, is a sense of oncoming disintegration. Autumn's bounty is only conceivable because it occurs towards the close of the growing season, and all of this richness is on the verge of decay; when winter arrives, the fruit will spoil, leaves will fall, and crops will be gathered. This, however, does not diminish the beauty of autumn, but rather shows that beauty shines the brightest in the moments before it is gone. Indeed, things extract their beauty and value from the notion of finitude, which Sharp considers to be the essence of the poem stating that:

> “To Autumn,” which I take to be Keats's purest celebration of the transient mortal condition, involves a sanctification of the human that goes quite beyond mere resignation or passive acceptance. Sunset, night, and winter hover along the poem's periphery, but the foreshadowing of death, far from haunting or escaping the poem's affirmation, gives it its inclusive character. The poet is totally undisturbed by the recurrent foreshadowing and subtly resonating imminence of death. For at this supremely luxurious moment of fruition is able to view the external world of nature from the point of view of one who fully accepts his mortality and recognizes that nature will survive him. Only by living intensely in the present moment can one discover that autumn has its own music. (42-3)

According to Sharp, Keats is completely unaffected by the frequent warning and the soft inevitable death. He may see the outside world through the eyes of someone who has

accepted his mortality and realises that nature will outlast him. In a way, death is as much a part of autumn's beauty as life is.

Richard Marggraf Turley, in “'Full-grown lambs': Immaturity and 'To Autumn',” admits that:

> ‘To Autumn’ is a poem that strives for canonicity, a poem that insists it is of ‘such completion’ to warrant ‘passing the press’, even as the ‘youngster’ Endymion was not (published Preface). But in the canons of English literature ‘To Autumn’ is a Trojan horse. It quietly subverts the mature values it ostensibly buys into and appears to eulogize. (40)

Undeniably, the poem is written in such a mastery that all the elements and aspects that Keats has been criticised for do exist, yet they differ depending on the eye of the reader. The poem is dynamic yet seems static; it is quite dramatic but looks so serene. Eventually, Keats surrenders himself to time admitting its power and for the first time, Keats is satisfied. Ernest J. Lovell, Jr., in “The Genesis of Keats’s Ode "To Autumn,” asserts that this tranquil, unquestioned acceptance of reality, which amounts to a view of the beauty of things as they are, is possibly the most significant distinction between the Autumn Ode and the other poems in the 1820 anthology. There is no straining after "escape" in this setting, the ideal and the actual are one (205). “To Autumn” is the last of the six legendary odes he finished in 1819 and indeed the last poem in Keats' life. These months were filled with a bittersweet mix of sadness and delight. Keats had fallen in love with Fanny Brawne, but the couple was not capable to marry due to the poet's financial difficulties. After Keats nursed his brother through much of his illness, his brother Tom died of tuberculosis in December 1818. Keats would cough blood for the first time in early 1819 revealing he had fallen ill with the same illness that had taken his mother and brother. “-To Autumn- considered in more detail, is traditionally taken as the final harvesting of "the living year" of Keats's genius” (Macksay

852). In this way, 1819 was the Autumn of Keats' life with its long, glorious days nearing to an end.

All the above-mentioned details could be confirmed through the biography of Keats and not only Keats the poet, Albert Elmer Hancock in his literary biography *John Keats* reports that:

> He is gone. He died with the greatest ease. He seemed to go to sleep. On Friday the 23rd, at half-past four the approach of death came on. ' Severn — I — lift me up, for I am dying. I shall die easy. Don't be frightened! Thank God it has come.' I lifted him up in my arms and the phlegm seemed boiling in his throat. This increased until eleven at night, when he gradually sank into death, so quiet that I still thought he slept — but I cannot say more now. (215-6)

The poem reflects the struggle between the superficial delights of autumn's fullness and beauty and the sense of knowing that all of its fruits will be taken soon. It shows the speaker's scepticism about the pleasure and delight he sees around him, as well as his concern about what may happen to them in the future. He recognises that these feelings of joy and melancholy can exist side by side. The speaker's conclusion towards the end is that he can recognise the beauty for what it is regardless of its transience, which demonstrates wisdom, maturity, and serenity from a philosophical mind. Sharp affirms that the most profound beauty can be revealed only to those who recognise. In Wallace Stevens' words: “Death is the mother of beauty,” and it is because Keats recognises this that he can accept, with consummate intensity and “disinterestedness,” the fragile equilibrium in which beauty and transience are poised in this world (43). Eventually, Keats’ promise to Mother Nature is fulfilled; he finds his last closure that resulted in a spectacular poem of serenity despite his mischievous illness, which makes “To Autumn” a fall without crisis/a fall.

Conclusion

"Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no to-morrow. To forget time, to forget life, to be at peace." Oscar Wild

This study uses ecocriticism to investigate the depiction of imagery of nature and the representation of the natural world in the two poems of John Keats: "Ode to a Nightingale" and "To Autumn". It also analyses the representation of his understanding of both the value of developing a connection with nature and its devastation over the industrial Revolution, notably in Britain. Furthermore, this research investigates the relevance of nature as far as the relationship that may exist between it and man in these odes. Moreover, by combining the poet's life, the social context, and the previously stated poems, it illustrates the disruption of ecological equilibrium caused by man's exploitative actions that have destroyed the natural world as presented in the poems. The analysis of Keats' eco-consciousness reveals his mastery of utilising natural elements adding his touch of senses garnishing them with imagination to breach the physical boundaries with nature that ultimately gives him maturity. As a result, this research seeks to highlight both the strengths of imagination and escapism to reach his aims in the two poems.

Britain and change have a shared history together. Indeed, men's exploitative and opportunistic activities were experienced not just during the Industrial Revolution, but also thousands of years before agriculture began. This resulted in the emergence of novel concepts and ideas, most notably capitalism, which was the newly dominating ideology of the period. It grew so powerful that environmental abuse became a commonplace, and the profibility notion became the norm. Britain's landholding system was radicalised and moved away from the rigid laws of property ownership towards a more flexible set of norms defined by the parliament, with most restrictions eliminated. As a result of the agricultural revolution,

Britain became a one-of-a-kind country among others. Nonetheless, this rapid transformation foretold something far more significant: the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, the economic shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy and society is referred to as industrialization. The British Industrial Revolution was so destructive to nature that the ecological system witnessed an imbalance and it was completely damaged. In fact, industrialisation was a key historical development that occurred under a variety of circumstances. However, this tragedy had a profound influence on the lives of many people. A subset of these people were the Romantics, who founded what is now known as the Romantic Movement. Their aesthetic works were popular throughout the Industrial Revolution. Their primary source of inspiration for writing was nature. These writers stood out fiercely against the social, psychological, and environmental effects of the newly industrialised Britain believing that unbridled industrialization was incompatible with the human spirit and men's fundamental rights. They fought for the creativity, subjectivity, and liberalism that defined this era in their works. The Romantics were not tied to the Industrial Revolution just by their historical presence or by their existence during the same period as the revolution; nature, however, brought them together. Many Romantic thinkers and artists saw the new industrial doctrines as cruel and dulling to the senses and soul, so they called for a return to nature.

Because nature is central to the Romantics ideas, ecocriticism is the principal approach concerned with differing perspectives on nature. Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary study of the connection between literature and ecology in which researchers examine writings that demonstrate environmental concerns, among other topics, and explore the various manners literature tackles the subject of nature. Accordingly, a set of terms that reflect the theory is used to the two poems. Namely ecological consciousness, which is a projection of man's attitudes towards nature and the subject's position with respect to it. Deep ecology often emphasises the realisation of (a changed) self via affinity with the environment. In addition to

pastoral, which is a romanticized depiction of rusticity in contrast to, and frequently in mockery of, urbanisation, focused in the first place on the lives of shepherds and rural life. As a result, in this inquiry Keats' poems are under investigation using the ecocritical approach.

Keats' yearning for truth, beauty, comfort, and immortality is a direct result of a stifling past filled with death. With a terrible present in his hands and a bleak future beyond his grasp, Keats has no clue how to confront his concerns or go forward in pursuit of his ambitions. His present tantalises him with a sentimental self that convicts him to vividly recreate all the sad recollections of death and loss of his family members, most significantly his brother Tom, whose death occurred before the production of "Ode to a Nightingale". A delightful tone crosses all barriers into Keats' ears throwing him off balance and transporting him to a land of forgetfulness at the brink of breaking down. In his ten-stanza body of work, which is replete with natural components, most notably the nightingale, as the poem title implies, Keats experiences a trancelike phenomenon that human common sense cannot completely comprehend. Throughout the poem, changes in the spatiotemporal dimensions, as well as changes in the senses, signal not just a movement in the surroundings but also a transition towards Keats' final epiphany. He evolved from wishing to leave his world and achieve immortality by different means such as wine, poison, death, or the bird itself to thoroughly comprehending that his existence is not the worst and that the nightingale's life is not without defects. Keats ultimately realises that the nightingale is in the same darkness as he is, the darkness of mystery while he is in the darkness of ignorance and contempt. The first epiphany, the light of the two beings, is where Keats comes back to the mortal world without the original ignorance, rather he returns as a philosopher. Soon, Keats recognizes that the nightingale's voice is the melody of Mother Nature's tongue unveiling the mystery behind it. In addition, nature allows his residence under her guardianship. Essentially, his ecological consciousness and his fondness for nature to which he seeks a safe haven in the gloomiest

moments of his life results in Keats being inspirited. All that emptiness of anguish, loss, and misery must be filled with something, and Keats chooses to make nature a part of his heart and soul. As a result of being inspirited by nature, Keats suffers for her pain and dies with her death. Not only that, but Mother Nature provides Keats with something more valuable than an escape, shelter, or beauty. She lectures him philosophy taking him on a journey to self-realization in which he uncovers the harsh truth. First, the immortality he seeks can only be attained through poetry because humans can never be physically immortal. Second, he is intensely aware of his near death due to tuberculosis symptoms, but most crucially, he is painfully aware of Mother Nature's near end due to industrialization.

Now at the near end, Keats is neither disturbed by the fact of his decay nor disturbed by the decay of nature. During the time of composing his last poem “To Autumn”, those months were filled with a bittersweetness, but what is yet to come is greater. He expresses the conflict between the ephemeral pleasures and beauty and the realisation that all of those pleasures will be gone shortly. He demonstrates his cynicism about the joy and delight he observes around him, as well as his anxiety about what could happen to them in the future. He has now acutely realised that these sensations of joy and sorrow may coexist. Keats’ conclusion at the end is that he can recognise beauty for what it is despite its transience, which displays philosophical understanding, maturity, and serenity. All he wants now is eternal undisturbed peace. In fact, Keats is predestined to be one with Mother Nature. His epiphany granted by nature for her inspirited vessel (Keats) first leads to different attitudes towards abstract notions such as life, immortality, and death. Keats is amused by the joys of life, reaches immortality through poetry instead of hemlock, wine, or the bird, and calmly accepts death for what it holds for him. However, nature does to Keats what death could not do. Indeed, Keats now sees death as the isthmus in which his body shall rot and flowers grow from it to be eternally united with nature after he dies with her death.

Eventually, Keats' life philosophy is a combination of good and bad, agony and pleasure, not only the visible part of it but even his life within. In fact, limiting the study of all the elements to physical phenomena reduces the philosophy's far-reaching spiritual dimensions. Thence comes the contribution of this dissertation that thoroughly examines Keats' two poems in order to probe into the spiritual dimensions of his poetic expression. The imagery he produces and paints, as well as the wonderful art with which he infuses his images into the hearts and souls of the reader, is the culmination of his spiritual journey. Keats' poetry presents the fact that human beings and the environment are inextricably linked through invisible strands, which is why people can appreciate the beauty of nature. There would have been no such intense feelings, if there had not been such a strong link; the beauty of nature breathes into us. This philosophy demands us not to ignore the truth that our drastic greed, coupled with total contempt for the preservation of nature, will ultimately rob us of all happiness.

Works Cited

1. Primary Sources

Keats, John. "Ode to a Nightingale." *Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats*, edited by Edward Hirsch and Jim Pollock. Modern Library, 2001, pp. 273-5.

---. "To Autumn." *Complete Poems and Selected Letters of John Keats*, edited by Edward Hirsch and Jim Pollock. Modern Library, 2001, pp. 288-9.

2. Other Writings

Keats, John. Letter to Benjamin Bailey. 22 November 1817. *Selected Letters of John Keats*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

---. Letter to Benjamin Bailey. 10 June 1818. *Selected Letters of John Keats*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

---. Letter to Charles Brown. 1-2 November 1820. *Selected Letters of John Keats*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

---. Letter to J. H. Reynolds. 21 September 1819. *Selected Letters of John Keats*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

---. Letter to William Haslam. 15 January 1821. *Selected Letters of John Keats*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

---. Letters to George and Georgiana Keats. 14 February - 4 May 1819. *Selected Letters of John Keats*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

---. Letters to George and Georgiana Keats. 17-27 September 1819. *Selected Letters of John Keats*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

---. Letters to George and Georgiana Keats. 14 February - 4 May 1819. *Selected Letters of John Keats*, Harvard University Press, 2005.

3. Secondary Sources

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* 7th ed, Heinle & Heinle, 1999.

Allen, Robert C. *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective*. Cambridge University Press. 2009. www.cambridge.org/core/books/british-industrial-revolution-in-global-perspective/29A277672CCD093D152846CE7ED82BD9, 10.1017/cbo9780511816680. Accessed 7 May 2022.

Asim, Muhammad, et al. "Vision of Nature: Romantic Poetical Imagination." *Asian Innovative Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2017, pp. 42–54.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 2nd ed., Manchester University Press, 1995.

Bertolino, Paola. "Nature and Beauty in Keats Great Odes." American Studies - Literature, grade: 3 (C), University of Leipzig, 2002, pp. 1-22.

Bloch, Enid. "Hemlock Poisoning and the Death of Socrates: Did Plato Tell the Truth?" *Plato Journal*, no. 1, 2001, pp. 1-8. https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-4105_1_1

Boulger, James D. "Keats' Symbolism." *ELH*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1961, pp. 244–59. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/2872068. Accessed 21 May 2022.

Brenner, Erich. "Human body preservation - old and new techniques." *Journal of goodwcolianatomy*, vol. 224, no. 3, 2014, pp. 316-44. doi:10.1111/joa.12160.

Buell, Lawrence. “Ecocriticism: Some Emerging Trends.” *Qui Parle*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2011, pp. 87–115. https://doi.org/10.5250/quiparle.19.2.0087. Accessed 10 May 2022.

---. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Blackwell, 2008.

Campbell, Joseph. “Coming into Awareness.” *A Joseph Campbell Companion: Reflections on the Art of Living*, edited by Robert Walter and Diane K. Osbon, Joseph Campbell Foundation, 2011, pp. 85-194.

Constantakis, Sara. “To Autumn.” *Poetry For Students: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Poetry Volume 36*, edited by Sara Constantakis and David Kelly, Gale Cengage Learning, 2011, pp. 294-311.

Cossu, Sara. “Of Daffodils and Nightingales: The Dialectic between Poet and Poetical Object in Wordsworth and Keats.” *Academia.edu*, 2019, pp. 1-10.

Crawford, A. W. “Keats’s Ode to the Nightingale.” *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 37, no. 8, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1922, pp. 476–81. https://doi.org/10.2307/2914866.

Creaser, John. “From ‘Autumn’ to Autumn in Keats's Ode.” Essays in Criticism, 1988, pp.190-214.

Das, Srimanta. “John Keats’ to Autumn: an Ecocritical Reading.” Vol. 6, 2018, pp. 1-4. oaji.net/articles/2017/488-1537446628.pdf. Accessed 20 Apr. 2022.

Dator, Jim, et al. “What Is Globalization?” *Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions: East Asia and Beyond*, University of Hawai’i Press, 2006, pp. 13-18. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv3zp081.5. Accessed 7 May 2022. doi:10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.70.30

Donato, Eugenio. “The Writ of the Eye: Notes on the Relationship of Language to Vision in Critical Theory.” *MLN*, vol. 99, no. 4, 1984, pp. 959-78. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/2905512. Accessed 31 May 2022.

Duan, Yingjie. “On the Cyclical Movement in John Keats’s “to Autumn.”” *The Explicator*, vol. 79, no. 3, 2021, pp. 119-22. doi: 10.1080/00144940.2021.1965515. Accessed 7 June 2022.

Estok, Simon C. “Shakespeare and Ecocriticism: An Analysis of “Home” and “Power” in King Lear.” Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association, vol. 103, 2005, pp.13-36. doi: 10.1179/000127905805260537

Farr, James R. *World Eras*. vol. 2, Thomson Gale, 2003.

Fehnker, Lissy, et al. “Understanding Conceptions of “Nature” for Environmental Sustainability: A Case Study in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand.” *Earth*, vol. 2, no. 3, 22 June 2021, pp. 357-373. www.mdpi.com/2673-4834/2/3/21, 10.3390/earth2030021. Accessed 10 May 2022.

Ferber, Michael. *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press, 2010.

Fisher, Joseph. “The History of Landholding in England.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 4, 1876, pp. 97-187. https://doi.org/10.2307/3677922. Accessed 7 May 2022.

Fogle, Richard Harter. “Keats’s Ode to a Nightingale.” *PMLA*, vol. 68, no. 1, 1953, pp. 211-22. https://doi.org/10.2307/459916. Accessed 28 Apr. 2022

Foster, John B. *The Vulnerable Planet: A Short Economic History of the Environment*. Monthly Review Press, 1999.

Frederick, Suresh. *Contemporary Contemplation on Ecoliterature*. Authorpress, 2012.

Fruit, John P. "Keats's Ode to a Nightingale." *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 12, no. 7, 1897, pp. 193-96. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/2917954. Accessed 19 May 2022.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. Routledge, 2004.

Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Goodwin, David. "Toward a Grammar and Rhetoric of Visual Opposition." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1999, pp. 92-111. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/466092. Accessed 18 May 2022.

Hafez, Faten M. *Representations of Nature and Ecological Collapse in the Novels of Jane Austen, Lydia Maria Child, and Catharine Maria Sedgwick*. 2021. St. John's U, PhD dissertation.

Hancock, Albert Elmer. *John Keats: A Literary Biography.* Boston and New York Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908.

Hillas, Smith. "John Keats: Poet, Patient, Physician." *Reviews of Infectious Diseases*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1984, pp. 390-404. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4453349. Accessed 28 May 2022.

Hoggart, Richard. “Literature and Society.” *The American Scholar,* vol. 35, no. 2, 1966, pp. 277-89. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41209369. Accessed 6 May 2022.

Holstein, Michael E. “Keats: The Poet-Healer and the Problem of Pain.” *Keats-Shelley Journal,* vol. 36, 1987, pp. 32-49. *JSTOR,* http://www.jstor.org/stable/30210277. Accessed 25 May 2022.

Homans, Margaret. “Keats Reading Women, Women Reading Keats.” Studies in Romanticism, vol. 29, no. 3, Boston University, 1990, pp. 341-70. https://doi.org/10.2307/25600850.

Hong, Chen. “To Set the Wild Free: Changing Images of Animals in English Poetry of the Pre-Romantic and Romantic Periods.” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment,* vol. 13, no. 2, 2006, pp. 129-49. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44070263. Accessed 17 May 2022. https://scholar.stjohns.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1327&context=theses_dissertations

Hornby, A S. “Ecological crisis.” *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary: Of Current English*, edited by Sally Wehmeier and Michael Ashby, 6th ed., Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 399.

---. “Requiem.” *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary: Of Current English,* edited by Sally Wehmeier and Michael Ashby, 6th ed., Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 1084.

Hutchings, Kevin. “Ecocriticism in British Romantic Studies.” Literature Compass, vol. 4, no. 1, 2007, pp. 172-202.

Kappel, Andrew J. “The Immortality of the Natural; Keats’s "Ode to a Nightingale"” ELH 45.2, 1978, pp. 270-84.

Keller, Mara Lynn. “The Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone: Fertility, Sexuality, and Rebirth.” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1988, pp. 27-54. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25002068. Accessed 20 May 2022.

Khan, Abdul, and Tallat Jabeen. “Stylistic Analysis of the Poem “To Autumn” by John Keats.” *International Journal of Academic Research and Reflection,* vol. 3, no. 1, 2015, pp. 127-37. www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/STYLISTICS-ANALYSIS-OF-THE-POEM-%E2%80%98TO-AUTUMN%E2%80%99-BY-JOHN-KEATS.pdf. Accessed 29 May 2022.

Kitson, Peter J. “The Romantic Period, 1780-1832.” *Literature in Context,* edited by Paul Poplawski, Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 274-363.

Kong, Fanting. “The Ecocritical Analysis of Ode to a Nightingale by John Keats.” *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Culture, Education and Economic Development of Modern Society (ICCESE 2019),* 2019, pp. 100-103. www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/iccese-19/55915650, 10.2991/iccese-19.2019.22. Accessed 30 Mar. 2022.

Kumar, Anil. “Brief Introduction of Environment, Ecology and Environmental Pollution.” *Journal of Modern Management & Entrepreneurship (JMME),* vol. 08, no. 01, 2018, pp. 313-22.

Kumar, Sanjai, and Suman Singh. “A Few Lines on the Odes of John Keats.” *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, vol. 2, no. 10, 2012, pp. 1-3. www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-1012/ijsrp-p1067.pdf. Accessed 22 Feb. 2022.

Lau, Beth. “Editing Keats’s Marginalia.” *Text*, vol. 7, 1994, pp. 337-48. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30227708. Accessed 20 Apr. 2022.

Lindenberger, Herbert. “Keats’s ‘To Autumn’ and Our Knowledge of a Poem.” *College English*, vol. 32, no. 2, 1970, pp. 123-34. https://doi.org/10.2307/374639. Accessed 20 Apr. 2022.

LokRaj, Sharma. “Representation of Natural World in Keats‟S ‘Ode to a Nightingale.’” *International Journal of Engineering Applied Sciences and Technology*, vol. 03, no. 11, 2021, pp. 53-61. www.academia.edu/43947084/REPRESENTATION_OF_NATURAL_WORLD_IN_KEATS_S_ODE_TO_A_NIGHTINGALE_. Accessed 28 Mar. 2022.

Lott, James. “Keats’s ‘To Autumn’: The Poetic Consciousness and the Awareness of Process.” *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1970, pp. 71-81. https://doi.org/10.2307/25599750. Accessed 20 Apr. 2022.

Lovell, Ernest J. “The Genesis of Keats’s Ode ‘To Autumn.’” *The University of Texas Studies in English*, vol. 29, 1950, pp. 204-21. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20776020. Accessed 20 Apr. 2022.

Luke, Timothy W. *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture*. University Of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Macksey, Richard. “Keats and the Poetics of Extremity.” *MLN*, vol. 99, no. 4, 1984, pp. 845-84. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/2905506. Accessed 7 Jun. 2022.

Margolis, John D. “Keats’s ‘Men of Genius’ and ‘Men of Power.’” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 11, no. 4, 1970, pp. 1333-47. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40754067. Accessed 30 Apr. 2022.

Marland, Pippa. “Ecocriticism.” *Literature Compass*, vol. 10, no. 11, Nov. 2013, pp. 846-68. compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/lic3.12105, 10.1111/lic3.12105. Accessed 7 May 2022.

Miller, Joan W. *Keats' Concept of Death.* 1965. Lehigh U, Master of Arts thesis. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/228668409.pdf

Minerva Salguero, Gómez. “A Critical Appreciation John Keats’ ‘Ode to a Nightingale.’” *English Literature*, 2020, pp.1-2. www.academia.edu/44312784/A_CRITICAL_APPRECIATION_JOHN_KEATS_ODE_TO_A_NIGHTINGALE_. Accessed 18 Mar. 2022.

Mohajan, Haradhan. “The First Industrial Revolution: Creation of a New Global Human Era.” Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2019, pp. 377-87.

Moore, Lisa L. *The Collected Poems of Anna Seward*. Routledge, 2016.

Morelli, John. “Environmental Sustainability: A Definition for Environmental Professionals.” Journal of Environmental Sustainability, vol. 1, no. 1, 2011, pp. 1-9. mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/96644/,https://mpra.ub.unimuenchen.de/96644/1/MPRA_paper_96644.pdf. Accessed 7 May 2022.

O'Rourke, James L. *Keats's Odes and Contemporary Criticism*. University Press Of Florida, 1998.

O'Brien, Patrick. "Provincializing the First Industrial Revolution." GEHN working papers, 2006. http://wwww.lse.ac.uk/EconomicHistory/Assets/Documents/Research/GEHN/GEHNWP17-POB.pdf. Accessed 3 May 2022. Preprints.

Oroskhan, Muhammad, and Esmaeil Zohdi. "Negative Romanticism: An Exploration of a Sense of Isolation in Yushij'sAfsaneh." SciPress Ltd, vol. 70, 2016, pp. 30-36.

Pace, Claire. "'Numi de' Poeti, e Della Musica': Claude Lorrain's Minerva Visiting the Muses." *Artibus et Historiae*, vol. 29, no. 57, 2008, pp. 125-48. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/20067185. Accessed 19 May 2022.

Panov, V.I. "Ecological Thinking, Consciousness, Responsibility." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 86, 2013, pp. 379-83. 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.583.

Podlecki, A. J. "Individual and Group in Euripides' Bacchae." *L'antiquité Classique*, vol. 43, no. 1, 1974, pp. 143-165. 10.3406/antiq.1974.1735.

Ravi, V. *Environmental Education*. Lulu Publication, 2015.

Richardson, Gary and Bogart Daniel. "Institutional Adaptability and Economic Development: The Property Rights Revolution in Britain, 1700 to 1830." NBER Working Paper No. w13757, 2008. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1088671. Preprints.

Schütze, Martin. "Studies in the Mind of Romanticism. I. Romantic Motives of Conduct in Concrete Development. The Letters of Heinrich von Kleist to Wilhelmine von

Zenge." *Modern Philology*, vol. 16, no. 6, 1918, pp. 281-96. http://www.jstor.org/stable/433211. Accessed 8 May 2022.

Scott, Heidi. "Keats's Ode to a Nightingale." *The Explicator*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2005, pp. 139-141. 10.1080/00144940509596919. Accessed 23 Nov. 2021.

Seward, Anna. "Colebrook Dale." *The Collected Poems of Anna Seward Volume 2*, edited by Lisa L. Moore. Routledge, 2016, pp. 217.

Shackford, Martha H. "Keats and Adversity." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 32, no. 4, 1924, pp. 474-87. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27533807. Accessed 22 May 2022.

Sharp, Ronald A. *Keats, Skepticism, and the Religion of Beauty*. U of Georgia, 1979.

Sharp, Ronald. "'A Recourse Somewhat Human': Keats's Religion of Beauty." *The Kenyon Review*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1979, pp. 22-49. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4335038. Accessed 19 May 2022.

Sikka, Sonia. "On the Truth of Beauty: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Keats." *The Heythrop Journal*, vol. 39, no. 3, 1998, pp. 243-263. philpapers.org/rec/SIKOTT, 10.1111/1468-2265.00076. Accessed 22 Feb. 2022.

Nasmyth, James. *James Nasmyth Engineer: An Autobiography*. Edited by Samuel Smiles, Cambridge UP, 1883.

Sofi, Nasser Ud-din. "Treatment of Nature by Romantic Poets." IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science, vol. 23, no. 6, 2013, pp. 81-3.

www.researchgate.net/publication/314447800_Treatment_of_nature_by_romantic_poets, 10.9790\/0837-1768183. Accessed 27 Mar. 2022.

Southam, B. C. "The Ode 'To Autumn.'" *Keats-Shelley Journal*, vol. 9, 1960, pp. 91-8. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30210061. Accessed 20 Apr. 2022.

Stefano, George B., et al. "Reciprocal Evolution of Opiate Science from Medical and Cultural Perspectives." *Medical Science Monitor*, vol. 23, 2017, pp. 2890-96. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5478244/, 10.12659/msm.905167. Accessed 19 May 2022.

Steinberg, Theodore L. "An Ecological Perspective on the Origins of Industrialization." *Environmental Review: ER*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1986, pp. 261-76. doi.org/10.2307/3984350. Accessed 7 May 2022.

Swinden, Patrick. "John Keats: 'To autumn'."Critical Quarterly, vol. 20, no. 4, 1978, pp. 57-60. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8705.1978.tb01668.x

Syropoulos, Spyros D. *A Bestiary of Monsters in Greek Mythology*. Archaeopress Publishing Ltd, 2018.

Szabó, Péter. "Historical ecology: past, present and future." *Biological Reviews of the Cambridge Philosophical Society* vol. 90, 4, 2015, pp. 997-1014. doi:10.1111/brv.12141s

Tate, Allen. "A Reading of Keats (I)." *The American Scholar*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1945, pp. 55-63. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41204757. Accessed 25 May 2022.

Tate, Allen. *On the Limits of Poetry, Selected Essays: 1928-1948*. Swallow, 1948.

Tso, Yi-Hsuan. “Keats’s Skepticism about Poetry’s Therapeutic Power.” *Intergrams*, vol. 11, 2011, pp. 26-41. DOI: 10.6387/INTERGRAMS.201103.0026. Accessed 23 Feb. 2022.

Turley, Richard Marggraf, et al. “Keats, ‘To Autumn’, and The New Man of Winchester.” *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 63, no. 262, 2012, pp. 797-817. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23324274. Accessed 28 May 2022.

Turley, Richard Marggraf. “Full-Grown Lambs: Immaturity and to Autumn.” Romanticism on the Net, no. 28, 2003, pp. 27-45. https://doi.org/10.7202/007210ar

Vasconcellos, Rafaela. “English Romantic Poets: A Brief Characterization and the Problematic of Didactic Division of Generations.” Journal of Undergraduate Students in the Area of Linguistic and Literary Studies in English. 2010, pp. 17-25. https://dlm.fflch.usp.br/sites/dlm.fflch.usp.br/files/texto5_0.pdf

Vavra, Sandra, and Sharon L Spencer, editors. *Clash! : Superheroic yet Sensible Strategies for Teaching the New Literacies despite the Status Quo*. Information Age Pub, 2011.

Vendler, Helen. *The Odes of John Keats*. Belknap of Harvard UP, 1983.

Wasserman, Earl R. *The Finer Tone: Keats’s Major Poems*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1953.

Wells, Colin. “The Mystery of Socrates’ Last Words.” *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2008, pp. 137–48. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737400. Accessed 25 May 2022.

White, Lynn JR. “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis.” *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, 1996, pp. 3-14.

Whiting, George W. “Charlotte Smith, Keats, and the Nightingale.” *Keats-Shelley Journal*, vol. 12, 1963, pp. 4-8. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30212621. Accessed 25 May 2022.

Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. Vintage, 1973.

Wolfson, Susan J. “Falling in Fall 1819: The Fall of Hyperion and To Autumn.” *Reading John Keats*, Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 123-35.

www.academia.edu/42280191/Of_Daffodils_and_Nightingales_The_Dialectic_between_Poet_and_Poetical_Object_in_Wordsworth_and_Keats. Accessed 7 May 2022.

ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تمثيل العالم الطبيعي في قصائد جون كيتس: " قصيدة الى العندليب " (1819) و "إلى الخريف" (1820) من منظور النقد الايكولوجي. يحلل فهمه لقيمة تطوير العلاقة مع الطبيعة وتداعيات تدهورها خلال الثورة الصناعية، ولا سيما في بريطانيا. علاوة على ذلك، ينظر هذا البحث في أهمية الطبيعة في مواجهة الرابطة التي قد تكون موجودة بينها وبين كيتس في قصيدتيه ذلك من خلال الجمع بين حياة الشاعر وسياقه الاجتماعي وكلماته، فإنه يوضح اختلال التوازن البيئي الناجم عن تصرفات الإنسان الاستغلالية تجاه الطبيعة وفي حين سعي الشاعر للوصول إليها. هذه الأطروحة، بالتالي، تستنتج وعي كيتس البيئي الذي يكشف عن إتقانه لدمج العناصر الطبيعية مع الخيال لخرق الحدود المادية الموجودة بين الإنسان والطبيعة. ونتيجة لذلك، يسلط هذا البحث الضوء على نقاط قوة الخيال وميول الهروب للوصول إلى أهدافه من خلال القصيدتين. أخيرًا، تتابع هذه الدراسة رحلة كيتس من العبث إلى سعيه لتحديد هويته وتحقيق الذات. في الواقع، تلهمه الطبيعة بشكل دائم لحبه وتبجيله وتفانيه في ذلك مما أدى إلى نضجه في نهاية المطاف وإلى وفاته المجازية لاحقًا. في وقت لاحق، تجلت علاقة كيتس بالطبيعة مرة أخرى فهو يعاني لمعناتها ويموت بوفاتها.