

ECOCENTRIC POLYPHONY: THE SUBVERSION OF
DUALISTIC THINKING IN DYLAN THOMAS'S POETRY

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ABSTRACT

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As part of its subversion of dichotomous logic, ecocriticism draws attention to the significant function the literary works can play in the process of calling for fundamental changes in the ethical values regarding the appreciation of the ecological interconnectedness between the human and the nonhuman beings. In this respect, post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry target dichotomous logic and try to revitalise ecocentrism. This thesis argues that prior to the introduction of these two recent ecocritical frames, as part of his struggle with the crisis of representation, Dylan Thomas portrayed a polyphonic ecocentric world and composed post-pastoral and ecopoems that attack anthropocentrism by restoring the bond between man and nature, and celebrate the nonhuman and the oppressed other as speaking subjects. This study discusses how Thomas's quest for meaning at the chaotic modernist backdrop motivated him to deconstruct man/nature, culture/nature dualities and to problematise the hegemony of time over space in the poems published in *Collected Poems 1934-1953*. This dissertation concludes that as a precursor of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, Thomas established ecocentrism as the centrepiece of both his life and works, and called for global ecological consciousness by portraying that the world is actually operating on non-hierarchical and non-anthropocentric laws that urge the ecological interconnectedness of all beings.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, duality, post-pastoral literature, ecopoetry

ÖZ

EKOMERKEZLİ ÇOKSESLİLİK: DYLAN THOMAS'IN ŞİİRLERİNDE İKİLİ DÜŞÜNCE SİSTEMİNİN ÇÖKÜŞÜ

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Ekoeleştirici ikili düşünce sistemini yok etmek üzere geliştirdiği bakış açısının bir parçası olarak insan ve doğa arasındaki ekolojik bütünselliği vurgulamakta ve bu bilinci önceleyen etik değerlerin yeniden benimsenmesi sürecinde edebiyat eserlerinin oynadığı önemli role dikkat çekmektedir. Bu bağlamda, post-pastoral yazın ve ekoeleştirici ikili karşıtlıkları ortadan kaldırmayı ve ekomerkezci anlayışı canlandırmayı amaçlayan yakın dönemde ortaya çıkmış ekoeleştirici yönelimlerdir. Bu çalışma, Dylan Thomas'ın post-pastoral yazının ve ekoeleştirici ortaya çıkışından önce, yaşamakta olduğu temsil kriziyle mücadelesinin bir parçası olarak, betimlediği ekolojik çoksesli dünyada, insanmerkezciliği eleştiren post-pastoral ve ekoeleştirici yazarlar, insan ve doğa arasındaki bağı yeniden kurmaya çalıştığını; insan olmayan ve ezilen öteki varlıkları konuşan özneler olarak tanımladığını ileri sürmektedir. Bu çalışma, *Toplu Şiirleri 1934-1953*'de yayınlanmış olan eserlerinde, yaşadığı dönemdeki epistemolojik karmaşayı ve anlamsızlığı aşma çabasının Thomas'ı nasıl insan/doğa, kültür/doğa ikiliklerinin yanı sıra zamanın uzam üzerindeki egemenliğini sorunsallaştırmaya yönelttiğini tartışmaktadır. Bu çalışma, post-pastoral ve ekoeleştirici öçüsü olarak Dylan Thomas'ın ekomerkezci anlayışı, hem hayatının hem de eserlerinin temel ilkesi olarak benimsediğini ortaya koymakta ve evrensel ekolojik bilinç uyandırarak dünyanın insan merkezci ve hiyerarşik olmanın ötesinde, aslında

bütün canlıların ekolojik bağılıklarını önceleyen kanunlar üzerine kurulu olduğunu yansıtan şiirler yazdığı sonucuna varmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekoeleştiri, ikilik, post-pastoral yazın, ekoşiir

To my dear sons, Atakan & Egehan

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ecocriticism is the outcome of the endeavour to bring literature and ecology together in order to raise awareness about the environmental crisis the entire planet with all its inhabitants confronts. Determined to alter the fundamental ethical norms of human beings, ecocriticism attacks dichotomous logic along with its hierarchically codified ideology and institutions. Inspired by the holistic approach of ecology and the poststructuralist challenge to logocentrism as well as the Enlightenment project, ecocritics call for a non-hierarchical and nonanthropocentric reconceptualisation of man and nature. Although at its initial stage ecocriticism mainly targeted anthropocentrism, today, with the contributions of theories and developments in the scientific, philosophical, cultural, and political arenas, ecocriticism has evolved into a very comprehensive interdisciplinary project that challenges the exploitation of all the oppressed such as women, peoples of colour, marginalised members of society and the nonhuman inhabitants of the world. Rather than foregrounding one particular group of the oppressed, ecocriticism reflects the heterogeneity of the planet and voices the concerns of the oppressed majority. Stimulated by the desire to revive the ecocentric discourse, various ecocritical orientations challenge hierarchical codifications and celebrate the ecocentric harmony of plurality. This multiplicity of voices and perspectives also manifests itself in the ecocritical analysis of literary works. Although the first ecocritical studies concentrated on non-fiction works, today ecocritics suggest that all literary pieces lend themselves to ecocritical analysis.

With its constantly growing critical scope and multiperspectivism, ecocriticism introduces new ecocritical frameworks such as post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry. Terry Gifford's views on post-pastoral literature aim to change the negative image of pastoral literature and are dedicated to the exploration of its contribution to ecocritical studies. In addition to overcoming the

dichotomy between pastoral and anti-pastoral, post-pastoral literature, as an all-inclusive frame, refers to all kinds of literary works that challenge dichotomous thinking and foreground the concerns of the various ecocritical orientations. Similarly, critics like Jonathan Bate and J. Scott Bryson theorise on ecopoetry and react against the scorn among ecocritics regarding the genre. By drawing attention to the significant function poetry can have in the revitalisation of nature as a speaking subject, they argue that ecopoetry plays a vital role in the revival of a nonanthropocentric view of the nonhuman world. Moreover, with the contributions of the ecocritical study of works by authors from various cultural backgrounds, ecocriticism assumes a more multicultural dimension and explores how the local at the same time voices global challenges to dichotomous logic and raises ecological consciousness within the process of finding genuine solutions to the ecological crisis. Within this frame of thinking, this dissertation considers Dylan Thomas as a precursor of both ecocritical orientations. The analysis of his works displays that long before the introduction of ecocriticism, with post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry as its recent manifestations, Thomas composed post-pastoral and ecopoems in which he subverted anthropocentric codifications of nature by giving expression to the major ecocritical concerns and representing a polyphonic ecocentric state of being that celebrates both nature and the marginalised human beings as speaking subjects.

1.1 Aim of the Study

Against the background of the ecocritical challenges to dualistic thinking and taking the premises of the Western metaphysics as the root causes of the present ecological crisis, the aim of this study is to offer an ecocritical analysis of Dylan Thomas's *Collected Poems 1934-1953*¹. Having lived and died in the first half of the twentieth century, when nature poetry lost its appeal, Thomas

¹ The poems analysed in this dissertation are taken from Thomas, Dylan. *Collected Poems 1934-1953*. Eds. Walford Davies and Ralph Maud. London: J. M. Dent, 1989. Print. The poems are provided in Appendix A. *Collected Poems 1934-1953*, *Collected Letters* and *Quite Early One Morning*, by Thomas, will be referred to as *CP*, *CL*, *QEOM* hereafter.

continued writing poems in which he attacked dichotomous logic, which still continued to reign in the general conception of nature, and tried to revive the ecocentric discourse. The ecocritical reading of various poems by Dylan Thomas from each of his volumes, *18 Poems* (1934), *Twenty-Five Poems* (1936), *The Map of Love* (1939), *Deaths and Entrances* (1946), *In Country Sleep and Other Poems* (1952), which are published in *Collected Poems 1934-1953*, reveals how the poet's struggle with crisis of representation at the post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian modernist backdrop led him to take refuge in nature. However, in the absence of a transcendental dimension beyond nature, Thomas's quest for meaning and its representation results in the appreciation of the inherent value of nature as well as the restoration of the bond between the human and the nonhuman beings. Based on a selective logic, this dissertation explores several representative poems from each of Thomas's volumes which demonstrate the overall ecocentric spirit dominating his entire poetic career. Thus, this dissertation discusses how, with the gradual recovery and the celebration of ecocentrism as the organising principle of both his life and work, Thomas frees himself from the agony of futile existence. In his poems Thomas creates an ecocentric polyphonic vision of life and being, which helps him to challenge dualistic thinking by reviving the marginalised ecocentric discourse and voicing the exploitation of both the nonhuman and human oppressed other. This thesis discusses how as part of his ecophonic subversion of dichotomous logic, as a post-pastoral poet and an ecopoet, Thomas problematises man/nature and culture/nature dualities as well as the hegemony of time over space as ideological constructs. Furthermore, in light of the multicultural theoretical framework put forward by third wave of ecocriticism, this study also discusses the contribution of Thomas's Welsh background to his creation of such a polyphonic ecocentric vision and surveys how by creating speakers like a druid, a bard and a rhymer, the poet transcends the boundaries of his native country and culture, and metamorphoses into an ecopoet who, as Bate in *The Song of the Earth* suggests, sings the universal ecophonic "song of the earth" (76). Similar to what Barbara Hardy, in *Dylan Thomas: An Original Language* declares, Thomas can be called "a green poet, who fully understands the politics of greenness" (132). Reflecting the ecocritical

consciousness to raise awareness about the way nature is abused by man, the master, in his poems he expresses contemporary man's "wishes and efforts to care for the globe, [his] polluted environment, and to displace the human animal from a still prevailing arrogant centrality" (*Dylan Thomas* 132).

This dissertation fills a significant gap in the field of Dylan Thomas studies since it considers Thomas as a precursor of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, and elaborates on various post-pastoral and ecopoetic elements that he incorporated into his poems long before the introduction of these frames by contemporary ecocritics: Gifford, Bate and Bryson. Different from the view points of the prominent Dylan Thomas scholars like John Ackerman, Jacob Korg, James Davies and Barbara Hardy, the dissertation develops a post-structuralist perspective to Thomas's work and regards him as a modernist poet who confronted a severe crisis of representation. By making close references to the ideas of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Anthony Giddens and David Harvey, the post-pastoral and ecopoetic reading of his poems dwells on the poet's ontological struggle and discusses his subversion of the hierarchical configuration of man over nature, culture over nature, as well as time over space. To this end, this dissertation expands on the features of post-pastoral and ecopoetry in Thomas's early and mature poetry, and studies the gradual celebration of ecocentrism as the centrepiece of both his life and work. This dissertation also argues that as a forerunner of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, in his poems Thomas voices many of the challenges introduced by contemporary green politics and discusses how the poet's revitalisation of ecocentrism echoes the major ideas introduced by deep ecology, social ecology, the environmental justice movement and ecofeminism. Thus, by expanding on Bate's idea that ecopoetry is the "song of the earth," this study declares that in his poetry Thomas creates an ecophonic world in which he becomes a mediator through whom not only nature but also all the oppressed could speak (*The Song*, 76). Moreover, the thesis focuses on the distinctive contribution of Thomas's Welsh background to his work. However, different from Davies and Hardy, it concentrates on the poet's holistic attack on dualism and foregrounds how the poet's polyphonic ecocentric vision offers significant insights into the universal

revitalisation of the essential bond between man and nature, culture and nature, as well as time and space in order to find global solutions to the present ecological crisis. Therefore, quite in line with the premises of third wave ecocriticism, by foregrounding the ecocentric polyphonic world that Thomas portrays in his work, this dissertation discusses the ways he calls for universal ecocentric consciousness.

1.2 Dylan Thomas in the English Literary Context

Modernism in literature reflected the attempts of numerous literary figures to develop new methods and techniques to represent the chaotic world they encountered. This was the period when the Western world experienced dramatic changes after the introduction of the ideas of figures like Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Albert Einstein, which destabilised the fundamentals of the Western metaphysics and undermined its logocentricism, rationalism and the idea of progress. The modern alienated man struggled to orient himself in a universe in which, as Michael Levenson puts it, “[t]here was so much to doubt: the foundations of religion and ethics, the integrity of governments and selves, the survival of a redemptive culture” (5). In the same manner, as is pointed out by Pericles Lewis, in *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, witnessing the subversion of former truths and values, and encountering a highly fragmented world, various modernist artists experienced a “crisis of representation” which “was two-fold,” including the “content” that is “what could be represented” and “form,” “how it should be represented” (2). Being born on 27 October 1914 and died on 9 November 1953, Dylan Thomas, like the other contemporary poets, was conscious of the drastic changes that took place in the Western world not only due to the developments in the scientific and cultural domains, but also because of the disillusionment and the depression brought about by the two World Wars. Despite his popularity among the public, Thomas was marginalised and critics were sceptical about considering him as a modernist poet. However, a global view of his poetry shows that his poems were the product of a poetic mind that struggled with a similar crisis of representation

that the mainstream modernist poets encountered. In order to cope with the severe sense of disillusionment and perplexity, Thomas experimented with both content and form, and gradually established ecocentrism as the centrepiece of both his art and life. Therefore, it is essential to explore Thomas's modernist quest and his unique resolution of crisis of representation which make Dylan Thomas a post-pastoral poet challenging the dichotomous logic as well as an ecopoet singing the polyphonic song of both the nonhuman and the human realms.

One of the reasons why Dylan Thomas was not regarded as a modernist poet was his lack of interest in the mainstream poetic trends of his time. The fact that he left school at the age of sixteen and did not attend university led him to explore his own poetic gift and eventually create his distinctive art that set him apart from major schools of poetry. According to Karl Shapiro in "Dylan Thomas," Thomas rejected "the literary traditionalism of the Eliot school; he wanted no part of it" (169). Likewise, Harvey Gross, and Robert McDowell in *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry*, maintain that although both were influenced by the pioneers of modernist poetry like Gerard Manley Hopkins and Wilfred Owen, "Dylan Thomas had no personal intimacy with Auden's Oxford Movement," either (65). Consequently, as Hardy maintains Thomas's critics were unwilling to "recognize, let alone praise his modernism," and concentrated on clarifying "his obscurity and strangeness" instead of "accept[ing] and plac[ing] them in the modernist tradition" (*Dylan Thomas*, 33, 32).

Apart from demonstrating little interest in following the popular poetic traditions, Dylan Thomas was against overt representation of contemporary political and social problems and reacted against the use of poetry as a medium to convey political ideas. In a letter to his friend A. E. Trick, Thomas expressed his scorn for contemporary intelligentsia: "Since I've been in London I've come into contact on a number of occasions with intellectual communism and communists ... And I dislike all of them" (*CL* 185). Questioning the hypocritical attitude of these people, Thomas observed that their policies were entirely disconnected from the crude realities of the community:

as revolutionaries and as communists, for, born in a fairly wealthy middle-class or upper middle class homes, educated at expensive prep schools, public schools, and universities, they have no idea at all of what they priggishly call ‘the class struggle’ and no contact at all with either any of the real motives or the real protagonists of that class struggle. (CL 185)

His interaction with communist intellectuals in London revealed to him their indifference to poetry. In the same letter Thomas declares the incompatibility of poetry and politics, for one “can’t be true to party and poetry” at the same time (CL 185). Therefore, despite his leftist inclination and what Jacob Korg, in *Dylan Thomas*, calls “a brief flirtation with Marxism” accompanied by “a naïve, passionate sympathy with all poor people,” Thomas displayed no major interest in the portrayal of contemporary social problems (6). In *Quite Early one Morning*, Dylan Thomas acknowledges how social injustice and industrialisation in the post-World War I period in Wales changed the content of poetry, for the poets “wrote, not of the truths and beauties of the natural world, but of the lies and ugliness of the unnatural system of society under which they worked – or, more often during the nineteen-twenties, and thirties, under which they were not allowed to work” (QEOM 69). However, what he offered was a more universal and much subtler treatment of such topics, which highlights the various forms of injustice against both human and nonhuman beings and sheds light on the present environmental crisis rooted in dualistic thinking and anthropocentric progressive discourse. As emphasised by Gross and McDowell, “Thomas’ poetry, from the very first, was unpolitical and unpreachy: aggressively unconcerned with ‘ideas’ and revolutionary only in the sense that it was temperamentally in agreement with all revolution” (65).

Thomas’s revival of the Romantic poets’ interest in man’s relationship with nature as part of his quest for meaning in life and poetry could be considered as another reason for the critics’ disregard for Thomas’s modernism. Like the Romantics, he questioned dualistic thinking and reacted against the Enlightenment concept of nature as a mechanism whose operations are to be discovered and controlled by man, the rational master. In spite of such affinities with the

Romantic tradition, it was not possible for Thomas to completely submit himself to its spirit because he lived in a post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian era. Hence, being inspired by Welsh mysticism, Dylan Thomas abandoned the Romantic perception of nature, according to which man's union with the nonhuman world would eventually lead to man's union with a transcendental creator, God and had to reconceptualise his unique religious faith. According to his mystical revival of the unity of man and nature, nature's transcendental value is replaced by the ecological interconnectedness of all beings as well as what Arne Naess, in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of Ecosophy*, calls its "intrinsic value" (29). As pointed out by Korg, while "Wordsworth finds moral strength in nature because it is the handiwork of a benign divinity; Thomas finds moral strength in it only because it exhibits evil and good as parts of a single design" (*Dylan Thomas* 82). Through such a reconceptualisation of nature and man, Thomas created an ecocentric vision of life which gave him the opportunity to resolve many of the conflicts that he experienced in the chaotic modernist context.

Dylan Thomas's Welsh background was another motive causing his marginalisation as a modernist poet. Thomas felt severely entrapped due to his nationality and cultural background, which caused serious conflicts regarding his sense of belonging. In *Dylan Thomas: His Life and Work*, John Ackerman observes that Thomas got a hostile reception from the Welsh nationalists because of his disregard for his Welsh roots and his preference for speaking and composing in English: "those Welshmen who do not speak Welsh, and what is more heretical, write about Wales in English, are considered – and often treated – by their Welsh-speaking fellow-countrymen as foreigners irremediably lost to the English, forever beyond the pale" (32). In the "Address to a Scottish Society of Writers in Edinburgh," Thomas expressed his sense of alienation:

Regarded in England as a Welshman (and a waterer of England's milk), and in Wales as an Englishman, I am too unnational to be here at all. I should be living in a small private leper-house in Hereford or Shropshire, one foot in Wales and my vowels in England. (68)

The Welsh culture produced another entrapment concerning Thomas's conceptualisation of himself as a poet. On one hand, Thomas wished to be carried away by his passions; on the other hand, he felt restrained since he was tormented by the ever-present Nonconformist religious values. According to Andrew Sinclair, in *Dylan the Bard: A Life of Dylan Thomas*, the poet could not get away from "the Welsh sense of sin and wickedness" because it "was a hidden anchor always in [his] soul" (33-4). Therefore, despite the fact that he was "longing fiercely for the appealing freedom of the poet," Thomas could not totally "reject the censorious society that loved him" (54). Being brought up in the Puritan Welsh background, it was not possible for Thomas to completely liberate himself from "the awful sense of unnecessary guilt that afflicted the Welsh conscience, young and old" (34).

Despite being denied his rightful status among contemporary poets, a closer analysis of his poetry reveals that throughout his poetic career Dylan Thomas experienced the same conflicts that the leading modernist figures encountered. Living in a decentered universe urged the modernist poets to search for new organising principles in order to make their existence meaningful. Rainer Emig, in *Modernism in Poetry: Motivations, Structures and Limits*, observes that motivated by the desire to "rescue a stable identity out of the fragmented reality of experience," each poet sought a centre for himself (84). In the modern world which was full of uncertainty and despair, Dylan Thomas experienced a similar anxiety. He manifested his quest for a worthy life in "Replies to An Enquiry," in *Quite Early One Morning*, by defining his poetry as "the rhythmic, inevitably narrative, movement from an overclothed blindness to a naked vision" (119). Thus, his poems are the manifestations of his "individual struggle from darkness towards some measure of light" in a fragmented universe (*QEOM* 119). Like the other modernist poets, Thomas's poetry is dominated by the search for an organising principle so that the human existence would acquire meaning. In "Gerard Manley Hopkins and Dylan Thomas," Henry Treece identifies two major modernist concerns that abound his poetry: "inquiry, and a terror of fearful expectation" (86). His endeavour to restore meaning into his life and work encouraged him to explore Welsh mysticism and Romanticism, which contributed

to the creation of his ecocentric holistic perception of being. Ackerman suggests that due to the Puritan and Nonconformist environment, Dylan Thomas perceived a “mystical sense of unity between all forms of life, a sensitivity towards animal and vegetal life much more profound than the conventional ‘love of nature’ ” (*Dylan Thomas* 41). Following the Old Testament premise that “everything in the world is, for its own sake, holy,” the Nonconformist Welsh had a holistic perception of life and beings in the world, and believed in “a sense of the unity of all creation” (*Dylan Thomas* 16). Such inspirational motives, consequently, stimulated Thomas to resolve his ontological quest by creating his unique, mystic and unitary ecocentric perception of life. As is highlighted by Stuart Holroyd, in “Dylan Thomas and the Religion of the Instinctive Life,” by seeing “man’s situation in the universe in the simplest terms,” Thomas was not only able to resolve his existentialist conflict, but also to reconceptualise his mission as an ecopoet, who composes songs that display how the world is essentially operating on non-hierarchical and nonanthropocentric principles (147). Although Thomas’s search initially proceeded at personal level, “his inquiry expand[ed] outwards until it embrac[ed] the whole system in which he mov[ed] (Treece 86).

Another significant modernist aspect of Dylan Thomas’s poetry is that his poems reflected the crisis of representation that the mainstream modernist poets went through. The modernist endeavour to portray fragmented reality motivated them, as Robert Holub in “Modernism, modernity and modernisation,” maintains, to “break with tradition” (278). In the same manner, Thomas experimented with conventional subject matter and the Welsh poetic tradition. According to Elder Olson, in *The Poetry of Dylan Thomas*, Thomas chose his themes from “the age-old ones of birth, sex, and death;” nonetheless, the uniqueness of Thomas’s representation of such ideas is stimulated by the revival of ecocentrism that foregrounds the interconnectedness of all beings within the cyclically operating mechanisms in nature (2). Hence, different from the Romantic notion of death with its transcendental dimension, death in Thomas’s poetry is a mere ecological process as part of which, with his death, man participates in the natural regeneration cycle. Such a reconceptualisation of ecocentric interconnectedness between man and nature also motivated Thomas to explore the representation of

the pre-modern cyclical notions of time in Welsh poetry. As Korg puts it, his works are the cyclical representations of how “[t]he seasons of the year, the unfolding of generations, and the alternations of life and death are stages in the dialectic drama of existence” (*Dylan Thomas* 18).

As part of his struggle with the modernist crisis of representation, Thomas also experimented with form and techniques of representation in order to convey his ecocentric vision of life. Experimentation with form and the exploration of free verse were among the innovations modernist poets introduced; nevertheless, being influenced by Welsh mysticism and bardic poetry, in order to portray the inherent ecological harmony that he perceived, Dylan Thomas treated form as an essential component of poetry writing. In “Replies to an Enquiry” as an answer to the question whether his poems are inspired by “a spontaneous impulse,” Dylan Thomas states that he regards poetry composition as “the physical and mental task of constructing a formally watertight compartment of words” (*QEOM* 119). Thomas admits that he might be initially motivated by a spontaneous urge; however, the fact that for him poetry writing is essentially a craft, could be seen as the evidence displaying his ecopoetic urge to portray the ecocentric interconnectedness of all beings: “To me, the poetical ‘impulse’ or ‘inspiration’ is only the sudden, and generally physical, coming of energy to the constructional, craftsman ability” (*QEOM* 120). Therefore, as Korg states, he tried out “demanding forms, with clear rhyme schemes and intricate stanzas” and demonstrated his craft in creating and “manipulat[ing] new and interesting forms” (*Dylan Thomas* 6, 37). In addition to these, he composed “in a syllabic verse, in which each syllable was accounted for” (*Dylan Thomas* 6). Korg cites “Vision and Prayer” among Thomas’s poems which demonstrate “the most extreme example of his characteristic formal discipline” (*Dylan Thomas* 6). Two of his later poems, “Poem on His Birthday” and “Fern Hill” demonstrate how much craft is involved in his poetry composition. While “Poem on His Birthday” has “143 work sheets in the manuscript,” “Fern Hill” is credited to have “over two hundred separate drafts” (*Dylan Thomas* 6). Rejecting the spontaneity of his work, Thomas strove to recapture the mystical dimension of ecocentric existence and

viewed poetry writing as a demanding craft requiring a series of revisions and modifications.

Like other modernist poets, Thomas felt entrapped by language. His endless efforts to put his ideas into words as well as to choose the right word in order to reach the perfect sound demonstrate the modernist concern with the inadequacy of language to convey meaning. Thus, as a modernist poet he had “the willingness to make radical linguistic experiment” (Levenson 3). In his “Poetic Manifesto,” which is the “recorded” and the “published” account of his answers to “Replies to an Enquiry,” Dylan Thomas discusses his passion for words as well as how much he struggles to find the right words to express his ecocentric reconceptualisation of existence (Sinclair 191). By elaborating on the concept of poetry composition as a craft, Thomas says:

What I like to do is to treat words as a craftsman does his wood or stone or what-have-you, to hew, carve, mould, coil, polish and plane them into patterns, sequences, sculptures, figures of sound expressing some lyrical impulse, some spiritual doubt or conviction, some dimly-realised truth I must try to reach and realise. (“Poetic manifesto,” qtd. in Sinclair 194)

Moreover, he also refers to his deliberate use of “devices of rhyme, rhythm, and word-formation” and his desire to “use everything and anything to make [his] poems work and move in the directions [he] want[s] them to” (Thomas, “Poetic manifesto,” qtd. in Sinclair 198). The impulse to be innovative made him one of the modernist poets who “re-creates forms and languages in ways expressive of his deep self, most visibly of his time, but becoming one of the great individualists of modern art” (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 51).

The fact that Dylan Thomas’s poetry is radically challenging and at the same time obscure can also be regarded as another indication of the modernist crisis of representation and the collapse of logocentrism since language ceases to be a tool to communicate the ecocentric reconceptualisation of reality. According to Shapiro, the incomprehensibility of Thomas’s poems signifies “[h]is dissatisfaction with his own lack of stability,” which consequently, “obscure[s] even the simple poems: he leaves out all indications of explanation, quotation

marks, punctuation, titles, connectives, whether logical or grammatical” (174). Similarly, Gareth Thomas, in “A Freak User of Words,” refers to the poet’s “remarkable verbal virtuosity,” which was regarded as “both a potential strength and weakness in him” (66). Although he is appreciated for his “freshness, inventiveness and audacity,” he is at the same time criticised for being repetitive and failing to represent a significant idea: “a fear that all the wordy frothiness concealed a lack of true substance underneath” (Thomas 66). An ecocritical reading of his poetry, however, indicates that the presumed obscurity of his poetry, in fact, stems from his desire to imitate the operating mechanism of nature and convey its polyphonic dimension. As it is pointed out by Derek Stanford, in “Critics, Style and Value,” “[t]he continuity in Thomas’s work is not the continuity of rational argument, but of something like biological growth” because the “poems evolve by a mode of transformation rather than by a step-by-step advance” (91). Therefore, in order to comprehend the recesses of his poetic universe, the reader is required to grasp the inherent ecocentric harmony the poet tries to represent through several examples of his unique word play. As mentioned by Olson, Thomas likes not only exploring the polysemic nature of words and employing “words with multiple meanings and multiple syntactic functions,” but also “coin[ing] words and devis[ing] new uses for words” (54, 55). Reflecting the complicated process of poetry composition, the comprehension of Thomas’s work is equally demanding as Gareth Thomas declares: “Always the rule seems to be, avoid the obvious, the single given meaning which is swallowed whole, unquestionably by the gullible reader” (74).

In addition to experimenting with form and language, as part of his endeavour to represent his ecocentric vision of life, Thomas resorts to symbolism, which is another reason for obscurity in his work. His determination to escape the logocentric entrapment encouraged him to be experimental and innovative in his creation of symbols. Therefore, he gained the opportunity, like Blake and Yeats, to develop “a private symbology, a system of metaphor” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 17). Olson is one of the scholars who elaborate on the nature of Thomas’s symbolism, and he identifies three major categories: “(1) natural, (2) conventional, and (3) private” (7). Although Thomas can be very original in his

creation of symbols, the “natural” and “conventional” symbols are relatively easy for the reader to grasp. The real obstacle to interpretation, however, is caused by the “private” symbols he introduced into his poems. Therefore, in order to decipher the meaning of his poetry, the reader is urged to carry out a “close inspection” of his private symbols which “ultimately yield their meaning only when the reader, by an act of intuition, recognize[s] the particular derivation of the symbol.” Olson offers a comprehensive list of Thomas’s private symbols, some of which are:

wax as a symbol of dead or mortal flesh, oil as a symbol of life, the sea as a symbol of the source of life, salt as a symbol of genesis in the sea. Scissors or knives are symbols of birth (on the ground that the birth-caul is cut open, the birth-string cut) or of death (on the ground that the thread of life is cut, the branch lopped) and of sexual connection (on the ground of its relation to life and death). (8)

Due to his experimentation with form, language, and symbols, Thomas’s poems were considered the products of spontaneous creative impulse. As declared by Sinclair, “[t]he obscurity of his earlier poems, the strange and intense juxtaposition of adjective and noun, and the violence of imagery” resulted in a tendency among several critics to associate his poetry with surrealism (91). Nevertheless, in a letter to Richard Church, who was the editor at J. M. Dent and Sons and who agreed to publish *Twenty-five Poems*, Thomas rejected such an influence (92). In response to Church’s claims for his alliance with the movement, Thomas declared that he had “very little idea what surrealism” was (*CL* 205). Moreover, he not only highlights that he had been ignorant of this movement’s existence but also states that never in his life did he “read a paragraph of surrealist literature” (Thomas, *CL* 205). Taking the surrealist approach to poetry composition as the manifestation of the poet’s unconscious, Dylan Thomas proclaims: “I do not mind from where the images of a poem are dragged up; drag them up, if you like, from the nethermost sea of the hidden self; but before they reach paper, they must go through all the rational processes of the intellect” (“Poetic Manifesto” qtd. in Sinclair 199). According to Thomas, no matter whether poetry originates from unconscious desires or is inspired by an external

motif, what is essential is the conscious effort the poet puts into the process of creation.

Because of his unique response to the modernist crisis of representation, Dylan Thomas is regarded as one of the most original poets of his time whose works lend themselves to ecocritical analysis. The ecocritical reading of Thomas's poetry not only offers significant insights into the reconceptualisation of man and nature, but also puts an end to debates about the obscurity of his works and calls for the celebration of his uniqueness among his contemporaries as he sings what Bate calls "the song of the earth" (*The Song* 76). Shapiro declares Thomas to be "the greatest lyricist of our time" and points out that "aside from the epic pretensions of many leading modern poets, there was only one who could be called a singer: Thomas" (168). Because he avoided the trap of writing escapist nature poetry, he composed poems in which he treated fundamental contemporary problems that derived from dualistic thinking and the objectification of nature. Being inspired by Welsh literary tradition and mysticism, Thomas can be considered a significant representative of third wave ecocriticism (Adamson and Slovic, qtd. in Slovic, "The Third Wave" 4). The modernist urge to go beyond the futility of the decentered world encouraged him to elaborate on the Welsh holistic perception of life to challenge the hierarchical codification of man over nature, culture over nature and time over space. However, reflecting the concerns of third wave ecocriticism, despite the unique flavour of his works, the revival of ecocentric spirit transcends the boundaries of his native country and offers significant insights regarding man's relationship with nature as an inhabitant of the entire planet.

Throughout his career Dylan Thomas published five poetry volumes: *18 Poems* (1934), *Twenty-Five Poems* (1936), *The Map of Love* (1939), *Deaths and Entrances* (1946), *In Country Sleep and Other Poems* (1952). *The Notebook Poems 1930-1934* and two further poems, "In Country Heaven" and "Elegy," were published posthumously. The ecocritical analysis of his poems from each of these collections displays that Thomas composed poems in which his quest for meaning in life and poetry encouraged him to explore the bond between man and nature. Because he dedicated himself to revitalising the marginalised ecocentric

discourse, I argue that he can be considered a precursor of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry.

As the forerunner of post-pastoral poetry and ecopoetry, in *18 Poems* (1934) and *Twenty-Five Poems* (1936) Thomas tries to restore ecocentrism by focusing on how the human and nonhuman beings are both exposed to the same creative-destructive mechanisms. This initial urge to revive the ecocentric spirit, with *The Map of Love* (1939), however, evolves into a more comprehensive challenge to dichotomous logic since his portrayal of the oppressed other becomes more pronounced. On the other hand, with the poems published in his last volumes *Deaths and Entrances* (1946) and *In Country Sleep and Other Poems* (1952), the revitalisation of ecocentrism as the central motif to organise his approach to life and poetry assumes a philosophical dimension. The poems published in these volumes display how with the influence of Welsh mysticism, Thomas reconceptualises life and death as integral parts of the creative-destructive processes in nature and dedicates himself to the celebration of this ecocentric holism. The post-pastoral and ecopoetic attack on the anthropocentric discourse and humanism, and the desire to voice the entrapment of both human and nonhuman beings are manifested in his “Prologue” to *Collected Poems 1934-1953*. Representing polyphonic ecocentrism, Thomas reconceptualises himself as Noah, who metaphorically unites not only man and nature, but also celebrates the contribution of all the poems in this literary arc to the portrayal of the holistic ecocentric discourse. Just like Noah, who was granted the privilege to save both human and nonhuman beings from total annihilation, Thomas regards himself as a modern saviour who, with the revival of ecocentricism and the creation of an ecophonic world view in his post-pastoral and ecopoems, offers a way out of the chaotic universe.

In short, despite charges of not being an intellectual poet due to avoiding the conventions of the mainstream poetic tradition and being incomprehensible, Dylan Thomas was one of the most popular poets of his time. Although critics could not agree on whether his poetry was modernist or not, I argue that Thomas’s search for a centrepiece to make both his life and his art meaningful can be considered as one of the most fundamental modernist aspects of him. His

experimentation with form, language, and symbolism demonstrated his struggle with the crisis of representation for he tried to communicate his ecocentric vision in his works. Thomas's frustration with the values of Nonconformist Welsh culture led him to question more orthodox Christian faith. Therefore, by hybridising Christianity with Welsh mysticism, Thomas created his own private visionary religion, which through its holistic ecocentric approach celebrates man's essential unity with nature. It is this representation of the non-hierarchical and nonanthropocentric patterns of existence in the nonhuman world in his poems that allows for the ecocritical analysis of his works and positions him among the precursors of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry. Thus, I argue that as a post-pastoral poet and an ecopoet, in his works Thomas not only demonstrates foresight about the hazardous impacts of dichotomous logic, but also provides significant insights into remedies for contemporary ecological crisis by singing the polyphonic song of nature that raises universal ecocentric consciousness.

1.2 Genealogy of Ecocriticism

Although man's relationship with nature and the ways it is represented in literature have been a constant debate in philosophy and literary criticism since ancient Greek times, today, ecocriticism aims to offer a comprehensive attack on dualistic thinking and challenges the reality it imposes as an ideological construct. Cheryll Glotfelty in her "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis" to one of the first major critical works in the field, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" which develops "an earth-centered approach to literary studies" (xviii). The idea of bringing literature and ecology together was introduced by William Rueckert, who, in his article, "Literature and Ecology" published in 1978, is credited to coin the term "ecocriticism" (Glotfelty xix-xx). Considering environmental problems among the most serious ones that humanity faces, Rueckert says that he is "going to experiment with the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (107). He regards ecology as an indispensable source in creating real

and groundbreaking solutions to environmental problems. That is why, by overcoming the antagonism between natural sciences and literature, he aims to create “an ecological poetics” that “appl[ies] ecological concepts to the reading, teaching and writing about literature” and consequently tries to revive the essential bond between the human and the nonhuman realms (Rueckert 107). Challenging the dichotomous logic, ecocriticism attacks anthropocentrism and calls for a dialogue between man and nature. The desire to revitalise the interconnectedness between the human and the nonhuman is also inherent in what ecocriticism signifies. As William Howarth, in his article “Some principles of Ecocriticism,” maintains, the words “*Eco* and *critic*” originate from the “Greek, *oikos* and *kritis*,” which “mean ‘house judge’ ” (69). While “the *oikos*” stands for nature, “the *kritos*” is the human being as “an arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order” (Howarth 69). Thus, an ecocritic is characterised as someone who is conscious of the anthropocentric codes and is determined to undo the harm that man has done to nature. Moreover, being aware of the destruction caused by culture/nature duality, the ecocritic “ ‘judges the merits and faults of writing ... with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and revising their harm through political action’ ” (69). Hence, in Howard’s terms an ecocritic is someone who glorifies nature and traces the impact of cultural codifications on its representation in literary works.

The growing interest in the scientific exploration of nature in the early modern era gradually led to the emergence of ecology as a new discipline during the Enlightenment. Donald Worster in *Nature’s Economy: The Roots of Ecology*, points out that the appearance of ecology as a science dates back to the eighteenth century, while the word “ecology” emerges much later in the mid-nineteenth century (viii). Hence, as Lynn White Jr., in “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” mentions the initial appearance of the term “*ecology*” in English was in 1873 (1203). The German zoologist Ernst Haeckel was regarded as the first person to define ecology in 1866:

By ecology we mean the body of knowledge concerning the economy of nature - the investigation of the total relations of the animal both to its inorganic and to its organic environment; including above all, its

friendly and inimical relations with those animals and plants with which it comes directly or indirectly into contact - in a word, ecology is the study of all those complex interrelations referred to by Darwin as the conditions of the struggle for existence. (qtd. in Bate, *Romantic Ecology* 36)

As it is highlighted by Bate, Haeckel regards ecology as “a holistic science, concerned in the largest sense with the relationship between living beings and their environment” (*Romantic Ecology* 36). Although initially ecology focused on the relationship between animals and the environment, later man and his interaction with nature was also added to its field of research. Ellen Swallow, a 19th century American scholar drawing attention to air pollution, the impacts of urbanisation and industrialisation, was credited to incorporate man’s interaction with nature into ecology.

The ecological interconnectedness of all beings stimulated literary critics to harmonise the holistic approach of ecology with literature in order to challenge man’s anthropocentric hegemony over the nonhuman world. Timothy Clark is one of the scholars, who in *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, considers ecology as an indispensable source for “green ethics” (151). He emphasizes the need for the interaction between ecology and environmental criticism because it “studies living things in their complex interdependence” and because we live “in a world in which human activities are so evidently destructive” (Clark 151). Richard Kerridge, on the other hand, in “Introduction” to *Writing the Environment: Ecocriticism and Literature*, draws attention to the global dimension of the environmental crisis. By elaborating on one of the primary ecological principles that “[n]othing may be discarded or buried without consequences” in nature, Kerridge declares that no single individual human being can disown his share in the solutions to the environmental problems because no one’s “backyard” can “be immune from pollution” (7). Each of the “local ecosystems” is in turn tied to “the global ecosystem, a totality which excludes nothing and can be rid of nothing” (Kerridge 7). This consciousness of the gravity of the ecological crisis motivates ecocritics to develop a much wider interdisciplinary perspective. Since environmental problems “are the outcome of

an interaction between ecological knowledge of nature and its cultural inflection,” in *Ecocriticism*, Greg Garrard observes that genuine solutions demand the contribution of not only ecology and literary and cultural studies, but also disciplines like “philosophy, sociology, psychology and environmental history” (14).

Despite the indispensable contributions ecocritical studies could offer to raise global ecological consciousness, ecocriticism appeared quite late in the critical arena. Jonathan Bate, in *The Song of the Earth*, sees environmentalism along with feminism and anti-racism as one of the radical challenges to the pre-conceived social norms in the 1960s, when feminist and post-colonial criticism flourished (72). Yet, according to Bate, environmental criticism falls behind the developments in these two areas because, while the 1980s was the decade when a many studies were carried out in feminist and post-colonial literary theory, there was just one book published in the field of environmental criticism (*The Song* 72). Glotfelty, on the other hand, draws attention to lack of communication and solidarity among the early ecocritics and their failure to evolve into an ecocritical school or movement (xvi-vii). She states that the true emergence of ecocriticism dates back to the mid’80s when various scholars were united to create projects in this area (Glotfelty xvii). That is why Glotfelty puts great emphasis on the role of the establishment of Association for the study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) in 1992 and the foundation of the journal *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* by Patrick Murphy in 1993 as cornerstones in the development of ecocriticism “as a recognizable critical school” (xviii).

1.4 Nature Oriented Criticism

Despite its brevity, with the contributions made by scholars from various disciplines in both natural sciences and humanities, ecocriticism has started to occupy a significant place in the field of literary theory and criticism. Reflecting the heterogeneity of the field, “green writing,” “nature writing,” “environmental writing” are some of the terms that have been coined to refer to literature that concentrates on the representation of nature. However, a brief survey of nature

oriented literature and criticism displays the transformation that has been taking place in the field. In *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*, Lawrence Buell argues that ecocritical studies can be analysed in two phases: first wave of ecocriticism and second wave of ecocriticism (17). While first wave of ecocriticism concentrates on challenging man/nature duality and anthropocentrism by privileging nature over man, second wave of ecocriticism foregrounds the ecological interconnectedness of all beings and problematises all hierarchical codifications that lead to the exploitation of both human and nonhuman beings. In addition to the theoretical frame put forward by Buell, in the introduction to *MELUS: Multiethnic Literature of the United States* issued in Summer 2009, Joni Adamson and Scott Slovic introduced “ ‘a new third wave of ecocriticism’ ” as a response to the growing multicultural spirit of ecocritical studies. (qtd. in Slovic, “The Third Wave” 4). Due to this multidisciplinary and multicultural atmosphere ecocritical studies have metamorphosed into a heteroglossic domain that calls for the contribution of works from different cultural and national backgrounds to raise global ecocentric consciousness.

In the early phase, nature oriented criticism concentrates on the subversive representation of man/nature duality by reversing the hierarchy into nature/man in nonfiction works. The writers who glorify untamed nature and call for a retreat into the wilderness as part of their challenge to anthropocentrism are regarded as the representatives of “nature writing” and first wave of ecocriticism. Gilbert White with his *A Natural History of Selbourne* (1789) is considered to be the initiator of this orientation, which later continued to flourish in the USA (Glotfelty xxiii). However, as John Elder in “The Poetry of Experience” observes, far from being considered as imaginative literature, nature writing is “not as comprehensive as a genre as the name might suggest,” but is “just one variety of the personal essay” (312-3). Thus, it limits itself to the composition of “creative non-fiction associated with usually meditative accounts of natural landscapes and wildlife” (Clark 5). Despite its significance in raising awareness about the inherent value of nature as a domain independent of human interference, nature writing remains within the boundaries of dichotomous logic since its challenges

are based on the reconceptualisation of the nonhuman world over the human world. Moreover, as Buell observes, in *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*, nature writing is also criticised for being the domain of white writers.

Motivated by an urge to escape the traps of dualistic thinking as well as by generic and racial constraints, instead of nature writing, scholars start to use the term “environmental literature.” The consciousness of the interconnectedness between culture and nature encourages ecocritics to be highly critical of the boundaries between the two and what they signify. As a result, such changes initiate, what Buell calls, second wave of ecocriticism, which is either rooted in first wave ecocritical ideas or evolved out of attempts to oppose them (*The Future* 17). Living in a world where the places “unaffected by human activity” are very rare, according to Clark there is “no ‘nature’” that is pure and untouched by human civilisation (6). That is why he employs the word environment in its plural form and points out that “there are various ‘environments,’ some more pristine than others” (Clark 6). In the same manner, Elder views “ ‘environmental literature’ ” as a “more inclusive term” since it encompasses not only the works by writers like Henry David Thoreau, but also the works by various “authors of color” such as Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes (313).

Although environmentalism challenges the underlying dichotomous logic of nature writing, it is criticised for still remaining as anthropocentric. According to Murray Bookchin, in *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, environmentalism serves for the maintenance of man’s supremacy over the nonhuman and the treatment of nature as “a storage bin of ‘natural resources’ or ‘raw materials’” by reducing it to “a passive habitat composed of ‘objects’ such as animals, plants, minerals” at the service of man, the master (21). The urge to transcend dichotomy and the desire to create a more inclusive frame is materialised with the emergence of ecocriticism which is rooted in the holism of ecology. Consequently, there has been a growing tendency among the scholars to use the term “ ‘ecocriticism’ ” rather than “ ‘environmental literature’.” As Glotfelty suggests, one of the major reasons why scholars “favor *eco-* over *enviro-*

” is that “*eco-*” bridges the binaries between man and nature, and highlights their mutual dependence (xx).

In addition to highlighting the interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman realms, second wave ecocritics also problematise culture/nature dichotomy and bridge up the gap between natural and built environments. Instead of concentrating on wild and untouched nature, scholars like Michael Bennett call for the emergence of “ a ‘social ecocriticism’ ” which treats “urban and degraded landscapes just as seriously as ‘natural’ landscapes” (qtd. in Buell, *The Future* 22). Moreover, such reconceptualisation of nature enlarges the scope of “the nature protection ethic” and draws attention to the significance of urban environments and “eco-injustice against society’s marginal groups” (Buell, *The Future* 22, 24). As Glean A. Love in *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology and the Environment* observes, although ecocriticism is established as “the blanket term” to refer to the studies in the field, depending on their various interests, the scholars can be considered as members of more specific subgroups producing works concentrating on “nature writing, deep ecology, the ecology of cities, ecofeminism, the literature of toxicity, environmental justice, bioregionalism, the lives of animals, the revaluation of place, interdisciplinarity, eco-theory” (5).

The broadened scope of second wave of ecocriticism motivates ecocritics to liberate themselves from the analysis of non-fictional pieces and explore the ecocritical potential in literary works. Scott Slovic in “Ecocriticism: Containing Multitudes, Practising Doctrine” points out that ecocriticism is either the “study of explicit environmental texts by way of any scholarly approach,” or the analysis of any kind of literary works from an ecological perspective exploring man nature interaction (160). Slovic highlights that all literary texts lend themselves to ecocritical interpretations since “there is not a single literary work anywhere that utterly defies ecocritical interpretation, that is ‘off limits’ to green reading” (“Ecocriticism” 160). Consequently, as Elder states, ecocritics concentrate on the representation of nature in not only the masterpieces written by Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Wolf in England, but also in the works of major American writers such as Melville and Whitman (313). Moreover, they

explore the ecocritical potential in works by “previously unheard voices” (Love 5).

The heterogeneity of ecocriticism is enriched with multinational and multicultural ecocritical perspectives as second wave of ecocriticism paved the way for the emergence of third wave of ecocriticism. According to Adamson and Slovic what distinguishes third wave ecocritical studies from the earlier two trends is an emphasis on “ ‘cultural background and ethnic identity’ ” which, in addition to contributing to the uniqueness of the works, allows them to exceed “ ‘ethnic and national boundaries’ ” in order to represent “ ‘all facets of human experience from an environmental viewpoint’ ” (qtd. in Slovic, “The Third Wave” 4). Unlike first and second wave ecocritical studies, third wave ecocriticism encourages a comparative analysis of man’s interaction with nature in different cultures and aims at capturing a universal ecocentric spirit while treating the particular (Slovic, “The Third Wave” 4). Slovic considers Patrick D. Murphy’s *Farther Afield in the Study of Nature-Oriented Literature* as one of the pioneering studies in third wave ecocriticism due to its emphasis on “comparative, trans-cultural approach to ecocritical studies” (“The Third Wave” 6). Murphy criticises not only ecocriticism’s excessive reliance on “nonfiction and the fiction of nonfictionality,” but also its concentration on American and British literary works (58). Being against “privileging of certain national literatures and certain ethnicities within those national literatures,” Murphy demands that ecocriticism should develop a more comprehensive perspective to explore the works written by writers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds from an ecocritical point of view (58). According to Murphy, such a change in focus is essential to “refine our awareness and expand the field of ecocriticism” (58). Slovic stresses that Murphy encourages ecocritics from different cultural and national backgrounds “to place their own national literatures ‘in an internationally relative and comparative framework’ ” (“The Third Wave” 6). It should be noted that Slovic regards the year 2000 as the time for the emergence of third wave ecocriticism, and says that it has been “energetically” expanding since then (“The Third Wave” 7). Moreover, he offers a list of the common features that characterise third wave of ecocriticism. One aspect of it is the study of “global concepts of place ... in

fruitful tension between neo-bioregionalist attachments to specific locales” and consequently creating “such neologisms as ‘eco-cosmopolitanism,’ ‘rooted cosmopolitanism,’ ‘the global soul,’ and ‘translocality’ ” (“The Third Wave” 7). Third wave ecocriticism focuses on the unique national and cultural representations of the interaction between the human and the nonhuman. However, it also strives to create a backdrop which allows for multicultural and multinational comparisons that surpass the national and cultural boundaries and explore the “possibility of post-national and post-ethnic visions of human experience of the environment” (“The Third Wave” 7).

1.3 Nature Oriented Literature

The enlarged scope of ecocriticism also encourages ecocritics to revisit the notions of what makes an environmental text. Quite compatible with the spirit of first wave ecocriticism, non-fiction works are regarded as the major pieces to challenge anthropocentric codifications. Lawrence Buell is one of the critics, who in *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*, classifies nonfictional works as the best examples of environmental literature and outlines some of the essential points in such a text. The first feature he identifies is concerned with the representation of nature in the work. Nature, that is “[t]he nonhuman environment,” occupies a significant place in the work rather than being just “a framing device” which in return implies “that human history is implicated in natural history” (Buell, *The Environmental* 7). The second aspect is a challenge to anthropocentrism as it states that “[t]he human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest” (*The Environmental* 7). Buell also concentrates on the ethical dimension of the portrayal of nature and states that “[h]uman accountability to the environment” should be taken into consideration. In addition to these points, an environmental text should also allow for the representation of “the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given” (*The Environmental* 8).

As stated above, while first wave ecocritics regard non-fiction works as the primary examples for nature oriented texts, second wave ecocriticism challenges

this reductionist outlook and celebrates the heteroglossic ecocritical representation in variety of genres. Influenced by the broadened perspective of ecocritical studies Buell revisits his own theories of nature and its role in defining a literary work as an environmental text. Different from his earlier proposition, he broadens his definition to reflect the interconnectedness between nature and man and reconceptualises “environmentality as a property of any text” since one can find traces of the nonhuman in every human creation (Buell, *The Future* 25). He also appreciates the expanding scope of the field due to the close “alliances” formed between different contributors ranging from “environmental writers, environmental activists,” to “extra-academic environmental educators” (*The Future* 28).

The reconceptualisation of nature and culture initiates a debate among ecocritics on whether or not to include pastoral literature within the category of environmental texts. The prevailing ecocritical antagonism against pastoral is rooted in its representation of dualistic codifications like man/nature, culture/nature, city/country along with the idealised portrayal of nature and the inhabitants of the country. Such binary oppositions, in their view, function as mechanisms to consolidate the dichotomous logic by offering false ideological representations to justify the exploitation of both nature and the ones that are identified with it. Raymond Williams is among them and, as Gifford points out, he views pastoral as “a pejorative term” (*Green Voices* 18). In order to demonstrate the nostalgic spirit in the pastoral, Williams in *The Country and the City* uses the image of an “escalator” and suggests that each period in human history develops a tendency to glorify the former epoch at the cost of turning a blind eye to its harsh realities (12). Following Williams, Roger Sales is another critic, who in *English Literature in History 1780-1830: Pastoral and Politics* undermines the pastoral conventions. As suggested by Gifford, Sale’s focal point is the pastoral literature produced during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, when it “created a false ideology that served to endorse a comfortable status quo for the landowning class who had been the reading public before the nineteenth century” (*Pastoral* 7). Sales identifies the dominant features of the pastoral tradition as “five Rs” signifying “refuge, reflection, rescue, requiem, and reconstruction” (17). Thus,

according to Gifford, Sales condemns the pastoral for being “essentially escapist” through “a selective ‘reflection’ on past country life,” which eventually results in “a simplified ‘reconstruction’ of what is, in fact, a more complex reality” (*Pastoral* 7). However, the theories regarding the mutual interaction between culture and nature along with the attempts to restore man as part of nature inspired ecocritics to abandon the conventional critical perspective and call for the revitalisation of pastoral.

Challenging the normative and prescriptive study of pastoral literature, many ecocritics react against the adverse criticism of the pastoral and dedicate themselves to exploring its prospects for the revival of ecocentric discourse and consciousness. Love is one of the critics who undermines the idealism of the pastoral world. Foregrounding the constructed nature of the pastoral world as a “highly stylized and simplified creation of the humanist assumptions of the writer and his audience,” Love declares that “Arcadia has no identity of its own” (66). Unlike Williams, however, Love believes that the remedy lies in the discovery of alternative pastoral forms because when it is “rightly understood,” pastoral offers “serious criticism of life,” which will be realised through the alliance between the pastoral and ecocriticism (67). The broadened scope of ecocriticism encourages ecocritics to reconceptualise the pastoral tradition. Buell, in “American Pastoral Ideology Reappraised,” for instance, proposes a new dimension to “pastoralism” and states that he uses it “in an extended sense” without being concerned with “the specific set of obsolescent conventions of the eclogue tradition” (23). “Pastoralism” for Buell invokes “all literature-poetry or prose, fiction or nonfiction-that celebrates the ethos of nature/rurality over against the ethos of the town or city” (“American Pastoral” 23). Therefore, it brings together “all degrees of rusticity from farm to wilderness” (“American Pastoral” 23). Although Buell’s reconceptualisation of pastoral cannot escape the traps of dichotomous logic for it privileges the country over the town, it demonstrates the urge to go beyond the conventional critical frame. However, in his later work, *The Environmental Imagination*, influenced by Leo Marx’s idea that contemporary changes in man’s interaction with nature will eventually lead to the emergence of new pastoral

frames, Buell calls for an “ecocentric repossession of pastoral,” and the explorations of “[p]astoral’s multiple frames” (52, 36).

Inspired by Buell’s search for alternative explorations of pastoral, in light of ecocritical studies, Gifford introduces a third category to the former pastoral duality: “the post-pastoral,” and aims to answer the adverse criticism directed at pastoral and to stimulate the study of its ecocritical potential (*Pastoral* 146). The “post-pastoral” as a term can be considered as the product of the endeavour to reflect the “interdisciplinary” dimension and the heterogeneity of ecocritical studies in creating an umbrella term which not only brings together all aspects of man’s contact with nature, but also “encompass[es] visionaries from the past as well as the present and a range of forms from the ballad to travel writing” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 149). This perspective encourages scholars to overcome polarities like man/nature, city/country and urban/rural by celebrating their ecocentric holism. Gifford stresses that with its holistic approach ecological criticism could be “the frame of our age” since it foregrounds “‘environment’, rather than ‘countryside’ or ‘landscape’ or the ‘bucolic’” (*Pastoral* 147). Consequently, because of its subversive prospects, “[f]rom the earth-centered” perspective, the pastoral is rich in potential for new viewpoints and analysis (Love 66).

By elaborating on the nature of Ted Hughes’ poetry, in *Pastoral*, Gifford identifies six essential features which originate from both pastoral and anti-pastoral conventions and which can exist in verse and prose (150). Quite in harmony with the dialogical interaction between natural and social sciences that ecocriticism tries to stimulate, one of the primary aspects of the post-pastoral is the call for “an awe in attention to the natural world” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 151-2). The reverence for the natural can be inspired by the scientific revelation of nature’s mysteries or ecology’s discovery of the interdependence of the human and the nonhuman, as well as by “a deep sense of the immanence in all natural things” (*Pastoral* 152). Different from the former pastoral representations, post-pastoral does not fall into the trap of idealising nature, but highlights the interconnectedness of all beings. As for the second important feature, Gifford benefits from the holism of ecology that highlights the interconnectedness of all

beings within a universe that operates on the perfect balance of creative-destructive mechanisms (*Pastoral* 153). Foregrounding deep ecological biocentrism, that is ecocentrism, post-pastoral also challenges anthropocentrism by regarding man as one species whose existence is tightly connected to all other fellow species. Therefore, the third element of post-pastoral is the consciousness “that our inner human nature can be understood in relation to external nature” (*Pastoral* 156). Rather than privileging the country over the city, post-pastoral literature reflects the social ecological consciousness about the interconnectedness between culture and nature, and focuses on the predicament of urban dwellers. As a result, another feature of post-pastoral is the subversion of culture/nature duality by creating “an awareness of both nature as culture and of culture as nature” (*Pastoral* 161). In addition to incorporating the premises of deep ecology and social ecology, post-pastoral represents the concerns of animal studies. Inspired by the ecocritical urge to raise ecological consciousness, post-pastoral works attack anthropocentrism as it declares that “consciousness” stimulates “conscience” (*Pastoral* 163). Despite acknowledging man as a rational being, Gifford demands one to transform his “consciousness” into “conscience” by enhancing one’s reverence for the nonhuman and assuming the “responsibility for its ecological relationships and its ultimate survival” (*Pastoral* 163). Post-pastoral is also an answer to what Love calls the “unprecedented significance” of pastoral literature in contemporary context “when the comfortably mythopoeic green world of pastoral is beset by profound threats of pollution, despoliation, and diminishment” (66). According to Gifford in “Towards a Post-Pastoral View of British Poetry,” post-pastoral is the right term to be used to refer to the “contemporary landscape poem,” drawing attention to “the presence of toxic waste in a landscape like the Lake District” (53). The last feature of post-pastoral harmonises the concerns of the environmental justice movement with the challenges introduced by ecofeminism as it declares that “the exploitation of the planet is of the same mindset as the exploitation of women and minorities” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 164). Quite integral to the post-pastoral call for consciousness that turns into conscience in the fifth element, the sixth one draws attention to “both environmental and social exploitation” (*Pastoral* 165).

With the introduction of the theoretical frame by Gifford, pastoral literature regains its rightful position among environmental texts that contribute to the reconceptualisation of our ethical and moral values. Instead of being escapist or creating false ideological representations, post-pastoral literature treats many dimensions of the contemporary ecological crisis. Because post-pastoral goes beyond particular generic codes, it metamorphoses into a heteroglossic ecocentric frame that is rooted in the holistic ecocritical challenge to dichotomous logic. Abolishing such dualities like man/nature, culture/nature and city/country, it prioritises the portrayal of the interconnectedness of all beings as the inhabitants of the whole planet.

In addition to the revival of interest in pastoral literature, the debate on what is an environmental text also involves the revitalisation of poetry as another neglected domain. Due to the challenges introduced by scientific knowledge, towards the end of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century, nature poetry lost its splendour. Living in a post-Darwinian universe, it was rather difficult for the reading public to be carried away by the sublime feelings the representation of nature in the Romantic poems were meant to stimulate. Consequently, the realist and the naturalist poets condemned the bond between man and nature for being a pathetic fallacy, which resulted in the composition of fewer nature poems that received only little public appreciation. However, shattering the widespread scorn for nature poetry, contemporary ecocritical studies introduce ecopoetry as a category that establishes the bond between ecology and poetry, and regard ecopoetry as a generic medium that voices the primary ecocentric concerns. The initial move to explore the ecocritical potential of poetry manifests itself with the renewed interest in Romantic works. Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991), and *The Song of the Earth* (2000) are the two significant contributions to the field. With *The Song of the Earth*, Bate is among the leading ecocritics, who creates an organic bond between living on earth and poetry writing. In Bate's view, ecopoetry is the kind of poetry that conceptualises the Earth as man's home: "[e]copoetics asks in what respects a poem may be a making (Greek *poiesis*) of the dwelling place - the prefix eco- is derived from Greek *oikos*, 'the home or

place of dwelling' ” (*The Song* 75). He also draws parallelism between the interdependence of numerous components in natural life and poetry composition. He argues that because of its “rhythmic, syntactic and linguistic intensifications,” poetry is the best manifestation of “nature’s own rhythms, an echoing of the song of the earth itself” (Bate, *The Song* 76). By reflecting the interconnectedness of life in nature, the composition of ecopoetry connects man to nature as well as raises his consciousness regarding its essential unity.

Besides revisiting Romantic poetry, ecocritical studies also survey the environmental concerns in the works of various modern and contemporary poets. Since the 1950s, the representation of nature has come into prominence and eventually has led to the emergence of what J. Scott Bryson, in “Introduction” to *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction*, calls “*Ecopoetry*” a movement (3). Despite sharing the Romantics’ reverence for nature, as the pioneers of *Ecopoetry* the “new generation of poets” differ from their predecessors with the “perspective on the human-nonhuman relationship” in their work (Bryson 5). Because of its recent entry into the critical arena, Bryson mentions the difficulty of providing a concise definition of what ecopoetry is; yet he regards it as “a subset of nature poetry,” which focuses on “distinctly contemporary problems and issues” (5). Among the major features of ecopoetry that Bryson identifies is the attention given to “the interdependent nature of the worlds” of man and the natural environment (5-6). In addition, ecopoetry perceives “the world as a community,” which inspires “humility in relationship with both human and nonhuman nature” (6). The last characteristic of ecopoetry that Bryson suggests is “an intense skepticism concerning hyperrationality, a skepticism that usually leads to an indictment of an overtechnologized modern world” and the presence of “a warning concerning the very real potential of ecological catastrophe” (6). With its attacks on the idea of progress, ecopoetry problematises the alliance of science with anthropocentrism.

To sum up, ecocriticism is the outcome of the growing concerns about the anthropocentric codifications and exploitation of nature which lead critics and literary figures to explore the potential in literature to raise awareness about the gravity of the ecological problems. The initial orientations of such an endeavour cannot escape the trap of being dualistic and treat the realms of nature and man as

two separate domains. Being mostly the territory of the white writers, this first wave of ecocriticism consists of non-fiction prose works. However, with the challenges introduced into the field regarding the constructedness of culture/nature dichotomy, second wave ecocriticism generates a more holistic critical perspective that treats man-made things as significant areas of exploration. The scope of ecocritical studies is further extended with the emergence of third wave ecocriticism, which encourages the critics for a comparative analysis of the ways how the national and local representations of man's relationship with nature go beyond the boundaries of their unique background and emphasise the sense of global environmental consciousness. The heteroglossic ecocritical background also encourages ecocritics to reconsider the criteria regarding what makes an environmental text. The appreciation of the fundamental function of literary works in challenging dichotomous logic leads to the revival of interest in pastoral literature and poetry. The emergence of post-pastoral and ecopoetry not only contributes to the reconceptualisation of nature and man's relationship with the nonhuman, but also plays a significant role in calling attention to the present ecological crisis and raising ecological consciousness.

CHAPTER 2

DICHOTOMOUS LOGIC AND ITS ECOCRITICAL AND GREEN POLITICAL SUBVERSION

2.1. Dualism as the Root Cause of the Contemporary Ecological Crisis

The ecological crisis that the human and the nonhuman inhabitants of the planet face is the outcome of the marginalisation of the holistic ecocentric discourse due to an alliance between dichotomous logic and anthropocentrism. Evolving out of Platonic dualistic philosophy, the Western epistemology has always been based on the idea of an origin, which functions as the unifying element that is unreachable because it exists outside the material world in the realm of Ideas. The realm of essences has always been regarded as the origin which organises and structures worldly matter. Such a hierarchy between this world and the one beyond it laid the foundations of dualistic philosophy as the cornerstone of the Western metaphysics that gradually disconnected man from nature because it subordinated the nonhuman realm to the will of the anthropos. By privileging man over nature, this dichotomous logic established anthropocentrism as the major discourse that rationalised the reduction of the nonhuman world into a passive object and prioritised the interests of humans over those of nonhumans. Despite being the products of the philosophical atmosphere and ideological background, dualistic thinking and anthropocentrism have been naturalised for centuries. A closer look at the root causes of the ecological crisis reveals how throughout the Western history dichotomous logic has penetrated the fundamentals of religious faith, humanist philosophy as well as the idea of progress and has constructed a value system that has been marginalising ecocentrism by consolidating anthropocentric discourse in order to justify the exploitation of nature.

The conversion from paganism to Christianity is among the major turning points in the Western history that led to the subversion of the ecocentric discourse by anthropocentrism. Inspired by Platonic dualistic philosophy, Christianity

reinforced anthropocentrism and continued to break the ecocentric bond between man and nature. As Clark points out, anthropocentrism represents “any stance, perception or conception” which privileges “the human as centre or norm” (3). Based on anthropological evidence, George Sessions, in “Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour,” says that the metamorphosis of the Greek culture from “the Nature-oriented ... cosmological speculations of the Pre-Socratics to the anthropocentrism of the classical Athenian philosophers” is one of the significant changes that resulted in the violation of the harmony between man and nature (159). He regards the Aristotelian notion of “an Earth-centered finite universe” inhabited by rational human beings as a very significant milestone since it “promoted the hierarchical concept of the ‘Great Chain of Being’ ” (Sessions 159). Sessions observes that this change has had a significant effect on the religious practices of the Western world by creating a gap between man and the nonhuman environment along with initiating the process of eliminating “a sacred sense of the Earth and all its inhabitants” (158).

The Creation story in Genesis marks the beginning of the Christian anthropocentric discourse for it licences man to master nonhuman beings. The idea that God created “man in his *own* image” after creating the universe and its nonhuman occupants establishes a hierarchy between the godlike man and the other creations (Gen. 1.27). Man’s superiority is further highlighted with God’s blessing of man and giving him the right to “replenish the earth, and subdue [nature]” as well as to “have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen. 1.28). Lynn White Jr. highlights that “Christianity,” different from “ancient paganism and Asia’s religions ... not only established a dualism of man and nature, but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” (1205). White views Christianity, specifically in the way it is practiced in the Western culture, as “the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen” because “[m]an shares, in great measure, God’s transcendence of nature” (1205). According to Val Plumwood in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, dichotomous logic operates on “domination/subordination” which also determines “the identity of both the relata” (41). Consequently, by associating man with God, Christianity

validated the exploitation of nature as a subordinated other which is denied an essence of its own.

Man's anthropocentric mastery assumes a different dimension during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, when in light of humanist philosophy man is reconceptualised as a rational master. Maintaining the marginalisation of ecocentrism, rationalism becomes a substitute for man's divine right to control nature. In *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present*, M. A. R. Habib states that although the idea of humanism initially appeared in Cicero's writings, it is conventionally associated with the Renaissance men's desire "to distinguish themselves from the medieval scholastics" (230). As a concept humanism denotes "a world view and set of values centered around the human" instead of the God centred universe of the Middle Ages. Rejecting the fallen nature of man, humanism foregrounds the trust in human "potential" and what he can accomplish here on earth (Habib 230). Humanism also restored man to his prestigious position as the rational being, a status he used to enjoy in classical Greek and Roman times. The ideas of the Italian Renaissance philosopher, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, in *On the Dignity of Man* demonstrate the endeavour to fuse Christianity with humanism by rewriting the story of the creation in a form of Platonic revival. Having created the universe and man, God talks to Adam and declares that he has the freedom to shape himself: " 'We have given to thee, Adam, no fixed seat, no form of thy very own, no profit peculiarly thine, that thou mayst feel as thine own you, possess as thine own the seat, the form, the gifts, which thou thyself shall desire'" (Della Mirandola 4). Man is the unique being who can decide on his own life by becoming his own "judge" and is capable of being the " 'molder and maker of [himself]' " (5). Being " 'placed at the center of the world' ," through individual choices, man could " 'go downward into the lower natures which are the brutes'" or he can " 'go upward from thy soul's reason into the higher nature which are divine' " (5). In spite of consolidating man/nature duality, different from the biblical story, man is privileged over other creations not merely because of being godlike, but because he can make rational choices and through his free will he is to distinguish himself from lesser beings.

With the rationalism of Rene Descartes, on the other hand, anthropocentrism liberates itself from its religious motifs as man/nature dichotomy evolves into mind/body duality. Rather than attributing man's mastery over nature to a transcendental creator, rationalism justifies the exploitation of nature since like the human body it is codified as an object that lacks reason. As part of his quest for who he is, in *Discourse on Method and Meditations* Descartes expresses his distrust in the body as the source of unreliable sensual perceptions and declares: “ ‘I think, therefore I am’ ” (23). Thus, Descartes celebrates the mind with its thinking faculty as the sole proof of his existence: “I am, I exist, that is certain. But how often? Just when I think; for it might possibly be the case if I ceased entirely to think, that I should likewise cease to exist” (73-4). Defining man as “a thing which thinks” also allows him to declare the rational “ ‘I’ ” “without scruple as the first principle of the Philosophy for which [he] was seeking” (Descartes 73-4, 23). As an alternative to the “speculative philosophy” that is taught at schools, Descartes offers what he calls “practical philosophy” which will allow man “to attain knowledge which is very useful in life” (41). The rational study of the operating mechanisms in nature and “knowing the force and the action of fire, water, air, the stars, heavens and all other bodies that environ us” eventually position men as “the masters and possessors of nature” (Descartes 41). According to David Hawkes, in *Ideology*, emphasis on thinking as the ultimate proof of one's existence led to the construction of the new concept of man: “an individual, unified subject – an ‘I’ which is doing the thinking” (60). This results in the emergence of “the originary, unitary, transcendent Cartesian ego,” who privileges himself over all the other beings. Descartes' Cartesian ego sets the ground for rational philosophy that establishes the duality between the rational master and nature, which is regarded as separate and secondary. Moreover, it provides a rationale for his anthropocentric desires and means. Man as the ruler of nature and possessor of practical knowledge is also capable of inventing “an infinity of arts and crafts” through which he will “enjoy without any trouble the fruits of the earth and all the good things which are to be found there” (Descartes 41-2). As it is suggested by Bate, Descartes sets the scene for “the triumph of technology” (*The Song* 137). The rational man was convinced that

using his mind, he could not only have command on everything around him, but also create mechanisms to exploit nature for his own benefit.

The humanist trust in man's capacity to reason also alters the way nature is conceptualised, which paves the way for the evolution of natural theology into secular natural science. Despite the enmity between Christianity and science, Jeffrey Foss, in *Beyond Environmentalism: A Philosophy of Nature*, maintains that many scientists are initially inspired by the presumption that the universe is created by a rational creator. Moreover, the idea that the universe must have "logos" and must be operating on "rational principles, or laws," encourages them to decode the "laws laid down for nature by God" (Foss 172). However, the growth of this new scientific spirit that celebrates the individual and his capacity to reason and reach truth transformed the valid method of scientific research, which ultimately ruled out the role of God. Rather than relying on some scientific authority like Aristotle, Francis Bacon in *The New Organon*, regarded "true induction" as "[t]he only hope," and encouraged the modern scientist to conduct a series of trials and experimentations to gather scientific evidence that will ultimately lead him to general principles of operation in nature (35). The gradual renunciation of the orthodox methods of exploring the mysteries of nature during the 18th century endowed man with immense trust in his ability to think and decipher the mechanisms of nature in order to better both himself and the world he lived in. The Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke and David Hume regarded themselves as "initiating an era of humanitarian, intellectual and social progress" based on the "ability of human reason" (Habib 311). Consequently, man declared his mastery over nature, which was reconceptualised "as an enormous, soulless mechanism that worked according to knowable natural laws" (Garrard 61-2).

The confidence in human potentials accompanied by the growing scientific spirit and rapid industrialisation in the 19th century set the scene for the emergence of the idea of progress that justified the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse. John Bagnell Bury, in *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth*, discusses the background to the idea of progress and declares that at its core lies the conviction that "civilisation has moved, is moving, and will move

in a desirable direction” (12). Because progressive thinking not only synthesises what took place in the past, but also has the ability to foresee the future, human history is regarded as a continuum throughout which man has been making a series of advancements (Bury 15). This faith in progress to “continue indefinitely” disguised its anthropocentric motives by implying “a condition of general happiness” and creating an illusory future when everyone one day is to enjoy the benefits of progress (16). Nevertheless, by averting all objections, progressive thinking became a means to consolidate the Western man’s anthropocentric exploitation of nature with its goal to move towards a “desirable” and wanted “direction” (16). Positioning himself at the centre of existence, during the 19th century man was motivated to invent different mechanisms of scientific exploration and exploitation of nature, which eventually paved the way for various technological developments striving to control nature and ease the life of man at his new industrial and urban background. Thus, such anthropocentric motives foregrounded economic expansion at the cost of upsetting the natural balance and eclipsed the betterment of man both morally and spiritually. As Donald Worster in *Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* states with the reduction of the nonhuman world into a passive object, the progressive ideals metamorphose into “the world-view of *materialism*,” which by prioritising economic and scientific developments turned a blind eye to its devastating effects on nature (211).

The brief overview of the fundamentals of the Western metaphysics like religious dichotomy, dualistic thinking and the idea of progress reveals how they consolidated the anthropocentric discourse and metamorphosed into various mechanisms to justify the exploitation of nature by man. Inspired by Biblical exegesis, Christianity played a significant role in the reduction of the nonhuman world into a domain at the service of man who was positioned at the top of the hierarchy among the earthly beings. Platonic dualistic philosophy paved the way for the emergence of a full scale dualistic frame of thinking which through humanism and rationalism disconnected man from nature during the Renaissance and rationalised its anthropocentric exploitation. The codification of nature as a grand machine whose operating mechanisms could be discerned and used by the

rational man to control it reached its peak during the Enlightenment, when the alliance between anthropocentrism and science stimulated the creation of a progressive view of life which gradually transformed the agrarian Western world into an industrialised and urbanised one. Filled with the desire to escape barbarity and create a progressive civilisation, the Western man used religious dichotomy and dualistic thinking to maintain his oppression of the nonhuman world. Progressive thought and the exploitation of nature reached its peak in the 19th century the Western world became increasingly industrialised and urbanised. However, this was also the period when the Western man was forced to confront the dark side of his anthropocentric and progressive exploitation of the nonhuman world. Thus, the initial struggle to cope with various forms of pollution, rapid industrialisation and urbanisation has lent its place, today, to a global ecological crisis which threatens the wellbeing of the entire planet.

2.2 Ecocritical Subversion of Dichotomous Logic

Since the early 19th century, the alliance among dualism, anthropocentrism and progressive thinking has been under attack. The earliest challenge to anthropocentric discourse and humanism took place with Romanticism that emerged as a reaction to the Age of Reason. By problematising the binary oppositions like man/nature, mind/body and culture/nature, the Romantics tried to revive ecocentrism and demanded that humanity should return to its former pre-industrialised organic state of existence. Nevertheless, the real significant challenge to the premises of the Western metaphysics took place in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century with the groundbreaking ideas of figures like Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud and Ferdinand de Saussure. Their substantial destabilisation of humanist philosophy and the reconceptualisation of man and reality later culminated with the theories of the poststructuralist thinkers in the 1960s. Challenging the background to dichotomous logic and the world view it preached as an ideological construct, poststructuralism undermined humanist ideals by problematising man and reason as the corner stones of the Western progressive

history and its linear flow based on causality. Influenced by the poststructuralist subversion of the fundamentals of the Western world, today ecocriticism attacks the exploitation of nature to serve man's anthropocentric and progressive ambitions. Condemning dichotomous logic, ecocritics question the hierarchical codifications of man over nature, culture over nature as well as time over space.

2.2.1 Man/nature Duality

Because contemporary ecological crisis is the dead end of anthropocentric and humanist mode of thinking, ecocriticism objects to the philosophical and ideological background of the early modern period and the Enlightenment. Poststructuralism not only problematises man's central position but also challenges logocentrism and demythologises the rational individual as the provider of meaning. It foregrounds the constructed nature of truth, reality and human identity and discusses the various subjectification processes the human subject is exposed to. By elaborating on the poststructuralist theories of Jacques Derrida regarding dualism and logocentrism as well as Michael Foucault's ideas on power and discourse, ecocritics problematise man/nature duality and emphasise the essential interconnectedness of human and nonhuman beings. What is more, being inspired by the recent developments in science, the subversion of the hierarchical codifications of man and nature also destabilises anthropocentrism as an ideological construct and stimulates ecocritics to call for the restoration of the holistic ecocentric discourse.

With his deconstructive philosophy Jacques Derrida plays a significant role in the ecocritical challenge to dualistic thought and the hierarchical anthropocentric world view it has generated. Derrida's attack on humanist philosophy is maintained with the deconstruction of the binaries and his problematisation of the existence of a center or a master signified as the organising principle of the Western metaphysics. While discussing logocentric tradition in *Positions*, Derrida says that it is based on a "violent hierarchy," in which "one of the two terms governs the other" (41). Therefore, his major goal is "to deconstruct the opposition" by "overturn[ing] the hierarchy" (Derrida,

Positions 41). Derridian deconstructive reasoning also undermines the mechanism of structuralism and the concept of origin. In “Structure, Sing, and Play,” by elaborating on the ideas of Saussure, Derrida argues that “the structure – or rather the structurality of structure” with “a center” or “a point of presence, a fixed origin” has always been an integral part of the Western science and philosophy (149). Being assigned the fundamental role to “orient, balance and organise,” the center is believed to avoid “the *freeplay* of the structure” (Derrida, “Structure” 150). However, based on the classical notion that “the center is, paradoxically, *within* the structure and *outside* it,” Derrida demythologises the significance of the center by using its basic principles against itself (“Structure” 150). While the center is considered to be “at the center of totality,” because it “is not part of the totality, the totality *has its center elsewhere*,” deconstructive philosophy declares that such a center does not exist (“Structure” 150). The Western world has been operating on the belief that there is a transcendental force, a master signified that organises everything and grants it meaning. Derrida, on the other hand, reduces the center, to a “function” which operates on differences; eventually, metamorphosing the entire Western intellectual history into “a discourse” (“Structure” 151).

Derrida’s attacks on the premises of origin stimulate ecocritics to question man/nature duality. Motivated by his deconstruction of dualistic thinking and the concept of origin, they undermine anthropocentric discourse and humanism, which have been imposing a hierarchical ideology by putting man at the center. Richie Nimmo, in “The Making of the Human: anthropocentrism in modern social thought,” undermines the hegemony of man and the “essentialist distinction between humanity and its others” by declaring that it is not possible to separate man from the world that surrounds him (60). Based on deconstructive demystification of the hierarchy between the two legs of the binaries, ecocriticism maintains that the mastery of man over nature is a mere construct since these two components are actually interdependent. Criticising humanism for repressing “this dialectical interrelationship” between the human and the nonhuman realms, Nimmo observes that in subject/object and man/nature duality “both parts ... are mutually constitutive” (61). Consequently, as Laurence Coupe, in *The Green*

Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism, maintains, the aim of ecocriticism is not to reverse the hierarchy to establish another duality where nature is privileged over man because it would be “simply to invert the logic of patriarchy” (120). The deconstruction of man/nature duality also involves the subversion of the hierarchical and anthropocentric world view it constructed. The idea that human needs are of utmost importance and the prioritization of them should be the major goal of life has been naturalised as the order of nature. According to Eric Katz, in “Against the inevitability of anthropocentrism,” anthropocentrism has penetrated all areas like “science and technology” as well as “aesthetics” and “ethics” which “organize, understand, and validate claims about the world” from a human centred perspective (17). Therefore, in light of poststructuralist theory as well as the developments in the field of ecology, ecocritics demand that man should give up his anthropocentric claims over the nonhuman world and revitalise the holistic ecocentric discourse instead. In “The Land and Language of Desire: where deep ecology and poststructuralism meet,” SueEllen Campbell elaborates on the common ground where ecology and theory meet. The deconstruction of dichotomous logic and anthropocentrism motivates ecocritics to reconceptualise man-nature relationship within the ecocentric frame of “*networks*” (131). Reflecting the holistic spirit of ecology, this subversion of “centers with networks,” not only foregrounds the mutual dependence and influence of the components, but also raises ecocentric consciousness (Campbell 132). As an inhabitant of the Earth, man’s actions should always be guided by the fact that human beings “can’t do anything without causing lots of side effects because everything is connected, nothing is isolated” (132).

In addition to the deconstruction of the dichotomous logic, ecocriticism is also inspired by Derridian subversion of logocentrism. The absence of a centre and a transcendental signified leads to the deconstruction of logocentric thinking and the destabilisation of man as the possessor and producer of logos. As Derrida, in *Margins of Philosophy* observes, logocentrism is based on the idea that “univocity is the essence, or better, the *telos* of language” (247). Starting with the ancient Greeks, the Western tradition has been functioning on the idea that language can express thought. According to K. M. Newton, Derrida opposes

“logocentrism” in the Western metaphysics that conceptualises meaning as “existing independently of language in which it is communicated and thus not subject to the play of language” (147). However, by building upon Saussure’s theories on the arbitrariness between the sign, signifier and the signified in the signification process, Derrida turns the communication process into an endless free play of signifiers that fail to reach the master signified. Consequently, due to such challenges to logocentrism man is denied the privileged position to command language to have dominion over the nonhuman world. Being influenced by such challenges to logocentrism, ecocriticism not only requires man to stop treating nature as a grand mechanism whose laws can be decoded by the human master but also urges him to appreciate it as a subject that has its own unique communication devices. As suggested by Serpil Oppermann in “Ecocriticism: Natural World in the Literary Viewfinder,” in order to undo logocentric thinking, “ecocriticism embarks upon the project of reconceptualizing nature ... but as an active agency in its own right” (4). Oppermann cites the names of various ecocritics like Donna Haraway, Diana Fuss, Patrick Murphy and Evelyn Fox Keller, who voice the need “for a reconception of nature as an active and speaking subject” (4).

Apart from Derridian deconstructive philosophy, the theories of Michel Foucault, too, offer significant insight into the ecocritical challenge to man/nature duality by exposing the constructed nature of anthropocentric discourse and revealing its alliance with power. Following Nietzsche, Foucault’s theories on “the will to truth” undermine the humanist faith in man’s idea of progress as one of the fundamentals of the Western epistemology. Questioning the existence and the validity of ultimate truth and God as the organising principle, Nietzsche foregrounds the alliance between man’s desire for power and knowledge. Foucault’s ideas in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” reveal that he shares the Nietzschean outlook of history which is based on “the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge” (95). A thorough survey of different scientific inquiry shatters that illusion and reveals the fact that they are triggered by the “aspects of the will to knowledge: instinct, passion, the inquisitor’s devotion, cruel subtlety, and malice” (Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” 95). Although conventionally power

is considered to derive from knowledge, as Madan Sarup in *An Introductory Guide to Poststructuralism and Postmodernism* puts it, with Foucault, “knowledge is a power over the others, the power to define others” (67). Thus, he undermines the Western man’s naive pursuit of ultimate truth and knowledge. In “The Order of Discourse,” Foucault maintains that truth can only be declared as the truth as long as it follows the operating mechanism of the dominant discourse: “[i]t is always possible that one might speak the truth in the space of wild exteriority, but one is ‘in the true’ only by obeying the rules of discursive ‘policing’ which one has to reactivate in each of one’s discourses” (61). Consequently, the distrust in the emergence and the nature of truth makes Foucault regard the significant discoveries in science “as the appearance of new forms in the will to truth” (“The Order of Discourse” 54). Therefore, being disillusioned with the idea of progress, Foucault stresses the need for a thorough analysis of “[t]he great biological image of progressive maturation of science” (“Truth and Power” 54).

Foucauldian criticism of man’s will to knowledge foregrounds the constructedness of anthropocentric humanist philosophy. The rational decoding of the operating mechanisms of the nonhuman world resulted in the reduction of nature into a passive object at the service of the rational man. However, as pointed out by Sarup, in Foucauldian terms, due to its alliance with power, rationalism is “a myth which has to be superseded” (69). By focusing on the outcomes of the humanity’s will to knowledge, Foucault discloses its ironic nature: “[e]ven in the greatly expanded form it assumes today, the will to knowledge does not achieve a universal truth; man is not given an exact and serene mastery of nature” (“Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” 95). Therefore, the presence of several discontinuous events and the power struggle involved in search for truth undermine the progressive nature of both history and scientific knowledge.

Integral to the ecocritical subversion of man’s will to command nature, Foucauldian demythologisation of the existence of ultimate truth and the idea of progress sets the ground for the ecocritics’ challenge to anthropocentrism and the validity of scientific knowledge. Living in a poststructuralist context where previously accepted reality is regarded as mere construct, ecocritics distrust “the

idea of science as wholly objective and value-free” (Garrard 10). Like what Foucault emphasises, man’s will to knowledge “multiplies the risks, creates dangers in every area; it breaks down illusory defences” (“Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” 95). According to Sessions, starting with the early modern times the pursuit of scientific knowledge has been inspired by “anthropocentric humanist/Christian” motives, and aimed at “conquering and dominating Nature” (161). For centuries man has convinced himself that scientific knowledge confirmed his mastery over nature. However, in light of Foucauldian theories, it is possible to identify the loopholes in the anthropocentric discourse in order to subvert the mastery of man. Sessions acknowledges that history of man provides enough scientific evidence to prove that the world is essentially “nonanthropocentric” (161). Hence, he discusses how scientific knowledge challenged “the Aristotelian anthropocentric cosmology” and substituted it with “the original nonanthropocentric cosmological worldview of the Pre-Socratics; first in astronomy with heliocentrism, the infinity of the universe, and cosmic evolution; then in biology with Darwinian evolution” (161). In the same manner, Louise Westling, in “Literature, the Environment, and the Question of the Posthuman,” elaborates on the various modern scientific theories that undermine man’s desire to master nature. She mentions that the studies conducted by the scientists Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, and Werner Heisenberg in relativity theory and quantum mechanics subverted “the idea of nature as a comprehensible machine” by displaying “the relativism and situatedness of knowledge, the dynamism, reciprocity, and indeterminism of physical entities and forces” in an unprecedented manner (Westling 35). Today, the challenge to anthropocentric world view continues with ecology, “as the ‘subversive science,’” which “pointed toward an ecocentric orientation to the world” (Sessions 161-2). Sessions resembles “modern science” to “a two-edged sword” (161). No matter how much the Western world has sought to disguise the constructedness of the anthropocentric discourse and humanism, the significant scientific advancements have resulted in the decentralisation of man from his “preeminent place in the Aristotelian/Christian cosmology” (Sessions 162). As a result, the will to knowledge metamorphoses into a process in which knowledge cannot escape its

primary pragmatic motives that are far from being rooted in reason (Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” 96). In the same manner, Oppermann is also highly critical of the idea that scientific data reflect the truth. In order to exemplify, she discusses the case with quantum mechanics and states that “reality is observer created and subject to the process of observation in coming into being; and that process itself is subjective” (6). Hence, she remarks that “science as the arbiter of truth that is fixed, unitary and absolute is fundamentally illusory” (Oppermann 6).

Another significant contribution of Foucauldian theory to ecocritical subversion of dichotomous logic is related to the revitalisation of ecocentrism, the marginalised discourse, by disclosing the alliance between discourse and power. Due to its close ties with power and the idea that it is shaped by various historical factors, knowledge in Foucauldian theory metamorphoses into discourse. According to Alec McHoul and Wendy Grace, in *A Foucault Primer*, unlike the conventional notion of knowledge as “technical knowledge or know-how,” in Foucauldian theory, discourse signifies “the social, historical and political conditions under which, for example, statements come to count as true or false” (29). Foucault views history as the continuous exchange of power among the dominant and minor discourses which promote their own constructed realities. The discourse/power alliance is operative in the domain of scientific knowledge, which undermines anthropocentrism and the truth it communicates concerning the rightful mastery of the human beings over the nonhuman ones. Because it has secured man’s materialistic desire to accumulate wealth, make progress and improve his living conditions through the advancement of technology and exploitation of nature, anthropocentrism has remained as the dominant discourse. Although the alliance of anthropocentrism with capitalism and industrialization has been celebrated as a profitable one, today, ecocritics recognize that it has been directing man to his doom. Hence, in Foucauldian sense, as mentioned in “Truth and Power,” they have been carrying out a genealogical study of history to unearth the marginalized discourses and focus on the life style of the organic communities to rediscover states of existence in harmony with nature (59). The search for other suppressed discourses can be seen as a reflection of what

Christopher Manes, in “Nature and Silence,” calls the urge to restore “ ‘the language of birds’ ” that is liberated from its anthropocentric and humanist ambitions and voices “the passions, pains, and cryptic intents of the other biological communities that surround us and silently interpenetrate our existence” (25).

The restoration of the ecocentric discourse and man’s former unity with nature is possible only after making human beings acknowledge that their mastery of nature is illusory and their perception of nature is constructed. However, such recognition should be followed by the willingness to alter his consciousness and accept the existence of alternative perceptions. In an interview, “The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom” conducted by Paul Fronet-Betancourt, Helmut Becker and Alfredo Gomez-Muller, Michel Foucault mentions the ancient roots of ecological discourse. According to Foucault, despite the conflict between ecological movement and science or technology in defining what truth is, “ecology also spoke a language of truth” to communicate the particular “knowledge concerning nature, the equilibrium of the processes of living things, and so forth, that one could level the criticism [‘*nature-sceptical*’]” (“The Ethic of Care” 15). Foucault’s remarks, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, display that despite the fact that ecological discourse expresses the truth about the interconnectedness between human and nonhuman beings, it has been suppressed by institutions and mechanisms of power, forcing ecological discourse to maintain its existence in the margins as “subjugated knowledges,” which in Foucauldian theory refers to the areas of knowledge that have been either suppressed or disregarded by the dominant discourses (81). As it is mentioned by Linda Martin Alcoff, in “Foucault’s Philosophy of Science: Structures of Truth/Structures of Power,” in Foucauldian theory discourses function “[i]n circular fashion” and determine the validity of both the current views and the emergence of the new ones in the future (215). Therefore, in order for “a statement” to be categorised as “meaningful” it should be “statable within a discourse” (Alcoff 215). Foucault’s challenges to the totalitarian attitudes and prioritization of plurality and diversity find expression in the various ecological orientations and their attempts to subvert anthropocentric discourse. Quite in

harmony with the holistic spirit of ecology, biocentrism, that is ecocentrism, foregrounds the interconnectedness of all beings as the inhabitants of the entire planet. Problematizing man/nature duality, ecocentrism declares that “all organisms, including humans, are part of a larger biotic web or network or community whose interests must constrain or direct or govern the human interest” (Buell, *The Future* 132). Unlike the anthropocentric desire to master nature, as Clark observes, “*biocentrism*” demands that man should free himself from all the preconceived notions regarding such a privileged status and develop a new consciousness appreciating “the intrinsic value of all natural life” and prioritising “the needs of other species or integrity of place” (2). Despite opposing man/nature dichotomy, ecocentrism does not simply reverse the hierarchy, but avoids “privileg[ing] ... just one species” and strives to “identify with all life or a whole ecosystem” (Clark 3).

The ecological transformation in the reconceptualisation of man’s perception of nature calls for a fundamental change in the ethical values, too. The revival of ecocentric discourse requires man to reconstruct a value system that celebrates the interconnectedness of all beings. According to Terence Ball, in his “Green Political Theory,” due to the restoration of ecocentrism, anthropocentric “measure of value” is replaced with an ecocentric one which is both “naturalistic and holistic” and prioritises “the health and well-being of the ‘biotic community’ – for example, an ecosystem and the myriad species it sustains – takes precedence over any of its individual members” (540). As pointed out by Ball, dismissing “*Homo sapiens* – as the source and measure of value,” ecocentrism extols the worth of all species (540). In the same manner, David Pepper, in *Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice*, declares that among the major outcomes of ecocentric consciousness is that it stimulates a “‘bioethic’,” which “constrain[s] human action, particularly through imposing limits to economic and population growth” (33). Being highly critical of the “modern large-scale technology and the technical and bureaucratic elites” ecocentrism rejects “centralisation and materialism” (Pepper, *Eco-Socialism* 33). The transformations in the domain of ethics along with the urge for the appreciation of the interconnectedness of all species also encourage ecocritical studies to develop a more comprehensive

approach regarding environmental preservation. Thus, as Robyn Eckersley, in *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach*, maintains, environmentalism concentrates on the preservation of not only wilderness areas, but is also “concerned to protect threatened populations, species, habitats, and ecosystems *wherever situated* and irrespective of their use value or importance to humans” (46).

To conclude, it can be said that in light of the ideas of Derrida and Foucault, the poststructuralist deconstruction of dichotomous logic, the challenges introduced to the constructed nature of reality along with the deciphering of the alliance between discourse and power contribute to the ecocritical subversion of man/nature duality. The destabilisation of man as the master reduces anthropocentrism to a discourse and encourages ecocritics to foreground the ecological interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman beings. Moreover, the disillusionment with rationalism and progress results in the problematisation of objective scientific truth and the way scientific discourse is manipulated by the ones in power. As part of their critique of anthropocentric discourse, ecocritics explore the field of ecology and call for the restoration of the holistic perception of the marginalised ecocentric discourse. Abolishing the hierarchical codifications between man and nature, they attack the reduction of nature to a passive object and struggle to voice as well as to put an end to the oppression of the nonhuman world.

2.2.2 The Hierarchical Codification of Culture over Nature

The subordination of nature to culture is another manifestation of dichotomous logic. Being a derivative of man/nature duality, culture as the product of the rational master has been considered to be superior to nature in its plain and untouched state. The humanist urge to decode the laws of nature metamorphosed into the Enlightenment project, with which the rational pursuit of knowledge seeking has evolved into the desire to construct a progressive civilisation. However, the poststructuralist challenge to dualistic thinking and the ecocritical revival of the ecocentric discourse has initiated a debate on what

culture and nature are. As stated before, at its initial stages the attack on culture/nature dichotomy was based on the reversal of the hierarchy and treating nature as the superior leg of the binary opposition. Today, however, the consciousness that man inhabits a world where truth and reality are ideologically constructed stimulates ecocritics to reject all normative definitions so that they can explore how both culture and nature have been codified through various discursive mechanisms. The most recent challenges to culture/nature duality, on the other hand, offer a compromise between these two theoretical frames and foreground their interconnectedness and mutual interaction.

Raymond Williams in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* offers a detailed account of the various meanings of nature and suggests that “[n]ature is perhaps the most complex word in the language” (219). Nevertheless, he identifies three different meanings. The first meaning of nature is concerned with “the essential quality and character of something;” while the second one refers to “the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both” (Williams, *Keywords* 219). The last one connotes “the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings” (*Keywords* 219). According to Williams, the second and the third connotations of the word are self-explanatory and “the area of reference is broadly clear” (*Keywords* 219). Nevertheless, due to several historical, cultural and philosophical changes, their “precise meanings” varied and sometimes have been formulated in a manner to oppose each other (*Keywords* 219). Williams highlights that because of the Romantics’ interest in nature, among these three meanings, the last one reflects “one of the most powerful uses of nature” (*Keywords* 223). Signifying “goodness and innocence,” it is used to refer to “ ‘countryside’, the ‘unspoiled places’, plants and creatures other than man” (*Keywords* 223). Because it categorises nature as “what man has not made,” this meaning also creates the duality between “town and country” (*Keywords* 223). Williams also adds that it is this particular meaning of the word nature that inspires the concepts like, “[n]ature-lover and nature poetry” (*Keywords* 223). By elaborating on Williams’ second and third suggestions for meaning, the critics participating in the debate on what nature is are divided into various opposing groups.

Reflecting the spirit of first wave ecocriticism, the first group of ecocritics make a clear distinction between nature and culture for they identify man and man-made things with culture. Similar to what Williams puts forward, they associate nature with “the material world,” and position it over the unnatural culture. One of the leading figures of these critics, Kate Soper, in *What is Nature? Culture, Politics and the Non-Human*, conceptualises “nature as ‘otherness’ to humanity” and contrasts it with “culture,” “history,” “convention,” “what is artificially worked or produced;” in other words, with “everything which is defining of the order of humanity” (15). Despite the attempt to reverse culture/nature hierarchy, such a critical attitude consolidates anthropocentric dualistic codifications. As it is highlighted by Clark, nature, because it is conceptualised as “the non-human world, [and] the non-artificial,” cannot escape being exposed to “human contemplation, exploitation, wonder or terror” (7). With this dualistic definition, culture still remains as the superior leg of the binary opposition, whereas nature is subjected to stay as the weaker one.

Poststructuralists, who make up the second group, introduce an integrated attack on dichotomous logic and rather than prioritising one over the other, problematise any hierarchical codification between culture and nature. Different from the former group of ecocritics, they do not treat man and nature as two separate domains but explore how they are both ideologically constructed. By elaborating on the second meaning proposed by Williams, they reject the existence of any essence and “inherent force” in nature (*Keywords* 219). Peter Quigley, in “Nature as Dangerous Space,” problematises nature as a concept and argues that “the natural” involves “human bias and self-reflexive anthropocentrism” (182). Furthermore, he maintains that living in a poststructuralist era, “it is impossible to take a term like nature at face value” or to turn a blind eye to “the fissure of contradiction and the fault-lines of history that criss-cross the term” (Quigley 182). Similarly, in the introduction to *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies: Transatlantic Conversations on Ecocriticism*, Catrin Gersdorf and Sylvia Mayer emphasise the ways man constructs nature, which takes place at both the material and cultural levels (13). On one hand, with industrialisation, technology and urbanisation man transforms the natural

environment. On the other hand, the construction of nature is determined by factors like who man is “in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, nationality, and geographical location” (Gersdorf and Mayer 14). The “cultural values, norms, and attitudes” which construct man also shape his interaction with nature: “we carry minds full of cultural values, norms, and attitudes that inform the ways in which we see, know, represent, inhabit, and, ultimately, reconstruct nature” (14). Therefore, the role of literature in the perception of nature is also debated. In his article, “The Social Construction of Nature,” Terry Gifford emphasises that because “[n]otions of nature are ... socially constructed,” the representation of nature in poetry cannot be “ ‘innocent’ ” (30, 33). Gifford mentions that all references of nature are ideologically conditioned and reflect the “culturally developed assumptions about metaphysics, aesthetics, politics, and status” (“The Social Construction” 33).

The poststructuralist approach to man, nature and culture as the products of the various ideological mechanisms is criticised for merely theorising on the problem and neglecting the gravity of the ecological crisis. Because nature has been exposed to severe exploitation and destruction leading to an environmental crisis, according to Love, it is not possible to view nature as a cultural or linguistic construct (8). Such a perspective will only serve for the consolidation of “the continuing degradation of a natural world that is most in need of active human recognition and engagement” (Love 8). In “The Idea of Nature” Kate Soper, opposes the poststructuralist argument concerning the constructedness of nature and the notion that “everything has been said about nature once we have remarked on its ‘textuality’ and its continually shifting signifier” (124). Despite acknowledging that nature is culturally constructed, Soper argues that “it does not justify the conclusion that there is no ontological distinction between the ideas we have of nature and that which ideas are about” (“The Idea of Nature” 124). In order to concretise her objections, Soper elaborates on a very significant man-made reality of nature: “it is not language that has a hole in its ozone layer, and the ‘real’ thing continues to be polluted and degraded even as we refine our deconstructive insights at the level of the signifier” (“The Idea of Nature” 124). She not only foregrounds the existence of nature independent of human discourse,

but also emphasises the devastation that culture has caused to it. She argues that in contemporary world, the human effect on nature “has been so extensive that there is an important sense in which it is correct to speak of ‘nature’ as itself a cultural product or construction” (“The Idea of Nature” 124). What she mocks is the artificiality of culture that has resulted in immense natural destruction; thus, has inevitably reconstructed nature.

In addition to these conflicting ideas, there are some other critics who highlight the significance of a compromise between different conceptualisations of nature. Like Soper, they elaborate on the third definition of nature; however, avoiding the trap of dichotomous logic, they do not create dualities such as nature/man and nature/culture. By reconceptualising man as part of nature, they call for the generation of a holistic ecocritical frame which also explores the impacts of ideology and discourse on the codification of the nonhuman world. As a solution to the conflict, Garrard proposes “to balance a constructionist perspective with the privileged claims to literal truth made by ecology” (10). This dialogical interaction between the two opposing views of culture and nature encourages ecocritics to be constantly aware of the idea that “‘nature’ is always in some ways culturally constructed,” while at the same time it reminds them that “nature really exists, both the object and, albeit distantly, the origin of our discourse” (9). The ecocritical challenge to dichotomous logic results in the exploration of the interconnectedness between man and nature as well as culture and nature. The urge to study how the interaction between man and nature develops into mutual transformation stimulates ecocritics to trace the impacts of nature on one’s identity formation. While Love foregrounds the way “[n]ature interacts with cultural influences in shaping human attitudes and behaviour,” Campbell draws attention to men’s closeness to land in their childhood and adulthood as a significant power to determine their perception of both themselves and the world around (8; 127). According to Gersdorf and Mayer, on the other hand, because we live in an age when the humanity tries to recover the essential bond between man and nature, it is difficult to talk about a clear distinction between nature and culture; therefore, they propose approaching nature and culture “as hybridized entities,” a critical point discussed by Dana Phillips (14).

They regard the essays in *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies: Transatlantic Conversations on Ecocriticism* as the initial products of an ecocritical project which tries to transform ecocriticism into “a methodology” that critiques how both nature and culture have been conceptualised by ideology, aesthetics, and ethics (10).

Ashton Nichols’ attack on man/nature and culture/nature dichotomy in *Beyond Romantic Ecocriticism: Toward Urbanatural Roosting* can be considered as one of the attempts to hybridise culture with nature. With the concept “urbanature,” he argues that despite the changes in the living conditions and the culture he has created, man is still part of nature (xiii). Therefore, Nichols demands a change in the conventional conceptualisation of “the idea of ‘nature’ altogether” and observes that being “ ‘natural’ originally meant, not to be non-human but, ‘to be born’: *natura*, ‘birth,’ and also ‘essence’ ” (xiv, xviii). With this argument Nichols subverts the unnaturalness of “[t]he human-made object” (xviii). Being created by man does not make it “less natural”, “no less ‘born’ or ‘essential’ ” (xviii). Therefore, both the nest of the bird and the human house should be regarded as natural (xviii).

In summary, the discussions on culture/nature duality revolve around the theories of poststructuralist critics who consider the category of nature as a human construct and the critics who are highly critical of such ideological and cultural codifications of nature and insist on its independent existence. Nevertheless, with the restoration of the essential bond between man and nature based on the developments in the field of ecology, the culture-nature debate assumes a more holistic perspective. Being encouraged by ecological interconnectedness of all beings, ecocriticism abolishes the hierarchical codifications between culture and nature and explores their symbiotic existence. Thus, rather than declaring either culture or nature as the superior leg of the binary opposition, or treating them as ideological constructs only, scholars develop a holistic theoretical frame which regards man and culture as integral parts of nature.

2.2.2.1 City/country Dichotomy

The hierarchical codification of culture over nature causes the emergence of city/country dichotomy besides its various derivatives like urbanisation/organicism and civilisation/wilderness. Reflecting the rational man's conquest of nature, the city has been regarded as the token of Western progressive civilisation. Because it naturalised the anthropocentric exploitation of the nonhuman world, the city was positioned above the country which was associated with primitiveness and barbarity. However, the recent developments in urban and ecocritical studies problematise the conventional polarity between these two forms of settlement. By drawing attention to the fact that urbanisation has been devastating the human and nonhuman life both in the city and the country, various urban and cultural critics are motivated by the desire to put an end to its alliance with capitalism and industrialisation. Quite in parallel with the deconstruction of man/nature as well as culture/nature dichotomies, the ecocritical subversion of city/country duality is maintained by abolishing its ideological dualistic codifications and highlighting their former interconnectedness prior to the emergence of the modernity. Such a reconceptualisation of the city and the country inspires ecocritics to treat the urban and the rural environments as equally significant domains for ecocritical analysis. To this end, urban ecology and urban ecocriticism, as the recent fields of study, strive to develop a holistic approach by reconceptualising the urban and the natural phenomena.

Urbanisation in its pre-modern organic phase occupies a very significant place in the ecocritical subversion of city/country duality for it not only reveals the constructedness of dichotomous logic, but also provides ecocritics with alternative forms of ecocentric existence and settlement. In its initial as well as in its later developmental stages in the Western history, such as the classical age and the medieval period, urbanisation was very much tied to the natural environment and it had strong organic ties with it. In *Urbanization Without Cities: The Rise and Decline of Citizenship* Bookchin rejects the orthodox city/country polarity as "a gross simplification of reality," and observes that in human history there have been periods when the country and the city "existed in an almost exquisitely

sensitive, creative, and ecological balance with each other” (2). Therefore, he categorises the pre-modern cities and the modern urbanised cities as two opposing sites of being; thus, subverting the conventional synonymy of “ ‘urbanity’ ” with “ ‘city’ ” (Bookchin, *Urbanization* 1). In Bookchin’s view, in the pre-urbanised era, the life in the city, which was “an authentic area of political life,” used to demonstrate “some balance with the natural world” (*Urbanization* 1). That is why the state of existence of the members of the organic society can be defined as “neither above nature nor below it but *within* it” (Bookchin, *The Ecology* 5).

Although the theory of organicism is a reminder of the existence of alternative non-hierarchical interaction between man and nature as well as the city and the country, it is criticised for being escapist and creating idealised images of the country. Despite acknowledging the interconnectedness between the city and the country in the pre-capitalist phase of human history, different from Bookchin, Raymond Williams problematises the views regarding the organic communities of the pre-industrial times and argues that organic life style is a mere construct to disguise the abuse of the less powerful ones by the institutions of power. Criticising capitalism as the primary force that “over several centuries altered our country and created our kinds of city,” he discusses how the country underwent dramatic changes as it was transformed from its “feudal and immediately post-feudal” state into “agrarian capitalism,” which later metamorphosed into industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century (Williams, *The Country* 302, 60). Therefore, for Williams the polarity between the country and the city was nothing more than the ideological outcome of the “changing historical realities” (*The Country* 289). Williams declares that human history is based on the conflict between “the land” as the major source of living and the glories of man in his attempts to establish a civilisation that is associated with the city (*The Country* 1). Undermining the conventional dichotomy between the country and the city as expressed in the famous proverb “‘God made the country and man made the town’,” Williams declares that the idealisation of the country functioned as an ideological tool “to promote superficial comparisons and to prevent real ones” (*The Country* 54).

Because the actual leap in urbanisation took place in the 19th century, its impacts on both the city and the country occupy a significant place in the

ecocritical debate regarding the city/country dichotomy. With the growth of industrialisation, the alliance between urbanisation and capitalism not only substantially transformed the texture of both the city and the country, but also reinforced their essential interconnectedness. As suggested by Ostergren and Le Bossé, the cities were reconstructed due to the technological advances and the changes the Industrial Revolution introduced to the organization of production such as: “the replacement of hand labor with machines, the movement of production activities from small workshops to factories, the use of new and more powerful sources of power, and the invention of a vast array of new products” (287). Such drastic changes initiated a chain of irreversible transformations in the lives and the environment of both the city and the country dwellers. It impaired the rural life style that was “based on values, culture and institutions nourished by agrarian relationships,” as well as the life in the city, where “the values, culture, and institutions [were] nourished by civic relationships” (Bookchin, *Urbanization* 3). Consequently, the distinctive characteristics of both the country and the city have been “absorbed by urbanization, with its smothering traits of anonymity, homogenization, and institutional gigantism” (*Urbanization* 3). Undermining the primary motive to make progress and to monumentalise the city as the domain of civilisation, the technological advances in transportation and communication have once again brought the city and the country closer and foregrounded their essential interconnectedness. The interaction between the city and the country has increased to such an extent that “the countryside has become in many ways an extension of the urban realm, making the differences between urban and rural life less perceptible than they once were” (Ostergren and Le Bossé 261). With the growth of urbanisation, the clear distinction between the city and the country has vanished due to the constantly expanding suburban areas into the country.

Due to all these destructive effects of urbanisation in the industrialised capitalist Western world on both the country and the city, urban and cultural theorists strive to overcome city/country dichotomy by developing an integrated approach which foregrounds their interconnectedness. Stimulated by the consciousness that both the city and the country have been under the oppression of urbanisation, the recent developments in urban and ecological studies paved the

way for the emergence of a new theoretical frame, “urban ecology” (Benton-Short and Short 141). Interviewed by Michael Bennett, Andrew Ross, in “The Social Claim on Urban Ecology,” elaborates on the appearance of urban ecocriticism in literary critical studies. Ross states that urban ecological criticism started in the early decades of the twentieth century with works by the critics like Robert E. Park, Earnest Burgess, and Roderick D. Mackenzie, the members of the Chicago School (16). The major concern of these critics was the study of urban dwellers’ power struggle to occupy space. These critics identified a number of similarities between the development of cities and “plant ecology”: “Just as plant ecology is determined by the struggle of species for space, food, and light, so too the spatial organization of city life can be explained as the products of competition and selection” (Ross 17).

Urban ecology has led to a significant change in the way the city and the urban environment have been conceptualised. Prior to the emergence of urban ecology, regarding the city as a distinct phenomenon, the urban theorists “ignored the physical nature of cities” and assumed that “a city” existed “on a flat, featureless plain” (Benton-Short and Short 4). Instead of considering it as part of the ecological continuum, they treated the city as the realm for politics as well as economic and cultural progress. Due to city/country dichotomy, any discussion of environmental preservation “excluded the city” and involved “halting the encroachment into pristine areas such as rainforests and tundra” (4). Fundamental to the renewed interest in bringing the city and nature together in both social and natural sciences, the cities are considered as the domains that call for ecologically oriented study. The revival of interest in urban ecological studies is demonstrated by Michael Bennett and David W. Teague in *The Nature of Cities: Ecocriticism and Urban Environments* in 1999. In the introduction to this book, Bennett and Teague state that the aim of their book is “to sharpen this focus on nature of cities by exploring the components of an urban ecocriticism” (4). They stress that it is essential for ecocritical studies to consider the urban context as an important focus area. Yet, their real underlying motivation is to “remind city dwellers” of their existence “within ecosystems” and highlight the significance of ecological consciousness “for understanding urban life and culture” (Bennett and Teague 4).

Briefly, because the city is regarded as the product of the rational man, it is positioned as the superior leg of the binary, while the country as the shadowy leg is associated with primitivism. However, ecocritical studies draw attention to the impacts of urbanisation not only on these two forms of settlements, but also on human and nonhuman beings. The drastic changes that have been introduced by industrialisation and urbanisation blurred the boundary between the city and the country, which has contributed to the emergence of urban ecology and urban ecocritical studies. Inspired by the desire to overcome city/country duality, urban ecocriticism regards the urban and rural nature and their inhabitants as equally significant areas for ecocritical exploration.

2.2.3 The Hegemony of Time over Space

A holistic ecocritical challenge to dichotomous logic and the revival of ecocentric discourse also requires the subversion of the hierarchy between time and space as the product of modernity. Being very much rooted in man/nature duality, the demarcation between time and space is another manifestation of Western rational man's desire to accomplish the Enlightenment project. The immense faith in human potential to decipher the operating mechanisms of nature inspires man to create a progressive civilisation which will allow him to surpass his ancestors and escape barbarity. Because time signifies progress, it is positioned above space which, in turn, is reduced to a mere passive background on which civilisation can be built. Stimulated by the consciousness that the ecocritical challenge to dichotomous logic could not be achieved unless the hegemonic logic behind time and space as well as space and place is subverted, ecocritics react against the objectification of space at the service of man to fulfil his anthropocentric progressive goals. According to Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, in the "Introduction" to *Thinking Space*, because "no social process exists without geographical extent and historical duration", space and time are among the key concerns of ecocritics (4). In the same manner, Patrick D. Murphy regards spatial studies as an indispensable dimension of ecocriticism in its endeavour to maintain "momentum as an international movement" and to certify "itself as an academic

discipline” (65). In order to attack dualistic thought and anthropocentric progressive history, ecocriticism foregrounds the constructed nature of the hierarchy between time and space. The revitalisation of space as a category and as a fundamental component of life encourages them to explore it as the product of various mechanisms as well as a domain of power. Inspired by the holism of ecology and the fact that we inhabit a globalised world, ecocritical studies revive the interconnectedness between space and place. The urge to raise ecocentric consciousness and to create genuine solutions to ecological problems motivate them to develop a more globalised sense of place as we are all inhabitants of only one place, the planet Earth.

The history of the marginalisation of cyclical temporality as well as cyclical notions of existence coincides with the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse. Religious dichotomy, humanist philosophy and the idea of progress gradually not only disconnected man from nature, but also dissociated time from space. Anthony Giddens, in *The Consequences of Modernity*, highlights that despite having their own methods of calculating time, the pre-modern societies did not measure time without referring to space (17). Because any references to measuring time involved “socio-spatial markers: ‘when’ was almost universally either connected with ‘where’ or identified by regular natural occurrences” (Giddens 17). However, as it is pointed out by Bury, with Christianity, the Western world renounces the Greek cyclical concept of time which is based on the cycles of nature and reconceptualises time with its linear frame, in which “the past” is “leading up to a definite and desirable goal in the future” (36). Moreover, with the Renaissance, the medieval concept of history “as a series of events ordered by divine intervention and revelations” was replaced by the concept of history “as a natural development” (Bury 35). According to Bury, the sixteenth century, because it provides “the mental atmosphere of the modern world,” marked the beginning of the progressive history (44). Regarding the same matter, in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, David Harvey remarks that the humanist motives not only glorify and foster “the liberation of ‘Man’ as a free and active individual,” but also justify “the conquest and rational ordering of space” as part of the Enlightenment Project

(249). Like Harvey, Bertrand Westphal is another critic, who in his *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, maintains that the Western notions of spatiality and temporality are rooted in the Enlightenment and in positivism in particular, according to which “[s]pace only mattered insofar as the ‘homogeneous flow’ of time had to happen *somewhere*” (1, 9-10). Westphal emphasizes the constructed nature of the superiority of time over space and mentions that because “[t]ime contained progress, and time was enslaved to progress,” it eventually reduces space to “an empty container, merely a backdrop for time, through which the god Progress would reveal himself” (9-10).

The developments in both natural and social sciences indicate how time and space are essentially interconnected. One major attack on the naturalisation of the hegemony between time and space takes place with the introduction of the theories of Einstein, which undermine all certitude and attempts at objectivity regarding temporality and space. Doreen Massey in *Space, Place and Gender* discusses how the hierarchy between time and space as the product of classical physics developed by Isaac Newton is deconstructed. As mentioned by Massey, the “outmoded” classical physics suggests that “both space and time exist in their own right, as do objects” (260). Space is regarded as “a passive arena,” that provides “the setting for objects and their interaction” (Massey 260-1). On the other hand, objects, which “exist prior to their interactions,” interact with “one another through force-fields” (261). Moreover, “[t]he observer, similarly, is detached from the observed world” (261). Unlike classical physics, modern physics highlights the interconnectedness between things and declares that the “identity of things is *constituted through* interactions” (261). Based on this theoretical background, Massey concludes that modern physics displays how “space and time are inextricably interwoven” (261). In the same manner, by referring to the views of many contemporary physicists, Harvey argues that temporality and spatiality cannot be dissociated from matter: “Neither time nor space, the physicists now broadly propose, had existence (let alone meaning) before matter; the objective qualities of physical time—space cannot be understood, therefore, independently of the qualities of material processes” (203). Recent ideas in philosophy and cultural theory, too, add another dimension to the

interconnectedness of time and space. In “Spatial Criticism: Critical Geography, Space, Place and Textuality,” Philip E. Wegner, elaborates on the contributions of Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre to spatial studies. Their reconceptualisation of space as both “a *production*” and “a *force*,” undermine the Enlightenment and the Cartesian understanding of space “as an objective homogeneous extension (*res extensa*), distinct from the subject (*res cogitans*),” as well as the Kantian idea of “space as an empty container in which human activities unfold” (181).

The theories on the production of space play a significant part in the subversion of the demarcation between time and space. It not only liberates space from being a passive object, but also restores spatiotemporality for space is subjected to a process of construction based on the values of a particular era. In “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” Foucault elaborates on the history of space in the Western culture and points out that the construction of space is determined by the conditions and values of the period: “it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space” (1). In the same manner, Henri Lefebvre with the title of his book, *Production of Space*, suggests that space is the product of its times. Lefebvre problematises the idea of space as “a pre-existing void,” and a mere “container waiting to be filled by a content - i.e. matter, or bodies,” because such a perception of space foregrounds the arbitrariness between space as the container and what it holds (170). According to Lefebvre, the lack of a bond between the container and its components introduced “a ‘logic of separation’ ” which implies that “[a]n empty container accepts any collection of separable and separate items” (170). The Lefebvrian alternative to such restricted spatial theories is the reconceptualisation of space as a social construct. Because space is a product that is created out of a “productive process,” Lefebvre argues that the production of space has its own history which is defined by “forces of production” such as “nature; labour and the organization of labour; technology and knowledge” as well as “the relations of production” rather than causality and sequential actions (46). Therefore, he redefines space as neither “a mere ‘frame’ ” nor “a form or container of a virtually neutral kind” which stores everything that is “poured into it” (Lefebvre 93-4). What he proposes instead is space as “social morphology” (94). Inspired by Lefebvre, Massey regards the construction of

unique places as the “intersection” of “networks of social relations and movements and communications” (154). According to Massey, rather than being based on “some long internalized history,” the specific identity of a place is defined by the way “it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus” (154).

The discussion on the revitalisation of space also focuses on its being a significant force to be controlled by the ones in power. In his interview, “Space, Knowledge, and Power” with Paul Rabinow, Foucault states that space is a “fundamental” component of “communal life,” and plays a significant role “in any exercise of power” (252). Quite in parallel with Foucault, Lefebvrian theory too views space as a significant force. According to Lefebvre, space is not only “a means of production,” but also “a means of control, and hence of domination, of power” (26). Harvey too agrees with Lefebvre’s theories on time and space as significant mechanisms of social control and power. He argues that in capitalist communities it is not possible to disregard the interconnectedness between time, space and money which eventually “forms a substantial nexus of social power” (Harvey 226). Thus, he concludes that “those who command space can always control the politics of place even though, and this is a vital corollary, it takes control of some place to command space in the first instance” (234). Drawing attention to the constructed nature of spatiality and temporality, Harvey rejects their being “neutral in social affairs” because they are the components of “intense social struggle” (234).

The restoration of spatiotemporality as well as the revitalisation of space as a social product and force encourages the critics also to revisit the demarcation of space from place. In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Yi-Fu Tuan elaborates on how culture constructs space and place as two distinctive categories (5-6). Despite the mutual dependence of space and place, Tuan suggests that of the two, the former “is more abstract” than the latter (6). Therefore, the human interaction and involvement with “undifferentiated space” results in its transformation into place (Tuan 6). Although there is no striking distinction between space and place in pre-modern times, the rise of modernity “increasingly tears space away from place” since the former “face-to-face

interaction” is replaced by “relations between ‘absent’ others” that are “locationally distant” (Giddens 18). In spite of being disguised by “the ‘visible form’ of the locale,” place is largely shaped and organised by external forces beyond its control (Giddens 19).

The theories regarding the revitalisation and the construction of space inspire ecocritics to relate them to contemporary state of existence. We inhabit an increasingly globalised world in which the distinctions between the local and the global are constantly blurred due to the drastic technological changes in areas like economics, industrialisation, communication and transportation. The consciousness that space is the product of its period encourages them to explore how such transformations have shaped contemporary man’s interaction with space and place. Motivated by the desire to overcome man/nature dichotomy, ecocritics initially focus on the restoration of the bond between man and nature in order to cope with the impacts of globalisation. As Ursula Heise, in *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*, puts it, this endeavour to “realign culture with place” is defined as “ ‘reterritorialization’ ” (53). Their major goal is to stimulate man to revive his former sense of unity with space and recover what Giddens calls the spirit of locality (18). In pre-globalisation period it was possible for one to enjoy the sense of being rooted in one place, living there for a long time and feeling the sense of security ensured by the familiar environment. However, according to Heise, the attempts regarding “ ‘reterritorialization’ ” are undermined by the fact that the increase in globalisation prevents man from being engaged in “in-depth experience of place” (53). Therefore, instead of “ ‘reterritorialization’,” Heise argues that “[d]eterritorialization” is a better term to define man’s interaction with place in today’s increasingly global state of existence which is controlled by “structures, processes, and products that originate elsewhere” (54). As defined by Karen Caplan, in “Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse” “deterritorialisation” signifies “the displacement of identities, persons, and meanings” that contemporary men encounter in the postmodern context (188). Because of interacting with people from different cultural and geographical backgrounds as well as being exposed to constantly changing

phenomena contemporary men undergo a severe sense of alienation and estrangement from their own native cultural background.

Since the attempts to restore the former bond between space and place fail and contemporary man's interaction with space cannot escape being defined as "deterritorialization," ecocriticism, inspired by the holism of ecology, reconceptualises space and place. The urge for raising global ecocentric consciousness blurs the dividing line between space and place, and transforms all the local environments into one ecological place. Although raising environmental consciousness requires the restoration of one's sense of place, as Heise declares, it may be a futile attempt unless it is reinforced by a global sense of planet. By foregrounding the concept of " 'eco-cosmopolitanism', or environmental world citizenship," she tries to draw attention to the need for a more global perception of sense of place (10). Heise opposes individual projects to get into contact with nature as "imaginative dead ends," since they fail to demonstrate "what it means to think and live in an environmentally conscious way" (48). In order to create a more comprehensive environmental awareness beyond individual, local and national levels, she proposes exploring the potential contribution that all studies on globalisation can offer. She strongly believes that, despite its drawbacks " 'deterritorialization' " allows for "new cultural encounters and a broadening of horizons" for environmental studies (Heise 10). Hence, according to Heise, environmentalists are faced with "the challenge" posed by "deterritorialization" and are to develop alternative "socioenvironmental" projects "that are premised no longer primarily on ties to local places but on ties to territories and systems that are understood to encompass the planet as a whole" (10). In today's global context Heise urges the environmentalists to enlarge their scope of environmentalist thought "to shift the core of its cultural imagination from a sense of place to a less territorial and more systemic sense of planet" (56). Consequently, abolishing the dichotomous relationship between the two, place and space cease to be mere stages where man's anthropocentric progressive aims are demonstrated.

In conclusion, the ideas introduced by various scholars from cultural and political studies lead to the subversion of the hegemony of time over space which

is rooted in the progressive world view of the modernity. The Enlightenment project as well as the idea of progress stimulates the rational man to break the bond between time and space and to promote linear temporality. In addition to creating a hierarchy between time and space, modernity causes the reduction of space into a passive background where progressive human civilisation could be created. Critics also problematise the constructed nature of the dissociation of space from place. However, the recent theories that are introduced into the field of spatial studies foreground the interconnectedness between time and space, and revitalise space in their attempts to restore spatiotemporality. Undermining the idea of space as an empty container, they discuss space as a domain for production and power. The revival of spatiotemporality is also discussed in relation to the impacts of globalisation on man's sense of space and place. Despite destabilising one's local sense of place, globalisation urges man to develop a more global sense of place and raises awareness on environmental consciousness. Because space is the product of the changing times, ecocritics try to reconceptualise space and place at the backdrop of a global ecological crisis. Therefore, ecocritics urge the inhabitants of the world to develop a globalised holistic perception of place by redefining the space of the entire planet as their ultimate home.

2.3 The Green Political Challenges to Dualistic Thinking

Because contemporary environmental problems are very much the end products of the Western man's ideologically inspired mastery over nature, sustainable solutions involve attacks on the alliance among various factors like politics, capitalism, science, technology, and industrialisation. Within this frame of thinking, the ecocritical challenge to dichotomous logic and anthropocentric notions is also maintained in the political arena with the emergence of various movements like Deep Ecology, Social Ecology, the Environmental Justice Movement, and Ecofeminism, which aim to decipher the underlying ideological background of the Western progressive history. As declared by Garrard, ecocriticism is "an avowedly political mode of analysis" because its explorations

are inspired by the changes that take place in both philosophy and political theory (3). Although Dylan Thomas lived long before the emergence of such green political orientations and during his life he consciously avoided affiliation with any political factions, when read in light of the challenges introduced by the domain of green politics, as a precursor of ecopoetry and post-pastoral poetry in his works he casts light on many of the problems that are voiced by these major green political factions. Therefore, as part of its ecocritical reading of Thomas's poems, this study also focuses on how they have developed their own environmental theories with unique solutions to put an end to the oppression of both human and nonhuman beings by the dominant anthropocentric discourse.

2.3.1 Deep Ecology

One of the most fundamental challenges to anthropocentrism is introduced by deep ecology. Inspired by the premises of ecocentrism, the deep ecology movement was founded in 1972 by Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher. He explains the emergence of "deep" ecology as a movement in opposition to "shallow" ecology (Naess 27). Naess criticises shallow ecology for failing to provide realistic and true solutions to the environmental problems by focusing on merely the "[f]ight against pollution and resource depletion" and basically foregrounding "the health and affluence of people in the developed countries" (27). Despite their concern for the natural environment, shallow ecologists cannot escape anthropocentric thinking and prioritising the wellbeing of man. Influenced by the theoretical frame put forward by the field of ecology, Naess develops an alternative outlook in which he draws attention to the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman beings and favours "*the relational, total-field image*" (28). In "Introduction: Ecosophy T: From Intuition to System," David Rothenberg observes that Naess's "relational thinking," based on the notion that "nothing exists apart," forms "the essence" of deep ecological movement (6). Thus, at the core of deep ecological thinking lies the premise that it is not possible to think of human beings, various species or ecological problems in isolation.

Together with Sessions, Naess introduces what they call “a ‘deep ecology platform’,” which outlines the major principles of the movement (28). Challenging the solutions put forward by shallow ecologists, deep ecologists demand substantial “change in policies” regarding “basic economic, technological, and ideological structures” (Naess 29). As part of ideological transformation, deep ecology advocates “appreciating life quality” meaning “dwelling in situations of intrinsic value” rather than leading a kind of life aspiring for “a high standard of living” (29). Hence, they insist upon “a drastic change in human self-understanding: one should see oneself not as an atomistic individual engaged in the world as a resource for consumption and self-assertion, but as part of a greater living identity” (Clark 2). This radical change in attitude and practice also demands man to stop prioritising his individual needs and to take into consideration the needs of the nonhuman, too. Consequently, at the end of the platform, Naess urges those who agree with the premises of deep ecology “directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes” into their lives in order to trigger a global ecocentric consciousness (29). As David Pepper observes, in *Modern Environmentalism: an Introduction*, deep ecologists believe that social transformation can take place only after fundamental changes “at the level of *individual consciousness*” are achieved (21). Therefore, as part of their attack on man/nature duality by highlighting the “intrinsic value” of all nonhuman beings, Naess directs people to take action by creating their individual ecological philosophy and introduces the concepts of “ecophilosophy” and “ecosophy” in which he harmonises the ideas in the field of ecology and philosophy (29, 36).

2.3.2 Social Ecology

In addition to deep ecology, social ecology is another political movement which explores man/nature duality and the destructive effects the derivatives of such a hierarchy have produced in the Western history. In their attempts to escape the trap of establishing new dualities, social ecologists avoid the use of the term duality and prefer hierarchy instead. By building upon the criticism of other

movements like ecofeminism and the environmental justice, social ecology concerns itself with creating “a synthesis of environmental and social concerns” (Garrard 3). Murray Bookchin, as one of the leading figures of the movement, in *The Philosophy of Social Ecology*, foregrounds the human impact on nature by emphasising that “our basic ecological problems stem from social problems” (35). Therefore, as Janis Birkeland, in “Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice,” puts it, social ecology focuses on “the issue of dominance relationships” and calls for “radical social transformation in the direction of non-hierarchical and more communal, decentralized societies” (29).

Despite being motivated by the same ideal to subvert man/nature dichotomy, what distinguishes social ecology from its counterpart, deep ecology, is its concern with the analysis of the urban setting as a significant aspect of human existence. By challenging all forms of hierarchy and abolishing the dichotomy between culture and nature as well as the urban and the rural, social ecologists contribute to the development of green political thought. Regarding such binary oppositions as cultural and ideological constructs, social ecologists reject Kate Soper’s definition of nature as well as the deep ecological prioritisation of the wild, unspoiled nature; thus, they treat both rural and urban space as equally important domains for ecocritical explorations. As it is stated by Michael Bennett in “From Wide Open Spaces to Metropolitan Places,” social ecology with its focus on the urban environment strives to identify the influence of “the social, political, and economic decisions made by humans” on the environment (298). Bennett argues that social ecology offers a more comprehensive “theoretical frame” which is “as spacious as the land” and allows “room for the urban, suburban, small-town, rural, and wild spaces that fill the physical and cultural landscape of the United States, West and East, and its literature” (“From Wide Open Spaces” 308). Living in a poststructuralist era where all ideologies and totalitarian philosophies are regarded as mere constructs, contrary to the deep ecological endeavour to restore biocentrism, social ecologists reject the prioritisation of one “ ‘ism’ ” over another (Bennett, “From Wide Open Spaces” 299). Hence, different from the deep ecological proposition to take refuge

in wild and uncontaminated nature, as a social ecocritic, Bookchin's solutions focus on man's existence in the social domain.

2.3.3 The Environmental Justice Movement

Another political orientation that brings environment and politics together is the environmental justice movement, which concentrates on how environment has been converted into an ideological tool to oppress the marginal groups in contemporary industrialised capitalist world. In "Environmental Justice" Robert Figueroa and Claudia Mills declare that different from the mainstream environmental movement, by prioritising the interconnectedness between human and nonhuman beings, the environmental justice movement emphasises the "causal relationships between environmental issues and social justice" (427). According to the definition provided by Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans and Rachel Stein, in the introductory chapter to *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, & Pedagogy*, environmental justice signifies "the right of all people to share equally in the benefits bestowed by a healthy environment" such as "the places in which we live, work, play and worship" (4). Therefore, the environmental justice movement problematises the injustice both the environment and the marginalised members in the world have been exposed to due to the dominant progressive anthropocentric discourse. As part of its attack on the Western progressive ideals, the environmental justice movement voices the inequities the poor and the people of colour confront in the places where they live. By drawing attention to "the disproportionate incidence of environmental contamination in communities of the poor and/or communities of color," it strives to prevent such people from being exposed to "the risks posed by environmental degradation and contamination" as well as to allow them to have "equal access to natural resources that sustain life and culture" (Adamson, Evans and Stein 4).

The environmental justice movement has been condemned for limiting its struggle for justice only for the sake of humans, subsequently remaining within the boundaries of anthropocentrism. Kevin Michael DeLuca is among the critics, who in "A Wilderness Environmentalism Manifesto: Contesting the Infinite Self-

Absorption of Humans,” critiques the movement for being human centred. He declares that the members of the environmental justice movement value nonhuman just because it influences the human beings as in the case of their interest in “practices that harm the environment and the nonhuman in support of some human concern, frequently jobs” (DeLuca 27). In response to these charges against the environmental justice movement and the urge for the development of a nonanthropocentric outlook Brian Baxter, in *A Theory of Ecological Justice* proposes a more holistic treatment of environment with both its human and nonhuman inhabitants and politics. Inspired by Nicholas Low and Brendan Gleeson, Baxter refers to this new direction as “ ‘ecological justice’ ” (7). In the “Introduction” to *Justice, Society, and Nature: An Exploration of Political Ecology*, Low and Gleeson regard environment among the significant factors that shape justice in today’s world, when “the relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world is again being redefined” (2). In addition to “the justice of the distribution of environments among peoples,” Low and Gleeson elaborate on “the justice of the relationship between humans and the rest of the natural world,” and put forward the theoretical frame: “ecological justice” (2). In this line of thinking, Baxter argues for the development of “a moral case which covers all life-forms” and discusses the need “for extending the very specific moral category of distributive justice to non-human life-forms” (10, 8). Having revised its theoretical frame and philosophy, the environmental justice movement develops a more integrated attack on dichotomous logic and aims at restoring ecocentrism.

2.3.4 Ecofeminism

Stimulated by the precursory challenges of feminist critics like Hélène Cixous, ecofeminism is another green political orientation, which by demythologising anthropocentric discourse and foregrounding the essential interconnectedness of the human and nonhuman beings, develops the most comprehensive attack on dichotomous logic. Ecofeminism is a response to the failure among the major political orientations to introduce a holistic attack on anthropocentrism as their theories neglected nature as the most significant victim.

In “Sorties,” Cixous criticises the dominance of phallogocentric thought through patriarchal binaries and declares that “history has never produced, recorded anything but” phallogocentrism (142). She states that phallogocentrism restricts “thought – all of the concepts, the codes, the values – to a two-term system, related to ‘the’ couple man/woman” (Cixous 138). Cixous demonstrates the ever presence of this duality by listing some of its derivatives like “Activity/passivity, Sun/Moon, Culture/Nature, Day/Night, Father/Mother, Head/Heart, Intelligible/sensitive, Logos/Pathos” (142). Western phallogocentric history of civilisation has been progressing on the oppression of the latter principle, codified as female, by the former superior one signifying the male principle. Thus, nature, being associated with women and passivity, has been reduced to an object to be exploited by man, the rational master. As suggested by Greta Gaard, in her essay, “Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism,” such initial attacks on dualism called for the alliance between feminism and “the various movements for social justice and environmental health, explorations that uncovered the linked oppressions of gender, ecology, race, species, and nation” and contributed to the emergence of ecofeminism in the 1980s (28).

The urge to subvert phallogocentric anthropocentric discourse resulted in the appearance of cultural/radical ecofeminism that built its attack on the essential biological oneness between women and nature which led to their mutual oppression. However, because such criticism could not liberate itself from the codes of dualistic thinking, as it basically targeted patriarchy by substituting it with its counterpart matriarchy, cultural/radical ecofeminism was challenged by social ecofeminism that problematised the idea of oppression as a whole rather than focusing on the oppression of one particular group. Thus, the emergence of social ecofeminism during the 1990s signalled a shift in the areas ecofeminists were interested in (Gaard, “Ecocriticism Revisited” 31). As pointed out by Pepper, social ecofeminism has developed in two directions: the materialist social ecofeminism and the idealist social ecofeminism (*Modern Environmentalism* 109, 110).

Different from cultural/radical ecofeminism, the materialist social ecofeminism has developed a more comprehensive criticism of patriarchal domination and has extended it to include all the oppressed: “exploitation of nature relates to exploitation in society, emphasising social and political rather than personal aspects of the domination of women and nature” (Pepper *Modern Environmentalism* 109). Thus, unlike the cultural/radical ecofeminists, the materialist social ecofeminists attack “essentialism in general and biological determinism” regarding man and woman since such attributes are political and ideological constructs (*Modern Environmentalism* 109). According to Gaard, at this stage in the development of ecofeminist studies, critics like Kate Soper, Karen Warren, and Ariel Salleh were motivated to analyse the exploitation of both women and nature in light of postmodern and poststructuralist theories. However, because this “postmodern feminism” concentrated “primarily on human categories” it neglected the “concern for the environment” (Gaard, “Ecocriticism Revisited” 32).

The idealist social ecofeminists, on the other hand, have aimed for the complete annihilation of hierarchy and abuse of power. Rejecting the tendency among ecofeminists who foreground the essentialist and biological conceptualisation of woman as part of nature, Birkeland emphasises that “the very essence of ecofeminism is its challenge to the presumed necessity of power relationships” (19). Therefore, in order to put an end to the anthropocentric oppression that nature endures, it is essential to terminate the exploitation of human beings. This is possible through undermining the constructed nature of patriarchal social structure by cutting off the bond between “masculinity” and its illusory “‘power over’ others” as well as “the rejection and denigration of the ‘feminine’” (Birkeland 19). Thus, the idealist social ecofeminism aspires to bring together ecofeminism and environmentalism to challenge the hierarchical values of the Western culture (Pepper, *Modern Environmentalism* 111). Pepper refers to Rosemary Radford Ruether’s (1975) call for women to “unite with the environmental movement to reshape the ‘underlying values of this society’, that is, its prevailing *ideas*, from which hierarchical organisation and domination are held to stem” (*Modern Environmentalism* 111).

Despite its various fractions, ecofeminism puts forward the most comprehensive attack on dichotomous logic. To this end, as Greta Gaard declares in the opening chapter, “Living Interconnections with Animals and Nature” to *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*, ecofeminism brings together “various fields of feminist inquiry and activism: peace movements, labor movements, women’s health care, and the anti-nuclear, environmental, and animal liberation movements” (1). Because all oppression originates from a common source, the annihilation of it calls for the joint attack on dichotomous logic by all the oppressed. According to Stephanie Lahar, in “Roots: Rejoining Natural and Social History,” since it enlarges upon both “social and ecological contexts,” ecofeminism introduces a theory that is “open and evolving, rather than ‘finished,’ explanations” (107). Therefore, with its holistic challenge to all forms of oppression, it offers significant contribution to animal studies by encouraging the mutual participation of feminists, animal liberationists and environmentalists (Gaard, “Living Interconnections” 5). In “Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals,” Lori Gruen criticises the reductionist perspectives of both feminist and animal liberationists as they are concerned with “one group while often ignoring the pain and suffering of others” (60). Consequently, in order not to fall into the trap of “exclusionary theorizing,” Gruen demands ecofeminists to explore “the oppression of the nonhuman animals with whom we share the planet” (61). However, such ecofeminist criticism should avoid foregrounding “a ‘natural’ connection” emphasising “that women and animals are essentially similar,” but should focus on deciphering how such “a constructed connection ... has been created by the patriarchy as a means of oppression” (Gruen 61).

To summarise, the brief overview of the major movements in green politics displays that each green political orientation has developed its individual challenge to anthropocentrism and the oppression that both human and nonhuman beings have been exposed to in the increasingly urbanised and industrialised capitalist world. As part of their struggle to overcome the anthropocentric construction of reality, these political movements introduce their alternative solutions. While deep ecology foregrounds individual appreciation of nature’s

inherent value for a more extensive social change, social ecology favours more communal solutions. The environmental justice movement, on the other hand, tries to end the environmental degradation and discrimination the marginalised figures in the community encounter. Different from these green political orientations, social ecofeminism offers the most comprehensive and holistic analysis of human and nonhuman degradation by opposing the objectification of all beings and species regardless of their race, gender, cultural and political background as well as by questioning the environmental conditions where they live and work.

In light of the theoretical background provided in Chapter I and Chapter II regarding the ecocritical subversion of dichotomous logic, in Chapter III, Chapter IV and Chapter V, by elaborating on various poems from *18 Poems*, *25 Poems*, *The Map of Love*, *Deaths and Entrances*, and *In Country Sleep* as the volumes brought together in *Collected Poems: 1934-1953*, this dissertation will identify and discuss how Thomas's poetry bears the particular features of both post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry. In Chapter III, this study will investigate how the modernist search for meaning in life and work encourages Thomas to attack man/nature dichotomy and anthropocentric discourse by composing post-pastoral and ecopoems in which he foregrounds the deep ecological intrinsic value of nature and revitalises the ecocentric discourse in his early poetry by reconceptualising man as part of the ecological whole and demonstrating how he is subjected to the same creative-destructive processes in the nonhuman world. Moreover, by focusing on the way Thomas employs several motifs from Welsh folk literature and pantheism, the thesis will discuss how, as a post-pastoral and an ecopoet, in his mature poetry, Thomas challenges the hierarchical Christian anthropocentric discourse and celebrates the ecocentric interconnectedness among the human, the nonhuman and the divine. As part of the survey of Thomas's attack on dualistic thinking, this thesis will also dwell on the challenges introduced by social ecofeminism and the environmental justice movement and will analyse the ways the poet represents the ecocentric polyphony by liberating the oppressed nonhuman beings and the marginalised members of the society from being silent objects by reconceptualising them as active speaking subjects.

Based on the challenges that urban ecocriticism, social ecology and the environmental justice movement introduce to dichotomous logic, in Chapter IV this dissertation will discuss the post-pastoral and ecopoetic subversion of culture/nature duality in Dylan Thomas's poetry. It will elaborate on the poet's critique of the Western history, the alliance between scientific knowledge and the institutions of power to create a progressive capitalist culture that marginalises ecocentric discourse and reduces both human and nonhuman beings to objects to be exploited and to be oppressed. Integral to the urban ecological premise regarding the interconnectedness between culture and nature, this chapter will also discuss the poet's portrayal of the urban dwellers' essential unity with nature and their urge to be in contact with the nonhuman world by creating ecocentric heterotopias at the urban background. Furthermore, as part of the ecocritical deconstruction of culture/nature dichotomy and of the analysis of the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse, this chapter will also discuss Thomas's representation of the Western anthropocentric discourse as an ideological construct by declaring that the world is essentially polyphonic and nonanthropocentric, and is operating on ecological laws highlighting the interconnectedness of all beings.

Fundamental to its discussion of the ecocentric polyphony and its challenge to hegemonic logic, in Chapter V, this thesis will explore how, as an ecopoet, Dylan Thomas subverts the hierarchical codification of time over space. This chapter will focus on the ways Thomas declares that such a hierarchy does not exist in the nonhuman world by revitalising the essential bond between time and space and consequently, restoring spatiotemporality in his early poems. The chapter will further discuss the subversion of the hegemony between time and space by exploring how a linear and single notion of time is undermined as he portrays the nonlinear forms the perception of time can assume based on numerous social, environmental, cultural and mental factors. Additionally, this chapter will also discuss the problematisation of the concept of passive space that functions as a mere background at the service of the rational master by drawing attention to the ways one's interaction with the nonhuman world can contribute to the formation of his ecocentric consciousness. The challenge to the hegemony of

time over space is also maintained with the representation of the cyclical spatiotemporal patterns in both the nonhuman world and the human body. The chapter also traces how, in his mature poetry, he retreats into the ecocentric past which contributes to the gradual restoration and the celebration of ecocentrism as the centrepiece of both his life and work. Thus, Thomas emerges as an ecopoet who sings the polyphonic ecocentric song of the universal interconnectedness of all beings inhabiting a world that is operating on cyclical ecological creative destructive principles.

All in all, inspired by the premises of third wave ecocriticism, in Chapters III, IV, and V, the thesis will discuss how the ecocentric polyphony Thomas as a post-pastoral and an ecopoet creates transcends the Welsh boundaries. Despite the fact that the poems analysed in this thesis are the products of Dylan Thomas's individual attempt to find meaning in a chaotic fragmented world, his subversion of man/nature, culture/nature dualities as well as his attack on the hegemony of time over space offer significant universal ecocentric insights into the appreciation of the essential bond between the nonhuman and human realms. Thomas's restoration of the ecocentric discourse in his poetry echoes the urge among contemporary men, who confront a severe ecological crisis, to revive the universal ecocentric consciousness and to promote a globalised sense of place by reconceptualising the planet as the sole home for all species.

CHAPTER 3

THE ATTACK ON MAN/NATURE DUALITY IN DYLAN THOMAS'S POETRY

It is my aim as an artist ... to prove beyond doubt to myself that the flesh that covers me is the flesh that covers the sun ... the blood in my lungs is the blood that goes up and down in a tree. It is the simplicity of religion. (Dylan Thomas, *CL* 89-90)

Although literature cannot provide immediate and first hand solutions to the present environmental crisis, it has a fundamental function in the reconceptualisation of man's relationship with nature and raising awareness about ecocentric consciousness. As this study will discuss, Dylan Thomas's search for meaning in his life and poetry results in the subversion of dichotomous logic by ecocentric vision, which makes him one of the precursors of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry. To this end, this chapter will demonstrate how, by employing motifs from both post-pastoral and ecopoetic frames, Thomas deconstructs man/nature duality and creates a polyphonic ecocentric vision of life and existence that transcends the boundaries of his Welsh background and assumes a universal dimension. The generation of ecocentrism as the organising principle of Thomas's life and poetry evolves after a series of interrogations and quests for meaning in life. This chapter will explore the post-pastoral and ecopoetic attack on man/nature duality and the revival of ecocentrism in three interwoven phases. In his early poems that are published in his first two volumes, *18 Poems* and *25 Poems*, this multidimensional process is initiated with the poet's identification of the human body with the processes in nature. However, in the second phase, with the poems published in the third and the fourth volumes, *The Map of Love* and *Deaths and Entrances*, as a mature poet, his challenge to dichotomous logic is carried out on a more metaphysical and philosophical ground. As he reconceptualises his own religious faith in light of Welsh pantheism, the holistic ecocentric discourse becomes more pronounced. The analysis of the poems in his last volume, *In Country Sleep*, in the last phase,

indicates that the celebration of the ecocentric vision resolves both the modernist crisis of representation as well as his existentialist conflict. This chapter will also discuss how, with the recovery of the ecocentric holistic vision of life, Thomas becomes aware of both the reduction of nature to a passive object as well as the oppression of the marginalised members of the society, which encourages him to represent ecocentric polyphony and to call for ecocentric consciousness.

3.1 The Reconceptualisation of Man as Part of the Natural Ecosystem in Thomas's Early Poetry

In Thomas's early poetry, the attack on dualistic thinking and search for an organising principle are reflected through his observations on the operating mechanism in the human body and nature. As stated above, the revival of the ecocentric spirit in Thomas's poetry reflects one of the major features of ecopoetry as it foregrounds the interconnectedness between man and nature. The representation of the bond also reflects the post-pastoral portrayal of the internal harmony between the processes that take place in the human and the nonhuman worlds: "the inner is also the workings of the outer [nature]" (Gifford, *Pastoral* 156). Thus, in light of the theoretical frames of ecopoetry and post-pastoral literature, this chapter will first discuss how Thomas subverts man/nature dichotomy by displaying that both the human and the nonhuman worlds are controlled by the same creative-destructive forces. To this end, the poems "A process in the weather of the heart," "The force through the green fuse the flower," and "And death shall have no dominion" will be explored.

As a poem published in *18 Poems*, "A process in the weather of the heart" demonstrates Thomas's struggle to cope with the absence of a centre in a post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian universe. Living in a world in which logocentrism is highly problematised, he questions who man is. However, the awareness of the non-existence of a transcendental signified stimulates him to turn to nature. His observations on the nonhuman world make him realise that it is essentially non-hierarchical and nonanthropocentric. As an ecopoet, in "A process in the weather of the heart," Thomas explores the essential unity between man and

nature through the identification between the human body and the natural world by focusing on the creative-destructive mechanisms that control all beings. As part of his quest for who man is, Thomas creates a speaker who elaborates on various bodily and natural processes which allow for the redefinition of man as a part of the ecological whole.

Because “A process in the weather of the heart” is one of the examples in which Thomas explores the co-existence of life and death, and re-conceptualises life as a process leading to death, it is one of what Ralph Maud, in *Entrances to Dylan Thomas’s Poetry*, calls “ ‘process poems’ ” (qtd. in Davies 142). According to Maud, Thomas’s major concern in his “ ‘process poems’ ” is the representation of “ ‘the duality of the world,’ the ‘struggle between black and white’ ” (qtd. in Davies 142). However, challenging the dichotomous logic, the existence of the opposing forces in nature does not create a hierarchical view of life. Because the logocentric past cannot sooth the agony of existence, reflecting the predicament of the modern man, the speaker is forced to re-comprehend both himself and the world around. However, different from the anthropocentric and humanist views of nature, attempts to decipher the operating mechanism in nature are not motivated by the desire to master the nonhuman world.

The ecopoetic interconnectedness between the human and the nonhuman beings is established with the opening lines of the poem where both are exposed to the same natural processes. Challenging the humanist view of man as the master of nature, the poem reconceptualises man as an organic being whose bodily functions imitate those existing in the natural world. According to William York Tindall, in *A Reader’s Guide to Dylan Thomas*, through the use of the word “ ‘weather’,” in the title, a word signifying “outer climate” to refer to “inner climate,” Thomas unites the human and the nonhuman worlds (35). Because it is part of the organic creative-destructive cycle, man’s conception at the same time signifies his death:

A process in the weather of the heart
Turns damp to dry; the golden shot
Storms in the freezing tomb

A weather in the quarter of the veins
Turns night to day; blood in their suns
Lights up the living worm. (*CP* 1-6)

The identification between man and nature is maintained with the processes that take place in the mother's womb prior to man's birth and the processes in the tomb following death. While "damp," "the golden shot," "the veins," "blood" and "the living worm" are associated with vitality and life, the words "dry," "[s]torms in the freezing tomb," symbolise death (*CP* 2, 4, 5, 6, 2, 3). The lines "[a] weather in the quarter of the veins / Turns night to day" signals conception which marks the beginning of a series of natural processes leading to death (*CP* 4-5). The poem's challenge to man/nature duality is quite compatible with Darwin's observations, in *On the Origin of Species*, regarding the ecological balance since each species' system is connected "in the most essential yet often hidden manner, to that of all other" (49). This non-hierarchical view of nature encourages him to re-locate himself within the nonhuman world. The life and death cycle and the interconnectedness of the human and the nonhuman beings are highlighted with the womb and the "the living worm" (*CP* 6). In addition to being associated with the womb and fertility as it stands for "penis," the worm also reflects death and stands for the "coffin-worm" (Tindall 35). Following death, the human body is consumed by the worm and joins the natural processes by contributing to the maintenance of life in the nonhuman world. Displaying the ecocentric vision of existence, Thomas's poetry offers an "insight that all things participate in all others because natural changes involve the constant shifting of particles of matter from one form of life to another" (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 18).

The speaker continues elaborating on the co-existence of all beings and life as a process leading to death in the rest of the poem. Following conception, the foetus is born, yet the womb still maintains its double function of providing life and to initiate the process leading to death: "A process in the eye forwarns / The bones of blindness; and the womb / Drives in a death as life leaks out" (*CP* 7-9). Being born and introduced to the light of the sun, the child is conscious of the ever-presence of death. The identification between the human and the nonhuman beings is further stressed with the resemblance between "[t]he seed" and man (*CP*

13). As part of the creative-destructive cycle in nature, it “makes a forest of the lion, / Forks half its fruit; and half drops down, / Slow in a sleeping wind” (*CP* 13-5). Imitating this natural process, the human body is exposed to the same mechanisms, the “damp” human “flesh” metamorphoses into “dry” “bone” (*CP* 17, 16, 17, 16).

As an eco-poem deconstructing man/nature dichotomy with its ending, “A process in the weather of the heart” indicates Thomas’s initial attempts to reconceptualise nature and man. By foregrounding the interconnectedness of all beings, nature is re-defined as an organic domain that operates on creative-destructive processes. At the core of the poem lies the deep ecological premise: “[r]ichness and diversity of life forms are values in themselves and contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth” (Naess 29). This deep ecological appreciation of the existence and the bond between all beings is reflected in the speaker’s reconceptualisation of man as one participant of this ecological whole. This ecocentric frame of existence is manifested with the declaration of man’s mortality and the representation of death as a natural component of life. In spite of being still alive, once he is born, the living man is a mere ghost: “A process in the weather of the world / Turns ghost to ghost; each mothered child /Sits in their double shade” (*CP* 19-21). The only natural outcome of the shift between the moon and the sun, as symbols of flowing time, is the process of tearing down “the shabby curtains of the skin” (*CP* 23). By elaborating on the body-earth identification, Thomas ends the poem with the striking declaration that life ends when “the heart gives up its dead” (*CP* 24). The polysemic nature of the concluding remark implies that just as everything in nature is subjected to death, despite connoting life, each beating of the heart at the same time brings the human body closer to its death. Because the poem sees death as part of natural life, it undermines man’s mastery over other nonhuman beings. The escape from *logos* is manifested in the reduction of death to an ecological process. In the absence of God as the transcendental signified, man is no longer the godlike creature but is just one species among countless others.

The restoration of the ecocentric discourse is possible only after abandoning dualistic codifications of man and nature. Quite similar to “A process in the

weather of the heart,” in “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower,” which is another poem in *18 Poems*, Thomas continues his attempts to redefine man and nature from an ecocentric point of view. The poem foregrounds the central notion of the process poems that man is subjected to the same forces in nature like the other nonhuman beings, and as George Sutherland Fraser in *Writers and Their Work: Dylan Thomas* puts it, it “is massively identifying the body of man with the body of the world” (10). The poem’s attack on humanist and anthropocentric discourse reflects one of the fundamental features of post-pastoral literature regarding the realisation that “inner human nature” can only be comprehended by appreciating the mechanisms of “external nature” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 156). In spite of elaborating on similar motifs that appear in “A process in the weather of the heart,” the ecocentric spirit in “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower,” becomes more pronounced and is established through the identification of a correspondence between the force that operates in human body with the force that exists in the world of the nonhuman beings.

As in “A process in the weather of the heart,” in “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower,” the speaker tries to make sense of his life and existence by resorting to nature as the only source of knowledge. In the first stanza, the post-pastoral subversion of man/nature hierarchy takes place with the identification of the human body with the plants. By announcing that both the speaker and the members of the nonhuman world like “the flower,” “roots of the trees” and “the crooked rose” are controlled by the same creative-destructive “force,” he acknowledges the ecocentric interconnectedness of beings (*CP* 1, 2, 4, 1). Shattering the humanist illusion of man’s mastery over nature, the speaker tries to comprehend how both his body and nature operate:

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever. (*CP* 1-5)

Being assigned the dual function of creating and destroying, “[t]he force” reminds the speaker of his organic bond with the nonhuman world (*CP* 1). Thus, the speaker is conscious of its creative dimension which “drives” both “the flower” and his “green age,” as well as its capacity to “blast the roots of the trees” and destroy his life (*CP* 1, 2). Reflecting the spirit of post-pastoral poetry, Thomas establishes the “body-earth metaphor” and elaborates on “[t]he force” as the unifying element between the inner mechanisms of the human body and the external world of nature (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 46; *CP* 1). Through the images of “the crooked rose” and his “youth” being “bent by the same wintry fever” Thomas restores man to nature and tries to reconceptualise death as part of the natural cycle (*CP* 4, 5).

The colour imagery of the poem also contributes to the portrayal of the unitary existence of man and nature as both are depicted in green. According to Hardy, “[t]he epithet ‘green’,” that unites man and nature “makes a statement about the identity, or intimacy, of both, and starts off the sequence of statements about a natural unity” (*Dylan Thomas* 134). As pointed out by Ackerman, in Thomas’s poetry, “green” reflects “potential or recently created life” (*Dylan Thomas* 44). Hence, the colour green in “my green age” suggests “the youth and innocence” of the persona, the stage of his life when he is fresh and filled with generative force (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 44). The speaker’s recognition of his oneness with nature, on the other hand, involves his acceptance of death as part of nature. Sharing the same fate with “the crooked rose,” he acknowledges the transience of his youth, the immanence of death and the dual nature of existence (*CP* 4). This generative force metamorphoses into destructive power for “the same wintry fever” destroys both “the crooked rose” and “[his] youth” (*CP* 5, 4, 5). As a result, the poet establishes the ecocentric unity between man and nature by revealing that “both are subject to the same life, the same death” (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 44). What is more, greenness is transformed into a literary force that unites the first stanza with the rest of the poem and contributes to its emergence both as an ecological and an artistic whole.

The poem’s ecocritical challenge to dualistic thinking is maintained in the second stanza through the portrayal of the post-pastoral identification of the life-

giving power of water in nature with blood in the human body. The generative force mentioned in the first stanza “drives the water through the rocks” as well as “[his] red blood” (*CP* 6-7). Water as the source of life in nature is likened to red blood, the source of life and vitality in the human body. The body nature identification is also emphasised with the “veins” in the speaker’s body and “the mountain spring,” which are both controlled by the same force (*CP* 9-10). However, quite conscious of the dual nature of existence, repeating the same pattern of the former stanza, the speaker mentions that it has a destructive dimension and is capable of “[drying] the mouthing streams” and changing his blood into “wax” (*CP* 7-8).

Dylan Thomas’s representation of the organic bond between man and nature displays the constructedness of man/nature, subject/object dichotomy. As pointed out by Nimmo, ecocritics acknowledge that the existence of man as the subject is bound to the being of nature as the object: “[a] ‘subject’ can only exist as a subject in a world irreducible to its subjectivity; while an ‘object’ can only exist as a distinct object, a thing-in-itself rather than part of an indivisible flux, when perceived as such by a subject” (61). Similarly, in the third stanza, Thomas problematises man’s illusory mastery over nature by foregrounding the identification of human breath with the wind in the third stanza. Through this juxtaposition, the brevity of breath and human life with the everlasting power of the wind, the speaker declares man’s inability to prevent his death:

The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail.
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman’s lime. (*CP* 11-5)

Contrary to the humanist concept of man as the rational master, Dylan Thomas dethrones him from his privileged subject position and represents his insignificance compared to the supremacy of nature. Thomas challenges dualistic thought and anthropocentrism by “displac[ing] the human animal from a still prevailing arrogant centrality” (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 132). Regarding life as a

journey to death, the speaker expresses his bewilderment in the face of nature's power, "[t]he hand," to control the wind as well as to "[s]tir the quicksand" and acknowledges that the same natural power brings him closer to his death (*CP* 11-2). With the image of the wind that "[h]auls my shroud sail," as well as "the hangman's lime" the speaker also recognises man's frailty and mortality for each breath he takes brings him closer to his death (*CP* 13, 15). What is significant about Thomas's subversion of dualistic thinking, however, is that it does not lead to the creation of an alternative dichotomous frame. Campbell views biocentrism, that is ecocentrism, as "the most important challenge to traditional hierarchies in ecology" because it does not fall into the trap of "tak[ing] value from the once dominant and giv[ing] it to the weak" (128). Through its attack on all forms of hierarchy, ecocentrism develops a "holistic rather than an atomistic perspective ... insofar as it values populations, species, ecosystems, and the ecosphere *as well as* individual organisms" (Eckersley 46). In the same line of thinking, the poem's attack on the mastery of man over nature involves the restoration of the ecocentric holism with the reconceptualisation of death as a return to nature. The speaker acknowledges that following his death, he will take part in the biological processes which involve the dissolution of his dead body into its elements and its eventual transformation into "clay" that feeds the roots of "the hangman's lime" (*CP* 15). Challenging the anthropocentric view, the poem positions man as part of nature and revives the organicist view of existence of the pre-modern men and views life as a process leading to death, which is no more than a return to the elements of nature.

The subversion of man/nature duality through the post-pastoral representation of the parallelism between the inner forces in the human body with the outer forces in nature is also declared in the fourth stanza. Thomas treats love and water as equally important elements that contribute to the meaning and maintenance of life:

The lips of time leech to the fountain head;
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores.

And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars. (*CP* 16-20)

With the personification of time, the poet creates an image of an aging speaker whose existence depends on both water and love. Because of the poem's holistic perception of life, as stated above, death is considered as a mere fall to earth and as a reunion with nature. Therefore, the speaker is convinced that his lover's agony following his loss will be relieved, "shall calm her sore" (*CP* 18). Although the last two lines with the allusion to the creation myth may function as another reminder of man's mortality, the poem's ecocentric spirit does not allow room for "a heaven" as the transcendental realm where man is to be admitted when he dies (*CP* 20). The passage of time with its alternating seasons, "weather's wind," along with love may contribute to the transformation of man's life into a heavenly one (*CP* 19).

"The force that through the green fuse drives the flower" ends with the couplet that restates the poem's central post-pastoral premise: the union of the human body with nature. In addition to highlighting the mortality of man, it also restates man's return to nature, where his body is consumed by "the same crooked worm" that consumed the lover's body: "And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb / How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm" (*CP* 21-2). Being among Thomas's most frequently employed symbols, the worm suggests "both ... life and death" for it is "a living symbol of both states" (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 45). The poem demonstrates Dylan Thomas's search for meaning and an organising principle in a de-centred post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian universe. It does not promise a transcendental realm as a reward for death, while it still "proceed[s] to some kind of telos or conclusion" that is quite optimistic (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 33). The revival of the holistic ecocentric perception of existence inspires the poet to meditate on how man's bodily functions mirror the ones in external nature and eventually to restore the essential unity between the human and the nonhuman. Being deprived of an external cause to grant meaning to his existence, man is encouraged to resolve his conflict through acknowledging himself as part of nature. In such a context, we cannot help remembering Fraser's

words: “[t]he forces ... that control the growth and decay, the beauty and terror of human life are not merely similar to, but are the very same forces as we see at work in outer nature” (10).

In addition to representing the post-pastoral interconnectedness between man and nature, with its form, choice of images, colour imagery and repetitive pattern “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower” highlight same concern, too. Quite in line with what Bate proposes, by imitating the rhythms of nature, as an ecopoem, “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower,” reflects the correspondence between poetry writing and nature (*The Song* 76). Displaying Dylan Thomas’s poetic craft, the poem has quite a “tight structure” that “conveys two balanced ideas: the kinship between nature and the speaker, who are subjected to the same forces, and the duality of these forces, alternatively creative and destructive” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 49). Demonstrating Thomas’s formal mastery, the repetition of “I am dumb to” in each fourth line in the stanzas and the final couplet has significant ecopoetic dimension for it can be interpreted as an attack on man/ nature duality by emphasising the insignificance of man as the rational master within the cyclical life and death process in nature. From an ecocentric point of view, man’s mastery of nature is just a mere construct which is undermined by man’s mortality. Since he is just one being among the numerous others in nature, he is exposed to the same creative-destructive natural forces like “the flower,” “the roots of trees,” “water,” “the blowing wind,” and the “crooked worm” (*CP* 1, 2, 11, 12, 22).

Apart from undermining the anthropocentric discourse “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower” is among the first poems that establishes Thomas’s polyphonic ecocentric vision with its attack on logocentrism, which privileges man while reducing nature to a mere silent object. As Sarup remarks, logocentrism provides the Western thought with an organising principle which is based on the premise that “there is an essence, or truth which acts as the foundation of all beliefs; hence there seems to be a disposition, a longing, for a ‘transcendental signifier’ which would directly relate, correspond, to a secure stable ‘transcendental signified’ (i.e. a *logos*)” (37). For centuries, the rational man deluded himself as the meaning making agent within this logocentric

universe. However, reflecting the Saussurean challenge to man as the name giver, being dumb, the speaker ceases to be the leading figure in the arbitrarily functioning signification process in which “[t]he linguistic sign unites not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image,” in other words, the “*signified*” and the “signifier” (66, 67). Moreover, the dumbness of the speaker manifests the “‘anti-humanist’ ” stance of structuralism by subordinating man as the source of meaning to structure: “[h]owever far back we push, however much we hunt for the origin of meaning, we will always find a structure already in place” (Eagleton 98). Hence, the poem destabilises man’s ability to perceive the real world and have control over the way it is defined through language. Although the speaker of “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower” renounces his illusory mastery over nature, his dumbness is the manifestation of his actual alienation from it since, as Richard Rorty in “Deconstruction” puts it, he tries to use language “to do what language cannot do” (173). The poem indicates that the only thing language is capable of doing is to “betray any attempt to transcend it” (Rorty 173). A real union with nature is possible only after the speaker liberates himself from all the constraints imposed by anthropocentric and logocentric thought.

The speaker’s dumbness reflects the collapse of the rational subject since he is forced to question his mastery over nature, which can be considered as the speaker’s urge for a renewed consciousness. In order to appreciate the creative and destructive processes in nature, the first requirement is to become dumb and break his ties with logocentric thought so that he can initiate a genuine contact with nature and escape alienation. In Hardy’s view, nature has “its own language” which manifests itself through its “repetitions and permutations” (*Dylan Thomas* 108). Therefore, dumbness is quite an ambiguous state signifying “an appropriate way of communicating with the non-human nature which can’t speak our language” (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 110). According to Oppermann, ecocriticism demands man to recognise nature “as a self-articulating subject” (4). Echoing Oppermann, with the image of a dumb speaker Thomas revitalises nature as a speaking subject which communicates its ecocentric discourse through its various forces like the flower, the water and the wind. Reflecting the natural heterogeneity, each of them offers its unique contribution to the maintenance of

the natural harmony. Despite signifying the plurality of the natural voices, they all sign the same ecocentric song. By singing “the song of the earth itself,” the poem subverts the logocentric dichotomy and declares man as the one who is dumb (Bate, *The Song* 76). Thanks to his dumbness, the speaker is awakened to this ecocentric polyphony. Because the poem tries to restore man to his former unified position with nature and foregrounds man’s yearning for a true union, Hardy views the poem as one of Dylan Thomas’s works in which he “succeeded in crossing the threshold from human nature to nonhuman nature” and challenging man/nature duality by revealing “that such a threshold does not exist” (*Dylan Thomas* 132).

A discussion on “A process in the weather of the hearth” and “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower” indicates that as part of his quest for meaning Thomas tries to comprehend both man and nature. He subverts man/nature duality by reconceptualising the nonhuman world as a domain that functions based on ecological interconnectedness which also includes the human beings. However, his pursuit of the essence of existence is still not finalised for he struggles to make sense of death and the life after it. Thus, different from these two poems, “And death shall have no dominion,” which is published in his second volume, *Twenty-five Poems*, is an attempt to reconceptualise death in a decentred universe. Despite continuing his exploration of the ecological unity between the human and the nonhuman worlds, in “And death shall have no dominion,” the attack on man/nature duality is also maintained with the representation of man’s participation in the natural creative destructive processes following his death. Reflecting the spirit of post-pastoral poetry, the ecocritical subversion of dichotomous logic manifests the “biocentric view” of existence with its fundamental principle “that what grows is decay, that in turn feeds growth; but neither growth nor decay dominates” (Gifford, “Towards a Post-Pastoral View” 58).

In the opening stanza of “And death shall have no dominion” the challenge to man/nature duality is introduced with the speaker’s rebellion against the sense of finality associated with death and his reconceptualisation of it as a process which restores man to nature. Although the poem is inspired by the ecocentric

spirit of the process poetry, unlike “A process in the weather of the hearth,” and “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower,” it reverses the order of existence and focuses on death along with the destructive mechanism in nature as a result of which man is reintegrated into the organic world of the nonhuman realm. As pointed out by Holroyd, the poem regards death as “a return to the matrix of life” (144). The ecocentric holism of this post-pastoral poem is established through the representation of how, once dead, the human body is united with other dead people as well as with the elements of nature like the wind, the stars and the sea. Rather than focusing on the death of an individual person, in order to emphasise the universality of death and the organicism of all human beings, the speaker refers to various people who encountered different forms of deaths, but are all unified with nature:

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones are gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion. (*CP* 1-9)

Through the image of “[d]ead men naked,” Dylan Thomas elaborates on the idea of death as the greatest equaliser challenging the culturally codified dichotomies (*CP* 2). Being dead and “naked,” man can no longer claim his anthropocentric mastery over nature for he returns to his original state of existence (*CP* 2). Death also negates the polarity between the sane and the insane, and foregrounds their organic essence and mortality: “They shall have stars at elbow and foot / Though they go mad they shall be sane” (*CP* 5-6). Man’s alienation from nature in the modern chaotic universe that is deprived of meaning may cause madness; yet, death and reunion with nature restores one to sanity. Rather than evoking fear, death offers solace to the ones who “sink through the sea,” or die because of despair, “they shall rise again” (*CP* 7). Moreover, because death simply means transition from one form of existence to another, it is also spiritually elevating:

“Though lovers be lost,” that is, they are physically dead, the idea of love endures (*CP* 8).

In the second stanza, “And death shall have no dominion” explores death as a process of reintegration with the elements of nature by elaborating on the destructive and creative aspects of water. Reflecting the holism of ecocentrism, the poem manifests the post-pastoral awareness regarding the ecological balance of “growth and decay, ecstasy and dissolution” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 153). By reinforcing the identification of the human body with nature, the speaker emphasises how the dead men’s bodies decompose and eventually become part of the nonhuman world:

And death shall have no dominion.
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan’t crack;
And death shall have no dominion. (*CP* 10-8)

Man’s vain attempt to control nature and the sea dominates the poem. The humanist image of man as the master is undermined with the references to the dead people who lost the fight against the sea, “[t]wisting on racks when sinews give way,” and lie in the seabed, their grave (*CP* 13). The sense of lack of purpose in life is highlighted with the image of men “[s]trapped to a wheel,” which like the wheel of fortune moves beyond their control (*CP* 14). Moreover, loss of faith in the existence of a transcendental realm is expressed in the line “[f]aith in their hands shall snap in two” representing the failure of conventional religion to sooth the agony of death and inspire hope (*CP* 15). The polysemic image of “the unicorn evils,” can be interpreted as the supposed suffering that awaits man after death along with Thomas’s dismissal for such a belief (*CP* 16). Additionally, it can be taken as another attack on humanism and anthropocentrism since it may reflect the mysterious, unknown natural beings in the deep recesses of the seabed which as part of the creative-destructive natural process contribute to the dead

bodies' return to the sea. This regenerative power of the sea may also be linked to the womb, one of Dylan Thomas's frequent symbols of life and death. Despite being dead, these bodies are reborn in nature's womb and are eventually restored to nature. Consequently, the speaker is relieved with the recognition of water as one of the natural elements associated with both life and death, and declares that "death shall have no dominion" (*CP* 18).

After elaborating on the destructive side of death, the last stanza of "And death shall have no dominion" offers the post-pastoral representation of the creative dimension of death by focusing on how the dead bodies contribute to the regenerative processes in nature. Attacking the constructed nature of dualistic thinking, Thomas offers a portrayal of ecocentric holism through his juxtaposition of opposites like the living and the dead, life and death, as well as the human and nonhuman beings. Quite in line with what Coupe points out regarding the ecocritical challenge to binarism, the subversion of man/nature duality in the poem avoids the trap of dualistic thinking and does not reverse the hierarchy by positioning nature as the superior leg of the binary (120). The last stanza of "And death shall have no dominion" juxtaposes the continuation of natural life with the dead men's inability to physically participate and actively enjoy the beauties of these pleasures as the living people do. Being dead, "[n]o more may the gulls cry at their ears," nor can they listen to the "waves break loud on the seashores" (*CP* 20, 21). They are also deprived of the beautiful sight of "a flower" "[l]ift[ing] its head to the blows of the rain" (*CP* 22, 23). Nevertheless, the poem ends with the reconciliation that "[t]hough they be mad and dead as nails," the dead men become part of nature and contribute to its creative process as the "[h]eads of characters hammer through daisies;" which "[b]reak in the sun till the sun breaks down" (*CP* 24, 25, 26). In "Dylan Thomas's Concept of the Poet," Korg argues that such a holistic perception of life allows Thomas to reconceptualise life as an "organic existence" which, with each phase of being like "birth, growth, reproduction, death" offers "a dialectic of opposites which are never synthesized, so that the contraries of vitality and entropy are always present" (17). As opposed to the ideologically constructed dualities that preach anthropocentric values and the mastery of man over nature, in this post-pastoral poem, Dylan Thomas

suggests that though such oppositions are part of nature, they do not build hierarchies; on the contrary, they abolish them and emphasise their ecological coexistence and mutual dependence. The poem ends with the final remark of the speaker who is relieved that “death shall have no dominion,” since the decomposed dead bodies contribute to regeneration in nature with the growth of daisies in particular. Consequently, Dylan Thomas once again establishes the essential unity of man and nature and the interconnectedness of all beings in the absence of a transcendental realm.

“And death shall have no dominion” can be regarded as Thomas’s revolt against a meaningless existence which is deprived of a telos since man loses faith in the promise of a transcendental realm and existence. The poem consists of three stanzas, each of which starts and ends with the strong pronouncement “And death shall have no dominion” (*CP* 1-9, 10-8, 19-27). In all three stanzas, the poet challenges the idea of death as an end in itself and displays how man is “part of a global ecosystem,” and that he is “subject to ecological laws” (Pepper, *Eco-Socialism* 33). Reflecting Gifford’s “biocentric view” which foregrounds the non-hierarchical co-existence of the opposites in nature, “And death shall have no dominion” is a post-pastoral poem that mirrors the creative-destructive cycle in nature (“Towards a Post-Pastoral View” 58). Once being born, the human body is destined to return to nature. While the opening “And death shall have no dominion,” may symbolise man’s birth, the one at the end may connote his death and his participation in the ecological processes in nature. This repetition may signify the poet’s desire for self-assurance that reunion with nature provides his life with meaning; on the other hand, it might reflect the cyclical creative-destructive process in nature. Thus, “And death shall have no dominion,” along with the repetition of “shall” and “shall not” throughout the poem, can be regarded as Thomas’s efforts to resolve these conflicts by foregrounding the unity of the human body with nature. As pointed out by Korg, Thomas builds upon “the body-earth metaphor,” which rather than suggesting that “the body has endurance or immortality” implies that the human body “has roots, winds, worms and so on” (*Dylan Thomas* 34). This re-established bond between man and nature also foregrounds the poem’s ecocentric universe.

All in all, in light of the ecocritical analysis of the poems, “A process in the weather of the heart,” “The force through the green fuse drives the flower” and “And death shall have no dominion,” it can be concluded that in Dylan Thomas’s early poetry the modernist crisis of representation stimulates the poet to turn to nature and revive the ecocentric spirit as the organising principle for both his life and works. The poet’s representation of the essential bond between man and nature positions him among the precursors of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry. This reading of these poems indicates that at the early stages of his poetic career, as both a post-pastoral and an ecopoet, his attack on dichotomous logic concentrates on the interconnectedness between the human and nonhuman worlds. The poet’s struggle to reconceptualise man and nature initially results in the acknowledgement of the fact that man is part of the nonhuman world that is operating on ecological principles. As a result, Thomas composes poems in which he communicates the ecocentric holism of nature. The urge to challenge man/nature duality in the ecopoem “A process in the weather of the heart” manifests itself with the representation of how the laws of nature also operate in the human body and shape his life. In “The force through the green fuse drives the flower,” which, again, demonstrates the features of both post-pastoral poetry and ecopoetry, on the other hand, it is observed that Thomas shatters all anthropocentric claims of mastery over nature as he portrayed man as part of the nonhuman world where all beings are subjected to the same creative-destructive forces. As part of Thomas’s desire to mirror ecocentric polyphony, with its attack on logocentrism, the poem also tries to revitalise nature as a self-articulating agency. Moreover, the exploration of these poems displays that because he lived in a post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian universe, where the existence of a transcendental power was questioned, Thomas redefines death as a mere return to nature and as a process in which the human body participates in its regenerative operations. The ecocritical analysis of another post-pastoral poem “And death shall have no dominion,” indicates Thomas’s preoccupation with the mystery of death which he resolves by reducing death into an organic process of reintegration with the elements of nature. In this poem too, the possibility of a transcendental “dominion” is located only in this world, not in an afterlife. Thus, the discussion

on these points shows that Thomas's observations on the interconnectedness between man and nature as a young poet stimulates him to start shaping the holistic ecocentric discourse as the organising principle of both his life and work. Therefore, in his poems he portrays nature as a nonanthropocentric and non-hierarchical domain that operates on ecological laws based on interconnectedness of all beings rather than on any man centred epistemology. As part of his ecocentric vision of life and being he revitalises the bond between man and nature, and restores man to the ecological continuum by abolishing the humanist claim of rational mastery over nature.

3.2 Pantheism and the Revival of the Ecocentric Discourse in Thomas's Mature Poetry

The second focal point this chapter will discuss is how the desire to restore essence to his existence and poetry in the post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian universe encourages Dylan Thomas to revisit Welsh pantheism and literature so that he can create a non-hierarchical polyphonic ecocentric universe. Treece discusses the ways Thomas was influenced by Hopkins. Although both poets experienced a similar ontological crisis and their poetic styles were alike, he states that their ultimate resolutions differ from one another. According to Treece, while in Hopkinsian universe there is God to grant the poet some relief, in the world that Thomas inhabits there is no place for such optimism: "the uncertainty is there, and the inner conflict is never fully resolved, in God or in the poet's self" (83). However, different from Treece's argument, the ecocritical reading of his later poems indicates that through the restoration of ecocentrism as the centrepiece of both his life and work, Thomas could resolve his conflict regarding the meaninglessness of existence. By elaborating on the body-nature identification in his early poems published in *18 Poems* and *25 Poems*, starting with *The Map of Love* Thomas composes more spiritually elevating and philosophical poems. At this stage in his poetic career, his revival of the holistic vision culminates into a full-scale ecocentric discourse which criticises the hierarchical codifications preached by the Christian anthropocentric discourse. Because the conventional

Christian faith fails to soothe the agony of futile existence, Thomas turns to Welsh mysticism, which, as Holroyd observes, eventually contributes to the evolution of his “personal faith” and “his pantheism” (148, 149). According to Holroyd, the Nonconformist Welsh religion so deeply penetrates his consciousness that Thomas cannot totally liberate himself from Christianity (148). Therefore, as a compromise Thomas brings together his “indigenous paganism and those aspects of Christianity which he found acceptable” and creates his personalised religion that hybridises Christianity with natural religion and reflects the spirit of ecocentrism (Holroyd 148). The influence of the Welsh cultural background enriches Thomas’s desire to represent the natural polyphony by creating speakers like a druid, a bard, and a rhymer. In light of third wave ecocriticism put forward by Adamson and Slovic, this section will also discuss how Thomas transcends his national and cultural boundaries, and metamorphoses into an ecopoet calling for universal ecocentric consciousness. The poems “After the funeral,” “In Country Sleep,” and “Poem on his Birthday” will be explored in order to discuss how, with the creation of his personalised faith, the ecocentric discourse is established as the centrepiece of Thomas’s life and poetry, and contributes to his subversion of man/nature duality.

“After the funeral” is one of the significant works that appears in *The Map of Love* and reveals how Thomas’s representation of the interconnectedness between man and nature assumes a more spiritual dimension. The disillusionment with Christianity’s promise of a transcendental realm inspires Thomas to reconceptualise death through the revival of Welsh pantheism and literature. As an ecopoet, Thomas declares the speaker of the poem first as a druid and later as a bard, who mediates between the human and the nonhuman worlds and portrays his polyphonic ecocentric vision of life. In the poem he attacks the rigidity of the Christian burial rituals and creates an alternative ecocentric burial ceremony for his aunt, Ann Jones, in which death is celebrated as a spiritual union with nature. With its ecophonic world, the poem can be considered as an ecocentric elegy in which the poet’s struggle to come to terms with the death of his aunt ends in the reconciliation enabled by the ecocentric discourse.

The poem's destabilisation of man/nature dichotomy and Christian anthropocentric discourse starts with a critique of conventional Nonconformist burial and mourning rituals. "After the funeral" is based on the meditations of an adult speaker who recollects childhood memories of his aunt's death and portrays it through the eyes of the boy witnessing the funeral rites: "Shakes a desolate boy who slits his throat / In the dark of the coffin" (*CP* 7-8). The poem begins with the description of the scene following the funeral and the boy speaker's observations concerning both the actions of the mourners and the funeral rituals. As Hardy notes, "After the funeral" attacks the "provincial Welsh mourning tongues and habits, in a harsh and grotesque caricature of Welsh funeral rites" (*Dylan Thomas* 6). By resembling the actions of the attendants to those of a mule, the speaker condemns their hypocrisy:

After the funeral, mule praises, brays,
 Windshake of sailshaped ears, muffle-toed tap
 Tap happily of one peg in the thick
 Grave's foot, blinds down the lids, the teeth in black,
 The spittled eyes, the salt ponds in the sleeves,
 Morning smack of the spade that wakes up sleep,
 Shakes a desolate boy who slits his throat
 In the dark of the coffin and sheds dry leaves,
 That breaks one bone to light with a judgement clout,
 After the feast of tear-stuffed time and thistles (*CP* 1-10)

The speaker questions the Welsh funeral rites and the pretence that accompanies them. The mule's indifference to death with its bray, "[w]indshake of sailshaped ears" and the act of "happily" tapping his toe is employed to reflect the insincerity among the mourners who despite their "spittled eyes" and "the salt ponds in the sleeves" are not actually grieving for their loss (*CP* 2, 3, 5). According to Ackerman, these two expressions reveal the vanity of the people present at the funeral: "he speaks satirically of the mourners' 'spittled eyes'," implying that "the mourners have been spitting on their eyes to feign tears," along with " 'the salt ponds in the sleeves' " to mock their "assumed grief" (*Dylan Thomas* 76). Ackerman argues that one of Thomas's aims in this poem is to mock the Welsh bereavement culture: "In Wales, to this day, a funeral is referred to as 'beautiful',

and usually involves a long procession of mourners, tiers of flowers and fervent hymn-singing” (*Dylan Thomas* 78-9). Despite the references to a lot of crying implied by “tear-stuffed time,” Thomas is highly critical of such practices and condemns the atmosphere with the deliberate choice of the word “feast,” which “suggests there was a certain enjoyment of the grief” (*CP* 10, Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 78). Thomas’s representation of the Nonconformist burial ritual reveals that they lack spirituality and have been reduced to mere habits. Contrary to the spiritually elevating and soothing function attributed to religion, the orthodox monotheistic faith fails to respond to the fundamental human need regarding what follows after death.

As a follow up to his attack on the Nonconformist burial practices, Thomas starts composing his ecocentric elegy against the background of the alternative ecocentric burial ceremony he conducts for his aunt. Similar to the message conveyed in the title of the poem, Thomas suggests that what happens after the funeral is more significant than what takes place during it. The subversion of the sterile Nonconformist discourse with the ecocentric one is maintained with the juxtaposition of the hypocrisy of the others present with the sincerity of the mourning boy, “who slits his throat /In the dark of the coffin and sheds dry leaves” (*CP* 7-8). As Raymond Stephens, in “The Self and World,” observes, the poem is the account of a speaker, in whose image the boy’s and the adult poet’s consciousnesses are merged “in the continuity of experience” that fluctuates between the past and the present (52). The ecocentric burial is also Thomas’s attempt to recapture the mystic dimension of religious faith in its urge to resolve the enigma of existence. As pointed out by Holroyd, inspired by “a quest of unity,” one shatters all “the limits of selfhood” and participates “in some larger life which invests the particular individual life with meaning” (139). Thus, the ecocentric funeral ceremony for the aunt starts with the image of the boy who “sheds dry leaves” over her body and reconceptualises death as a union with the elements of nature (*CP* 8). Because Thomas lost faith in the Christian God and the existence of a transcendental realm, the conventional Nonconformist Christian burial and mourning rituals are regarded as mere habits which fail to provide hope and relieve the agony of death. Thus, in “After the funeral,” Dylan Thomas offers

a worthier burial for his aunt: “In a room with a stuffed fox and a stale fern, / I stand, for this memorial’s sake, alone / In the snivelling hours with dead, humped Ann” (*CP* 11-3). Through the revival of the primitive ecocentric values, the alterative burial ceremony declares the aunt’s oneness with nature:

Whose hooded, fountain heart once fell in puddles
Round the parched worlds of Wales and drowned each sun
(Though this for her is a monstrous image blindly
Magnified out of praise; her death was a still drop;
She would not have me sinking in the holy
Flood of her heart’s fame; she would lie dumb and deep
And need no druid of her broken body). (*CP* 73)

Depicting her burial as a return to her original state, Thomas subverts the sterile Christian discourse with the ecocentric one. Emphasising her generosity, he suggests that with “her hooded, fountain heart,” Ann brings life to the “puddles Round the parched worlds of Wales” (*CP* 14, 15). According to Hardy, Dylan Thomas follows the elegiac tradition in English literature as the aunt “is first buried, then revived for metamorphosis and apotheosis” (*Dylan Thomas* 9). Hardy further observes that following the burial, Thomas portrays her as a goddess of South Wales, which is reconceptualised as “a wasteland ... devastated between the wars by poverty, unemployment, and economic waste” (*Dylan Thomas* 9). Similar to Lycidas, Ann “is not only resurrected, but made into a fertility figure, a Welsh rural working-class Fisher Queen” (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 9).

The ecocentric spirit of the alternative burial is enhanced with Thomas’s declaration of the speaker as the aunt’s druid. Embodying the resonances of the ancient druids, within the ecophonic world of the poem, the druid speaker bridges the gap between the human, the nonhuman and the divine. As pointed out by Ackerman, a druid is an “ancient Welsh poet, prophet, and priest,” whose “supernatural and divine powers” enabled him to become the “mediator between man and the gods” (*Dylan Thomas* 79). Being the conductor of the ceremony, the druid speaker reconceptualises death as the human being’s participation in the eternal cyclical creative-destructive processes in nature. The ecocentric meditation

on her death encourages him to accept this process as spiritually rewarding. The speaker is conscious of the fact that Ann would consider such “blindly / Magnified ... praise” as “a monstrous image” because, for her, death “was a still drop” which demands no “holy / Flood of her heart’s fame” (*CP* 16- 17, 16, 17, 18-9). Nevertheless, according to Stephens, Ann’s rejection of a druid, in fact, reflects “the poet’s passionate realization that she deserves one” (52). In order to appreciate her humility and, at the same time, reward her passive endurance of a difficult life, the bard offers a highly idealised account of her life.

The ecophonic spirit of the elegy is also highlighted with the speaker’s transformation into a bard. In addition to mediating between the world of the human and the nonhuman, the druid-bard speaker calls for aid from the members of the nonhuman world as part of his attempt to celebrate her union with nature. Thus, the poem offers ecocentric reconciliation to her death:

But I, Ann’s bard on a raised hearth, call all
The seas to service that her wood-tongued virtue
Babble like a bellbuoy over the hymning heads,
Bow down the walls of the ferned and foxy woods
That her love sing and swing through a brown chapel,
Bless her bent spirit with four, crossing birds.
Her flesh was meek as milk, but this skyward statue
With the wild breast and blessed and giant skull
Is carved from her in a room with a wet window
In a fiercely mourning house in a crooked year. (*CP* 21-30)

Addressing “[t]he seas” and “the ferned and foxy woods,” the speaker wants them to help him to communicate her “virtue” and “love” (*CP* 22, 24, 22, 25). Since she is part of nature, rather than praying for her admission to a transcendental realm preached by monotheistic rituals, he argues that “her love sing[s] and swing[s] through a brown chapel” (*CP* 25). Thomas employs the brownness of the chapel and the blessing of the “four, crossing birds,” to highlight her union with earth and other nonhuman beings (*CP* 26). The natural participants of the ritual will also help him construct her “skyward statue / With the wild breast and blessed and giant skull” (*CP* 27-8). Hardy argues that in the poem the funeral of his aunt is “de-Christianised,” as it takes place “out of doors, made into a pagan druidical

ceremony, and the language is allowed to swell again, as birds and trees extend the apotheosis” (*Dylan Thomas* 13).

As part of their reconciliatory spirit, the ecocentric burial rituals also try to make up for the hard life Ann had. By voicing the suffering and the injustice she bore, the bard represents another ecocritical, ecofeminist challenge to dualistic thinking. Ecocriticism and social ecofeminism, in particular, attack man/nature duality and fight against all forms of injustice because they claim that anthropocentrism, being rooted in patriarchy, oppresses not only nature, but also women:

I know her scrubbed and sour humble hands
Lie with religion in their cramp, her threadbare
Whisper in a damp word, her wits drilled hollow,
Her fist of a face died clenched on a round pain;
And sculptured Ann is seventy years of stone.
These cloud-sopped, marble hands, this monumental
Argument of the hewn voice, gesture and psalm
Storm me forever over her grave until
The stuffed lung of the fox twitch and cry Love
And the strutting fern lay seeds on the black sill. (*CP* 31-40)

Through the images like Ann’s “scrubbed and sour humble hands,” Thomas foregrounds the oppression she underwent in a world constructed by patriarchal hierarchies (*CP* 31). As suggested by James Davies, in *A Reference Companion to Dylan Thomas*, apart from depicting her as “a virtuous woman in tune with the natural environment,” Dylan Thomas also represents her “as [a] victim of a life unremitting toil in a narrowly Nonconformist world” (163). Similar to the way dualistic thought and anthropocentrism silence nature, his aunt was denied the right to speak and think: “her threadbare / Whisper in a damp word, her wits drilled hollow” (*CP* 32-3). According to Davies, Thomas condemns the imprisonment she endured because of “hard manual work, of knowing her place, of narrow, life-denying religion, and of dreadfully monotonous subsistence living” (166).

The speaker’s desire to offer an ecocentric alternative burial culminates in the last section of the ecopoem where with the assistance of the nonhuman

elements he creates Ann's statue. As part of the ritual rites, the speaker metamorphoses now, into a sculptor, who builds Ann's statue: "And sculptured Ann is seventy years of stone" (CP 35). In Ackerman's view, Thomas substitutes Ann's "physical ugliness" with "marmoreal serenity" (*Dylan Thomas* 80). Hence, the poem emerges as the "monumental / Argument of the hewn voice" (CP 36-7). Through his choice of stone as natural material too, the speaker expresses her unity with nature. Symbolically, however, the statue and stones stand for the ecocentric elegy the bard has been composing. Ann has been immortalised not only through her union with nature, but also through the poem he composes. As Stephens maintains, Thomas transforms "conventional elegiac materials— a memorial stone is 'carved' into words and those words are animated into the living voice and breath of the poet" (53).

The ending of "After the funeral" represents the polyphonic ecocentric spirit that Thomas creates in his poems. Displaying reverence for all living and nonliving beings on earth, the poem focuses on how Ann's body is welcomed by both the fox and the fern as the different representatives of the nonhuman realm. Thus, the poem ends with the reconciliation that Ann has been immortalised and her unified existence in nature is concretised with the image of both the "[t]he stuffed lung of the fox twitch and cry Love" and "the strutting fern lay seeds on the black sill" (CP 39, 40). Ackerman elaborates on the significance of the use of these two images and views them as "the symbols used to transcend reality" through reflecting the ecocentric unity of natural beings: "the one an animal, the other a plant" (*Dylan Thomas* 80). In Ackerman's view, while "the fox *will* cry Love ... the fern *does* ensure a kind of immortality" (*Dylan Thomas* 81). Integral to its challenge to the Christian anthropocentric discourse, the poem not only restores man's bond with nature but also attributes a spiritual dimension to death as reunion with nature. Quite in parallel with elegiac conventions in "After the funeral," as suggested by Korg, "the physical and specific melt into the spiritual and universal" (*Dylan Thomas* 83).

Thomas's subversion of man/nature duality and the Christian anthropocentric discourse is quite compatible with what Adamson and Slovic identify as the major premises of third wave ecocriticism in its struggle to

represent the universal ecocentric pattern of existence while being inspired by unique “ethnic and national particularities” (qtd. in Slovic “The Third Wave” 4). Similar to what Adamson and Slovic propose, the poem is inspired by the Welsh culture for Thomas conceptualises the speaker of the poem as a druid and a bard. Hence, he goes beyond the boundaries of his native culture and creates an ecocentric elegy that preaches the premises of the holistic ecocentric discourse that appeal to all human beings regardless of their national, cultural, and ethnic identities. Echoing W. E. Yeomans, in “Dylan Thomas: The Literal Vision,” in spite of originating from “some personal event or state,” Thomas’s poems gradually evolve into “a cosmic, human vision” (96). Although “After the funeral” is an ecocentric rewriting of the burial of Thomas’s aunt, with its challenges to man/nature duality and Christian anthropocentric discourse, it offers an alternative reconceptualisation of death as a physical and spiritual union with nature. Problematising all hierarchical codifications, such a reconceptualisation of death contributes to raising a universal ecocentric consciousness regarding the interconnectedness of all beings. Thus, the ecocentric spirit of the poem demands man to abandon his claims for mastery and domination, and to consider himself as part of the organic whole.

The gradual recovery of the holistic ecocentric spirit and its transformation into the organising principle of both Dylan Thomas’s life and poetry is completed with the poems in his last volume, *In Country Sleep*. The poem, “In Country Sleep” can be considered within the frame of ecopoetry since it represents the polyphonic ecocentric song of the nonhuman world. The poem reflects the consciousness of Dylan Thomas as an ecopoet, who is disillusioned with the humanist ideals preached by the Enlightenment project. “In Country Sleep” Thomas creates another bardic speaker, a father figure who composes a goodnight tale for his daughter before she sleeps. However, the threatening atmosphere following World War II creeps into the peaceful background of the poem since the speaker associates the daughter’s sleep with her death. Within the context of this chaotic universe dominated by loss of faith in Christianity, Thomas takes refuge in pantheism that helps him to overcome the fear of death and celebrate the holistic spirit of ecocentrism.

The subversion of dualistic and anthropocentric codifications in “In Country Sleep” starts with the ecocentric rewriting of fairy tales. Part I begins with the speaker, who tells a tale to his daughter to make sure that she has a peaceful sleep. Challenging the way dualistic thinking and anthropocentrism construct the human and the nonhuman beings, the father wants his daughter to “[n]ever and never ... [f]ear or believe” the terrifying representations of the setting and the characters in the fairy tales (*CP* 1-3). In the opening stanza, the speaker addresses his daughter and warns her against the false portrayal of the wolf as evil and not to dread the arrival of the deceitful “wolf in a sheepwhite hood / Loping and bleating roughly and blithely” in order to “eat [her] heart” (*CP* 3-4, 7). In the second and the third stanzas Dylan Thomas continues undermining the fairy tale representations of constructed reality imposed by dualistic thought. The father wants his daughter to “[s]leep, good, for ever, slow and deep,” and not to fear deception by “gooseherd or swine [which] will turn / Into a homestall king or hamlet of fire / And prince of ice / To court the honeyed heart from your side before sunrise” (*CP* 8, 10-3). Similarly, the speaker attacks the cultural codification of women as evil witches, “the broomed witch’s spume” by declaring them as “the innocent lie[s]” (*CP* 17, 15). “In Country Sleep” also celebrates the deep ecological “intrinsic value” of nature and offers a critique of the pessimistic “anti-arcadian outlook” that derives from the evolution theory according to which “species were the product of blind physical laws, operating without regard for human moral values” (Naess 29; Worster, *Nature’s Economy* 122). Rather than being a perilous environment, the country and the nonhuman world provide comfort and protection: “you are shielded by fern / And flower of country sleep and the greenwood keep” (*CP* 17-8). Echoing the ecocritical challenge to anthropocentric and patriarchal dualities, the speaker suggests that such wicked codifications are the outcomes of man’s desire to control both nature and the ones that are identified with it. Through the speaker’s rejection of such categorisations, the poem questions anthropocentrism which gives man, the master, the right to name and impose his authority over the objectified other.

In addition to exposing dichotomous logic as an ideological construct, “In Country Sleep” also attacks war and progress as the outcomes of humanist

philosophy. Abolishing the false codifications of nature, the speaker secures his daughter from any culturally imposed threats and ensures that she has an untroubled sleep. However, through the speaker's identification of sleep with death, the poem introduces man and his progressive ambitions as the real threat to her well-being. In *A Dylan Thomas Companion* Ackerman observes that "In Country Sleep" is one of the poems that Thomas composed after World War II and the destruction caused by the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (158). The Enlightenment ideal to master nature and make progress ironically metamorphosed into a nightmare by producing weaponry to destroy all forms of human and nonhuman life. Thomas chooses the tranquil country as the setting of his poem and identifies its peace and harmony with the innocence and the purity of childhood. Nevertheless, due to the imminent danger of total destruction and nuclear annihilation, night and his daughter's sleep remind him of the ever-present death. What the poem foregrounds is that rather than nature, it is man with his progressive ambitions to master nature and the less powerful human beings that brings destruction to the world. Being conscious of man's devastating power, the father, who is portrayed as a motherly figure, tries to warn his daughter against untimely and unnatural death, which is personified as a thief unexpectedly stealing one's life: "Fear most ... but the Thief as meek as the dew" (*CP* 35-8).

Although the poem initially appears as an account of the father's advice to his daughter to acknowledge death as part of life and as a return to nature, a careful analysis reveals that it also mirrors the father's fear of loss of his daughter. As in "After the funeral," in "In Country Sleep" the solution lies in the subversion of dichotomous logic and logocentrism by ecocentrism. As Eagleton observes, at the centre of logocentric universe is placed "the 'transcendental signified'" which has been represented by various concepts like "God, the Idea, the World Spirit, the Self, substance, matter" (113). However, which one of these different "candidates" enjoys the privilege of occupying the centre has always been ideologically determined (Eagleton 113, 114). Similar to what Eagleton observes, the existence of God as the transcendental signified, as the logos, is reduced to a mere "fiction" in the poem; thus, Thomas's quest for essence in life is resolved through the revival of the ecocentric holism in pantheistic faith (114). In the

personalised religion that he constructs, Thomas positions God as a part of nature, which reduces the transcendental signified into the level of a signifier. According to Ackerman, Thomas fuses his pantheism with the pastoral tradition for he depicts “the natural world in terms of pantheism where God appears to be the immanent and vital ‘Force of Power’ rather than a transcendental being who controls the cosmos while being outside it” (*Companion* 137). Rather than seeking refuge in a transcendental realm and praying to a monotheistic almighty god, the speaker urges her to recognise that “[t]he country is holy: O bide in that country kind, / Know the green good” (*CP* 39-40). As part of its ecocentric spirit, the poem demonstrates that nature is revered for what it is. Thus, in “In Country Sleep,” nature is depicted as a sacred domain which ensures the peace and harmony of man’s both life and death: “Under the prayer wheeling moon in the rosy wood / Be shielded by chant and flower and gay may you / Lie in grace” (*CP* 41-3). By elaborating on the body-earth identification, Thomas reconceptualises death as a sleep in the arms of nature; therefore, nature is seen as the domain which soothes the agony of what is to come.

Ecocentrism of the poem is also manifested in Thomas’s reconceptualisation of death as a spiritually rewarding participation in the natural regenerative processes. Being part of nature, the daughter is subjected to its destructive forces. Thomas uses conventional metaphors like “sleep” and “night” to refer to death (*CP* 43, 51). However, within the poet’s ecocentric world, they also stand for the naturalness of death. In the last stanza of Part I, the speaker highlights the naturalness of death by elaborating on various natural phenomena such as the fall of the “dew,” “the rain,” and “the star” (*CP* 58, 57, 60). He tries to help his daughter to acknowledge her mortality as the inherent outcome of being alive. Since man’s fall, death has been part of life and his daughter is just one single person among countless others: “This night and each night since the falling star you were born, / Ever and ever he finds a way, as the snow falls” (*CP* 51- 52). The following lines reflect both the speaker’s desire to help his daughter admit death as part of nature and his conflict regarding its inevitability as well as its early arrival: “Be you sure the Thief will seek a way sly and sure / And sly as snow and meek as dew blown to the thorn” (*CP* 49-50). Nevertheless, the overall

optimism of the poem based on the idea of death as a return to nature is blurred with the concluding line: “As the world falls, silent as the cyclone of silence” (*CP* 63). Thomas chooses to define death as mere silence and avoids making any comments regarding what follows. According to Davies, such a conclusion reveals Dylan Thomas’s response to the threatening atmosphere of the world caused by the atomic bomb and nuclear armament and argues that it displays the poet’s “apocalyptic despair” (207).

Part II of “In Country Sleep” stands out as a resolution to the conflict at the end of Part I. Davies remarks that Dylan Thomas’s initial aim was to compose the poem in three parts; however, following the completion of the first two, “he lost momentum and brought the poem to, seemingly, an adequate conclusion” (207). Thus, Part II not only provides an answer to what happens after death, but also restores the optimism of the poem through its representation of the polyphonic song of nature. Quite contrary to the silence at the end of the first part, the initial stanzas of the second part exhibit the vitality and the dynamism of the nonhuman beings. Foregrounding the intrinsic value of nature, the poem indicates how the different inhabitants of the natural world like “the reindeer,” “the rooks,” “[t]he stream,” “the nightingale” as well as “[h]ill of cypresses” contribute to the “[p]astoral beat” (*CP* 64, 67, 72, 74, 76, 71). Based on his observation on the operations of the nonhuman world, the speaker concludes that they are actually participating in “[t]he sermon / Of blood!” and “The saga from mermer / To Seraphim / Leaping!” (*CP* 77-80). At the beginning of this section, Dylan Thomas portrays the “celebration of the hidden energy and ‘blood’ of natural life, lyrically exultant in mood and metaphysical in its implications” (Ackerman, *Companion* 150). Thus, the poem’s ecocentric vision offers an alternative form of existence in which “paradise lost points to paradise regained” (*Companion* 158).

The poem contrasts the harmonious existence of various nonhuman beings with the world created by man based on humanist and progressive desires. While the former one is based on the organic interconnectedness of all its participants, the civilisation that man constructs is built on hierarchical patterns originating from man/nature, as well as subject/object dichotomies. In *The poetry of Dylan Thomas: under the spelling wall*, John Goodby observes that “the stylised

violence of the later poems” is motivated by the poet’s desire “to reveal it as unnatural” (409). Through the union of the nonhuman world with the spiritual realm, Thomas reintroduces the central theme of the whole poem, death as part of nature: “All tell, this night, of him / Who comes as red as the fox and sly as the heeled wind” (CP 80-1). Resembling life to a symphony conducted by different participants, the speaker declares the “[i]llumination of music!” (CP 81). The lines, “Music of elements, that a miracle makes! / Earth, air, water, fire, singing into the white act” not only emphasise the natural harmony, but also show Dylan Thomas’s ecocentric vision (CP 87-8). Similar to what Kate Rigby, in “Ecocriticism,” says, as an ecopoet, Thomas along with raising consciousness about “the beauty, complexity and potential fragility of the earth,” also becomes a mediator composing the “heteroglossic song” of the nonhuman world (168). Contrary to the fear of war and death that the anthropocentric progressive civilisation evokes, the nonanthropocentric nonhuman world is polyphonic. Using music to reflect their mutual coexistence and the natural harmony, Thomas emphasises the way the nonhuman world interacts with one another away from the interference of man, the master. As suggested by Fraser, Dylan Thomas’s early poetry is a manifestation of his endeavour to “grasp the whole of life, human and natural, as an apparently confused but ultimately single process” (9). In his later poetry, however, the desire to resolve the mysteries of the world is replaced by “quite consciously and much less bewilderingly, *celebrating* that process” (Fraser 9).

After highlighting the non-hierarchical world of the nonhuman beings, Thomas foregrounds pantheism and the idea of death as one’s union with the elements of nature. Similar to the elegiac reconciliation he provides at the end of “After the funeral,” in “In Country Sleep,” nature is regarded as the ultimate refuge. Because with her death she will also participate in the polyphonic world of the nonhuman realm and contribute to its regenerative processes, the father resumes his optimism. Quite parallel to Eisler’s observation, the poem demonstrates how, with the introduction of a new perception, it is possible to reach the “consciousness of the essential unity of all life” (qtd. in Oppermann, 5). Such a holistic perception of life encourages Thomas to poeticise nature’s creative

long as her faith in life and natural regeneration is not “deathless” and does not die, she reaches immortality and her existence maintains its meaning (*CP* 113). Rejecting the orthodox idea of death as a transition to a transcendental realm, what Thomas represents is that “in nature’s cycle death brings re-immersion into its forms and forces and what is lost, what death in fact steals or removes, is only the belief/superstition that heaven or hell follows” (Ackerman, *Companion* 150). Quite in harmony with the poem’s ecocentric spirit, through the “re-immersion into the physical universe,” death is regarded as “an affirmation and celebration of that universe and man’s unity with it” (*Companion* 151). With “In Country Sleep,” Thomas tries to escape the gloom and the despair of the modern times by offering people an alternative ecocentric tale which relieves their agonies regarding lack of meaning in life and death. Because of its representation of the revival of the ecocentric spirit through pantheism, “In Country Sleep” is a rewritten ecocentric poem which subverts the anthropocentric history of the Western man.

Being one of the poems published in *In Country Sleep*, “Poem on his Birthday” is the last birthday poem of Dylan Thomas in which his existentialist conflict is fully resolved with the celebration of ecocentrism as the organising principle of his poetry and life. Different from “After the funeral” and “In Country Sleep,” in which he meditates on the deaths of other people, in “Poem on his Birthday,” he tries to come to terms with his own death in a universe deprived of a transcendental power to grant meaning to life and inspire hope regarding life after death. Thomas’s disillusionment with Christianity and his revival of pantheism reaches its peak in “Poem on his Birthday.” As in the other two poems analysed in this section, as an ecopoet Thomas creates a poet “rhymer,” whose polyphonic ecocentric song contributes to the subversion of man/nature duality and the Christian anthropocentric discourse.

“Poem on his Birthday” is inspired by the context of Dylan Thomas’s thirty-fifth birthday and displays the poet’s consciousness of having reached the mid-point of his life as well as anxiety about his future and death. Bearing traces of Thomas’s personal life, the poem is a representation of the poet’s divided consciousness regarding the futility of life and death, which is reflected in his

portrayal of two speakers: the speaker and the poet “rhymer” (*CP* 15). While the speaker as an external observer stands for Thomas as a modernist poet inhabiting a chaotic world, the rhymer demonstrates ecopoetic consciousness and his faith in pantheism. Quite compatible with the theoretical frame that Bate puts forward, in “Toward Green Romanticism,” the rhymer is a figure who approaches nature “with wonder and reverence” and is capable of grasping and appreciating the interconnectedness of all its beings (67). The poem starts with the speaker’s narration of the way the rhymer “celebrates and spurns / His driftwood thirty-fifth wind turned age” “[in] his house on stilts,” from where he sees the “full tilt river and switchback sea” and the participants of the natural life (*CP* 7-8). As pointed out by Davies, the imaginary house of the rhymer bears close resemblance to Dylan Thomas’s Boat House, which is “a three-story cottage built in the early nineteenth century” and “is tucked under a cliff a little away from central Laugharne and on the very edge of the estuary of the river Tâf, with its sea birds and herons” (79). Like the context of the other poems, nature plays a significant part in “Poem on his Birthday” as his house has the view of both the river and the sea, and is surrounded by various animals like cormorants, herons, flounders, gulls and curlews. Although the rhymer is inside the house, he is very much immersed in the lives of the nonhuman beings and appreciates the creative-destructive processes in nature. Because of the consciousness that the natural balance is based on the co-existence of the opposites, the rhymer’s celebration of his birthday simultaneously involves meditation on his death. The particular time of the poem, which is symbolically represented by the images of the “mustardseed sun” and “[t]his sandgrain day in the bent bay’s grave,” also foregrounds the idea that the rhymer is drawn closer to death (*CP* 1, 6).

The subversive ecocentric song of the rhymer starts with his contemplation on the coexistence of life and death in the nonhuman world. Being disillusioned with the existence of a Christian God, as part of his search for an organising principle, the rhymer focuses on nature and tries to comprehend the power stimulating the natural harmony. In the next four stanzas, “the rhymer” in his “long tongued room” in the boat house, looks outside and witnesses the life struggle of various sea creatures and birds (*CP* 15):

Under and round him go
 Flounders, gulls, on their cold, dying trails,
 Doing what they are told,
 Curlews aloud in the congered waves
 Work at their ways to death,
 And the rhymer in the long tongued room,
 Who tolls his birthday bell,
 Toils towards the ambush of his wounds;
 Herons, stepple stemmed, bless.
 In the thistledown fall,
 He sings towards anguish; finches fly
 In the claw tracks of hawks
 On a seizing sky; small fishes glide
 Through wynds and shells of drowned
 Ship towns to pastures of otters. He
 In his slant, racking house
 And the hewn coils of his trade perceives
 Herons walk in their shroud, (*CP* 10-27)

The scene is dominated by the idea of life as a journey to death, as part of which flounders, gulls and curlews perform their “dying trails,” “[w]ork at their ways to death” (*CP* 11, 14). Attacking anthropocentric codifications, the poem foregrounds the inherent value of the nonhuman world. Away from the human interference, the world of the nonhuman beings has its own natural flow that is based on a perfect balance of its creative-destructive processes. While “finches” and “small fishes” are preys to “hawks” and “otters,” their deaths contribute to the maintenance of some other species (*CP* 20, 22, 21, 24). After foregrounding incidents displaying the regenerative power of death, the poem focuses on the rhymer, who “[i]n his slant, racking house” declares the coexistence of life and death in nature as “[h]erons walk in their shroud” (*CP* 25, 27). Thomas further elaborates on the idea of death leading to life by referring to animals like the “minnows,” “dolphins” and “seals” (*CP* 29, 33, 34). In the poem, by attacking man’s illusory mastery over nature, in addition to liberating nature from being a passive object at the service of the anthropos, Thomas also declares the “sense of the insignificance, the smallness, of man” (Bate, “Green Romanticism” 67).

The poem’s subversion of man/nature duality and the Christian anthropocentric discourse is intensified with its problematisation of the existence

of a transcendental creator. Witnessing the natural life-and-death cycle of various nonhuman beings that “[u]nder and round him go,” the rhymer appreciates their contribution to the maintenance of life as they are “[d]oing what they are told” (*CP* 10, 12). Because of his desire to recapture the pre-monotheistic holistic perception of nature, the way he conceptualises his religious belief is akin to “that of primitive man in the ages before moral concepts became associated with religion” (Holroyd 142). Reflecting Thomas’s personal religious faith which “directly contradicts the tested truth of all the great religions” the rhymer’s awareness and appreciation of the natural harmony is devoid of any orthodox divine cause (142). The recognition that this telos is based on organic motives rather than divine ones encourages him to question the underlying cause of his own existence. Within the holistic universe that Thomas creates, birth signifies death; thus, when “the rhymer” “tolls his birthday bell,” he not only celebrates his thirty-fifth birthday, but also declares the unavoidability of his death (*CP* 15, 16). Experiencing a midlife crisis at the age of thirty five, he “[t]oils towards the ambush of his wounds” and “sings towards anguish” and contemplates on his own end (*CP* 17, 20). Thomas’s desire to surpass the premises of the Christian anthropocentric discourse is also highlighted with the rhymer’s consciousness of natural rhythms as major sources of inspiration. Rejecting logocentrism, as an ecopoet, he sings his own unique polyphonic ecocentric song that expresses the inherent natural harmony and represents life as a journey to death.

After highlighting the nonanthropocentric life of the nonhuman beings, as part of its attack on dualistic thinking the rhymer’s song dwells on man’s journey to death. Restoring man to his unitary existence with nature, Thomas focuses on the cyclical existence of the human beings, which in his temporal domain starts in the mother’s womb. With the first two lines of the stanza five, the speaker announces the beginning of the rhymer’s cyclical journey: “In a cavernous, swung / Wave’s silence, wept white angelus knells” (*CP* 37-8). While the images of “cavernous,” and “[w]ave’s silence” suggest the mother’s womb and prenatal existence, the references to “swung,” and “white angelus knells” signify his birth, which at the same time announces his subsequent death (*CP* 37, 38, 37, 38). Therefore, for the past thirty-five years, the celebration of each birthday has been

at the same time a declaration of his mortality: “Thirty-five bells sing struck” (*CP* 39). The co-existence of life and death is further highlighted with the references to his living body and mind as a “skull” as well as to his experiences as “scars where his loves lie wrecked” (*CP* 40). The agony of death and the uncertainty of the future are still among his major concerns as he tries to overcome his fear of meaningless existence by turning to the Christian God:

And tomorrow weeps in a blind cage
Terror will rage apart
Before chains break to a hammer flame
And love unbolts the dark

And freely he goes lost
In the unknown, famous light of great
And fabulous, dear God.
Dark is a way and light is a place,

Heaven that never was
Nor will be ever is always true,
And, in that brambled void,
Plenty as blackberries in the woods
The dead grow for His joy. (*CP* 42-54)

Although the rhymer is ready to freely submit himself to the cause of a transcendental God, he is frustrated with the recognition that neither such a creator, nor a place like heaven exists. Reducing the entire Christian doctrine to a discourse, the poem undermines the conventional religious motifs like defining life as a “[d]ark ... way,” and associating light with heaven, “light is a place” (*CP* 49). Being disillusioned with the idea of a God and the existence of a transcendental realm like heaven, “[h]eaven that never was / Nor will be ever is always true,” the rhymer turns to pantheism (*CP* 50-1). According to Ackerman, in the poem “ ‘Heaven’ remains an illusion that the poet paradoxically records rather than a Christian reality” (*Dylan Thomas* 135). Appreciating the regenerative power of nature, he declares that man is subjected to the same natural laws and like “plenty as blackberries in the woods,” human beings are born “in that brambled void,” and eventually are destined to die (*CP* 53-4). The way Thomas views God also rejects the idealisation of “a Being, conceived as perfect,

towards whom human effort is oriented” (Holroyd 142). Rejecting heaven as the exalting spiritual reward for death, what he proposes is death as a return to nature: “And, in that brambled void, / Plenty as blackberries in the woods / The dead grow for His joy” (CP 52-4). Because he reconceptualises God as a signifier, he suggests that God resides in nature, and man through his return to nature continues participating in his natural creative cycle: “The dead grow for His joy” (CP 54). As Holroyd maintains, the god he worships “possesses no attributes, is capable of neither love nor anger, but is conceived rather as a vague Force or Power which is responsible for the harmony of the world and is most clearly discernible in that harmony” (143). The pantheism of the poem is also enhanced with the idea that death involves man’s union with the divine and spiritual forces that dwell in nature. The poem reflects Thomas’s personalised faith when the speaker declares man as part of the nonhuman world, which at the same time, is the residence of “God and His Ghost” (CP 60). Rather than urging “the complete submission of his own will and the purification of the soul which follows the suppression of the sensual appetites,” man’s union with God could be reached with “a complete absorption in the life of the senses” (Holroyd 142-3). Therefore, the poem establishes the union between the rhymer and “the spirits of the horseshoe bay,” the “eagles,” “the roots of whales,” “wild geese,” as well as “every soul His priest” (CP 56, 58, 59, 61). This harmonious existence of all beings brings a sense of relief as he recreates earth as a heavenly place: “young Heaven’s fold / Be at cloud quaking peace” (CP 62- 63). Abolishing the Christian features of God, Thomas’s God neither asks for the “sacrifice of man,” nor requires any “particular effort of will ... to attain the condition of unity with him” (Holroyd 142). The speaker is conscious of the “continuing process of existence” which involves man’s reunion with the nonhuman world as “he loses human identity” (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 136). Consequently, by restoring the bond between man, nature and divine as well as by acknowledging the harmonious co-existence of the creative-destructive forces in the nonhuman world, the speaker frees himself from the agony of death.

The rhymer’s conflicts regarding life and death, God and mortality are resolved with the restoration of the ecocentric vision. Starting with stanza nine the

poem turns into an ecocentric manifesto which puts an end to all ambiguities and offers a holistic philosophy of life. The sense of holism is also reflected through the union of the speaker and the rhymers into one single consciousness signing nature's polyphonic ecocentric song as Thomas starts referring to the speaker and the rhymers as "me" and "I" (CP 76, 78). Acknowledging his mortality at the age of thirty five, the speaker accepts his death: "Oh, let me midlife mourn by the shrined / And druid herons' vows / The voyage to ruin I must run" (CP 76-8). As Korg points out, the speaker's former observations regarding the "balances of the destruction apparent in the life of the shore with the deliverance felt beyond it" reach a peak in this part of the poem and metamorphose into "a long period of paradoxical praise and thanks" (Dylan Thomas 95). He finds relief in sacred nature, declares herons as his druids, and sees death as a voyage to destruction. Consequently, despite being mortal and moving closer to death, the speaker abandons his pessimism and affirms his worth as a human being who accepts his unitary existence with nature.

The last three stanzas of "Poem on his Birthday" are meditations on how the speaker comes to terms with his mortality and resolves his midlife crisis. Highlighting Thomas's ecocentric consciousness as an ecopoet, they express his ability "to restore us to the earth which is our home" (Bate, *The Song* ix). Thomas's use of colon also signifies the speaker's altered perception and mode. The ninth stanza ends with a declaration which announces his mortality and his unity with nature: "Yet, though I cry with tumbledown tongue, / Count my blessing aloud:" (CP 80-1):

Four elements and five
Senses, and man a spirit in love
Tangling through this spun slime
To his nimbus bell cool kingdom come
And the lost, moonshine domes,
And the sea that hides his secret selves
Deep in its black, base bones,
Lulling of spheres in the seashell flesh,
And this last blessing most, (CP 82-90)

This statement not only declares Thomas's ecocentric vision by uniting all the arguments in the poem, but also emphasises his cyclical notion of temporality. The way the speaker defines who man is challenges all anthropocentric values and implies that man is part of nature. Being generated from the "[f]our elements" and having "five / Senses," "man" is "a spirit in love" who starts his journey with his birth into this world ruled by death: "Thangling through this spun slime / To his nimbus bell cool kingdom come" (*CP* 82-3, 84-5). The speaker's ecocentric manifesto continues with the statements revealing that throughout his life man's mind is always pre-occupied with the idea of death: "And the sea that hides his secret selves / Deep in its black, base bones" (*CP* 87-8). Reflecting on death, however, makes him realise "this last blessing most" (*CP* 90):

That the closer I move
To death, one man through his sundered hulks,
The louder the sun blooms
And the tusked, ramshackling sea exults;
And every wave of the way
And gale I tackle, the whole world then,
With more triumphant faith
That ever was since the world was said,
Spins its morning of praise, (*CP* 91-9)

In addition to helping him recognise his essential unity with nature, acknowledging his mortality also allows him to celebrate the beauty of life and the vitality of nature. Such images like "[t]he louder the sun blooms," "the tusked, ramshackling sea exults," "every wave of the way" and the "gale" he confronts express the speaker's optimistic view of life as well as displaying "With more triumphant faith / Than ever was since the world was said / Spins its morning of praise" (*CP* 93, 94, 95, 96, 97-9). Similar to what Holroyd maintains, "Poem on his Birthday" is among the latter works in which "the note of morbidity" regarding the representation of death gives way to its "joyful acceptance" (146).

The poem ends with the speaker's praise for nature, its beauties and the continuation of life. The cyclical flow of temporality and the co-existence of life and death are foregrounded once again as the speaker's reflections on his own death are juxtaposed with the images of regeneration in nature. Bate calls for the

restoration of “[t]he romantic sublime” in order to attack man/nature duality (“Green Romanticism” 67). Although it is rather difficult to associate Thomas with romantic idealism, it is possible to argue that as an eco-poet he approaches nature “with wonder and reverence” and demonstrates the endeavour to poeticise its sublimity (“Green Romanticism” 67). In spite of the forthcoming death implied by the image of “berry brown / Fall,” the speaker perceives the vitality of the natural cycle and conceptualises death as a rebirth for he “hear[s] the bouncing hills / Grow larked and greener at berry brown” (*CP* 101-2, 100-1). His altered attitude to death and temporality is also reflected in his approach to nature. Nature is not only the home of the nonhuman beings, but it is also the spiritual resting residence for man: “More spanned with angles ride / The mansouled fiery islands” (*CP* 104-5). Because death is natural and is conceived as a return to nature, life as a journey to death is no longer terrifying:

Oh,
Holier than their eyes,
And my shining men no more alone
As I sail out to die. (*CP* 105- 108)

His holistic perception of life relieves his agony and after acknowledging himself as part of nature, the speaker resumes his optimism and is ready to set sail. Although, throughout the poem, Thomas portrays “the duel between resistance and acceptance” of death, it ends with the image of a speaker, who “feels that he can meet with death without resistance” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 94).

Despite originating from Thomas’s personal struggle to resolve conflicts regarding life and death, the restoration of the holistic ecocentric vision in “Poem on his Birthday” through the revival of pantheism has its universal dimension, too. Reflecting the spirit of third wave ecocriticism, the poem demonstrates Thomas’s desire to express the universal through the portrayal of the personal while he enquires into “all facets of human experience from an environmental viewpoint” (Adamson and Slovic, qtd. in Slovic “The Third Wave” 4). The actual Laugharne environment with its estuary and bay along with life-death struggles of their nonhuman inhabitants triggers Thomas’s imagination to explore the universal

human endeavour to make sense of their being and existence. As Fraser maintains, despite the presence of a contemporary reading public that criticised him for composing repetitive poems lacking intellectual depth and being obscure, “Thomas obviously did succeed in communicating in verse, to a very large public by modern standards, something which that public felt important” (4). Today, however, his portrayal of the essential interconnectedness of all beings along with the urge to raise ecocentric consciousness adds to the poet’s significance. Thomas’s representation of death in “Poem on his Birthday” is one of the major works in which the “individual” metamorphoses into “impersonal” expressing all beings’ never ending ontological quest (Fraser 5). Moreover, what is striking about “Poem on his Birthday” is the argument that nature is also the heaven and the residence of God, which redefines nature as the cosmic space where the earthly and the spiritual realms are united. Offering a celebratory account of the universal ecocentric harmony, the poem attacks man/nature duality and depicts how Thomas’s personal resolution to his crisis of being is at the same time the fundamental premise around which everyone should be united.

By way of conclusion, it can be stated that as a follow up to the subversion of man/nature duality in his early poetry based on the organic interconnectedness between man and nature, Thomas’s challenge to dichotomous logic in his later poems, “After the Funeral,” “In Country sleep” and “Poem on his Birthday” assumes a more spiritual and philosophical dimension. The ecocritical reading of these works manifests how Thomas gradually matures as a post-pastoral poet and an ecopoet, who celebrates the restoration of ecocentrism as the organising principle in both his life and poetry and sang the polyphonic song of nature. Thomas’s existentialist conflict causes a severe sense of frustration with Christianity and faith in the existence of God as a transcendental signified. The decentred world that he encounters encourages him to turn to Welsh pantheism and literature, which plays an indispensable role in the poet’s creation of his personalised religion by reconceptualising nature as a sacred domain where God dwelled. The revival of pantheism also contributes to the resolution of the anxiety regarding death and mortality as it encourages the poet to consider death as man’s return to nature. Consequently, it is observed that by elaborating on Welsh literary

motifs like druids, bards and rhymers, Thomas composes ecopoems that voice the polyphonic ecocentric song of nature's holiness and the spiritually rewarding interconnectedness between the human and nonhuman beings. The ecocritical discussion of "After the funeral" displays how the revival of Welsh literature and mysticism allows Thomas to subvert the Christian anthropocentric discourse against the background of the holistic ecocentric discourse. Undermining the lack of spirituality in the Christian mourning rituals, he composes an ecocentric elegy in which the druid-bard speaker conducts a subversive ecocentric burial celebrating his aunt's union with the elements of nature. The ecocritical discussion of "In Country Sleep" displays another dimension of Thomas's challenge to man/nature duality as it undermines all ideological codifications of nature by declaring it as holy while announcing man with his anthropocentric and progressive desires as the real threat to both human and nonhuman wellbeing. Man's humanist desire to master nature created a civilisation that has destroyed and has been continuing to threaten the human and nonhuman existence regardless of its rural or urban environment. As an ecopoem, "In Country Sleep" reveals how the restoration of man's union with nature encourages Thomas to acknowledge death as part of the natural creative-destructive processes. The ecocentric holism of the poem portrays the agony of the speaker father, who advises his daughter to consider death as natural as sleep. The celebration of the ecocentric spirit reaches its peak in his last birthday poem, "Poem on his Birthday," as one of the most significant works representing ecocentric polyphony. The ecocritical discussion of the poem indicates how the revitalisation of ecocentrism contributes to the resolution of the poet's existentialist conflict regarding birth and death. Quite contrary to the premises of the Christian anthropocentric discourse concerning the hierarchical chain of beings, the speaker declares God as part of nature; thus, death involves man's union with nature and the divine. Despite the fact that these ecopoems are inspired by Thomas's personal experience and mirror the Welsh culture, they offer universal glimpses of how to become a citizen of the earth by redefining man, nature and the divine in the post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian universe. Reflecting the spirit of third wave ecocriticism, as an ecopoet Thomas not only expresses the universal agony

of the modern man and his yearning for spirituality, but also represents the relief that ecocentric holism can provide.

3.3 Ecocentric Polyphony and the Oppressed Other

As the last point of discussion regarding the subversion of man/nature dichotomy in Dylan Thomas's poetry, this section will elaborate on how as a post-pastoral poet he expands his polyphonic ecocentrism and voices the injustice against the oppressed other. Thomas's personal quest for meaning and the gradual restoration of the ecocentric spirit in his life and poetry makes him realise the exploitation and the oppression of both nonhuman and human beings by the dominant progressive anthropocentric and patriarchal discourse. In his later volumes, in *The Map of Love* and *Deaths and Entrances*, in particular, he directs his attention to more social subjects. As part of the endeavour to create a polyphonic ecocentric vision, he composes various poems in which he not only tries to restore the unity between man and nature, but also reconceptualises the silenced members of the nonhuman and human worlds as speaking subjects. To this end, in light of the theoretical background on social ecofeminism and the environmental justice movement, in this chapter the thesis will discuss the post-pastoral representation of the deconstruction of man/nature duality as well as the poet's call for the revival of the ecocentric discourse and consciousness in the poems "Because the pleasure-bird whistles," "The tombstone told" and "Love in the Asylum."

As the opening poem of Thomas's third volume, *The Map of Love*, "Because the pleasure-bird whistles" demonstrates the predicament of the modernist suburban poet who reflects on the entrapment both the nonhuman and the human beings encounter at the backdrop of the chaotic atmosphere of the late 1930s, when the world was on the brink of another war. The poem can be regarded as one of the major works in *The Map of Love* that bear the traces of the several conflicts the Western world confronted such as "Italy invading Abyssinia, the Spanish civil war, and German annexations in Europe" (Davies 161). In Bate's view, ecocriticism "speak[s] on behalf of the Other," that is nature, which as the

“subject” of ecocriticism cannot “speak for itself” (*The Song* 72). Quite in parallel with Bate’s ideas on the significance of ecocritical theory, in “Because the pleasure-bird whistles,” Dylan Thomas creates a poet speaker who tries to speak for the nonhuman world and foregrounds both the oppression the nonhuman beings are exposed to and the environmental injustice the marginalised other suffers within the urban environment. Reflecting the social ecofeminist premise to fight for “the liberation of all oppressed groups,” “Because the pleasure-bird whistles,” is considered as a post-pastoral poem that portrays the exploitation of a bird (Gaard “Living Interconnections” 5). Moreover, it gives expression to the environmental injustice the marginalised other suffers. The poem’s subversion of man/nature duality also raises awareness on what Gifford calls the post-pastoral urge to transform ecocentric consciousness to ecocentric conscience (*Pastoral* 163).

As part of Thomas’s polyphonic ecocentric vision, this post-pastoral poem echoes nonanthropocentric environmentalists’ attack on the injustice and cruelty to the nonhuman animals and problematises the victimisation of the pleasure-bird to satisfy the desires of man, the master. The image of the blind bird in the first line of the poem, “[b]ecause the pleasure bird whistles after hot wires,” can be regarded as just one form of violation of what Low and Gleeson call “*ecological justice*” that is caused by man/nature duality (*CP* 1; 2). As pointed out by Davies, this vulgar act originates from the idea that when they are blinded, the birds “would sing better” (161). The striking image of the blind bird at the service of the pleasure seeking man symbolises how, since the emergence of the Enlightenment project, the entire nonhuman world has been reduced to a passive object to be controlled to satisfy man’s progressive ideals. Clark declares that at the backdrop of rationalism “nature” signifies “the nonhuman world, the non-artificial,” and is reduced to a mere “object of human contemplation, exploitation, wonder or terror” (7). However, the blind pleasure-bird undermines man’s illusory mastery over nature by displaying the ironic predicament of the urban man, who despite being codified as the master, still feels the need to be in contact with the nonhuman world. Dichotomous logic with its false hierarchical codifications alienates man from nature and ignores the fact that “[l]ike all species” man exists

in an “ecosystem” (Bate “Green Romanticism” 67). The urban civilisation based on the Western man’s progressive desires has not only destroyed his own natural “ecosystem,” but also “every other species’ ecosystem” (“Green Romanticism” 67). Therefore, as Gifford observes the urge to be in touch with nature is more pressing among the urban dwellers who because of being cut off from nature and “living in large industrial cities ... need to have unmediated contact with” the nonhuman realm (“The Social Construction” 29). Foregrounding the constructed nature of dualistic thinking, “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” reflects the modern man’s desire to tame and shape nature in order to escape the agonies of his entrapment as well as the threat of another war by listening to the song of the pleasure-bird. Quite in parallel with nonanthropocentric environmentalist theory, which, as Peter S. Wenz, in “Does Environmentalism Promote Injustice for the Poor?” observes, challenges any humanist motives and calls for disinterested theories of environmental preservation, the poem’s subversion of man/nature duality demands a fundamental change in ecological ethical values. The poem urges man to appreciate the rights of other species when, as Wenz proposes, human well-being is not at stake (58).

Another portrayal of the ecocentric polyphony in this post-pastoral poem is given through the representation of the social ecofeminist holistic attack on the objectification of the marginalised human beings by the dominant progressive anthropocentric discourse. Establishing the essential unity between the speaker poet and the members of the nonhuman world, as part of his ecophony, Thomas also undermines the alienation of human beings within the urban setting. Echoing Bookchin’s critique of urbanisation as “a form of social cannibalism” the poet speaker identifies his own entrapment in the urban context with the violent custom of blinding the birds to sing better (*Urbanization* 3). The speaker resembles himself to a horse and questions whether it is possible for him to forget the ugly and bitter side of real life and create escapist illusions in his work: “Shall the blind horse sing sweeter?” (*CP* 2). Because he shares the same fate with the bird, the poet speaker, though his blindness is metaphorical, is expected to turn a blind eye to the collapsing state of civilisation and compose poems to please the urban dwellers who long for a better future suggested by the context of the coming new-

year. According to Davies, the poem bears a “dreadful personal relevance: the singer sings because of self-destructive activities to which he is irresistibly drawn” (161). Unlike the rhymer in “Poem on his Birthday,” who celebrates man as part of nature, the poet in this poem is alienated from nature and elaborates on the destructive effects of dualistic thinking. Being the first poem in Thomas’s third collection, “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” expresses the frustrations of the poet regarding the Western civilisation, which is threatened by the impending Second World War and the state of urban life when 1938 comes to its end: “Convenient bird and beast lie lodge to suffer / The supper and knives of a mood” (*CP* 3-4). As “a poem presaging disaster,” it represents the dark state of civilisation with the descending fear of war and how lack of spirituality in the urban life torments both the animal and the human beings (Davies 161). While the bird’s blindness forces it to whistle and satisfy its listeners, the poem as the metaphorical song of the poet displays the collapse of modern civilisation.

“Because the pleasure-bird whistles” also voices the environmental injustice the marginalised other undergo in the urban environment. The victimisation of nonhuman and human beings is highlighted with the caged existence of the pleasure-bird as well as the entrapment of the speaker in the broken rooms of London, which fail to provide him with a shelter from the winter cold and snow. The poem displays the ecological injustice done to the bird which is denied the right to live and sing freely in its own natural manner and environment. Similarly, the speaker, who represents the alienated state of existence of the marginalised people in the urban environment, is disconnected from nature and because of “disparate distribution of wealth and power” he is also denied access to proper living conditions and food (Adams, Evans, and Stein 5). In a world which is devastated by war, economic depression, serious political conflicts and the threat of another war, the poem draws attention to “environmental degradation” such people are exposed to (Adams, Evans, and Stein 4). “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” is a bitter attack on the Western man’s glorification of the city, which in Short’s words is regarded as “a metaphor for social change, an icon of the present at the edge of the transformation of the past into the future” as well as “the emancipator trajectory of urbanization” (41,

43). The urban context where the speaker is forced to live is one manifestation of the anti-urbanist view of “the city” as “a wilderness” for it provides “an unnatural setting for the anonymous interaction of an alienated population” (Short 44, 47). Surrounded by “wilderness,” the speaker is defined as “[a]n enamoured man alone,” with no one to share his grief and suffering (Short 44; *CP* 7). The poem also maintains the identification between the poet speaker and the blind pleasure bird through the references to his eyes: “the twigs of his eyes, two fires,” which watch “the drug-white shower of nerves and food,” signifying his struggle against both cold and hunger (*CP* 7, 8). The speaker’s unnatural state of existence and his fight against cold and hunger in the urban environment are juxtaposed with several other images:

Savours the lick of the times though a deadly wood of hair,
 In a wind that plucked a goose,
 Nor ever, as the wild tongue breaks its tombs,
 Rounds to look at the red, wagged root. (*CP* 9-12)

Due to the frost of the broken rooms, his hair is resembled to “a deadly wood of hair” in the cold winter wind, which blows so strong that as if it “plucked a goose” (*CP* 9-10). Moreover, his inability to move as well as the difficulty to stand firm are expressed with the image of a tree that is “red” with its “wagged root” (*CP* 12).

Quite integral to his desire to give expression to the concerns of the oppressed other, in “Because the pleasure-bird whistles,” Thomas problematises the dead end of the Enlightenment project and the idea of progress. As Eckersley observes, the “ecofeminist project” undermines the anthropocentric ideal to progress and rejects “many of the ‘advances’ of patriarchal culture” (64). In the same manner, the poem critiques the degenerate state of Western civilisation. With the identification of London with Sodom, Thomas subverts the linear flow of the Western history and demonstrates that progress is an illusion. Questioning the achievements of Western humanist culture, the poem suggests that London in the late 1938 and the early 1939, as the capital of the British colonial empire and a leading centre of civilisation, was equally corrupt like Sodom in the Biblical story

of Lot's wife: "Because there stands, one story out of the bum city, / That frozen wife" (13-4). However, Thomas uses such allusions to intensify the entrapment of the modern urban dweller. While the biblical characters had the opportunity to escape corruption, the speaker does not have the chance to take refuge in a better place as urbanisation and war are the ever-present threats. As it is pointed out by Tindall, Dylan Thomas composed the poem during his stay in London in December 1938 (145). Despite being a source of attraction for his emancipation from the Welsh Nonconformist background and implied advances in his poetic career, for Dylan Thomas, London was quite a terrifying place. In his letter to Watkins, written on 20th December, 1938, he comments on the dreadful impacts of London life on him and his determination to avoid going there: "I've just come back from three dark days in London, city of the restless dead. It really is an insane city, & filled me with terror ... I'm not going to London again for years" (CL 343). Similar to Thomas's antagonism towards London life expressed in his letter to Watkins, the speaker in the poem wishes to escape this degenerate urban environment and wants to live in a more peaceful place. Nonetheless, quite compatible with the post-pastoral treatment of the pastoral motif of retreat and return, the speaker cannot run away from the ugliness of the urban life and chooses to poeticise on it. Thus, different from Lot's wife, despite the threat of being turned into a stone, he looks at the city and contemplates on its collapsing civilisation:

That frozen wife whose juices drift like a fixed sea
Secretly in statuary,
Shall I, struck on hot and rocking street,
Not spin to stare at an old year (CP 14-8).

As Davies observes, "Thomas is determined to examine that past" and is determined to "draw a lesson from it" (161). Moreover, through the images of "the sniffed and poured snow on the tip of the tongue of the year," the poem foregrounds how progressive time consumes both the human and the nonhuman potential as it "clouts the spittle like bubbles with broken rooms" (CP 5, 6). By personifying the "old year," and resembling it to "the mauled pictures of boys,"

the speaker observes how it is “[t]oppling and burning in the muddle of towers and galleries” (*CP* 17, 19, 18).

His disillusionment with the present state of human progress is further intensified with the identification of the biblical characters with contemporary urban dwellers: “The salt person and blasted place / I furnish with the meat of a fable” (*CP* 20-1). Undermining progress and civilisation as mere illusions, the poem declares that the modern poet speaker and the biblical figures are actually the characters in the same story. Despite being inspired by the degeneration of London in late 1938, the ending of the poem assumes an allegorical dimension as it reflects on the whole history of the Western civilisation by resembling it to “the past table,” on which “the dead starve, their stomachs turn to tumble” (*CP* 25, 22). Expressing the speaker’s pessimism regarding human civilisation and his lack of hope for a better future, the poem ends with the ironic declaration of contemporary state of existence as a “present grace” (*CP* 25). Consequently, rather than being an account of “only a personal crisis,” the poem is a representation of “a collapsing world already in flames” (Davies 161).

As part of its desire to speak for the oppressed nonhuman and human beings, as a polyphonic post-pastoral poem “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” demands a vital change in Western anthropocentric discourse’s treatment of the marginalised other. By challenging the anthropocentric “consciousness” that in Gifford’s words “has for centuries appeared to set us apart from nature,” the poem revitalises ecocentric consciousness (*Pastoral* 164). Inspired by Dylan Thomas’s personal experience, “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” is an account of the speaker’s consciousness of the way both nature and man are victimised by this anthropocentric discourse. Quite similar to the ecofeminist challenge to “instrumentalist values, and mechanistic models,” the post-pastoral features in the poem draw attention to the “intrinsic value” of the nonhuman world (Birkeland 20; Naess 29). Thomas’s subversion of anthropocentric needs is compatible with the social ecofeminist call for respect and the recognition of each species integral place in nature. The poem also urges the prioritisation of bioethics that requires man to “respect plants, animals and all nature, which has a right to existence and humane treatment” (Pepper, *Modern Environmentalism* 15). What is more, it also

calls into question the anthropocentric codification of a nonhuman being as a “pleasure-bird,” claiming that its essential aim is to please its master (*CP* 1). The poet speaker’s awareness about the victimisation of the nonhuman beings cannot be dissociated from Dylan Thomas’s consciousness of the alienation of human beings due to the ideals of Western progressive history.

The ecocritical discussion of “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” displays the fundamental function literature and poetry can have in the way nature is conceptualised. Like what McKusick, in *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*, proposes, the poem offers significant insights into “the interrogation of fundamental ethical values” and the subversion of the anthropocentric discourse by the principles of ecocentrism (200). In addition to demanding consciousness regarding the suffering of the pleasure-bird and the poet speaker as the representatives of the oppression of both the nonhuman and the human beings, as a post-pastoral poem, it stimulates ecocentric conscience. Thomas’s portrayal of the “intrinsic value” of nature evolves into “conscience,” as in Gifford’s words: “with consciousness comes conscience” (Naess 29; *Pastoral* 163). Similar to the holistic challenge of social ecofeminism, the ecocentric consciousness of the poem reveals the essential unity between nature and man, and calls for the appreciation of the inherent worth of all living beings. Thus, it urges the development of an ecocentric conscience inspired by “the need to improve our relationship with our neighbours on this planet” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 173). Through abolishing all hopes for a better future and rejecting the existence of a peaceful refuge, the poem represents the “dialectical experience” of human beings who live in a time when there is no “separation between urban and rural existence” (*Pastoral* 173). As part of its call for ecocentric conscience, “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” points out the necessity for the subversion of the anthropocentric and humanist codifications of nature and man. Since under these circumstances the pastoral retreat offers no relief, rather than escaping, man is compelled “to take responsibility for its [nature’s] ecological relationships and its ultimate survival” by creating more ecocentric solutions such as calling for the termination of the victimization of nature and man (Gifford, *Pastoral* 164). Consequently, it can be said that as a precursor of post-pastoral poetry, in the

poem Dylan Thomas expresses his “plea for environmentally sensitive local and global management” (*Pastoral* 164).

Integral to his ecocentric polyphony, Thomas composed post-pastoral poems in which he voices the exploitation of women. While “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” elaborates on the way man’s mastery exploits the nonhuman beings and the urban dwellers, another poem from *The Map of Love*, “The tombstone told,” explores the marginalisation of women. Quite similar to the context of the previous poem, this poem brings together the major concerns of social ecofeminist theory and post-pastoral poetry. Inspired by the ecofeminist goal to challenge all kinds of injustice and oppression regardless of their cause such as “race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species,” as an ecophonic post-pastoral poem, “The tombstone told” elaborates on the dreadful consequences of silencing of women by Western anthropocentric discourse that is codified by patriarchal values (Gaard, “Living Interconnections” 1). Attacking man/nature and man/woman dualities, “The tombstone told” demonstrates how the oppression of the woman in the poem causes her madness and, eventually, leads to her suicide.

The social ecofeminist subversion of man/nature and man/woman dichotomies in “The tombstone told” starts with the critique of the reduction of woman into a dumb and passive object. Just as nature is objectified to fulfil the progressive goals of anthropocentric discourse, the poem foregrounds the oppressive mechanism that the phallogocentric discourse imposes on the woman and silences her. Quite parallel to what Plumwood declares, the poem reveals how the alliance between dualistic thinking, “domination and accumulation” metamorphoses into “major cultural expressions and justifications” of the ones that are oppressed (42). In order to objectify the mutual oppression of both nature and women, Thomas composes a post-pastoral poem in which the protagonist is absent or not acknowledged until the last stanza, in which a bird sings the song of the oppressed other. The ecofeminist discussion of the poem highlights how gender is politically constructed and that it cannot be discussed independently of issues like “power, dominance, and masculinity” (Birkeland 15). For the purpose of voicing her exploitation, Thomas creates a speaker who, through the subversion

of her dumbness, reconstructs her real story. The process of digging out her hidden history is initiated with the verbalisation of the inscriptions on her tombstone:

The tombstone told when she died.
Her two surnames stopped me still.
A virgin married at rest.
She married in this pouring place,
That I struck one day by luck,
Before I heard in my mother's side
Or saw in the looking-glass shell
The rain through her cold heart speak
And the sun killed in her face.
More the thick stone cannot tell. (*CP* 1-10)

The patriarchal victimisation of the woman is highlighted with the brevity of the inscriptions on the tombstone. The fact that Thomas consciously avoids mentioning her name, but rather foregrounds her two surnames, the “married name and maiden name” signifies her abuse by patriarchy represented by her father or by her husband (Tindall 167). The poem indicates that the oppression of both nature and woman originates from the man/nature dichotomy. As Gaard observes, the alliance between anthropocentric discourse and patriarchy results in “feminizing nature” as well as “naturalizing or animalizing women,” which, in turn, justified “the domination of women, animals, and the earth” (“Living Interconnections” 5). In the same manner, the first line, “[t]he tombstone told when she died” also undermines the objectification of the woman, as it mocks the patriarchal indifference to the conditions leading to her death (*CP* 1). Although the information on the tombstone foregrounds her death, the speaker declares that rather than when, the reason why she died needs to be questioned. However, due to the obscurity of her life and death, the speaker, as Korg stresses, assumes an “unusually bare and reportorial” stance (*Dylan Thomas* 83). Because he is stricken by the presence of “two surnames” on the tombstone and the idea that she was “[a] virgin married,” he dedicates himself to reconstructing her life story by putting together the information he collects from different sources (*CP* 2, 3). Upon reading the surnames on her tombstone, the speaker recalls the day when,

by coincidence, he witnessed her wedding. The poem problematises the way marriage is enforced on women against their will. Thus, her virginity indicates how she was treated as a passive object since she was compelled to marry a man she did not love. In order to communicate her oppression, the speaker directs his attention to voices and patterns of nature. In addition to emphasising her oneness with nature and that the nonhuman world shared her grief, the expressions of “pouring place”, “[t]he rain through her cold heart speak,” and “the sun killed in her face” demonstrate that her life was full of deep woe and pain (*CP* 4, 8, 9). Korg regards her as one of the figures that demonstrates Dylan Thomas’s concern with the representation of “the figure of the natural, lunatic, or simpleton (often a woman) who offers love or devotion to an uncomprehending world but who meets with suffering or indifference” (*Dylan Thomas* 82). Determined to go beyond the limited knowledge that is available, “[m]ore the thick stone cannot tell,” the speaker pursues the rewriting of her story based on further inquiry (*CP* 10).

The social ecofeminist challenge to man/nature and man/womn dualities is revealed in the second stanza, in which the speaker intensifies her exploitation with the representation of her body and the details that led to her madness. Despite the obscurity of her life prior to her marriage, with references to “the devilish years and innocent deaths,” the speaker alludes to her former affair which resulted in her pregnancy signified by “[t]o the room of a secret child” (*CP* 14, 15). Both in his earlier poems and in his letters, Thomas expressed his criticism of the Welsh Nonconformist society which allows no room for people to satisfy their natural sexual impulses. “The tombstone told” is a portrayal of the bitter outcomes of such oppression. As the details of her victimisation unfold, the poem metamorphoses into her cry against injustice:

Before she lay on a stranger’s bed
With a hand plunged through her hair,
Or that rainy tongue beat back
Through the devilish years and innocent deaths,
To the room of a secret child,
Among men later I heard it said
She cried her white-dressed limbs were bare
And her red lips were kissed black,

She wept in her pain and made mouths,
Talked and tore though her eyes smiled. (*CP* 11-20)

As it is implied by “the room of a secret child,” she was pregnant (*CP* 15). Not having another solution, she married a man who, despite the marriage bond, is still regarded as a mere stranger: “she lay on a stranger’s bed” (*CP* 11). As Birkeland puts it, a true critique of the oppression of women and nature cannot be performed “without addressing male-centeredness and sexism” (16). Therefore, quite in line with the ecofeminist attack on “the ethic of dominance,” the poem problematises marriage as an institution at the service of patriarchal hierarchy (Birkeland 20). It questions the abuse of her body and its reduction to a mere object to satisfy men’s desire and condemns marriage as an institution which allows men to possess the female body as the stranger husband’s “hand plunged through her hair / Or that rainy tongue beat back” (*CP* 12-3). The agony caused by her abuse expressed in “[s]he cried her white-dressed limbs were bare / And her red lips were kissed black” exposes the hypocrisy of the patriarchal society which overlooks the psychological and emotional needs of women and reduces them to mere bodies that invoke sexual pleasure (*CP* 17-8). The poem condemns the sanctimony of the patriarchal figures who witness her case: “Among men later I heard it said” (*CP* 16). Ignoring the underlying causes of her madness, the men’s account of her story, “mouths, / Talked” still foregrounds her body as an object of desire with her “bare” “limbs” and “red lips” (*CP* 19-20, 17, 18). At the end of the second stanza, the speaker’s reconstruction of her story assumes a new dimension with the introduction of her madness. Although insanity is the unavoidable outcome of the unbearable anguish she suffers, Thomas foregrounds its liberating function. Despite the outburst of madness when “[s]he wept in her pain and made mouths, / Talked and tore though her eyes smiled,” it sets her free (*CP* 19-20).

As a polyphonic post-pastoral poem voicing the injustice against women, “The tombstone told” condemns the oppressive patriarchal society where women are emancipated only through madness or death. The speaker’s reconstruction of the poor woman’s history is finalised with his making her voice heard in the song “[o]f the stone bird guarding her” in the last stanza (*CP* 25). Therefore, the poem

becomes the cry of the two unvoiced repressed beings, who are marginalised and silenced by the anthropocentric and patriarchal discourses. From an ecofeminist point of view, the poem calls for a social transformation that is only possible after abolishing the perspectives of what Birkeland calls “Masculinist or ‘Manstream’ theory” (15). To highlight the prevalence of madness and suicide among the oppressed women and to criticise the patriarchal society’s disregard for the underlying causes of such events, the speaker refers to her death as if it was a scene he saw in a film:

I who saw in a hurried film
Death and this mad heroine
Meet once on a mortal wall
Heard her speak through the chipped beak
Of the stone bird guarding her:
I died before bedtime came
But my womb was bellowing
And I felt with my bare fall
A blazing red harsh head tear up
And the dear floods of his hair. (*CP* 21-30)

The poem’s attack on man/nature and man/woman dichotomies identifies the world of the nonhuman with the woman as the fellow sufferers. The idea that she “died before bedtime came” might suggest her untimely death as “[d]eath and this mad heroine / Meet once on a mortal wall” (*CP* 26, 22-3). However, the holistic ecocentric perception of life offers a relief to her agonies. Following her “bare fall,” she is not only liberated from all oppression, but is also united with nature and becomes part of its regenerative processes (*CP* 28). Her suicide terminates her life along with the life of her baby; yet, the images of her “bellowing” “womb,” “[a] blazing red harsh head,” and “the dear floods” signifying fertility and vitality implying regeneration (*CP* 27, 29, 30). Thus, the speaker’s rewriting of the woman’s story ends with the ecocentric reconciliation highlighting the ecocentric interconnectedness of all beings.

The social ecofeminist discussion of “The tombstone told” reveals how, as a post-pastoral poem, it raises consciousness that the oppression of both nature and women are caused by anthropocentric discourse and its patriarchal

manifestations of power. Being part of the marginalised and repressed, the woman in the poem represents what is uncanny and dark in both nature and women that the anthropocentric discourse and patriarchy cannot resolve and control. Quite parallel to what Marti Kheel, in “From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge,” says, integral to its ecofeminist demand for social transformation, the poem declares that “one cannot change what one does not understand” (244). The fact that Thomas deliberately avoids mentioning her name adds a universal dimension to the poem’s challenge to man/nature (woman) duality. Through the portrayal of the victimisation of one woman, the poem raises awareness about the way both nature and women have been exploited. The poem’s struggle to draw attention to the mutual oppression of woman and nature calls for a universal and groundbreaking challenge to dualistic thinking since as Gaard declares: “no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature” (“Living Interconnections” 1).

Apart from the exploitation of the nonhuman beings and women, social ecofeminism extends its scope by questioning the injustice against the other marginalised figures. Being inspired by the theories developed in ecological, feminist and social sciences as well as in the field of environmental justice, ecofeminism attacks different forms of oppression, all of which are derivatives of man/nature(woman) duality constructed by humanist ideology (Gaard, “Living Interconnections” 1). It challenges power relations in the society and its critique of dualistic thinking which determines the course of things in these relations is manifested in post-pastoral literature, which, as Gifford declares, is rooted in the ecofeminists’ realisation that the oppression of the nonhuman beings cannot be dissociated from the oppression that women and minorities encounter (*Pastoral* 164). “Love in the Asylum,” in *Deaths and Entrances*, is one of his poems in which Thomas offers a polyphonic representation of social ecofeminist and post-pastoral concern with the minority figures who are identified with nature. Because “Love in the Asylum” is a criticism of the power/discourse alliance as well as the constructed nature of dualistic thinking, Foucauldian theories on the subjectification of the human beings along with his ideas on the codification of

space and heterotopias offer significant contribution to the poem's ecophonic subversion of the anthropocentric discourse.

"Love in the Asylum" problematises the injustice the speaker of the poem suffers during the subjectification process of the dominant anthropocentric discourse. Like the protagonist of "The tombstone told," the speaker of the poem is marginalised because of his bond with nature and is codified as mad. "Love in the Asylum" with its speaker, who is kept in the asylum, reflects Foucauldian theory on how the alliance between the dominant discourse and institutions of power controls the construction of human identity and oppresses those who do not comply with the normalisation processes. In the afterword, "The Subject and Power" to *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Foucault discusses " 'dividing practices' " through which "[t]he subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others" (208). To illustrate, Foucault mentions the categories of "the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, and the criminals and the 'good boys' " ("The Subject and Power" 208). Foucault explores the mechanisms and the instruments of the "official discourses" in the "process of normalisation" which create clearly defined categories like "the normal person" and "the good citizen," as opposed to " the pathological specimen" and "the delinquent" (McHoul and Grace 17). Similarly, as Hardy points out, "Love in the Asylum" is Thomas's poetic response to "Cefn Coed", "the new asylum conspicuously built in 1931 on one of Swansea's surrounding hills" (*Dylan Thomas* 114). In light of Foucauldian theory, with its setting "Love in the Asylum" contributes to the post-pastoral representation of the social ecofeminist challenge to the discursive dividing practices codified by dichotomous logic. In the poem, Thomas creates a speaker who violates the codes of normality dictated by the dominant discourse as "patients in psychiatric hospitals [asylums] were then uninhibitedly called mad, even lunatic" (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 114). Demonstrating the social ecofeminist concern for the marginalised other, this ecophonic poem undermines the constructed nature of sane/mad demarcation and attacks the marginalisation of both nature and those who identify themselves with the natural.

In the poem, Thomas uses the asylum as a metaphor to emphasise the physical and the psychological entrapment the speaker has to bear as part of the discursive reconstruction of his identity within the so called normalisation process. By undermining the reduction of space into a passive background, the poem reveals how it is utilised as “a *force*” to control human action as the speaker is confined to live in the asylum (Wegner 181). Through such expressions as “the nightmarish room,” “the male wards” and “the madhouse boards worn thin by my walking tears,” Thomas highlights the unnatural state of the speaker’s living conditions (CP 7, 9, 15). Nature appears in the poem as an absent presence. The speaker’s physical confinement in a small room; however, cannot suppress the urge to be in contact with nature, which is highlighted with his references to “clouds,” “oceans,” “skies” and “stars” (CP 6, 9, 12, 18). Thus, the speaker yearns for the antithetical form of his living conditions which are embedded in nature.

The post-pastoral representation of the marginalisation of nature and the speaker in the poem leads to the metamorphosis of the asylum from a discursive mechanism of normalisation to a subversive Foucauldian heterotopia. In spite of the totalising control imposed on the creation of the urban as well as the non-urban space by institutions of power, in “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,” Foucault identifies spaces that have subversive characteristics as they represent diversity and plurality. He divides the kind of spaces “which are linked with all the others,” but at the same time “contradict all the other sites” in two categories: “the utopias” and “heterotopias” (Foucault, “Of Other Spaces” 3-4). Foucault defines utopias as the “sites with no real place” offering the perfect image of the society (“Of Other Spaces” 3). As opposed to the utopic sites, Foucault positions heterotopias which are the “real places” that exist “probably in every culture, in every civilization” (“Of Other Spaces” 3). Furthermore, in an interview, Foucault defines heterotopias as the kind of “singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others” (“Space, Knowledge, and Power” 252). The asylum in the poem is a manifestation of what Foucault calls “heterotopias of deviation,” as the sites which are occupied by people “whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the

required mean or norm” (“Of Other Spaces” 5). Foucault cites “rest homes and psychiatric hospitals,” “prisons” and “retirement homes” to exemplify the “heterotopias of deviation” (“Of Other Spaces” 5). In “Love in the Asylum,” despite being a “heterotopia of deviation,” rather than contributing to the normalisation of the speaker and his codification as a sane being, the asylum encourages him to rely on his imaginative faculties and create an illusory world which transcends man/nature, city/country and culture/nature dualities (“Of Other Spaces” 5). Subverting the function of the asylum to discipline the defiant according to the anthropocentric humanist codifications, the poem declares that rather than its inhabitants, it is the society that needs the asylum, as the speaker calls it “the house not right in the head” (*CP* 2). Through the rejection of the sane/insane dichotomy, Thomas declares the speaker as “natural” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 90). Condemning the speaker’s alienation from nature and the unnatural living conditions that are imposed on him, Thomas demands the restoration of the ecocentric discourse by restabilising the bond between the speaker and nature.

“Love in the Asylum” communicates the speaker’s desire for union with nature by subverting the dominant anthropocentric discourse with the marginalised ecocentric discourse. As part of his theories on the subversive function of heterotopias Foucault maintains that they operate “between two extreme poles” that is either “to create a space of illusion,” or “to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” (“Of Other Spaces” 8). Quite similar to Foucauldian theory regarding the function of heterotopias, in the poem the asylum encourages the speaker to subvert its original purpose by constructing a heterotopic site which, despite evolving out of the context of the asylum, offers a “represented, contested, and inverted” account of its conditions (Foucault, “Of Other Spaces” 3). In the same manner, although the asylum connotes culture and progress which are conventionally associated with the city, in “Love in the Asylum,” Thomas creates what Foucault calls a heterotopia of “compensation” (“Of Other Spaces” 8). Because the imaginative speaker transforms his room into a site of being where nature and man are united, it evolves into an ecocentric “refuge” (Tindall 191). The visit of an imaginary “stranger,” “[a] girl mad as

birds” to this ecocentric heterotopia allows the speaker to enjoy a sense of relief (CP 1, 3). As pointed out by Korg, she is “an imaginary mistress,” who transforms the speaker’s entire experience in the asylum (*Dylan Thomas* 90). Even though he is confined to a room in the asylum, his imagination sets him free for he creates a fictional lover, “[a stranger has come / To share my room],” thanks to whom he could still be reminded of his natural being and real humanity (CP 1-2). Overcoming the unnatural living conditions of the asylum, the speaker celebrates the liberating function of love as a natural human desire:

A stranger has come
To share my room in the house not right in the head,
A girl mad as birds

Bolting the night of the door with her arm her plume.
Strait in the mazed bed
She deludes the heaven-proof house with entering clouds

Yet she deludes with walking the nightmarish room,
At large as the dead,
Or rides the imagined oceans of the male wards. (CP 1-9)

Because the poem identifies the imaginary girl with nature, the heterotopic world of the room assumes an ecocentric dimension and allows the speaker to compensate for his entrapment in the asylum by establishing contact with the natural world beyond the speaker’s reach. The identification of the girl with nature also subverts the constructed nature of madness and reconceptualises it to signify being as natural and free as birds. Furthermore, the presence of the girl transforms the solitary room into “the heaven-proof house with entering clouds” and allows him to have a dreamy contact with nature as she “rides the imagined oceans of the male wards” (CP 6, 9). The act of “[b]olting the night of the door with her arm her plume” expresses his desire to prolong the ecocentric dream along with the impulse to keep the oppressive world beyond the room out so that the ecocentric heterotopic world of the room remains theirs only (CP 4). However, the speaker’s complete submission to this ecocentric world is undermined with the repetition of “deludes” and “delusive,” indicating that the oppression still penetrates his consciousness (CP 6, 8, 11).

The subversion of the dominant anthropocentric discourse by the ecocentric discourse is maintained in the rest of the poem as the speaker continues elaborating on how the imaginary speaker altered his perception of his room. Her union with nature is further emphasised with her being “possessed” by the forces of nature (*CP* 10):

She has come possessed
Who admits the delusive light through the bouncing wall,
Possessed by the skies

She sleeps in the narrow trough yet she walks the dust
Yet raves at her will
On the madhouse boards worn thin by my walking tears.

And taken by light in her arms at long and dear last
I may without fail
Suffer the first vision that set fire to the stars. (*CP* 10-8)

Echoing Thomas Heyd’s observation in “Art and Foucauldian Heterotopias” that heterotopias rebel against “the normalization or homogenization of space,” the girl in the poem undermines the codes of normalisation preached by the asylum as a disciplinary institution (159). Attacking the orthodox connotations of the word “possessed,” Thomas foregrounds its liberating dimension (*CP* 10). Being “[p]ossessed by the skies,” as the provider of “light,” she symbolises the irrational and untamed forces in nature and revolts against the rationalism of the asylum: “Yet raves at her will / On the madhouse boards” (*CP* 11, 16, 14-5). In addition to reviving the essential union between man and nature, the poem also focuses on the speaker’s contact with other human beings. As a post-pastoral poem, “Love in the Asylum” draws attention to the fact that “[t]he divisiveness of our social life” originates from the “the same source and hubris” which disconnects man from nature (Gifford, *Pastoral* 165). The poem demonstrates how man’s attitude to the nonhuman world also determines his interaction with the other human beings. The Western anthropocentric discourse has been exploiting both man and nature. Therefore, as Gifford acknowledges, the desire to “heal our relationship with the earth we inhabit” also requires “the healing of our relationship with ourselves as a

species” (*Pastoral* 165). The ecocentric heterotopia that the speaker creates in the poem not only expresses his yearning to be in touch with nature, but also displays his need for love and human contact. The visit of the imaginary girl “brings to her lover, who has been unable to find love in the real world, a dispensation” by “taking the dreamer in a cosmic, primeval embrace” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 90). In addition to offering consolation to his isolation and marginalisation, the girl also illuminates him as he is “taken by light in her arms at long and dear last” (*CP* 16). The love and the union of the two marginalised figures also have a mystical dimension which leads to an awakening in the speaker: “I may without fail / Suffer the first vision that set fire to the stars” (*CP* 17-8). The poem also foregrounds the sublime aspect of love and allows them to “unite with fundamental creation” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 90). The idea of “first vision” in the last line of the poem reflects the polysemic dimension of Thomas’s poetry (*CP* 18). Apart from signifying his transition to another realm which is beyond the room, it may stand for acknowledgement of his entrapment within the walls of the asylum. Thus, in addition to connoting love and passion, the “fire” may also stand for the agony of his entrapment (*CP* 18).

The social ecofeminist and post-pastoral discussion of “Love in the Asylum” indicates another aspect of Dylan Thomas’s attack on the Western progressive civilisation that has been disconnecting man from nature. The poem also problematises discourse/power relations and the normalisation of human beings through disciplinary institutions like the asylum in the poem. According to Heyd, Foucauldian heterotopias are conceptualised “as ruptures or discontinuities” to prove the existence of “counter-examples to the supposition that the fabric of power and knowledge is seamless” (159). Mocking the function of the asylum to restore man to normality and conformity, Thomas draws attention to the healing power of nature. The poem manifests that rather than the speaker, it is the present state of the humanist culture which is rooted in the glorification of rationalism and the exploitation of the nonhuman world that is sick and needs to recover the former bond with nature. As a result, this ecophonic poem displays how, despite his imprisonment and repression, the speaker’s imaginary contact with nature sets him free and offers a temporary relief to him in

the heterotopic world he and his imaginary lover create. Thus, the poem subverts the progressive rational discourse with the ecocentric discourse of the characters in the poem. Their union with nature in their imagination creates a nonconformist psychic space for them to reject subjectification by the dominant humanist discourse in order to maintain their essential natural being.

To conclude, it can be said that as part of his attack on the dichotomous logic and its alliance with the anthropocentric humanist and patriarchal discourses, Dylan Thomas composes ecophonic poems that react against the silencing of the members of both the nonhuman and human worlds. The ecocritical discussion of the poems “Because the pleasure-bird whistles,” “The tombstone told,” and “Love in the Asylum” reveals that they offer significant insights regarding the environmental injustice against the oppressed other as well as giving expression to the social ecofeminist urge to end all forms of oppression. In each poem Thomas voices the cruelty and injustice that have been imposed on nature and the people who are identified with it. Thus, these poems are classified within the frame of post-pastoral poetry, in which Thomas revitalises the polyphony of the ecocentric discourse and reconceptualises these marginalised figures as speaking subjects. In “Because the pleasure-bird whistles,” by elaborating on the violent act of blinding birds to sing better, reflecting the spirit of post-pastoral poetry, Thomas draws attention to the victimisation of the nonhuman beings to satisfy the needs of man, the master. Establishing the bond between the speaker poet and the blind pleasure bird, the poem also focuses on the injustice imposed on nature and man within the urban background. Being disillusioned with the Western progressive ideals, Thomas displays the interconnectedness between the nonhuman and the human beings, and as a post-pastoral poet calls for both ecocentric consciousness and conscience. In addition to raising awareness about the way anthropocentric discourse shapes and dominates nature and man, “The tombstone told” is another polyphonic post-pastoral poem that problematises the oppression of women and gives expression to the injustice against them. The poem explores the cruel mechanisms of the patriarchal objectification of a young woman, who eventually went mad and committed suicide. By digging out the details of her exploitation, the speaker of

the poem tries to voice the oppression she was exposed to. Undermining dualistic codifications, “The tombstone told” establishes the bond between the victimised silenced woman and nature since with her death she participates in natural harmony. Reflecting the holistic social ecofeminist attack on dichotomous thinking, Thomas also focuses on the oppression of the marginalised members of the society who are identified with nature and who defy being codified by the dominant anthropocentric discourse. Reflecting the predicament of the modern man, who is disconnected from nature, the speaker of “Love in the Asylum” is labelled as mad and is kept in an asylum. By undermining the function of the asylum as part of the normalisation process of the human subjects, and creating an imaginary lover, the speaker conceptualises an ecocentric heterotopia which relieves him of his agonies. Integral to its attack on man/nature duality, the ecophonic poem suggests that the true remedy to the entrapment of the modern man lies in the restoration of the bond between man and nature.

CHAPTER 4

THE RECOVERY OF THE BOND BETWEEN CULTURE AND NATURE IN DYLAN THOMAS'S POETRY

We shall ride out alone then,
Under the stars of Wales,
Cry, multitudes of arks! Across
The water lidded lands,
Manned with their loves they'll move
Like wooden islands, hill to hill.

.....
My ark sings in the sun
At God speeded summer's end
And the flood flowers now.
("Prologue" *CP* 91-6, 100-2)

This chapter argues that the reconceptualisation of man as part of the nonhuman world stimulates Dylan Thomas to challenge culture/nature duality. Being born and brought up in Swansea, throughout his life Thomas could not set himself free from the agony of being a suburban poet, who was alert to the transformations both the world and his country experienced. By foregrounding urban man's need to recover his essential unity with the nonhuman world, Dylan Thomas foreshadows the spirit of post-pastoral literature as well as ecopoetry, and treats significant contemporary problems that are foregrounded by ecocriticism like alienation, urbanisation, disillusionment with scientific development and progress along with the constant threat of war and annihilation. Therefore, in addition to considering Thomas as both a post-pastoral and an ecopoet, who sings the polyphonic, non-hierarchical and nonanthropocentric song of the human and nonhuman worlds, this study will also discuss another post-pastoral dimension of his work and will explore how he bridges the gap between culture and nature as well as the city and the country. Based on the ecocritical challenge to the premises of the Western progressive history, this chapter will study the subversion of culture/nature duality in Thomas's poetry by analysing the consequences of the glorification of the anthropocentric discourse on both man

and nature. Moreover, this chapter will discuss Thomas's desire for ecocentric holism through the representation of the interconnectedness between culture and nature at the urban backdrop along with the portrayal of the nonanthropocentric form of existence within the domain of the nonhuman beings.

4.1 The Outcomes of the Marginalisation of the Ecocentric Discourse

In his poems Dylan Thomas demythologises the ideological background of Western anthropocentric history that has been naturalising the reduction of the nonhuman world into a mere background at the service of man. His critique of the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse is based on how the alliance between scientific knowledge and institutions of power created a world view that justified the exploitation of both nature and man. To this end, this chapter will first offer a post-pastoral and an ecopoetic discussion of the poem "Why east wind chills" as a satirical account of the metamorphosis of the Western man's nonanthropocentric contact with nature into an anthropocentric one. Additionally, in light of social ecological attack on culture/nature dichotomy the chapter will explore the outcomes of the marginalisation of ecocentrism in "I see the boys of summer" and "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London." Of these two post-pastoral poems, the former reveals Thomas's subversion of culture/nature dichotomy, through his representation of how, because of being disconnected from nature, man is alienated from himself and is reduced to an object to be exploited by capitalism and materialism. The latter, on the other hand, with its attack on Western progressive ideals, subverts the dichotomy between the city and the country and declares the urban environment as part of nature.

At first look, "Why east wind chills" reads like a Romantic poem which explores two of the significant motifs of the tradition: the naivety of children and the idea of nature as a teacher. However, as the poem unfolds, it reflects the frustration of Thomas as a modernist poet who is disappointed in the loss of spirituality in man's contact with nature. Mirroring the dark background of the depression years of the mid-1930s, at its core the poem focuses on the antagonism between the awed attitude of children in the face of nature and the alliance

between power and anthropocentric scientific discourse to decode laws of nature to oppress both the nonhuman and the human beings. Therefore, rather than a Romantic work, “Why east wind chills” can be considered as a post-pastoral poem that is rooted in the children’s “awe in attention to the natural world” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 151-2). In *Where Have the Old Words Got me? Explications of Dylan Thomas’s Collected Poems*, Ralph Maud draws attention to the similarity between the questions the children in the poem ask and the questions explored in *Children’s Encyclopaedia* and its serial “The Children’s Book of Wonder” which were popular in Thomas’s time (295). As part of his attack on culture/nature dichotomy, as a post-pastoral poet, Thomas elaborates on the childlike queries of these sources; however, as an ecopoet he also criticises the transformation of the childlike awe into scientific knowledge that is used for exploitation and destruction.

The ecocritical critique of the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse starts with Thomas’s creation of an adult speaker who, because of being disillusioned with the present state of the Western science and civilisation, yearns for the loss of the former reverence for the nonhuman world among men. Through the images of naïve children who have preserved the holistic perception of life and are filled with great admiration for the natural processes, the poem sheds light on the former periods in human history when the organic bond between man and nature was not broken. Thus, the poem is an account of the transformation in the way nature is conceptualised by the Western man as it stops being an “organic universe” as well as the “nurturing mother,” and is reconceptualised as “a great machine” (Garrard 61). As a post-pastoral poem, “Why east wind chills” raises concerns about “our fragile relationship with nature” (Gifford, “Towards a Post-Pastoral View” 58). Since man can easily be corrupted by the dichotomous logic, the childlike awe and the desire to resolve the mysteries of nature metamorphose into mechanisms to control it (“Towards a Post-Pastoral View” 58). Quite similar to the ecocritical contempt for progressive history, Thomas offers a short ironic account of how the Western man’s admiration for nature metamorphoses into a story of the mastery of the nonhuman realm.

“Why east wind chills” offers a subversive rewriting of the Western progressive history and civilisation from the perspective of the marginalised ecocentric discourse. In the first and the second stanzas, the speaker lists the various questions that express the curious children’s awe at natural processes. Not being corrupt by anthropocentric ambitions, these children are motivated by the desire to discover the underlying mystery as the speaker declares: “The child shall question all his days” (*CP* 7). Filled with wonder, he inquires “[w]hy east wind chills and south wind cools,” and tries to comprehend the reasons for the existence of different natural materials and objects each with their particular features and functions: “Why silk is soft and the stone wounds” (*CP* 6). They also want to resolve the mystery of how “night-time rain” and “the breast’s blood,” their mothers’ milk, “[b]oth quench [their] thirst” and contribute to the survival and growth of the human and the nonhuman beings (*CP* 8, 9). Nevertheless, the children’s enthusiasm to discover the operating mechanisms of nature is contrasted with the adult speaker’s reserved attitude which echoes the Nietzschean scorn for the rational man’s desire to conquer nature. In “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,” Nietzsche mocks the humanist attempt to decipher the rules of nature when man is even not “able to perceive himself completely” since “nature ... conceal[s] most things from him – even concerning his own body” (80). Similarly, the speaker criticises the inability of modern science to provide spiritually elevating answers to satisfy the curiosity of the children. The rigidity and rationality of the scientific outlook is undermined by the imaginative childlike answers the speaker gives:

Shall not be known till windwell dries
And west’s no longer drowned
In winds that bring the fruit and rind
Of many a hundred falls; (*CP* 2-5)

In addition to foregrounding “[t]he discouraging limits of knowledge,” Thomas also makes a smooth transition to the dark background of the poem by introducing death as a significant theme (Tindall 46). The drying of the “windwell” as well as not blowing of the “winds” signify the changing seasons and death (*CP* 2, 4). The

speaker's statement that the children will "have a black reply" also enhances the fear of loss of potential and life (*CP* 9).

The post-pastoral sense of wonder is maintained in the second stanza with two additional questions, "When cometh Jack Frost" and "Shall they [children] clasp a comet in their fists?" (*CP* 10, 11). However, the poem ceases to be the representation of the children's awe in the natural phenomenon for the speaker's grim and pessimistic attitude starts to be dominant. At this point in the poem, the speaker focuses on the ironic evolution of scientific inquiry from awe to a powerful tool to destroy life. As pointed out by Davies, Thomas's "early poems are haunted by the Great War" (50). Being written in 1936, the poem is the product of a poet who is aware of the drastic outcomes of World War I and witnesses how economic depression and the rise of fascism move the world to an even darker future and set the scene for World War II. Therefore, the "comet" that the curious children want to hold metamorphoses into bombs which "from high and low, their dust / Sprinkles in children's eyes a long last sleep" and cause their death (*CP* 11, 12-3). The idea that "dusk is crowded with the children's ghosts" not only suggests the innocence of these children, but also their inability to comprehend the causes and the horrifying outcomes of the war (*CP* 14). The naivety of the children is implied with the change in the colour of the answer the children get. The threat of death, "black reply," metamorphoses into "a white answer," which as Maud remarks, "will come when we [the children] die and all is revealed" (*CP* 9, 15; 295). Although it is very difficult for the speaker to rationalise and justify war, he hopes that death might provide answers to all unanswered questions and resolve all conflicts: "Not till ... / Shall a white answer echo from the roof tops" (*CP* 12-5).

Thomas's juxtaposition of the children's ecocentric approach to natural phenomena with the anthropocentric humanist exploitation of nature bears fundamental ecopoetic traits. Thus, "Why east wind chills" metamorphoses into an ecopoem that represents the deep ecopoetic antagonism towards "hyperrationality," which plays a significant role in the construction of a world shaped by science and technology (Bryson 6). Echoing Foucauldian theories, the poem can be read as an attack on the way those in power exploit knowledge to

control both the human and the nonhuman potential. In “Truth and Power,” Foucault declares that “the rhythm of transformation doesn’t follow the smooth, continuist schemas of development” in fields such as “biology, political economy, psychiatry, medicine” (54). For Foucault, due to the alliance between knowledge and power, “[i]t is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (Sarup 74). Consequently, power manipulates both the elimination and emergence of new areas of knowledge. Demythologising the Western progressive and scientific history, the poem focuses on how the alliance between the anthropocentric discourse and power displaced the former holism of the ecocentric discourse by reducing it to the Foucauldian category of “subjugated knowledges” (*Power/Knowledge* 81). As Foucault observes, although ecocentric discourse provides its own answers to man/nature debate and “ecology also spoke a language of truth,” it has been marginalised by the alliance between the dominant anthropocentric discourse and the institutions of power devoted to the mastery of nature and progress (“The Ethic of Care” 15). While the first two stanzas are basically dedicated to the post-pastoral representation of the sublime feelings that nature inspires in children, the rest of the poem offers an ecopoetic satirical account of this alliance. Moreover, reflecting Foucauldian views that challenge humanist thought and undermine the traditional concept of progressive history in search of ultimate truth, Thomas attacks the idea that the modern pursuit of knowledge leads to universal scientific progress. The poem is the portrayal of what Foucault calls “the will to truth,” which has always functioned as “a system of exclusion,” has been modified by the changing times, and has been patrolled by institutions of power (“The Order of Discourse” 54). Foucault argues that history “bears” a “mask” of being “neutral, devoid of passions, and committed solely to truth” (“Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” 95). Instead of “becom[ing] pure speculation subject only to the demands of reason,” will to knowledge generates “a progressive enslavement to its instinctive violence” (“Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” 96). The reliance on scientificity and reason leads to anthropocentric “disenchantment of the world” and the emergence of “technical rationality” which focuses on the “efficacy” of the methods while neglecting “ends” as well as “values” (Sarup 69). “Why east

wind chills” opens with the children’s questions regarding the operating mechanisms of nature and explores how such quarries metamorphose into weapons to destroy humanity and civilisation. Thus, the poem demonstrates that throughout human history the “battle” to reach the truth has not been, in the words of Foucault, “ ‘on behalf’ of the truth;” on the contrary, it is a fight “about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays” (“Truth and Power” 74).

As an ecopoem, “Why east wind chills” closes with Thomas’s exploration of the effects of the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse and the consolidation of culture/nature duality. It shows how being motivated by his anthropocentric progressive desires, the rational man breaks his ties with nature and the natural in him. Being carried away by the Enlightenment project, he distrusts the wisdom of former “authority or spiritual revelation” and relies on his reason instead (Worster, *The Wealth* 211). Consequently, as the master, he justifies his exploitation of nature and scientific knowledge to create a progressive civilisation that appealed to the needs of the ones in power (*The Wealth* 211). In the same manner, the speaker mocks the humanist trust in reason and the objective pursuit of scientific knowledge: “All things are known” (*CP* 16). The poem undermines the powerful proclamation regarding the ability of the human mind and science to know everything by focusing on the contradictory status of scientific knowledge with its power to decipher and communicate the mysteries of nature:

All things are known: the stars’ advice
Calls some content to travel with the winds,
Though what the stars ask as they round
Time upon time the towers of the skies
Is heard but little till the stars go out. (*CP* 16-20)

Through its stars nature offers glimpses of knowledge, “some content to travel with the winds” (*CP* 16). However, the speaker is highly critical of the way that knowledge is exploited. Inspired by nature, scientific knowledge may contribute to the construction of a civilisation symbolised by “towers of the skies” (*CP* 19). With the argument that “[t]ime upon time the towers of the skies / Is heard but

little till the stars go out” the speaker questions the way scientific knowledge is abused to satisfy anthropocentric and progressive ambitions of the privileged few in power (*CP* 19-20). This ecopoem also demonstrates how in spite of appearing “seamless and rational,” science does not advance “from stage to stage” to reach “the truth” (McHoul and Grace 4). Subsequently, scientific inquiry is not motivated “by any underlying principle which remains essential and fixed while all around it changes” (4). By establishing the intrinsic unity between nature and the awe-struck children, the speaker refers to both as “stars” (*CP* 18). On one hand, the expression “the stars go out” suggests the rigidity of such scientific knowledge and its failure to appreciate the holistic and unitary existence of all beings, as it might refer to the way the operating mechanisms of science destroy the means that nature uses to communicate itself (*CP* 20). It may also signal the metamorphosis of scientific knowledge into a destructive tool that causes the death of the curious and inquisitive children.

Integral to its critique of culture/nature duality, as an ecopoem, “Why east wind chills” problematises the alliance between scientific knowledge and power to control nature and people. Although power is conventionally considered to derive from knowledge, for Foucault “knowledge is a power over the others, the power to define others” (Sarup 67). Hence, rather than instigating emancipation, knowledge “becomes a mode of surveillance, regulation, discipline” (67). Despite the limited ability of modern science to unravel the mysteries of nature, knowledge is within the control of a few privileged actors. As a result, the scientific knowledge that ordinary people can access is no more than “the stars’ advice,” which, according to Tindall, refers to “astrology” (*CP* 16; 105). The idea that science is the domain of power is also emphasised by the speaker’s recollection of his school years: “I hear content, and ‘Be content’ / Ring like a handbell through the corridors” (*CP* 21-2). As Tindall remarks, “[i]n the corridors of school or life itself, he hears wise words that fail to inform him or to answer those children” (105). Being denied the “content” of true scientific knowledge, they are asked to “[b]e content” (*CP* 21). The poem ends with the speaker’s ironic remark that the simple questions that occupy the human mind get the popular

response “ ‘Know no answer’, ” while scientific knowledge is exploited to create weapons that destroy the lives of children and men (*CP* 23):

And ‘Know no answer,’ and I know
No answer to the children’s cry
Of echo’s answer and the man of frost
And ghostly comets over the raised fists. (*CP* 23-6)

The poem attacks the present state of scientific progress with its idealism to better human existence and to resolve the mystery of life. Echoing the concerns of ecopoetry regarding an impending “ecological catastrophe,” the speaker develops a highly critical attitude to the creation of a world ruled by technology, which in the wrong hands has disastrous impacts on both the human and nonhuman beings ” (Bryson 6). Despite being composed long before the so-called advanced world we inhabit today, the poem is one of the examples proving that “poetry continues to matter as we enter a new millennium that will be ruled by technology” (Bate, *The Song* ix). The speaker condemns the way science turns a blind eye to the suffering of both children and “the man of frost” while “ghostly comets over the raised fists” fall (*CP* 25, 26). Through the image of “ghostly comets” he once again emphasises how, because of being abused by mechanisms of power, modern science is transformed into a tool that ruins the lives of innocent people (*CP* 25). Thomas’s portrayal of awe at operations of nature allows him to compose a post-pastoral poem that later develops into an ecopoem which problematises the way the anthropocentric humanist discursive mechanisms marginalise the ecocentric discourse and utilise scientific knowledge to oppress and even victimise the ones that cannot produce or control it. Consequently, “Why east wind chills” concludes with an implied, but evaded question that evolves out of the naïve queries of the children: Why does science kill?

Besides criticising the transformation of the Western man’s perception of nature from being filled with awe into an attitude dominated by anthropocentric motives, as a post-pastoral poet, Thomas also composes poems in which he dwells on the bitter results of this change. As a poem that is published in *18 Poems*, “I see the boys of summer” can be considered as the product of a quest of the young

poet who is frustrated by the sterility of contemporary urban existence. Similar to his attempts to redefine fundamental notions like man and nature, Thomas questions the progressive civilisation which is rooted in the dissociation of human sensibility involving the glorification of the mind and the condemnation of the body. The poem explores the ruinous outcomes of creating a civilisation based on the exploitation of man and nature, and critiques the way the nonhuman world and human potential are consumed by war, industrialisation and urbanisation. Thus, as “I see the boys of summer” offers a short biting account of Western progressive history and problematises man as the producer of culture. Its attack on culture/nature duality is maintained through its form which consists of three dialogical parts (Olson 31). While part one focuses on sterility in both boys and nature, the second part declares that such self-alienation is caused by the condemnation of sexuality; thus, calls for its celebration. The closing part, on the other hand, demonstrates a reconciliatory function as it restores the bond between culture and nature by displaying that man is essentially a part of nature.

The exploitation of both the human and the nonhuman potential by the dominant anthropocentric discourse is represented as the major cause of sterility and alienation in “I see the boys of summer.” In Part I, this post-pastoral poem questions the frustrating consequences of the glorification of culture and progress in the period after World War I and the subsequent depression years. Echoing the social ecological contempt for the hierarchical codification of culture over nature, the poem demonstrates how, as Bookchin remarks, because of man’s desire to dominate, human history has metamorphosed into “a steady process of estrangement from nature” (*The Ecology* 65). Being the opening poem of Dylan Thomas’s first collection, *18 Poems*, “I see the boys of summer” was composed between 1933 and 1934, and mirrors the major concerns that occupy a significant place in Thomas’s early poetic career such as “fear of impending war, [and] sexual experience” (Tindall 26). As Thomas writes to Pamela Hansford Johnson, it was Thomas’s conscious choice to start his first volume with this poem: “I am going to include some poems which have been printed, so ‘Boys of Summer’, though altered & double length, is to open the book” (*CL* 125). It portrays the atmosphere of the times when both Wales and the world struggled with serious

economic turmoil caused by the war, which emerged due to colonial rivalry among the countries willing to exploit human and natural resources of the colonised places. According to Davies, Wales enjoyed wealth and welfare produced by World War I since “docks, mines, and steelworks boomed with the war effort, and agriculture benefitted from the increased demands for food production” (9). Nevertheless, between the early 1920s and the outbreak of World War II, the country struggled with very serious problems. As pointed out by Sinclair, during the time of the Great Depression, the people in Swansea were confronted with high rate of unemployment (42). Due to the strikes that took place in the 1920s, many steel mills, along with several coal mines and factories in South Wales were closed down (Sinclair 42). Davies mentions that Swansea, because of the “anthracite coal field of West Wales, plus tinsplate,” was among the fortunate Welsh towns which “survived this period better than many Welsh places” (9). Yet, following this brief period of relief, Swansea could not escape the depression years of the 1930s; when, in Swansea, “[n]early ten thousand people were out of job, and two thousand families on the Means Test” (Sinclair 42).

In addition to drawing attention to the exploitation of nature, “I see the boys of summer” foregrounds the oppression of man through its portrayal of his sterile state of existence within a depressive urban background. Thomas focuses on the entrapment of the young boys who are identified with nature and are exploited by the Western man’s progressive ideals leading to war and destruction. Quite in parallel with the “anti-urbanists’ ” contempt for the urban backdrop due to its “unnatural setting for the anonymous interaction of an alienated population,” the poem represents the conflict between the vitality of the boys and their meaningless life (Short 44). The poem opens with the representation of “the boys of summer,” filtered through the consciousness of a much older speaker, representing the aged generation. The young boys, on the other hand, mirror the disoriented Welsh youth, who, with no future prospect, as Sinclair mentions, try to survive “on the dole” (42). By elaborating on several nature images, Thomas identifies the repression of natural sexual impulses as the primary reason for the sterility in both the human and the nonhuman world:

I see the boys of summer in their ruin
Lay the gold tithings barren,
Setting no store by harvest, freeze the soils;
There in their heat the winter floods
Of frozen loves they fetch their girls,
And drown the cargoed apples in their tides. (*CP* 1-6)

Being associated with summer, the boys are expected to reflect their vigour and enthusiasm of life. However, their mood contradicts such expectations as the boys are “in their ruin” (*CP* 1). The poem foregrounds the frustration of the boys’ sexual impulses since “out of the heat of intercourse comes only ‘frozen love’” (Davies 138). Through the images of “gold tithings barren,” and having “no store by harvest, freeze the soils” the speaker emphasises the sterility of the young generation (*CP* 2, 3). Attempts for sexual union with “their girls” suggested by the references to “the cargoed apples,” also lead to bitter disappointment: “There in their heat the winter floods / Of frozen loves” (*CP* 5, 6, 4-5). The poem focuses on the alienation of man in the sterile urban backdrop and mirrors the state of mind of “a suburban poet,” who explores “the tension between self and limiting world” which imposes artificial codes of existence (Davies 121). As Bookchin observes, the poem portrays the predicament of the modern people who “have lost sight of the *telos* that renders [them] an aspect of nature” (*The Ecology* 315). The dominant sense of entrapment can also be perceived in Thomas’s letter to Pamela Hansford Jonson, in which he shares his thoughts about the oppressive Nonconformist Welsh culture:

my experience of waking with a woman at my side has been necessarily limited. The medieval laws of this corrupted hemisphere have dictated a more or less compulsory virginity during the period of life when virginity should be regarded as a crime against the dictates of the body. (*CL* 59)

Since, as a young person, he is culturally conditioned to regard sexuality akin to sin, Thomas chooses poetry as an outlet to sublimate such natural impulses. Thus, similar to what Fraser declares, portraying the predicament of “the middle-class adolescent male” who lives in “an advanced and therefore in many ways

repressive [Western] civilization,” the poem is not just “*about* the boys of summer in their ruin, but *by* one of them” (11).

From a social ecological point of view, “I see the boys of summer” demonstrates how man and nature are consumed by capitalism, which rationalises the exploitation of human and nonhuman potential. The poem depicts the conflicts and the futility of both young and old people living in Wales after World War I. Davies maintains that the first line of the poem “could be seen as descriptive of the dead and maimed survivors of that Great War” as well as being an explicit reference to “the economic causalities of the 1930s” (138). Capitalist mechanisms of production and rapid industrialisation resulted in the reconceptualisation of man as an object to be exploited. “I see the boys of summer” offers an ironic picture of the way man’s anthropocentric and humanist desires eventually lead to his objectification by capitalist ideology due to being subjected to parallel “forms of coordination, rationalization, and control” that are imposed on the nonhuman world (Bookchin, *The Ecology* 65). Quite similar to what Bookchin declares, the poem reveals how “the reduction of humanity to a technical force” causes men’s “mental,” and “factual” alienation from nature (*The Ecology* 65, 315). According to Tindall, the boys in the poem signify the futile existence of all living men regardless of their age and nationality: “Probably these boys are all men – in their aspects of sperm cells, embryos, and adolescents” (29). Therefore, the boys stand for “Welsh-men, driven from mine, factory, and home by the depression of 1931” as well as the ones “ruined in London” (Tindall 29).

The conflict between cultural codifications and man’s natural impulses is foregrounded by the incompatibility between the boys’ state of existence and their natural being. In the second stanza, the speaker continues dwelling on the sterile life of the boys and their repressed sexual desires by drawing images from the nonhuman world like “light,” “honey,” “hives,” “the sun,” and “moon” (*CP* 7, 8, 9, 10, 12). Despite being identified with “light,” the boys “are curdlers in their folly” (Davies 138; *CP* 7). The vitality of the boys is undermined by their inability to achieve sexual satisfaction:

The jacks of frost they finger in the hives;
There in the sun the frigid threads
Of doubt and dark they feed their nerves;
The signal moon is zero in their voids. (*CP* 9-12)

Like the sun that is deprived of its life-giving power, the sexual act is devoid of its creative function. Davies argues that the speaker conceptualises “[t]he boys’ members” as ‘jacks of frost’,” which are “inserted like fatal fingers into the female ‘hives’ ” (138). The artificial culture condemns sexuality as unnatural; consequently, “[t]he physical life is frozen or soured by the puritanically moral restrictions of life in the provincial suburbs” (Davies 138).

Apart from exploring the oppression and the alienation that culture/nature duality causes, “I see the boys of summer” abolishes all hopes for a better future. The pessimism of the mature speaker is intensified by the last two stanzas of Part I. After focusing on the hopelessness of “the boys of summer,” the mature speaker reinforces the wretched future by referring to “the summer children in their mothers / Split up the brawned womb’s weathers” (*CP* 1, 13-4). The speaker implies that though each day and night “with quartered shades / Of sun and moon,” they move closer to their birth, life provides no grounds for optimism (*CP* 16-7). Once being born, they will be plagued by a life threatened by war: “As sunlight paints the shelling of their heads” (*CP* 18). Furthermore, in the last stanza, the speaker expresses his dark vision of the future and declares that “from these boys shall men of nothing” become (*CP* 19). Even if “conception and birth do occur,” they do not contribute to the maintenance of the vitality of life for they simply involve “seedy shifting” (Davies 138; *CP* 20). Because the alienated existence in the urban background does not provide the boys with outlets to celebrate their natural being and channel their creative energy, “the pulse of summer” metamorphoses into “the ice” (*CP* 24).

As a follow up to the post-pastoral representation of the consequences of culture/nature duality as the major causes of the sterility of the urban dwellers, in Part II, “I see the boys of summer,” focuses on the urgent need for the restoration of the bond between the two through the reconceptualisation of sexuality as a natural and integral part of both human and nonhuman worlds. Similar to what

Olson mentions regarding one of the distinctive characteristics of Thomas's style, the poem flows in a dialogue form that "state[s] two different sides of a case or two different moods" (31). Part II of the poem offers the boys' response to the mature speaker of Part I. Although the boys recognise their worthless existence, they also voice the urge to change their unnatural state of being. In the poem, the boy speaker asserts that sexuality is part of the creative process in nature; therefore, rather than being condemned, it needs to be celebrated. Within the ecocentric universe that Thomas struggles to create at the initial stages of his poetic career, the human body is regarded as a mechanism imitating the natural process. Hence, the poem demonstrates one of the fundamental features of Thomas's early poetry in the sense that the speaker is inspired by "the immediate perceptions of his own body, as the centre of a world which is felt as an extension of their functional processes" (Stephens 32). The boy speaker also draws attention to another natural phenomenon, the coexistence of life and death. The ever-present threat of death encourages the boys to stop wasting their youthful energy and vitality:

But seasons must be challenged or they totter
Into a chiming quarter
Where, punctual as death, we ring the stars;
There, in his night, the black-tongued bells
The sleepy man of winter pulls,
Nor blows back moon-and-midnight as she blows. (*CP* 25-30)

In response to the transformation of summer into winter in this urban and the post-World War I setting, the boys demand that "seasons must be challenged" for each minute they move closer to death: "or they totter / Into a chiming quarter" (*CP* 25-6). Associated with death, winter is represented as "[t]he sleepy man" in whose night "the black-tongued bells" ring (*CP* 29, 28). What they attack is this unnaturalness of the presence of winter in summer.

The second stanza is a manifestation of sexuality as part of the creative-destructive continuum of life. Death remains as a threat, yet sexual union, through conception and birth, is the gateway to overcome it: "We are the dark deniers, let us summon / Death from a summer woman" (*CP* 31-2). With the references to

“[a] muscling life from lovers,” “the bright-eyed worm,” and “the planted womb the man of straw,” sexual intercourse is assigned a central role in the boys’ protests against futility and meaningless existence at the urban backdrop (*CP* 33, 35, 36). The poem demonstrates Thomas’s struggle against orthodox religious approaches to sexuality as he tries to reconceptualise a religion that is, in Shapiro’s words, “simply a part of life, part of himself” (172).

Contrary to the sterility of the first part, sexuality brings vitality to both the human and nonhuman worlds and contributes to the revival of the holistic ecocentric discourse in Part II. The challenge inspires hope and optimism in the third stanza since the boys acknowledge their sexual impulses, which restore their harmonious unity with nature. Despite lacking the philosophical and intellectual sophistication of Hopkins and T. S. Eliot, as Shapiro maintains, “with no equipment for theorizing about the forms of nature,” Thomas seeks to formulate his own holistic faith by “draw[ing] his symbology almost entirely from Sex-symbol” (173). The threatening darkness of death is replaced by the cyclical perception of seasonal change “in this four-winded spinning” (*CP* 37). Positioning themselves as part of nature, “[g]reen of the seaweed’s iron,” the boys also recover the regenerative power of nature to restore life to their existence consumed by war and industrialisation (*CP* 38). The image of “chok[ing] the desert with her tides,” foregrounds the revitalising function of the sea as it transforms infertile land into “the country gardens for a wreath” (*CP* 41, 42). The vigour of life is further emphasised in the last stanza of Part II, in which the boys represent spring as the season when the regenerative process begins. Through sexual references like “love’s damp muscle dries and dies,” as well as “break a kiss in no love’s quarry,” life maintains its energy (*CP* 46, 47). Thus, the boys’ reply ends with the remark, “O see the poles of promise in the boys,” inviting both the mature speaker and the reader to resume their optimism (*CP* 48). The boys’ perception of sexuality not only challenges the oppressive attitude of the urban life but also is a reminder of its naturalness and regenerative power.

The post-pastoral challenge to culture/nature dichotomy as an ideological construct is brought to a conclusion with the restoration of man as part of nature and the celebration of ecocentric holism. After elaborating on the different

dimensions of the oppression of both nature and man due to hierarchical codification of culture over nature in Part I and Part II, in Part III, which consists of a single stanza, Thomas offers a resolution. As Davies states, Thomas composes this last stanza “as a dialogue between the older narrator and the boys” (138-9). While the first three lines are dedicated to the ideas of the mature speaker, the last three express the ideas of the young boys:

I see the boys of summer in their ruin.
Man in his maggot’s barren.
And boys are full and foreign in the pouch.
I am the man your father was.
We are the sons of flint and pitch.
O see the poles are kissing as they cross. (*CP* 49-54)

Associating “ruin” with mortality, the mature speaker appreciates the coexistence of life and death (*CP* 49). Within the cyclical and unitary existence of all beings, man is exposed to the natural laws of birth and decay: “Man in his maggot’s barren” (*CP* 50). However, different from his attitude in Part I, he recognises the creative potential and vitality of the boys as he declares that “boys are full and foreign in the pouch” (*CP* 51). According to Korg, there is a significant change in the perception of the mature speaker, who acknowledges that “the principle the boys represent is an element of a larger whole” (*Dylan Thomas* 48). The boys’ reply, on the other hand, reflects the optimism of Part II, due to the celebration of the regenerative power of sexuality, which allows the boys of summer to surpass meaningless existence. The fact that they regard themselves as the successors of the previous generation, “I am the man your father was,” expresses their faith in sexuality to ensure the continuation of life (*CP* 52). In addition to portraying the disillusionment in the Western progressive culture, the poem declares man as essentially natural: “the sons of flint and pitch” (*CP* 53). Davies remarks that the optimism of the poem at the end derives from the ambivalent nature of the word “cross,” which “suggests the creative link between sex and love; thus, ending the poem with an optimistic gesture” (139). As a post-pastoral poem, “I see the boys of summer” emphasises the way creative human energy has been consumed by culture that is materialised in progress and identified with war, industrial growth

and urbanisation. Unless the artificiality of this form of civilisation is acknowledged and man's natural impulses are welcomed, human existence is doomed to be sterile and meaningless.

Apart from problematising progress and the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse, Thomas writes war elegies which reveal how the humanist ideal to oppress nature gradually evolves into the desire to master the human and the natural resources of the other countries. The poems in *Deaths and Entrances* like "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London," "Ceremony After a Fire Raid," and "Among those killed in the Dawn Raid was a Man Aged a Hundred" are the products of the suburban poetic consciousness witnessing the devastation during World War II and its disastrous effects on both the human and the nonhuman world. As pointed out by Davies these poems focus on the London blitz and are regarded as Thomas's unique contribution to the literature of war (71). By questioning the death of innocent civilians like children and old people, Thomas attacks the unnaturalness of death brought about by war. Integral to his post-pastoral critique of progress and civilisation in his ecocentric elegy, "A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London," like urban ecocritics Thomas problematises culture/nature duality and considers the urban environment as part of nature.

"A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London" represents the fall of the Western culture and civilisation in the holocaust atmosphere of the urban environment in London, during World War II. The poem is inspired by the blast that London suffered during the summer of 1944 and is the elegiac account of a mature speaker's reflections on life and death after witnessing the unfortunate child's loss of life by fire (Davies 57). Despite the speaker's rejection of the elegiac motif of mourning proclaimed by the title, the poem demonstrates Thomas's conflict in his attempts to come to terms with the death of a child. Behind the dignified acceptance of death as part of life and its celebration as the child's return to nature, the poem mocks the vanity of war and its atrocity against the civilians. As suggested by Plumwood, dualistic philosophy has reduced nature to a mere object at the service of man "the master subject," the leading character of "the master story" (190, 196). The war context of the poem can be viewed as

one of the devastating episodes in this “master story,” which could offer nothing, but “conquest and control,” “capture and use,” as well as “destruction and incorporation” (Plumwood 196). By reversing the typical elegiac pattern and experimenting with the conventions of the genre, Thomas composes an elegy which mourns death through its ironic rejection. Instead of questioning the meaning of life and death, the poem opens with reconciliation. The idea that through her death the child returns to the elements of nature becomes the speaker’s major justification not to mourn for her:

Never until the mankind makings
Bird beast and flower
Fathering and all humbling darkness
Tells with silence the last light breaking
And the still hour
Is come of the sea tumbling in harness

And I must enter again the round
Zion of the water bead
And the synagogue of the ear of corn
Shall I let pray the shadow of a sound
Or sow my salt seed
In the least valley of sackcloth to mourn
The majesty and burning of the child’s death. (*CP* 1-13)

Critics agree that the speaker’s basic motivation for refusing to mourn for the child is Thomas’s reconceptualisation of death as a union with the elements of nature, which, as deep ecologists suggest, has its own “intrinsic value” and is portrayed as sacred (Naess 29). Ackerman argues that the devastation caused by fire raids motivates Thomas to employ “biblical language from the account in Genesis of the first creation of the world to commemorate contemporary events” (*Companion* 110). The speaker’s references to “making / Birds beast and flower” connote God’s creation of the universe by transforming “darkness” into “light” (*CP* 1-2). In Ackerman’s view, biblical allusions comprise “the main source of the poem’s imagery” in the first stanza in particular: “‘darkness’ is referred to as ‘fathering’, since it is in darkness that all life begins” (*Dylan Thomas* 117).

Apart from being allusions to the creation story, the religious motifs in the first stanza, however, can be interpreted as attacks on culture/nature duality and

man's anthropocentric intrusion into the natural harmony. Despite being one species among numerous others, man declares himself the master who has the right to control the other species. Although the title of the poem sets the scene for mourning and death, the speaker consciously delays referring to the victim. As Ackerman remarks, the initial sentence of the poem "extends from the first to the thirteenth line, without intervening punctuation," and it declares that "[n]ever, until the end of the world, will he mourn the child's death" (*Dylan Thomas* 116). Through the ironic avoidance of reference to the dead child, as well as through the reserved tone of the speaker, the poem juxtaposes the unnatural death of the child due to the war with the natural flow of life with its "[b]ird beast and flower" along with "the sea tumbling" (*CP* 2, 6). The civilisation "mankind" constructs puts nature "in harness" and violates the natural course of existence as "humbling darkness," the war, descends upon the earth (*CP* 1, 6, 3). The speaker's references to "with silence the last light breaking," "the still hour / Is come" may signify death imposed by man, which puts an end to the agony of life and allows for union with nature (*CP* 4, 5-6).

With the second stanza where the speaker alludes to his own death, on the other hand, Thomas moves to a more ecocentric and holistic domain as the speaker expands the use of religious images to include pantheistic motifs and elements of nature. He imagines his dead body's re-immersion with the elements of nature such as water and earth: "the round / Zion of the water bead / And the synagogue of the ear of corn" (*CP* 7-8). Korg maintains that the speaker's association of "Zion" with "the water bead," "the synagogue" with "corn," as well as "the stations of the breath" in the following stanza with "breath" and air display their holiness and how "they are given a new authenticity when they are linked with the concrete, familiar, and primordial elements of water, corn, and breath" (*CP* 7, 8, 16; *Dylan Thomas* 86). Moreover, the dead human body is resembled to a "corn" that is sown in earth (*CP* 9). According to Hardy, Thomas's blending of "Christian and Jewish temples in an easy companionship" helps him to communicate the essential interconnectedness between the human and the nonhuman beings (*Dylan Thomas* 148). Consequently, as part of its holism and its

post-pastoral attack on culture/nature duality, the poem unites religious and natural motifs and offers an ecocentric remedy.

In addition to representing death as part of life and as a transition to a unified existence, with its critique on war and the degenerate state of civilisation, “A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London” condemns the untimely death of the child due to war. The meditation on his own death allows the speaker to shift the attention from natural death to the brutal and unnatural death of the child. Rejecting mourning for her, he neither prays nor cries since she is buried “[i]n the least valley of sackcloth” (*CP* 12). Therefore, the seemingly peaceful evocation of the natural harmony is undermined by the reserved attitude of the speaker as well as the poem’s subtle irony. Despite the speaker’s attempts to eliminate all grounds for grief, Thomas problematises the unnaturalness of her death. In Ackerman’s view, although Thomas declares that he will not mourn for the child, his composition of an elegy in itself is a manifestation of his muddled mind (*Companion* 110).

This ironic attitude also dominates the speaker’s argument regarding his rejection to grieve for the death of the child in the third stanza, where he sets the child’s naivety and innocence against the degenerate state of contemporary Western civilisation, as progress eclipsed “man’s moral and social ‘perfectibility’” (*Bury* 15). Because elegising her loss would double the crime committed against her humanity, he declares:

I shall not murder
The mankind of her going with a grave truth
Nor blaspheme down the stations of the breath
With any further
Elegy of innocence and youth. (*CP* 14-8)

Nevertheless, the strong expressions such as “murder[ing]” her “mankind” as well as “blasphem[ing] down the stations of the breath,” undermine the speaker’s assertion that the poem is not an elegy (*CP* 14, 15, 16). Korg argues that the speaker’s “refusal to mourn” is “a paradoxical declaration” because, despite providing “sufficient reasons for refraining,” by taking on “a ritualistic tone” and elaborating on “religious imagery,” the speaker stresses that “formal observation

of the child's death would be an impertinence" (*Dylan Thomas* 86). These images can also signify his struggle to preserve his humane stance as he witnesses the collapse of Western progressive civilisation ending up with the victimisation of the child. Thus, "a grave truth" not only refers to the grave for the burned body of the child but also to metaphorical collapse and the burial of the ideals of Western progressive civilisation (*CP* 15).

The poem's post-pastoral challenge to culture/nature duality is also maintained by the restoration of the bond between man and nature. In order to cope with the destructive state of contemporary civilisation, Thomas retreats into his holistic and ecocentric faith. The poem is about the death of an individual child; yet, the fact that the girl is "London's daughter" attributes a more social and even universal function to it emphasising that she is just one sufferer among many others (*CP* 19). Thus, quite in harmony with the spirit of third wave ecocriticism, the poem's critique of war demonstrates, as Hardy puts it, Thomas's scorn for nationalism due to the consciousness that he composed his works in a world where "nationalism has become a renewed threat to peace and community and social justice" (*Dylan Thomas* 1). It is this "lack of nationalism" that enables Thomas to go beyond any national codes and to represent the girl as a dweller of mother earth (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 1). As in the context of his earlier poems, he conceptualises earth as the mother's womb and regards it as an integral part of the birth-death cycle. Just as she was conceived and grew up in her mother's womb prior to her birth, after her death, the child is reborn in another womb, the earth. Thomas's ecocentric perception of life helps him to create a reconciliatory spirit in the poem for the dead child is restored to its original residence, nature:

Deep with the first dead lies London's daughter,
Robed in the long friends,
The grains beyond age, the dark veins of her mother,
Secret by the unmourning water
Of the riding Thames.
After the first death, there is no other. (*CP* 19-24)

Contrary to the threatening war atmosphere of the human world, the natural world provides relief to the agonies of the dead child as her body is buried “[d]eep with the first dead” and is offered shelter and protection for she is “[r]obed in the long friends” (CP 19, 20). By foregrounding that she is not the only one who died and that she has become one of the numerous “grains beyond age,” the poem declares the naturalness of death and its contribution to the regenerative power in nature (CP 21). Consequently, as Hardy proposes, “A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London” “contains a powerful rejection of anthropocentricity” (Dylan Thomas 147). The poem ends with the consolation that once the affliction and pain of life is over, death is a gateway to immortality: “[a]fter the first death, there is no other” (CP 24). Elaborating on its ending, Fraser argues that it “has a resonance and authority both for unbelievers and believers” (27). In Fraser’s view, it can be interpreted as both the poet’s welcoming of death for it terminates all the pain and injustice in life, as well as referring to the liberation of the immortal soul from the suffering associated with earthly existence (27). However, more significant than these two views is Fraser’s call for the appreciation of “the baffling simplicity of Thomas’s unitary response” that is accompanied by the plea “not [to] impose abstract categories on him,” which echoes the ecocentrism of the poem’s conclusion for it reconceptualises death as a mere stage in the natural circulation (27).

Demythologising the humanist celebration of the city as the domain for man’s progress, as a post-pastoral poet, Thomas does not fall into the trap of identifying nature with country and culture with town. Such a post-pastoral representation of the interconnectedness between culture and nature foreshadows the developments in urban ecology. By alluding to recent changes in the urban studies discussed by Roger Keil in “Urban Political Ecology,” Benton-Short and Short elaborate on the theories regarding the cities as “ecological systems,” which view them “as much natural as wilderness and the environment as much social as the city” (5). Hence, the major goal of urban ecology is the exploration of “cities as sites of biophysical processes interwoven with social processes in complex webs of human-environmental relations” (Benton-Short and Short 141). Thomas abolishes the hierarchical codification between the city and the country, and

considers the urban environment and its inhabitants as part of his ecocentric holism. Despite being one of the most significant centres of civilisation and progress and being exhausted by urbanisation, London is still situated on a piece of land and is part of nature. Moreover, “A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London” also echoes Nichols’s theories on “urbanature” that do not distinguish between nature in the urban, man-constructed sites and in countryside: “human beings are not *out of* nature when they stand in the streets of Manhattan any more than they are *in* nature when they stand above tree-line in Montana” (xiii). Consequently, because man is part of nature from his birth to death, Nichols declares that: “[n]othing I can do can take me out of nature. There is nowhere for me to go. I am a natural being from the moment I am born (biologically) until the moment I die (organically)” (xv). The poem embodies a similar urbanatural consciousness regarding the interconnectedness of nature and culture, and calls her “London’s daughter” (CP 19). Although she is an urban dweller, the child is still part of nature and is buried in the same earth where London culture exists. Hence, the natural environment in London is regarded as the dead child’s “mother” through which the regenerative power of nature in “the dark veins” flows (CP 21). The difficulty of maintaining culture/nature dichotomy is also expressed with the presence of the river Thames. The fact that it flows through one of the world’s most important centres of culture and that it is polluted due to urbanisation, industrial waste or war does not make it less natural. Because death is reconceptualised as the daughter’s return to nature, like the speaker, the river Thames refuses to mourn for her death: “the unmourning water / Of the riding Thames” (CP 22-3). The ecocentric spirit of the poem deters both the speaker and nature from mourning for the dead girl; however, the poem retains its elegiac spirit since it is the manifestation of what Thomas really grieves for: the collapse of the ideals of the Western civilisation. Consequently, as Goodby proposes, the war context encourages Thomas to explore the “pastoral’s distinctive ability” to create poetry that abolishes the “tensions between country and city, art and nature, the human and the non-human, our social and inner, and masculine and feminine selves” (378).

To sum up, based on the ecocritical study of the poems, “Why east wind chills,” “I see the boys of summer” and “A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London” it can be inferred that as a precursor of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, Thomas demythologises the fundamentals of Western progressive civilisation by declaring that the dichotomy between culture and nature is an ideological construct. The discussion of the above poems in light of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry demonstrates the poet’s condemnation of the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse as opposed to the glorification of the anthropocentric discourse. In “Why east wind chills,” Thomas offers a short history of the marginalisation of ecocentric discourse. The ecocritical challenge to culture/nature duality in the poem is maintained through the representation of an alienation process as part of which the anthropocentric discourse has disconnected man from nature and transformed it into an object to be scientifically explored. As a post-pastoral poem, “Why east wind chills” juxtaposes the awe of children with the domineering attitude of those in power who control and abuse scientific knowledge to create weaponry so as to consolidate their superior position. In “I see the boys of summer,” Thomas’s attack on culture/nature duality is carried out through the representation of how dichotomous thinking and the Western man’s desire to progress create a sterile culture and justify the exploitation of both nature and man by capitalism. The poem mirrors the predicament of modern urban young men who lead a futile life due to being disconnected from nature and being estranged from their true essence. The post-pastoral subversion of dichotomous logic in “I see the boys of summer” took place with the celebration of the boys’ natural impulses through welcoming sexuality as a significant regenerative power, which not only restores meaning into their existence, but also inspires hope in them in their attempts to come to terms with the sense of futility and mortality. The discussion of “A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London,” on the other hand, reveals the poet’s attack on marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse. In this post-pastoral poem Thomas problematises how humanist progressive desires gradually metamorphose into a grand scale colonial rivalry among the leading Western countries and causes the death of millions of people in war. Therefore, the poem can be considered as a bitter attack on war and the

fundamentals of the Western civilisation leading to the unnatural death of innocent civilians. Because there can be no justification for the death of the innocent child, in “A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London” Thomas refuses to mourn for the victim of the blast. However, at the end of the poem, through the revival of the ecocentric spirit, Thomas foregrounds the essential bond between the human and the nonhuman beings and redefines her death as a return to nature. Thus, as part of the holistic post-pastoral and urban ecocritical challenge to dualistic thinking, Thomas challenges culture/nature as well as city/country dualities because, in spite of being an urban dweller, the child remains part of nature.

4.2 The Desire for Ecocentric Holism beyond Culture/nature Dichotomy

In addition to composing poems in which he attacks the grim consequences of the promotion of the progressive anthropocentric discourse, Dylan Thomas also wrote poems that foreground the modern man’s prevailing desire for ecocentric holism. “The hunchback in the park” and “Over Sir John’s Hill,” in *Deaths and Entrances* and *In Country Sleep*, respectively, are two works in which Thomas, as an ecopoet and post-pastoral poet, elaborates on the idea that man, despite the civilisation he has been constructing, is essentially part of a larger universe that is operating on non-hierarchical and nonanthropocentric mechanisms. Through its setting and the protagonist, “The hunchback in the park,” subverts culture/nature dichotomy by demonstrating the urban dwellers’ urge to be in contact with nature as well as foregrounding nature’s liberating power. The poem, “Over Sir John’s Hill,” on the other hand, reveals culture/nature duality as an ideological construct through the representation of organic interconnectedness of the inhabitants of the nonhuman world.

In “The hunchback in the park,” Thomas’s portrayal of the hunchback and the context of the park can be considered as the epitome of the concretisation of the control that man imposes on nature. Nevertheless, the post-pastoral discussion of the poem reveals the subversive dimension of the poet’s representation of the park and its dweller. Reversing its initial anthropocentric function of controlling

the nonhuman domain, the park metamorphoses into a place where man can be in contact with nature. The hunchback, on the other hand, with his crooked body signifies the entrapment of the modern man and the decline in the Western culture and progressive ideals. As part of its attack on dichotomous logic by identifying the hunchback with nature, the poem draws attention to the mutual exploitation of both the human and the nonhuman beings in the urban background and voices the environmental injustice the hunchback is exposed to. The poem's challenge to culture/nature dichotomy reaches its peak when, motivated by the desire for ecocentric holism, the hunchback transforms the park setting into an ecocentric heterotopia with its non-hierarchical patterns of existence.

The setting and the characters the poem represents are rooted in Thomas's childhood experiences in Cwmdonkin Drive and Cwmdonkin Park in Swansea. The poem is the nostalgic account of an adult speaker who remembers with remorse the past when he played with other children in the park and could witness the life that was going on there. What Thomas says in *Quite Early One Morning* reflects the relevance of his personal background to the context of the poem:

We knew every inhabitant of the park, every regular visitor, every nursemaid, every gardener, every old man. We knew the hour when the alarming retired policeman came to look at the dahlias and the hour when the old lady arrived in the bath chair six Pekinese, and a pale girl to read aloud to her. (5)

Among the inhabitants of the park, the one that triggered Thomas's imagination was an "old man," who later metamorphoses into the hunchback in the poem: "[t]he face of the old man who sat summer and winter on the bench looking over the reservoir, I can see clearly now and I wrote a poem long long after I'd left the park and the sea-town" (*QEOM* 5). The park which was situated so close to his parents' house was not only a playground for him and other children, but also a place that inspired his imagination with its world "full of terrors and treasures" (Thomas, *QEOM* 4). As it is suggested by Davies, in "The hunchback in the park" Thomas revisits his notebooks written during 1932 and 1933 (71). The final version that appears in *Deaths and Entrances* was brought to a conclusion in July

1941 and can be regarded as Thomas's impulse to recapture childhood's lost vision at the backdrop of the war-tormented Western world (Ackerman, *Companion* 113).

The post-pastoral subversion of culture/nature duality in "The hunchback in the park" is maintained by its setting which, as part of its ecophonic representation, raises fundamental questions about progressive history and environmental justice. Thomas's portrayal of the entrapment of the hunchback demonstrates the concerns of the environmental justice movement which problematises the injustice regarding each person's "right" to have equal access to "the benefits bestowed by a healthy environment" including where he/she "live[s], work[s], play[s] and worship[s]" (Adamson, Evans and Stein 4). In "Manufacturing the Ghetto: anti-urbanism and the spatialization of race," Michael Bennett elaborates on the challenge the environmental justice movement introduces to mainstream environmental movements' anxiety for "clean air and water and maintaining wildlands" (169). Thus, it allowed the environmental movement to enlarge its scope by verbalising the concerns of "a much more diverse group of citizens concerned about the spaces in which they live" instead of focusing on the interests of "the mostly white, upper-middle classes" (Bennett, "Manufacturing the Ghetto" 169). According to Figueroa and Mills, environmental justice can be explored from two perspectives. The first dimension is called "distributive justice," and studies the ways "environmental benefits and burdens [are] distributed;" the second one, on the other hand, is "participatory justice" and it concentrates on the ways "these distributive decisions [are] made" as well as the parties that are involved in this process (427). As Figueroa and Mills suggest, distributive justice is an "issue ... of environmental equity," and is the outcome of unrest among the marginalised members of the society like "people of color, the poor, and under-represented groups such as indigenous tribes and nations," who revolt against the "disproportionate amount of environmental burdens," some of which are "exposure to hazardous materials and toxic wastes, pollution, health hazards, and workplace hazards, as well as the exploitation and loss of traditional environmental practices and depletion of local natural resources" (427).

In the first two stanzas of “The hunchback in the park,” by drawing attention to the particulars of the hunchback’s life, the adult speaker offers a dark picture of the Western urban society which denies its aged and disadvantaged members, symbolised by the hunchback, the right to live in proper places and maintain their existence on decent food and drink. The poem mocks the ideals of Western progressive history with its promise to ensure the welfare and happiness of all human beings and attacks the marginalisation of those who can no longer be efficient and productive according to the laws prescribed by capitalist progressive norms (Bury 16). Because of his failure to function within the capitalist society, the hunchback is exposed to environmental “inequities” and “socio-economic discrimination” (Figueroa and Mills 426). Being excluded from what is considered to be the civilised life of the urban environment, the old man is confined to a life in the park where he faces “environmental degradation” (Adamson, Evans and Stein 4). That the speaker does not remember the hunchback’s name reflects societal indifference to the existence and suffering of such people and testifies to how they are denied the right to play a role in the mechanisms of “participatory justice” (Figueroa and Mills 427). Referring to him as “[a] solitary mister”, the speaker highlights the man’s loneliness as well as the fact that his existence is not acknowledged within the domain of the dominant progressive discourse:

The hunchback in the park
A solitary mister
Propped between trees and water
From the opening of the garden lock
That lets the trees and water enter
Until the Sunday sombre bell at dark

Eating bread from a newspaper
Drinking water from the chained cup
That the children filled with gravel
In the fountain basin where I sailed my ship
Slept at night in a dog kennel
But nobody chained him up. (*CP* 1-12)

Recollecting the inequity the old man suffered, the speaker is conscious of the victimisation of the hunchback. Being subjected to distributive injustice, the hunchback is denied very fundamental environmental benefits like “a safe workplace, clean water and air” and is exposed to several “environmental burdens,” as he is compelled to live “in a dog kennel” (Figuroa and Mills 427; *CP* 11). In the poem, Thomas draws attention to “housing” and “health care” as the major “inner-city problems” questioned by the environmental justice movement (Bennett, “Manufacturing the Ghetto” 169). The park as his dwelling place with its “fountain,” and “the chained cup,” “the railings,” as well as the presence of “a newspaper” is the present indicator of Western progressive civilisation (*CP* 10, 8, 38, 7). The fact that the hunchback can barely satisfy his very basic survival needs shatters the illusion of a progressive life. Demonstrating the concerns of the environmental justice movement, Thomas draws attention to the “environmental degradation and contamination” that the hunchback, as a marginalised figure, is exposed to, and highlights that he is deprived of “equal access to natural resources that sustain life and culture” (Adamson, Evans and Stein 4). The only food that he can reach is bread, which, wrapped in newspaper, is most probably the leftovers of the decent food consumed by privileged others. Although the water he drinks looks readily available, it is far from being healthy enough for consumption as he has to drink it “from the chained cup / That the children filled with gravel / In the fountain basin where I [the speaker] sailed [his] ship” (*CP* 8-10). Reflecting the principles of third wave ecocriticism, the portrayal of the life and the conditions of the hunchback goes beyond its Welsh background and acquires global significance. As Hardy observes, despite being the recreation of the poet’s childhood memories, “The hunchback in the park” “is certainly not appropriately or adequately described as a Welsh poem about a Welsh place” (*Dylan Thomas* 19-20). Therefore, it raises awareness about the worldwide impacts of urbanisation as well as the alienation of man and the exploitation of nature by drawing attention to the “poverty of life in parks” or any “public space which is a playground for happy children and a refuge for lonely people and down-and-outs” (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 19-20).

In addition to attacking the environmental injustice the marginalised people are subjected to, with its representation of the park, “The hunchback in the park” also involves the critique of city/country duality and the way nature is constructed by the anthropocentric discourse. Thomas’s attack on dichotomous logic echoes the theories of social and urban ecocritics, who argue that “[t]he city is an integral part of nature and nature is intimately interwoven into the social life of cities” (Benton-Short and Short 5). Because parks are the most important places where the natural and the urban coexist, urban ecologists and critics devote special attention to their creation. The construction of parks along with “other ‘green’ amenities” mirrors that culture’s approach to nature (Benton-Short and Short 24). They view parks as the outcomes of “a more self-conscious referencing of nature in cities” which created them as integral parts of the urban context, like Hyde Park in London or Central Park in New York (Benton-Short and Short 9).

As a forerunner of post-pastoral poetry, Thomas abolishes the dichotomy between the two forms of settlement and focuses on the predicament of the poem’s marginalised protagonist, the hunchback, and explores the impacts of urbanisation on both the human and nonhuman worlds. Contrary to Kate Soper’s concept of “nature as ‘otherness’ to humanity,” the poem challenges the hierarchy between culture and nature as an ideological construct and emphasises the interdependence between them (*What is Nature?* 15). Because it is difficult to disconnect it from its urban background, the park, signifying nature in the poem, can be regarded as a manifestation of what Gersdorf and Mayer call “hybridized entities” (14). The context of the park in Thomas’s poem displays a dual character regarding man’s approach to nature. Being situated in an urban background, it is identified with culture and the city. Therefore, it not only reveals the “*production*” of space by various “social processes and human inventions,” but also symbolises the anthropocentric taming of the nonhuman world (Wegner 181). With its gates, “the garden lock” and “the park keeper / With his stick that picked up leaves,” the park can be viewed among the major indicators of man’s mastery over nature (*CP* 4, 23-4). “The fountain basin,” its “chained cup” along with the “rockery” are among the other signs signifying how nature has been codified by man (*CP* 10, 8, 19).

The park also undermines all claims of domination by revealing the urban man's need for contact with nature. It is designated as "[u]rban greenery," and plays an indispensable role in "tak[ing] rough edge off the immigrant soul" so that he can be in contact with nature (Ross 22). Although constructing gardens, parks and green areas were designed as tokens of civilisation, ironically they prove that man cannot be disconnected from nature. According to Gifford, the construction of parks not only reveals the co-existence of culture and nature but also displays the predicament of the contemporary state of human existence with the urgent need for "retreat to the countryside, or nature, and return to the court, or the city" ("Towards a Post-Pastoral View" 51). Thus, the park reminds the urban dweller of his essential unity with nature and satisfies his yearning for holism by allowing him to be in contact with the nonhuman world.

Despite the fact that the park is the construct of urban culture, it is still associated with nature. Fulfilling its liberating function, it is the playground for "[t]he truant boys from the town" (*CP* 16). The poem subverts the anthropocentric motives behind its construction and inspires the children to go beyond its boundaries by triggering their imagination so that they can be in contact with untamed nature. Demythologising the mastery of man, the children's imagination transforms the park into a "loud zoo of the willow groves" where they play "[h]unchbacked in mockery" (*CP* 22, 21). Quite relevant to Thomas's childhood memories, the park is identified with creativity since its various "secret places, caverns and forests, prairies and deserts" have the power to change it into "a country somewhere at the end of the sea" (*QEOM* 4). Thomas himself elaborates on how imagination encouraged him to go beyond the limits of the park: "that small world widened as I learned its secrets and boundaries, as I discovered new refuges and ambushes in its woods and jungles; hidden homes and lairs for the multitudes of imagination, for cowboys and Indians, and the tall terrible half-people who rode on nightmares through my bedroom" (*QEOM* 6). In the same manner, although teasing the hunchback is one of their favourite games, the park metamorphoses into a "loud zoo" which is situated in an imaginary country where the boys, as the "blue sailors" arrive and where "the tigers jump out of their eyes / To roar on the rockery stones" (*CP* 22, 30, 28-9).

Apart from being the gateway to a dreamy world, the park is also a shelter for the marginalised members of the society. Elaborating on Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism, urban ecocritical theory regards the city as the arena of a survival struggle for space among urban settlers. In Ross's view, the scarcity of green areas in urban settlements causes a lot of conflicts and becomes "a primary battleground" where "a variety of interested claims" clash (22). In the poem, both the park and the hunchback are the end products of the way nature and the people who are identified with it have been exploited due to culture/nature duality. The figure of the hunchback with his deformed body can be interpreted as the symbol of the modern man's survival struggle. Because the hunchback cannot orient himself in the urban environment, he takes refuge in the park as the sole place where nature still exists. Offering reconciliation for his isolation, the park is represented as his home since he "[p]ropped between trees and water" and "the park birds" (*CP* 3, 13). Thomas employs the deformed body of the hunchback to instantiate the way humanism dissociated sensibility and created mind/body hierarchy. The specific remarks of the speaker in "The hunchback in the park" signify the interconnectedness between the hunchback and nature along with their mutual exploitation. The entrapment of the nonhuman world is foregrounded by the fenced park and "the garden lock" (*CP* 4). Even though the speaker declares that "nobody chained him up," since the hunchback does not have any place to take shelter in, he is confined in the park and the "dog kennel" (*CP* 12, 11). The anthropocentric mastery of nature is also highlighted by the control man imposes on the water flow by building a "fountain" as well as taming the ones identified with the elements of nature: "Like water he sat down" (*CP* 10, 14). Although the children's teasing of the hunchback at first glance appears to be a naïve game, it is also conditioned by anthropocentric codes. Because the hunchback does not fit into the image of man engineered by anthropocentric rational discourse, he is not respected even by children who are supposed to be the most innocent of the evils. Thus, similar to the way nature has been conceptualised to provide for the well-being of man, the hunchback is to satisfy the children's desire for pleasure.

With its last two stanzas, "The hunchback in the park," reveals Thomas's desire to create a polyphonic ecocentric vision as he becomes a mediator who

communicates the urban man's desire for ecocentric holism and voices the oppression of the marginalised figures that are identified with nature. Although the park in the poem demonstrates the totalitarian control imposed on the creation of the urban space by the dominant anthropocentric discourse, it metamorphoses into a Foucauldian heterotopia. In order to escape the entrapment imposed by the dominant anthropocentric discourse on nature and what is natural, the hunchback resorts to the liberating power of imagination to create an ecocentric heterotopia. According to Foucault, as part of their subversive dimension heterotopias transform the primary function of a social space ("Space, Knowledge, and Power" 252). Unlike utopic sites, the park as the heterotopia in the poem falls into the domain of "real places" integral to urban culture (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" 3). The subversive nature of the park as a heterotopic place can be discerned from what Dylan Thomas declares in *Quite Early One Morning*: "And the park itself was a world within the world of the sea-town" (4). Undermining the essential motives for its construction and the rational control imposed on what is natural, through hunchback's imagination the park is converted into a place representing diversity and plurality:

Made all day until bell time
A woman figure without fault
Straight as a young elm
Straight and tall from his crooked bones
That she might stand in the night
After the locks and chains

All night in the unmade park
After the railings and shrubberies
The birds the grass the trees the lake
And the wild boys innocent as strawberries
Had followed the hunchback
To his kennel in the dark. (CP 31- 42)

With the descending darkness following the "bell time" everyone withdraws into their private spheres and the park is left to "the old dog sleeper" (CP 31, 25). Similar to the subversive role the imaginative faculty plays in "Love in the Asylum," the hunchback builds a heterotopia of "compensation" (Foucault, "Of

Other Spaces” 8). Thus, as Fraser mentions, the hunchback “seeks happiness in a dream in which the park stands for all the richness of life from which he is locked out” (28). Despite being imprisoned in the park “[a]fter the locks and chains,” the hunchback celebrates the descending darkness and “the night” when “she might stand” (*CP* 36, 35). Challenging the control imposed on nature, by creating “[a] woman figure without fault / Strait as a young elm / Straight and tall from his crooked bones,” the old man transcends the oppressive reality of his everyday existence (*CP* 32-4). Through the imaginary companion, the poem problematises another form of Foucauldian “ ‘dividing practices’ ,” the dichotomy between “the sick and the healthy” (“The Subject and Power” 208). According to Hardy, in “The Personal and the Impersonal in Some of Dylan Thomas’s Lyrics,” as part of his desire to make up for his “disfigured” body symbolising his exploitation, he creates “a straight and perfect human image” (139). Moreover, the dream woman encourages the hunchback to “[unmake the] park” and transform it into an ecocentric realm not corrupted by dualistic thinking. By bridging up the gap between such oppositions like the “[s]traight” and the “crooked bones,” “the railings” and “shrubberies,” “the wild boys innocent as strawberries” and the old hunchback, his dream restores the essential harmony between them (*CP* 34, 38, 40). Consequently, through the reconceptualisation of the annoying “truant boys,” the hunchback foregrounds their untamed nature and innocence as essential dimensions of their true existence and highlights their union with nature by associating them with “strawberries” (*CP* 16, 40). The poem ends with the restoration of the ecocentric spirit which, in Fraser’s view, emphasises the idea that “all sets of polar opposites” such as “mocked and mocker; boys and hunchback: growth and decay, life and death, dream and reality” are “at some level equally holy and necessary” (28). Although the ecocentric relief provided by the heterotopic world is very brief and only lasts for the night, the hunchback is prepared for a peaceful sleep. Accompanied by all the inhabitants of the park as well as “[t]he birds the grass and trees the lake” he goes to “his kennel in the dark” (*CP* 39, 42).

Being the product of Thomas’s mature poetic career, “Over Sir John’s Hill” expresses the poet’s desire for ecocentric holism. Although it is a poem that

is inspired by the beautiful landscape and the non-hierarchical world of nonhuman beings in Laugharne, it has the dark overtones of post-World War II and the Cold War context. In the poem, by elaborating on the ecological war that takes place in the pastoral setting, Thomas problematises the war fought by man for domination and exploitation. Thus, rather than being an escapist poem, “Over Sir John’s Hill” is a post-pastoral work which reflects the poet’s “recognition of a creative–destructive universe” which is based on a “balance in a continuous momentum of birth and death, death and rebirth” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 153). Like “A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London,” “Over Sir John’s Hill” is an elegy in which the speaker grieves over loss of life among inhabitants of the nonhuman world. However, demonstrating the poet’s desire for ecocentric holism, “Over Sir John’s Hill” condemns the anthropocentric discourse and its progressive ideals and extols the ecocentric interconnectedness of the nonhuman beings.

As the forerunner of a post-pastoral mode of thinking, Dylan Thomas’s ecocritical exploration of the potential of pastoral poetry in “Over Sir John’s Hill” starts with its setting, which plays an integral role in the poem’s subversion of culture/nature duality. Like “Poem on his Birthday,” it is inspired by the pastoral setting of Laugharne, which as Ackerman mentions is a “fishing village” and “has always been popular with Welsh artists and writers” (*Dylan Thomas* 138). Rejecting the life style of the contemporary “intellectual or cosmopolitan bohemian poet” who engaged in “literary parties” and “the theatre discussions,” Thomas took refuge in the “humdrum, non-literary existence” of Laugharne, which with its sea and landscape contributes to “the genesis of the later work” (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 139). The entire poem is based on the poet’s observations on the life of the nonhuman world from his boat house. Regarding the same point, Davies states that the title of the poem is inspired by the hill “named after Sir John Perrot, the Elizabethan lord of Laugharne castle,” which Thomas could see from his work place (208). Critics like Love, Williams and Gifford denounce the pastoral’s idealised representation of the countryside and its inhabitants because such conventions merely consolidate anthropocentric and humanist codifications of nature and everything that is associated with it. Quite in parallel with the ecocritical demand that pastoral poetry should be conscious of

“superficial comparisons” between the city and the country, Thomas employs the pastoral setting of Sir John’s hill, the bay and the Towy estuary to criticise the collapse of the Western civilisation (Williams, *The Country* 54). The poem’s celebration of the interconnectedness of all beings with its “biocentric view” also involves the poet’s challenge to the hierarchical culture and civilisation that the Western man has created, which eventually turned into a tool to dominate and destroy the less powerful ones (Gifford, “Towards a Post-Pastoral View” 58).

As part of his challenge to the hierarchical patterns of the Western culture, Thomas creates an ecophonic world by harmonising the conventions of the fable with ecopoetry. Aesop, as the speaker of this ecocentric fable, like Aesop the ancient poet, represents the non-hierarchical world of the nonhuman beings in order to convey his moral message to the modern man. Witnessing the interconnected pattern of life and death in the nonhuman world, the speaker, “I young Aesop,” is “fabling to the near night by the dingle / Of eels” (*CP* 35). According to Korg, the speaker as Thomas’s spokesperson assumes the role of “a recorder” that “sympathetically writes down the chronicle of the ordeal imposed by nature upon its creatures” (*Dylan Thomas* 96). Within this non-dualistic domain, man ceases to be the master and leaves the stage to the birds which become the leading actors of the poem. The ecocentric polyphony is enhanced with the presence of the heron that is assigned the role to aid Aesop as the representative of the nonhuman world. The alliance between the speaker and the heron in the composition of this ecocentric fable reflects the poet’s interest in “the idea of the *dyn hysbys* or wise man,” which Thomas borrows from the Anglo-Welsh novel to add a “bardic and prophetic stance” to his later works (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 143). Therefore, as a post-pastoral poem, “Over Sir John’s Hill” fulfils a very significant function of communicating the underlying spirituality within the ecocentric co-existence of life and death in the nonhuman world.

Dylan Thomas’s representation of the nonhierarchical life and death pattern in the nonhuman world contributes to his subversion of culture/nature duality as an ideological construct. Reflecting the social ecological attack on hierarchy, the poem declares that such hierarchical codifications do not exist among the nonhuman beings as each species is assigned a unique role within the

creative-destructive cycle. With the emphasis on the interconnectedness of beings in the nonhuman world, the poem portrays the “ ‘economy of nature’ ” which, as Worster points out signifies “a world of living things that are constantly at work, in discernible patterns, producing goods and services that are essential for the survival of one another” (50). Thomas uses hunting as the central motif to reflect this “ ‘economy of nature’ ” around Sir John’s Hill, the bay, as well as the Towy estuary (Worster, *The Wealth* 50). In Tindall’s view, the hill and the river “are parts of a landscape whose inscape is life and death” (281). Foregrounding the natural life cycle, the poem displays how the death of some birds contributes to the maintenance of life among others:

Over Sir John’s hill,
 The hawk on fire hangs still;
 In a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk, he pulls to his claws
 And gallows, up the rays of his eyes the small birds of the bay
 And the shrill child’s play
 Wars
 Of the sparrows and such who swansing, dusk, in wrangling hedges.
 And blithely they squawk
 To fiery tyburn over the wrestle of elms until
 The flash the noosed hawk
 Crashes, and slowly the fishing holy stalking heron
 In the river Towy below bows his tilted headstone. (*CP* 1-12)

The events in the poem take place “at drop of dusk,” which connotes death (*CP* 3). Through the reference to “swansing” songs of the victims, Thomas also foreshadows their death as it “suggests not only their song at the day’s end but the last song of those soon to die, in this allegory/bestiary on the human condition” (*CP* 7; Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 139). The speaker sets the scene for the “[w]ars” that are just about to take place between “the hawk on fire” and “the small birds of the bay” such as “the sparrows” (*CP* 6, 2, 4, 7). With its images the poem emphasises how life and death are interwoven. While “the hawk on fire” with “his claws,” “gallows” and “[t]he flash of the noosed hawk” signify death, “the sparrows” that “blithely they squawk” are associated with the vitality of life (*CP* 2, 3, 4, 10, 7, 8). Although the hawk is about to bring death to the sparrows, their death bestows life to the hawk. The co-existence of life and death is also

maintained through the references to “the fishing holy stalking heron” that “bows his tilted headstone” and whose survival depends on the death of other nonhuman creatures (*CP* 11, 12). Ackerman observes that the heron epitomises “Thomas’s vision of life-in-death” because it “both witnesses and demonstrates the action as, shaped like a headstone, his beak dips into the water” (*Companion* 140).

While the Western man’s anthropocentric and progressive desires to dominate and control lead to the destruction of both his own race and the nonhuman beings, members of the nonhuman realm kill only to survive. Hence, at the core of the poem lies “a pattern of divine justice in the landscape and animal life of Laugharne” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 95). The justifiable death among the nonhuman beings is also intensified by Thomas’s conversion of the natural setting of the poem into “a court of law,” where the hawk’s hunt begins (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 96):

Flash, and the plumes crack,
And a black cap of jack-
Daws Sir John’s just hill dons, and again the gulled birds hare
To the hawk on fire, the halter height, over Towy’s fins,
In a whack of wind.
There
Where the elegiac fisherbird stabs and paddles
In the pebbly dab-filled
Shallow and sedge, and ‘dilly dilly,’ calls the loft hawk,
‘Come and be killed,’
I open the leaves of the water at a passage
Of psalms and shadows among the pincer sandcrabs prancing
(*CP* 13- 24)

As part of the court atmosphere of the poem Thomas appoints Sir John’s hill as the judge, who being the “just hill” puts on “a black cap of jack- / Daws” (*CP* 15, 14-5). The ever presence of the hill and its being the ground for countless creative-destructive processes grants him the right to declare the death of the sparrows. Moreover, Thomas extends his judicial metaphor to include the hawk, as the “executioner” and the sparrows and the other birds as the “prisoners” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 96). The hawk descends on his prey with “[f]lash, and the plumes crack,” which is accompanied by his cry “ ‘dilly dilly’, ” and “ ‘[c]ome

and be killed” (CP 13, 21, 22). The sacramental as well as the sacrificial dimension of such a death is also emphasised with the reactions of the witnesses. While the heron composes elegies for the dead birds, the speaker prays for their souls:

And read, in a shell
Death clear as a bouy’s bell:
All praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be sung,
When his viperish fuse hangs looped with flames under the brand
Wing, and blest shall
Young
Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck, ‘dilly dilly,
Come let us die.’
We grieve as the blithe birds, never again, leave shingle and elm,
The heron and I,
I young Aesop fabling to the near night by the dingle
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distant (CP 25-36)

Despite the presence of biblical allusions such as “open[ing] the leaves of the water at a passage / Of psalms,” what the speaker reads is the sacred book of nature which encourages him to acknowledge the naturalness of death in life: “And read, in a shell / Death clear as a bouy’s bell” (CP 23-4, 25-6). Thus, the speaker not only expresses his admiration for the hawk, “[a]ll praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be sung,” but also praises his prey: “and blest shall / Young / Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck, ‘dilly dilly, / Come let us die.’ ” (CP 27, 29-32). Moreover, the hawk is associated with fire and, as Korg observes, reflects “its ambivalent suggestions of creative and destructive power” (Dylan Thomas 96). Through the destruction of the other birds, it maintains its existence and is portrayed as the symbol of the regenerative function in nature. The poem’s post-pastoral attack on anthropocentrism and war also involves the representation of what Campbell calls “*networks*” rather than “centers” that signify hierarchy (131, 132). The hawk and the sparrows are the participants of the ecocentric “network” of existence which is based on the interconnectedness of all beings. Within the natural creative-destructive cycle, death is regarded as something blissful even by the ones who feel its cold grip and express their

willingness to die (Campbell 131). As a result, the grief of both the heron and the speaker metamorphoses into a polyphonic fable and hymn:

The heron and I,
I young Aesop fabling to the near night by the dingle
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distant

Crystal harbour vale
Where the sea cobbles sail,
And wharves of water where the walls dance and the white cranes
stilt. (*CP* 34-40)

The peace and the tranquillity of the nonhuman world after the “blithe birds” fall prey to the hawk also highlight the naturalness of death (*CP* 33). Thomas calls for God’s grace for the victims: “the led-astray birds whom God, for their breast of whistles / Have mercy on” (*CP* 44-5). The sense of grief and mourning covers the entire estuary. The speaker as the witness of the creative destructive process in nature “[t]hrough windows / Of dusk and water” observes that while “the heron grieves in the weeded verge,” the river also cries for the dead birds: “the tear of the Towy” (*CP* 48-9, 48 52). The only sound that disturbs the grieving silence of “the looted elms” and the “green cocks or hens” is of the owl: “Only a hoot owl / Hollows, a grassblade blown in cupped hands” (*CP* 53, 54, 52-3).

With its representation of the ecocentric interconnectedness, “Over Sir John’s Hill” also undermines the concepts of victory and defeat as two of the key concepts on which the Western progressive history is based. Although the hawk is the triumphant one, his defeat of the less powerful sparrows does not build a hierarchy. Challenging religious dichotomy and humanist philosophy that preach man’s illusory mastery over the other species, the poem, manifests the ecological harmony. Echoing Darwin’s theory of evolution, the poem shakes the Cartesian ego’s trust in human reason to control both himself and the nonhuman world around him as he is compelled to acknowledge that existence on earth is determined by processes such as natural and sexual selection in a world operating on biological principles (86, 93). What is more, “Over Sir John’s Hill” highlights that despite their struggle “for food or residence,” each species is connected to

another one (49). Hence, at the end of the poem, Thomas juxtaposes mourning with the restoration of natural peace and balance, and offers an elegiac reconciliation. Representing the ecocentric polyphony, as the two witnesses of the creative-destructive operations in nature, the heron and the speaker appreciate the essential harmony in nature and present what Tindall calls “[t]heir elegiac celebration” (281). While “[t]he heron, ankling the scaly / Lowlands of the waves, / Makes all the music,” the speaker as the “young Aesop” is “fabling” the events (*CP* 56-8, 35). Quite conscious of the operating mechanism of nature, the speaker can “hear the tune of the slow, / Wear-willow river,” which is regarded as a “grave,” signifying the creative-destructive processes in nature (*CP* 58-9). What is more, in Ackerman’s view, the image of “grave” through its verb “ ‘engrave’ ” can also denote “the poet’s carving of his ritualistic poetry of remembrance, marking nature’s rites” (*Dylan Thomas* 141). Thus, he creates an ode with elegiac tone: “Before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken / Stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds sailing” (*CP* 60-1). Quite compatible with the features of post-pastoral poetry, the poem regards death as a “process” (Gifford, *Pastoral* 153). Thomas’s representation of the non-hierarchical natural pattern reflects the metamorphosis of “decay” into “growth” while avoiding the creation of a hierarchy between the two (Gifford, “Towards a Post-Pastoral View” 58). Although the poet speaker is inspired by what he has witnessed and composes an ecocentric elegy on the interconnectedness of life and death in the Towy estuary, the poem is the symbolic manifestation of one of Thomas’s elemental poetic motifs: life as a journey to death and grave. As a result, despite the former allusions to Christianity and God, with its ending the poem declares ecocentrism as its organising principle. By reconsidering the position of man, what the poet demands mirrors the deep ecological call for “an understanding of life in which the thinking of the ‘self’ must already include other organisms” because the wellbeing of one depends on the wellbeing of the other (Clark 23).

Dylan Thomas’s attack on the hierarchical codification of culture over nature with the representation of the futility of war in “Over Sir John’s Hill” can be regarded as one of the successful explorations of the pastoral tradition to fulfil its role in the portrayal of significant contemporary problems. Similar to Love’s

observation that pastoral poetry should not confine itself to its “comfortably mythopoeic green world,” the poem problematises the way the anthropocentric humanist desire to master nature metamorphoses into war and grand-scale destruction (66). As suggested by Ackerman, it “is a bestiary fable with direct reference to the human condition” (*Dylan Thomas* 143). The horrific consciousness of the Second World War as well as the Cold war still penetrates the poem. “Over Sir John’s Hill” problematises dichotomous logic by juxtaposing the unjust death of millions of people with its portrayal of death as part of the natural creative-destructive pattern. According to Gifford, pastoral retreat into the country necessitates “some sense” of “a return from that location to a context in which the results of the journey are to be understood” (*Pastoral* 81). In the same manner, though the poem is the product of a suburban poet, who retreats into the peace and the tranquillity of the rural environment, his perception of natural events is shaped by the events that caused the disillusionment with progressive civilisation and humanist thought. Goodby states that Thomas’s pastoral poems were composed while “the shadow of the bomb falls across them” (380). Therefore, by elaborating on Gifford’s theories on pastoral poetry he coins “‘Cold War pastoral’ ” as an alternative category reflecting the mindset of the post-war poets (Goodby 378). Challenging the constructed nature of anthropocentrism and the idea of progress, reflecting the premises of third wave ecocriticism, “Over Sir John’s Hill” expresses the poet’s yearning for a world that operates on ecocentric holistic premises. Despite the fact that the poem is inspired by the events that he witnesses in Laugharne, which, as Hardy maintains, make him “one of the most interesting regional poets of this century,” Thomas surpasses “his Welshness” with his “admirably unmilitant, antinationalist, unpartisan, humorous, and pacifist” stance (*Dylan Thomas* 1). Therefore, as an eco-poet, he declares that a better unthreatening world can be constructed only after the appreciation and the celebration of the non-hierarchical patterns of existence in the nonhuman world.

In short, the discussion of the poems, “The hunchback in the park” and “Over Sir John’s Hill” demonstrates Dylan Thomas’s subversion of culture/nature dichotomy by problematising the entrapment of the modern man in the urban background and his yearning for contact with nature. When read in light of the

theoretical framework of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, both poems critique the anthropocentric progressive history and manifest the poet's attempts to voice the desire to recover the former holistic ecocentric perception of life. Reflecting the premises of social and urban ecocriticism as a post-pastoral poem, "The hunchback in the park" abolishes the dichotomy between the urban and the rural nature and treats the context of the town park as the symbol of the modern man's urge to be in touch with nature. Moreover, the hunchback, as the central figure of the poem, signifies the objectification of both nature and the ones that are identified with it. Nevertheless, through the subversion of the anthropocentric mastery over nature, the world of the park in the poem, thanks to the hunchback's power of imagination, resists totalising codifications and metamorphoses into a polyphonic and non-hierarchical ecocentric heterotopia. In order to foreground culture/nature duality as an ideological construct and to portray the modern man's desire for ecocentric holism, Dylan Thomas also juxtaposes the destructive outcomes of Western progressive civilisation with the non-hierarchical world of the nonhuman beings where each species' unique contribution to the maintenance of the ecocentric holism is appreciated. In "Over Sir John's Hill" the ecocentric polyphonic world the poet created allows him to contrast the collapse of the Enlightenment project and Western progressive ideals due to the two World Wars with the ecocentric harmony and order in the nonhuman world. By elaborating on the hawk and the sparrows as the two participants of the ecological war, the hunt, Thomas emphasises the non-hierarchical order among the nonhuman beings. Although the sparrows fall prey to the hawk, their death is part of the just ecocentric harmony since it initiates the natural regenerative processes. What is more, as part of his subversion of culture/nature duality, Thomas avoids the pastoral trap of being escapist and employs the ecocentric harmonious order of the nonhuman world in the countryside as a foil to the constructedness of the anthropocentric and hegemonic world the Western man created. "The hunchback in the park" and "Over Sir John's Hill" originate from Thomas's unique experiences and are inspired by his Welsh background; yet, the ecocritical subversion of culture/nature duality in these poems offers significant insights regarding the universality of the problems caused by dualistic thinking. From the

portrayal of particular incidents and individuals Thomas moves to a more universal frame in which he tries to raise global ecological consciousness regarding the urge to abolish culture/nature duality and to appreciate the interconnectedness of all beings.

CHAPTER 5

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE HEGEMONY OF TIME OVER SPACE IN DYLAN THOMAS'S POETRY

A worm tells summer better than the clock,
The slug's a living calendar of days;
What shall it tell me if a timeless insect
Says the world wears away?
(“Here in this spring” *CP* 14-7)

Integral to the subversion of man/nature and culture/nature dualities in Dylan Thomas's poetry, another issue that this study will discuss is the destabilisation of the hierarchical configuration of time over space. The modernist impulse to find an organising principle in his poetry in order to cope with the chaotic and fragmented world encourages Thomas to restore the essential unity between man and nature, and to establish ecocentric holism at the core of both his life and work. This chapter will discuss how, as part of his holistic vision of life, he also problematises the linear configuration of time and revives cyclical temporality. Firstly, it will focus on the subversion of the hegemony of time over space in his early works by exploring how, as an ecopoet, Thomas observes the parallelism between the cyclical rhythms in nature and in human life and body to revitalise cyclical temporality as well as to restore the bond between time and space. Secondly, this chapter will also discuss how the gradual revival of the cyclical and holistic perception of life in Thomas's mature poetry enables him to resolve his conflicts regarding the meaninglessness of existence and fear of death, as he recovers his childhood ecocentric vision. In addition to these, borrowing conceptual tools from third wave ecocriticism this chapter will also discuss the details of how, despite being rooted in his Welsh background, the gradual celebration of the spatiotemporal frame of existence in Thomas's poetry offers significant insight into a globalised sense of place.

As a forerunner of ecopoetry, Dylan Thomas's challenge to the hegemony of time over space is attained through his close observations on the cyclical and

spatiotemporal patterns in both the nonhuman world and the human body. Reflecting the modernist urge to reject tradition, Thomas's representation of temporality in his poems is highly experimental as he develops his unique subversive means of representation that challenge linearity. Being inspired by nature, he imitates its operating mechanisms through the creation of various images that revive nonlinear flow of time and restore the bond between time and space. The ecopoetic desire to represent the spatiotemporal and cyclical patterns in nature in Thomas's works is also stimulated by his Welsh background and poetic tradition. Contrary to its modern demarcated linear form, as it is pointed out by Ackerman, the old Welsh poets perceived and represented time "as an eternal moment rather than as something with a separate past and future" (*Dylan Thomas* 6). In the same manner, in his poems Thomas does not follow a linear progressive pattern but "a pattern of experience," which is not based on "a narrative design;" thus, the construction of " 'meaning' " in his work is "concentric rather than linear" (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 7). Ackerman's view is confirmed by Thomas's words, as in one of his letters to Henry Treece, he sums up his own method of poetry composition as follows:

A poem by myself *needs* a host of images, because its centre is a host of images. I make one image – though 'make' is not the word; I let, perhaps, an image be 'made' emotionally in me and then apply to it what intellectual and critical forces I possess – let it breed another, let that image contradict the first, make of the third image bred out of the other two together, a fourth contradictory image, and let them all, within my imposed formal limits, conflict. (CL 281)

What he says about the dynamism of images in his process of composition and how he relates himself to it seem to be exactly the same thing as a pattern of experience in Ackerman's analysis. The thing that Thomas foregrounds is the cyclical process of image creation, which is "a constant building up and breaking down of the images that come out of the central seed, which is itself destructive and constructive at the same time" (CL 281). Such a conception of life also shapes the way his poetry is composed and contributes to his poetic experience as an ecopoet imitating the spatiotemporal rhythms in nature. The close affinity

between ecological interconnectedness of beings and poetry composition is highlighted with the choice of “seed” as a metaphor for poetic images (Thomas, *CL* 281). He imitates this natural harmony of heterogeneity in the process of poetry composition. Rather than the logocentric function of a central image that organises “the *life* in any poem,” he prefers ecocentric polyphony and creates a host of images that dialectically interact with one another: “the life must come out of the centre; an image must be born and die in another; and any sequence of my images must be a sequence of creations, recreations, destructions, contradictions” (Thomas, *CL* 281). The plurality of images and their dialectical and cyclical interaction patterns during poetry composition are at the same time a manifestation of Thomas’s ecocentric perception of life. Therefore, “[t]he relationship between the parts is total rather than consecutive,” which makes poetry writing “a whole experience, without actual end or beginning” (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 7).

5.1 The Subversion of Linear Temporality and the Revitalisation of Space in Thomas’s Early Poetry

Thomas’s challenge to the hegemony of time over space derives from the same existentialist quest that encourages him to subvert the man/nature dichotomy. In his early poetry, just as his observations on the nonhuman and human worlds allow him to restore the bond between man and nature, his examination of the natural temporal and spatial patterns encourages him to question the linear configuration of time as well as the denaturalisation of space as a passive background. As part of his struggle to overcome man’s futile existence in a world where faith in God and a transcendental realm is undermined, Thomas, the ecopoet, yearns for a holistic perception of life, which motivates him to observe the way time and space interact in nature. To this end, this chapter will explore the poems “Here in this spring,” “Before I knocked,” and the first two birthday poems, “Especially when the October wind” and “Twenty-four years.”

“Here in this spring,” in *Twenty-five Poems*, can be considered as an ecopoem that is inspired by the desire to imitate the natural state of existence.

Reflecting Dylan Thomas's ideas on poetry composition, the poem evolves out of several images that foreground the interconnectedness between time and space. As an ecopoet, Thomas's observations on the seasonal changes that take place in the nonhuman world result in an awareness about the spatiotemporal rhythms in nature. His appreciation of the cyclical patterns of being allows him to problematise linear codifications of time and the constructedness of the hierarchy between time and space.

"Here in this spring" opens with the portrayal of an anxious speaker who feels entrapped by the linear flow of time. Thomas represents spring as the season associated with regeneration as well as with the vitality of the young speaker. However, the sense of meaningless existence and the fear of the finality of death prevent him from enjoying his youth. Thus, feeling at one with the "spring bird," that is buried by "[t]his summer," the speaker of the poem focuses on how with its linear flow, time brings him closer to death (*CP* 4):

Here in this spring, stars float along the void;
Here in this ornamental winter
Down pelts the naked weather;
This summer buries a spring bird. (*CP* 1-4)

The ever-present threat of death transforms the speaker's perception of the seasons for "this spring" and "[t]his summer" are determined by the gloom of winter (*CP* 1, 4). Being identified with "void," spring connotes the uncertainty and the fear of death, while summer ceases to be the season for growth and development since birth signals despair and annihilation (*CP* 1). Because his mind is constantly preoccupied with death, he elaborates on winter and the sense of ending suggested by the images of "ornamental winter" and "the naked weather" (*CP* 2, 3). This pessimism is also highlighted by the repetition of "this," for it reveals how the speaker thinks of all seasons in relation to death; hence, he cannot appreciate the unique contributions of each seasonal transformation to human existence (*CP* 1, 2, 4).

In the second stanza of "Here in this spring," the speaker challenges linear temporality and its indifference to the cyclical changes in the natural world. Quite

similar to what Henri Lefebvre points out, the speaker recognises that the separation of time from space does not exist in the natural world where being embedded in nature “time is apprehended within space” (95). Acknowledging the cyclical flow of time, the speaker starts perceiving the vitality of nature as well as the interconnectedness of each season. With the image of “the years’ / Slow rounding of four seasons’ coasts,” the speaker not only perceives the transformation that takes place in the nonhuman world, but also avoids referring to death (*CP* 5-6). This altered ecocentric consciousness can be discerned from the references to life and vitality as “autumn teach[es] three seasons’ fires” and sings “four birds’ notes” (*CP* 7, 8). Within the cyclical flow of time, all seasons are bound together and introduce their distinctive, yet, interrelated changes in life. The fact that each season has its own creative-destructive dimension is expressed with the image of “three seasons’ fires” (*CP* 7). In addition to suggesting energy, fire also symbolises destruction. However, the poem foregrounds the regenerative power of fire by elaborating on the idea that whatever fire devastates does not disappear since it merely returns to nature and becomes part of its elements. Similarly, the poem declares that within the cyclical frame of temporality, out of the ashes of the former season the consecutive one is born.

The consciousness of the constructed nature of linear temporality transforms the poem into an ecopoem in which the bond between time and space is re-established. The gradual renunciation of linear temporality associated with the sense of death as finality leads to the restoration of the cyclical temporality and the reconceptualisation of death as union with nature. Stimulated by his close observations on the co-existence of life and death in nature, the speaker attacks linear progressive time, which reduces space and nature to a mere passive background:

I should tell summer from the trees, the worms
Tell, if at all, the winter’s storms
Or the funeral of the sun;
I should learn spring by the cuckooing,
And the slug should teach me destruction. (*CP* 9-13)

Appreciating spring and winter as the two dialectical frames of cyclical temporality signifying birth and death, the speaker declares that he could perceive “summer from the trees,” “spring by the cuckooing,” whereas “the worms,” and “the slug” signify “winter’s storms / Or the funeral of the sun” as well as “destruction” (*CP* 9, 12, 9, 13, 10-1, 13). Although winter is followed by spring which is symbolised by “the cuckooing” birds, spring naturally leads to winter and death (*CP* 12). Thomas’s subversion of the constructed nature of the superiority of time over space is a challenge to the Enlightenment project to master nature and make progress. According to Giddens, such a hierarchy did not exist in the pre-modern times since the calculation of time was rooted in the natural phenomena (17). Similarly, as an ecopoet Thomas revives the spatiotemporality of the Welsh tradition and employs natural images to overcome the hegemony of time over space and creates an ecocentric universe in which “the unity of matter” cannot be dissociated from “unity of time” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 19).

The subversion of the hierarchy between time and space is intensified in the last stanza with Thomas’s juxtaposition of several images that denote cyclical temporality and linear codification of time. By elaborating on the images of “the worms” and “the slug” as the symbols of cyclical patterns in nature, the speaker expresses his distrust in the mechanical indicators of linear time (*CP* 14, 15). While the former ones reflect cyclical temporality and portray death as a union with nature, the latter, “the clock” and “calendar of days” indicate the meaninglessness of life leading to death (*CP* 14, 15):

A worm tells summer better than the clock,
The slug’s a living calendar of days;
What shall it tell me if a timeless insect
Says the world wears away? (*CP* 14-7)

Reflecting the ecocritical challenge to the treatment of space and nature as the passive frames where human civilisation makes progress, the temporality of the poem is rooted in the changes that take place in nature. Disregarding the constructed nature of mechanical time, he maintains that “[a] worm tells summer

better than the clock” and “[t]he slug’s a living calendar of days” (*CP* 14, 15). Richie Nimmo points out that modernity constructed a world based on the marginalisation of the nonhuman beings while glorifying men “as the source of all meaning and value, the agents in all action, the eye in the storm of existence itself” (60). However, “Here in this spring,” not only opposes such anthropocentric hierarchisation between the rational man and the nonhuman world, but also undermines the humanist progressive ideals. Thus, the speaker regards the “worm” and “the slug” as more reliable sources in humanity’s attempt to resolve the enigma of existence where death rules (*CP* 14, 15). Whereas “the clock” as the human invention to measure the constructed linear time confines man’s life to a limited temporal frame that ends with death, the “worm” and “the slug” are reminders of cyclical creative-destructive operating mechanisms in nature (*CP* 14, 15). As declared by Korg, the cyclical notion of time signifies “an absence of time” since it conceptualises time as “neither an irresistibly passing stream nor a rigidly ordered and irreversible sequence” (*Dylan Thomas* 20). Therefore, by opposing demarcation and linearity, cyclical time signifies “an eternal present” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 20). The poem’s challenge to linear temporality and demarcated time reaches its peak with the last two lines: “What shall it tell me if a timeless insect / Says the world wears away” (*CP* 16-7). Expressing his distrust in the man-made objects to measure time, he relies on the natural indicators of cyclical temporality such as “a timeless insect” that expresses the endless recycling of nature (*CP* 16). Hence, his experimentation with unique ecocentric motifs allows him to enter the grave and witness “the strange and secret existence of the dead” and feel the pain of “the resolution of the body into its elements and the transmutation of those elements into other forms of life” (Olson 13). The poem ends with the ecocentric declaration that as part of the cyclical temporality, all living beings are destined to die and are to participate in the regenerative process carried out by the “worm” and the “timeless insect” (*CP* 14, 16). The desire to recover the holistic ecocentric perception of life along with the revival of the pre-modern approaches to temporality and space indicate Thomas’s desire to resolve his conflict regarding the meaningless existence in a world devoid of any centre.

The reconceptualisation of man as an organic being that is part of nature encourages Dylan Thomas to represent how man is subjected to the same cyclical patterns of existence as the nonhuman beings. One of the poems in *18 Poems*, “Before I knocked,” is a significant example of ecopoetry demonstrating the non-linear temporality by portraying life as a cyclical journey which is initiated by conception and which ends with death and the body’s return to nature. The temporality in “Before I knocked” flows through the reflections of the speaker of the poem in whose image Dylan Thomas unites the perceptions of the child, Christ, and the poet. As part of his attack on progressive linear temporality, Thomas employs several sexual images which contribute to the restoration of the bond between man and nature as well as indicating its fundamental role in the cyclical flow of existence.

Because it is associated with creation and birth, Dylan Thomas views sexuality as a fundamental part of cyclical existence. Engaging in the sexual act, man imitates and simultaneously becomes involved in the creative processes in nature. The desire to represent non-linearity motivates Thomas to be highly experimental as Stewart Crehan, in “The Lips of Time,” maintains: “[i]n Thomas’s poems about birth, temporal logic is overthrown” (51). Reflecting the natural cycle, in “Before I knocked,” Thomas treats conception as the initial stage of Christ’s physical existence and portrays a foetus, who even before his birth, is aware of death and his subsequent regeneration with the elements of nature. Imitating the operating mechanisms in the nonhuman world, man’s existence takes place in the cyclical domain: conception, birth and death. Thus, because of being “the initiator of fresh processes and the centre of the reproductive life,” in this ecopoem, sex is “the source of both unity and division in the body and in nature” (Stephens 39). Abolishing such dualities like “[b]irth and death, sin and redemption, growth and decline,” the unified perception of time foregrounds their coexistence and displays how they are “superimposed upon one another” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 20).

Within the ecocentric universe that Thomas strives to create, man’s cyclical journey starts with conception. The cyclical temporality of “Before I knocked” is portrayed through the figure of Christ, who as the speaker of the

poem meditates on his conception, life and death. Rather than demonstrating it as a sin, the young poet foregrounds its regenerative role in the cyclical continuation of life. Thomas attributes a divine function to sexuality and, as Holroyd puts it, “sex, together with the processes analogues to it in the natural world” metamorphoses into “Dylan Thomas’s god” (144). Thomas’s desire to surpass the lack of spirituality in the conventional Christian faith, in “Before I knocked” is realised with the union between Christ and his pantheism. By reinterpreting Christianity from a pagan perspective, Thomas regarded “sexual union” as “the gateway to the unitive life” (Holroyd 143). The temporality in the poem flows in three consecutive phases of Christ’s existence. The beginning of the poem reflects the time prior to the speaker’s conception and birth implied by the title “Before I knocked” and displays Thomas’s preoccupation with “pre-natal life” as an integral part of human existence (Holroyd 146). The second phase is initiated by birth and encompasses the speaker’s earthly existence until death. The third phase, which completes the cycle, covers the speaker’s reunion with the spiritual realm following his death. According to Korg, “[i]n Thomas’s view the embryo is already the child, the man, and the corpse; the corpse, in turn is the decomposed elements that will feed the plants and so be returned to the cycle of life and death” (*Dylan Thomas* 20). The opening stanza concentrates on the first stage, which, at the same time, announces the other two:

Before I knocked and flesh let enter,
With liquid hands tapped on the womb,
I who was as shapeless as the water
That shaped the Jordan near my home
Was brother to Mnetha’s daughter
And sister to the fathering worm. (*CP* 1-6)

The speaker, Christ, establishes the unity of the spirit, “flesh” and “worm” by declaring that despite having different physical manifestations they originate from the same source (*CP* 1, 6). Before he was conceived and was transformed into “flesh” in the mother’s “womb,” the speaker existed “as shapeless as the water” (*CP* 1, 2, 3). Quite in harmony with Thomas’s ecocentrism, the poem emphasises that “life begins before personality” is shaped into “human form” and maintains

its existence “after the death of personality” (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 46). The poem’s challenge to dualistic thought is intensified with the idea that before assuming human form, Christ was neither male nor female: “Was brother to Mnetha’s daughter / And sister to the fathering worm” (Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 46; *CP* 5-6). By elaborating on the “worm,” as one of his favourite images to represent cyclical temporality and the coexistence of life and death, with a reference to “the fathering worm,” Thomas suggests that man’s journey to death starts with his conception (*CP* 6). Foregrounding the poem’s ecocentric spirit, the “fathering worm,” symbolises the two poles of existence (*CP* 6). On one hand, because it is described as “fathering,” the “worm” is associated with “‘sperm,’” as “a life force” (Davies 142). On the other hand, as in “Here in this spring” the “worm” connotes “death” and the subsequent regeneration (142).

The eco-poetic revival of cyclical temporality by exploring the processes in the human body is maintained in the second stanza, in which following his conception the speaker, Christ refers to himself as a foetus in his mother’s womb and contemplates on his death. Although physically he is not capable of perceiving the external world, “I who was deaf to spring and summer, / Who knew not sun nor moon by name,” because he is part of the universal cycle of existence, he is already conscious of death: “Felt thud beneath my flesh’s armour” (*CP* 7-8, 9). Prior to birth, he is “in a molten form” and is aware of the seasonal and daily cyclical patterns in nature (*CP* 10). The completion of the pre-natal stage as the first phase of cyclical existence is signalled by “I knew the message of the winter, / The darted hail, the childish snow” (*CP* 13-4). His birth and his entry into the second temporal frame are indicated as the natural outcomes of his conception: “My veins flowed with the Eastern weather / Ungotten I knew night and day” (*CP* 17-8). The speaker’s knowledge of the existence of “night and day” and his appreciation of the forces in nature like the “wind,” and “the hellborn dew” establish the unity between him and the nonhuman world (*CP* 18, 16).

Dylan Thomas’s attempts to overcome the existentialist crisis and to get over the rigidity of Christian faith encourage him to reconcile religion with ecocentric holism. By reconceptualising Christ as the redeemer in light of his pantheism, Thomas represents him as part of the universal natural harmony. As

Yeomans points out, in his poems Thomas identifies the workings of the human body with the operating mechanism of nature and draws attention to the common cyclical patterns: “In Thomas’s overall vision the history of a man is analogous to the history of the cosmos” (102). Each phase of human existence corresponds to a cosmic phenomenon. While “the foetal stage” is associated with man’s existence in “Eden and heaven,” man’s birth refers to “the fall of Eden, heaven, and God” (Yeomans 102). In its fallen state, the modern man’s existence is characterised by suffering and lack of spirituality, which is expressed through the various struggles that Christ endures during the second phase of his cyclical life:

As yet ungotten, I did suffer;
The rack of dreams my lily bones
Did twist into a living cipher,
And flesh was snipped to cross the lines
Of gallow crosses on the liver
And brambles in the wringing brains. (*CP* 19-24)

The portrayal of Christ in adversity reflects Thomas’s challenge to sterile religious doctrines which by dissociating him from nature ruin his spirituality. Consequently, his “dreams” are reduced “into a living cipher” and his crucifixion is regarded as the physical pain in his body for his “flesh was snipped to cross the lines / Of gallow crosses on the liver / And brambles in the wringing brains” (*CP* 20, 21, 22-4). The speaker Christ further emphasises the torture that he encounters like his “throat knew thirst,” “the blood runs foul” and “my belly hunger” (*CP* 25, 28, 29). Despite the physical suffering, Christ’s crucifixion is spiritually elevating and makes his earthly life more bearable: “[His] heart knew love” (*CP* 29). Thus, Thomas makes a smooth move from the material existence to a spiritual one and introduces the ecocentric union between nature and the divine. The coexistence of life and death is expressed by the reference to the maggot as the speaker acknowledges his nearing death for his “blood runs foul” and “[he] smelt the maggot in [his] stool” (*CP* 28, 30).

The restoration of the bond between nature and the divine helps Thomas to overcome the crisis regarding the meaninglessness of existence and to view death as one’s union with nature and participation in its mysticism. In stanza six the

poem moves to its third phase of the human cyclical existence with the declaration of Christ's death and his passage to the spiritual realm:

And time cast forth my mortal creature
To drift or drown upon the seas
Acquainted with the salt adventure
Of tides that never touch the shores.
I who was rich was made the richer
By sipping at the vine of days. (*CP* 31-6)

Although Christ's earthly existence comes to an end as "time cast forth [Christ's] mortal creature," his death is represented as a gateway to a more spiritually rewarding state of being (*CP* 31). The anxiety of the linear flow of time and the threat of death are eliminated with the image of the speaker's "sipping at the vine of days" (*CP* 36). Moreover, his immersion in elements of nature symbolised by the sea contributes to his spiritual self-realisation: "I who was rich was made the richer" (*CP* 35).

With the seventh stanza, the poem completes the cyclical frame of temporality as it poeticises on the holistic life. Offering an ecocentric account of Christ's story in which the material and the spiritual realms are united, Thomas rewrites the Christian myth on his birth and death:

I, born of flesh and ghost, was neither
A ghost nor man, but mortal ghost.
And I was struck down by death's feather.
I was a mortal to the last
Long breath that carried to my father
The message of his dying christ. (*CP* 37-42)

The poet's rejection of dualistic thinking manifests itself in the representation of Christ as both human and divine, "a mortal ghost" (*CP* 38). As Holroyd maintains, Thomas regards sex as an "overwhelming mystery" for it is a means to surpass the separateness among all living beings (144). Although in its rewritten account Christ is still conceived by "flesh," a human being, the father image is reinterpreted in pantheistic terms (*CP* 37). Challenging the existence of a transcendental God, the speaker declares that god resides in nature. Hence, rather

than ascending to heaven and reaching God, Christ “was struck down by death’s feather” and returns to nature (*CP* 39). That there is no room for hierarchical codifications within the ecocentric universe that is based on the cyclical patterns of existence is reflected in Thomas’s rejection of capitalising “father” and “christ” (*CP* 41, 42). Through the union of matter with time, the poem “renders all things participants in one another’s existence” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 20). Consequently, the poem unites the human and the divine; and afterlife with man’s earthly existence.

“Before I knocked,” ends with a quatrain in which the speaker Christ addresses the modern reader in search of a transcendental being to provide meaning for his existence. Despite the allusions to various Christian motifs, the poem’s concluding message is a subversion of the conventional religious doctrines by the ecocentric cyclical perception of being. That is why the speaker makes a clear distinction between himself and the orthodox Christian God:

You who bow down at cross and altar,
Remember me and pity Him
Who took my flesh and bone for armour
And doublecrossed my mother’s womb. (*CP* 43-6)

Referring to the reader’s quest for spirituality in the modern chaotic world, Christ wants him to “[r]emember [the speaker Christ] and pity Him” when he prays “at cross and altar” (*CP* 44, 43). Problematising the existence of a Christian god and Christ as his son, the speaker wants the reader to abandon such constructed forms of worship: “Who took [his] flesh and bone for armour / And double crossed [his] mother’s womb” (*CP* 45-6). Within the mystical and the ecocentric frame that Thomas creates, the speaker Christ undermines logocentric discourse and positions God as part of nature. While “[t]he great gods of the world are transcendent as well as immanent and they are apprehended by man’s conscious mind,” Thomas’s god is “felt along the bloodstream or in the sexual organs, buried in the unconscious” and is subjected to natural laws like birth and death (Holroyd 143). The poem ends with the union of the divine and the human, and emphasises the cyclical flow of time with the image of the “mother’s womb”

being “doublecrossed” (*CP* 46). Integral to the cyclical temporality, conception and “womb” are not only associated with life, but also with death (*CP* 46). However, as it is emphasised throughout the poem, death, with its regenerative power, marks only the beginning of another spiritual existence. As Logan puts it, in “Before I Knocked,” by elaborating on the notion that “birth is a dying, a crucifixion,” the poet “moves back one more step” and declares: “conception is dying” (49).

Thomas’s holistic perception of life abolishes the hegemony of time over space and liberates nature from being a passive background where man’s progressive ideals take place. Similarly, in “Before I knocked,” nature is represented as the domain where the physical human existence takes place and fulfils its cyclical operation. The unity between man and nature is emphasised through references to “water,” “worm,” the seasons, “the wind,” and “the seas” (*CP* 3, 6, 16, 32). The revival of cyclical temporality offers an alternative unified perception of existence and the world. What is more, Thomas uses the human body as a space to demonstrate the unity of man and nature. The “womb” is an important place which signifies spatiotemporality since it is the place where life begins and is the initiator of life and death cycle (*CP* 46). Following conception and birth, the human body participates in the cyclical pattern of life and with death it returns to nature, another space. According to Holroyd, death and its regenerative power are reconceptualised in sexual terms: “for death was entry into the womb of the universe, and as man and woman surrender their separate identities at the moment of union, so does man give up his identity when submerged by death” (144). The representation of spatiotemporality in “Before I knocked” also undermines the idea of progressive history. Rather than humanist philosophy and man’s rational choices, the maintenance of life and its regenerative cycle depends on sexuality and the human body as fundamental dimensions of both human and nonhuman existence. Thus, the poem’s subversion of the hegemony of time over space is achieved by the portrayal of the processes that take place in the human body as the mirror of similar processes in the nonhuman world.

In addition to these poems in which Thomas elaborates on the spatiotemporal patterns in both nonhuman and human worlds, the birthday poems offer significant insights into his subversion of the hierarchical codification of time over space. In order to escape a futile existence, in his first two birthday poems, “Especially when the October wind” and “Twenty-four years,” Thomas explores his personal life and individual experiences as part of his attack on dichotomous logic. An ecocritical discussion of these ecopoems reveals the poet’s struggle to escape the severe sense of perplexity and fear of death in a decentred universe through the efforts to revive a universal sense of spatiotemporality.

The first birthday poem, “Especially when the October wind,” criticises the dichotomy between time and space by problematising its constructed nature. Despite being the product of a young poet’s imagination, since it “was first published on 24 October 1934 a few days before his twentieth” birthday, the poem is filled with pessimism and is a manifestation of Thomas’s search for a centre in a chaotic universe (Ackerman, *Companion* 81). Because Thomas treats birth as the precursor of death, in “Especially when the October wind,” October reflects the poet’s anxiety concerning the essence of life and reminds him of the imminence of his death. The poem also demonstrates the tension between the cyclical temporality and the linearity of the demarcated time represented by the speaker’s consciousness of the fact that the passage of time brings him closer to his end. Reflecting Thomas’s struggle to overcome the futility of his life, “Especially when the October wind” can be considered as an ecopoem whose speaker tries to compose a poem in which temporality is perceived through the changes that take place in nature and offers insight into universal spatiotemporality.

The opening stanza sets the scene in the poem and expresses the speaker’s anxiety about the linear flow of time and his death. Taking a walk one October morning, the speaker wanders by the sea coast and meditates on the changes in nature, his own life and mortality. Ackerman maintains that one of the basic features that characterises Thomas’s poetic style is to employ an “actual background, whether associated with place or person” to represent “his conflicting emotions and perceptions” (*Dylan Thomas* 61). In the same manner, “Especially

when the October wind” is inspired by the natural setting of Swansea, his birth place, and it elaborates on the changes that autumn introduces to its hills and the seascape. As the month in which Thomas was born and when the nonhuman world experiences a series of transformations while winter draws closer, October reminds the poet speaker of his death. Thus, inspired by the desire to surpass his mortality, he starts composing a poem in “a defiance of death” (Tindall 52). The first stanza of the poem is an account of the speaker’s contemplation on the seasonal changes in nature and their impact on his self-perception:

Especially when the October wind
With frosty fingers punishes my hair,
Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire
And cast a shadow crab upon the land,
By the sea’s side, hearing the noise of birds,
Hearing the raven cough in winter sticks,
My busy heart who shudders as she talks
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words. (*CP* 1-8)

Being quite aware of the changes in nature, the speaker feels the “frosty” wind, listens to “the noise of the birds,” and “the raven cough,” which signal the coming winter associated with death (*CP* 2, 5, 6). Because he is burdened by the consciousness that with each birthday he is nearing his death, the speaker elaborates on several images that express how he is consumed by linear temporality. Resembling himself to a “shadow crab upon the land,” he regards his life as a “walk on fire” (*CP* 4, 3). The poem reduces man’s earthly existence that is codified by linear temporality to a mere walk or journey represented as a shadowy mark leading to death. Rather than regarding the “sun” as the source of energy and vitality, the speaker identifies it with the annihilation associated with winter (*CP* 3). According to Ackerman, the sun in Thomas’s early work is represented “as a basic image of life-destroying forces” (*Dylan Thomas* 58). Therefore, the image of “the crabbing sun” because it connotes “seizing” and “taking hold of,” symbolises the destruction of the speaker’s body (*CP* 3; Ackerman, *Dylan Thomas* 58). Despite “hearing the voice of the birds,” as the reminders of the continuing life, the speaker’s preoccupation with death is foregrounded by the image of “the raven cough in winter sticks” (*CP* 6). Similar

to the raven that announces the arrival of winter, the speaker declares his desire to compose his birthday poem to surpass mortality: “My busy heart who shudders as she talks / Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words” (*CP* 7-8).

The second stanza of “Especially when the October wind” reveals the speaker’s attempt to liberate himself from the entrapment of both linear temporality and logocentrism. Reflecting the modernist crisis of representation that Thomas encounters in his early poems like “A process in the weather of the heart,” the speaker of the poem feels entrapped by language. Despite the fact that he is inspired by nature in October, words fail him in his attempts to represent his thoughts. In order to escape the imprisonment imposed on him by his mortality and the inadequacy of language, the speaker juxtaposes several images that represent the flow of external life. His observations on the outside world allow him to recognise the bond between the human and the nonhuman worlds by “celebrat[ing] the Swansea life before him in images of the natural world, human and natural life blurred into association by the power of the word” (Ackerman, *Companion* 82). While the women walking in the horizon are resembled to “the trees /The wordy shapes,” the children playing in the park are associated with stars: “and the rows / Of the star-gestured” (*CP* 10-1, 11-2). Although the speaker’s initial motive for composing the poem is to resolve his conflict about existence and mortality, the awareness about the eternal cyclical patterns of life in nature stimulates him to imitate them. Hence, the addressee, “you,” the speaker mentions can be the poems he writes inspired by such a unity between the human and the nonhuman worlds (*CP* 13). Echoing Bate’s ideas regarding ecopoetry, “Especially when the October wind” becomes an ecopoem portraying the patterns and rhythms of the nonhuman world with the “vowelled beeches”, “the oaken voices, from the roots / Of many a thorny shire tell you notes,” as well as “the water’s speeches” (*The Song* 76; *CP* 13-6).

The speaker’s dedication of himself to the representation of natural design contributes to the poem’s challenge to linear temporality. In the third stanza he concentrates on the passage of time and dwells on the conflict between the cyclical time in nature and the clock time that organizes his everyday life. Giddens regards the invention of the mechanical clock as the ultimate

materialisation of the hierarchy between time and space, which in turn functioned as justification for the glorification of linear temporality (17). Similar to the context of “Here in this spring,” the speaker of this poem, too, subverts linear temporality with the cyclical flow of time:

Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock
Tells me the hour’s word, the neural meaning
Flies on the shafted disk, declaims the morning
And tells the windy weather in the cock. (*CP* 17-20)

The contrast between the artificial linear time and the natural nonlinear time is presented through the juxtaposition of human constructs to measure time with the natural phenomena. Ackerman, too, states that by witnessing the external world through the window of his house, the speaker contemplates on man-made time and the cyclical life and death pattern (*Dylan Thomas* 60). The presence of “a pot of ferns” and “the wagging clock” in the first line marks the distinction between natural time and mechanical time and declares life as a journey leading to death: “Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock / Tells me the hour’s word” (*CP* 17-8). Drawing parallelism between his body clock, that is “the neural meaning” and natural cyclical time, he reconceptualises time and rejects the indications of the mechanical time “on the shafted disk” (*CP* 18, 19). “Behind a pot of ferns” the speaker sees objects like “the wagging clock” as well as the weathercock (*CP* 17). However, despite creating tension regarding the passage of time, such objects are far from signifying the inherent meaning of temporality in human life. Thus, he diverts his attention to the temporal rhythms in nature:

Some let me make you of the meadow’s signs;
The signal grass that tells me all I know
Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye.
Some let me tell you of the raven’s sins. (*CP* 21-4)

Rejecting the temporality imposed by the mechanical clock, the speaker elaborates on the cyclical creative and productive process in nature. The restoration of spatiotemporality in this ecopoem is achieved by various images which reflect the transformations both in the nonhuman world and the passage of

time. Through his observations such as “meadow’s signs” and “the signal grass” what he grasps is a “world quite at one with itself,” and creates a “poetic response” reflecting its “baffling simplicity” (*CP* 21, 22; Fraser 5). While “grass” stands for life and is associated with spring and summer time, “wormy winter” refers to death and the regenerative function of the worm for it contributes to the dead body’s participation in the natural creative-destructive process (*CP* 22, 23). In addition to the worm, the raven, as a carrion bird, is another member of the nonhuman world that contributes to the regenerative cycle in nature. Shattering the humanist attempt to comprehend the operating mechanisms of the human and the nonhuman worlds, the speaker recognises his ignorance in the face of nature: “tell me all I know / Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye” (*CP* 22-3). Consequently, the speaker’s exploration of the external realm restores man’s essential union with nature and encourages him to think of death as a return to its regenerative cycle, as part of which he contributes to the growth of its various beings.

The ecopoetic subversion of the hegemony of time over space in “Especially when the October wind” is intensified by references to other natural phenomena, which signify the interconnectedness of all beings and the co-existence of life and death. Foregrounding the spatiotemporality in the poem, the speaker once again declares that this poem is inspired by the seasonal changes in the Welsh nonhuman world during October and echoes its cyclical patterns of existence like a spider spinning its web:

Especially when the October wind
 (Some let me make you of autumnal spells,
 The spider-tongued, and the loud hill of Wales)
 With fists of turnips punishes the land,
 Some let me make you of the heartless words.
 The heart is drained that, spelling in the scurry
 Of chemic blood, warned of the coming fury.
 By the sea’s side hear the dark-vowelled birds. (*CP* 25-32)

Although the image of “turnips” flourishing in the fields, the “autumnal spells” and the “birds” “[b]y the sea’s side” may imply the continuation of life, the speaker’s pessimism dominates the last stanza (*CP* 28, 26, 32). Witnessing the

cyclical pattern of existence in the nonhuman world encourages him to accept death as a natural outcome of being alive; however, the speaker is troubled by what follows next. Just like his birthday, all the transformations in nature are reminders of “the coming fury” when “[t]he heart is drained” (*CP* 31, 30). Because in his early poetry Thomas is still searching for an organising principle in his life, death remains as something terrifying and causes severe anxiety; thus, the poem does not provide relief from the fear of death.

A close reading of “Especially when the October wind” displays that the poem problematises the constructed hierarchy of time over space and restores spatiotemporality which transcends their particular context and assumes a universal dimension. Reflecting the spirit of the third wave of ecocriticism, it is inspired by Thomas’s Welsh background and life in Swansea and sheds light on what Slovic calls “global concepts of place” (“The Third Wave” 7). The particular background to the poem is Swansea, his house, the Cwmdonkin Park along with the landscape and the seascape that stretches in front of his eyes. The October wind, its frost, his shadow on the sea side, the birds, as well as the barren trees signify the arrival of winter. The transformation that the Swansea nonhuman world goes through as winter draws near and the poet’s reflections on these changes lead to his recognition of the cyclical natural time. In *The Poetry of Personality: The Poetic Diction of Dylan Thomas*, William Greenway argues that in “Especially when the October Wind” Thomas represents “a world composed of objects that also manage to be words, part of a greater poem, which is the world” (28). Similar to Greenway’s observation, Thomas composes an ecopoem in which the particular details of the physical background are transformed into images reflecting the state of the cyclical existence of all human and nonhuman beings. Although the poem is the product of Dylan Thomas’s endeavour to resolve the conflicts about the futility of his own life, it communicates the universal agony of the modern man living in a world deprived of all meaning. Therefore, by elaborating on his own birth, Thomas tries to sooth his sense of futility through the restoration of the unity between man and nature; however, at this point in his life and poetic career, he could not fully escape the pessimism of death.

The ecocritical reading of his second birthday poem, “Twenty-four years,” which appears at the end of *The Map of Love*, reveals that Thomas’s representation of time and space is still very much rooted in his endless quest for meaning in life and death. Although it is a single-stanza poem that consists of nine lines, it is a brief and compact account of the major concerns that inspired Dylan Thomas in his first three volumes. By bringing together various images from his former poems, “Before I knocked” and “Especially when the October wind,” in “Twenty-four years,” Thomas maintains his eco-poetic challenge to linear temporality and the demarcation between time and space by foregrounding man’s essential unity with the nonhuman world and elaborating on the idea of life as a cyclical journey which ends with his return to nature. However, the despair of the former poems is intensified with the emphasis he puts on lack of spirituality in a world that is shaped by progressive and materialist desires.

Revisiting the journey motif in “Before I knocked,” in “Twenty-four years,” conception marks the beginning of man’s cyclical existence in this eco-poem. Similar to the context of “Especially when the October Wind,” in “Twenty-four years” with his twenty-fourth birthday the speaker is reminded of his mortality. It mirrors the griminess of the post-war context and the Great Depression, when “every kind of cultural leadership” lost its significance and poets “were deprived of every ideal” (Shapiro 169). Signalling the overall pessimism of the poem, in the opening lines, the consciousness that because of being born, he is destined to die, brings tears into the speaker’s eyes:

Twenty-four years remind the tears of my eyes.
(Bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in labour.)
In the groin of the natural doorway I crouched like a tailor
Sewing a shroud for a journey
By the light of the meat-eating sun.
Dressed to die, the sensual strut begun,
With my red veins full of money,
In the final direction of the elementary town
I advance as long as forever is. (*CP* 1-9)

The juxtaposition of “grave” with “labour” emphasises not only the idea that birth naturally leads to death, but also to man’s organic union with nature (*CP* 2).

“Twenty-four years” with the image of “the groin of the natural doorway” echoes “Before I knocked” for it identifies womb with earth and declares it as the initial stage of man’s cyclical journey (*CP* 3). Similar to what Olson says, the speaker “transports” the reader “into the mysteries of the womb” (13). Imagining himself as the baby in the labouring mother’s womb, the speaker resembles himself to a tailor, “I crouched like a tailor,” who prepares “a shroud for a journey / By the light of the meat-eating sun” (*CP* 3). Because within the cyclical frame of Thomas’s universe, birth naturally involves death, the speaker, once being born, is conscious of his mortality and engages in “[s]ewing” his shroud (*CP* 4). In Ackerman’s view “[t]he image of the tailor represents the world of the flesh in contrast to that of the spirit; the world of mortal time as against that of eternity” (*Dylan Thomas* 85). Following his birth, the speaker’s journey is portrayed through several images that highlight cyclical patterns of existence and man’s return to nature. By alluding to the destructive dimension of the sun in “Especially when the October wind,” and the regenerative function of the worm in his former poems, Thomas creates the grotesque image of “the meat-eating sun” (*CP* 5). Thus, with its rising and setting, the sun is regarded as the symbol of cyclical temporality and the way how all beings are drawn to death. Nevertheless, the speaker questions man’s disregard for this fundamental principle of life. Despite the fact that he is “[d]ressed to die,” man is preoccupied with materialism (*CP* 6). Reflecting modern man’s lack of spirituality, life is reduced to a “sensual strut,” that is characterised by his “red veins [being] full of money” (*CP* 6, 7). Because life is deprived of its fundamental motives, through this image Thomas displays how the speaker’s “veins are filled, not with immortal energy, but with the medium of worldly exchange that, once spent, is gone” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 75-6). In spite of engaging in sensual pleasure and being consumed by the desire to become rich, man cannot escape the entrapment of being mortal and moves “[i]n the final direction of the elementary town” (*CP* 8). Thomas’s portrayal of grave and death as “the elementary town” may represent the poet’s struggle against death and his attempt to reconceptualise it as a reunion with the elements of nature (*CP* 8). Consequently, life leading to death is a cyclical process that has been going on for centuries and is to continue “as long as forever is” (*CP* 9).

Although the speaker of “Twenty-four years” is aware of the cyclical pattern of existence and regards man as part of nature, the fear of death still prevails. Like “Especially when the October wind,” the speaker in “Twenty-four years” concentrates on the operating mechanisms in both nature and human body; yet, he avoids elaborating on what happens after death. The fragmented world the young poet encounters is devoid of meaning. Undermining “conventional birthday wishes,” the poem does not offer solace and is dominated by the hopelessness and grimness of death (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 114). Different from “Before I Knocked,” the two early birthday poems do not provide relief for the agony of death. Although death is represented as a return to nature, it lacks the spiritual reconciliation of participating in the regenerative power of death.

In conclusion, the ecocritical discussion of four poems by Dylan Thomas indicates that integral to his struggle to restore ecocentric holism as the organising principle in his life and art, the poet’s challenge to dichotomous logic also involves his attack on the hierarchical codification of time over space. The discussion of the ecopoems, “Here in this spring,” “Before I knocked,” along with the first two birthday poems “Especially when the October wind” and “Twenty-four years,” displays that the subversion of the hegemony between time and space is maintained with the poet’s close observations on the cyclical patterns in both external nature and the human body, which reveals that such a hierarchy does not exist in nature. Thus, these poems display how, as an ecopoet, Thomas dedicates himself to the restoration of the bond between time and space. By challenging the progressive and linear flow of time Thomas not only revitalises spatiotemporality but also reconceptualises death as the body’s participation in the creative-destructive cyclical patterns of existence. Being one of his early poems, “Here in this spring” reflects the poet’s consciousness of the constructedness of dichotomous logic since it foregrounds that time and space are essentially interconnected by dwelling on several spatiotemporal markers. In the poem, Thomas liberates space from the status of a passive background and represents nature as the domain where creative-destructive processes take place. In “Before I knocked,” on the other hand, the subversion of the hierarchy between time and space is achieved through the portrayal of the cyclical processes in the human

body by elaborating on sexuality as an indispensable dimension of life and death. Within the ecocentric universe that Thomas tries to poeticise man's journey to death is initiated with his conception in the womb and comes to an end with his union with elements of nature following his death. In order to escape the entrapment of living in a universe that is deprived of the image of a transcendental creator, God, Thomas reconceptualises life as a process or a journey to death, at the end of which he is united with nature, the spiritual domain where God also dwells. Inspired by his personal experience, in the birthday poems, "Especially when the October wind" and "Twenty-four years" Thomas portrays his struggle for meaning in a chaotic life since the changes that take place in nature in October remind the speaker of his own mortality. The challenge to dichotomous logic in "Especially when the October wind" is achieved through the rejection of the clock time associated with linear temporality and sense of finality and the celebration of the natural cyclical temporality. Similarly, in "Twenty-four years" Thomas dwells on the journey motif and declares the meaninglessness of a life that is codified by linear temporality associated with progress and materialism. Despite the fact that in these poems Thomas struggles to re-establish the essential bond between man and nature by revealing that they are subjected to the same creative-destructive mechanisms of existence, at the early stages of his poetic career death still remains as a threat and creates a harsh sense of pessimism.

5.2 Retreat into the Ecocentric Past and the Celebration of Spatiotemporality in Thomas's Mature Poetry

The poetry Dylan Thomas wrote following *18 Poems*, *25 Poems* and *The Map of Love* aims at resolving his former crisis of meaning and existence. With the gradual maturation of Dylan Thomas as an ecopoet, the interconnectedness between the human and nonhuman beings becomes more pronounced and the ecocentric vision of life is fully established as the organising principle of his life and poetry. This transformation introduces a fundamental change in his perception of time and space as well as life and death. The ideas like birth and death, conceptualising life as a journey that comes to an end with one's death and return

to nature at first glance may create the impression that his later poetry is nothing more than a masterful treatment of the same issues that occupied him in his early work. However, the celebration of ecocentric holism, after a series of fundamental quests of being, stimulates him to offer more philosophical and meditative representations of the former themes. His representation of spatiotemporality assumes a significant spiritual dimension, which helps the poet to abandon his former pessimism and fear of death. In response to the criticism directed at Thomas's poetry for being obscure and repetitive, Fraser declares "that in Thomas's best poems there is a coherent meaning," and emphasises that "it is not always mechanically the same meaning," which is based on "the same archetypal poem over and over again" (36). Drawing attention to the transformation that took place in Thomas, the mature poet, Fraser argues that he "grew and changed and at his death was still developing, in the direction of a wider and more genial human scope" (36). "Poem in October" and "Fern Hill," which both appear in *Deaths and Entrances*, are two significant works that elaborate on the journey motif of the earlier poems. Quite compatible with Fraser's observations, I argue that these ecopoems display the spiritual change the speakers experience as they revive the ecocentric holism of their childhood. In both poems, Thomas's challenge to the hegemony of time over space is achieved through the revitalisation of space and nature as the living forces that interact with man, shape his identity, feelings and values. The revitalisation of spatiotemporality in these poems also offers significant insight into the ecocritical debate regarding the universal sense of place.

In the former poems linear temporality and the agony of death stimulate the speakers to become observers of the life and death patterns of existence in both the human and the nonhuman worlds so that they can acknowledge their oneness with nature and mortality. In the same manner, in "Poem in October," Thomas creates a speaker whose birthday reminds him of his death. Nevertheless, this ecopoem is rooted in the memories of the ecocentric past when the speaker as a child was an active participant of the cyclical natural processes. In order to escape the entrapment of linear temporality, the thirty-year old speaker retreats into his past and tries to recapture his childhood unity with nature. Mirroring his

modernist urge to be experimental regarding the subversion of linearity, in “Poem in October” the adult speaker’s consciousness of birth and mortality is shaped by both the present moment and his past. Thus, in the poem Dylan Thomas offers two frames of temporality: the material linear time and the cyclical natural time. While the material linear time organises the speaker’s life in town, Laugharne, the cyclical time is associated with his childhood memories and the countryside. Through such a juxtaposition, as an ecopoem, “Poem in October” undermines the future oriented linear temporality that is preached by the progressive Western history and calls for the recovery of the ecocentric past and the globalised notion of place.

The opening line of “Poem in October” introduces these two temporal domains on an October morning when the speaker initiates his spiritual journey into the country and his past. While he gradually moves away from the town, Laugharne, and linear temporality, the speaker is immersed in the natural flow of time in the country and his childhood memories. Different from “Especially when the October Wind” and “Twenty-four years,” the poem is dominated by a celebratory spirit for the speaker enjoys the walk he takes in the country early in his birthday morning. While he walks, he not only admires the peace and harmony of nature, but also becomes an active participant in it:

It was my thirtieth year to heaven
 Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood
 And the mussel pooled and the heron
 Priested shore
 The morning beckon
 With water praying and call of seagull and rook
 And the knock of sailing boats on the net webbed wall
 Myself to set foot
 That second
 In the still sleeping town and set forth. (*CP* 1-10)

Unlike the two earlier birthday poems, in “Poem in October” birth does not create a grim and pessimistic view of life inevitably leading to death. On the contrary, he extols life as his “thirtieth year to heaven” (*CP* 1). Rather than consolidating the idea that “the past” naturally moves to “a definite and desirable goal in the

future,” the speaker dismisses the present and the future as he withdraws into his past (Bury 36). Being liberated from town and its linear temporality allows the speaker to position himself as part of nature and to free himself from the fear of death. Thus, he defines his earthly life as a heavenly one as his physical and spiritual journey begins. When the town is still asleep, he “set[s] forth” and starts his walk (*CP* 10). He also witnesses the awakening in nature as “[t]he morning beckon[s]” in the “harbour and neighbour wood” with its “water praying and call of seagull and rook” along with “the knock of sailing boats” in Laugharne’s “mussel pooled and the heron / Priested shore” (*CP* 5, 2, 6, 7, 3-4):

My birthday began with the water-
 Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name
 Above the farms and the white horses
 And I rose
 In rainy autumn
 And walked abroad in a shower of all my days.
 High tide and the heron dived when I took the road
 Over the border
 And the gates
 Of the town closed as the town awoke. (*CP* 11-20)

The joyous mood of the poem is enhanced by the second stanza where the nonhuman world celebrates the speaker’s birthday: “Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name / Above the farms and the white horses” (*CP* 12-3). In Korg’s view, “the spectacle of nature inspires joy” in the speaker and encourages him to revive his unified existence with nature in his childhood days (*Dylan Thomas* 92). The reference to water in the line “[m]y birthday began with the water” is not only an indicator of the falling rain, but also denotes the mother’s womb and water as the source of life and purification (*CP* 11). This particular birthday is also important because it signifies his spiritual rebirth inspired by his reunion with nature and childhood perception of life. According to Holroyd, the poem proves that “never throughout his life did Dylan Thomas lose the freshness and immediacy of the child’s vision of nature” (147). Hence, both the rain and his childhood memories contribute to his redemption and the restoration of the ecocentric holism as he “walk[s] abroad in a shower of all [his] days” (*CP* 16).

While he revives his childhood imagination, he distances himself from the present moment and linear temporality and fully participates in the innocence of his childhood: “when I took the road / Over the border / And the gates / Of the town closed as the town awoke” (*CP* 17-8). As suggested by Ackerman, the speaker “crosses the border of time and sees in a vision his lost childhood” (*Dylan Thomas* 132).

The speaker’s spiritual journey to his ecocentric past contributes to the ecopoetic challenge to the hierarchy between time and space in “Poem in October.” Undermining the Enlightenment project’s desire to create a progressive civilisation to liberate man from nature by becoming its master, the poem highlights that human liberation can only be achieved through the restoration of man’s essential bond with nature. The subversion of the glorious humanist image of “‘Man’ as a free and active individual,” is maintained through the portrayal of his urge to be in contact with nature (Harvey 249). As the adult speaker retreats into the country and his childhood, the sense of alienation and pessimism metamorphoses into the glorification of man’s union with nature. Moreover, instead of being passive objects, similar to what Merrifield proposes, in “Henri Lefebvre: A Socialist in Space,” regarding Lefebvrian deconstruction of the notion of space “as a dead, inert thing or object,” the poem foregrounds nature and space as indispensable components of man’s holistic existence (171). Through the representation of the interconnectedness between the speaker and nature, the poem celebrates the reconceptualisation of space as an “organic and fluid and alive” domain which “has a pulse,” “palpitates,” “flows and collides with other spaces” (Merrifield 171).

The emancipation of both man and nature from dualistic codifications in “Poem in October” is demonstrated by the changing spirit and the temporality of the poem. In the following stanzas, the time of the poem shifts from the autumnal October to the light and liveliness of summer associated with the country and childhood. In line with Harvey’s objection to “the idea of a single and objective sense of time or space” that conditions and organises “the diversity of human conceptions and perceptions,” the poem offers time and space in their plural frames (203). Quite contrary to the gloom of “Especially when the October wind”

and “Twenty-four years,” the seasonal references to October in the third and fourth stanzas are associated with life and vitality. The speaker is immersed in the naivety of his childhood, when he was not aware of the destructive implications of October and fall leading to death. What is more, the destructive power of the sun in Thomas’s earlier birthday poems changes into a “[s]ummery” one: “the sun of October / On the hill’s shoulder, / Here were fond climates” (*CP* 24, 23-5). Despite the fact that the “[w]ind blow[s] cold,” it is not frosty and he does not feel its cold since it blows “[i]n the wood faraway under me” (*CP* 29, 30).

“Poem in October” also restores spatiotemporality as the speaker’s sense of time is interrelated with his perception of space. The town as the indicator of the present time and winter is associated with “rain” and “mist,” whereas the country, which is “[b]eyond the border and under the lark full cloud” is identified with “all the gardens / Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales” (*CP* 31, 33, 37, 35-6). Thus, the life in town of the thirty-year old speaker is contrasted with the life in the country in the past. This dual nature of space and temporality inspires the speaker to transcend the entrapment of the present time and space and to create what Harvey calls unique “mental spaces” (203). Similar to Harvey’s theory, the speaker is stimulated by his childhood experiences and transforms the October setting into a special summertime country space. As the distance between the country and the town grows, the harbour and the church appear smaller to his eyes: “Pale rain over the dwindling harbour / And over the sea wet church the size of a snail” (*CP* 31-2). On the other hand, the dynamism and the liveliness of nature is portrayed through the images of “[a] springful of larks in a rolling / Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling / Blackbirds” (*CP* 21-3). Korg views the poem as “a reading of nature, whose meaningfulness” is foregrounded through the various images Thomas creates (*Dylan Thomas* 92). The speaker is aware that a true celebration of life is only possible through one’s complete integration with nature. Indispensable to its challenge to the primacy of time over space, the poem reconceptualises space in its multiplicity. Quite in parallel with what Merrifield mentions, the speaker’s mental space is a hybridised domain of various kinds of space like “urban space, social space, physical space, experiential space” (173). Consequently, the speaker’s perception of the country

space is shaped by several factors such as his childhood memories, his life in town and the actual countryside early in the morning of his thirtieth birthday. Although the speaker yearns for the recovery of the past unity with nature, “[t]here could I marvel / My birthday / Away,” he cannot escape the consciousness of his life in town and the implications of October weather since “but the weather turned around” (CP 38-40). Furthermore, as part of the revival of its spatiotemporality, the mental space that the speaker creates by harmonising several notions of space cannot be dissociated from double consciousness of temporality. As Ackerman observes, Thomas’s use of “ ‘but’ ” in the line “but the weather turned around” marks “the contrast between the actual weather (which is rainy) and the ideal, ‘summer’ weather of the childhood vision” (*Dylan Thomas* 132; CP 40).

The poem’s attack on the hierarchy between time and space is maintained in the next part through the speaker’s rejection of the October weather and his determination to remain in the country so as to enjoy its vitality. Although the adult consciousness tries to penetrate his childhood memories, the speaker ignores the present temporality and continues reflecting on the past filled with the recollections of “the blue altered sky,” and “wonder of summer / With apples / Pears and red currants” (CP 42, 43- 45):

It turned away from the blithe country
 And down the other air and the blue altered sky
 Streamed again a wonder of summer
 With apples
 Pears and red currants
 And I saw in the turning so clearly a child’s
 Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother
 Through the parables
 Of sun light
 And the legends of the green chapels. (CP 41-9)

The spiritual journey to the past reaches its peak with the speaker’s reminiscence about his mother: “And I saw in the turning so clearly a child’s / Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother” (CP 46-7). In addition to expressing the speaker’s lost connection with his childhood perception of life, the idea of “[f]orgotten mornings,” suggests his joy at recapturing it (CP 46). With “the

legends of the green chapels” Thomas reveals the innocence of his childhood experience as well as the way it is idealised (CP 49).

In the last two stanzas Dylan Thomas merges the two temporal domains associated with the country and the town, and offers a unified consciousness of the speaker. The sixth stanza elaborates on the impact of the recollected childhood on the thirty-year-old adult man. The unified portrayal of the past and the present as well as the child with the adult speaker is presented through the image of “the twice told fields of infancy” which makes him cry: “his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine” (CP 50, 51). The child’s unitary existence with “the woods the river and sea” allows him the opportunity to appreciate “the mystery” of life (CP 52, 57):

And the twice told fields of infancy
That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine.
These were the woods the river and sea
Where a boy
In the listening
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.
And the mystery
Sang alive
Still in the water and singing birds. (CP 50-9)

Thomas foregrounds the union of the child, the adult speaker and the nonhuman world. The speaker’s recovery of the holistic past demonstrates Thomas’s attack on the idea of progress, which, as Harvey maintains, plays a vital role in “[t]he reduction of space to a contingent category” and the prioritization of time and “temporality, the process of *becoming*, rather than *being* in space and place” (205). Challenging progressive and linear codifications of time, the poem portrays the subordination of “the processes of *becoming*” to “*being* in space” (Harvey 205). As a result, because the adult speaker could recapture the former unitary spirit of his childhood days “in the listening / Summertime of the dead,” death no longer appears threatening (CP 54-5). The recovery of the ecocentric consciousness of his childhood vision allows the speaker both to appreciate and communicate nature’s holism and the co-existence of life and death. As an

ecopoet, Thomas creates a speaker singer, who through the various images, voices the polyphonic ecocentric harmony in nature. According to Hardy, the child functions as a mediator between the adult speaker and the nonhuman world by becoming “an imaginative singer as well as a listener” (*Dylan Thomas* 25). Through the image of “[s]ummertime of the dead,” Thomas not only subverts the sense of finality of death by reflecting the regenerative power of summer, but also proclaims the mortality of all human and nonhuman beings (*CP* 55). Acknowledging his mortality and death as part of life relieves the agony of death and turns life into summertime. This is the “truth of his joy” that as a child he “whispered” “[t]o the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide” (*CP* 55, 56). In Ackerman’s view, the adult speaker appreciates and willingly participates in the child’s unitary existence with nature: “The child, it seems, was already a pantheist and his mystical sense of communion is repeated in the adult poet’s vision” (*Dylan Thomas* 133). Contrary to the pessimistic perception of death that dominates the earlier two birthday poems, in “Poem in October” the restoration of the ecocentric holism of all beings motivates Thomas to offer an optimistic account of existence. Filled with joy, the speaker revives the mystery of life that he could still capture “in the water and singingbirds” (*CP* 59). The reference to “the twice told fields of infancy” displays the speaker’s cyclical perception of life (*CP* 50). The spiritual journey to his ecocentric past is completed with the adult speaker’s appreciation of the mystery of life at the age of thirty.

The poem ends with the declaration of the holiness of the country and the hybridisation of his perceptions of life as a child and as an adult. The speaker’s desire to prolong his unitary existence with nature and his past, “[a]nd there could I marvel my birthday,” is obstructed once again due to the consciousness of the October weather: “but the weather turned around” (*CP* 60, 61). This intrusion of the linear frame of thinking reflects the conflict between the “two minds” that Shapiro identifies in Thomas’s poetry (174). While the “the joyous, naturally religious mind” can be identified with the childhood imagination and cyclical perception of existence, the second one, “the disturbed, almost pathological mind of the cultural fugitive or clown,” represents the adult linear vision of life (Shapiro 174). However, Thomas offers a sense of reconciliation between the two frames

of temporality. Although it is not possible for him to stop the linear progress of time and remain as a child forever, the spiritual journey to his past at the age of thirty makes him recover the truth of life: “And the true / Joy of the long dead child sang burning / In the sun” (CP 61-3). Therefore, the poem closes with the juxtaposition of the cyclical temporality of his childhood with the linear temporality of his adult life in town. “[T]he sun” and “the summer noon” of the country and “heaven” are represented together by “October blood” (CP 63, 65, 65, 66):

And there could I marvel my birthday
 Away but the weather turned around. And the true
 Joy of the long dead child sang burning
 In the sun.
 It was my thirtieth
 Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon
 Though the town below lay leaved with October blood.
 O may my heart’s truth
 Still be sung
 On this high hill in a year’s turning. (CP 60-9)

The coexistence of life and death, and the coming fall and winter are further expressed by the image of “the town below” that is covered with the autumnal leaves (CP 66). The consciousness of death as part of the natural cycle inspires hope in him. Just as winter is followed by spring and summer in the natural cycle, the speaker is subjected to the same temporal rules. That is why he wishes to celebrate his next birthday “On this high hill in a year’s turning” to sing his “heart’s truth” (CP 69, 67). According to Hardy, the ending of the poem is “a secular prayer for continuities ... in which birthdays are links in the chain of natural piety” (*Dylan Thomas* 114). Thus, at the end of the poem, Thomas completes the speaker’s cyclical spiritual journey by bringing together the three temporal frames of his existence: his past, present and future.

Thomas’s problematisation of the linear codifications of time as well as the restoration of spatiotemporality is also compatible with third wave ecocritical studies’ demand for raising awareness about the globalised perception and representation of place (Slovic, “The Third Wave” 7). Reflecting the theoretical

frame put forward by Adamson and Slovic, although “Poem in October” is a birthday poem that is inspired by the Welsh culture and landscape, it transcends its personal and national boundaries due to Thomas’s transformation of this unique background into a universal place where creative-destructive mechanisms of nature operate. In his letter he wrote to Vernon Watkins in August 1944, Thomas refers to “Poem in October” as “a Laugharne poem: the first place poem I’ve written” (*CL* 518). In the poem, Thomas offers two distinctive representations of Laugharne as a town and as a country, which at the same time are closely related to the poem’s double consciousness of temporality. While Laugharne as a town is associated with linear time and the aging speaker, the countryside, which is defined as “heaven,” is the place where the cyclical time operates (*CP* 1). Despite being a small provincial town, in “Poem in October,” Laugharne is depicted as the domain for human civilisation with its harbour, boats, the church and the castle. Filled with the desire to escape the aging world, the thirty-year old speaker wants to take shelter in the countryside of Laugharne, where he creates an alternative mental space which helps him to revive his childhood spirit. By crossing the visionary border between the town and the country as well as the linear and cyclical temporality, the speaker withdraws into the peace and harmony of the pastoral setting of his childhood. The speaker’s physical walk from Laugharne into the country metamorphoses into a spiritual journey to the ecocentric past of all beings. The speaker’s retreat into the Welsh countryside of his childhood reflects the modern man’s urge to recover the pre-modern holistic ecocentric perception of life when man celebrated his essential unity with nature. By avoiding the trap of escapism, the pastoral setting of the poem offers significant ecocritical insights by encouraging the modern man to appreciate the mystery of life by restoring the bond between the human and the nonhuman as well as time and space. The representation of the life-death cycle within the spatiotemporal frame of “Poem in October” offers an alternative ecocentric way of conceptualising what existence is. The restoration of the ecocentric spirit and spatiotemporality is also essential because it helps Thomas to resolve his conflict regarding the meaningless life.

As the last poem that appears in Dylan Thomas's fourth volume, *Deaths and Entrances*, "Fern Hill" offers a significant portrayal of the poet's changed perception of meaning in life. Similar to "Poem in October," "Fern Hill" is another ecopoem that demonstrates an adult speaker's retreat into the ecocentric holism of his childhood in order to cope with the futility of life and the agony of death. The recollection of the happy childhood memories on his aunt Ann's farm, Fernhill, contributes to the restoration of cyclical temporality and challenges the hierarchical codification of time over space. The revival of spatiotemporality in "Fern Hill" not only liberates space from being a mere background, but also generates a universal sense of place.

In "Fern Hill" Dylan Thomas's subversion of the hierarchy between time and space begins with the speaker's withdrawal from linear temporality and his taking refuge in his ecocentric childhood. The poem offers an account of the mature speaker's yearning for the peace and harmony of his childhood days, and reflects how the adult consciousness regarding mortality and the passage of time penetrates his memories of the past. Quite in parallel with Thomas's representations of temporality in "Poem in October," the speaker of the poem has double consciousness of time. While the adult speaker's immediate perception of time is shaped by linear temporality, the child's notion of time is rooted in the nonlinear temporality of nature. In the first two stanzas, "Fern Hill" represents how the aging speaker's desire to retreat into the ecocentric holism of his childhood is interrupted by the penetrations of the linear temporality. The poem's striking opening statement is a manifestation of this double consciousness which brings together the pastness of his childhood and the present moment: "Now as I was young and easy" (CP 1). Echoing Harvey's theories on the subjectivity involved in the perception of time and place, the poem demonstrates the ways in which both the present and the past notions of temporality are formed by a variety of external and internal stimuli (203). As declared by Goodby, through "the temporal incompatibility of 'Now' and 'was'," the adult speaker "plunges more immediately and deeply into the imagined paradise of childhood," which consequently "contribute[s] to the utopian stasis of the child's experience of time" (359). In addition to demonstrating how ignorant the speaker was of the passage

of time, the joyful recollection of his past reminds him of his oneness with the natural environment:

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
 The night above the dingle starry,
 Time let me hail and climb
 Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
 Trail with daisies and barley
 Down the rivers of the windfall light. (*CP* 1-9)

The portrayal of the unity of child and the nonhuman world reveals the constructedness of dualistic thought as well as the hegemony of time over space. Unlike the adult speaker, because he was immersed in nature, the child was not corrupted by notions of hierarchy and mastery, which allows him to enjoy his nonanthropocentric interactions with the nonhuman world within its nonlinear temporal frame. According to Holroyd, the awareness of man's integral place in nature is peculiar to the civilized adult consciousness since "[n]ature-mysticism is only possible for a civilised mind," who struggles to overcome the "gap between man and nature which was non-existent for primitive man" (147). Like the primitive man, the child had no knowledge of dichotomous codifications imposed by civilization. Thus, "Fern Hill" can be considered as one of Thomas's poems demonstrating his determination to revive "the freshness and immediacy of the child's vision of nature" (Holroyd 147). The child's ecocentric perception is highlighted with such images as "happy as the grass was green" as well as "[g]olden in the heydays of his eyes" (*CP* 2, 5). The carefree child enjoyed the pastoral setting of the farm, "the lilting house" and "the apple towns," which, despite being human constructs, were also in tune with the natural environment with its "dingle starry," "the trees and leaves," and "with daisies and barley / Down the rivers of the windfall light" (*CP* 2, 6, 3, 7, 8-9). However, the peace of this unified existence is interrupted by the intrusion of the adult consciousness. Addressing time as, "[t]ime let me hail and climb," he not only wants to revive his past joys, but also wants to stop its flow which brings him closer to death.

Through “the personification of time” the speaker expresses his yearning for the anxiety-free perception of nonlinear temporality and tries to recapture the same naïve spirit: “And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves / Trail with daisies and barley / Down the rivers of the windfall light” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 93; *CP* 7-9). On the other hand, the fact that the adult speaker refers to his ecocentric background in past tense reflects the difficulty of transcending the codifications of linear temporality and his concerns about mortality and death.

Similar to “Poem in October,” the nonlinear perception of time in the speaker’s childhood is associated with the vitality and joy of summer in the pastoral world. In the second stanza, the speaker’s attention shifts from the landscape of the former one to the particulars of the farm life as he shares his experiences with animals. Quite in line with what Campbell proposes, “Fern Hill” illustrates the indispensable role one’s interaction with nature plays in shaping both his personality and his conceptualisation of nature during the process of “the writing of [their] textuality” (127). As an ecopoem it is the product of a poetic consciousness that harmonises his personal experience with Welsh pantheism and its cyclical frame of existence. Davies states that Thomas’s stays on his aunt’s farm “comprised one of his life’s great formative experiences” as the farm allowed him to build “his consciousness of the power of nature in all its color, fecundity, and teeming life” (14). Hence “Fern Hill” expresses Dylan Thomas’s “nostalgia for his roustabout country holidays” (Sinclair 33). His representation of farm life is full of optimism and foregrounds the unity between the child and its nonhuman participants:

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
 In the sun that is young once only,
 Time let me play and be
 Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
 And the sabbath rang slowly
 In the pebbles of the holy streams. (*CP* 10-8)

As in the first stanza, the child's oneness with nature is highlighted. The "green" child enjoying his "golden" age established a harmonious relationship with both the farm and the animals: "I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves / Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold" (*CP* 10, 14, 15-6). By elaborating on the polysemic implications of the colours green and gold, Thomas creates several images that enhance the poem's ecocentric spirit. As the colour of the natural realm, the colour green is one of the significant motifs that unites man with nature. While in the opening stanza, with "as the grass was green," green is employed to refer to freshness and vitality of nature, in the second one it contributes to the identification of the child with the nonhuman world and foregrounds his naivety with such expressions like "I was green and carefree" and "[a]nd green and golden I was" (*CP* 2, 10, 15). Apart from green, Thomas also employs the word golden to express the innocence and the preciousness of his childhood days. As pointed out by Goodby, golden stands for the idealised conceptualisation of the past as in the examples of "[g]olden in the heydays of his eyes" and "be / Golden in the mercy of his means" in the first and second stanzas (393; *CP* 5, 13-4). What is more, by bringing "green and golden" together in the second stanza to refer to the speaker's being "huntsman and herdsman" as well as the state of the child's being "green and golden," Thomas draws attention to the operation of the natural laws because the speaker "is gradually becoming subject to the 'process of natural growth' " (*CP* 15; Goodby 394). The awareness about the impossibility to remain "green and golden" forever is reflected by the intrusions of the speaker's linear temporal consciousness (*CP* 15). Repeating the same pattern of the first stanza, the pastoral summer is blurred by the remarks indicating the passage of time: "In the sun that is young once only, / Time let me play and be / Golden in the mercy of his means" (*CP* 12-4). The adult speaker wants to prolong his immersion in nature and recover his childhood sensibilities; yet, the recognition that "the sun that is young once only" undermines his plea (*CP* 12). Although the poem foregrounds the union between the child and nature, a closer look reveals that it also explores the adult speaker's recollection of his gradual disconnection from nature as he grows up. Apart from emphasising the

child's indifference to such worries, the poem reflects the impossibility of undoing the past or freezing the flow of time.

The ecocentric spirit of the poem also problematises the reduction of space into a passive background and attacks culture/nature dichotomy. Challenging the objectification of space to foster human civilisation, "Fern Hill" represents how man made culture, the farm, cannot be dissociated from nature. Echoing Patrick D. Murphy's words, because "culture is also inextricably ennatured" the human constructs like "the barns," the "yard," and "the farm" are regarded as the "home" for both the human and nonhuman beings (14; *CP* 10, 11). In the ecocentric past of his childhood, despite the allusions to the markers of human civilisation like the cultivation of the land, the construction of a house, with its fire and chimneys, the stables and the ricks, the human existence cannot be disconnected from its roots; thus, all man-made constructs are in tune with the natural environment.

The conflict between the linear and nonlinear conceptions of temporality of the adult speaker and the child is intensified in the third stanza. While the child acknowledges the temporal transition from summer to winter as well as the descending night as part of the cyclical pattern of nature, such transformations signify death and finality for the adult speaker. Subverting the hierarchical codification of time over space, as an ecopoem, "Fern Hill" represents the passage of time by focusing attention on the changes in nature. The pastoral spring and summer setting of the first two stanzas, when the sun was young, is replaced by the notions of the running sun and the idea that the farm was getting ready for winter through "the hay / Fields high as the house," "the chimneys" with the "fire green as grass" (*CP* 19-20, 22). Within the ecocentric context of the speaker's childhood the farm with its human and nonhuman dwellers welcomed winter and went to sleep:

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass.
And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars

Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark. (*CP* 19-27)

The adult speaker's double consciousness manifests itself in what sleep signifies for him and the inhabitants of Fernhill. Although the speaker associates sleep with death, for the child it was a mere move to another natural form of existence. Ignorant of the adult speaker's worries, the child "nightly under the simple stars" "rode to sleep" (*CP* 23, 24). The poem also foregrounds that the adult speaker's uneasiness was not shared by the nonhuman world as it peacefully fell into sleep with "the nightjars / Flying with the ricks, and the horses / Flashing into dark" (*CP* 25-7). The way Thomas employs the idea of sleep in the poem signifies the end of a single day within the context of the speaker's childhood as well as the end of life in the adult speaker's perception of temporality. This is how Thomas converts an individual experience "into a vision of innocence before the Fall" (Fraser 5). Consequently, the poem flows in two but mutually dependent temporal frames. For the child, ignorant of death and mortality, sleep only implied the end of the day and the night, which was naturally followed by sun rise and the beginning of another day. When analysed from the perspective of the mature speaker, the cyclical operation of a single day suggests the existence of a similar pattern in the entire human life. In addition to implying the end of a day, sleep may be the symbol of death as the end of life.

With the speaker's recognition that death is as natural as sleep, his anxiety concerning the linear flow of time decreases. Abandoning his worries related with death and finality, the adult speaker explores how sleep connotes regeneration as the farm was awakened to a new day and spring following the night or winter. Just as each night is followed up by a day, each death marks the beginning of a regenerative process. The grimness associated with the passage of time that has been prevalent since the beginning of the poem is replaced with the sense of optimism and hope as the farm inhabitants witnessed the dawn of a new day and season. The sense of renewal is also expressed with the maturation of the speaker who acknowledges that in addition to implying death and sense of finality, the passage of time can also bring about change and regeneration:

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise. (CP 28-36)

The speaker elaborates on the rebirth that takes place both in nature and on the farm: “The sky gathered again / And the sun grew round that very day” (CP 31-2). Thomas’s references to creation myth like “Adam and maiden” and “after the birth of the simple light,” may signify the speaker’s reawakening to his individual and holistic perception of life (CP 30, 33). Being part of the natural world, man is exposed to the same creative and destructive impulses in nature. As suggested by Bate, as an ecopoem “Fern Hill” represents the Earth as man’s home (*The Song* 75). As a result, the sense of ending and the fear of the imminent death in the former stanzas metamorphose into the sense of return to nature that contributes to its renewal. The speaker’s allusion to “Adam and maiden,” instead of the image of the innocent child in the previous parts also foregrounds his altered vision (CP 30). It signals the maturation of the speaker with his passage to adulthood as well as his acceptance of the mortality of the human beings. Thomas also draws attention to the changes that take place in the nonhuman world through the newborn horses: “spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm / Out of the whinnying green stable / On to the fields of praise” (CP 34-6). Thus, the poem builds up an ecocentric background by allowing the adult speaker to perceive the way life operates in nature and to reposition himself as part of its interconnected patterns.

The following stanza dwells on the speaker’s altered consciousness and offers a celebratory account of cyclical temporality and existence. Abandoning the fear stimulated by linear temporality and meaningless existence, he enjoys his immersion in the nonhuman world. Despite growing old, the speaker is capable of preserving the holistic ecocentric perception of life and temporality. The

recognition of death as part of creative-destructive pattern of life is reflected in the speaker's carefree attitude to life:

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace. (*CP* 135)

The speaker's unified existence with nature is emphasised through the references to his being "honoured" by both "foxes" and "pheasants by the gay house" (*CP* 37). Despite the presence of "the new made clouds," representing the new responsibilities and frustrations of his growing age, he maintained his "heedless ways" and was still free and easy: "And nothing I cared" (*CP* 38, 40, 42). The former attempts to undo the linear temporality so that he can eternalize the joys and innocence of his childhood are replaced by remarks that express his determination to fulfil his desires within his limited temporal existence. In addition to expressing the cyclical flow of time, the idea that "the sun born over and over" also foregrounds the sense of brevity of life (*CP* 39). Hence, as much as "time allows / In all his tuneful turning," his "wishes raced" as the speaker tried to realise his desires (*CP* 42-3, 41). Although life was short and allowed "so few and such morning songs," the flow of time involves the growth and maturation of "the children green and golden" (*CP* 43, 44).

In the last stanza of "Fern Hill" Thomas's problematisation of linear temporality comes full circle with the restoration of cyclical flow of time. As a follow up to the contradictory opening remark "Now as I was young and easy," the poem is the cyclical account of the mature speaker's meditations on his childhood and youth (*CP* 1). After offering a review of what has taken place between now and then, the temporality in "Fern Hill" makes a smooth transition from past to present. The completion of the cyclical frame of the ecopoem is further maintained by the speaker's reconceptualisation of death as a return to

nature and his participation in the natural creative-destructive processes. Elaborating on sleep as a metaphor for death, the poem foregrounds the multiple frames of temporal perception by harmonising the past, the present and the future:

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
 In the moon that is always rising,
 Nor that riding to sleep
 I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
 Time held me green and dying
 Though I sang in my chains like the sea. (*CP* 46-54)

The carefree life of his childhood represented through the image of “the lamb white days” and his being “young and easy” gradually brings him closer to night as he is “riding to sleep” (*CP* 46, 1, 49). Revisiting the idea of sleep as a metaphor for death, Thomas declares that awakening from sleep entails reunion with nature: “I should hear him fly with the high fields / And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land” (*CP* 50-1). Although time and death bring an end to his existence as a child and mature man, the image of the “moon that is always rising” signals the continuity of being after death in its altered form. He is relieved with the recognition that death involves the decomposition of his body and being reborn since he is taken “[u]p to the swallow thronged loft” and still being able to “hear him fly with the high fields / And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land” (*CP* 47, 50-1). Maintaining the former personification of time, within the ecocentric and holistic universe of the poem, Thomas depicts it as a force with dual character that both keeps the speaker alive and moves him closer to death: “Time held me green and dying” (*CP* 53). The poem ends with the celebration of the ecocentric consciousness. In spite of being chained by mortality, man is part of nature and is welcomed to participate in the joy of singing the polyphonic song of nature with the other natural beings and the sea. According to Korg, “Fern Hill” is one of Thomas’s poems in which “the transition from joy in life to resignation to death is smooth and untroubled” (*Dylan Thomas* 93). The holistic and ecocentric spirit soothes the speaker’s earlier

agonies as it ensures man's immortality through his return to nature. Being the closing poem in his fourth volume, *Deaths and Entrances*, "Fern Hill" manifests the way Thomas reconceptualises death and mortality within the ecocentric and holistic universe he creates in his works. As Goodby maintains, Thomas insisted on publishing "Fern Hill" in *Deaths and Entrances* due to its indispensable contribution to "essential part of the feeling and meaning of the book as a whole" (356; *CL* 569). Like the other modernist poets, Thomas's poetry is dominated by the search for an organising principle so that the human existence would acquire meaning. Living in a decentred universe devoid of relief provided by faith in a divine creator, Dylan Thomas's mind is occupied with mortality and what death signifies. Treece identifies two major modernist concerns that abound his poetry: "inquiry, and a terror of fearful expectation" (86). In his early work, Thomas's ontological search initially proceeds at a personal level; nevertheless, he "does not stop there: his inquiry expands outwards until it embraces the whole system in which he moves" (Treece 86). Challenging death as a gateway to a transcendental realm, he portrays it as the telos and treats it also as the cause that leads to man's return to nature, that is his origin. Reflecting the poet's ecocentric consciousness, in "Fern Hill," the death of the speaker involves his body's entry into the grave, the space where it will participate in the natural regenerative activities. As part of the cyclical existence death is reconceptualised as birth and man's return to nature. This also implies another instance and shows how Thomas goes beyond dichotomous logic by joining telos and origin in the same experience.

The restoration of cyclical temporality and ecocentric consciousness in "Fern Hill" contributes to the revitalisation of space in man's holistic perception of existence. In line with the theoretical framework of third wave ecocriticism, as in "Poem in October," in "Fern Hill," Thomas's ecocentric world is inspired by his personal experience, which later acquires a universal dimension. The speaker's meditations on the ecocentric childhood memories in Fernhill, the actual farm setting is converted into what Heise calls "environmental world citizenship" because it is reconceptualised to include the entire human and nonhuman worlds as the participants of the same creative-destructive processes within cyclical existence (10). Quite in parallel with "Poem in October," "Fern Hill" is one of the

ecopoems in which “the figures and landscapes have new solidarity, a new self-sufficiency” since they are portrayed as “windows opening on a timeless universe” (Korg, *Dylan Thomas* 82). Despite being rooted in a particular and concrete background, Thomas’s experience assumes universal ecocentric significance and raises ecocentric consciousness. According to Hardy, in order to appeal to the modern man’s desire for holism, Dylan Thomas “rechristen[ises] his aunt’s farm” and changes the original English name “Fernhill” into “Fern Hill” so as “to recreate a place and time, analyzing the word to spell out and specify a larger and wilder greenness” (*Dylan Thomas* 22). The altered version “Fern Hill,” liberates the context of the poem from its particular Welsh setting and creates an alternative which explores the union between man and nature in any place. Therefore, echoing the ideas of Heise regarding “deterritorialization,” the setting of the poem offers a global understanding of place (10). The universal sense of unity in the poem is also established by the representation of the bond between man and various nonhuman beings. The separation of “Fern” and “Hill” not only subverts culture/nature duality by “making a title, referring to a hill as well as a man-made farm,” but also indicates the unity of “the two natural elements of vegetation and earth” (Hardy, *Dylan Thomas* 135). As suggested by Heise, “Fern Hill” goes beyond being a poem that attempts to restore ecocentrism, but can be taken as a significant work which displays “what it means to think and live in an environmentally conscious way” (48). The ecocentric holism that Thomas proposes in this ecopoem can sooth the agony of all people who strive to make their lives meaningful, regardless of who they are, where and when they live.

In summary, the discussion of Dylan Thomas’s treatment of time and space in his later poems reveals that the celebration of the ecocentric holism motivates him as an ecopoet to denaturalise the dichotomy between the two and to imitate the cyclical spatiotemporal rhythms in nature. The discussion of the ecopoems, “Poem in October” and “Fern Hill,” illustrates that within the ecocentric universe that Thomas represents the perception of time with its nonlinear flow and frequent shifts between the present and the past is rooted in the speakers’ perception of space. In both poems the quest for meaning in life encourages the poet to undertake a spiritual journey to his childhood, which

contributes to the revival of the ecocentric spirit and the resolution of his conflict regarding mortality and death. Different from his early ecopoems like “Here in this spring,” “Before I knocked,” “Especially when the October wind,” and “Twenty-four years,” in which death and mortality are regarded as threats, in “Poem in October” and “Fern Hill,” they are acknowledged as the natural components of man’s cyclical existences. What is significant about his later view of death is that he abandons his pessimism and celebrates it as a gateway to man’s return and union with nature. In both poems, the representation of double consciousness of temporality and the constant shifts between the present moment and the past not only challenge the linear configurations of time, but also foreground the multiple frames and the subjectivity involved in its perception. In “Poem in October” the spiritual journey is initiated early on his thirtieth birthday morning and involves the speaker’s liberation from the linear temporality identified with his life in town, Laugharne. As the speaker distances himself from the living present, he creates a country space in his imagination in which the season changes into summer and he enjoys his union with nature in this ecocentric past. Thus, Thomas’s revitalisation of space moves beyond mere observation on how temporality was shaped by space for he elaborates on space as a vital component determining one’s personality and perception of nature. In the same manner, in “Fern Hill,” the subversion of the hegemony of time over space is maintained with the mature speaker’s spatiotemporal retreat into the memories of his childhood, when he enjoyed his non-hierarchical existence within the nonhuman world of the farm. The recovery of the ecocentric holism of the past inspires both speakers to celebrate the natural cyclical patterns and to revitalise nature as the place where man returns after his death. The way Thomas reconceptualises death as one’s participation in the regenerative processes in nature transcends the boundaries of his unique sources of inspiration and offer an ecocentric alternative to sooth the agony of meaningless life and death. Although these poems are generated by particular experiences, the poet’s consciousness and imagination transform his representation of these places into various mental spaces. However, as part of the poet’s ecocentric vision, such spaces are reconceptualised to signify nature as the universal home, the ultimate place where

all human and nonhuman beings participate in its cyclical creative-destructive processes. Despite originating from the Welsh background, Thomas's treatment of spatiotemporality reflects the premises of third wave ecocriticism and the ecocritical demand for a global sense of place. As an eco poet he sings the universal ecocentric song of the interconnectedness of all beings that are subjected to the same creative-destructive processes in nature.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has tried to explore and discuss the subversion of dichotomous logic and what Dylan Thomas offered as a remedy to its dissolution in his poetry by focusing on poems in his *Collected Poems: 1934-1953*. The analysis of several of his poems in *18 Poems*, *25 Poems*, *The Map of Love*, *Deaths and Entrances*, and *In Country Sleep* has displayed Thomas's problematisation of the hierarchical configurations of man, culture and time over nature and space. Although literature cannot provide first hand solutions to the environmental problems the world confronts, this thesis has attempted to demonstrate the indispensable role literary works can play in raising ecocentric consciousness. Thomas's rejection of the major poetic trends of his time and his insistence on composing nature poems in a period when such poetry fell into disfavour or when poets wrote escapist pastoral poems led to his marginalisation among the other modernist poets. Today, however, re-reading of his poetry with ecocentric consciousness indicates that long before the emergence of the recent theoretical frames such as post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, in his poems Thomas set out to challenge dichotomous logic as an ideological construct and to revitalise the ecocentric discourse. Stimulated by the ideas generated in the field of ecocriticism along with the contributions of poststructuralist philosophy, cultural and political theories, post-pastoral literature challenges the adverse criticism condemning pastoral for being escapist and creating false ideological representations. Post-pastoral abolishes generic codifications regarding environmental texts and introduces a heterogeneous holistic ecocritical frame that subverts all dualities, calls for the appreciation of the inherent value of the nonhuman world and foregrounds the ecological interconnectedness between the human and the nonhuman beings. In the same manner, ecopoetry addresses the notoriety of nature poetry and revitalises the genre and its role in raising awareness about the ecological crisis. Moreover, by foregrounding the essential unity between man

and nature, ecopoetry is considered as the medium through which the rhythms of nature as well as its operating mechanisms can be represented. It is because of the strong parallelisms between the elements of the post-pastoral and Thomas's poetry, that this dissertation regards Thomas as a precursor of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry and has attempted to discuss the post-pastoral and ecopoetic dimensions of his work. Without the retreat motif and illusory representations in his works, Thomas voiced many of the fundamental concerns treated by contemporary ecocritical studies. Through the post-pastoral elements in his poetry with ecocentric consciousness he puts under question the constructedness of dualistic thinking, and manages to bridge the gap between the conflicting poles of binary oppositions.

By exploring Thomas's celebration of the interconnectedness between man and nature as a post-pastoral and ecopoet, this dissertation has discussed the polyphonic ecocentric spirit in his poetry. The dissertation has demonstrated how Thomas became a mediator through whom nature, the oppressed members of both the human and the nonhuman worlds could speak and call for ecocentric consciousness. The study has elaborated on the distinctive contributions of Thomas's Welsh background to his holistic attack on dualism and has focused on how the poet's polyphonic ecocentric vision offered significant insights into the universal revitalisation of the essential bond between man and nature and finding global solutions to the present ecological crisis. This point brings him closer to the premises of third wave ecocriticism. In light of all these discussions, this dissertation also reveals that through his ecocentrism, Thomas finds a personal remedy to the modernist crisis of representation and chaos. Ecocentrism also becomes his organising principle while composing poetry. Thus, ecocentric holism offers him a way out of the modernist crisis which resulted from the loss of the previous organising principles; therefore, it assumes epistemological as well as ontological significance for him. In other words, post-pastoral and ecopoetic ecocentrism gives him the conceptual tools to make sense of his empirical reality and also to organise his process of composing poetry.

The focus of this dissertation is shaped by how post-pastoral and ecopoetic ecocentrism in Thomas's poetry determined the course of things in his

conception of the world and his process of poetry composition. Therefore, before the deeper analysis of the poems, the dissertation also offered a brief argumentative survey of different modes of ecocentrism to prepare the ground for the forthcoming chapters on conceptual terms. Influenced by the theories of the major poststructuralist philosophers and cultural theorists, ecocriticism problematises religious dichotomy, humanist philosophy as well as the idea of progress as the primary root causes of the environmental issues. Challenging the fundamentals of the Western metaphysics, ecocritics subvert the hierarchical configurations of man over nature, culture over nature, and time over space. Being inspired by the ideas of Jacques Derrida as well as the new ideas in the field of ecology, ecocritics go beyond man/nature duality and anthropocentrism by highlighting the ecological interdependence between the human and nonhuman beings. Thus, ecocriticism demands a fundamental change in man's approach to nature and problematises the anthropocentric discourse by urging man to give up his illusory mastery over nature so that he can celebrate the essential ecological unity of all beings. The ideas of Michel Foucault on discourse and power, on the other hand, encourage ecocritics to question anthropocentrism as an ideological construct. Destabilising the alliance between the institutions of power and scientific explorations, they call for the revival of the marginalised ecocentric discourse. Quite indispensable to the ecocritical subversion of man/nature dichotomy is the deconstruction of the hierarchy between culture and nature. Although the initial challenges to such hierarchical codifications were based on reversing the basic binarism by prioritising nature over culture, or focused on its constructedness, the recent studies in the field have drawn attention to the mutual interaction between culture and nature within the context of the industrialised, urbanised and increasingly globalised world. Hence, rather than being in conflict with one another, today culture and nature are viewed as hybridised entities. Ecocriticism also reacts against the conventional identification of the city as the domain of civilisation with culture and the country with unspoiled nature. Ecocritics argue that neither the city, nor the country could escape the threats of the anthropocentric discourse. Because both are encroached by urbanisation, they consider the urban background and the urban dwellers' need to be in contact with

nature as significant areas to be explored. In addition to attacking man/nature, culture/nature and city/country dualities, the hegemony of time over space is another area that ecocriticism concentrates on. The theories introduced by Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, and David Harvey into contemporary philosophy and cultural studies encourage ecocritics to react against the dissociation of time from space which took place in the aftermath of the Enlightenment project. Since with its linear demarcation time signified progress, the Western history has been based on the glorification of temporality at the cost of reducing space into a passive domain where dynamic developments have been taking place. Foregrounding the constructedness of such dichotomous logic, ecocritics revitalise space and revive spatiotemporality. Rather than an empty container, they conceived space as a force and as the product of mental, social, economic and political factors in today's constantly globalising world. Moreover, due to the inevitable invasions of the local by the global, ecocritics draw attention to the need to raise universal ecological consciousness and stimulate a more global notion of place.

The subversion of dichotomous logic is also maintained by the theories introduced in the field of green politics. As one of the major political orientations, deep ecology challenges anthropocentrism and urges the restoration of ecocentrism. In order to put an end to an anthropocentric configuration of nature, deep ecologists try to raise ecocentric consciousness. Therefore, they foreground a fundamental ecocentric transformation in each individual's perception of nature and advocate retreat into the wild and unspoiled nature. However, because their challenge to anthropocentrism is based on the reversal of the former hierarchy, deep ecologists are criticised for not providing efficient solutions to the environmental crisis. Different from deep ecology, social ecology, on the other hand, attacks all forms of hierarchy and proposes more collective remedies to the environmental problems. What is significant about social ecology is that it abolishes the dichotomy between the city and the country, and looks into the impacts of urbanisation on both the human and the nonhuman worlds. Because it prioritises the needs of the human over the nonhuman beings, like deep ecology, social ecology cannot escape anthropocentric hierarchical codes. The

environmental justice movement, on the other hand, aims at drawing attention to the inequity the marginalised people confront in their access to proper living conditions and appropriate means of survival. Nevertheless, the most substantial attack on dichotomous logic is developed by social ecofeminism, which targets all forms of oppression and offers an all-inclusive attack on dualistic thinking. By criticising the other political movements for ignoring the marginalisation of women and remaining within the domain of the patriarchal discourse, social ecofeminists revolt against the exploitation of all nonhuman and human beings regardless of their gender, race, cultural and economic background. In this dissertation, rather than prioritising any one of these ecocritical views, I borrowed terms and tools from all of them where necessary to achieve a thorough analysis of the poems. By putting them in a dialogue in my analytical chapters, I also aimed to fill in the theoretical gaps in them.

In Chapter III, this dissertation has discussed the subversion of the dichotomy between man and nature in various poems taken from each of Thomas's volumes. Based on the ecocritical frame put forward by post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, the dissertation has traced the gradual appreciation of the vitality of the nonhuman world and the celebration of the ecocentric polyphony in his poems. To this end, the chapter has focused on three major domains which allowed the poet to problematise dichotomous logic and re-establish the bond between the human and the nonhuman realms: the identification of the processes in the human body with the processes in the nonhuman world, the subversion of the Christian anthropocentric discourse with the ecocentrism of pantheism and his call for ecocentric consciousness by voicing the injustice against the oppressed other. It has been observed that at the initial stages of his poetic career, in *18 Poems* and *25 Poems*, Thomas's search for a nonanthropocentric view of life encourages him to appreciate the intrinsic value of nature. By declaring man as part of nature and foregrounding the interconnectedness between the processes in the human body with the ones in the external nature, in "A process in the weather of the heart," "The force through the green fuse drives the flower," and "And death shall have no dominion" Thomas shatters all anthropocentric claims of mastery over nature and reveals how both nonhuman and human existence is

actually based on non-hierarchical ecological principles. Additionally, the chapter has indicated that this initial urge to revive the bond between man and nature in the first two volumes metamorphoses into a holistic ecocentric discourse that grants meaning to both his life and work in *The Map of Love* and *In County Sleep*. Since he lived in a post-Nietzschean and post-Darwinian universe, where the existence of a transcendental power was problematised, Thomas reconceptualised death as a return to the elements of nature. As he took refuge in the mysticism of the primitive nature worship, Thomas offered a critique of the lack of spirituality in the Christian discourse and the anthropocentric hierarchy it preached. Thus, the revitalisation of the Welsh mysticism and poetic tradition, in the poems “After the funeral,” which is published in *The Map of Love*, “In County Sleep” and “Poem on his Birthday,” which appear in *In County Sleep*, contributes to the maturation of Dylan Thomas as an ecopoet, who celebrates his mission to mediate between the human and the divine nature in order to sing the ecocentric song of nonhuman and human interconnectedness. It has been observed that with the revitalisation of ecocentric holism that undermines all ideological codifications of nature, he liberates himself from the agony of a futile existence. Moreover, this chapter has also discussed how, as a post-pastoral poet, Thomas develops a holistic critique of dichotomous logic and gives expression to the concerns of both social ecofeminism and the environmental justice movement by reacting against the way nature, women and the marginalised figures in the society are oppressed by patriarchal codes and the anthropocentric discourse. In the post-pastoral poems, “Because the pleasure-bird whistles,” “The tombstone told” and “Love in the Asylum,” Thomas problematises the way nature and those that are identified with it are objectified. Hence, as part of his polyphonic ecocentric vision Thomas voices the exploitation of the marginalised other and calls for ecocentric consciousness that abolishes hierarchical codifications by foregrounding the interconnectedness of all beings.

Because the challenge to man/nature duality cannot be dissociated from the other derivatives of dichotomous thinking, in Chapter IV, this dissertation has surveyed the post-pastoral subversion of culture/nature dichotomy in Dylan Thomas’s poetry in the light of ideas put forward by social and urban ecologists.

Integral to the ecocritical subversion of the fundamentals of the Western epistemology, the poems that are discussed in this chapter have revealed how Thomas critiques the downfall of the progressive civilisation and condemns the ways the anthropocentric discourse and humanism enslave both man and nature. Therefore, the post-pastoral analysis of the deconstruction of culture/nature duality in the chapter has concentrated on two major areas: the outcomes of the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse and the modern man's desire for ecocentric holism. As part of its ecocritical challenge to culture/nature duality, in "Why east wind chills," this chapter has discussed the marginalisation of the holistic ecocentric discourse by the dominant anthropocentric discourse, which imposes its control on scientific knowledge and exploits it as a tool to oppress the human and the nonhuman world. The poem represents the ecocritical attack on the reduction of nature to a mechanism whose operating laws can be deciphered to satisfy the progressive ideals of man, the master. Abolishing city/country duality as a derivative of the hierarchy between culture and nature, as a post-pastoral poet, in "I see the boys of summer" Dylan Thomas treats the industrialised urban environment as a significant ecocritical domain and criticises the ways man is dissociated from nature, which results in a deep sense of alienation. It has been discerned that by highlighting the essential unity of man and nature, Thomas abolishes the dichotomy between culture, and nature and reflects the urban man's urge to celebrate one's natural impulses. Another post-pastoral work, "A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London," indicates Dylan Thomas's demystification of the Western man's pursuit of truth and knowledge by demonstrating how his desire to master nature evolves into a drive to oppress and exploit the human and nonhuman resources of the other countries. Consequently, the chapter has discussed the poet's disillusionment with the ideals of the Western progressive civilisation and his attack on war with all the pain and suffering it brings to innocent civilians. Moreover, in light of the ideas supported by social and urban ecology, the dissertation has discussed the representation of the urban man's desire for ecocentric holism. In order to relieve the agony of being disconnected from nature in the urban backdrop, in "The hunchback in the park" Thomas creates a marginalised figure who constructs his ecocentric heterotopia

that undermines the anthropocentric configurations of nature and attacks the oppression of the ones that are identified with it. Apart from condemning the alienation of man from nature, the chapter has also dwelled on Thomas's juxtaposition of the collapsing Western progressive civilisation with the non-hierarchical and nonanthropocentric domain of the nonhuman beings. In "Over Sir John's Hill" Thomas contrasts the injustice and the unnatural death of civilians caused by war with the ecological war in the nonhuman world, where the death of a single being is viewed as an essential dimension of the maintenance of life. Thus, instead of composing escapist pastoral poems that idealise the peace and the tranquillity of the countryside, in his post-pastoral poems Thomas undermines the Western progressive ideals and calls for the restoration of the ecocentric holistic discourse, which appreciates the existence of all beings and celebrates their unique contribution to the ecological balance.

In addition to analysing the deconstruction of man/nature and culture/nature dualities, in Chapter V this dissertation has also attempted to discuss the subversion of the hegemony of time over space in Dylan Thomas's poetry. Quite indispensable to his search for an organising principle in his life and poetry, as an eco-poet imitating the rhythms in nature, in his works Thomas is preoccupied with the passage of time. In such a context, the chapter has concentrated on Thomas's problematisation of linear temporality and the revitalisation of spatiotemporality. Because he lived in a decentered universe devoid of the existence of a transcendental power and the promise of a transcendental realm, in his early poetry the linear flow of time functions as a reminder of the meaninglessness of life in which he is constantly drawn closer to his death. Echoing the ecocritical attack on the hierarchical codification between time and space, it has been perceived that in his work Thomas problematises its ideologically constructed nature. By becoming a keen observer of the nonhuman world, as an eco-poet, he declares that such a hierarchy does not exist in nature since the measurement of time is rooted in spatial indicators and has a non-linear flow. Therefore, this chapter has elaborated on the poems, "Here in this spring" and "Before I knocked," in which the poet challenges linear temporality by foregrounding the cyclical patterns of existence in the nonhuman realm as well as

the human body. Because the anxiety about the essence of being along with the conflict between linear and cyclical temporality are represented in the poems that are inspired by his personal life, the chapter has concentrated on his birthday poems. It has been concluded that while the first two birthday poems, “Especially when the October wind” and “Twenty-four years” are burdened with the fear of death and the passage of time, in the third birthday poem, “Poem in October,” with the restoration of the ecocentric vision of life, the distress regarding the futility of existence gradually vanishes. The recognition that, because of being part of nature man, is also subjected to its creative-destructive mechanisms encourages Thomas to celebrate the cyclical flow of time and his body’s return to the elements of nature. Furthermore, the recovery of the ecocentric holistic spirit in “Poem in October” and “Fern Hill” is attained by the adult poet’s meditations on the ecocentric world of his childhood with its cyclical temporal frame. Consequently, the challenge to the hegemony of time over space in his later poems is achieved by the violation of the linear flow of time through the experimental juxtaposition of the past with the present as well as the constant shifts between the two temporal frames. As part of the ecocritical analysis of the subversion of the dichotomy between time and space in the poetry of Dylan Thomas, the chapter has also discussed the revitalisation of space as an indispensable element that shapes one’s interaction with nature. Reflecting the developments in contemporary spatial studies regarding spatiotemporality, the chapter has revealed that within the polyphonic ecocentric world that Thomas tries to create in his poems, space ceases to be a passive object. Both the nonhuman world and the human body are represented as significant spaces which evolve into the globalised notions of place that transcend all individual, cultural as well as national boundaries and call for a globalised reconceptualisation of place where universal creative-destructive and cyclical processes are carried out.

By way of conclusion, it can be stated that the revival of ecocentric polyphony in Thomas’s works transcends the boundaries of his native background and demands a change in man’s perception of nature and all that is identified with it so that a universal non-hierarchical and nonanthropocentric alternative frame of existence can be re-formed and implemented. Reflecting the concerns of third

wave ecocriticism, although the restoration of the ecocentric holistic discourse owes much to the Welsh pantheism, literature, landscape and town, the ecocritical analysis of Dylan Thomas's work has displayed that his poems go beyond their unique local and national background, and represent the predicament of all men that live in a world shaped by ideologically constructed dualistic codes. Dylan Thomas's Welsh background plays a vital role in his subversion of dichotomous logic, the restoration of the universal ecocentric spirit, and the call for global ecocentric consciousness. As it has been discussed in Chapter II, contemporary environmental problems are the end products of religious dichotomy, humanism and the Western man's desire to create a progressive culture. The ecocritical analysis of his work has revealed the poet's sensibility and his gift of foresight regarding the collapse of the Enlightenment project and the dark future that awaited the human animal unless he abandons his anthropocentric and humanist claim over the nonhuman world and revitalises the holistic spirit of ecocentrism. Thus, as a forerunner of post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, in his poems Thomas foreshadowed many of the ecological problems that have culminated into a global environmental crisis today. The poet's post-pastoral and ecopoetic representations of the decline of the Western progressive culture, the entrapment of man in the industrialised urban background, the reduction of nature into a passive object, along with the marginalisation of the ecocentric discourse by the dominant anthropocentric discourse offer significant insights into the reconceptualisation of culture and nature as well as the city and the country in order to come up with more realistic and feasible solutions to contemporary ecological problems. The revival of the ecocentric discourse in Thomas's poetry demands fundamental changes in the way man perceives nature and urges him to stop seeing the nonhuman world as an object to be scientifically explored, controlled and filled, but to celebrate it as a living organism operating on interconnected cyclical patterns of being. As a post-pastoral and an ecopoet, Thomas offers a polyphonic ecocentric representation of existence which abolishes all forms of hierarchies created by dichotomous logic and foregrounds the essential unity between man and nature regardless of where and when they live. The ecocentric resolutions that Thomas proposes in his poems go beyond the

Welsh context and reflect the consciousness of the ecocritical premise that the environmental crisis the world confronts has transcended the national borders of each country and has evolved into a worldwide threat. The major contribution of this dissertation to the field of Dylan Thomas studies is that by borrowing conceptual tools from post-pastoral literature and ecopoetry, it has discussed how Thomas's poetry reflected the heterogeneity of ecological interconnectedness and portrayed a polyphonic ecocentric harmony by restoring the essential bond between man and nature, culture and nature as well as time and space. The dissertation has surveyed how, after a series of questioning and contemplation against the decentered chaotic backdrop of a world that went through two World Wars and the Cold War, Dylan Thomas resolved his existentialist conflict with the restoration of the holistic vision of the ecocentric discourse.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

LIST OF THE POEMS REFERRED TO

A process in the weather of the heart

- A process in the weather of the heart
Turns damp to dry; the golden shot
Storms in the freezing tomb.
A weather in the quarter of the veins
Turns night to day; blood in their suns 5
Lights up the living worm.
- A process in the eye forwarns
The bones of blindness; and the womb
Drives in a death as life leaks out.
- A darkness in the weather of the eye 10
Is half its light; the fathomed sea
Breaks on unangled land.
The seed that makes a forest of the loin
Forks half its fruit; and half drops down,
Slow in a sleeping wind. 15
- A weather in the flesh and bone
Is damp and dry; the quick and dead
Move like two ghosts before the eye.
- A process in the weather of the world
Turns ghost to ghost; each mothered child 20
Sits in their double shade.
A process blows the moon into the sun,
Pulls down the shabby curtains of the skin;
And the heart gives up its dead.

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever. 5

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax.
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks. 10

The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail.
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime. 15

The lips of time leech to the fountain head;
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores.
And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars. 20

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm.

And death shall have no dominion

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead man naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot; 5
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion. 10
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two, 15
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan't crack;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may gulls cry at their ears 20
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;
Though they be mad and dead as nails,
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies; 25
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion.

After the funeral

After the funeral, mule praises, brays,
Windshake of sailshaped ears, muffle-toed tap
Tap happily of one peg in the thick
Grave's foot, blinds down the lids, the teeth in black,
The spittled eyes, the salt ponds in the sleeves, 5
Morning smack of the spade that wakes up sleep,
Shakes a desolate boy who slits his throat
In the dark of the coffin and sheds dry leaves,
That breaks one bone to light with a judgment clout'
After the feast of tear-stuffed time and thistles 10
In a room with a stuffed fox and a stale fern,
I stand, for this memorial's sake, alone
In the snivelling hours with dead, humped Ann
Whose hodded, fountain heart once fell in puddles
Round the parched worlds of Wales and drowned each sun 15
(Though this for her is a monstrous image blindly
Magnified out of praise; her death was a still drop;
She would not have me sinking in the holy
Flood of her heart's fame; she would lie dumb and deep
And need no druid of her broken body). 20
But I, Ann's bard on a raised hearth, call all
The seas to service that her wood-tongued virtue
Babble like a bellbuoy over the hymning heads,
Bow down the walls of the ferned and foxy woods
That her love sing and swing through a brown chapel, 25
Bless her bent spirit with four, crossing birds.
Her flesh was meek as milk, but this skyward statue
With the wild breast and blessed and giant skull
Is carved from her in a room with a wet window
In a fiercely mourning house in a crooked year. 30
I know her scrubbed and sour humble hands
Lie with religion in their cramp, her threadbare
Whisper in a damp word, her wits drilled hollow,
Her fist of a face died clenched on a round pain;
And sculptured Ann is seventy years of stone. 35
These cloud-sopped, marble hands, this monumental
Argument of the hewn voice, gesture and psalm
Storm me forever over her grave until
The stuffed lung of the fox twitch and cry Love
And the strutting fern lay seeds on the black sill. 40

In Country Sleep

I

Never and never, my girl riding far and near
In the land of the hearthstone tales, and spelled asleep,
Fear or believe that the wolf in a sheepwhite hood
Loping and bleating roughly and blithely shall leap,
My dear, my dear, 5
Out of a lair in the flocked leaves in the dew dipped year
To eat your heart in the house in the rosy wood.

Sleep, good, for ever, slow and deep, spelled rare and wise,
My girl ranging the night in the rose and shire
Of the hobnail tales: no gooseherd or swine will turn 10
Into a homestall king or hamlet of fire
And prince of ice
To court the honeyed heart from your side before sunrise
In a spinney of ringed boys and ganders, spike and burn,

Nor the innocent lie in the rooting dingle wooed 15
And staved, and riven among plumes my rider weep.
From the broomed witch's spume you are shielded by fern
And flower of country sleep and the greenwood keep.
Lie fast and soothed,
Safe be and smooth from the bellows of the rushy brood. 20
Never, my girl, until tolled to sleep by the stern

Bell believe or fear that the rustic shade or spell
Shall harrow and snow the blood while you ride wide and near,
For who unmanningly haunts the mountain ravened eaves
Or skulks in the dell moon but moonshine echoing clear 25
From the starred well?
A hill touches an angel. Out of a saint's cell
The nightbird lauds through nunneries and domes of leaves

Her robin breasted tree, three Marys in the rays.
Sanctum sanctorum the animal eye of the wood 30
In the rain telling its beads, and the gravest ghost
The owl at its knelling. Fox and holt kneel before blood.
Now the tales praise
The star rise at pasture and nightlong the fables graze
On the lord's-table of the bowing grass. Fear most 35

For ever of all not the wolf in his baaing hood
Nor the tusked prince, in the ruttish farm, at the rind
And mire of love, but the Thief as meek as the dew.

Poem on his Birthday

In the mustardseed sun,
By full tilt river and switchback sea
Where the cormorants scud,
In his house on stilts high among beaks
And palavers of birds 5
This sandgrain day in the bent bay's grave
He celebrates and spurns
His driftwood thirty-fifth wind turned age;
Herons spire and spear.

Under and round him go 10
Flounders, gulls, on their cold, dying trails,
Doing what they are told,
Curlews aloud in the congered waves
Work at their ways to death,
And the rhymer in the long tongued room, 15
Who tolls his birthday bell,
Toesl towards the ambush of his wounds;
Herons, stepple stemmed, bless.

In the thistledown fall,
He sings towards anguish; finches fly 20
In the claw tracks of hawks
On a seizing sky; small fishes glide
Through wynds and shells of drowned
Ship towns to pastures of otters. He
In his slant, racking house 25
And the hewn coils of his trade perceives
Herons walk in their shroud,

The livelong river's robe
Of minnows wreathing around their prayer;
And far at sea he knows, 30
Who slaves to his crouched, eternal end
Under a serpent cloud,
Dolphins dyive in their turnturtle dust,
The rippled seals streak down
To kill and their own tide daubing blood 35
Slides good in the sleek mouth.

In a cavernous, swung
Wave's silence, wept white angelus knells.
Thirty-five bells sing struck
On skull and scar where his lovews lie wrecked, 40
Steered by the falling stars.

And tomorrow weeps in a blind cage
Terror will rage apart
Before chains break to a hammer flame
And love unbolts the dark 45

And freely he goes lost
In the unknown, famous light of great
And fabulous, dear God.
Dark is a way and light is a place,
Heaven that never was 50
Nor will be ever is always true,
And, in that brambled void,
Plenty as blackberries in the woods
The dead grow for His joy.

There he might wander bare 55
With the spirits of the horseshoe bay
Or the stars' seashore dead,
Marrow of eagles, the roots of whales
And wishbones of wild geese,
With blessed, unborn God and His Ghost, 60
And every soul His priest,
Gulled and chanter in youg Heaven's fold
Be at cloud quaking peace,

But dark is a long way.
He, on the earth of the night, alone 65
With all the living, prays,
Who knows the rocketing wind will blow
The bones out of the hills,
And the scythed boulders bleed, and the last
Rage shattered waters kick 70
Masts and fishes to the still quick stars,
Faithlessly unto Him

Who is the light of old
And air shaped Heaven where souls grow wild
As horses in the foam: 75
Oh, let me midlife mourn by the shrined
And druid herons' vows
The voyage to ruin I must run,
Dawn ships clouted aground,
Yet, though I cry with tumbledown tongue, 80
Count my blessings aloud:

Four elements and five
Senses, and man a spirit in love

Thangling through this spun slime
To his nimbus bell cool kingdom come 85
And the lost, moonshine domes,
And the sea that hides his secret selves
Deep in its black, base bones,
Lulling of spheres in the seashell flesh,
And this last blessing most, 90

That the closer I move
To death, one man through his sundered hulks,
The louder the sun blooms
And the tusked, ramshackling sea exults;
And every wave of the way 95
And gale I tackle, the whole world then,
With more triumphant faith
That ever was since the world was said,
Spins its morning of praise,

I hear the bouncing hills 100
Grow larked and greener at berry brown
Fall and the dew larks sing
Taller this thunderclap spring, and how
More spanned with angles ride
The mansouled fiery islands! Oh, 105
Holier than their eyes,
And my shining men no more alone
As I sail out to die

Because the pleasure-bird whistles

Because the pleasure-bird whistles after the hot wires,
Shall the blind horse sing sweeter?
Convenient bird and beast lie lodged to suffer
The supper and knives of a mood.
In the sniffed and poured snow on the tip of the tongue of the year 5
That clouts the spittle like bubbles with broken rooms,
An enamoured man alone by the twigs of his eyes, two fires,
Camped in the drug-white shower of nerves and food,
Savours the lick of the times through a deadly wood of hair
In a wind that plucked a goose, 10
Nor ever, as the wild tongue breaks its tombs,
Rounds to look at the red, wagged root.
Because there stands, one story out of the bum city,
That frozen wife whose juices drift like a fixed sea
Secretly in statuary, 15
Shall I, struck on the hot and rocking street,
Not spin to stare at an old year
Toppling and burning in the muddle of towers and galleries
Like the mauled pictures of boys?
The salt person and blasted place 20
I furnish with the meat of a fable;
If the dead starve, their stomachs turn to tumble
An upright man in the antipodes
Or spray-based and rock-chested sea:
Over the past table I repeat this present grace. 25

The tombstone told

The tombstone told when she died.
Her two surnames stopped me still.
A virgin married at rest.
She married in this pouring place,
That I struck one day by luck, 5
Before I heard in my mother's side
Or saw in the looking-glass shell
The rain through her cold heart speak
And the sun killed in her face.
More the thick stone cannot tell. 10

Before she lay on a stranger's bed
With a hand plunged through her hair,
Or that rainy tongue beat back
Through the devilish years and innocent deaths
To the room of a secret child, 15
Among men later I heard it said
She cried her white-dressed limbs were bare
And her red lips were kissed black,
She wept in her pain and made mouths,
Talked and tore though her eyes smiled. 20

I who saw in a hurried film
Death and this mad heroine
Meet once on a mortal wall
Heard her speak through the chipped beak
Of the stone bird guarding her: 25
I died before bedtime came
But my womb was bellowing
And I felt with my bare fall
A blazing red harsh head tear up
And the dear floods of his hair. 30

Love in the Asylum

A stranger has come
To share my room in the house not right in the head,
A girl mad as birds

Bolting the night of the door with her arm her plume.
Strait in the mazed bed 5
She deludes the heaven-proof house with entering clouds

Yet she deludes with walking the nightmarish room,
At large as the dead,
Or rides the imagined oceans of the male wards.

She has come possessed 10
Who admits the delusive light through the bouncing wall,
Possessed by the skies

She sleeps in the narrow trough yet she walks the dust
Yet raves at her will
On the madhouse boards worn thin by my walking tears. 15

And taken by light in her arms at long and dear last
I may without fail
Suffer the first vision that set fire to the stars.

Why east wind chills

Why east wind chills and south wind cools
Shall not be known till windwell dries
And west's no longer drowned
In winds that bring the fruit and rind
Of many a hundred falls; 5
Why silk is soft and the stone wounds
The child shall question all his days,
Why night-time rain and the breast's blood
Both quench his thirst he'll have a black reply.

When cometh Jack Frost? the children ask. 10
Shall they clasp a comet in their fists?
Not till, from high and low, their dust
Sprinkles in children's eyes a long-last sleep
And dusk is crowded with the children's ghosts,
Shall a white answer echo from the rooftops. 15

All things are known: the stars' advice
Calls some content to travel with the winds,
Though what the stars ask as they round
Time upon time the towers of the skies
Is heard but little till the stars go out. 20
I hear content, and 'Be Content'
Ring like a handbell through the corridors,
And 'Know no answer,' and I know
No answer to the children's cry
Of echo's answer and the man of frost 25
And ghostly comets over the raised fists.

I see the boys of summer

I

I see the boys of summer in their ruin
Lay the gold tithings barren,
Setting no store by harvest, freeze the soils;
Theire in their heat the winter floods
Of frozen loves they fetch their girls, 5
And drown the cargoed apples in their tides.

These boys of light are curdlers in their folly,
Sour the boiling honey;
The jacks of frost they finger in the hives;
There in the sun the frigid threads 10
Of doubt and dark they feed their nerves;
The signal moon is zero in their voids.

I see the summer children in their mothers
Split up the brawned womb's weathers,
Divide the night and day with fairy thumbs; 15
There in the deep with quartered shades
Of sun and moon they paint their dams
As sunlight paints the shelling of their heads.

I see that from these boys shall men of nothing 20
Stature by seedy shifting,
Or lame the air with leaping from its hearts;
There from their hearts the dogdayed pulse
Of love and light bursts in their throats.
O see the pulse of summer in the ice. 25

II

But seasons must be challenged or they totter
Into a chiming quarter
Where, punctual as death, we ring the stars;
There, in his night, the black-tongued bells
The sleepy man of winter pulls, 30
Nor blows back moon-and-midnight as she blows.

We are the dark deniers, let us summon
Death from a summer woman,
A muscling life from lovers in their cramp,
From the fair dead who flush the sea 35
The bright-eyed worm on Davy's lamp,
And from the planted womb the man of straw.

We summer boys in this four-winded spinning,
Green of the seaweed's iron,
Hold up the noisy sea and drop her birds, 40
Pick the world's ball of wave and froth
To choke the deserts with her tides,
And comb the county gardens for a wreath.

In spring we cross our foreheads with the holly,
Heigh ho the blood and berry, 45
And nail the merry squires to the trees;
Here love's damp muscle dries and dies,
Here break a kiss in no love's quarry.
O see the poles of promise in the boys.

III

I see the boys of summer in their ruin. 50
Man in his maggot's barren.
And boys are full and foreign in the pouch.
I am the man your father was.
We are the sons of flint and pitch.
O see the poles are kissing as they cross. 55

A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire, of a Child in London

Never until the mankind making
Bird beast and flower
Fathering and all humbling darkness
Tells with silence the last light breaking
And the still hour 5
Is come of the sea tumbling in harness

And I must enter again the round
Zion of the water bead
And the synagogue of the ear of corn
Shall I let pray the shadow of a sound 10
Or sow my salt seed
In the least valley of sackcloth to mourn

The majesty and burning of the child's death.
I shall not murder
The mankind of her going with a grave truth 15
Nor blaspheme down the stations of the breath
With any further
Elegy of innocence and youth.

Deep with the first dead lies London's daughter,
Robed in the long friends, 20
The grains beyond age, the dark veins of her mother,
Secret by the unmourning water
Of the riding Thames.
After the first death, there is no other.

The hunchback in the park

The hunchback in the park
A solitary mister
Propped between trees and water
From the opening of the garden lock
That lets the trees and water enter 5
Until the Sunday sombre bell at dark

Eating bread from a newspaper
Drinking water from the chained cup
That the children filled with gravel
In the fountain basin where I sailed my ship 10
Slept at night in a dog kennel
But nobody chained him up.

Like the park birds he came early
Like the water he sat down
And Mister they called Hey mister 15
The truant boys from the town
Running when he had heard them clearly
On out of sound

Past lake and rockery
Laughing when he shook his paper 20
Hunchbacked in mockery
Through the loud zoo of the willow groves
Dodging the park keeper
With his stick that picked up leaves.

And the old dog sleeper 25
Alone between nurses and swans
While the boys among willows
Made the tigers jump out of their eyes
To roar on the rockery stones
And the groves were blue with sailors 30

Made all day until bell time
A woman figure without fault
Straight as a young elm
Straight and tall from his crooked bones
That she might stand in the night 35
After the locks and chains

All night in the unmade park
After the railings and shrubberies
The birds the grass the trees the lake

And the wild boys innocent as strawberries
Had followed the hunchback
To his kennel in the dark.

40

Over Sir John's Hill

Over Sir John's hill,
The hawk on fire hangs still;
In a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk, he pulls to his claws
And gallows, up the rays of his eyes the small birds of the bay
And the shrill child's play 5
Wars
Of the sparrows and such who swansing, dusk, in wrangling hedges.
And blithely they squawk
To fiery tyburn over the wrestle of elms until
The flash the noosed hawk 10
Crashes, and slowly the fishing holy stalking heron
In the river Towy below bows his tilted headstone.

Flash, and the plumes crack,
And a black cap of jack-
Daws Sir John's just hill dons, and again the gulled birds hare 15
To the hawk on fire, the halter height, over Towy's fins,
In a whack of wind.
There
Where the elegiac fisherbird stabs and paddles
In the pebbly dab-filled 20
Shallow and sedge, and 'dilly dilly,' calls the loft hawk,
'Come and be killed,'
I open the leaves of the water at a passage
Of psalms and shadows among the pincerred sandcrabs prancing

And read, in a shell 25
Death clear as a bouy's bell:
All praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be sung,
When his viperish fuse hangs looped with flames under the brand
Wing, and blest shall
Young 30
Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck, 'dilly dilly,
Come let us die.'
We grieve as the blithe birds, never again, leave shingle and elm,
The heron and I,
I young Aesop fabling to the near night by the dingle 35
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distant

Crystal harbour vale
Where the sea cobbles sail,
And wharves of water where the walls dance and the white cranes stilt.
It is the heron and I, under judging Sir John's elmed 40
Hill, tell-tale the knelled
Guilt

Of the led-astray birds whom God, for their breast of whistles,
 Have Mercy on, 45
 God in his whirlwind silence save, who marks the sparrows hail,
 For their souls' song.
 Now the heron grieves in the weeded verge. Through windows
 Of dusk and water I see the tilting whispering

Heron, mirrored, go, 50
 As the snapt feathers snow,
 Fishing in the tear of the Towy. Only a hoot owl
 Hollows, a grassblade blown in cupped hands, in the looted elms
 And no green cocks or hens
 Shout 55
 Now on Sir John's hill. The heron, ankling the scaly
 Lowlands of the waves,
 Makes all the music; and I who hear the tune of the slow,
 Wear-willow river, grave,
 Before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken 60
 Stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds sailing.

Here in this spring

Here in this spring, stars float along the void;
Here in this ornamental winter
Down pelts the naked weather;
This summer buries a spring bird.

Symbols are selected from the years' 5
Slow rounding of four seasons' coasts,
In autumn teach three seasons' fires
And four birds' notes.

I should tell summer from the trees, the worms 10
Tell, if at all, the winter's storms
Or the funeral of the sun;
I should learn spring by the cuckooing,
And the slug should teach me destruction.

A worm tells summer better than the clock, 15
The slug's a living calendar of days;
What shall it tell me if a timeless insect
Says the world wears away?

Before I knocked

Before I knocked and flesh let enter,
With liquid hands tapped on the womb,
I who was as shapeless as the water
That shaped the Jordan near my home
Was brother to Mnetha's daughter 5
And sister to the fathering worm.

I who was deaf to spring and summer,
Who knew not sun nor moon by name,
Felt thud beneath my flesh's armour,
As yet was in a molten form 10
The leaden stars, the rainy hammer
Swung by my father from his dome.

I knew the message of the winter,
The darted hail, the childish snow,
And the wind was my sister suitor; 15
Wind in me leaped, the hellborn dew;
My veins flowed with the Eastern weather;
Ungotten I knew night and day.

As yet ungotten, I did suffer;
The rack of dreams my lily bones 20
Did twist into a living cipher,
And flesh was snipped to cross the lines
Of gallow crosses on the liver
And brambles in the wringing brains.

My throat knew thirst before the structure 25
Of skin and vein around the well
Where words and water make a mixture
Unfailing till the blood runs foul;
My heart knew love, my belly hunger;
I smelt the maggot in my stool.

And time cast forth my mortal creature 35
To drift or drown upon the seas
Acquainted with the salt adventure
Of tides that never touch the shores.
I who was rich was made the richer
By sipping at the vine of days. 40

I, born of flesh and ghost, was neither 41
A ghost nor man, but mortal ghost.
And I was struck down by death's feather.

I was a mortal to the last
Long breath that carried to my father 45
The message of his dying christ.

You who bow down at cross and altar,
Remember me and pity Him
Who took my flesh and bone for armour
And doublecrossed my mother's womb. 50

Especially when the October wind

Especially when the October wind	5
With frosty fingers punishes my hair, Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire And cast a shadow crab upon the land, By the sea's side, hearing the noise of birds, Hearing the raven cough in winter sticks, My busy heart who shudders as she talks Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words.	10
Shut, too, in a tower of words, I mark On the horizon walking like the trees The wordy shapes of women, and the rows Of the star-gestured children in the park. Some let me make you of the vowelled beeches, Some of the oaken voices, from the roots Of many a thorny shire tell you notes, Some let me make you of the water's speeches.	15 20
Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock Tells me the hour's word, the neural meaning Flies on the shafted disk, declaims the morning And tells the windy weather in the cock. Some let me make you of the meadow's signs; The signal grass that tells me all I know Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye. Some let me tell you of the raven's sins.	25
Especially when the October wind (Some let me make you of autumnal spells, The spider-tongued, and the loud hill of Wales) With fists of turnips punishes the land, Some let me make you of the heartless words. The heart is drained that, spelling in the scurry Of chemic blood, warned of the coming fury. By the sea's side hear the dark-vowelled birds.	30 35

Twenty-four years

Twenty-four years remind the tears of my eyes.
(Bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in labour.)
In the groin of the natural doorway I crouched like a tailor
Sewing a shroud for a journey
By the light of the meat-eating sun. 5
Dressed to die, the sensual strut begun,
With my red veins full of money,
In the final direction of the elementary town
I advance as long as forever is.

“Poem in October

It was my thirtieth year to heaven
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood
And the mussel pooled and the heron
 Priested shore
 The morning beckon 5
With water praying and call of seagull and rook
And the knock of sailing boats on the net webbed wall
 Myself to set foot
 That second
In the still sleeping town and set forth. 10

My birthday began with the water-
Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name
Above the farms and the white horses
 And I rose
 In rainy autumn 15
And walked abroad in a shower of all my days.
High tide and the heron dived when I took the road
 Over the border
 And the gates
Of the town closed as the town awoke. 20

A springful of larks in a rolling
Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling
Blackbirds and the sun of October
 Summery
 On the hill’s shoulder, 25
Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly
Come in the morning where I wandered and listened
 To the rain wringing
 Wind blow cold
In the wood faraway under me. 30

Pale rain over the dwindling harbour
And over the sea wet church the size of a snail
With its horns through mist and the castle
 Brown as owls
 But all the gardens 35
Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales
Beyond the border and under the lark full cloud.
 There could I marvel
 My birthday
Away but the weather turned around. 40

It turned away from the blithe country

And down the other air and the blue altered sky
 Streamed again a wonder of summer
 With apples
 Pears and red currants 45

And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's
 Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother
 Through the parables
 Of sun light
 And the legends of the green chapels 50

And the twice told fields of infancy
 That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in mine.
 These were the woods the river and sea
 Where a boy
 In the listening 55

Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy
 To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.
 And the mystery
 Sang alive
 Still in the water and singingbirds. 60

And there could I marvel my birthday
 Away but the weather turned around. And the true
 Joy of the long dead child sang burning
 In the sun.
 It was my thirtieth 65

Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon
 Though the town below lay leaved with October blood.
 O may my heart's truth
 Still be sung
 On this high hill in a year's turning. 70

And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
 Before the children green and golden
 Follow him out of grace. 45

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
 In the moon that is always rising,
 Nor that riding to sleep
 I should hear him fly with the high fields 50
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
 Time held me green and dying
 Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

APPENDIX B.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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- 2007 – Present** Ph.D., English Literature, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.
- 2004** M.A., English Literature, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.
- 2001** B.A., Department of Foreign Language Education, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Instructor of English Language, Bilkent University School of English Language, Ankara, Turkey, September 2001 - January 2005.

Lecturer of English Literature, Department of Western Languages and Literatures, Kocaeli University, Kocaeli, Turkey, June 2005- present.

PUBLICATIONS

Altındağ, Zümrüt. “William Blake as a “naive” and “sentimental poet.” *Balkan Educational Studies* 2017. Edirne: Trakya University. Publication No:188, ISBN: 978-975-374-213-9. 2017. 405 - 414.

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APPENDIX C.

TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

EKOMERKEZLİ ÇOKSESLİLİK: DYLAN THOMAS'IN ŞİİRLERİNDE İKİLİ DÜŞÜNCE SİSTEMİNİN ÇÖKÜŞÜ

Antik Yunan'dan günümüze kadar insan-doğa ilişkisi ve onun edebiyata olan yansımaları felsefe ve edebiyat eleştirisi alanlarında önemli bir tartışma konusu olarak yerini korumuştur. Ancak günümüzde ekoeleştiri karşı karşıya kaldığımız küresel çevre krizinin asıl nedeni olarak ikili karşıtlıklar üzerine kurulu Batı metafiziğini görmektedir. Bu nedenle, ikili düşünce sistemini tamamen ortadan kaldırmayı hedeflemekte ve bu yapının kurguladığı gerçeklik anlayışını reddeden bir bakış açısı geliştirmektedir. Cheryll Glotfelty bu alandaki ilk eserlerden biri olan, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology (Ekoeleştiri Okumaları: Edebi Ekoloji'nin Dönüm Noktaları)*, için yazmış olduğu "Giriş" bölümünde ekoeleştiriye edebiyatın çevre ile olan etkileşiminin incelenmesi şeklinde tanımlamakta ve doğa-merkezli anlayış vurgusu yapmaktadır. Edebiyat ve ekoloji bilimini bir araya getirme fikrini ise ilk olarak William Rueckert, 1978 yılında yayınlanmış olan "Literature and Ecology" ("Edebiyat ve Ekoloji") başlıklı makalesinde ele almış ve ekoeleştiri terimini ortaya atmıştır. Rueckert'a göre çevre sorunları insanoğlunun karşılaştığı en ciddi ve acil çözüm bekleyen problemdir. Bu nedenle Rueckert çözümüm bir parçası olarak edebiyat eserlerinin incelenmesinde ekoloji biliminin ortaya koyduğu bütünselliğin önemli katkı sunabileceğini dile getirmiştir. Bu amaçla, bilim ve şiir arasındaki çok eskilere dayanan husumeti ortadan kaldırarak "ekolojik yazın bilimi"ni ("an ecological poetics") geliştirerek ekolojik kavramların edebiyat eserlerini okumakta, öğretmekte ve yorumlamakta uygulanabileceği fikrini geliştirmiştir (Rueckert 107). Böylelikle ekoeleştiri, edebiyat ve ekoloji arasında bir diyalog başlatarak, insan ve insan olmayan varlıklar arasındaki asli bağı da yeniden canlandırmayı hedeflemektedir. Günümüzde yeryüzündeki bütün varlıkların birbirleriyle olan

ekolojik bağından esinlenen ekoeleştirmenler, bu bütünsellik anlayışını edebiyat alanına uyarlayarak, okurlarda çevre sorunları hakkında ekolojik bilinç uyandırmayı hedeflemektedir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı günümüzde ikili düşünce sistemine karşı geliştirilmiş olan ekoeleştirel ve politik karşı çıkışlar ışığında Dylan Thomas'ın *Collected Poems 1934-1953* (*Toplu Şiirler 1934-1953*) ekoeleştirel tartışmasını sunmaktır. Doğa şiirine olan ilginin azaldığı 20. yüzyılın ilk yarısında yaşamış ve ölmüş olan Thomas, ikili düşünce sistemine başkaldırarak ekomerkezci söylemi tekrar canlandırmayı hedefleyen şiirler yazmaya devam etmiştir. Thomas'ın eserlerinin ekoeleştirel incelemesi göstermektedir ki ekoeleştirmenin post-pastoral edebiyat ve ekoşiir gibi son dönem yönelimlerinin ortaya çıkışından çok önce, şair insan merkezli anlayışı yıkan ve doğayı konuşan bir özne olarak benimseyen eserler ortaya koymuştur. Bu nedenle, bu tez çalışması bir çok temel ekoeleştirel sorunu dile getirdiği için Dylan Thomas'ı her iki yönelimin öncüsü olarak görmektedir. Dylan Thomas'ın *Collected Poems 1934-1953* başlıklı eserini oluşturan, *18 Poems* (1934) (*18 Şiir*), *Twenty-Five Poems* (1936) (*Yirmi Beş Şiir*), *The Map of Love* (1939) (*Aşkın Haritası*), *Deaths and Entrances* (1946) (*Ölümler ve Girişler*), ve *In Country Sleep and Other Poems* (1952) (*Kır Uykusunda ve Diğer Şiirler*), şiir koleksiyonlarından seçilmiş olan şiirlerin ekoeleştirel okuması, şairin Nietzsche ve Darwin sonrası modernist dönemde yaşamış olduğu varlık ve temsil krizini aşmak için doğaya sığınışını göstermektedir. Ancak doğa artık aşkın boyutunu yitirdiği için, Thomas'ın hayatı anlamalandırma çabası doğanın içsel değerinin takdir edilmesi ve insan ile doğa arasındaki bağın yeniden kurulmasıyla sonuçlanmıştır. Bu nedenle, bu tez çalışması, yavaş yavaş benimsenen ekomerkezci bakış açısının nasıl Dylan Thomas'ın hayatının yanı sıra eserlerinin de düzenleyici ilkesi olarak şairin varoluş krizine çare olduğunu incelemektedir. Thomas şiirlerinde çok sesli bir hayat anlayışını temsil ederek ötekileştirilmiş olan insan ve insan olmayan canlıların sömürsünü dile getirmekte ve bu sayede ikili düşünce sisteminin yerine ekomerkezci söylemin benimsenmesinde öncülük etmektedir. Bu tez çalışması, Dylan Thomas'ın eserlerindeki ikili düşünce yapısına karşı geliştirilen başkaldırının bir parçası olarak şairin insan/doğa, kültür/doğa karşıtlıklarına ek olarak zaman ile uzam arasındaki hiyerarşiyi

ideolojik birer kurgu olarak sorgulayışını tartışmaktadır. Ek olarak, üçüncü dalga ekoeleştirmenin tanımladığı çok kültürlü kuramsal çerçeve ışığında, bu çalışma ayrıca Thomas'ın Galli geçmişinin yaratmış olduğu çok sesli ekomerkezci dünya algısına olan katkısını irdeler. Bu nedenle, bu tez çalışması, şiirlerinde özne olarak çoğunlukla druid, ozan ve acemi şair (rhymers) figürlerini seçen Thomas'ı, kendi ülkesinin sınırlarını aşarak Jonathan Bate'in ortaya koyduğu gibi “yeryüzünün şarkısını” (“the song of the earth”) söyleyen ve evrensel çok sesli ekolojik bütünselliği yansıtan ekoşair olarak tanımlamaktadır.

Edebiyat eserlerinin evrensel ekolojik bilincin oluşmasında sunduğu önemli katkıya rağmen, ekoeleştirmenin ortaya çıkışı oldukça yenidir. Jonathan Bate *The Song of the Earth (Yeryüzünün Şarkısı)* eserinde 1960'larda düzene karşı radikal başkaldırıyı temsil eden feminizm ve sömürgesonrası gibi akımlarla aynı zamanda ortaya çıkmasına rağmen ekoeleştirmeyi yeterince etkili olamadığı için eleştirmektedir. Özellikle 1980'lerde feminizm ve postkolonyal çalışmalar alanlarında birçok eser ortaya konulurken, ekoeleştiri alanında yalnızca tek bir kitap yazılmıştır. Bate gibi, Glotfelty de ekoeleştirmenin doğuşunu oldukça yakın bir tarihe dayandırmakta ve 1980'lerin ortasında daha önceden farklı alanlarda bireysel çalışmalar yürütmekte olan kişilerin bir araya gelmesiyle önemli bir canlanmanın meydana geldiğini vurgulamaktadır. Glotfelty'ye göre özellikle 1992'de Association for the study of Literature and Environment (ASLE, Edebiyat ve Çevre Çalışmaları Derneği)'nin kuruluşu ve 1993'te de Patrick Murphy tarafından *ISLE, Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (Edebiyat ve Çevre Üzerine Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar)* dergisinin yayına başlaması ekoeleştirmenin gelişmesine büyük ivme kazandırmıştır.

Kısa geçmişine rağmen, ekoeleştiri bugün doğa ve sosyal bilimler alanlarından bir çok bilim insanının ve akademisyenin katkılarıyla edebiyat eleştirisi ve kuramı alanında önemli bir yere sahip olmaya başlamıştır. *The Future of Environmental Criticism (Çevreci Eleştirinin Geleceği)* başlıklı eserinde Lawrence Buell ekoeleştirmenin geçirmiş olduğu tarihsel gelişimi birinci ve ikinci dalga ekoeleştiri olarak incelemektedir (17). Birinci dalga ekoeleştiri insan/doğa ikiliğini ve insan merkezli yaklaşımları ortadan kaldırmayı hedeflerken, hiyerarşik yapıdan uzaklaşmayı alternatif bir ikilik yaratarak

doğayı insandan üstün tutmuştur. Bu amaçla ortaya çıkan ilk ekoeleştirel çalışmalar ikili düşünce yapısından kurtulamamış, insan ve doğayı iki ayrı varlık alanı olarak görmüştür. Çoğunlukla beyaz ırktan yazarların egemen olduğu birinci dalga ekoeleştirel çalışmalar kurgudışı nesirle sınırlandırılmıştır.

Ancak, kültür/doğa ikiliğinin ideolojik bir kurgu olduğuna dair geliştirilen ekoeleştirel yaklaşımlar sonucunda insanın yarattığı şeyleri de kapsayan ve daha bütünsel bir bakış açısını benimseyen ikinci dalga ekoeleştiri ortaya çıkmıştır. Birinci dalga ekoeleştiri insan/doğa ikiliğini ve insan merkezli yaklaşımları ortadan kaldırmayı hedeflerken hiyerarşik yapıdan uzaklaşamayarak doğayı insandan üstün tutmuştur. Öte yandan, ikinci dalga ekoeleştiri bütün varlıkların ekolojik birlikteliklerini vurgulayarak, insan ve insan olmayan bütün varlıkların sömürüsüne kaynak oluşturan tüm hiyerarşik kodları reddetmektedir. Bu gelişmelere ek olarak, 2009 yazında Joni Adamson'ın ve Scott Slovic'in girişimleriyle ortaya çıkan *MELUS: Multiethnic Literature of the United States (Birleşik Devletler'in Çok Etnikli Edebiyatı)* ekoeleştirel tartışmalara çok kültürlü bir boyut kazandırmış ve üçüncü dalga ekoeleştirisinin gelişmesine destek olmuştur. Bu disiplinlerarası ve çok kültürlü ortam sayesinde ekoeleştirel çalışmalar farklı kültürel, etnik ve ulusal geçmişleri yansıtan eserlere odaklanmakta, bu çok sesliliğin evrensel ekolojik bilincin oluşmasında sunabileceği katkının önemine dikkat çekmektedir.

Ekoeleştirisinin giderek genişleyen kapsam ve bakış açısı aynı zamanda çevresel metin tanımının da yeniden ele alınmasını gerekli kılmıştır. Birinci dalga ekoeleştirisinin etikisiyle yalnızca kurgudışı nesir ile sınırlanmış olan çevresel metin algısı terk edilerek farklı edebi türleri kucaklayacak ve ekoeleştirel çok sesliliği yansıtacak şekilde tekrar tanımlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda insan ve doğa arasındaki bağa ve bütünselliğe vurgu yapan metinler ekoeleştirmenler tarafından incelemeye değer çevresel metinler olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

Kültür ve doğa kavramlarının yeniden tanımlanması, ekoeleştirmenleri pastoral yazını da çevresel metin kapsamında değerlendirmeye teşvik etmiştir. Theokritos ve Vergilius tarafından ortaya konan klasik örneklerden yola çıkarak günümüze kadar uzanan köklü geçmişine bakıldığında pastoral eserler ortaya koyduğu idealize edilmiş doğa ve kırsal yaşam temsilleriyle insan/doğa,

kültür/doğa şehir/taşra gibi karşıtlıklarla ikili düşünce sistemini ideolojik olarak desteklemekle suçlandığından ekoeleştirmenler tarafından çok ciddi şekilde eleştirilmiştir. Pastoral yazın, doğanın ve kırsal bölgelerde yaşamını sürdüren insanların maruz kaldıkları sömürünün ideolojik olarak yok sayılmasının temel nedenlerinden biri olarak görülmüştür. Buna karşın, insan/doğa ve kültür/doğa arasındaki ikiliklerin kurgusallığının tartışmaya açılmasıyla ekoeleştirmenler pastoral yazına olan geleneksel olumsuz yaklaşımları terk ederek pastoralın ekomerkezci söyleme ve ekolojik bilincin gelişmesine sunabileceği katkıya odaklanmaktalar. Bu girişimin önemli isimlerinden biri olan Terry Gifford, *Pastoral (Pastoral)* başlıklı kitabında, pastoral ve anti-pastoral ikiliğini aşmak üzere post-pastoral olarak adlandırdığı üçüncü bir tür ortaya atmıştır (146). Post-pastoral yazının önemli özelliklerinden birisi ikili karşıtlığı ve insan merkezci yapıyı eleştirmesidir. Pastoral yazına yöneltilmiş olan olumsuz eleştirilerden uzak durmaya çalışan post-pastoral, ekoeleştirel çok sesliliği yansıtan kapsayıcı bir çerçeve oluşturarak, derin ekoloji, sosyal ekoloji, çevresel adalet hareketi ve ekofeminizm gibi farklı ekopolitik hareketlerin vurguladığı temel bir çok sorunu dile getirmektedir. Pastoral ve anti-pastoral özellikler barındıran edebi türlerin ötesine geçen post-pastoral, insan/doğa, kültür/doğa ve şehir/taşra gibi ikiliklerin birer ideolojik kurgu oluklarının altını çizerek yeryüzünde yaşayan bütün varlıkların birbirleriyle olan ekolojik bağılıklarını incelemektedir. Bu nedenle, edebi türler arasında ayırım gözetmeksizin post-pastoralın bütünleştirici bakış açısı nesir ve nazım eserlerde var olabilmektedir.

Post-pastoralın dışında çevresel metin tartışmasının bir parçası olarak ekoeleştirmenler başka bir ihmal edilmiş alan olan şiire yönelmişlerdir. Scott Bryson'ın, *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction (Ekoşiir: Eleştirel bir Giriş)* başlıklı eserinin giriş bölümünde belirttiği gibi, 19. yüzyılın sonlarında ve 20. yüzyılın başında yapılmış olan bilimsel çalışmaların ortaya koyduğu yeni veriler insanların doğa şiirinden uzaklaşmasına neden olmuştur. Darwin sonrası evrende doğanın insana karşı olan cömertliği ve merhameti ciddi bir şekilde sorgulandığından, çok az sayıda doğa şiiri yazılmış ve basılabilmektedir. Ancak bugün, bilim ve şiir arasındaki husumetin ortadan kalkmasına neden olan,

ekoeleştirmenler tarafından ekoşiir olarak adlandırılan ve ekolojik kaygıları dillendiren yeni bir tür ortaya çıkmıştır. *The Song of the Earth*'de Jonathan Bate, yeryüzünde yaşamakla şiir arasındaki organik bağa dikkat çekmektedir. Bate'e göre özellikle de teknolojinin hüküm sürdüğü bu yüzyılda şiir bize yeryüzüyle olan bağımızı hatırlatmak ve bu bağı tekrar canlandırmak gibi hayati bir öneme sahiptir. Bu bağlamda Bate, Romantik şiirlerdeki insan-doğa bütünselliğine geri dönmenin anlamlı olacağını vurgulamaktadır.

Romantik eserlere geri dönüşün yanı sıra ekoeleştirel çalışmalar çağdaş şairlerin eserlerindeki çevresel kaygıları da ele almaktadır. 1950'lerden bu yana şiirdeki doğa temsilleri giderek yoğunluk kazanmış ve Bryson'ın "*Ecopoetry*" ("*Ekoşiir*") olarak adlandırdığı akım ortaya çıkmıştır (3). Bryson'a göre bu yeni nesil şairleri Romantik seleflerinden ayıran özelliklerin başında insan ve insan olmayan varlıkların ekolojik birlikteliğini vurgulamaları gelmektedir. Edebiyat eleştirisi alanında daha çok yeni bir kavram olduğu için ekoşiiri tam anlamıyla tanımlamanın güç olduğunu belirten Bryson, onu doğa şiirinin alt katmanlarından biri olarak görmektedir. Ekoşiirin başlıca temel özellikleri arasında günümüz ekolojik sorunlarını ele almak, insan ve doğa arasındaki karşılıklı etkileşim ve birlikteliği vurgulamak, insan ve insan olmayan bütün varlıkları dünya üzerindeki yaşamın ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak kabul etmek ve saygı duymak, aşırı akılcılığa kuşku ile yaklaşarak giderek teknolojinin esiri haline gelen modern dünyayı ekolojik felakete karşı uyarmak sayılabilir. Bütün bunlara ek olarak, gelişmişlik idealini eleştiren ekoşiir, insan merkezilik ve bilim arsındaki ittifakı da sorgulamaktadır.

1914-1953 yılları arasında yaşamış olan Dylan Thomas, çağdaşları gibi Batı dünyasında bilimsel ve kültürel alanlarda yaşanmakta olan köklü değişikliklerin bilincindedir. İki dünya savaşının ardından tüm dünyanın ve ülkesi, Galler'in, içinde bulunduğu travmaya şahit olmuştur. Her ne kadar kendi döneminde Thomas modernist bir şair olarak kabul edilmemişse de, ortaya koyduğu eserler modernist edebiyatın karşı karşıya kaldığı temsil krizinin birer göstergesidir. Batı dünyasının temel değerlerinin çöküşü Thomas'ı derin hayal kırıklığına itmiş ve bu varoluşsal çatışma onu eserlerinde içerik ve form açısından kendine özgü denemeler yapmaya teşvik etmiştir. Yaşamı boyunca çağdaşları

arasında hak ettiği değeri görememesine rağmen, eserlerinin ekoeleştirel okuması göstermektedir ki temsil ve varoluş krizini aşmak üzere Thomas'ın geliştirdiği ekomerkezci yaşam bilinci bugün onu post-pastoral ve ekoşairin öncüleri arasına konumlandırmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu tez çalışması ekomerkezci söylemin nasıl zamanla Thomas'ın hayatını ve eserlerini anlamlandıran temel ilke olarak benimsendiğini incelemekte ve onun ikili düşünce sistemini altüst ederek doğanın ve bütün ezilenlerin çok sesli şarkısını söyleyen bir post-pastoral ve ekoşair olarak ortaya çıkışını tartışmaktadır

Dylan Thomas'ın modernist bir şair olarak kabul edilmeyişinin nedenlerinin başında ana akım şiir yönelimlerini benimsememiş olması gelmektedir. Bu bağlamda özellikle de Romantik gelenekten esinlenerek insan ve doğa arasındaki bütünselliği vurgulaması Thomas'ın modernizmine şüphe ile bakılmasına neden olmuştur. Dylan Thomas, Romantik şairler gibi, ikili düşünce sistemini sorgulamış ve Aydınlanma Çağı'nın ortaya koyduğu insanın hizmetine sunulan ve çalışma prensipleri efendisinin akli tarafından keşfedilen doğa algısına karşı çıkmıştır. Ne var ki onun Romantik geleneği tamamen benimsemesi yaşamış olduğu Nietzsche ve Darwin sonrası dönemde mümkün olmadığından, şair insan ve doğa arasındaki bağı Gal mistisizmi ışığında yeniden kavramsallaştırarak özünde ekomerkezci bilinci benimseyen kendi din inancını oluşturmuştur. Romantiklerin ortaya koyduğu doğa anlayışını reddeden Thomas, insanın doğa ve aşkın olan Tanrı ile bütünleşmesinin mümkün olmadığı farkındadır ve şiirlerinde derin ekoloji akımının kurucusu olan Arne Naess'in, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of Ecosophy (Ekoloji, Toplum ve Yaşam Biçimi: Ekosofi'nin Temel İlkeleri)*, başlıklı eserinde dile getirdiği gibi doğanın içsel değerini ("intrinsic value") vurgulamaktadır (29).

Dylan Thomas'ın modernist bir şair olarak kabul edilmesindeki başka bir engel ise onun Galli geçmişidir. Merkezci bir evren algısının yok oluşu diğer modernist şairleri olduğu gibi Thomas'ı da yeni arayışlara yöneltmiştir. Eserlerini ve varlığını tekrar anlamlı kılmak amacıyla Thomas Gal mistisizminden esinlenerek kendine özgü mistik ve bütünsel ekomerkezci hayat ve evren algısı geliştirmiştir. Bu sebeple, Romantiklerin ölüm anlayışından farklı olarak, Thomas'ın şiirlerinde doğanın döngüsel yenilenme sürecinde ölüm insanın

ekolojik bütünselliğın bir parçası olarak doğaya dönüşü ile sınırlandırılmıştır. İnsanın ve doğanın ekomerkezci bilinç ışığında yeniden tanımlanması Thomas'ı diğer modernist şairler gibi bilinçli bir şekilde edebi geleneklere ve ilkelere karşı çıkmaya ve çeşitli deneysel yöntemler geliştirmeye yöneltmiştir. Bu bağlamda, özellikle Gal halk şiirindeki öğeler ve döngüsel zaman kavramı önemli katkılar sağlamıştır. Böylece yerelden yola çıkarak evrensel ekolojik bilincin oluşmasına katkı sağladığı için Thomas bugün aynı zamanda üçüncü dalga ekoeleştirisinin de önemli temsilcileri arasındaki yerini almaktadır.

Modernist temsil krizini aşmak ve geliştirmiş olduğu ekomerkezci dünya algısını yansıtabilmek için Thomas ayrıca şiir formunu ve temsil tekniklerini deneyselleştirmiştir. Çağdaşlarından farklı olarak Dylan Thomas serbest nazım kullanmayarak geleneksel Gal mistik düşünce ve halk şiirinin etkisiyle formu şiirde önemli bir yapı taşı olarak görmüştür. Bu nedenle şiir yazmak her ne kadar özünde içten gelen dürtülerin dışı vurumu olsa da Thomas için her zaman bir zanaat olma özelliğini korumuştur. Ancak diğer modernist şairler gibi Thomas da kedisini dil tarafından kuşatılmış hissetmektedir. Onun şiirlerinde yaratmış olduğu ekomerkezci evren görüşü şairin hayatı anlamlı kılma gayretinin özgün bir ürünüdür. Fakat dil ekomerkezci bilinç ile değişen gerçeklik algısını yansıtan güvenilir bir araç olmaktan çıktığı için Thomas eserlerinde kendine has semboller, çeşitli dil ve kelime oyunları üretmekte ve kusursuz ses uyumunu yakalayabilmek için bitmek tükenmek bilmeyen arayışlara yönelmektedir. Thomas'ın şiirlerinin okuyucu açısından çok zor anlaşılır olması da bu temsil krizinin ve ses-merkezciliğın çöküşünün bir yansımasıdır.

Yaşadığı dönemde her ne kadar modernist bir şair olarak kabul görmemiş olsa da, eserlerinin ekoeleştirel okuması Thomas'ın döneminin en özgün şairleri arasındaki yerini almasını sağlamaktadır. Post-pastoral ve ekoşiirsel yaklaşımlar onu anlaşılması zor bir şair olmaktan kurtarmakta ve Bate'ın dediği gibi, "yeryüzünün şarkısı"nı söyleyen ender şairlerden birisi olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Thomas'ın insan ve doğa arasındaki kadim bağı yeniden kurarak, ekomerkezli bilinci hayatını ve şiirini anlamlı kılan düzenleyici ilke olarak benimsemesi, onu post-pastoral edebiyat ve ekoşiirin başlıca öncülerinden birisi yapmaktadır. Gerçeklerden kaçan doğa şiirleri yazmak yerine Thomas, ikili

düşünce sisteminin neden olduğu günümüzün temel ekolojik sorunlarını ele alan ve doğanın edilgen bir nesne haline dönüştürülmesine karşı çıkan eserler yaratmıştır. Üçüncü dalga ekoeleştirinin ilkeleri ışığında, eserlerindeki Gal kültürünü yansıtan nitelikler, yerel olmanın ötesine geçerek, insan ve doğa arasındaki ekolojik bağın tekrar oluşmasına katkıda bulunmakta ve insana diğer canlılar gibi bu gezegenin bir parçası olduğunu hatırlatan evrensel ekolojik ilkeleri vurgulamaktadır.

Yeryüzünde yaşayan insan ve insan olmayan bütün varlıkların bugün karşı karşıya kaldıkları ekolojik krizin asıl nedeni olarak, bütünsel ecomerkezci söylemi baskılayan ve marjinalleştiren ikili düşünce sistemi ile insan merkezci söylemin kurduğu ittifak kabul edilmektedir. Batı metafiziğinin temellerini oluşturan ikili düşünce sistemi, dinsel ikilik, ve gelişmişlik ideali kısaca gözden geçirildiğinde görülmektedir ki ortaya çıkan mekanizma doğanın insan tarafından sömürsünü meşrulaştırmıştır. İkilik felsefesinin kurucularından olan Eflatun, yaratmış olduğu öğretisinin bir parçası olarak, İdealar evreni ile insanın bu dünyadaki yaşamını temsil eden maddi evren arasında bir hiyerarşi kurgulamış ve İdealar evrenini maddi evrenden üstün tutmuştur. Batı epistemolojisinin temelini oluşturan bu öğreti, ikilikler üzerine kurulu olan evrenin merkezini daima maddi dünyanın ötesinde olan İdealar evreninde konumlandırmıştır. Bu nedenle bu aşkın evrendeki idealar ayrıcalıklı konumları gereği her zaman maddi evrendeki yansımalarından üstün kabul edilmiş ve İdealar dünyasının maddi dünyayı anlamlandıran özü, merkezi oluşturduğu düşüncesi egemen olmuştur. Batı metafiziğinin temellerini oluşturan ve akli önceleyen bu ikilik felsefesine göre insan da maddi dünyayı temsil eden doğadan üstün tutulmuş ve böylece kendisini onun efendisi olarak ilan etmiştir. İnsan merkezci bu zihniyet doğanın sömürsünü makul göstermiş ve onu pasif bir nesne olarak kodlamıştır.

Ekomerkezci söylemin insan merkezci söylem tarafından baskılanmasında etkili olan diğer bir gelişme de çok tanrılı pagan inancının yerine Hristiyanlık'ın kabulüdür. *Eski Ahid*'teki yaradılış hikayesinden yola çıkan Hristiyanlık, Tanrı'nın kendi suretinde yarattığı insanoğlunu diğer varlıklardan üstün tutarak insan merkezci söylemi dini açıdan temellendirmiştir. Böylece

Hristiyan dini, *İncil* yorumlarına dayanarak doğayı Tanrı tarafından yaratılanlar arasındaki hiyerarşide en tepede bulunan insanoğlunun hizmetine sunmuştur.

Eflatun'nun ikilik felsefesi, Rönesans dönemiyle birlikte tam anlamıyla ikili düşünce sistemine dönüşmüş, hümanizm ve akılcılığın etkisiyle, insanı doğadan koparıp, insan merkezci söylemi hakim kılmıştır. Rene Descartes'ın aklın bedenden üstün olduğunu ileri süren rasyonalist felsefesinin etkisiyle insanın doğa sömürüsü, dini temellerden arınarak akılcı bir zemine oturmuştur. Sonuç olarak, Descartes'ın rasyonalist felsefesi, insan/doğa ikiliğini akıl/beden karşıtlığının bir parçası olarak konumlandırmıştır. Akıldan yoksun olan doğa, tıpkı insan bedeni gibi insan aklının hizmetine sunulmuştur.

İkili düşünce sisteminin ve insan merkezci söylemin kurguladığı doğayı nesnelleştirme uğraşı Aydınlanma Çağı'yla birlikte doruk noktasına çıkmıştır. Çalışma prensipleri insan aklı tarafından deşifre edilebilen muhteşem bir mekanizma olarak kurgulanan doğa yine efendisinin hizmetine sunulmuştur. Bu dönemde bir otoriteye dayandırılan geleneksel doğa çalışmaları terk edilerek daha deney odaklı usullere geçiş yapılmıştır. İşte bundan dolayıdır ki, John Locke ve David Hume gibi Aydınlanma Çağı filozofları ve Sir Isaac Newton gibi bilim adamları, insan oğlunun kendini ve çevresini geliştirerek daha aydınlık bir dünya yaratabileceğine inanmışlardır. Gittikçe ilerlemekte olan bilime ek olarak insan aklına ve yeteneklerine olan inancın artması, gelişmişlik idealinin ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Sonuç olarak tarım odaklı toplum yerini gittikçe sanayileşen ve kentlileşen bir Batı yaşam tarzına bırakmıştır. 19. yüzyılda ise ortaya çıkan bilimsel ve teknolojik gelişmeler ışığında hız kazanan sanayileşme, kentlileşme ve gelişmişlik süreci doğa sömürüsünü en uç seviyeye taşımıştır. Ancak, bu dönem aynı zamanda Batı insanının insan merkezci ve ilerleme odaklı doğa sömürüsünün görmezlikten gelinen karanlık yüzüyle yüzleşmeye başladığı dönemdir. Bunun sonucunda da ilk etapta çeşitli şekillerde kendini gösteren çevre kirliliği, çarpık sanayileşme ve kentlileşme, bugün dünya üzerinde yaşamakta olan bütün canlıları tehdit eden evrensel bir ekolojik krize dönüşmüş durumdadır.

İkili düşünce sistemine yönelik ilk eleştiriler Romantizm tarafından ortaya konmuştur. İnsan/doğa, kültür/doğa ve akıl/beden gibi ikili karşıtlıkları

sorunsallaştıran Romantikler, ekomerkezci söylemi canlandırmaya çalışarak sanayi devrimi öncesi organik yaşam biçimine dönüşü savunmuşlardır. Ancak ikili düşünceye ve Batı metafiziğinin dayandığı temellere yönelik gerçek başkaldırı 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında Friedrich Nietzsche, Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud ve Ferdinand Saussure gibi kişilerin ortaya attığı düşünceler ve teoriler ile gerçekleşmiştir. Hümanist felsefeye ve onun kurgulamış olduğu insan ve gerçeklik algısına karşı çıkışlar 1960'larda geliştirilen postyapısalcı teorilerle doruk noktasına ulaşmıştır. Postyapısalcılık yalnızca insan ve aklı üstün tutan ikiliği yıkmakla kalmıyor, aynı zamanda insan merkezci, gelişim odaklı ve sebep sonuç ilişkisi üzerine kurulu olan Batı tarihinin gerçekte baskın söylemin yarattığı bir kurgudan ibaret olduğunu da göstermektedir. Batı dünyasının temelini oluşturan yapı taşlarının kökünden sarsan postyapısalcı bakış açısı, ekoeleştirmenlerin de insan/doğa, kültür/doğa, şehir/taşra gibi karşıtlıkların yanı sıra zaman ile uzam arasındaki hiyerarşiyi de sorgulamaya teşvik etmiştir.

Postyapısalcı teorinin etkisiyle ekoeleştirel çalışmalar, insan/doğa ikiliğini sorgulamaya yönelmişlerdir. Fikirleriyle postyapısalcılığın önemli temsilcilerinden olan Jacques Derrida'nın, Saussure'ün dilbilim kuramından yola çıkarak geliştirmiş olduğu yapısökümcü yöntemle Batı metafiziğinin temelini oluşturan egemen ve aşkın gösterilen iddiasını çürütmektedir. Böylece Batı tarihi boyunca İdea, Tanrı, İnsan ve Akıl gibi merkezci evren algısını temsil eden aşkın gösterilenlerin varlığına dayanan ikili karşıtlıkların kurgusallığı da gözler önüne serilmektedir. Sonuç olarak, modernitenin ve Aydınlanma felsefesinin dayattığı insan ve gerçeklik algısının ortadan kalkmasıyla, insanın insan olmayan varlıklar üzerindeki hakimiyet iddiası da hükmünü yitirmiştir. Bu bağlamda insan merkezci söylemin yerine, ekoeleştiri bütün canlıların birlikteliğini vurgulayan ekomerkezci söylemi canlandırmayı hedeflemektedir.

Postyapısalcı bakış açısı aynı zamanda bilimsel gerçeklik ve bilginin kendisinin de sorgulanmasına vesile olmuştur. Aklın önderliğinde nihai hakikate erişme hedefinin ve önceki nesillere göre daha gelişmiş bir dünya düzeninde yaşama ülküsünün aslında baskın söylem olan insan merkezcilik ile kapitalizm arasındaki ittifakın bir yanılması olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Nietzsche'nin hakikat, bilgi ve insan doğası üzerine geliştirmiş olduğu kuşkucu yaklaşımdan

yola çıkan Michel Foucault'ın görüşleri ekomerkezci söylemin canlandırılması ve yaygınlaşması açısından büyük katkı sağlamaktadır. Bilimsel bilginin baskın söylemin kurguladığı gerçeklik anlayışıyla örtüşmediği sürece yok sayıldığını belirten Foucault, bilimin hiç bir zaman insanlığın ya da nihai hakikatin hizmetinde olmadığını vurgulamaktadır. Foucault'ya göre bilgi ve hakikat tarih boyunca baskın söylemin temsilcisi olan iktidar sahiplerinin kontrolü altında olmuştur. Bu nedenle insanoğlu bilimsel bilginin onun doğa üzerindeki hakimiyetini desteklediğine inanmayı seçmiş ve George Sessions'ın da dediği gibi ekoloji bilimini ve temsil ettiği gerçekleri yok sayarak yeryüzünde aslında insan merkezilikten uzak bir bütünselliğin varlığını inkar etmiştir. Bu düşüncelerden yola çıkan ekoeleştiri, insan/doğa ikiliğini sorunsallaştırırken bilimi güç odaklarının tekelden kurtarıp, ekolojinin yardımıyla insan ve insan olmayan bütün varlıkların birlikte var olmak zorunda oldukları gerçeğini yaygınlaştırmaya ve bugüne kadar bastırılmış olan ekomerkezci söylemi yeniden canlandırmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu bütünsellik ışığında yeni bir doğa/insan ikiliğinden kaçınan ekoeleştiri, doğayı insanın hizmetinde olan pasif bir nesne durumundan kurtarmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu bağlamda insan/doğa ikiliğini sorunsallaştıran çevreci siyasetin önemli temsilcilerinde biri derin ekolojidir. Bu hareketin kurucularından olan Arne Neass ve George Sessions insan merkezci söylemin terk edilerek doğanın içsel değerinin takdir edilmesinin önemini vurgulamaktalar. Ancak derin ekoloji özellikle ekofeminist hareket tarafından ataerkil iktidar söylemini yok sayarak bireysel çözümler sunmakla itham edilmektedir. Ekofeministlere göre insan merkezci anlayışın egemenliğini yıkmak için var olan hiyerarşik yapıyı yalnızca doğa/insan ikiliği şeklinde değiştirmek gerçekçi bir yaklaşım değildir. Bunun yerine ekofeminizm, ötekileştirilmişliğin ve yok sayılmışlığın gerçekte tek sorumlusu olan ikili düşünce sistemine ve onun normalleştirdiği ataerkil zihniyete karşı koymak için bütün ezilen kesimlerin topyekün mücadele etmesi gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Bu sayede insan merkezci söyleme karşı en kapsamlı karşı çıkışı sergileyen ekofeminizm, Greta Gaard'ın *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (Ekofeminizm: Kadınlar, Hayvanlar, Doğa) için yazmış olduğu giriş bölümünde belirttiği gibi barış, emek,

kadın sađlıđı, n kleer karřıtlık, evre ve hayvanları  zg rleřtirme hareketleri gibi bir ok aktivist grubu bir araya getirmektedir.

K lt r ve dođa arasındaki karřıtlık, ikili d ř nce sisteminin kurgulamıř olduđu gerekliliđin bir bařka tezah r d r. İnsan/dođa ikiliđinin bir t revi olarak k lt r, akıl sahibi insanın  r n  olduđu iin daima bakir ve yalın olan dođadan  st n tutulmuřtur. R nesans'la birlikte ortaya ıkan insanođlunun kendini gerekleřtirme d rt s n n bir parası olan dođa kanunlarının iřleyiřine hakim olma hedefi Aydınlanma ađı'yla birlikte ileri bir medeniyet kurma projesine d n řm řt r. Lakin, postyapısalcı teoriler ıřıđında ekoeleřtiri, k lt r ve dođa tanımlarının yeniden sorgulanmasının gerekliliđine dikkat ekmektedir. Her ne kadar ilk ařamada dođayı k lt rden  st n kılan ekoeleřtirel yaklařımlar geliřtirilmiř olsa da daha sonradan var olan ikili yapıyı ters y z etmekten bařka bir amaca hizmet etmediđi iin bu problemlili anlaıřtan uzaklařılmıřtır. Yařamakta olduđumuz postyapısalcı d nyada, her iki kavramın insan merkezci s ylemin dayattıđı ideolojik birer kurgu olduđu kabul edilmektedir. K lt r/dođa ikiliđini ortadan kaldırmak  zere y r t len tartıřmalar temel olarak iki ana erevede ele alınmaktadır: postyapısalcı kuramın etkisiyle dođanın kurgusalılıđını vurgulayan ekoeleřtirel alıřmalar ve b t n ideolojik kurgulardan bađımsız can ekiřmekte olan dođanın varlıđını benimseyen yaklařımlar. Ancak son d nemde ekomerkezci s ylemin canlanmasıyla birlikte, insan ve dođa arasındaki b t nselliđi vurgulayan bakıř aıllarının ortaya ıkmasıyla birlikte k lt r/dođa ya da dođa/k lt r gibi kurgusal yapılardan uzaklařılarak, k lt r ve dođanın gerekte i ie gemiř kavramlar olduđu g r řleri yaygın olarak kabul g rmeye bařlamıřtır. Bu b t nsellik ıřıđında, nasıl ki insan dođanın ayrılmaz bir parasıysa, k lt r n de dođadan bađımsız var olamayacađı d ř n lmektedir.

 zellikle, evreci siyasetin temsilcilerinden olan sosyal ekoloji, insanı dođanın bir parası olarak konumlandırarak k lt r/dođa ikiliđine karřı ıkmaktadır. Derin ekolojinin aksine, sosyal ekoloji k resel ekolojik krizin  z m n  toplumsal bilinlenme ile gerekleřebileceđine inanmaktadır. Murray Bookchin ve Michael Bennett gibi bu hareketin  nde gelen isimlerinin yapmıř oldukları alıřmalar, kentleřmenin sanayileřme ve kapitalizm ile kurduđu ittifakın Őehir ve k y ayrımı yapmaksızın insan ve insan olmayan b t n

varlıkların hayatını tehdit ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır. İnsan/doğa, kültür/doğa karşıtlıklarını ortadan kaldırmak amacıyla geliştirilmiş olan ekoeleştirel yaklaşımların etkisiyle günümüzde şehir/taşıra ikiliği de ideolojik bir kurgu olarak kabul edilmektedir. Modernite öncesi şehir ve köy hayatının birbiriyle olan organik bağlarından esinlenen ekoeleştirmenler, kentsel ve kırsal doğayı eşit derecede önemli inceleme alanları olarak kabul etmektedir. Günümüzde sanayileşme ve kentleşmede yaşanmakta olan köklü değişimler şehir ve köy arasındaki keskin ayrımı ortadan kaldırmaktadır. Bu bağlamda kent ekolojisi ve kent ekoeleştirisini alanlarındaki gelişmeler özellikle şehir ve şehir insanını ekoeleştirmenin kapsamı dışında tutmanın önemli bir eksiklik olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Şehir/taşıra karşıtlığını ortadan kaldırmak arzusuyla bu iki ekoeleştirel yönelim yerleşim yerlerindeki bütün canlıların yaşam biçimlerini ve doğa ile olan bütünsellik ihtiyaçlarını incelemektedir. Kültür/doğa ikiliği üzerine kurulu bir yaşam biçiminin doğa sömürsünün yanı sıra toplum tarafından dışlanmış, ötekileştirilmiş ve nüfusun büyük çoğunluğunu oluşturan yoksul ve ezilmiş insanların haklarının da gasp edilmesi anlamına gelmektedir. İnsan oğlunun yaratmış olduğu kültürün imtiyazlarından yalnızca ayrıcalıklı bir kesimin yararlandığını vurgulamaktadır. Bu çerçevede *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, & Pedagogy* (Çevre Adaleti Seçkisi: Siyaset, Yazınbilim & Pedagoji) başlıklı eserde Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans and Rachel Stein'ın ortaya koyduğu gibi, çevresel adalet hareketinin geliştirmiş olduğu politik eleştiriler, kentlerde yaşayan ve ötekileştirilmiş topluluk ve bireylerin maruz kaldığı çevresel adaletsizliklere dikkat çekmektedir. Bütün bireylerin sağlıklı ve yaşanabilir bir çevrede yaşama, çalışma, oynama ve ibadet etme hakkını savunan çevresel adalet hareketi, küresel ekolojik krizin yükünün ezilen kesimin sırtına yüklenmesine karşı çıkmaktadır.

İkili düşünce sistemine yöneltilmiş kapsamlı eleştirinin bir parçası olarak ekoeleştiri modernitenin bir başka kurgusu olan zaman ile uzam arasındaki hiyerarşik ilişkiyi incelemektedir. İnsan/doğa ikiliğinin bir uzantısı sonucu zamanın uzamdan koparılışı, modern insanın gerçekleştirmeye çalıştığı Aydınlanma projesinin bir ürünüdür. Bu dönemde doğa kanunlarının işleyişini çözmedeki insan aklına duyulan sonsuz güven insanoğlunu atalarının

barbarlığından kurtararak çok daha gelişmiş ve ileri bir medeniyet kuracağına inandırmıştır. Böylece gelişmişliği ve ilerlemeyi temsil eden zamanın akışı döngüsellikten uzaklaşarak sebep-sonuç ilişkisi çerçevesinde doğrusal bir boyuta indirgenmiştir. Öte yandan, medeniyetin inşa edildiği edilgen zeminden başka bir anlam ifade etmeyen uzam ise arka plana itilmiştir. Bu durum aynı zamanda uzam ve mekan arasındaki bağın da kopmasına neden olmuştur. Modernite ve Aydınlanma Çağı'nın yaratmış olduğu ideolojik kurgusal gerçekliğe karşı çıkışının bir parçası olarak ekoeleştirel çalışmalar zaman ile uzam ve uzam ile mekan arasındaki bu kopukluğu gidererek, uzamın insanın insan merkezci amaçlarını yürüttüğü bir varlık olarak kurgulanmasını eleştirmektedir. Bu başkaldırının bir parçası olarak ekoeleştiri zaman ve uzamın bütünselliğine dikkat çekmekte ve modernite öncesi dönemlerden esinlenerek uzamsal-zamansallığı canlandırmaya çalışmaktadır.

Yeryüzündeki yaşamın devamlılığı, uzam ve mekanın öneminin yeniden anlaşılması için ekoeleştiri bu iki yapının kurgulanmasında etkili olan çeşitli etmenlere ve güç ilişkilerine odaklanmaktadır. Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault ve David Harvey' nin fikirlerinden yola çıkan ekoeleştirmenler, uzamın boş bir hazne olmamanın ötesinde bir üretim ve iktidar alanı olduğunu vurgular. Ek olarak, uzamın kurgulanışındaki zihinsel, sosyal, politik ve ekonomik unsurlara odaklanarak uzam ve mekan algısının çeşitliliğini ve çoğulluğunu tartışır. Ekoeleştiri aynı zamanda küreselleşen dünyamızda değişen zaman, uzam ve mekan algısına dikkat çeker. Uzamsal-zamansallığın yeniden önem kazanması özellikle küreselleşmenin bireyin uzam ve yer algısı üzerindeki etkisi bağlamında ele alınmaktadır. Ekoloji biliminin sunmuş olduğu bütünsellik ışığında, ekoeleştiri karşı karşıya kaldığımız ekolojik krize çözüm üretmek adına ekomerkezci bilinç yaratma çabasıdadır. Ekoeleştiri bu amaca ulaşmak için zaman ve uzam arasındaki bağı yeniden kurmanın yanı sıra uzam ve mekan ayrımını da yok ederek daha evrensel bir yer algısı yaratmayı hedeflemektedir. Ekoeleştirmenler ideolojik ve politik olarak yaratılmış ülke ve bölge sınırlarının ötesine geçerek, Yerküre'nin tamamını bütün canlıların tek ve daimi yuvası olarak benimsemenin önemi vurgular. Bu isimlerden Ursula Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global (Yer Algısı ve Gezegen Algısı:*

Küresel Çevre İmgelemi) başlıklı eserinde, bütün dünya vatandaşlarına seslenerek mekan algısının bütün Yerküre'yi kapsayacak şekilde yerelleştirilmesi çağrısında bulunmaktadır.

Yukarıda belirtilmiş olan ekoeleştirel arka plan ışığında, bu tez çalışması, post-pastoral ve ekoşiirin öncüsü olarak Dylan Thomas'ın eserlerinde ikili düşünce sisteminin çöküşünü tartışmaktadır. Bu bağlamda öncelikle ilk analiz bölümü olan III. bölüm şairin insan/doğa karşıtlığını sorunsallaştırarak insan ve insan olmayan tüm varlıkların yeryüzündeki ekolojik bütünselliğin bir parçası olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bölümde öncelikle *18 Poems* ve *25 Poems*'de yayınlanmış olan şiirlerinden “A Process in the weather of the heart,” (“Yüreğindeki mevsim döngüsü”), “Yeşil fitilden doğru çiçeği koşturan o güç” (“The force through the green fuse the flower”) ve “Ve artık hükmü kalmayacak Ölümün” (“And death shall have no dominion”) ele alınarak, genç şairin hayatını ve şiirini anlamlandıran düzenleyici ilke arayışının bir parçası olarak ekomerkezci bilinç oluşturma çabası incelenmektedir. Bu post-pastoral ve ekoşiirlerde Thomas, insan/doğa karşıtlığına başkaldırarak insan bedeni ve doğa arasındaki ortak çalışma presiplerini vurgulayarak ekomerkezci ruhu canlandırmaya çalışmaktadır. “A Process in the weather of the heart,”daki insan ve doğa bütünselliği insan bedeninin ve doğanın işleyişi arasında tam bir uyumun olduğunu göstermektedir. Öte yandan, “The force through the green fuse drives the flower,” başlıklı eserde ise yeryüzündeki bütün canlıların aynı yaratıcı-yıkıcı güçlere tabi olduğu belirtilerek insanoğlunun doğa üzerindeki sözde hakimiyetini yıkmaktadır. “And death shall have no dominion,” da ise ölümden sonra aşkın bir alem olgusunu reddeden Thomas, ölümü, bütün canlıların ekolojik sürekliliğin devamına katkıda buldukları bir süreç olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu şiirlerin ekoeleştirel okuması modernist bir şair olarak Thomas'ın içinde bulunduğu karmaşık ve anlamsız yaşamdan kaçışı doğaya sığınarak aşmaya çalıştığına işaret etmektedir.

Dylan Thomas'ın eserlerinde insan/doğa ikiliğine karşı çıkışın bir parçası olarak bu çalışmanın ele aldığı diğer önemli nokta ise panteizm ve ekomerkezci bütünselliğin canlanmasıdır. Bu aşamada şairin olgunluk döneminde yazdığı şiir kitaplarında, *The Map of Love, Deaths and Entrances* ve *In Country Sleep*'de yayınlanan eserler ele alınmıştır. Yaşamakta olduğu Nietzsche ve Darwin sonrası

dönemde ortaya çıkan varoluşsal kaygılar şairi, hiyerarşik olmayan ve özünde çok sesliliği barındıran ekomerkezci bir evren özlemi ile Gal mitolojisini ve halk edebiyatını yeniden ele almaya teşvik etmiştir. İlk şiirlerindeki beden-doğa özdeşliğinden yola çıkan Thomas'ın olgunluk dönemi eserlerindeki insan merkezci söyleme karşı geliştirdiği tartışmalar daha felsefi ve metafizik bir boyut kazanmıştır. İkili karşıtlıklar üzerine kurulu geleneksel Hristiyan inancını sorgulayan şair, Gal mitolojisinin etkisiyle Hristiyanlık ve doğa inancını harmanlayarak özünde bütün canlıların bütünselliğini barındıran ve doğayı Tanrı'nın da yaşamakta olduğu kutsal bir alan olarak tanımlayan kendine has bir din inancı geliştirmiştir. Sırasıyla, "After the funeral" ("Cenazeden Sonra"), "Kır Uykusunda" ("In Country Sleep") ve "Poem on his Birthday" ("Doğum Günü üzerine Şiir") başlıklı eserleri post-pastoral ve ekoşair açısından incelendiğinde, ekomerkezci bakış açısının, şairin eserlerinin ve hayatının merkezinde konumlandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Thomas'ın bu şiirlerde ölümü insan, doğa ve Tanrı'nın bütünleşmesi ve ekolojik yaşam döngüsünün bir parçası olarak tanımlanışı şairin varoluşsal kaygılarının giderek azalmasına yardımcı olmuştur. Ekomerkezci söylemin benimsenişi aynı zamanda modernist temsil krizinin de aşılmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bu üç şiirde de Gal kültürünün etkisi ile yaratmış olduğu druid, ozan ve acemi şair (rhymer) gibi şiir özneleri sayesinde Thomas doğanın bütünselliğini ve çok sesliliği yansıtmaktadır. Bu durum Adamson and Slovic tarafından ortaya atılan üçüncü dalga ekoeleştirel bağlamda ele alındığında, Thomas'ın kendi ülkesinin değerlerinin ötesine geçerek evrensel ekolojik değerleri yansıtan ve evrensel çevre bilinci oluşturmaya çalışan bir post-pastoral ve ekoşair olduğunu göstermektedir.

Dylan Thomas'ın eserlerindeki insan/doğa karşıtlığının sorgulanışı incelendiğinde diğer önemli bir unsur da ekomerkezci çok sesliliğin bir parçası olarak ötekileştirilmiş insan ve insan olmayan bütün varlıkların ezilmişliklerini dile getirerek ekolojik bilinç uyandırmaya çalışmasıdır. Özellikle *The Map of Love* ve *Deaths and Entrances* ile başlayan süreçte bir post-pastoral ve ekoşair olarak Thomas, daha toplumsal sorunları ele almaya başlamış ve eserlerinde bugün ekofeminist ve çevresel adalet hareketlerinin insan merkezci söyleme yönelttiği önemli eleştirilere değinmiştir. Bu sayede Thomas yaratmış olduğu çok

seslilik ile nesneleştirilmiş doğa ile onunla özdeş olan kadını ve çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı toplum tarafından dışlanmış insanların sesi olmuştur. Post-pastoral ve ekoşiir özellikleri açısından incelendiğinde “Because the pleasure-bird whistles” (“Zevk-kuşu ötüyor diye”) insan olmayan canlıların sömürsünü ele alırken, “The tombstone told” (“Mezar taşının anlattığı”) başlıklı eseri kadınların ezilmişliklerini dile getirmektedir. “Love in the Asylum” (“Tımarhanede Aşk”) şiiri ise toplum tarafından “deli” olarak ilan edilmiş olan bir kişinin ötekileştirilmesini eleştirmektedir. Böylece Dylan Thomas, yeryüzü’nün şarkısını söyleyen bir ekoşair olmanın ötesine geçip ekolojik çok sesliği yansıtan, insan ve insan olmayan bütün varlıkların yaşam haklarını dile getiren eserler yaratmıştır.

IV. bölümde bu tez çalışması, gelişmişlik odaklı Batı tarihini sorunsallaştıran ekoeleştiril yönelimler ışığında, Dylan Thomas’ın eserlerindeki kültür/doğa karşıtlığının eleştirisini tartışmaktadır. İkili düşünce sisteminin kurgusallığını vurgulayan Dylan Thomas, kültür ve doğa kavramlarının gerçekte birbirinden bağımsız düşünülemediğini göstermektedir. Sanayileşmiş bir kasaba olan Swansea’de doğup yetişmiş bir şair olan Thomas, yaşamı boyunca ülkesi ve dünyanın geçirmekte olduğu köklü değişime şahit olmuştur. Bu nedenle Thomas, eserlerinde kentli insanın doğa özlemini dile getirmekte ve günümüzde ekoeleştirinin konusu olan yabancılaşma, kentselleşme, bilimsel gelişmişlik ve ilerlemeye olan inancın yok olması, aralıksız savaş ve yok oluş tehdidi gibi bir çok konuya ışık tutmaktadır. Pastoral yazını yapay ikili karşıtlıkların kısılcından kurtaran Thomas, eserlerinde kültür/doğa ve şehir/taşra gibi hiyerarşilerin insan merkezci söylemin kurguladığı gerçekliğin bir dayatması olduğunu tartışmaktadır. Thomas’ın şiirlerinde insan merkezci söylemin kendi sürdürülebilirliğini sağlamak adına bilimsel bilgi ve güç odakları ile ittifak kurarak nasıl doğayı ve insanı sömürdüğü ele alınmaktadır. “Why east wind chills” (“Batı Rüzgarı neden üşütür”) başlıklı şiiri ekoeleştiril olarak okunduğunda bilimi araçsallaştıran insan merkezci söylemin insanı doğadan kopardığını ve bilimsel bilgiyi bütün canlılara hükmetmek için kullandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ek olarak sosyal ekolojinin kültür/doğa ikiliğine yöneltmiş olduğu eleştiriler ışığında “I see the boys of summer” (“Yaz çocuklarını görüyorum”) ve “Bir Yas Tutmayı Reddetmek Ölümü için, Yangından, Londra’da bir Çocuğun” (“A Refusal to Mourn Death, by Fire,

of a Child in London”) şiirlerinde ekomerkezci söylemin marjinalleştirilmesinin sonuçları gözler önüne serilmektedir. İlk eser doğaya ve kendi benliğine yabancılaşan ve kapitalizm tarafından sömürülen bir nesneye dönüşen kentli insanın durumunu irdelerken, ikinci yapıt da şehir ve taşra ayrımını ortadan kaldırarak II. Dünya Savaşının masum sivilleri nasıl katlettiğini göstermektedir. Böylece bu bölümdeki post-pastoral eserlerde Thomas, gelişmişliğin ve bilimsel bilginin özerkliğinin bir mit olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır.

IV. bölümde ayrıca Thomas’ın kültür/doğa karşıtlığının bir sonucu olarak ele aldığı modern insanın ekomerkezci bütünselliğe duymuş olduğu özlemi anlatan eserleri incelenmektedir. Şairin olgunluk dönemi post-pastoral ve ekoşiirlerinden olan “The hunchback in the park” (“Parktaki Kambur”) ve “Over Sir John’s Hill” (“Sir John Tepesi Üzerinde”)’de bahsettiği gibi insanoğlu gerçekleştirmeye çalıştığı bütün gelişmişlik hedeflerine rağmen özünde hiyerarşik olmayan ilkeler üzerine kurulu bir düzenin parçasıdır. Park arka planıyla ve kambur sırtlı kahramanıyla “The hunchback in the park,” sembolik olarak doğadan koparılmış günümüz kentli insanın kuşatılmışlığını yansıtmaktadır. Kültür/doğa çatışmasının yapaylığına vurgu yapan şair, şiir öznesinin hayal gücünü kullanarak insanın doğa özlemini tatmin etme çabasını ve doğanın özgürleştirici gücünü betimlemektedir. “Over Sir John’s Hill”de ise kültür/doğa karşıtlığının ideolojik bir kurgu olduğunu gözler önüne seren Thomas, doğadaki hiyerarşik olmayan işleyişi gözlemlerine dayanarak aktarmaktadır. Batı insanının sözde gelişmişlik idealleri uğruna başlatmış olduğu sömürgecilik savaşlarının aksine, şair bu eserinde Towy nehir ağzında yaşayan kuşlar arasındaki yaşam-ölüm döngüsündeki karşılıklı bağlılığı ön plana çıkarmakta ve organik bütünselliğe duyduğu özlemi aktarmaktadır.

Son analiz bölümü olan V. bölümde ise bu çalışma Dylan Thomas’ın şiirlerinde zaman ve uzam arasındaki hiyerarşik kurgunun eleştirisini tartışmaktadır. Thomas eserlerinde gelişmişlik ideali nedeniyle doğrusal zamansallığın yüceltilişini ve uzamın edilgen bir nesneye indirgenişini sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Öncelikle erken dönem şiirlerinde yoğun olarak hissedilen modernist temsil ve varoluş krizinin yaratmış olduğu kaygılar, Thomas’ın yaşam ve ölüm konuları üzerine yoğunlaşmasına ve doğrusal zamansallığı sorgulamasına

neden olmaktadır. İnsanın yaşamını anlamlı kılan Tanrı ve aşkın bir aleme olan inancın yokoluşu, onu doğa ve insan bedenindeki zaman ile uzam etkileşimini ve döngüsel işleyişi gözlemlemeye teşvik etmiştir. Bir ekoşair olarak Thomas'ın insan ve doğa arasındaki kadim bağı canlandırma ve ekomerkezciliği temel ilke olarak benimseme çabası onu şiirlerinde uzamsal-zamansallığı canlandırmaya itmiştir. "Here in this spring" ("İşte bu baharda") başlıklı eserinde Thomas zaman ve uzam arasındaki bağı yeniden canlandırmak için doğadaki döngüsellliği aktarırken, "Before I knocked" ("Kapıyı çalıp bedene bürünmeden önce") şiirinde ise insan hayatının yaşam ve ölüm arasındaki döngüsellğine dikkat çekmektedir. İnsanın yaşam yolculuğunu anne karnında embriyonun oluşmasıyla başlatan Thomas, ölümden sonra da bedenin doğadaki ekolojik yaşamın bir parçası haline geldiğini belirtmektedir. Öte yandan, doğrusal zamansallığın yaratmış olduğu kaygıların doruk noktasına ulaştığı "Especially when the October wind" ("Özellikle Ekim rüzgarında") ve "Twenty-four years" ("Yirmi-dört yıl") başlıklı ilk iki doğum günü şiirlerinde yaşam-ölüm kıskacındaki Thomas uzamsal-zamansallığı yeniden oluşturarak ekomerkezci bütünselliği yakalama arayışındadır. Ancak olgunluk döneminde yazmış olduğu şiirlerle birlikte ekomerkezci söylemin daha baskın hale gelmesi Thomas'ın yaşam-ölüm ve zaman-uzam algısının önemli ölçüde değişmesine katkıda bulunmuştur. Bu aşamada uzamsal-zamansallık temsili belirgin tinsel boyut kazanarak, şairin erken dönem şiirlerindeki karamsarlıktan arınarak hayatı ve ölümü doğa ile bütünleştiği manevi bir yolculuk olarak kucaklamasına yardımcı olmuştur. *Deaths and Entrances*' da yayınlanmış olan üçüncü doğum günü şiiri "Poem in October" ("Ekim Şiiri") ve "Fern Tepesi" ("Fern Hill")'de yaşamın bir yolculuk olduğu fikri üzerine yoğunlaşan Thomas, zaman ve uzam arasındaki hiyerarşiyi şiir öznelerinin ekomerkezci bilinçle özdeş olan çocukluklarına yaptıkları tinsel yolculukla yıkmaktadır. Bu sayede Thomas, döngüsel zamanı tekrar canlandırarak doğa ve uzam benlik, duygu ve değerlerin oluşma süreçlerinde oynadıkları aktif rolü dile getirmektedir. Ekomerkezci bilincin etkisiyle Thomas'ın benimsediği uzamsal-zamansallık onu aynı zamanda üçüncü dalga ekoeleştirel çalışmaların belirttiği gibi evrensel yer algısının oluşmasına katkıda bulunan ekoşairlerden biri yapmaktadır. Bu şiirler farklı mekanlardan ilham alınarak yaratılmış olsa da,

ekomerkezci bilinç ışığında Thomas doğayı, insan ve insan olmayan bütün varlıkların nihai yuvası olarak yeniden kavramsallaştırmaktadır. Böylece bir ekoşair olarak Thomas tüm canlıların bütünselliğini vurgulayan evrensel ekomerkezci şarkılar söylemektedir.

Özetle, bu tez çalışması Dylan Thomas'ı post-pastoral ve ekoşairin öncüsü olarak kabul etmekte ve onun eserlerinde ikili düşünce sisteminin kurgulamış olduğu insan/doğa, kültür/doğa karşıtlıkları ile zaman ve uzam arasındaki hiyerarşiyi nasıl yıktığını tartışmaktadır. Yaşamakta olduğu varoluşsal çatışma ve karşı karşıya kaldığı modernist temsil krizi, Thomas'ı yaşamı ve eserlerini anlamlandıracak düzenleyici ilke arayışına yöneltmiştir. Onun eserlerinin ekoeleştirel okuması göstermektedir ki, ilk şiirlerinden itibaren şair, çözümü insan ve doğa arasındaki bağı yeniden canlandırmakta aramaktadır. Bu özgün çıkış yolu olgunluk dönemi şiirlerinde ekomerkezci söyleme dönüşerek Thomas'ın insanı, doğayı ve yaşamı ekomerkezci bilinçle yeniden tanımlamasıyla son bulmuştur. Thomas'ın şiirlerindeki yeryüzündeki ekomerkezci bütünselliği yeniden canlandırarak evrensel bir ekomerkezci bilinç uyandırma çabasını tartışan bu tez çalışması, onun yaşadığı dönemin ve ülkenin sınırlarını aşarak, bugün tüm dünyanın karşı karşıya kaldığı çevre krizinin çözümüne ışık tutan bir post-pastoral ve ekoşair olarak anılmasını sağlayarak, Dylan Thomas çalışmalarına katkıda bulunmayı hedefler.

APPENDIX D.

TEZ İZİN FORMU / THESIS PERMISSION FORM

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- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences
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TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: **Yüksek Lisans** / Master **Doktora** / PhD

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