An Ecocritical Reading of the River Thames in Selected *Fin de Siècle* Literature

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DECLARATION

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STATEMENT 1

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Abstract

Our interaction with the natural environment plays a pivotal role in our survival as a species on earth. By foregrounding the River Thames, this thesis demonstrates how nature plays a part in our everyday recreation, in what way it can aid in the construction of our identities and finally how our treatment of it can have an adverse or beneficial effect on our own existence. These exchanges with nature are revealed by ecocritically examining the central themes of leisure, national identity, and sanitation from ten underexplored literary texts that represent the Thames during the *fin de siècle*.

From the primary research, two dominant narratives were seen to be associated with the River: progress and decline, with the former having been overstated by critics. Therefore, the Thames is critically examined amid a sphere of Victorian progress. This thesis contributes to the field of Victorian ecocriticism, a discipline that Mazzeno and Morrison argue has the potential to unlock "the canon to include new works that contribute to an overall understanding of the period" (2016, p.10). Thus, by adopting the novel approach of ecocriticism, this thesis enables a 'new' understanding of *fin de siècle* literature that centralises the natural environment.

Through an analysis of Leslie's *Our River*, the Pennells' *The Stream of Pleasure*, and Ashby-Sterry's *A Tale of the Thames*, the first chapter reveals how, through the theme of leisure, the Thames was part of a thriving Victorian consumerist culture where an aestheticisation, a reification and a hierarchical usage of the waterway was prominent, suggesting a social ecology along the River. Chapter Two builds on these ideas of capital and leisure by viewing the Thames in the wider context of nationhood through the exploration of De Vere's 'To the Thames', Blind's 'To the Obelisk', Gosse's 'The Shepherd of the Thames' and Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment'. Through an ecocritical analysis of national identity within these poems, I claim that all four of the works can be read as ecopoems. I then interrogate the stability of an English and British identity that is often associated with the Thames. From this, I question how sanitation played a role in the River's literary image by examining Barr's 'The Doom of London', Allen's 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe', and White's 'The River of Death' within Chapter Three, where I consider a metaphorical sanitation (via natural forces), and a literal sanitation that can be traced to nineteenth-century public health reform. I also adopt the ecocritical theory of the post-pastoral to explore the powerful impact that nature imposes upon humanity.

This thesis contributes to our understanding of how the Thames was represented in a positive way within literature during the *fin de siècle*, by suggesting that it was bound with three dominant themes: leisure, national identity, and sanitation. I also suggest that through reading the River, we can gain a cultural understanding of humanity's relationship with the natural world by highlighting three ecocritical relationships that exist along a continuum: anthropocentric, symbiotic, and ecocentric. I further claim that, through numerous connections, there existed a "network" of writers who, together, through their writings, popularised the Thames during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Ultimately, I argue that literature has the potential to enable a more widespread knowledge and understanding of how nature functions and coexists alongside humanity.

In Loving Memory of William Bryant Philpin

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List of Illustrations

Introduction

> The river rolls in from the sea and up to London with the tide; at the other end it rises in a field near Cirencester to dampen the green grass in a dark curving line that soon becomes a stream. The salt water from the sea and the clear sweet water from the low Cotswold hills meet at Teddington. Some things do not change.
>
> (Schneer, 2005, p.286)

The River Thames, as Jonathan Schneer suggests in this extract, is a continuous movement of water and regardless of its movement through time and space, the waterway's ecological journey remains the same. However, attitudes towards the Thames and society's interaction with it have changed. The reason for a literary exploration of the River during the latter half of the nineteenth century is because it was, what I would term, an active natural formation. The term 'active' may seem self-evident in the ecological sense, as it is continuously in motion as an ecosystem. However, the term active here refers to a socially, politically, and culturally active landscape, which conveys how the Thames was frequently at the forefront of public consciousness.

Mainstream Victorian literature has often portrayed the Thames as dirty and polluted and have associated it with sickness, degeneracy and corruption. However, primary research undertaken for this thesis reveals that this was not always the case. Instead, a re-evaluation of representations of the River is offered in this study by demonstrating how selected literature of the *fin de siècle* enables an association between the Thames and themes of progress including leisure, national identity, and sanitation. It does so through analysis of the material and metaphorical representations of the River within ten underexplored literary texts that are representative of a wider selection (see Appendix Two), and by linking these texts to the social and historical background of the nineteenth-century Thames. This new way of reading the

River is exemplified through George Dunlop Leslie's *Our River: Personal Reminiscences of an Artist's Life on the River Thames* (1881); Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennell's *The Stream of Pleasure: The Narrative of a Journey on the Thames from Oxford to London* (1891); Joseph Ashby-Sterry's *A Tale of the Thames* (1896); Aubrey De Vere's 'To the Thames' (wr.1843, pub.1884); Mathilde Blind's 'To the Obelisk: During the Great Frost, 1881' (1881); Edmund Gosse's 'The Shepherd of the Thames' (1885); John Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment' (1909); Robert Barr's 'The Doom of London' (1892); Grant Allen's 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe' (1897) and Fred M. White's 'The River of Death' (1904). This selection also reveals a network of writers who were writing in a way that aligned the Thames with progress during the *fin de siècle*. Furthermore, a socio-political engagement with the natural environment within literature is a fundamentally ecocritical notion and therefore, by applying an ecocritical approach, it enables the reader to critique the underlying relationships between the natural world and humanity.

As this thesis researches literature from the past, it is worth pointing out the ways in which our privileging of the present shapes our conception of the past. As Gillian Beer explains

> the reinterpretation of the past through the critical apparatuses and cultural preoccupations of the present as 'presentism' [she] characterizes presentism as the belief that 'now' offers the only authoritative source of meaning, and that the past is to be read for its relevance to our contemporary concerns.
>
> (cited in Ledger and McCracken, 1995, p.2)

The emergence of ecocritical approaches and their importance in post-millennial literary criticism is one such example of 'presentism' in that our increasingly heightened awareness of the human impact on nature can be seen to give authority to readings of the past that focus on

these concerns. With this in mind, through the present lens of ecocriticism I examine literature from the late Victorian and Edwardian period, with a view that current ecocritical debates can provide meaning within these texts. Presentism can be problematic within a cultural-historical study such as this, because whereas I am ecocritically analysing the Thames amid historical themes of Victorian progress, such as imperialism, other contemporary literary approaches, such as postcolonialism, would view this theme in the pejorative sense. For this reason, my thesis is predominantly an ecocritical one in order to avoid a fusion of theoretical approaches. However, there are occasional references to other critical approaches, such as Marxism or Postcolonialism, where appropriate – particularly as I refer to issues of capital and imperialism. Nineteenth-century historical changes to the River are also considered amidst the analysis, but only after ecocriticism has been applied, because whilst I mainly rely upon the theory of ecocriticism, this thesis is also grounded within historical and cultural debates concerning literature and the Thames. From this ecocritical perspective, I am able to demonstrate a 'new' way of reading Victorian writers that reveals a cultural understanding of humanity's relationship with the natural environment.

Rationale and Chapter Methodology

Having researched the primary material (see Appendix Two), it became clear that two narratives were emerging in relation to literary representations of the Thames during the *fin de siècle*. The first being the River's association with sickness, pollution, death, criminality, the fallen woman, and social decay, thus offering an adverse and pessimistic view of the Thames. The second, as this thesis examines, is the alignment of pleasure, capital, recreation, art, wealth, Empire, national identity, sanitary reform, and progress, which meant that a more favourable and commendable way of seeing the River was possible. The idea of two dominant Thames narratives is consistent with a proposition by John Glendenning (2007) in relation to the duality of narratives during the period. He argues that cultural interpretations of late-Victorian

literature were subject to a system of binary oppositions, one of which is the duality of progress and degeneration. Based on this idea, I argue that because the degenerative narrative of the Thames has been overstated by critics, then the River amid a history of progress is ripe for investigation.

The dominant themes – leisure, national identity, and sanitation – that emerged as narratives of progress are evident in the primary material, but also through consideration of the social, economic, and political role of the River during the nineteenth century. Despite running for about 215 miles from Gloucestershire, through London and out towards the sea passing Kent, the primary material reveals how the Thames is mainly culturally associated with the City. Ford Madox Ford similarly made this point in *The Soul of London* (1905), when he described the River as "that great friend that made London" (1995, p.167). This link with the City is also evident through the three themes that dominate literary depictions of the Thames during the *fin de siècle*: leisure, national identity, and sanitation. Leisure was a way of escaping the industrialism of the City and, as a nation, Britain's recreation was becoming more advanced, amid what Judith Flanders terms "the new middle class world of plenty and ease" (2006, p.xvi), as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. This "consumer revolution" (Flanders, 2006, p.xvi) saw a flourishing in leisure activities, including sports, theatre attendance, magazines, holidays, and books. The Thames formed part of this leisure boom with the rise in boating along the waterway, usually in the upper reaches of the River, away from the City. Whereas London was regarded as the "heart of the empire" (Schneer, 2005, p.196) both nationally and internationally during this time, Britain's identity as a powerful nation often relied on the sanitary image of the City, including its waterways. Without effective sanitation, the River could not be used effectively as a portal of leisure because pollution would affect the pleasurable experience that leisure induces. Pollution would also compromise the River as a projection of national power: as Bill Luckin points out, it was "a national – and an

imperial – humiliation that the heart of the capital should be so vilely polluted" (1986, p.17). This meant that sanitation had become a political priority *because* of these Victorian social and political aspirations of pleasure through leisure and because of the importance of maintaining a powerful national identity so central to imperial might. The impurities of London were viewed differently by the American writer Henry James, who saw them as a contributor to the grandeur and powerful image of the City. He makes the connection between these "atmospheric impurities [and] the wealth and power of the British Empire at large" (James, 1905, p.162). This strengthens the connection between, leisure, national identity, and sanitation, by suggesting that each of them can be positioned in the context of Victorian progress.

In addition to the emerging themes, the ten primary works were chosen because of thematic links across works from different literary genres, the revelation of a network of writers, and the publication of these works during the *fin de siècle* (or republication in terms of De Vere). The primary research was undertaken in a variety of ways: using online databases and archives, including the British Library and *The Internet Archive*, and also by visiting a number of libraries, such as the British Library in London and Cardiff University's Special Collections and Archives. From this research, a number of literary genres were found that contained representations of the Thames: novels, short stories, poetry, travel writing, plays, autobiographies and essays (see Appendix Two). Two types of literary representation were identified: one where the Thames was the primary subject, such as Leslie's *Our River*, and one where it was only briefly mentioned such as Blind's 'To the Obelisk'. I decided that both were pertinent as they could be linked to the overall meaning of the text, and so both are included within this thesis. This is important because one aspect of ecocriticism that emerged was how minor allusions to nature can be shown as integral to the plot and theme. For example, the fog

that rises from the waterway, as seen in Barr's 'The Doom of London', can be seen as an ecological link to the River that shapes the meaning of the story.

The decision to focus on one literary genre in each of the three chapters was for two reasons. Firstly, there was a predominant focus of each theme within their corresponding genres. By this I mean, the primary research revealed that representations of the Thames in relation to leisure was predominantly evident in travel writing, national identity in poetry, and sanitation in the short story. However, the three themes are not exclusive to each literary genre, for example national identity and the poem. Rather, they are grouped in this way, in accordance with their most dominant theme, to enable a more consistent and sustained analysis. It was found that each theme was prevalent within the other genres, thus linking the thesis together. For example the short stories in Chapter Three exhibit an aesthetic pleasure through the use of visual fog that resonated with the aesthetic pleasure that was experienced through leisure in the travel writings of Chapter One. Secondly, the mutability of form was considered during the research process, and I felt that I needed to analyse the texts in accordance with one genre as it could have impacted upon the ecocritical analysis of the ten works. For example, Leslie's and the Pennells' works could be examined as memoirs and not travel writing, considering that their works are autobiographical when they write about their personal experiences of the Thames. Consequently, these texts could then be ecocritically interpreted as humanity engaging with nature to forge an identity, which, in turn, could be deemed as symbiotic, and as personal rather than socio-political. This highlights the role of genre in the ecocritical reading of each text. Whilst travel writing is examined within the sphere of anthropocentricity, poetry within a symbiosis, and the short story within an ecocentricity, I do not propose, like the themes, that these three relationships are exclusive to each genre, but rather the

relationships have the propensity to shift in accordance with each text. However, for the purpose of consistency and clarity, I chose to analyse these works as examples of one genre.

There remained a wide selection of literature that evoked the three themes with a variety of genres (see Appendix Two), so it became necessary to narrow the focus. Further research revealed connections amongst some of the writers who were using related themes (see Appendix Three). These writers never formally assembled to write about the Thames, but each of them were representing the River amid an avenue of progress during the *fin de siècle*. They are also linked in numerous other ways, including through literary circles and literary salons; via publishing houses; literary anthologies; direct mentions to the other authors in their own works; the Society of Authors; nineteenth-century movements including Pre-Raphaelitism or Aestheticism; friendships, and finally, through being influenced by, or comparable to, the British Romantic poets. Some were also linked through being mentioned in literature pertaining to the Thames, such as Ashby-Sterry and De Vere in William Davenport Adams's essay 'The Praise of Thames' (1888). Therefore, despite the ten works being representative of a wider selection of literatures, the selection process for inclusion within this thesis was narrowed by considering the linkage between the writers.

I will now clarify how many of these writers were linked through the late Victorian aesthetic movement. Firstly, the time period examined by this thesis is slightly after the publication of Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of Renaissance* (1873), considered by many to be "the manifesto of aestheticism" (Burdett, 2014, no page number). Within the Preface to this work, Pater claims that the aesthetic critic

> regards all the objects with which he has to do, all works of art and the fairer forms of nature and human life, as powers or forces, producing pleasurable sensations.

(Pater, 1873, p.viii/ix)

This can be likened to the literary works produced by Leslie, the Pennells, and Ashby-Sterry, and how they demonstrate the pleasurable sensations associated with recreational experiences of the Thames. Secondly, in a 1868 review of William Morris's poetry for the *Westminster Review*, Pater was one of the first aesthetes to use the phrase associated with the movement: 'art for art's sake', translated from and influenced by French writer Théophile Gautier's use of the term *l'art pour l'art* (Prettejohn, 1999, p.38). This phrase advocated pleasure above didacticism in relation to art, conflicting with the anthropocentric view of literature as suggested by Chapter One. However, by retrospectively applying an ecocritical approach, I demonstrate how pleasure can be reconfigured as an anthropocentric engagement with the natural landscape.

Pater was a regular attendee at literary gatherings held at fellow aesthete and poet Mary R Robinson's home in Earl's Terrace; other guests included William Michael Rossetti (brother of Dante Gabriel Rossetti), Ford Madox Brown (grandfather of Ford Madox Ford), Oscar Wilde, the Pennells, Gosse, Blind, Morris and James McNeill Whistler amongst others (Jones, 2015; Diedrick, 2017). Whilst many of the writers are linked via late Victorian aestheticism, as a Royal Academician, Leslie belonged to an older generation of art criticism. New art critics, such as the 'aesthetes', were keen to dismantle the monopoly of the Royal Academy for displaying works of art (Jones, 2015). Despite these opposing views in art criticism, the Pennells make three references to Leslie's expert knowledge of the River within their tale, thus establishing another connection between the writers.

The pertinence of late Victorian aestheticism also connects with the ideas of Romanticism that repeatedly emerged when conducting research of both the primary and secondary material. Firstly, the subject of nature is a clear connection with the Romantics

because they wrote of this subject prolifically in their work. Secondly, the fact that Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991) was one of the first established works of ecocriticism within Britain, means that the field of ecocriticism has its origins in the study of Romantic literature. Furthermore, John Parham also argues that "ecological literary critics need to urgently broaden their approach both to Romanticism itself and to the possibilities that lie within later post-Romantic traditions" (2010, p.60), thus highlighting the need to consider echoes of Romanticism within periods including the *fin de siècle*. I agree with Parham's notion of a post-Romantic tradition, and I demonstrate within this thesis how many of these late Victorian writers were influenced by the Romantic poets. For example, both Blind and Allen highly revered Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry (Morton, 2005; Diedrick, 2017), and Gosse, upon reading Keats's *Endymion* (1818), declared "I, too, will be a poet" (cited in Thwaite, 2007, p.59).

The discovery of this network of writers, who were writing about the Thames during the *fin de siècle*, means that this thesis is also partly a network study. Helen Southworth claims that a network study

> undoes the myth of the individual artist working alone [and] constitutes an extremely useful tool or metaphor in terms of looking at traditionally marginalised groups, such as women writers.
> (Southworth, 2010, p.17)

This strengthens the value of the network of Thames writers as identified by this thesis, particularly in relation to the lesser known female writers Elizabeth Pennell and Mathilde Blind who, it would seem, were literary counterparts of the more well-known male writers Swinburne, Pater, Morris, and Wilde. Joanne Shattock (2016) has also emphasised that publishers' offices during the Victorian period were a significant place for literary networks. She argues that they were "where contacts were made, contracts initiated, and literary gossip circulated" (Shattock, 2016, p.510). This is pertinent to Robert Barr, who co-edited *The Idler*

(1892–1911) magazine with fellow Thames-writer Jerome, or Fred M. White and Barr who both published frequently in *Pearson's Magazine* (1896–1939).

The identification of this network of writers also contributed to the *fin de siècle* focus of this study. For this reason, seven of the texts are late Victorian (Leslie, 1881; Blind, 1881; Gosse, 1885; Pennell, 1891; Barr, 1892; Ashby-Sterry, 1896; Allen, 1897) and two are from the Edwardian period (White, 1904; Davidson, 1909). However, De Vere's 'To the Thames' was originally published in *The Search after Proserpine: Recollections of Greece and other Poems* in 1843 and, whilst this study focusses upon the time period between the 1880s and the 1900s, 'To the Thames' is pertinent because it was republished in 1884, and also due to the significance of its content that specifically communicates issues of imperialism during an era of vast expansion for the Empire. The date of the *fin de siècle*, as Lyn Pykett claims in the *Introduction to Reading Fin De Siècle Fictions*, occurred "between 1880 and 1914" (2013, p.1). These years, Pykett argues, were considered to be a period of transition. Similarly, the Thames was also in a period of transition concerning recreation and sanitation, strengthening the appropriateness for a study of the River during the *fin de siècle*. However, Pykett further notes that the idea of this period occupying a transitory status is an outdated perception, and that it is possible to critically view the 'new' *fin de siècle* as a "product of new critical and theoretical perspectives" (2013, p.3). In accordance with this notion, I adopt the relatively new discipline of ecocriticism in order to give a 'new' understanding of *fin de siècle* literature. Pykett further argues that despite degeneration being "an important component of the *fin de siècle* discourse of imperialism [the latter] played a major role in producing *fin de siècle* self-understanding" (2013, p.16). The correlation between degeneration and imperialism conflicts with this thesis, which considers imperialism as a feature of progress in the context of Victorian society and the Thames. However, Pykett's assertion also highlights the significance of

imperialism in forming an identity, in the same way that in Chapter Two I argue that it contributes to national identity.

Another reason for examining the texts within a *fin de siècle* cultural context is that these literary representations of the Thames subscribe to cultural attitudes of that time. In their work on the *fin de siècle,* Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (2000) describe the attitudes that were exercised during the late Victorian period, as shown in the following quotation:

> [T]he Victorians regard[ed] themselves and their society as the acme of human development. But the economic recession of the 1880s, combined with a fear that the great "Age of Empire" might be short-lived, meant that ideas of progress were increasingly countered by fears of cultural – nearly always expressed as racial – decline.
> (Ledger and Luckhurst, 2000, p.1)

The two central narratives identified here by Ledger and Luckhurst, progress and decline, which featured in several literatures of the nineteenth century, can also be applied to the River. Luckhurst later argues that a critical rethink in relation to the late Victorian period has occurred in recent years, whereby an emphasis has been placed upon "scientific naturalism [thus] resulting in a rush to scientize many aspects of social and cultural life" (2002, p.4). Certainly, this thesis addresses the role of ecological science within a cultural context, and this rethink of the nineties that Luckhurst writes about means that the decision to focus on the *fin de siècle* is a timely one. Therefore, blending the science of ecology with literature of this period enables a cultural understanding of relationships between nature and humanity.

Chapter One examines leisure and demonstrates how the Thames was caught up amidst a growing consumerist society, which was committed to pleasure as a relief from the pressures of industrial life, revealing a predominantly anthropocentric relationship with the

natural world. Whilst Leslie's *Our River*, the Pennells' *Stream of Pleasure*, and Ashby-Sterry's *A Tale of the Thames*, exemplify how the middle classes were consuming the Thames through leisure and literature, each one offers a different perspective. Leslie offers an artist's viewpoint that created an aestheticisation of the Thames; the Pennells, as Americans, afforded an international tourist's perspective that illustrates a commodification of the River, and Ashby-Sterry writes from the position of an experienced boatman with excellent knowledge of the water, and his novel indicates a heightened emphasis on materialism as the River traverses towards the City. The development of different modes of transport, including the railway and steamships, had a direct impact on the Thames during the nineteenth century. Tim Youngs writes that "[n]ew modes of travel brought about new ways of seeing and writing" (2013, p.62). This is evident within all three texts, and therefore they are examined as examples of travel writing that reveal a new way of viewing the Thames during the *fin de siècle* that correlates with the Victorian ethos of progress.

The three works are explored using an ecocritical approach, but there are specific areas of analysis for each one. Through Leslie's work, there is the scrutiny of a perceived ownership of the Thames and I offer an analysis of how the River is presented visually and through his use of language, and also how this evokes echoes of Romanticism. Within the Pennells' tale, an exploration of how picturesque tourism commodifies the River is undertaken, alongside consideration of the interconnectedness between weather formations surrounding the waterway and commercialism, demonstrating a hierarchical usage of the waterway that favours the middle classes. Finally, the notion of travel on the Thames as a spiritual journey that satiates human desire is considered through Ashby-Sterry's novel, along with the differences between rural and urban representations of the River, and the eco-cultural link between music and the Thames is also suggested.

Bate's ecocritical work *The Song of the Earth* (2000) is pertinent to Chapter One because of the ways in which it specifically addresses the relationship between humanity and nature through leisure. Bate argues that an "encounter with nature is a form of recreation, it is also an act of re-creation" (2001, p.132). This shows that whilst humanity's engagement with nature, such as boating along the Thames, is an act of leisure where nature is enjoyed, it can simultaneously be an act of leisure where nature is changed. Drawing on Bate's argument, I argue that whilst the primary aim of these writers was to highlight the pleasure induced from recreation along the Thames, a consequence of this was a consumerist approach to the natural world that opened up a new sphere within society whereby hierarchical strictures were at play. I suggest that in addition to an anthropocentric view of the Thames, a social ecology (Clark, 2011) emerges within these three works. My analysis is also indebted to Alison Byerly's *Are We There Yet? Virtual Travel and Victorian Realism* (2013), for her work on travel and the picturesque. It also refers to Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* (1973), because of the emphasis placed on nature and culture in the context of capital.

Chapter One's focus on leisure through domestic travel on the Thames occurred as a result of a consumerist culture stemming from the Industrial Revolution. However, the River was also a gateway for international travel and commerce to the rest of the world. Writing about travelling between countries in Victorian Britain, Marjorie Morgan argues that

> travelling removes people from their familiar milieu and confronts them with the other, the foreign. This confrontation […] forces them to reflect on the familiar, making them more aware of how it defines them individually and collectively.
>
> (Morgan, 2001, p.2)

Whilst this can be applied to a more localised travel of the Thames, it also reminds us of the connection that the Thames has, as a travelling space, to other nations. This removal was

attained through the physical acts of leisure and travel as Chapter One demonstrates, but also through the imaginative reflection on the Thames within poetry, thus enabling the gleaning of different identities.

In highlighting the representation of national identity through the Thames, Chapter Two draws on Tricia Cusack's *Riverscapes and National Identities,* and adopts her argument that the Thames "represented past, present, and future in relation to a complex interplay of constructions of 'Englishness' and 'Britishness'" (2010, p.16). The Thames was viewed as a contributor to Britain's national identity by the rest of the world because of the dockland's role in Britain's economy. However, Chapter Two also interrogates the stability of a British and English national identity by examining four poems by poets from four different nations: De Vere was Irish; Blind was born in Germany but "described herself as English" (Diedrick, 2017, p.4); Gosse was English and Davidson was Scottish. I argue that the Thames functions as a way of uniting different national identities, and proposing new identities such as a natural one. This collapse of a predominant British or English identity is contingent with tensions that arose during the late Victorian period. Margaret Linley argues that "the destabilizing effects of empire were beginning to rattle the fragile construct of a British nation that would become increasingly understood as 'English'" (2002, p.424). Instead, I suggest that the poetic imaginings of the Thames open up new ways of demonstrating the interconnection of different national identities.

Chapter Two highlights the significance of poetic form in the construction of national identity and this is determined through the use of 'high forms' including the sonnet, the elegy, and the ode. These forms have traditionally been used to discuss important or thoughtful subjects including imperialism, national identity or sovereignty, and therefore they

assist in the literary elevation of the Thames. As such, Chapter Two examines De Vere's Shakespearean sonnet 'To the Thames'; Blind's Petrarchan sonnet 'To the Obelisk: During the Great Frost, 1881'; Gosse's elegy 'The Shepherd of the Thames', and finally, John Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment', which I argue, adopts characteristics that are reminiscent of the traditional ode. The decision for selecting both a Shakespearean sonnet and a Petrarchan sonnet was made because their structural differences afford different ways of reading these works through an ecocritical lens.

I argue that each of the four poems can be read as ecopoems, as they reflect the stirrings of nature working as a process alongside a functioning symbiosis between the natural world and humanity. The poems are representative of a wider selection of poetry that associates the Thames with the theme of national identity (see Appendix Two). However, their selection is warranted due to the network of writers that situated the River amid a sphere of progress. For example, Blind, Gosse, and Davidson were all familiar with one another, either through correspondence or attendance at literary salons or dinners for the Society of Authors (see Appendix Three). Moreover, De Vere was revered by Gosse, cited by Adams as a forerunner of praiseworthy Thames literature, and influenced by Wordsworth, like Blind was influenced by Shelley.

The link between the ecopoem and identity is formed through the idea of symbiosis, which I argue to be a fundamental feature, meaning that humanity and nature have a mutually beneficial relationship in the context of the poem. The relationship determines a construction of identity for the human (author or reader), whilst nature and its environments are foregrounded. I specifically refer here to national identity, and the rationale for selecting national identity over other modes of identity, such as gender, was for three reasons. Firstly,

there was a strong correlation between nationhood and poetics during the Victorian period. In reference to Tennyson's poem 'To the Queen' (1878), Linley argues that a connection can be made

> between political empire and the imaginative empire of poets […] thereby locating dispersed individuals and connecting them emotionally and imaginatively to a cultural community across the vast geographical spaces of empire.
>
> (Linley, 2002, p.421)

Secondly, the Thames and national identity have served as commemorative themes within poetry for centuries, according to a *fin de siècle* essay by Adams (1888) that praises the River. Finally, my primary research revealed a high volume of links to nationhood and the Thames. Although, to some extent, these poems go beyond evoking national identities and instead suggest identities of place, such as Arcadia in Gosse's poem, or even identities of displacement or exile.

Through ecocritical research from a range of sources, I propose that there are four pertinent features that can be applied to poetry to determine whether it can be regarded as an ecopoem. These four features include an evident symbiosis between man and nature; the representation of nature as a process; the consideration of poetic language as natural, and finally the construction of a bioregion. Each poem does not need to adopt all four features of the ecopoem, as the four selected poems demonstrate. The features are explained in more depth under the heading 'An Ecocritical Approach', later in this Introduction. In relation to 'ecopoetics' in the recent *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, Kate Rigby (2016) claims that critics cannot agree on one definition of the ecopoem, and she points out that Bate rejects the political, or environmentalist agenda, in defining the ecopoem. In an attempt to define ecopoetry, John Elder (2002) offers two propositions towards the concept: one whereby he places poetry as a construct of humanity and, just as humanity's mind and body stems from the

earth, so does poetry. In the second proposition he argues that "poetry itself can manifest the intricate, adaptive, and evolving balance of an ecosystem" (Elder, 2002, p.ix). The four characteristics that I consider relevant in examining the four selected poems as ecopoems resonate with both of Elder's propositions. Timothy Clark questions whether ecopoetry is an emerging subgenre, or whether it can be applied to any poetry that deals with a "green subject matter" (2011, p.139). It is certainly viable that poems may have a deliberately environmental or 'green' agenda, and that in some way they are considered to be activist poems that may suggest an ecocentricism, however, this is not my argument. Instead, I propose that the ecopoem offers a cultural understanding of humanity's relationship with nature. This supports what J. Scott Bryson (2002) terms the 'ecopoem' in that they can be read as poems which augment the interconnected relationship between the nonhuman and human environment. I argue that a symbiosis exists whereby the ecopoem functions as a cultural ecosystem in that, through representations of different ecological processes, representations of identity are formed.

Bryson further describes the ecopoem as an "offshoot of nature poetry" (2002, p.5), and that whilst features of Romanticism still exist within 'ecopoetry', the ecopoem transcends this tradition and instead adopts current debates and concerns. The importance placed on poetic form by the Romantics is significant in our understanding of late Victorian poetry. Moreover, British Romanticism forms part of Britain's cultural heritage and therefore it is significant when forming an argument in relation to national identity. Similarly, Pre-Raphaelitism is drawn upon briefly in Chapter Two as Blind's poem can be seen to echo the style of Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Boos, 2004). In addition, there is also the connection made between Millais's pre-Raphaelite painting *Ophelia* (1851-2) and Gosse's poem through their representations of floral imagery and the Thames. These links to Romanticism and Pre-

Raphaelitism also contribute to the network of writers that were writing about the Thames during the *fin de siècle*, either by being influenced by the former or through socialising in literary circles.

The methodology of Chapter Two includes the allusion of De Vere's 'To the Thames' to the workings of a natural ecosystem that symbiotically functions alongside the implicitness of a cultural ecosystem, where national identities are realised. Through the implicitness of the water cycle (wind, air, river), together with De Vere's use of rhetorical devices (including the apostrophe and personification) and a Shakespearean sonnet form to address and describe the Thames, a tension is formed in the poem between natural power and the political power of the Empire. Whereas, Blind's use of the Petrarchan sonnet structure in 'To the Obelisk' creates a bioregional effect through the weather climate and the natural landscape. This contributes to the idea that an ecopoem functions through a poetic structural symbiosis because both Egyptian and British national identities are linked to the natural world through the idea of nature as a process. A sense of place is created in Gosse's 'The Shepherd of the Thames' through the reference to the River, but also through the speaker's physical presence in London, and his metaphysical presence in the English countryside that resonates with pastoralism. Sustainability and memory contribute to the formation of a bioregion within Gosse's poem. It also functions like a cultural ecosystem that determines a symbiosis between the Thames and the English countryside that symbolises national identity, as augmented by the pastoral and Arcadia. This ecosystem is further enhanced by the mourning (a primary theme of the elegy) that takes place within the poem, and the way this interacts with the natural landscape that includes the flora and fauna, as in images such as that of the willow. Finally, Davidson's poem reveals how industrialisation and nature intersect within the context of the City, and further highlights how they function together as an eco-cultural system to negotiate

different identities. The biodiversity contained within Davidson's poem is also traced to British Romanticism. Drawing on the work of his biographer, John Sloan (1995), Chapter Two also considers Davidson's knowledge of science to highlight his ecological awareness, which is deployed within his poem to orchestrate a symbiosis between the facets of national identity and the natural landscape.

Sanitation is considered in the final chapter of this thesis because until relevant changes had been applied and realised, it could not be considered to be an area of progress. The third chapter examines three short stories: Barr's 'The Doom of London'; Allen's 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe' and White's 'The River of Death', and considers sanitation in two ways: an environmental sanitation in Barr's and Allen's stories that acts as a metaphor for nineteenth-century sanitation, and physical sanitation in White's story. The significance of the short story form is explained in the introduction to the chapter, whereas some background to nineteenth-century sanitation and the Thames is referred to here. These stories were selected because they each represent the River in a different way, thus enabling a different analysis for each story. The Thames is evoked in Barr's story through the fog, and therefore its representation is implicit; Allen's story is set within the locale of the Thames Valley, and White's narrative is based upon the suggested polluting of the River. Whilst also being representative of wider literature relating to the Thames, the short story, and sanitation, each of the stories have also been considered in relation to one another in a number of critical works (Bleiler, 1993; Parrinder, 1995; Bulfin, 2015; Tattersdill, 2016).

The titles of each story, particularly the words 'doom', 'catastrophe', and 'death', all suggest a pejorative and possibly, degenerative, association with the Thames that is at odds with the aim of this thesis. Furthermore, as Pamela K. Gilbert points out, the Thames

and its sewage served as a "metaphor for the problems of the city" (2005, p.91). However, because the stories each place an emphasis on the authority of nature to cleanse environments (both natural and artificial), I argue that all three works were progressive in the sense that they convey an awareness of nature, and/or ecology through sanitation. In addition, the implementation of the Thames Preservation Act in 1885 meant that the Victorians were prioritising cleanliness and hygiene in relation to their River. Despite the pollution that still existed in and around the Thames, there was much to celebrate during the *fin de siècle* given the ceasing of cholera outbreaks, the development of a more effective sewerage system, and the political focus on sanitation.

The sanitation described within Chapter Three refers specifically to the cleansing of natural environments, and the importance of maintaining a clean river and surrounding natural world, as the three short stories illustrate. Now, the sanitation of natural environments could be seen as a fundamentally anthropocentric concept due to its benefit for human health, or as Chapter One exemplified, its advantage for humanity's recreation. However, Chapter Three recognises sanitation as fundamentally ecocentric within the context of selected short stories that draw upon the apocalyptic narrative and that contain representations of the Thames. I argue that through various ecological systems (such as the water cycle, the evaporation of water vapours, the eruption of a volcano, or the biological contamination of a waterway), the natural environment becomes sanitised and this results in the transformation of place. The fact that these changes are prompted by nature means that the stories can be read as ecocentric, and furthermore, nature's cleansing of the earth could also be viewed as symbolic of the sanitation that had been an area of Victorian social progress. The latter reading once again points towards a sanitation that was beneficial to humanity, and thus an anthropocentric representation emerges. However, as the reading is symbolic it then

becomes secondary to the primary ecocentric reading that is already taking place within the narrative itself.

An ecocentric reading of representations of the Thames within the three short stories was determined through the application of Terry Gifford's ecocritical theory of the post-pastoral. Gifford's study refers to the work of Lawrence Buell (1995) on the pastoral, which is where I observed the connection between ecocentricism and apocalypticism. For this reason, and coupled with the implicit apocalypticism contained within all three short stories, reference to Buell's work is made here:

> Just as the metaphor of the web of interdependence is central to the ethical force of the contemporary ecocentric critique of anthropocentrism, so is the metaphor of apocalypse central to ecocentricism's projection of the future of a civilization that refuses to transform itself according to the doctrine of the web.
>
> (Buell, 1995, pp.284-285)

This is pertinent to Chapter Three's exploration of the three short stories, as they each highlight an implicit apocalypticism through three natural catastrophes: deadly fog, volcanic eruption, and a (suggested) outbreak of bubonic plague. Environmental historian Peter Coates notes "that environmental threats (like everything else) are socially constructed and culturally defined" (1998, p.185). Therefore, the environmental threats of fog, volcanic eruptions, and diseases spread by water, that are represented within the three short stories, each stem from the problems of London fog in an industrial city; nineteenth-century global volcanic eruptions; and, finally, the pollution that plagued the Thames during the Victorian period. In defining environmental threats through short stories, each author transmits an ecological message, via periodicals of the *fin de siècle*, to the reader.

One of the reasons why Victorian ecocriticism is a particularly worthwhile area of cultural exploration, and Parham (2002) similarly makes this point, is that the term 'ecology' was coined as early as 1866 by German Darwinist Ernst Haeckel (Buell, 2005). This means that the study of place, and therefore the topic of humanity's relationship with the natural world was beginning to take shape during the Victorian period. Most recently, Laurence W. Mazzeno and Ronald D. Morrison have published *Victorian Writers and the Environment* (2016), a collection of essays that contain an analysis of selected authors including Ruskin, Jefferies, Dickens, Hardy, Browning, and the Brontës. Mazzeno and Morrison argue that establishing ecological associations with these writers could offer "a reconsideration of the value of some works included in the traditional canon and expand our interests beyond the novels, poems, and essays that were the staple of Victorian literature courses for nearly a century" (2016, p.10). Similarly, I demonstrate that by offering a 'new' way of reading Victorian writers, it is possible to unearth a number of underexplored authors of the period that contribute to our ecological way of reading humanity's relationship with the natural environment.

Furthermore, a study that combines ecology and literature is very much in accordance with the sensibility of the Victorian age. Luckhurst points out that "[t]here seemed to be 'two cultures' of allegedly interdisciplinary engagements with the late Victorian epoch, still divided between history of science and cultural studies" (2002, p.5). Ecocriticism merges this divide between science and culture, by offering a way of reading ecology through literature. Parham has also outlined parameters for a Victorian ecology, which he argues relates to the Victorian interest in "evolutionary theory and thermodynamics – that would come to form ecological science [and also the Victorian] proximity to the origins of environmental activism and ecological politics" (Parham, 2010, p.64). Whilst I do not address issues of environmental activism within this thesis, the ecological and cultural connection between the

sun and the Thames and the politics of capital in relation to the River's governance is made clear.

The chapters are organised in this way because of the underlying ecocritical narrative that emerged whilst reading the primary material. Through consideration of the themes, genres, and an application of ecocriticism to each text, I found that a predominant relationship existed between the Thames and humanity: anthropocentric, symbiotic, and ecocentric. In coining the term ecocriticism (discussed further below), William Rueckert claimed that adopting an anthropocentric vision would lead to an "ecological nightmare [which he describes as] a monstrously overpopulated, almost completely polluted, all but totally humanized planet" (1996, p.113). I suggest that parts of this image could relate to London during the nineteenth century, given mass migration to the City due to industrialisation that then resulted in a polluted Thames. Rueckert's notion means that temporally, an ecocentric vision would come after an anthropocentric one and therefore, logically, the theme of leisure, which promotes an anthropocentric vision, is examined in Chapter One, whilst national identity and a symbiosis that is in between the two (because it is neither human-centred nor nature-centred) is explored in Chapter Two, and sanitation and ecocentricism are the focus of Chapter Three.

An Ecocritical Approach

Having considered a range of debates concerning the definition of ecocriticism, I concluded that there are two principle ways that we can categorise the term. Firstly, ecocriticism is a way for readers to gain a cultural understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature. This may be a more 'ecological understanding' such as knowledge of ecosystems or natural processes, or a 'reliance-based understanding' whereby readers form a knowledge concerning humanity's dependence upon nature for a variety of reasons, including health, aesthetics and/or

beauty. The former can also refer to how nature relies upon humanity, for example it is people who, recognising responsibility toward nature, seek to avoid polluting natural spaces. This reliance can also be interpreted as symbiotic, whereby the relationship between nature and humanity is mutually beneficial. For instance, a natural space such as a river can forge human identities whilst functioning to physically sustain humanity, such as by providing water. At the same time, humanity may have different motives for using a river including leisure or health, and for this reason they aim to preserve these natural spaces. Secondly, we can categorise ecocriticism as relating to a more deliberate and/or radical environmental literary text.

The application of ecocriticism within this thesis predominantly refers to the first category, mentioned above. However, it is worth noting that a more deliberate environmentalist agenda is possible within some of the selected works. For example, through consideration of Grant Allen's scientific background (discussed in Chapter Three), it is possible that through his story he attempts to rouse an environmental consciousness within the reader. Having mentioned the author's background, I do not suggest authorial intention in relation to the interpretation of ecosystems or natural processes, but rather, it is the application of ecocriticism that enables the reading of the relationship between humanity and nature within the ten selected works.

As I chose to write about a specifically English landscape, it felt appropriate to adopt a primarily British ecocritical discourse. However, in the Introduction to *Writing the Environment*: *Ecocriticism and Literature* (Kerridge and Sammells, 1998), Richard Kerridge points out that "ecocriticism first took shape in the USA" (Kerridge, 1998, p.8). Since Kerridge's assertion, there has been a wealth of British ecocriticism that has been published

which is pertinent to the aims of this thesis. Kerridge also offers another validation for the use of British ecocriticism in the study of British landscapes when he argues the following:

> [A] British [ecocritical] perspective has to accommodate the densely populated and suburban character of most of the British countryside, and, most importantly, the historical meanings assigned to 'nature' in Britain, particularly the identification of rural life with feudalist traditions and hierarchies, in opposition to urban capitalism and its forms of social mobility (an opposition which has both reactionary and Marxist versions).
>
> (Kerridge, 1998, p.8)

The fact that Kerridge specifically addresses the capitalist and hierarchical aspect of 'nature' as an essential criteria of a British ecocritical perspective highlights the significance, within ecocritical theory, of reading the Thames amid capitalist discourse, an avenue that Chapter One explores. In the Introduction for Parham's collection *The Environmental Tradition in English Literature*, Louise Westling also makes the point that "just as English and American literature are interwoven traditions, so too are the ecocritical movements in the two spheres" (2002, p.1). On this basis, American ecocritical debates are drawn upon where appropriate as a way of framing these arguments, and also in an attempt to define the term ecocriticism, in order to establish its congruence for this thesis.

To consider the definition of the term 'ecocriticism', we must first refer to the origin of the word. According to a Western Literature Association Meeting, entitled 'Defining Ecocritical Theory and Practice' held in 1994 at Salt Lake City, the term 'ecocriticism' was coined by Rueckert in his 1978 essay 'Literature and Ecology: an experiment in ecocriticism'. In this essay, Rueckert argued that ecocriticism was concerned with "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (1996, p.107). Given the emphasis placed on the ecological features of the Thames in this thesis (such as the ecosystems, biodiversity,

and weather formations), Rueckert's definition is certainly helpful. However, despite acknowledging Rueckert's contribution to the term, in order to define the literary discipline many critics (Barry, 2002; Abrams, 2005) refer back to Cheryll Glotfelty's definition of ecocriticism.

Published in her later work *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment [before adding that it is] an earth-centred approach to literary studies" (1996, p.xviii). This definition is appropriate for this thesis because I examine how the Thames functions ecologically within the literature of the *fin de siècle*. Glotfelty further makes the point that "all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it" (Glotfelty, 1996, p.xix). This premise is significant because this study considers how leisure, national identity, and sanitation, are all connected to the Thames through differing relationships including anthropocentric, symbiotic, and ecocentric. Through these, in accordance with Glotfelty's definition, the River affects culture and vice versa.

Peter Barry further claims that Glotfelty's revival of the term also sought to replace the "critical field that had previously been known as 'the study of nature writing'" (2002, p.249). This seems to suggest that the terms nature and ecology can be used interchangeably, but it is also possible that 'nature writing' had become an outdated concept. Gifford makes reference to a 'Special Green Issue' of *Poetry Wales* that provoked a debate on the term 'nature poetry', where he concluded that "old writing about 'nature' then, was 'merely descriptive' [and that in] our own time, 'nature poetry' has become a pejorative term" (Gifford, 2011, p.26/7). This suggests that the study of 'nature writing' did not have the authority, or the validity, to critically go beyond the 'descriptive', or the aesthetic. Instead, the term

ecocriticism opened up the field to include the analysis of ecological processes or systems, and how these could be understood through literature.

Kate Soper (1995) has argued that the word 'nature' has become quite a nebulous term and as such, it can refer to both the natural environment and humanity. However, whilst this thesis does refer to both nature and ecology, to establish clarity, unless specified otherwise, references to 'nature' refers specifically to nonhuman nature, whereas ecology refers to the natural environment and its processes, including its ecosystems, its ecosphere, and its biodiversity. This debate concerning nature and ecology is addressed once again in Chapter Two when I argue that the four selected poems function specifically as 'ecopoems', instead of referring to them as a form of nature poetry.

Studies that examine the field of ecocriticism, including Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* (2004) and Clark's *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* (2011), are referred to throughout this thesis as they offer the fundamental essentials of ecocritical thought. Garrard's work is predominantly drawn upon in Chapter Three in relation to environmental rhetoric, environmental apocalypse, and his writings on pollution, whereas Clark's study features in Chapters One and Two to elicit understanding in defining ecocritical terms such as anthropocentrism, social ecology, ecopoetry, and bioregionalism. Clark's more recent work, *Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept* (2015), is referred to in the Conclusion because it considers the potential impact that ecocriticism has upon society's attitudes and behaviours towards the natural world.

In recent years, critic Jesse Oak Taylor published an article entitled 'Where is Victorian Ecocriticism?' (2015) in the journal *Victorian Literature and Culture*. His question resonates with the originality of this thesis, as late Victorian ecocriticism is a largely

underexplored area. Taylor observes that the field of ecocriticism is dominated by studies on Romanticism and nineteenth-century American literature, but states that there is a notable absence in the field of Victorian ecocriticism. The fact that Bate's *Romantic Ecology* is perceived by many as the first landmark study in British ecocriticism, supports this view. Clark argues that Bate's work reaffirmed "the importance of the natural world as a topic for literary criticism" (2011, p.19). Taylor concedes that his title, 'Where is Victorian Ecocriticism?', may be somewhat of an exaggeration as he then offers some examples, including Bate's later work *The Song of the Earth*, which examines the work of Thomas Hardy, and also Buell's study *Writing for an Endangered World,* which critically refers to Dickens's work.

Noticeably, Taylor does not mention Parham (2002), who asked a similar question thirteen years prior to Taylor. Parham's work, 'Was there a Victorian Ecology?' is a chapter taken from his edited collection *The Environmental Tradition in English Literature*. This collection ecocritically examines literature from a number of different literary movements, and Parham's chapter opens up the debate of a Victorian ecology. He continues this theme in his more expansive work on the field of Victorian ecocriticism: *Green Man Hopkins: Poetry and Victorian Ecology* (2010), and furthermore in his essay 'Dickens in the City: Science, Technology, Ecology in the Novels of Charles Dickens' (2010). In his work on Hopkins, Parham writes that "preservationism is, most accurately, the cultural equivalent of conservationism" (2010, p.15). These terms are pertinent to this thesis, because it places emphasis on the fact that the Thames Conservancy's implementation of the 1885 Thames Preservation Act was to promote recreation, despite it purportedly being about cleansing the River. Parham further claims that his reading of Hopkins's work is "based upon the two-fold definition of ecology […] as a scientific philosophy constructed around ecosystems theory; and as a corresponding theory of society organised around the sustainable use of that energy" (2010,

p.28). I adopt a similar approach to Parham in my examination of the relationship between humanity and nature through themes of social progress, including leisure, national identity, and sanitation, alongside ecological aspects of the Thames such as ecosystems and biodiversity.

Another, more recent, work of Victorian ecocriticism that Taylor does acknowledge, is Allen MacDuffie's *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination* (2014), which Taylor regards as "[a] key work in Victorian studies, ecocriticism, and the energy humanities" (2015, p.886). Allen too, like this thesis, refers to a discourse of degeneracy but he frames it within the context of the sun and energy flow:

> [A D]iscourse of degeneration first arose in England in *The Lancet* in the 1860s, which called attention to the serious, long-term public health issues arising as a consequence of industrial pollution, improper waste disposal, and overcrowding.
>
> (MacDuffie, 2014, p.225)

Here, MacDuffie makes the connection between degenerative discourse and pollution, which is similar to the way in which the Thames was represented due to its polluted state during the nineteenth century. Drawing on the laws of thermodynamics and science writing, MacDuffie makes extensive use of Dickens's work, in addition to the work of Stevenson, Conrad, and Wells. Whilst full-length books in the field of Victorian ecocriticism remain quite scarce, the discipline is not entirely lacking in criticism. Several journal articles or essays have been published in this field, which include works on Morris (Faldet, 2007; Mayer, 2011), Richard Jefferies (Mayer, 2011), Gerard Manley Hopkins (Day, 2004; Knickerbocker, 2012) and Joseph Conrad (McCarthy, 2009).

Rueckert (1978) addresses the subject of poetry, ecology, and symbiosis, and it is from this connection that I suggest the first feature of the ecopoem: that the ecopoem

demonstrates a symbiosis between humanity and nature. Rueckert reflects on Ian McHarg's definition of symbiosis in *Design with Nature* (1969), which is the "cooperative arrangement that permits increase in the levels of order" (cited in Rueckert, 1996, p.120). From this, Rueckert considers the creative process of forming a poem and deriving meaning from it, before concluding with the following statement:

> The central endeavour, then, of any ecological poetics would have to be a working model for the processes of transformation which occur as one moves from the stored creative energy of the poem, to its release by reading, teaching, or writing, to its transmutation into meaning, and finally to its application, in an ecological value system […] This work could transform culture and help bring our destruction of the biosphere to an end.
>
> (Rueckert, 1996, p.120)

Now, Rueckert's argument stems from a deep ecological perspective, but nevertheless, his articulation of the different stages of ecological poetics resonates with a symbiosis between human creativity or culture and ecological processes, which is pertinent to this thesis. Unlike Rueckert, I do not propose that reading poetry in this way has the potential to transform our relationship with the natural environment physically. Conversely, I argue that identifying the symbiosis in each poem, opens up a cultural understanding of our relationship with nature.

The symbiotic relationship that I argue is a defining feature of the ecopoem draws on Bryson's claim in *Ecopoetry: A Critical Introduction* (2002), where he suggests that one of the ecopoem's characteristics is "an emphasis on maintaining an ecocentric perspective that recognizes the interdependent nature of the world" (2002, p.5/6). I make use of the interdependence that Bryson suggests, but take it in a different direction in order to consider the theme of national identity where a symbiosis is revealed, as opposed to Bryson's ecocentric claim. This is because my argument focuses on both poetic form and the ecology of the Thames, and how these contribute to the projection of national identity, which means that the

emphasis that Bryson places on an 'ecocentric perspective' is lessened. A more apt concept for my study is that of the interconnectedness of humanity and the natural world working like a 'mesh', as proposed by Timothy Morton in *The Ecological Thought* (2010). His ideas are useful for my argument because the suggestive symbiosis that he refers to within his work is akin to the way in which I examine the relationship of the Thames and national identity.

Gifford highlights this reciprocity in his insightful study *Green Voices: Understanding Contemporary Nature Poetry* (1995). In an Introduction to the second edition of his work, Gifford addresses the term 'ecopoem' because his focus in the first edition had been on what he thought was an emerging 'green poetry' as opposed to ecopoetry, which he acknowledges as a misinterpretation. Congruent to my understanding of the ecopoem is Gifford's assertion that "[h]uman beings are in a continuously active relationship with a dynamic natural world […] Poetry which suggests static notions of nature and of our relationship with it tends towards pastoral" (2011, p.158). The ecopoem, I argue, rejects the notion of nature as static, or the simple aestheticisation of nature, but rather, the second feature of the ecopoem is the representation of nature as a process. However, an examination of Gosse's 'The Shepherd of the Thames' demonstrates how the pastoral can also function as an ecopoem, despite its idealisation of nature. Gifford's other work, *Pastoral* (1999), is also referred to within this chapter to forge an understanding in constructing an ecopoem through this aesthetic.

This second feature of nature as a process has its origins in the work of the American ecocritic Buell, who argues that one characteristic of an environmental text should be a "sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given" (1995, p.8). Quite rightly, Bryson (2002) suggests that Buell's claims can be applied to poetry. However,

given that I am not advocating the ecopoem as an explicitly environmental text per se, or one that harbours specifically green issues, my second feature of the ecopoem departs from Buell here. The idea of nature as a process overlaps with Elder's description of an ecosystem, where he writes "ecosystems are, above all, shifting fields of adaptation. Populations respond continuously both to each other and to changes in the topography, hydrology, soils, and climate of their bioregions" (2002, p.ix). This quotation highlights nature as a process but also signals the third and fourth features of the ecopoem, which includes the idea that a poem can operate as an ecosystem and also the pertinence of bioregionalism in constructing the ecopoem.

Consideration of a poet's use of language is pertinent to the third feature of the ecopoem. As such, my second chapter draws upon Scott Knickerbocker's study *Ecopoetics: The Language of Nature, the Nature of Language* (2012). This work argues that the process of associating language with the world means that figuration, including apostrophe, metaphors, and personification, is constructed by humans and as such belongs to nature (Knickerbocker, 2012, p.1). Knickerbocker questions whether "humans (and their constructions, including language) [are] a part of nature, or are humans and nature distinct categories? The answer must be both: humans are distinct yet inseparable from the rest of nature" (2012, p.4). It is this premise that I explore representations of the Thames in each of these poems through the use of language. Knickerbocker's work is used to shape the argument that the River functions as a symbol of national identity but more specifically, that the form of poetry in itself functions as a cultural ecosystem by giving us, as readers, a consciousness to perceive our identity within society.

Clark explains that "some critics, most notably John Elder […] push hard the notion of a poem itself as forming a kind of 'ecosystem', an interesting if forced analogy"

(2011, p.140). Yet, Kerridge foregrounds this idea by stating that "[a]nalogies between ecosystems and the way culture works are a strong tradition in ecocriticism" (2014, p.369). In continuation of this tradition, and by adopting Knickerbocker's theory that "artifice *is* natural", I argue that it is possible for poetry to operate as an ecosystem. Rather than it being a 'forced analogy', as Clark claims, we can make the connection between a natural ecosystem and poetic form by observing definitions of both an 'ecosystem' and 'poetry'. An ecosystem is a "biological system composed of all the organisms found in a particular physical environment, interacting with it and with each other" (*OED*). Meanwhile, poetry is defined as a "composition in verse or some comparable patterned arrangement of language in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by the use of distinctive style and rhythm" (*OED*). Notably, both are processes which rely on the interaction between human nature and nonhuman nature (significantly, in the case of nature poetry), or language and natural landscapes such as the Thames.

One of Gifford's defining features of a poem can contribute to our understanding of a poem as a cultural ecosystem, which I argue makes up one of the key features of the ecopoem. He argues that a poem is "a site where writer and reader negotiate that dialectic of personal and social meanings" (Gifford, 2011, p.39). Comparatively, the outcome of an ecosystem affords the existence of life upon the earth whereas ecopoetry enables us to make sense of this existence by affording us with identities that can be deconstructed through the natural environment, including a national identity. Therefore, the relationship between nonhuman and human nature manifests itself through poetry that enables the individual to understand the Self, and also the physical existence which they behold. In other words, having an identity helps us understand our function, our purpose, our heritage, and this, I would argue, is constructed through De Vere's, Blind's, Gosse's and Davidson's poems,

which describe nature or, more specifically, the Thames and its environments in relation to national identity.

The fourth feature of the ecopoem relates to the significance of place and, more specifically, the construction of a bioregion. Tom Lynch, Cheryll Glotfelty and Karla Armbruster (2012) have considered the differences between bioregional criticism and ecocriticism, and how the two overlap. Whilst both positions consider the relationship between culture and nature, Lynch, Glotfelty and Armbruster observe that bioregionalism is a difficult discipline to categorise, and that it focusses more "on how literary works relate to specific bioregions or contribute to bioregional practice and imagination" (2012, p.16). In my analysis I draw upon these ideas but also refer to Clark's (2011) definition of the bioregional, where he foregoes the generalisation of place in favour of a specificity to determine the natural landscape. Some consideration is also given to Robert L. Thayer's earlier bioregional ideas from his work *LifePlace: Bioregional Thought and Practice* (2003).

One cannot categorise any poem as an ecopoem, simply because it refers to nature. One way of distinguishing between the nature poem and an ecopoem is through consideration of Henry Ellison's sonnet 'To the Thames, Above Richmond Bridge' (1844, see Appendix One). Arguably, this poem functions as an example of nature poetry that was steeped in the Romantic tradition, despite its publication during the Victorian period. This relatively unknown poem draws upon the aesthetic of the Thames by referring to the "beauty of the scene" (1844, l.9), as the River is described as a "gentle stream" (1844, l.1) or "a gentle, faithful guide" (1844, l.9). This soft description is in concert with Gifford's (1999) description of nature poetry of the past that did not contribute to the notion of nature as an ecological process, and

this is demonstrated in Ellison's sonnet where emphasis is placed on the aesthetic beauty of the Thames.

Much attention has been given here to defining the ecopoem, and this is because many of the ecopoem's features that I put forward are also visible in non-poetic forms that are examined in this thesis. For example, the first feature of a symbiosis is evoked by Ashby-Sterry's travel writing novel through the pantheism that is suggested when the characters embark upon a spiritual journey to discover the River's source. The second feature, nature as a process, is also evident in Ashby-Sterry's novel when he describes the natural sounds emanating from the waterway, or on a grander scale, there is Allen's erupting volcano in 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe'. It should also be noted here that one of the issues that makes up the third feature of poetry working as a cultural ecosystem, where artifice is viewed as natural, is at odds with the apparent dismissal of artifice in Chapter One. However, this is because of the role that genre played within this thesis, whereby the texts in Chapter One were examined as examples of travel writing, and arguably artifice does not feature as prominently here as it does in poetry. All of these examples remind us that these ecocritical concerns can be viewed within different genres, and amid a range of themes.

The Nineteenth-Century Thames

In 1885, nature writer Richard Jefferies wrote that "[a] river like the Thames [should provide] pleasure for all" (1944, p.129). This statement is bound up with Jefferies's call for the protection of flora and fauna along the waterway. Thus, on the one hand Jefferies is advocating the naturalness of the River, whilst on the other hand he is promoting the Thames as a source of human pleasure. This 'pleasure' can be reached in an active, or functional, way through leisure, for example swimming or boating. It can also be attained by simply admiring the

beauty of the River and thus taking pleasure in enjoying its environment. Jefferies further outlines the viewpoint of both a sportsman and a naturalist when he declares that "the state of the river is one of chaos. There is no order" (1944, p.99). He is referring here to the changing role of the Thames towards the end of the nineteenth century, which impacted on the management of the waterway. However, there is also a hint of ambiguity in his statement that suggests he is commenting on the way that various people with different interests were interacting with the River. For example, sportsmen looked upon the Thames as a source of enjoyment, whereas the naturalist appreciated the ecological aspect of the River and is therefore likely to be more interested in preserving its waters. This image of the Thames sheds some light on the multifaceted way that the River was represented in nineteenth-century literature.

The nineteenth century was a period of vast change for the Thames and this is one of the reasons that makes it viable for literary exploration. As a source of drinking water for those living in its environment, outbreaks of cholera in the 1830s, 1840s, 1850s and 1860s meant that the River was held responsible for the deaths of thousands of Londoners. The accumulation of pollution and human sewage flowing freely along the waterway also caused other sicknesses, including typhoid and diphtheria (Schneer, 2005; Ackroyd, 2007; Cusack, 2010). This connection between sickness and death with the Thames meant that the relationship between the public and the River was one of fear, and this grew as news of cholera spread. The media intensified this unstable relationship: for example, during the middle of the century, an article from *The Times* relating to the Thames, reported that there was a "close relation between cholera and the water-supply in any given locality" (1853, p.8). Victorian British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli even labelled the Thames a "Stygian pool" (cited in Barnes, 2005, p.106). This reference to the River Styx aligns the Thames with death, mirroring public attitudes towards the waterway at this time. Despite significant changes in sanitation and the fact that the last Thames cholera outbreak occurred in 1866, another article in *The*

Times in 1897 (referring to an outbreak of typhoid and levels of pollution in the waterway), once again embroiled the River, sanitation, and sickness within the public's consciousness.

In addition to the media, advances in science also contributed to the public's growing knowledge and perception of the Thames. These advances led to the discovery that these diseases were in fact waterborne. A common belief since the Middle Ages had been that diseases such as cholera or typhoid were airborne and spread by the miasmas (Halliday, 1999; Herbst, 2008). However, in 1854 scientist John Snow put forward the idea of germ theory, highlighting the need for sanitary reform because of the danger posed by a polluted Thames to the health of humanity during the Victorian period. I argue that historical information is significant to literary representations of the Thames because each of the ten works are associated with the social, historical, and political aspects of the River through the themes of leisure, national identity, and sanitation.

Furthermore, the emergence of the railway during the nineteenth century impacted on the gradual transition of the Thames from a predominantly commercial waterway to a predominantly recreational one. An article from *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* explains the extent of the impact by writing about the economic status of the Thames Conservancy, who were the governors of the River between 1857 and 1974 (Ackroyd, 2007):

> They were in debt hopelessly and insolvently. Their locks and weirs were everywhere rotten and dangerous. As a highway for traffic of goods the Thames had been obliged to yield to the railway, and there was every chance of the navigation entirely ceasing.
>
> (June 26, 1869, p.832)

The observation here of the Conservancy's financial difficulties during the late 1860s emphasised the need to generate money in order to improve the run-down waterway. The significance of the railway here is that it impinged upon the commerciality of the Thames, leading to the increase in leisure along the waterway.

Contrary to *The Saturday Review*'s run-down image of the Thames, work had already been in place to revamp the verges of the Thames within the City, and so, 1869 (the same year as the publication of the *Saturday Review*'s article), saw the completion of the Albert Embankment, following with the Victoria Embankment in 1870 and the Chelsea Embankment in 1874 (White, 2007). This creation of green spaces in London added to the emergence of parks within the City, with Victoria Park in 1845, Battersea Park in 1864 and, as Jerry White adds, from the 1880s onwards "[s]ome ninety-five acres of green space were added to central London" (2007, p.61). Given that both the embankments and parks were constructed, it could be argued that they are not entirely natural. However, the emergence of these 'natural' spaces within London remains significant because it demonstrates how the Victorians recognised the importance of nature, particularly in relation to leisure. Furthermore, the embankments contributed to the public's perception of the Thames. David Barnes writes that the embankments "beautified the London riverfront considerably and created new public parks at Charing Cross and Cheyne Walk" (2005, p.107). The aesthetic of the Thames is evidently important to the Victorian public's enjoyment of the waterway, according to Barnes. This focus on the River's aesthetic is particularly pertinent as Cheyne Walk was resident to many of the aesthetes or Thames writers mentioned in this thesis, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Swinburne, Whistler, James, and Hilaire Belloc.

In 1885 the notion of the Thames as a recreational river became more widespread with the inauguration of the Thames Preservation Act. The aim of the act was to promote the use of the River as a place of leisure, particularly in its upper reaches, which involved sanitary measures so that it could be used more effectively in this way (Lambe, 2009). The Act's aims resonate with the themes revealed through analysis of the ten literary texts, specifically leisure and sanitation, although the Act itself is not mentioned within the works themselves. The Thames provided leisure in many different forms: boating including steamboats or punting, swimming, renting private boats, picnics on the banks, and walks along the pathways or embankments. This recreational image of the River did not entirely diminish the commercial use of the waterway (it is still used for both reasons today). Despite lesser reliance on the Thames as a commercial river, Britain's economy still relied on its functionality.

The Thames contributed to the power of the British Empire, as Schneer asserts: "Dockland probably contained more wealth and more stuff that was crucial to the operation of the national economy than any other place in Britain" (2005, p.195). Therefore, the success of Britain's economy, which contributed to its status as an Empire, was largely dependent on a fully functioning river. Considering that other nations around the globe perceived Britain as a powerful empire, the association of the Empire and the Thames meant that the River contributed to Britain's national identity. This meant that a polluted waterway, which induced sickness or death, thus connoting weakness, was at odds with a powerful strong image of the British Empire. Therefore, the Thames also had the potential to be deemed a 'national' concern, due to the unsanitised condition of its waters. Luckin (1986) observantly mentions how the British government was troubled by the River's reputation due to the cholera outbreaks of the nineteenth century, especially given the economy's reliance upon the Thames as a commercial river. It is therefore possible that initiatives such as the Thames Preservation Act

of 1885 were appropriated to serve 'national' needs, and to attempt to preserve a sanitised image of Britishness. These 'national' needs were in addition to the public's domestic recreational needs.

The association between the Thames, the British Empire, and sanitation, as a way of forging Britain's national identity also emerged in the media. During the *fin de siècle*, an article in *The Times* relating to London's sewage problems described the River as "the Imperial Thames" (1890, p.5). Imperialism formed a part of Britain's national identity at this time because of the nation's powerful status as an empire. However, research for this thesis shows that the words 'imperial' and 'Thames' have been compounded prior to the nineteenth century as a way of illustrating the dominant status of the River. The earliest example of the 'imperial Thames' was found in British poet laureate Nicholas Rowe's usage of it in his play *The Tragedy of the Lady Jane Gray* (1715). Interestingly, this reference occurs when Lady Jane Gray's husband, Guilford, describes his wife as "England's Queen [and] Empress of the wat'ry World" (1994, no page number). Given the play's basis on real events, the correlation between national identity and the Thames is not only made through literature but also history.

The history of the nineteenth-century Thames is significant in this thesis because the themes found amid literary representations of the River reflect events concerning the Thames during the *fin de siècle*. Prior to this period, the River had been viewed negatively as sickness and pollution had been associated with it, but so had more positive associations of the Thames with pleasure, recreation and national identity and these associations prevailed. Mention has previously been given to changes concerning the River and its environments for an aesthetic or pleasurable purpose. However, attention is now given to the changes that took place along the Thames for a functional purpose. Despite the first Public Health Act taking

place in 1848, Michelle Allen notes that it was not until the 1866 Sanitary Act that "London was a cleaner and healthier place to live" (2008, p.2) because it meant that local authorities "became responsible […] for the provision of sewers, water and street cleaning" (Bloy, 2014, no page number). However, it was the 1875 Public Health Act that had the most impact as it saw the construction and implementation of sewers and a drainage system beneath the embankments along the Thames, by engineer Joseph Bazalgette. Historically, by the end of the nineteenth century, a new way of seeing the waterway had been designated, and this contrasted with the unsanitised vision that had been offered by the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Literary Thames

An early example of a depiction of the Thames in Victorian literature is Thomas Hood's poem *The Bridge of Sighs* (1844), which is set in London beside Waterloo Bridge. In relation to Hood's poem and other literary examples such as Dickens's Martha in *David Copperfield* (1850), L. J. Nicoletti argues that the Thames often "served as a metaphor for the urban depravity caused by London's weakening morals" (2004, no page number). Nicoletti's work reveals a critical focus on the association between narratives of decline and the Thames through the figure of the prostitute. My research revealed that these trends continued throughout the nineteenth century and, in addition to the fallen woman, other aspects of social degeneracy, such as criminality or abject poverty were aligned with literary representations of the Thames. In Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860/1), the convict Magwitch terrorises young Pip in the Thames estuary, as Pip walks back from visiting the gravestones of his dead parents. Later in the novel, Magwitch uses the River as an escape route from prison (see also Barfield, 2007). Although he has redeemed himself by this point in the novel, his status as a convict remains. Dickens's later novel *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) opens with a scene upon the Thames

at night, where Jesse Hexham is seen pickpocketing the dead bodies floating in the waterway. In 1876, George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* narrates the eponymous character's rescue of Mirah, who had escaped her father and consequently a life of prostitution. Later, in 1889, the characters of Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* discover a dead woman's body, although the novel's humorous tone and emphasis on pleasure and recreation detracts from the depravity of the scene. Jefferies's novel *After London* (1885) goes as far as to describe, albeit in a post-apocalyptic context, how "the black water bears a greenish-brown floating scum, which for ever bubbles up from the putrid mud of the bottom" (Jefferies, 1980, p.37). These connections share a similarity with Disraeli's aforementioned association of the Thames with death, and contributes to a more pejorative image of the Thames that could be interpreted as a reflection of the dirty condition of the waterway during the nineteenth century.

These depictions of the Thames can be likened to the narratives of decline that became more widespread in literature after the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859). Some of the examples above pre-date Darwin's work, although they remain pertinent in their linkage to ideas of social degeneracy and the Thames. In the context of Darwin's work, Daniel Pick (1989) argues that human degeneracy was commonly seen as a threat to the ideals of Victorian society. Pick lists examples of degenerate narratives as depicting "[c]rime, suicide, alcoholism and prostitution [which] were understood as 'social pathologies' endangering the European races, constituting a degenerative process within them" (Pick, 1989, p.21). Given the historical association of the Thames with death and sickness on account of poor sanitation, it is unsurprising that the waterway was often caught up in a Darwinian discourse of degeneracy within Victorian literature.

Despite these less favourable connections made with the River, there were writers who were writing about the River in a positive way, by emphasising the notion of pleasure and recreation, or by associating it with the power of the Empire, and the cleansing of the landscape. Two mainstream examples include Jerome's recently mentioned *Three Men in a Boat* (1889) and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890). Morris's protagonist is seen to reject industrialised London and revel in a utopian vision of its future that includes travelling to different places via the Thames, imagined laudably as "sparkling under the sun" (1970, p.3). In a collection of essays entitled *Pagan Papers* (1894), Kenneth Grahame refers to the Thames within the context of leisure by referring to loafing, boating, punting, and the steam-launches. Grahame's later novel, *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), was set along the Thames and through the use of anthropomorphism, Grahame demonstrates the reliance and necessity of the River when Rat declares, "It's my world and I don't want any other" (1961, p.15). Another early twentieth-century work, Ford's *The Soul of London*, offers a representation of the Thames that correlates with both national identity and aestheticism, when he describes key landmarks of London (such as St Paul's or Nelson's Column) that are "hazily united into one 'view' by a river Thames" (1995, p.9). In support of the network of Thames-writers that I suggest (see Appendix Three), Ford was familiar with other writers and artists who shared ideas on aestheticism and wrote about the River, including Pennell, Blind, Gosse, and Morris, through the salons held by his grandfather Ford Madox Brown (Diedrick, 2017). In addition to the literature mentioned here and the ten selected texts, other representations of the Thames, both favourable and denigratory, were identified (see Appendix Two), and some of these examples are referred to throughout this thesis. There is a wealth of critical work in the field of Victorian studies that focuses on literary representation of the Thames and these studies also inform my arguments here.

Steven Barfield (2007) traces literary examples of the Thames from Early Modern pastoral examples (Drayton, Spenser, and Milton), through to the Romantics (Blake and Wordsworth), and concluding with Victorian representations (Dickens and Conrad). Through his Victorian analysis, he examines Dickens's and Conrad's references to trade and commerce, before concluding that this associates the River with prosperity and imperialism, respectively. Barfield further argues that the Thames can "act as a means by which writers envision change and transformation" (2007, no page number). Drawing inspiration from Barfield, this thesis recognises the connection between imperialism and the Thames within underexplored literatures of the *fin de siècle*, and develops this connection by suggesting how the River unifies different nations by constructing natural identities. In contrast to Barfield, David Skilton (2007) offers a socio-political reading of images of the Thames within Victorian artworks, suggesting a chronological change in cultural representations of the River as a consequence of developments in sanitation during the nineteenth century. This contrasts with the thematic approach that is emphasised by this thesis. It further departs from Skilton's work as it is literary based, and also examines different areas of the Thames, from the rural spaces of its source to the urbanism of London, unlike Skilton's focus within the space of the City.

Other critical sources offer a historical, social, and cultural account of the Thames, where brief references have been made to both the Victorian Thames and literary imaginings of the River. Significant examples include Schneer's *The Thames* (2005), Peter Ackroyd's *Thames: Sacred River* (2007) and Mick Sinclair's *The Thames: A Cultural History* (2007). Schneer writes about the transportation along the Thames of Anne Boleyn and Queen Elizabeth I during their coronation, thus suggesting both a British historical and a majestic link with the waterway. Furthermore, Schneer and Ackroyd agree that the River is "central to English life" (Schneer, 2005, p.289; Ackroyd, 2008, p.11). However, the idea that the Thames

can unify different national identities, represent displacement, or highlight the fluctuation of identities is not considered by these writers, but these are ideas that I examine in my second chapter.

Albeit indirectly, and not in the scientific sense, Ackroyd also refers to the ecology of the Thames, including its depth, when he suggests that it acts as a metaphor or as a "token of the unconscious" (2008, p.9). By contrast, my third chapter examines whether the Thames can be used to rouse an ecological consciousness and by doing so, how this can be perceived as an avenue of Victorian progress. Ackroyd comments on the natural waterway's relationship with its manmade urban environment, the City of London, and argues that the Thames "created civilization here. It fashioned London" (2008, p.9). This view highlights the fact that London was built around the Thames, emphasising the River's natural identity. However, a focus on literature and the Thames using an ecocritical approach to strengthen this notion of a natural identity is noticeably absent. Ackroyd argues that literary imaginings of the River in the late Victorian period were "imbued with a sense of mystery rather than a sense of savagery or of terror" (2008, p.329). This ambiguity, as suggested by Ackroyd, correlates with the way the Thames could be read in both a favourable and a pejorative way, as I suggest. However, a significant point of departure from Ackroyd's work is the close analysis of underexplored texts, a sustained ecocritical approach, and the significance of literary forms in viewing the Thames in a positive way.

Sinclair (2007) writes about the darker aspects of the River, hinting at a negative image of the waterway. However, he also recognises the duality in which the Thames is represented as he summarises his work by stating that it "describes the Thames as a source of power, a provider of livelihood and an object of pleasure" (2007, p.xi). His statement is synonymous with one of the aims of this thesis, which situates the River amidst a progressive

social context of leisure, national identity, and sanitation. Sinclair also identifies 1885, the year of the Thames Preservation Act, as a signal of the "changing role of the Thames" (2007, p.xx). This supports my primary research that identified the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s, as containing a higher cluster of literatures pertaining to the River (see Appendix Two) and its connection with progressive themes of recreation, nationhood, and sanitation.

In his seminal book, *Landscape and Memory* (1995), Simon Schama draws upon his own childhood experiences of the Thames to showcase the relationship between humanity and nature. Schama's writings are akin to many Victorian writers who wrote of their boating and leisure experiences down the River, a theme that forms the basis of Chapter One. He reminisces that "I had no hill, but I did have the Thames" (Schama, 1996, p.3), in a manner that affectionately speaks of ownership of the natural world. Schama further states that the "lines of imperial power have always flowed along rivers, water-courses are not the only landscape to carry the freight of history" (1996, p.5). The link between the 'imperial' and the Thames is also examined by Cusack (2010) in a chapter entitled 'The Victorian Thames', where she astutely observes the national role of the River within artworks of the Victorian period. Cusack offers a temporal and spatial reading of the riverscapes of the Thames and argues that representations of the River within selected artworks often encompass "an imperial iconography" (2010, p.57). She further comments that these representations embody a sense of nationalism associated with a postwar context, and is commonly linked with royalty. Schama's work and Cusack's chapter are useful in considering national identity and the Thames, but this thesis focusses on literature during the *fin de siècle*, and considers how the River transcends the real and enters the cultural sphere of literature, suggesting that it may be possible to see an emerging convergence between the real and the cultural in the way in which we view our natural world.

More literary-based studies of Victorian representations of the Thames have been conducted, including Gilbert (2005) and Allen (2008), who have explored the relationship between sanitation, the Thames, and Dickens, with specific emphasis given to the role of the River in *Our Mutual Friend*. Allen reveals the public's resistance to the government's implementation of the sewer, claiming that it reduced domestic autonomy and, whilst it "was intended to order the environment and cleanse the atmosphere, it is frequently represented as an instrument of social chaos, threatening the ideals of spatial division and social hierarchy in the Victorian urban context" (Allen, 2008, p.25). The link that Allen makes between sanitation and social hierarchies is particularly helpful, as I suggest that pollution undermines social hierarchies in White's 'The River of Death'.

Another, more recent, Dickensian study by Stephen Chapman (2012) examines a range of the novelist's works in relation to the Thames. He acknowledges that his work is partly ecocritical because it draws upon the relationship between nature and literature. However, my thesis departs from Chapman's work as I explore specific ecocritical principles and engage with, and expand upon, current ecocritical debates within the field. Moreover, I explore the Thames in relation to national identity within the context of high forms of poetry. I have chosen to incorporate references to Dickens's work due to the prolific nature of critical work on Dickensian literature and the Thames. Whilst this decision extends the remit of this thesis, it enables consideration of representations of the River within a post-Dickensian literary landscape to decipher whether any shifts or similarities occurred within nineteenth-century literary discourse. Having researched the critical work concerning Victorian literary representations of the Thames, I concluded that this is a critically under represented area.

Areas of Exclusion

In a study that explores boating, leisure, and the River during the *fin de siècle*, it is important to make reference to two mainstream contributors that connect these themes during this period – the aforementioned Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* and Morris's *News from Nowhere*, both of which informed my thinking. These novels are not included in my primary texts, but reference to them both are made within this thesis. Whilst Morris's socialist utopia seems congruent to the aims of my first chapter, the novel does not herald the sense of place which is consistent in the three chosen texts. For this reason, Morris's work was not included in favour of Leslie's, the Pennells', and Ashby-Sterry's texts which all establish a sense of place through their specific naming of the towns, locks and weirs that sit upon the Thames. Furthermore, the unsuitability of *News from Nowhere* for inclusion within this chapter is reinforced through consideration of David Faldet's work, who argues that the novel "is, in part, a picture of what Morris dreamed the Thames might be, if liberated from the overproductive demands of capitalism […] In the book he imagines a future where people care for the earth and its rivers" (2007, p.84). This environmental outlook of the Thames in Morris's novel conflicts with the way in which Leslie, the Pennells, and Ashby-Sterry present the River in their work, where capitalism appears to be a primary driving force. Although Jerome's novel *does* exhibit this sense of place, it does not resonate significantly with the Thames's political past in a way that highlights capital.

Another work that addresses the themes of boating and leisure in relation to the River is *The Book of the Thames: From its Rise to its Fall* (1859) by husband and wife Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall. The Pennells were therefore not the only husband and wife to write about their experiences of the River during the nineteenth century. The Halls trace the River from the source to the sea with the hope of "inducing travels at Home" (Hall, 1859, p.vii). Presenting

the landscape as an attraction is a typical feature of travel tourism, and therefore the Halls' book demonstrates how promoting the landscape as a place of recreation had actually begun earlier in the nineteenth century.

Despite my focus on 'high' forms of poetry (as they best reflect important themes such as national identity), there were many poems written about the Thames during the *fin de siècle* in the form of the ballad or song. These include Gosse's 'The Ballad of the Upper Thames' (1885), Eliza Manning's *Delightful Thames* (1886), and Rudyard Kipling's *The River's Tale* (1911). Given the simplicity of the song-like tradition, and Abrams's assertion that "the popular ballad is dramatic, condensed, and impersonal" (2005, p.18), it was felt that the ballad lacked the complexity to explore cultural modes of identity and the ecologies pertaining to a river.

Although Chapter Three adopts an ecocritical focus, it is worth pointing out the crossovers and the influence of the genre of science fiction, or scientific romance as it was then understood. It is through this genre that we can establish a network between the writers because each of the three short stories have been critically examined in the context of science fiction, by critics such as Everett F. Bleiler (1993) and Patrick Parrinder (1995). Barr's story ruminates on the possibly that a fog spreads through London, suffocating those in its path. It also invents an oxygen machine that could assist individuals caught up in a deadly fog. Meanwhile, Allen's tale questions what would happen if a volcano erupted in the Thames Valley, killing those in its path and destroying London. White's tale speculates on an entirely polluted Thames that would result in no clean drinking water on a hot summer's day. Despite, as this thesis argues, the ecological focus that is evident here, these short stories also relate to features of science fiction. Furthermore, Chris Baratta argues that science fiction is a beneficiary of ecocriticism

and that the latter is attempting to do what science fiction has done for over a century, which is "to look forward to where the current environmental crisis is taking humanity" (2012, p.2). This thesis does not explore genre theory and science fiction in depth, as this has the potential to redirect the focus of viewing the three short stories through Gifford's ecocritical theory of the post-pastoral. However, science fiction should be addressed here as critics, Bleiler and Parrinder, are referred to within Chapter Three.

One definition of science fiction that resonates with the selected short stories in this thesis is one put forward by Samuel R. Delany, where he argues that "science fiction is in dialogue with the present" (2012, p.165). This is an appropriate definition to apply to the three short stories because each of them address issues such as dangerous fogs, a changing Thames landscape, or a polluted River, which were all present concerns for individuals living in and around the environment of the Thames during the *fin de siècle*. Paul March-Russell highlights the variability of the science fiction genre when he argues that it "offers us language, vocabularies, images, ideas, that we can use to make sense of our society" (2013, no page number). One of these images, and March-Russell expands on this image in a later study *Modernism and Science Fiction* (2015), is apocalypticism. This image has already been contextualised within the field of ecocritical studies as existing as a metaphor. As such, and pertaining to March-Russell's explanation, through metaphorical apocalypticism, these short stories offer us a way to make sense of the role of ecology, or the natural world, within the late Victorian period. Furthermore, this strengthens the link between science fiction and ecocriticism.

Another significant area which could not be addressed in this study is the concept of gender. This is particularly pertinent as Ledger and Luckhurst explain that in respect

of the *fin de siècle*, the new woman was a feature of "Britain's cultural and political landscape [that] was being lit up by a constellation of new formations" (2000, p.xiii). Therefore, gender could also be considered as another area of progress in late Victorian society. The concept of gender can be explained in two ways: the writings concerning the Thames that was undertaken by male and female authors, but also the notion of the River as a gendered landscape. In the early stages of ecocritical debates, gender was also established as a significant division of the discipline. However, the reason for excluding this area of study is that, from the research found, it was felt that the subject of gender warranted greater exploration and that simply a chapter on the subject would not fulfil the area of research required.

Gender is a concern in the work of some of the critics I refer to. In her theorising of the term ecocriticism, Glotfelty questioned whether "men write about nature differently than women do?" (1996, p.xix), whereas Bate argues that "ecofeminists re-appropriate and celebrate the idea of woman's closeness to the rhythms of mother earth" (2001, p.107). This demonstrates that gender is also an ecocritical concern. Despite consideration of Elizabeth Pennell's writings of the Thames in Chapter One, and Mathilde Blind's poem in Chapter Two, this thesis predominantly considers male writers. However, there were other female writers during the *fin de siècle* who wrote about the Thames. Examples include Charlotte Riddell's *Daisies and Buttercups: A Novel of the Upper Thames* (1882), Eliza Manning's *Delightful Thames* (1886), and Margaret Armour's *Thames Sonnets and Semblances* (1897). To further this consideration of gender, it would be pertinent to examine these works in relation to questions about whether representations of the Thames are gendered and written differently by men and women.

As this Introduction has demonstrated, there has been a considerable amount of criticism concerning the Victorian Thames, although a body of work that focuses entirely upon the River within literature of the *fin de siècle* that includes the close analysis of the work of Leslie, the Pennells, Ashby-Sterry, De Vere, Blind, Gosse, Davidson, Barr, Allen, and White, is notably absent. My original contribution to knowledge is established in four ways: firstly, as a contribution to Victorian studies with the application of ecocriticism and the use of the Thames to examine a cultural relationship between humanity and nature. Secondly, I engage with and develop critical debates in the field of ecocriticism, including the definition of the ecopoem. Thirdly, I propose a network of writers that were writing about the Thames during the *fin de siècle*. In addition to socializing in the same literary circles and being close friends, this network also shared similar ideas and influences, such as aestheticism and Romanticism. Finally, the selected primary texts, particularly Ashby-Sterry's and De Vere's, are relatively underexplored and have not been examined from an ecocritical perspective.

1. Chapter One – "Up the River": Leisure and Anthropocentrism

"In its recreative character it is absolutely unique"
– Henry James, *English Hours*, 1905

Taking a trip "up the river" (Moller, 1891, no page number) had become synonymous with pursuits of rest, rejuvenation and recreation by the end of the nineteenth century. These expeditions were also an opportunity for Victorians to explore and admire the beauties of nature. Writers began recording these pastimes within their work, which led to the Thames becoming synonymous with the theme of leisure. Nature writer Richard Jefferies, in an essay entitled 'The Modern Thames' (1885), stated that "the river above all things is, and ought to be, a place of recreation" (1944, p.126). Jefferies's assertion was mirrored in activities that took place along the River. By the *fin de siècle*, the Thames had become a leisure portal; its waters were surrounded by river carnivals, river picnics, boating events and regattas. Pursuits of leisure had been enjoyed upon the Thames as far back as the twelfth century. However, it was specifically the Victorian period that heralded an increase in the recreational usage of boats upon the River, and it was not until the *fin de siècle* that recreation dominated the Thames in contrast to the River's commercial usage of the past.

This steady growth of the River as a leisurely space was enhanced through the exuberance of boating trends during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and, prior to these years, the inauguration of a number of river sporting events and clubs. The popular University Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge began in 1829 while the Henley Regatta emerged in 1839. The former became the Henley Royal Regatta in 1851 with the patronage of Prince Albert (Henley Royal Regatta, 2014). The advent of the steamboats, or steam launches as they were also called, in 1843 led to recreational river journeys being experienced by the

masses, and it was no longer reserved for the privileged few who could afford their own boats. These steamboats became widely popular by the *fin de siècle*. Meanwhile, whilst a number of amateur rowing clubs emerged at the beginning of the century, the implementation of the Amateur Rowing Association in 1882 saw a competitive element added to the sport (Halladay, 1990). By the late Victorian period, the Thames had become an arena of sporting contest and recreational pleasure, which offered an alternative to its industrialised past.

The association between leisure and the Thames was mirrored in literature of the late Victorian period, as exemplified in the following texts: George Dunlop Leslie's *Our River: Personal Reminiscences of an Artist's Life on the River Thames* (1881); Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennell's *The Stream of Pleasure: The Narrative of a Journey on the Thames from Oxford to London* (1891), and Joseph Ashby–Sterry's *A Tale of the Thames* (1896). Leslie's work is a non–fictional account of the River based on his experiences of leisure since childhood. Similarly, the Pennells' account is also non-fictional and is centred upon the experience of one journey jointly undertaken by an American husband and wife in the late Victorian period. Both Leslie's and the Pennells' works are arguably examples of travel writing, and this is explained in the following paragraph. The act of writing a piece of travel writing, with the purpose of publicising a place, could be considered human-centred, which supports the anthropocentric claim of this chapter. Meanwhile, Ashby-Sterry's *Tale of the Thames* is a piece of fiction in the form of a novel and is written in the third person about journeying along the River. Despite this, his novel can also be considered a form of travel writing. According to Carl Thompson, "a fictional novel *about* travel" or, as Thompson prefers, a "*modern* or *literary* travel book" (2011, p.16/17) can depict a real journey but also has the option to embellish, or adapt the storyline. This could be an appropriate way to describe Ashby-Sterry's novel as he was a keen boatman along the River, which means he is likely to

have interspersed his own knowledge of the geography of the Thames with a fictional narrative. The narrative viewpoint is therefore significant because, in using a third person perspective and by fictionalising his narrative, Ashby-Sterry negotiates a distance between himself and the novel. On the other hand, his use of the omniscient narrator gives him authority to comment on several aspects of the River without it being a direct reflection of his own voice.

The genre of travel writing offers a cultural account of the way humanity engages with nature and this is shown specifically through the Thames during the *fin de siècle*. In an attempt to define travel writing, Thompson writes the following:

> If all travel involves an encounter between self and other that is brought about by movement through space, all travel writing is at some level a record or product of this encounter […] it also reveals something of the culture from which that writer emerged.
>
> (Thompson, 2011, p.10)

This definition can be applied to *Our River* as it records a number of Leslie's memories where he has enjoyed the Thames, from different periods of his life. Similarly, the Pennells record one journey along the waterway, from Oxford to London, a very popular route during the Victorian period. Meanwhile, the notion that Ashby-Sterry's novel is a piece of travel writing is supported by Thompson's proposition that travel writing is both a heterogeneous and a hybrid form. He claims that "it is often hard to define where 'travel writing' ends and other genres begin, such as autobiography, ethnography, nature writing and fiction" (Thompson, 2011, p.12). This list of genres could be associated with each of the three selected works, but the emphasis is placed on 'travel writing' because of the genre's propensity to generate capital. Moreover, the three works, as per Thompson's definition, reveal details of the Victorian culture of leisure that was prominent along England's longest waterway.

Our River, *The Stream of Pleasure,* and *A Tale of the Thames* were selected for this chapter because the authors were familiar with each other's writings about the River (see Appendix Three). Furthermore, the ubiquity of the theme of leisure that connects all three works reveals a network of writers that were aestheticizing the Thames, during the *fin de siècle*. Boating is centralised within all three texts, although walking along the banks of the Thames is also evident in Ashby-Sterry's novel, and both of these modes of leisure are examined in this chapter. All works are examined with a specific focus on the body of the River, and its surrounding natural environment. These works reveal how representations of the Thames, in the context of leisure and by adopting an ecocritical approach, often resonated with the values, hierarchies and systems of capital. Each text arguably participates in capitalist processes through the act of writing about the Thames, as this act encourages tourism which in turn generates capital. The link between leisure and capital therefore exists upon the publication of all three texts, irrespective of whether the author's intention in writing about the Thames was for capital gain, and this could arguably be viewed as one of the tenets of travel writing. The role of human experience and the River is also significant and is considered within this chapter because the selected authors frequently boated along the Thames, and their knowledge and experience of the waterway can be observed within their work.

The relationship between human culture and the natural environment within literature is indicative of an ecocritical approach, according to Glotfelty's (1996) definition. Therefore, examining the relationship between Victorian leisure and the Thames within literature is forthrightly ecocritical. I argue that *Our River*, *The Stream of Pleasure,* and *A Tale of the Thames* represent a new literary discourse on the River that is not only concomitant with Victorian progress through leisure, but that also connects leisure and capital, forming a predominantly anthropocentric vision of the Thames. Glotfelty's reference to 'the physical

world' relates to nature and/or the natural environment, and thus references to nature within this chapter refer specifically to natural processes including the weather system or to natural landscapes such as seas, mountains or more specifically, the Thames.

The ecocritical work considered within this chapter is Jonathan Bate's *The Song of the Earth* (2000), and Bate argues that by participating in the principles of the picturesque, "we turn the places we visit into commodities" (2000, p.127). He subscribes to a capitalist discourse as part of his critique to describe the natural environment, which subsequently presents a hierarchy between humanity and nature. Bate refers to the writing genre of picturesque tourism, where writers revel in the beauty of the natural landscape which, in turn, can promote tourism. This situates the writer's work alongside a connection between the natural environment and commercialism; a trend that was particularly prominent during the late Victorian period, as Bate explains that "the number of people with the leisure and income to indulge that taste [picturesque tourism] had increased to such an extent that tourism itself began to change those places" (2000, p.132). His observation suggests the way in which humanity can affect nature, to the extent that humanity has the power to destroy or transform aspects of the natural landscape. Whilst this transformation of the natural environment was already evident from the Industrial Revolution, by the late Victorian period, it was possible to see how leisure, and not industry, was impacting on the natural environment instead.

Bate (2000) refers to eighteenth-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau's observations of the nascent man, and nineteenth-century philosopher Karl Marx's work on 'unalienated labour', as he ecocritically examines the notion of land ownership. Similarly, this chapter draws upon Rousseau's work, and references are also made to Marxist and capitalist

theory as a way of philosophically tracing humanity's relationship with nature. Despite these references to philosophical and Marxist debates, the analysis is firmly grounded within ecocriticism, given the emphasis placed on ecology and the natural environment. In his seminal study *Ecocriticism* (2004), Greg Garrard describes a social ecological or Eco-Marxist perspective, where variables including capital are examined in relation to the natural environment within literature. Meanwhile, Bate suggests that social ecology is "Marxism with ecology added on" (2001, p.38). His definition could be perceived as somewhat ironic, given that it immediately positions nature as secondary which defeats the objective of ecocriticism, a theory that seeks to elevate the role of nature within literature. Notably, the significance of 'capital' is primarily the outcome of the ecocritical analysis that is undertaken, and is not used as a tool of analysis. As the primary texts place an emphasis on the natural environment and reveal processes of capitalism along the waterway, appropriate engagement is made with Marxist critic Raymond Williams's work *The Country and the City* (1973), because it examines cultural images of the natural landscape in the context of the principles of capitalism.

By looking at Victorian acts of leisure and representations of the Thames in literature, this study lends itself to an ecocriticism that draws upon aesthetic theory. Bate (2000) locates the origins of environmentalism within aesthetic theory, which he argues constructs an anthropocentrism in our valuation of the natural environment. Clark (2011, p.80) points out that humanity's concern for the natural environment stems from our need to preserve appealing or aesthetically pleasing landscapes. This link between aestheticism and ecology is harnessed further through the network of writers that have been identified (see Appendix Three), many of whom were a group of aesthetes, particularly Elizabeth Pennell who has been described as the "quintessential female aesthete" (Jones, 2015, p.33). The primary works largely reveal how pleasure is the main outcome of an aestheticized Thames, and this relates

to late Victorian aestheticism, proffered by critics such as Walter Pater (1873). However, the earlier aestheticism of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) is also pertinent, and demonstrates the connection between this *fin de siècle* study and Romanticism. The two categories that Burke describes specifically relate to human feeling, which is evoked from experiences with natural landscapes and that can be applied to art, highlighting the significance of Burke's work in an ecocritical study that draws upon the relationship between humanity and nature. This chapter refers specifically to the Beautiful and demonstrates how through this we can observe a hierarchy between humanity and nature, configuring a social ecology along the Thames during the late Victorian period.

William Gilpin expanded on the notion of aestheticism and proposed an alternative category that could be situated in between the two Burke had already established. He termed it the picturesque and defined it as "that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture" (1768, p.x). Gilpin exemplified his ideas of the picturesque in his guide *Observations on the River Wye and Several Parts of South Wales & Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Summer of the Year 1770* (1782), which is referred to briefly in this chapter. These observations were written during a walking tour: a leisure pursuit of the eighteenth century that became popular with the Romantics, who were also famous for their observations of the natural environment. The association of the Thames with the picturesque did not originate with the Victorians, as representations of the River are rooted in the origins of the picturesque movement. Samuel Ireland's *Picturesque Views on the River Thames: From its Source in Gloucestershire to the Nore; With Observations on the Public Buildings and other Works of Art in its Vicinity* (1792), emerged amongst the inauguration of picturesque tourism (see also Vincent, 1909; Chapman, 2012). Therefore, by evoking the picturesque within their texts,

Leslie, the Pennells and Ashby-Sterry, can be seen to be writing back to an older tradition that situated the Thames within the picturesque.

In parity with Bate's and Clark's work, Alison Byerly claims that the picturesque is hierarchical, by stating that the movement "represented an elitist appropriation of the environment" (1996, p.53). She highlights the anthropocentricity of the attitudes that are evoked from the picturesque appreciation of landscape and, subsequently, uses the term 'picturesque commodity' to describe nature or, more specifically, the national parks that are the focus of her study. Similarly, Clark highlights the significance of the relationship between politics and nature as he uses a capitalist discourse to form part of his critique upon the adverse impact of environmental politics on natural landscapes. He argues that "[e]nvironmental politics becomes essentially a matter of long-term prudence for human interests and quality of life, the protection of aesthetically attractive landscapes and their associated leisure pursuits" (Clark, 2011, p.2). This indicates how the natural environment is often perpetuated as being solely for the use and functioning of humanity and from this, I argue that Leslie's, the Pennells', and Ashby-Sterry's works each signal a human-centred narrative, despite the Thames being a primary focus for all three. In the context of ecocriticism, Clark defines anthropocentrism as "the view that human beings and their interests are solely of value and always take priority over those of the non-human" (2011, p.3). I argue that this view is exemplified within the three selected works through the authors' aestheticising of the Thames via representations of human experience or human feeling, which is often foregrounded above the River.

Richard Kerridge (2001, p.130) refers to the Romantics when he writes of different tourists of the natural environment; his work is congruent to this chapter in relation to

the propensity for the traveller or tourist to transform the landscape, and, in relation to the occupier of the nature gaze. The significance of Romanticism is evident throughout this chapter, but particularly in relation to Leslie's work because, like other writers such as Blind and Gosse in this thesis, his writing was also influenced by the Romantics. The movement is also considered in relation to literary weather imaginings in the Pennells' tale, and the significance of the 'walking tours' in relation to leisure within Ashby-Sterry's novel. In another of his studies, Kerridge (2011) has also written about ecosystems in relation to Shakespeare's plays, which is pertinent to the consideration of weather formations within the Pennells' tale. Kerridge (2013) later wrote about dualisms, and their tendency for dissolution in the context of ecocriticism, in a way that brings together categories that structuralist critics may have perceived as opposites, such as nature and culture. Other ecocritics that are considered within this chapter, albeit to a lesser degree and specifically in relation to Ashby-Sterry's novel, include Lawrence Buell (1995) and Terry Gifford (1999). The former is drawn upon to explore the notion of Ashby-Sterry's tale as an environmental text, whereas Gifford's work is relevant as Ashby-Sterry's novel adopts the pastoral tradition, an aesthetic that was popular in forms of travel writing.

Heightened literary representations of the Thames during the Victorian period included a more practical contribution by Charles Dickens Junior, son to the famous author, about boating and the Thames, titled *Dickens's Dictionary of the Thames, from its Source to the Nore: An Unconventional Handbook* (1879). Given the significance of Dickens's *Dictionary* to the theme of leisure, his work is referred to throughout this chapter. In his Preface to the *Dictionary*, Dickens highlights the multifaceted usage of the Thames by aiming the book at local fishermen, tourists, inhabitants of the embankments and to those using the

River for commercial purposes. He also acknowledges the Thames Conservancy for their help, and for information which had been given to him:

> The objects aimed at […] have been to give practical information to oarsmen, anglers, yachtsmen, and others directly interested in the river; to serve as a guide to the numerous strangers who annually visit the principal places on its banks; to furnish a book of reference for residents; as well as to provide in a concise form a useful handbook for those connected with the port of London and its trade.
> (Dickens JNR, 1885, no page number)

Ultimately, Dickens's publication is focussed upon humanity's usage of the River rather than being a guide to preserving the natural landscape. Fundamentally, Dickens's *Dictionary* is seen entirely in relation to the human or, more specifically, the human pursuit of leisure. This can be interpreted as an anthropocentric hegemony between humanity and the Thames, which is also visible in the three selected literary works with wider reference to human experience of leisure, capital, and the River's governance.

The Thames Conservancy took up authority of the River in 1857 (Ackroyd, 2007, p.258) and, by obtaining knowledge of the politics of the Thames's governance, it is possible, to some extent, to understand representations of capital within literary depictions of the River. This is evident as Leslie, the Pennells and Ashby-Sterry, make numerous references to the Thames Conservancy or the way in which the authority achieved capital through leisure. Dickens's *Dictionary* outlined the primary aims of the Conservancy, which were "the navigation of the river; the lights to be carried by vessels; the regulation of the carriage of explosive substances, and of petroleum; the fisheries; the regulating of boat races" (Dickens JNR, 1885, p.45). Whether commercial or leisure, we can discern that the Thames Conservancy's main focus was for how the River was being utilised by humanity. It is also

likely that the Conservancy's promotion of leisure can be traced to motives that stem from capital.

The term 'conservancy' to describe the governors of the Thames conflicts with the capital processes that were imposed upon the River. The definition of conservation is the "preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment and of wildlife" (*OED*) which, given that the 'natural environment' is the subject here, is suggestively ecocentric. This would mean that the primary function of the Thames Conservancy was for the protection of the river itself, irrespective of how it is used by humans. However, contemporary ecocritics have referred to the anthropocentricity of the term conservation, including Parham, who defines it as "a management of natural resources for human benefit based upon scientific understanding" (2010, p.13), and this definition can be applied to the Thames Conservancy and is therefore a useful definition for this chapter.

Another aspect of Victorian society and modernity that affected the Thames was the emergence of the railway. By 1850 the railway was connecting most of England's largest cities, and this would impact on the River as both a commercial and a travel source. In 1897 "it was ruled that passenger steamers would take precedence over barges at Richmond and Teddington locks, a reversal of previous rulings giving rights of way to cargo carriers" (Sinclair, 2007, p.xx). This ruling clearly indicated that leisure activity was far more dominant upon the Thames than commercial activity. Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century, the impact of the Conservancy's promotion of recreation was reflected economically. Governing the River clearly meant capitalising on leisure pursuits and so the "Thames Conservancy recognized the changes by introducing registration fees for pleasure craft. By

1889, 12,000 such vessels were recorded, a fifty per cent increase on the previous year" (Sinclair, 2007, p.xxi). The Victorian pursuit of leisure had therefore become integral to the economic identity of the River, and I demonstrate how this indirect and subtle exploitation of the Thames could be observed in Leslie's, the Pennells' and Ashby-Sterry's works.

1.1 George Dunlop Leslie's *Our River: Personal Reminiscences of an Artist's Life on the River Thames* (1881)

George Dunlop Leslie published *Our River: Personal Reminiscences of an Artist's Life on the River Thames* in 1881 and published another edition in 1888, between these years he had also purchased a house along the Thames. One of the primary reasons for Leslie choosing to republish his work was his observation on the significant changes that had taken place along the River during the nineteenth century. He cites his home ownership as one of the main personal changes, and whilst his writings about the Thames remain the same aside from an additional Preface, he includes additional illustrations to his second edition. This highlights Leslie's preoccupation with the aesthetics of the River. Despite Ackroyd's claim that Leslie "was one of the many riparian travellers who could not resist the narration of a good drowning" (2008, p.390), which would situate Leslie's work and representation of the Thames amongst a late Victorian degeneracy, I remonstrate how the central focus of Leslie's work was to highlight his own aesthetic and recreational engagement with the Thames. In doing so, Leslie elevates the River by highlighting its positioning amid leisure, a key feature of Victorian progress.

Through writing *Our River*, Leslie describes a materialistic engagement with the Thames when he recounts his boating experiences. From a leisure-goer's perspective, changes to the River during the nineteenth century meant that recreational opportunities along

the waterway were enhanced. In contrast, from the artist's perspective, the changes to the landscape meant an imposition of the waterway's natural beauty. As both an artist and a keen boatman, Leslie was in a quandary in his depiction of the Thames in *Our River*. However, both of his concerns for the Thames were driven by his recreational and artistic pleasure, thus signalling an anthropocentricity in his relationship with the River. During a trip to Hampton in 1876, Leslie describes the artificial changes taking place upon the Thames:

> I was much struck by the great loss of beauty all the way down. The locks and weirs were almost all new, and the tow-path side in most places embanked artificially, large lumps of concrete being laid along the edges beneath the water, which are not very nice for punters, as the pole gets awkward twists between them. The great increase of ugly modern villas along the banks also vexed me much, especially at Staines, Teddington, and Kingston, and huge ugly water-works had been built at Molesey and Surbiton.
>
> (Leslie, 1888, p.52)

Leslie's focus on the 'loss of beauty', and the concrete beneath the waters that posed difficulties for punters, highlight his anthropocentric concern for the changes taking place, as they were affecting the visual image and the leisure aspect of the Thames. Ironically, what concerns Leslie the most are the modern villas (despite his own pride in occupying a house along the Thames) and the water-works, which were implemented for the benefit of human health. His description of them both as 'ugly' highlights his concern as aesthetic, not ecological, which could signal Leslie's estrangement from the natural environment.

Leslie's focus on the aesthetic, as opposed to the ecological, is supported by letters he wrote to fellow Royal Academician and close friend H. Stacy Marks, which were later published as *Letters to Marco* (1893). Despite his focus upon weather formations, biodiversity, wildlife, and the body of the River, in these letters, Leslie favours his aesthetic appreciation of nature. He chose to publish the letters because, as he describes, "there is always value in any records of the ways of nature" (Leslie, 1893, p.vi). This aesthetic record of the

Thames is pertinent to ecocriticism, because it negotiates a cultural understanding of humanity's relationship with nature, by examining *Our River* and considering Leslie's role as an artist. Bate believes that man became alienated from the natural environment at the "invention of property" (2000, p.47). If we apply Bate's assertion to the emphasis that Leslie places on his own property then Leslie has become estranged through the acquisition of the built environment.

Continuing the theme of acquisition, Leslie's *Our River* establishes a language of ownership through the work's title, and this can be understood as a feature of capitalist ideologies. There are two ways in which we can interpret Leslie's title: the Thames as a possession or, a communal usage of it. Both of these interpretations can be aligned with tenets of capitalism, albeit in different ways. The implication of including the proper noun 'Thames' within his title seems as though Leslie's work may contemplate the natural waterway, as opposed to it being about his own experience. However, the presence of the possessive 'our' highlights the River as a possession, thus suggesting an objectification of the Thames. In addition to Leslie's work, this notion of possessing the Thames has been seen in many non-fictional accounts of the River.

Simon Schama (1995) wrote of the Thames forming a part of his childhood, as noted in the Introduction to this thesis. Similarly, another twentieth-century Thames-writer, Alan Wykes, explicitly states how he thought of the waterway "possessively as 'my' river" (1966, p.19) in his work *An Eye on the Thames*. These representations contrast with C.J. Cornish's *The Naturalist on the Thames* (1902), published just twenty one years after Leslie's first edition of *Our River*. In contrast to Leslie's emphasis on leisure and the aesthetic of the River, Cornish focusses on the "natural history and character of the [Thames] valley as a whole,

from the upper waters to the mouth" (Cornish, 2008, p.5). Cornish included chapter headings such as 'Fountains and Springs' or 'Fish in the London River', which refer to the biodiversity and ecologies of the River. Three years after Cornish's publication, Ford Madox Ford's *The Soul of London* (1905) referred to the dialecticism between the naturalness of the Thames and the artificial environment that it runs through. Ford wrote that

> The River is a natural way; roads wind upon hills, descend valleys in zig-zags, make nowadays detours that were once necessary in order to strike fords or to convenience great houses or solitary hamlets.
> (Ford, 1995, p.57)

Ford demonstrates the interrelationship between the Thames and the artificial environment by describing its natural journey through the former. Unlike Cornish and Ford, Leslie does not write about the naturalness of the Thames as a body of water that exists with its own ecosystems, and biodiversity. Instead, the 'our' within Leslie's title foregrounds the River as a possible possession, and highlights pleasure as his primary focus. Bate notes that "[m]astery and possession are the driving forces not only of science but also of capitalism" (2001, p.99). When applying Bate's assertion to Leslie's title, I argue that the River is positioned within a capitalist system, where the Thames can be viewed as a commodity, and not as a body of water that belongs to a combination of ecological processes.

As such, Leslie's title suggests humanity's control over nature – an idea that is later popularised within the content of *Our River*. Following his discourse on possession and capitalism, Bate (2000) describes the moment humanity broke away from nature as a 'fall' by appropriating Rousseauan philosophy, namely *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men* (Rousseau, 1754). Within his work, Rousseau described how the division between man and nature stemmed from the creation of property:

> The true founder of a civil society was the first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying, 'This is mine', and came across people simple enough to believe him.
>
> (Rousseau, cited in Bate, 2001, p.47)

Through consideration of Rousseau's words, it is possible to discern the context of ownership that, he argues, began a system of inequality amongst the classes. Rousseau describes two types of people required to enable this system to operate: those who claimed to own the land and those who would accept their ownership. This system was later understood and described, by Marx and Engels (1848), as capitalism. Leslie's perceived ownership of the Thames is similar to ideas conveyed by nature writers of the *fin de siècle.* Writing in the context that the River should provide "pleasure for all" (1944, p.127), Jefferies felt that the Thames belongs, and should belong, "to a city like London" (1944, p.127). Contrary to Leslie, Jefferies does not allocate the River to a specific class, but rather to a specific region, despite the fact that the Thames runs through a number of regions including Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Reading. This suggests a divide between the rural and the urban, where Jefferies designates the urban as 'owning' the Thames. However, it should also be noted that Jefferies's status as a nature writer meant that he was unlikely to favour the urban over the rural, so it is therefore likely that Jefferies is referring to the cultural dominance that associated the River with the City. Furthermore, he also called for "a certain balance of life" (Jefferies, 1944, p.127) to be kept up, hereby promoting the natural preservation of the waterway that conflates with Leslie's predominant focus on leisure and pleasure.

In *The Country and the City* (1973), Williams argues that "it has been commonplace since Marx to speak, in some contexts, of the progressive character of capitalism, and within it of urbanism" (2011, p.37). It is appropriate to apply Williams's argument in the context of the Thames and its ownership, given that the River runs both through the countryside and the city. Thus, Jefferies's statement, in claiming the Thames belongs to the urban, is also

positioning the River within the cycle of capitalism. Whilst we have demonstrated how Leslie's title indicates humanity's possession of nature via Rousseau and Marx, it is also possible to see how even a communal usage of the Thames constructs a social strata that reverberated through capitalism.

By interpreting Leslie's title *Our River* to mean a 'communal usage', the waterway becomes a shared experience that is enjoyed by many who undertake their recreation, as Leslie does, through boating. With reference to the idea of a 'communal usage', it is worth considering the prospective 'communities' that were enjoying the Thames. Leslie's acquisition of a house in Wallingford on the banks of the Thames, a place described by fellow Thames-writer Joseph Ashby-Sterry as a "mansion" (1896, p.121), is significant because Ashby-Sterry's reference to the size of Leslie's home could be indicative of Leslie's position within the class system. In other words, like humanity's dominance over nature, Leslie also exists within a dominant position of the class hierarchy. The notion of having a hierarchy between different users of the Thames is suggestive of a social ecology, which means that the natural environment can be hegemonised in the same way as humanity. Drawing on the work of Murray Bookchin, Timothy Clark describes the formation of a social ecology:

> The loss of conditions of wholeness and freedom in society led simultaneously to people regarding all natural entities in the same acquisitive and instrumentalising way.
>
> (Clark, 2011, p.89)

Clark is writing in the context of human development and the transition of "communal relationships into market relationships" (2011, p.89) in relation to the use and possession of natural resources. This materialistic way of viewing the natural environment is visible through Leslie's use of language in his rationale for writing *Our River*, where a hierarchical usage of the Thames is suggested. Leslie wanted to offer an account of his "many happy days […] spent on the upper reaches of our noble river" (1888, p.vii). His description of the River as 'noble'

has aristocratic connotations, which could associate the Thames with affluence. It is therefore possible that Leslie may be inferring that the River is used by all of humanity but, according to class, it is regarded or utilised differently.

The suggestion that Leslie likens his relationship with the Thames to one of acquisition where he implicitly 'owns' the River, together with the idea that the Thames is reserved for the wealthy, are attitudes that were similarly reverberated in newspapers at the end of the nineteenth century. One article, entitled 'The Thames as a Pleasure Resort' from *The Pall Mall Gazette,* suggests a hierarchical usage along the waterway:

> The river to-day is for every one; from those who live beside it, coming daily to town from Richmond and Surbiton or even from Henley, and those who go down to it in houseboats, or spend an annual and often wet fortnight "camping out," to those who can only accomplish the joys of a Sunday picnic or a casual weekday outing. It caters for all classes in a way which no other pleasure resort can quite hope to do; and every class that uses the river has its own special ideal of what the river should be, and by consequence its own special grievances against those whose sins of omission and commission militate against the realization of such ideal.
>
> (*The Pall Mall Gazette*, 1899, no page number)

The title of the article and its further reference to the Thames as a 'pleasure resort' contributes both to the commodification of the waterway, and to the aesthetic notion of the River as a source of pleasure. A 'resort', which is a socially constructed place for the recreation of humanity, reinforces the notion that the Thames is perceived as being there purely for human pleasure. Whilst *The Pall Mall Gazette* emphasise the communal usage of the Thames, it does so by imposing hierarchies upon it through suggesting that the River is used differently by each class. However, the article also unites all users of the Thames, irrespective of class, against the politics over the River's governance, or 'militancy' as suggested, which seeks to impact upon their enjoyment of the Thames. Despite highlighting a communal usage of the Thames, the

implication of an existing social strata maintains the River as belonging within a system of capital, which correlates with the suggestion that Leslie regards it as a possession.

Leslie writes about his boat ownership, and this mirrors the suggested ownership that he declares of the natural environment – both of which are channelled through his love of boating. Together with his home ownership upon the banks of the Thames, Leslie also describes owning his first punting boat as "a distinct epoch in my river life" (1888, p.14). More explicitly, he claims to be a "possessor of a boat of my own" (Leslie, 1888, p.14). By describing this time as an 'epoch', the importance of ownership is suggested and the use of the word 'possessor', a synonym for owner, also connotes capital. Therefore, Leslie's engagement with the River becomes associated with capital, which supports the ecocritical argument that ownership is characteristic of capitalism (Bate, 2000). It is also worth considering nineteenth-century perceptions of possession and capitalism. In their seminal work *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels outlined how those who were in possession of land or properties were the dominant or ruling classes. In essence, this boat ownership positions Leslie amid the dominant classes, and this belonging can be deemed as synonymous with his dominance over the natural landscape. Leslie's admiration of his boat, as opposed to the River, can be seen in the frontispiece, entitled 'The Author's Punt' (see Fig.1, p.73) used in *Our River*, which was sketched by himself. This image centralises his punting boat, whereas the actual Thames occupies a small portion at the bottom of the painting. Whilst the boat is at the forefront of the painting, the upper regions of the painting are dominated by the natural landscape including the trees and the grasslands.

As Leslie's work reveals a recreational or aesthetical interest in the River, as opposed to an ecological one, each of his interests are discussed respectively. In the

Fig.1 Leslie, G. D. (1881) 'The Author's Punt', taken from *Our River: Personal Reminiscences of an Artist's Life on the River Thames,* Second Edition. London: Bradbury, Agnew & Co (1888).

recreational sense, boating or specifically punting, was Leslie's favourite pastime along the Thames. He describes how "[t]he fresh zest which punting gave me for the river was amazing, and a whole world of new pleasures and beauties seemed to open up to me" (Leslie, 1888, p.14). Boating evidently dominated Leslie's river experience, and this led to other sensations he felt along the Thames, such as pleasure from the aesthetics of the River. The focus on pleasure here correlates with the late Victorian Aesthetic movement's dictum, "art for art's sake" (Pater, 1873, p.213), whereby Leslie's experience need not be politically or ecologically charged, but merely a solely pleasurable recreational experience for its own sake. However, through the lens of ecocriticism, Leslie's references to the natural environment can be understood as being defined in their relation to the human act of leisure, and therefore nature is positioned as secondary.

Leslie further mentions that the River can often be an obstruction to his boating experience by writing that "[t]he water in the short reach between Goring and Cleve Lock is very deep and sluggish, bad of course for punting" (1888, p.153). Leslie's focus on his own recreational activity relegates a part of the waterway as inactive and ineffective. Therefore, despite the fact that the depth of a river forms part of its natural trajectory, and therefore contributes to its ecological function, Leslie foregrounds his own gratification and, although not deliberately, dismisses the Thames's natural conservation. This attitude is mirrored in contemporary ecocritical thinking. Bate (2000) asserts that conservation is not about 'nature's rights' but is more to do with 'human needs', such as the need for recreation, whilst Clark supports this view by declaring that "human interest and quality of [human] life" (2011, p.2) is at the heart of conservation. Therefore, the emphasis on the human activity of leisure upon the river, as exemplified by Leslie, supports an anthropocentric means of 'conserving' the waterway.

Leslie describes how nature became a hindrance to his pursuit of leisure, when he writes about a voyage he undertook "right up above Oxford, until the river became entirely choked with weeds, and navigation impossible" (Leslie, 1888, p.30). To an extent, this points at the inability to control nature by referring to an aspect of the River's ecosystem, and therefore hints at an ecocentricism or a dominance of nature. This indicates that the relationship between humanity and nature within Leslie's work is not entirely fixed, but the primary research has found that an anthropocentric reading of the work is more dominant. Therefore, the suggestion that these weeds prevent navigation posits nature as a burden and, the River's ecology can once again be viewed as inferior to humanity. Whilst Leslie appears to be concerned about the Thames's natural environment, through his reference to the choking weeds, he is actually expressing a grievance that the weeds are spoiling his leisurely pursuit of the River.

Despite the fact that it is the ecocritical reading of Leslie's tale that highlights the absence of references to the Thames's ecologies in *Our River* (as opposed to it being Leslie's intention), it is pertinent that his occasional poor impressions of the River resonates with traditional literary representations of the Thames. Leslie immediately evokes the theme of leisure when he begins writing about a trip to Oxford, a city known for its boating and regattas. He describes how "the poor Isis was very disappointing, looking so muddy and uninteresting" (Leslie, 1888, p.12). The reference to Isis is a cultural one that belongs in traditional literary representations of the Thames. His description of the River's 'muddy' waters is written amongst anecdotes of his first experiences of boating, which juxtaposes the Thames's ecology with human experience. The mud, which is necessary for the natural preservation [of the river], is dismissed by Leslie as a substance which contributes to his own

personal disappointment of the River's image. By referring to a 'poor Isis', Leslie suggests that the Thames is suffering from its own muddy waters.

Dickens's Dictionary of the Thames, first published just two years before Leslie's book of the Thames, contains an entry for the 'Isis', and from this entry a link can be established between Leslie's use of the term and the inclusion of 'Isis' within a literary tradition. Interestingly, *Our River* reveals that Charles Dickens JNR was a companion to Leslie during the latter's first experience at Henley Regatta, contributing to the network of writers that this thesis proposes (see Appendix Three). Leslie is therefore likely to have been familiar with *Dickens's Dictionary*, due to his friendship with Dickens JNR and his boating affinity with the River. Dickens JNR's entry describes the 'Isis' as

> a name frequently given to the Thames until it is joined by the Thame a mile below Day's Lock, near Dorchester. Camden thus derives the word Tamesis, or Thames, from the junction of the two rivers. This fanciful derivation appears to have no foundation in actual fact, but has been perpetuated by the poets who have sung of the nuptials of Thame and Isis.
>
> (Dickens JNR, 1885, p.114)

This cultural construction of the joining of Thame and Isis in a celebratory manner, which humanises the River, is once again evoked by Leslie as he describes the coming together of two tributaries at Sinodun Hill: "the Isis weds the Thame […] reminding one of a wedding *à la mode* between aristocracy and plutocracy; the Thame ringing little besides his name and title to his great rich bride the Isis, with her wealth of waters" (Leslie, 1888, p.159). Interesting to note, and perhaps worthy of further study, is the gendering of different parts of the Thames waterway in this literary construction. However, more pertinent to this chapter is Leslie's suggestion of the coming together of the politically powerful and the landed gentry.

By referring to the Thame and Isis, Leslie's representation of the River is connotative of power and capital, both of which are human or social constructions. This elevation of the Thames also shows Leslie's use of personification, whereby hierarchies are suggestively posited upon the River, which contributes to his human-centred approach. Personifying the Thames was commonplace for the Victorians, particularly within periodicals as a way of using metaphors to enable the public to understand the diseases that shrouded the Thames, as Clare Horrocks (2003) has examined. Whilst this use of personification that Horrocks identifies is constructive in its 'educatory' sense, it remains a pejorative representation as it aligns the Thames with sickness and thus the degenerative state of the waterway, whereas Leslie's personification lauds the River with celebration and wealth in a manner that heightens a materialistic way of viewing the Thames. Notably, the use of personification does not always indicate an anthropocentricity of humanity's relationship with nature, because, as Chapter Two demonstrates in the context of the 'ecopoem', personification can also augment a symbiotic relationship.

Leslie's anthropocentric hegemony, as suggested from an ecocritical reading of *Our River*, is continued through the language which he uses to describe both the River, and its surrounding wilderness:

> From Medmenham the river is rather dull until you reach Magpie Eyot; the stream is not very strong, and punting can be done with ease all the way up on the tow-path side. I have frequently seen herons along this Reach, standing with their grey heads out of the long weeds, for all the world like old gampy umbrellas stuck in the ground.
>
> (Leslie, 1888, p.77)

Here, Leslie's disinterest in the 'dull' Thames is only worth mentioning, in his view, due to the ease of punting, meaning that the River is defined by the human activity of boating which, as previously acknowledged, is an activity that would have generated capital for the Thames

Conservancy. The idea that the River is brought into being through boating suggests a reification of Thames, which can be traced to Marxist theory. Furthermore, this reification coupled with the ecocritical analysis of Leslie's language determines a social ecology in attitudes towards the River. The simile that Leslie uses to describe the heron, a bird that forms part of the river's biodiversity, is likened to a material object within the earth, which presents an example of the artificial being imposed upon the natural. Contrastingly, another admirer of the Thames, Alfred Williams, also described a heron amid the River's environment. In his *Round about the Upper Thames* (1922), Williams describes the heron in the following way:

> The heron's plan is to conceal itself on the bank, or amid reeds, and wait the approach of fish. Immediately one comes into view the heron stabs it behind the gills and stuns it, and the fish, rising to the surface, is quickly seized and thrown out upon dry land. The heron is highly destructive.
>
> (Williams, 1922, p.104)

Whilst Williams recognises and appreciates the authority of nature, or the heron, Leslie's likening to a 'gampy umbrella' can be viewed as an imposed materialism that positions nature as lesser to culture.

Through modernity, nature has often been regarded as lesser, and this has become fundamental to our understanding of humanity. As Kate Soper explains, "nature is opposed to culture, to history, to convention […] in short, to everything which is defining of the order of humanity" (1995, p.15). Similarly, Leslie's representation of the naturalness of the Thames is often opposed to the culture of late Victorian boating along the River. Soper (1995) further argues that nature is continually positioned as 'Other', and this is evident through the suggestive pejorative language appropriated within Leslie's account of the Thames. He refers to the River, outside Caversham Lock as "decidedly ugly" (Leslie, 1888, p.140), whereas just after Shillingford it becomes "almost insignificant" (1888, p.158) before turning "rather

insipid" (1888, p.159) after Day's Lock. These undesirable adjectives create an image of the River as both dull and unsightly, which subsequently refers to both the aesthetics and the character of the Thames. Ecocritically, Leslie's language oppresses the River and subsequently positions it as 'Other'. In his study of literature and the environment, Clark argues "that language is a decisive human environment and that its current dominant forms can rightly be called an environmental problem" (2011, p.46). With this in mind, it would seem that Leslie's use of language to describe the Thames, albeit inadvertently, is a way of exerting his dominance over the natural environment, whilst positioning his pursuit of leisure as the sole purpose of the River. In viewing the hierarchy between humanity and nature, as established through Leslie's use of language, *Our River* captures the essence that is in concert with capitalist ideologies.

Leslie's less favourable representations of the Thames contrast with the complimentary language he later adopts to portray the River, which resonates with his aesthetic appreciation of the waterway. Upon arriving at Wargrave, he suggests that "to see this place in its perfection, a fine evening at the end of September should be chosen when the colouring of the weeds and banks in the warm sunlight is as fine as anything ever done by Turner and Nature combined" (Leslie, 1888, p.127/8). Leslie is suggesting here that experiencing nature first-hand is the same as experiencing nature through viewing one of Turner's paintings. To some extent, this lessens the need for humanity to physically experience nature if a landscape painting is deemed sufficient, thus elevating materialism above nature once again. Although, it is also possible that Leslie is making a connection between the pleasurable sensation of looking at art and the pleasurable sensation of experiencing the Thames. Leslie's quotation situates the River amid the naturalness of weeds and, unlike the 'choking' way he previously described them, they are now amongst the sunlight, which negotiates a sense of warmth, or light, and, in doing so, Leslie idealises the Thames.

The reference to Turner is significant because, as Jonathan Schneer claims, the artist can be described as the "Thames's foremost interpreter in oil and watercolour" (2011, p.116). Turner's work often illustrated the environmentally hazardous impact that modernities, including the railway, were having on the natural landscape, which prompted debates concerning urban and rural landscapes. Similarly, Leslie recognises the disdain felt towards the railway due to its ruin of the natural landscape when he notes "[m]uch as the railway has been abused for spoiling the country, in this case I am sure it has to be thanked for the orderliness and refinement which it has brought to the river side" (Leslie, 1888, p.107). However, Leslie's scorn of the railway is swiftly dismissed as he recognises the value that it brought to the leisurely aspect of the River, ridding it of several commercial boats. Interestingly, one of Turner's many Thames paintings, *The River Thames near Isleworth: Punt and Barges in the Foreground* (1805, see Fig.2, p.81), illustrates Leslie's favourite leisurely pastime on the Thames: punting. However, the painting also recognises the commerciality of the River through the barges, and thus Turner's work could be considered a hybrid painting of the dual-usage (leisure and commercial) of the Thames that dominated the nineteenth century. Leslie's reference to Turner also establishes a link between art, nature and British Romanticism, whereby art could be considered another way of encouraging nature tourism. Turner's prominence as a Romantic artist, together with the notion that through painting and exhibiting his work he would have been highlighting scenery for visitations, demonstrates his engagement with the principles of nature tourism.

The Romantic conception of nature tourism is later visible in *Our River*, when Leslie acknowledges that the language he uses is nature-specific. However, representing the Thames or nature through language is problematic because, as Clark (2011) has suggested,

Fig.2 Turner, J. M. W. (1805) *The River Thames near Isleworth: Punt and Barges in the Foreground* [graphite and watercolour on paper]. London: Tate Gallery.

language is ultimately anthropocentric. In a manner that is akin to Wordsworthian perceptions of the imagination, Leslie proposes a hierarchy amongst those who are capable of appreciating the 'beauty in nature':

> The universality of beauty in nature must ever remain a problem of the greatest mystery to a reflective mind; that the vast superfluity of beauty which prevails on every side has been perfected solely for the delight and recreation of human beings, must appear an absurd idea, if we consider how very few of us there are, capable of appreciating this beauty even in a small degree. This book of nature is written in a language of its own.
>
> (Leslie, 1888, p.196)

Leslie's account of the River being written 'in a language of its own' echoes Wordsworth's 1802 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, where he outlines the aims of his poetry: "I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men" (Wordsworth, 2013, p.112). Leslie's intention to acquire an original language for his 'book of nature' separates individuals into those who are capable of appreciating the aesthetics of the natural landscape and those who are not. From an ecocritical perspective, this could be regarded as an ecological elitist appropriation that implies the act of nature adoration is hierarchical.

Leslie's writing of the Thames may be intended to mystify many readers which, once again, reinforces the notion that the admiration of the beauties of the River is reserved for a privileged few. In contrast, Wordsworth, through his self-confessed simple language, was attempting to appeal to people of all different social backgrounds. Bate explains how language is used as a medium between nature and culture:

> [I]n the division between nature and society, language is firmly on the side of society. Romanticism often insists that language is a prison house which cuts us off from nature, but simultaneously the poet strives

> to create a special kind of language that will be the window of the prison cell.
>
> (Bate, 2001, p.47)

Similarly, it could be that Leslie was attempting to harmonise the divide between nature and humanity through his use of language. However, he reserves the 'language of its own' for a select few who are able to appreciate and understand the beauty of nature, thus constructing a hierarchy between admirers of the beauties in nature, with the capable admirers claiming the dominant status.

Leslie's declaration of *Our River* as a 'book of nature' is questionable due to the focus of his work being on his personal memories, or 'reminiscences', together with his emphasis on the human pursuit of leisure. The Thames is essentially perceived in its value to us, as humans, and not in its own right as an ecological system, within Leslie's work. More appropriate then, would be to describe Leslie's work as a piece of travel writing, a genre that can be defined as "predominantly factual, first-person prose accounts of travels that have been undertaken by the author-narrator" (Youngs, 2013, p.3). These features appropriately describe Leslie's work. However, at the risk of suggesting that Leslie's work is one-dimensional in terms of genre, it could also be worth considering it as a piece of nature tourism. This combines Leslie's description of his work as a 'book of nature' with the consumerist style of travel writing. Certainly, Leslie's *Our River* does incorporate some characteristics of nature writing, including some references to the natural body of the Thames but, it is in the context of 'tourism' where Leslie's work belongs. For, as Leslie informs us, the book aims to leave "a slight record of the many happy days of my life that have been spent on the upper reaches of our noble river" (1888, p.vii) and, as Bate explains, "the modern tourism industry, the journey back to nature" (2000, p.127) originated in the writing of journals. Therefore, Leslie's text is

a recollection of his own journey back to the River, which means that his work may be read, economically, as a tour of the Thames.

This consumerist and anthropocentric style of writing can further be understood through consideration of Leslie's chapter headings. Of all twelve chapters, only one is centred around ecological aspects of the River: chapter ten is titled 'Flowers and Weeds on the River'. The remaining chapters focus on towns along the banks, histories of the River, boating along the Thames, inhabitants of the waterway, and places of interest. Examples include 'Description of Henley Regatta' or 'From Sonning to Abingdon'. However, the most significant chapter heading to support the notion that Leslie's work was intended for visitors to the Thames was his final chapter, entitled 'Parting Words of Advice', where he specifically addresses boating travellers to offer "a few words of advice, that [he] think[s] may be useful to [his] readers who may wish to enjoy the beauties of the river" (Leslie, 1888, p.228). Leslie's *Our River* can be read as a guide to the Thames for the prospective river tourist as, by encouraging visitors, Leslie participates in the customs of nature tourism and its subsequent capitalist implications. This example of nature tourism echoes Romantic relations between humanity and nature. Wordsworth was an economic recipient of nature tourism, as his "best-selling publication was not a volume of poetry but a *Guide to the Lakes*" (Bate, 2001, p.128). Both Wordsworth and Leslie, whilst seeming to appreciate the naturalness of the Lake District and the River Thames respectively, are inviting visitors to explore their subjects. In doing so, they are paving the way for an increase in visitations to their subjects that, subsequently, could evoke an exploitation of the natural environment by positioning it as a commodity.

A commodification of the Thames can also be read through Leslie's aestheticising of the River. In exploring the beauties in nature from an artist's perspective,

Leslie emphasises the significance of the artist's gaze. By describing the process of painting the Thames, Leslie highlights the role of both the natural and the human in imagining the River through art:

> The winter floods, the bend in the river, or the wind, may have had a hand in the work, but why is the result beautiful? Amongst the beauties of nature the disturbing influence of the hand of man is quickly recognized by an educated eye.
>
> (Leslie, 1888, p.197)

Here, Leslie recognises the role of the ecology of the Thames, including the natural processes, weather systems or natural formations, in the construction of the River as a work of art whilst also addressing the role of the 'hand of man'. This process of imagining the Thames through art, as Leslie describes, is subject to an 'educated eye', which is based upon the premise of the artist's continuous gazing at the landscape or, more specifically, "the education of his eye is his constant business" (Leslie, 1888, p.199). Therefore, Leslie aligns the 'educated eye' with the figure of the artist, and suggests that through an artist's 'educated eye', and the eventual finished work of art, the true 'beauties of nature' are realised. The appreciation of nature in Leslie's first quotation mirrors the view held by fellow Royal Academician John Ruskin, who believed that "it is in nature that the sources of pleasure in art are to be found" (Hewison, 1976, p.63). However, according to Hewison, Ruskin further argued that "it was not the object itself that was beautiful, but what we subjectively associated with it, and what we associated with it depended on the chance connections made by our experience and the operations of our own mind" (1976, p.55/56). Similarly, Leslie's notion of beauty is derived subjectively from his own leisurely and aesthetic engagement with the Thames, which is gaged through his own 'educated eye'. However, Ruskin identified a fallibility of the artist's eye (Colley, 2010, p.157) and Leslie similarly identified this shortcoming when he claimed that "in endeavouring to reproduce the perfection of nature I am perpetually being mortified at my shortcomings" (1888, p.199). Whilst Leslie imposes a limit on humanity's ability to capture the beauties in nature,

his positioning of the Thames amid writings of aesthetics can be argued as decisively human-centred.

In resonance with the Burkean Beautiful, Leslie questions the subjectivity of beauty in nature and its origins. Moreover, by considering Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry* we can, once again, trace Leslie's account of the River to Romantic conceptions of nature tourism. In *Our River*, Leslie describes his own experience of harnessing the 'educated eye' when he writes "I like then to lie down on the till of my punt with my head over the side, letting the boat drift with the stream, and gaze down into the water" (1888, p.202). This objectification of the Thames attributes power to humanity through the 'gaze' as a method of establishing true beauty. Burke argued that beauty "is a *positive* and powerful quality" (Burke, 2008, p.94), and therefore, if beauty can only be achieved by humanity then positivity and power is always aligned with man. As such, nature does therefore not have the power to form its own beauty. Moreover, the alignment of Leslie's beauty with the Burkean Beautiful can be evoked through Leslie's 'love' of the Thames. He describes how "Maple Durham is of perfect beauty […] a spot dear to all river-lovers' memories" (Leslie, 1888, p.143). This can be examined in accordance with Burke's experience of the Beautiful, when Burke argues that "we submit to what we admire, but we love what submits to us" (2008, p.103). Therefore, Leslie's reference to 'river-lovers' can be considered amid the Burkean principle of nature succumbing to humanity, and it is this principle that imposes a hierarchy between Thames-observers and the ecological body of the Thames.

With reference to the numerous changes along the waterway during the nineteenth century, Leslie repeats his reference to the 'river lovers' and thus firmly places them within an artistic realm. He wrote how the changes were "slowly but surely destroying the

simplicity, the picturesqueness, and the natural beauty so highly prized by artistic river lovers" (Leslie, 1888, p.viii). Leslie makes numerous references to the picturesque throughout his work. However, to avoid repetition, and because the aestheticism of the picturesque and its relationship with the River is more apparent in Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell's *The Stream of Pleasure,* the picturesqueness of the Thames is explored in more depth in the following section of this chapter.

1.2 Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennell's *The Stream of Pleasure: The Narrative of a Journey on the Thames from Oxford to London* (1891)

American husband and wife Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennells' leisurely account of the Thames was originally published in the American periodical *The Century Magazine* in August 1889. This was a shorter version of the 1891 publication that is examined here, and it was published under the magazine's caption of 'Midsummer Holiday Number'. This title would suggest that the intention of the Pennells' work was to promote tourism along the Thames and, by doing so within an international publication, the Pennells situate Britain's River amid global tourism. *The Stream of Pleasure: The Narrative of a Journey on the Thames from Oxford to London* is written and narrated by Elizabeth Pennell, and illustrations are sketched by Joseph Pennell.

Unlike Leslie, who was an experienced boatman, the Pennells were novices when it came to navigating a boat. A review of the Pennells' work in *The New York Times* explained that "[t]he lady who writes so gayly and her husband who illustrates so charmingly own up at once that they were the least nautical of explorers. She had never steered. He had never rowed" (*The New York Times,* 1891, no page number). Theirs is an amateur boating experience of the River between Oxford and London. However, similarly to Leslie, the

Pennells also held residence along the Thames Embankments. It is this home ownership that is the subject of their later autobiographical work, written again by Elizabeth Pennell, and titled *Our House and Out of Our Windows* (1912) with illustrations by Joseph Pennell. This work focuses upon the servants, charwomen, housekeepers, beggars and the various tenants that occupied their residence, which offers us an insight into the Pennells' middle class status during their time living in London. The significance of this status can be applied to the ecocritical reading of *The Stream of Pleasure,* because it feeds into the values of social ecology. As Clark points out, "violence against the natural world has its origins in human social and economic institutions based on oppressive systems of hierarchy and elitism" (2011, p.89). The word 'violence' here is too harsh to apply to the Pennells' usage of the Thames, as they are not physically destructive to the natural environment per se. However, their relationship with the River in *The Stream of Pleasure* can ecocritically be considered hierarchical and anthropocentric, in a way that suggests an indifference for the River's natural ecology.

According to the Pennells' autobiography, frequent visitors to the Pennells' home included fellow Thames-writer Edmund Gosse (whose poem 'The Shepherd of the Thames' is examined in Chapter Two), and one of Thames's most famous painters, James McNeill Whistler (whose work is referred to later in this chapter). Through a description of the view from their window, Pennell wrote how "evening transformed the Thames and its banks into Whistler's 'Fairyland'" (1912, p.293). Their fascination with the River would certainly have been harnessed by Whistler's work as the pair co-authored his biography, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler* (Pennell and Pennell, 1908). The Pennells were also well-acquainted with writings of the Thames during the late Victorian period, as shown when Elizabeth describes how "[i]n riverside gardens children practised what Mr. Ashby-Sterry calls 'hammockuity'" (Pennell, 1891, p.67). She also writes about exploring the backwaters of the

Thames when visiting Wargrave, and explains how they follow the advice given by Leslie in *Our River.* Furthermore, they reference Dickens JNR's *Dictionary of the Thames,* where he writes about the practice of taking the railway to a town upstream in order to undertake the popular Oxford to London recreational boat trip.

These links strengthen the Pennells' role amid the network of Thames writers that, I argue, existed during the *fin de siècle*. In addition, Jones (2015) has pointed out that Elizabeth was influenced by Pater's work on aestheticism, having met him late in 1885 – the same year that he published *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*, a novel where Pater's ideas on aestheticism are suggested. Pater's Epicureanism can be applied to *The Stream of Pleasure* because the Pennells' experience of the Thames is driven by their own pleasure, with even the titling of their work suggesting that the River primarily exists for them to indulge their senses. The year 1885 was also significant in relation to the Thames Preservation Act; Jefferies's essay 'The Modern Thames'; Gosse's poems 'The Ballad of the Upper Thames' and 'The Shepherd of the Thames' and it was also the year that the Newdigate Prize, a prestigious poetry competition at Oxford University, was won by Richard Hippisley Domenichetti for his poem 'The Thames'.

Whilst the focus of this chapter is the Pennells' boating experience along the Thames, it is worth considering how the Pennells viewed the River on a daily basis through the windows of their London home. Taken from *Our House,* the significance of the Pennells' view of the River scene is that it is very much defined by its artificial environment. Elizabeth Pennell describes the view from her window:

> I look out on the Thames: down to St. Paul's, up to Westminster, opposite to Surrey, and, on a clear day as far as the hills. Trains rumble across the bridges, trams screech and clang along the Embankments,

> tugs, pulling their line of black barges, whistle and snort on the river. The tide brings with it the smell of the sea and, in winter, the great white flights of gulls.
>
> (Pennell, 1912, p.342/3)

Even though the Thames is positioned amid industrialism here, Pennell recognises the naturalness that surrounds the River. However, her focus mirrors the way in which she perceives the Thames in *The Stream of Pleasure*, as she offers a sensual experience of the River by noting the scent of the sea, or the sight of the wildlife. The Pennells' assertion that the Thames is a 'stream of pleasure', whilst being suggestively characteristic of Epicureanism, also creates an anthropocentric vision of the River. This perception can be ascertained by defining the word 'pleasure'; the noun is a "condition or sensation induced by the experience or anticipation of what is felt to be good or desirable" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Considering this definition in terms of the Pennells' work, it is possible to equate the waterway with human desires or, sensuality, which means that whilst there is an appreciation of the naturalness of the River, this is only achieved through actually experiencing the Thames. In the Pennells' case, it is achieved through observing the River from their home and also their experience of journeying along the waterway, which means that it is possible to see the human act of leisure and the human state of pleasure interconnected by the Thames.

The Stream of Pleasure identifies several aesthetically pleasing areas along the Thames that relate to Gilpin's philosophy of the picturesque. This association is formed in two ways: through the Pennells' explicit use of language, and through the implicitness of their illustrations. Firstly, the Pennells' refer to the "picturesqueness [of] the river" (Pennell, 1891, p.57) and that within "all Thames villages the elements of the picturesque are the same" (1891, p.67). Bate argues that the tourism industry had its origins in Gilpin's aesthetic movement or, as Bate described, "the principles of picturesque tourism" (2001, p.132). It is therefore possible to associate the Pennells' late Victorian picturesque Thames with leisure and capital. In the

ecocritical sense, the Pennells' work conforms to the processes of capital by using the picturesque to promote tourism along the River. As Leslie's *Our River* does, *The Stream of Pleasure* upholds the Thames within the avenue of leisure, albeit in a different way.

In their journeys of recreation, the Pennells' *The Stream of Pleasure* and Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye* explore two different modes of leisure: boating and walking. This highlights the difference between an old recreational pastime, made popular by the Romantics at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and a pastime more familiar with the late Victorians. If we return to the picturesque lexis adopted by the Pennells when they declare Abingdon the "most picturesque little town on the Thames" (1891, p.30), the work contemplates the River in accordance with its relation to humanity and, in doing so, an anthropocentric vision of the natural environment is constructed. Interestingly, fellow-boater Ashby-Sterry, also declared that "few towns on the Thames present such a picturesque appearance from the water as Abingdon" (1896, p.103), which shows that this perception of Abingdon was a common one. From the Pennells' perspective, the River is viewed in the context of the town of Abingdon and this perception is congruent to Byerly's explanation on the value of the picturesque:

> The picturesque appreciation of landscape was in fact an appropriation of landscape that had more to do with the attitude of the viewer than the inherent qualities of the scene, which was valued only to the degree that it could be made to conform to preconceived aesthetic principles.
>
> (Byerly, 1996, p.56)

Through consideration of Byerly's argument, the Pennells' observation of the Thames at Abingdon is more to do with their own interpretation of the view, rather than the naturalness of the River itself. In favour of describing at length the scene of the Thames at Abingdon, the Pennells instead dedicate more interest to the "gabled streets, coming out now upon the market-

place and its town hall" (1891, p.30). From this, the couple arguably derive pleasure from the Thames by way of it being a gateway to places such as Abingdon, and not because of the actual waterway, thus augmenting an anthropocentricity in their writing.

The evocation of the picturesque through Abingdon in the Pennells' work is a pattern that is mirrored in other cultural formations, as shown through the subtlety of their illustrations that resonate with characteristics of the picturesque as featured in Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye*. However, firstly, another artist who painted the River at Abingdon in the same period as the Pennells was David Murray who, like George Dunlop Leslie, was a member of the Royal Academy of Arts. Murray captured the spire of Abingdon in a painting entitled *Abingdon-on-Thames* (1889–91, see Fig.3, p.93). The relevance of including Murray's work here is that it reveals a connection between Royal Academicians and New Art critics. Despite the tension between members of the Royal Academy and New Art critics (Jones, 2015), with the former viewing art as occupying a moral value and the latter being associated with "art for art's sake" (Pater, 1873, p.213), an affinity could be seen through representations of the Thames.

The Pennells also describe the scene at Abingdon as a "beautiful spire rising above the houses" (Pennell, 1891, p.30). In Murray's painting, a smaller proportion of his composition is allocated to the River, in what is arguably a visual mirroring of the Pennells' written account of the Thames at Abingdon. The River is dominated by the towering spire and buildings above in the painting, which imposes the materialism of architecture over the scene's natural waterway in what becomes a visually metaphorical dominance of humanity over nature. This physical positioning by the artist evokes a metaphorical hierarchy between the town and the River, whereby the town and its population overlook the lesser Thames, which is similar to

Fig.3 Murray, D. (1889-1890) *Abingdon-on-Thames* [oil on canvas]. Glasgow: Glasgow Museums.

the way in which the Pennells arguably centralise the town of Abingdon and position the River on the periphery. Both Murray and the Pennells, as we see shortly, use the spire as a physical symbol of the town's dominance over the Thames.

In *The Stream of Pleasure,* the Pennells further describe Abingdon by writing how "St Helen's Church is the centre of the town's beauty" (1891, p.31). Joseph Pennell captures this scene in one of his illustrations from *The Stream of Pleasure* by positioning the spire at the centre of his painting (see Fig.4, p.95). Despite the suggestion in Gilpin's tour guide that the picturesque seeks to encapsulate the beauty in nature, there is a limited emphasis on nature in the Pennells' description of Abingdon, a town they consider to be the most picturesque. Instead, the focus upon the manmade environment adheres to anthropocentric representations of the Thames that is in concert with contemporary ecocritical thought. In relation to humanity's relationship with the natural environment, Bate defines "anthropocentrism [as] the valuation of nature only in so far as it radiates out from humankind" (2001, p.138). With this in mind, the valuation of nature, or specifically the Thames, is established in the context of how it is positioned amid manmade constructions, such as buildings, or even humans themselves, within the aestheticism of the picturesque.

This anthropocentrism is also negotiated through the differing degrees of the picturesque. Robert Hewison (1976) recognises two varying degrees of the picturesque: these include 'high art', which has its origins in Italian landscape painting, and 'low art' that originated with the Dutch. Both Murray's and Pennell's illustrations contain an image of the Thames and its natural and artificial surroundings that is consistent with 'high art'. This form appealed "to aristocratic connoisseurship [and reflected] a regularity of composition softened

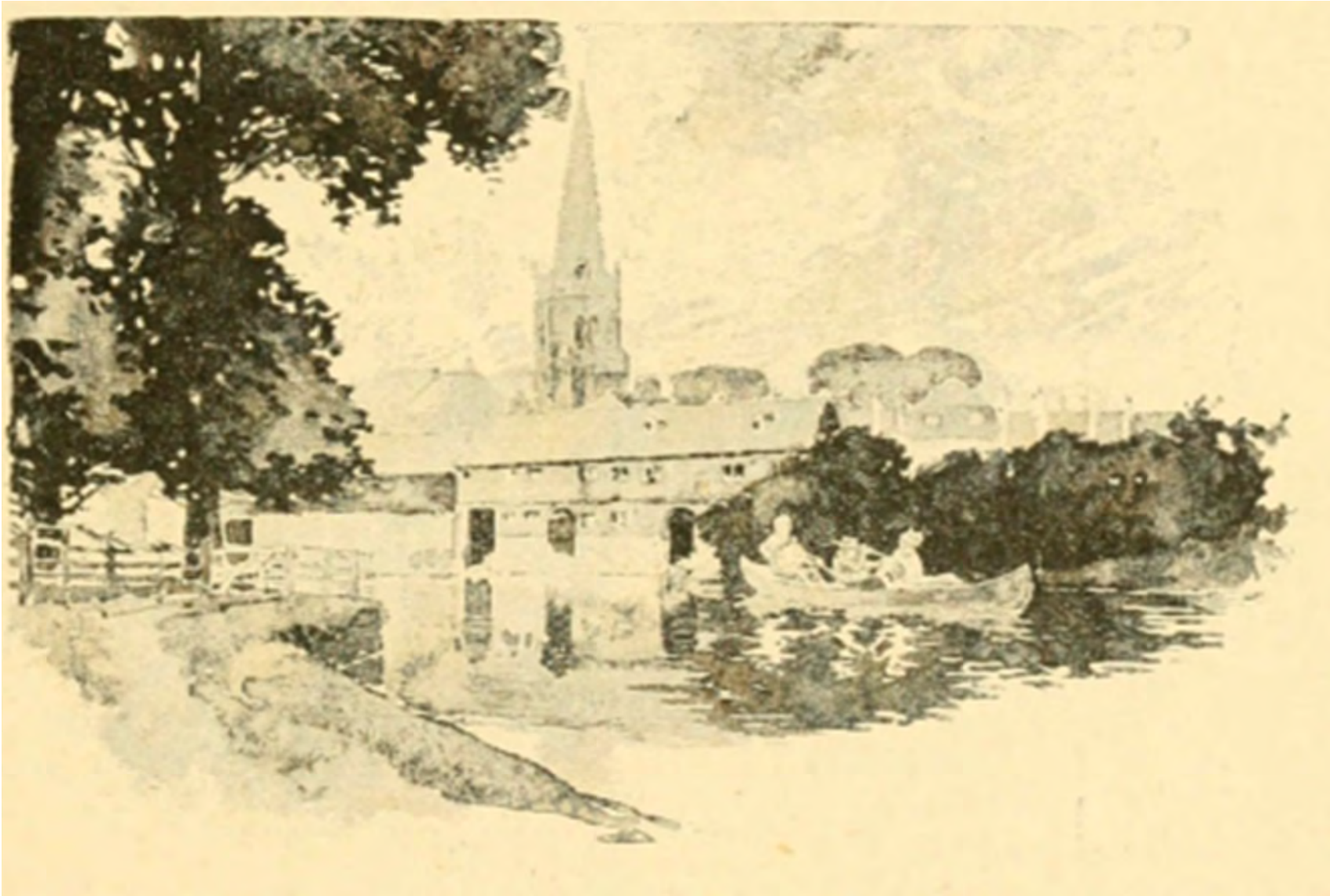

Fig.4 Pennell, J. (1891) 'Abingdon', taken from *The Stream of Pleasure: The Narrative of a Journey on the Thames from Oxford to London.* New York: Macmillan & Co.

by water and trees in a warm landscape that fades into a blue distance" (Hewison, 1976, p.34). In positioning both paintings in the 'high art' end of picturesqueness, they are elevated within a cultural hierarchy, situating the Thames, once again, amid social constructions of hegemony.

The Pennells' continuous written and illustrative allusions to the picturesque means that their representations of the Thames are rooted in eighteenth-century aestheticism that echoed British Romantic imaginings. As per Bate's argument, the picturesque was associated with tourism, and therefore the River is arguably commodified according to Romantic ideals. To strengthen this idea of Gilpin's legacy at the *fin de siècle*, Gilpin also described resources from the natural landscape as a commodity: "In many places also the views were varied by the prospect of bays, and harbours in miniature; where little barks lay moored, taking in ore, and other commodities from the mountains" (Gilpin, 1792, p.45). The use of the word 'commodities', which would later be popularised in Marx and Engels's *The Communist Manifesto* to denote people within the capitalist system, infers an exploitation of the natural environment. In the context of leisure tourism, a commodification of the landscape is therefore an ongoing process and has been evolving, at least since the picturesque movement.

The Pennells include a chapter entitled 'The Practical Chapter', which is written by J. G. Legge, and this chapter reveals details that are concomitant with processes of tourism. It is interesting to note that, whilst gender is not examined here, further research could be undertaken beyond this thesis to examine femininity and masculinity within *The Stream of Pleasure*. During this time, women were predominantly known for their emotional responses and not for their 'practicality' and so, by having a male writer compose 'The Practical Chapter', the Pennells' work also demonstrates an example of the woman's position within Victorian

society. This is because Elizabeth Pennell, on account of her femininity, would perhaps not have been deemed capable to write a chapter about the practicalities of the River. Of course, another interpretation could be that her inexperience of the Thames prevented her from writing such a chapter. Therefore, it is worth pointing out the continuous reference to Elizabeth's travel companion J–, which could suggest a lessening of the male figure in the work.

Legge's chapter includes a table that outlines the costs of hiring a boat for a week (see Fig.5, p.98) and the types of boats available to prospective hirers, with a notable difference in rate. These capital processes that were in operation along the River, supports contemporary ecocritical debates that tourism, within literature, acts as a form of exploitation where the natural environment is often demoralised for capital gain. The idea that the higher-priced boats, as per Legge's table, offer a more pleasurable boating experience is consistent with how sociological hierarchies are "geared to exploit both other people and the natural world as a source of profit" (Clark, 2011, p.2). Thus, those in possession of more capital have more power in the same way that humanity, as a whole, come together and subjugate nature, and this is established through late Victorian leisure and the monetary processes involved with travelling along the Thames.

In addition to Legge's chapter, the Pennells describe the way capital was attained along the River and they explicitly demonstrate how engaging in leisurely pursuits along the Thames was frequently met with expenditures. This is consistent with historical figures that show how "the Thames Conservancy figures for 1898 which show 10,482 pleasure boats registered and 257, 307 lock tickets sold" (Wigglesworth, 2013, p.104). These figures mirror the financial experiences of the Pennells as they journeyed along the waterway. In

Boating is, on the whole, an inexpensive amusement. You should get a boat almost anywhere, for practically the whole day, for 1s. 6d. a head—unless, of course, you do not return to your starting-place, but leave the boat to be called for. The following table gives in a handy form the prices charged for excursions down the river from Oxford:

	Teddington.			Eton.			Henley.			*Extra Hire.*	
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	Day.	Week.
Canoe, Whiff, Outrigged Dingey (for one person)	1	10	0	1	5	0	1	0	0	2/6	10/-
Dingey, Sculling Gig or Skiff, Double Canoe ..	2	0	0	1	15	0	1	10	0	3/-	15/-
Pair-oared Gig, Canadian Canoe..	2	10	0	2	5	0	2	0	0		
Randan Gig, Thames Skiff	3	0	0	2	15	0	2	10	0	5/-	20/-
Four-oared Gig, Randan Skiff	3	10	0	3	0	0	2	15	0		
Eight-oar	5	0	0	4	10	0	4	0	0	7/6	30/-
LARGER BOATS:—											
Large Shallop Four-oar	6	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	7/6	30/-
Large Four-oared Gig, with side seats ..	4	0	0	3	15	0	3	10	0	5/-	20/-
Randan Pleasure Skiff											
Pair-oared do. 19ft. to 20ft., with side seats	3	10	0	3	0	0	2	15	0		
Do. do. 16ft. to 18ft., ,,	3	0	0	2	15	0	2	10	0		
Ditto, fitted with tent cover and mattress ..	3	15	0	3	10	0	3	5	0	7/6	30/-
Randan, do. do. ..	5	0	0	4	10	0	4	0	0		

These prices include hire of boat for one week, after which extra hire is charged. It should be added that when a boat is left to be called for, a fee of 2s. 6d. is usually charged at the receiving boat-yard.

Fig.5 Legge, J. G. (1891) 'The Practical Chapter', in *The Stream of Pleasure: The Narrative of a Journey on the Thames from Oxford to London.* New York: Macmillan & Co.

reading the Thames alongside the theme of leisure, it is evident that the focus was on the beauty, and therefore the aesthetic pleasure sensation, and the propensity for the waterway to generate capital. In their work, the Pennells describe the act of purchasing a lock ticket:

> It admits you 'through, by, or over the lock or weir' for threepence. That is, I suppose, you can go through the lock in Christian fashion, drown under the weir, push and pull over the roller if there is one or drag your boat round by the shore: but whether you come out dead or alive, for any of these privileges the Thames Conservancy will have its threepence.
>
> (The Pennells, 1891, p.13)

Whilst the tone in this quotation is quite satirical, it remains significant as we can see how the Thames Conservancy were eliciting capital from the River, whilst at the same time promoting it as a recreational space. Thames cultural historian, Mick Sinclair, referred to "payment of a sometimes extortionate toll" (2007, p.xvii) which demonstrates how pursuits of leisure upon the Thames were always bound with capital. The Pennells' reference to the Thames Conservancy also highlights the Conservancy's presence, and particularly the idea of them ruling over the River. Ultimately, through this mutually beneficial relationship between the conservators and the leisure-goers, an ecocritical reading demonstrates how the natural world was being exploited both for reasons of capital gain and human pleasure. Another implication here, is that by charging for recreation, the Thames Conservancy is positioning leisure-goers back into the commercial realm of work from where they have supposedly escaped.

As the Pennells' tale suggests, the more people utilising the Thames meant a greater increase in the purchase of lock tickets, thus indicating an underlying economic agenda that existed behind the Act of 1885. It is with this notion that Peter Bailey's study 'Leisure: Merrie to Modern' classifies recreation as "a transplant of modern industrial production" (2012, p.632). He further argues that reformers were attempting to enforce a recreational discipline

that was akin to factory practices. This led to "a rogue branch of capitalism [because] leisure entrepreneurs played more to the needs and appetite of its citified subjects" (Bailey, 2012, p.632). In other words, whilst Victorians were being encouraged to indulge in their leisurely pursuits as a means of escapism from their industrialised lives, they were effectively being placed back into the realm of capitalism. This process may be applied to the promotion of recreation by the Thames Conservancy during the late Victorian period. Bate explains that an "encounter with nature is a form of recreation, all the more necessary because of the stress and alienation of urban modernity" (2001, p.132). The implication here is that whilst Victorian modernity drew people towards engaging in leisurely pursuits, these recreations would routinely place them back into the capitalist sphere from whence they had retreated. Therefore, as Bailey associates the outlet of capitalism with Victorian leisure, and despite their focus on pleasure, the Pennells position the Thames as a denominator in the functioning of capitalism within Victorian recreation.

According to the Pennells, the number of Victorians boating along the Thames was often determined by the weather. The importance placed on the weather within *The Stream of Pleasure* was recognised by contemporaneous, and global, media, as a newspaper review of their work described how "Mrs Pennell, if she were to perish for the assertion, would still keep on saying that it rains in England" (*The New York Times,* 1891, no page number). The fact that the review begins in this way, highlights the significance of Pennell's references to the weather and, I would argue, that these weather formations correlate with the capital generated, in a good or a bad way, for the Thames Conservancy through the presence and absence of boats along the River. This is due to the payment schemes that were in operation along the waterway, such as the purchase of lock tickets. The idea that poor weather meant less people boating along the Thames may seem like quite an obvious point, since it is quite common for people to remain

indoors during poor weather conditions. However, it is the Pennells' continuous references to the weather in relation to leisure that is the focal point, because it is these references that demonstrate how human behaviour changes on account of nature. A change that could be characteristic of an ecocentricism.

This change in human behaviour is shown as the Pennells describe how "with the sun came the boats [or] during that very rainy August, comparatively few people were on the upper reaches of the Thames" (Pennell, 1891, p.20) and further in the text, "when the sun shone again the boats all reappeared as suddenly. One cannot tell in words how the river, with the first bit of sunshine, like the Venetian lagoons, becomes filled with life" (Pennell, 1891, p.115). The suggestion here, and albeit an obvious one, is that without sunshine there is no life. Certainly, humanity would not exist without the sun, however, for the Pennells, 'life' means the sociological construction of leisure, as opposed to the biological existence of life. The Pennells give life to the Thames through the act of leisure and, in doing so, they dismiss the natural ecology and biodiversity which already existed within the River. Thus, once again, representations of the Thames give prominence to humanity, and humanity's pleasures, through a commercialism that is offered by the juxtaposition of materialism, as in the boats, and the natural world, as in the weather.

Commonly, the weather is culturally associated with humanity, and this is significant within the Pennells' work as a way of negotiating a hierarchy between natural forms, or ecosystems. The literary association between the weather and humanity is often made through human emotion. Chapter Three examines this idea in more depth in relation to fog and mental health. It is possible to consider, without suggesting a link between this novel and the

Pennells' work, the "dreary night of November" (Shelley, 1992, p.56) that mirrored the angst and despair of Victor Frankenstein upon first seeing the monster he had created, as one nineteenth-century literary example. This mirroring between the natural environment and human emotion was termed, by Ruskin, to be a 'pathetic fallacy' and, according to Ruskin, was a distinctly Romantic device (see also Bate, 2000). In *Modern Painters* (1843–1860), Ruskin's 'pathetic fallacy' is described as

> [t]he state of mind which attributes to it these characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief. All violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as the '*Pathetic Fallacy*'.
>
> (Ruskin, 2013, p.117)

Ruskin refers specifically to the 'mind', 'grief' or 'violent feelings' of human emotion. However, for the purposes of this argument, human behaviour is central to our understanding of Ruskin's 'pathetic fallacy'. Bate perpetuates Ruskin's theory by describing how the weather impacts on humanity's temperament, before developing this idea by referring to the Romantic poem and stating that "[w]eather is a prime means of linking spatiality and temporality" (Bate, 2001, p.109). In this sense, through the weather, we can associate the space of the River with the time when leisure was emerging within a highly industrialised society and, as aforementioned, where leisure became the 'life' source of the Thames. However, in accordance with the weather having the propensity to alter the mood of a human, this changing mood can affect behaviour, a process that is revealed within the Pennells' tale. The increase and decrease of leisure-goers along the Thames in accordance with the sun or rain is an example of human behaviour being affected by the weather, as the Pennells exemplify. Interestingly, this poses a challenge to the predominant anthropocentric relationship that I argue exists in the Pennells' work, given that nature has been attributed with the influence to transform acts of humanity. This could arguably indicate a natural hierarchy between the weather and the river.

So far, this chapter has explored how humanity can be seen to exploit the natural environment through acts of leisure and pursuits of pleasure. However, in evaluating the Pennells' references to the rain and sunshine, a contrasting notion of the forces of nature thwarting the human act of leisure is revealed. As such, it is possible to view an existing hierarchy within nature itself – between the physicality of the Thames and the dominant environmental processes such as the weather system. Given the anthropocentric alignment of the Thames with the Pennells' work, it could be worth considering whether this hierarchy is determined as a result of the river's and the weather's efficacy to humans. It could be argued that the weather is esteemed greater than the river due to its unpredictability and as such, it commands a greater respect by humanity, which is supported by the ecocritical stance that the weather is "the primary sign of [nature's] mutability" (Bate, 2001, p.100). Through this, I argue that cultural representations of nature can hold different positions between constructed human-nature hierarchies. Taking this into consideration, the Pennells' continual references to the sun and rain signify the change in the tourist landscape of the Thames, which shares another resemblance with *Observations on the River Wye*, where Gilpin describes how weather affects the picturesqueness of the landscape. Weather is therefore tied in with human pursuits of leisure and ultimately, the suggested commodification of the Thames within late Victorian picturesque tourism.

As the Pennells' tale progresses, we begin to see a 'breaking down' of the opposing natural forms of the river and the weather. On the one hand, and as suggested previously, the sun is aligned with culture whereas the rain is affiliated with nature. To clarify, the sun equates to leisure, and therefore culture, and the rain to an absence of humanity along the river, and therefore to nature as without humanity it is only the landscape that exists. On

the other hand, the Pennells later unify this duality of nature, with reference to a Bank Holiday Monday as they describe how "a grey, threatening sky […] not even the occasional shower could keep the boats at home" (Pennell, 1891, p.49). This description, once again, highlights the dominance of leisure, irrespective of the weather, and consequently humanity prevails, thus the anthropocentric representation of the Thames is restored. Interestingly, this unification of natural forms also correlates with an ecological perception proposed by Kerridge (2013), who identifies a shift in ecocriticism that has its origins in post-structuralist thought. According to Kerridge, an "[e]cological perception dissolves unifying notions of selfhood and strong dualistic separations between culture and nature, subject and object or human and non-human" (2013, p.354). If we consider the dualisms that exist within the Pennells' work to be sun and rain, leisure and absence of leisure, or culture and nature, a unification emerges through the representations of leisure-seekers enjoying the Thames during the bank holiday regardless of the weather.

As a result of increased leisure trends, the bank holiday was implemented during the Victorian period and it set out to appease lengthy working conditions. The unification of these dualisms suggests that the relationship between nature and humanity could be deemed as symbiotic within the Pennells' tale. However, the fact that the unification occurs in the context of the bank holiday that is associated with work and capital despite its function as a day of recreation, means that an anthropocentricism is the dominant prevailing relationship. To clarify, the ecological perception is commanded through suggestions of capitalism, with the bank holiday acting as an agent of the dissolution of dualisms that Kerridge (2013) describes. The Pennells describe the bank holiday events along the Thames, by asserting that "[t]he great business of the day with everybody, however, was eating and drinking" (Pennells, 1891, p.50). This reveals how the preoccupation of persons along the Thames during the bank holiday was

indulgence and pleasure. Furthermore, the introduction of the bank holiday was symptomatic of class and economic changes that had occurred in nineteenth-century society as a result of industrialisation.

The ambiguous boundary between culture and nature in relation to the weather has also been stated by Bate, who argues that "[t]he weather is the primary sign of the inextricability of culture and nature" (2001, p.102). This entanglement between culture and nature that exists in relation to the Thames, and the weather, within the Pennells' writing was also evident in artworks of the Victorian period. More specifically, the inclusion of fog within paintings was common amongst artists of the time. In London, the fog arose from industrialism but also from the natural vapours of the Thames, so we can therefore associate urban fog with both commerciality and nature. This affiliation between the fog and the Thames is explored further in Chapter Three, where it is examined in the context of fiction and the short story. Meanwhile, Whistler's use of the Victorian urban fog as an artistic technique whilst representing the Thames has been documented by several critics (Thornes and Metherell, 2005; Corton, 2015). However, this chapter considers Whistler's use of the fog as a visual representation of the merging of the duality between the nature of the Thames and the leisurely existence of humanity, which is shown in his painting *Battersea Reach from Lindsey Houses* (c.1864–1871, see Fig.6, p.106). There is no suggestion of an explicit link between the Pennells' work and Whistler's painting, however Whistler is an important figure to consider as he attended literary salons or soirees held at the Pennells' and Mary F. Robinson's homes, which were also frequented by other prominent aesthetes (Jones, 2015). This contributes to the argument put forward in this thesis that a network of people were producing literary (and artistic) images of the Thames in their work during the *fin de siècle*.

Fig.6 Whistler, J. A. M. (c.1864-71) *Battersea Reach from Lindsey Houses* [oil on canvas]. Glasgow: Hunterian Art Gallery.

Whistler's painting shows the view of the Thames from his home in Lindsey Row, where he resided when he first moved to London, as the Pennells (1908) point out in their biography. Christine Corton (2015) comments on the time it took for Whistler to paint this work, and suggests that he found it difficult to represent the fog. The use of fog within this painting seems to unify the River and the embankment by shrouding the painting with fog and ensuring that the lines between objects are made unclear. The fog creates an ambiguity around the Thames that could reflect the differing representations of the River that existed during the nineteenth century. This is because the painting is dated after the emergence of the railway but before the Thames Preservation Act of 1885, which possibly indicates the transitional period from the Thames's central use as an industrial river to a recreational one.

Whistler uses nature as an artistic tool by painting the fog, but it can also be understood as a visual social commentary on leisure during the Victorian period. This is because the most distinct image on the canvas is that of the three women, dressed in well-to-do clothing and holding parasols, admiring the Thames from the embankment. The distinctness places an emphasis on those who enjoyed the River for pleasure, as opposed to the actual Thames, which blends into the background of the painting. Less focus is also given to a singular figure who appears to the left of the painting, and this is achieved through Whistler's fusion of the Thames and the fog. It is unclear whether this figure is of a different class, or even a different gender, to the seemingly wealthy trio of women. Corton argues that the fog in the painting functions so that, "the people are ghostly silhouettes whose form appears to be dissolving before our eyes" (2015, p.179). This would suggest that the figures are united through the fog, a reading that through an ecocritical lens hints at an ecocentricism – should the origin of the fog be considered as natural, an idea that is explored further in Chapter Three.

The setting of Whistler's painting, as established through the title, is also notably associated with wealth, due to the Chelsea Embankments being an area of affluence, as E. M. Forster's novel *Howards End* (1910) would later exemplify. The unification of nature and culture is significant to Whistler's representation of the Thames, if we consider the two different ways in which he paints the people in his painting. Kerridge argues that this unification establishes "a self always already in the process of producing the world and being produced by it; a self through which the world flows" (2013, p.354). Based on Kerridge's work, I argue that by painting the singular figure and the trio of women differently, Whistler invites two ecocritical interpretations: one that favours a unity of humanity and the Thames (through the singular figure), and another that offers an anthropocentric means of reading the River (through the trio of women).

Just as Whistler utilises the fog for his painting, the Pennells also address the air quality in relation to their leisurely pursuit. As they arrive in Sonning, they refer to the attractions including the aesthetic beauty or the warm hospitality, and describe how "to counterbalance these attractions, the weather was vile. All Sunday drenching mist fell" (Pennells, 1891, p.77). These 'attractions' (the village and the hospitality) that they experience during their time at Sonning are human constructions and these are, albeit without authorial intention, pitted against the naturalness of the weather. This is achieved by suggesting that in order to have a good experience of one then the experience of the other must be opposing, in a way that sets up the nature/humanity binary. The vileness of the weather that the Pennells describe is one of the many grievances that they encounter along the River.

The increased tourism along the Thames would have undoubtedly affected the volumes of litter left in and around the River and its banks. The Pennells refer both indirectly

and directly to social and physical pollution that existed along the waterway. Despite the pejorative connotation of pollution, it is still referred to by the Pennells in the context of progress, or specifically situated amid the avenue of Victorian leisure. This is exemplified as they proudly reflect on the way in which they knowingly discard their rubbish into the River:

> We even watched with undisturbed equanimity the two or three steam launches that puffed by, rocking us on their waves, while we did our best to bury or sink the remains of our luncheon. I am proud to say our bottles never floated, but were sent to the bottom for the benefit of future archaeologists and antiquaries.
>
> (Pennell, 1891, p.25)

The Pennells view their discarding of rubbish into the Thames as a way of contributing to the Victorian culture of leisure, and furthermore that they are also creating a future workforce of historians and archaeologists. Presumably, an archaeological workforce that would one day examine the artefacts discarded in the Thames. Once again, this could be understood as a disregard of the natural environment, but a contemporary disregard as viewed from an ecocritical approach.

Despite the contemporary ecocritical view that the Pennells are treating the natural environment with contempt by discarding their rubbish, other Thames-writers of the *fin de siècle* were also condemning such behaviours. George Dunlop Leslie identifies the rubbish as a product of the Thames being used as a leisure portal and, in the aftermath of one Henley Regatta, he described how "Henley looks very deserted by noon on the day after the Regatta; on the river, numbers of floating champagne bottles, straw bottle-cases, bits of paper, and the trodden-down banks, tell their own tale" (Leslie, 1888, p.119). This description shows the effects of the leisurely imposition upon the natural landscape with the material items

dominating the natural view of the Thames. Leslie even comments on the physical footprint of humanity that not only highlights the change in the landscape, but also establishes the permanence of humanity's effect on nature. This permanence is seen in the non-biodegradable bottles that the Pennells attempt to bury in the Thames. By changing the landscape, along with their status as tourists, the Pennells' work feeds into contemporary ecocritical theory, as Kerridge argues "tourists are not external to the economy or ecosystem they visit; they are part of it, engaged in an activity likely to transform it" (2001, p.130). This is certainly true of the Pennells' experience of the Thames as they become engaged in the activity of leisure that, in turn, results in them discarding litter that then forms part of the unseen landscape of the waterway, which affects its ecosystem in a way that is not visible to the human eye.

The Pennells offer advice to prospective tourists of the Thames that inadvertently encourages the littering of the waterway, which favours the human leisurely aspect of the River. They advise "if you do go picnicking, sink or bury your empty bottles and refuse" (Pennell, 1891, p.149), which is arguably an imposition of humanity's cultural activities upon nature. From their advice, the image of the Thames remains unchanged because tourists are encouraged to conceal their indiscretions. This very fact could suggest that the Pennells were aware that what they were doing was frowned upon by regulators of the Thames or other River admirers. In a footnote added in his second edition, Leslie informs us of acts of environmentalism that had been augmented in recent years:

> I am glad to find that the fouling of the river from the debris […] from the house-boats and launches at the Regatta has lately attracted attention; and it is to be hoped something will be done to prevent the nuisance.
>
> (Leslie, 1888, p.119)

His assertion shows that there was some attempt to restore the River's natural ecology by cleaning it after leisurely events had taken place. Bate (2000) and Clark (2011) have pointed out that conservation is predominantly human centred and therefore, Leslie's hope that the debris will be dealt with is likely to be founded on his personal, admiration and pleasure of the Thames. Typically, conservation is again for the benefit of humanity, in the same way that the Pennells attempt to conceal their own debris is more for their own convenience, or for the aesthetics of the River, rather than its natural ecology.

Leisure had become socially holistic by the late Victorian period and it was no longer reserved for the privileged few; this became apparent along the Thames. However, events such as regattas, or boating, by using your own boat or by renting as the Pennells did was a costly act. Working class families may have been excluded from these activities. The increased popularity of the nineteenth-century steam launch meant that people of all classes could indulge in leisure and enjoy the Thames. With reference to the steamer and the railway, Byerly highlights the widening access of leisure to all classes:

> Leisure travel was no longer limited to scions of wealthy families taking the Grand Tour but might include workingmen from a provincial Mechanics' Institute taking an excursion train to London, London workers' families enjoying a Sunday steamer to Margate.
>
> (Byerly, 2013, p.8)

Whilst, as Byerly observes, the possibility for leisure had been opened up to a variety of social classes, a different order emerged between users of the River. Steamboats became widely popular by the *fin de siècle*. In 1878 a twice-weekly "steamer service between Oxford and Kingston" was established which increased "to a daily service by 1891" (Sinclair, 2007, p.xxi), the latter being the same year as the Pennells' work was published. Through the Pennells'

representation of the steam launch, it is possible to view hierarchies amongst leisure goers of the late-Victorian Thames. Pejorative representations of the steam launches were common amongst regular Thames-goers and those who were writing about the River (see also Ackroyd, 2007). These representations were particularly common amongst middle-class writers who could afford to rent out their own boat and therefore did not need to share their boating experience with others. The Pennells' objection to the commercial travel vessel is suggested when they refer to it as "a big steam-boat, out of all proportion to the river" (1891, p.22) and later as a "river fiend" (1891, p.49). They indicate that the boat's size is a bone of contention, and even suggest that the steamer is a foe to the River. However, their disdain is mirrored in their commentary of those who were using the steamers, which is referred to shortly.

Other middle-class writers, who either owned or rented their own boats, shared the Pennells' grievance towards the steam launches, and these pejorative remarks were prevalent in many forms of writing. Dickens JNR's Thames guide regarded them as "the curse of the river" (1994, p.237); Leslie's travel writing referred to them as "a hateful steam launch, fouling the water with its screw, scaring the rooks with its discordant whistle, blackening the air with its dirty smoke, and robbing the view of all its calm sentiment and beauty" (Leslie, 1888, 143/4); Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* assured us they were "demons of the river" (Jerome, 2004, p.106) but ironically, later in his novel, resolves to be towed by one, and George Robert Sims poetically declared the boat 'The River Demon' (1883) in his poem of the same name. Newspapers such as *The Pall Mall Gazette* published scornful poems about the steam launches, one example includes a poem by James Kenneth Stephen who describes the boats in a negative way:

> Blots upon nature: scars that mar her smile:
> Obscene, obtrusive, execrable, vile.

(Stephen, 1891, ll.23–24)

Stephen's apparent regard for 'nature' here is somewhat undermined by the beginning of his poem, which asserts that for boaters such as himself "the stream by right belongs" (1891, l.1). It is important to consider all of these examples as they offer the context to which the Pennells' were writing, and the shared attitudes towards these steam launches that promoted a hierarchical usage of the waterway in relation to class. Furthermore, these writers contribute to the network of Thames-writers, and therefore the Pennells can be seen to be participating in a culture of abhorrence towards the steam launches that existed in *fin de siècle* writing.

These late-Victorian representations of the steam launch posits the steamer as a form of social pollution for the more dominant classes who were enjoying the Thames. This notion establishes a connection between pollution and capital, given that the steamer's purpose was to both generate capital, in addition to enabling leisure for the working classes. It is possible that the valorisation of pollution could be deemed an offshoot of the genre of travel writing, as the purpose of this genre is to generate tourism which, in turn, generates capital. This idea is strengthened if we refer to American ecocritic Ursula K. Heise's essay 'Developing a Sense of Planet: Ecocriticism and Globalisation' (2012) in which she writes about contemporary travel writing, and its potential to distribute an ecological message:

> Over the last two decades, travel writing in particular has assumed crucial importance in environmentalists' attempts to document and comment on ecological crises, many of which are shared across regions: problems surrounding demographics, agriculture, pollution, energy use, habitat destruction, biodiversity loss and climate change all play themselves out around the world in various scenarios […] Travel narratives have provided environmentalist writers with a convenient framework to convey to their audience a sense of planetary connections and global threats.
>
> (Heise, 2012, p.94)

Now, it is worth pointing out that Heise refers to contemporary travel writing, more specifically, writings that have emerged over a hundred years after the Pennells' work, and also, I do not propose that the Pennells are writing with an ecological sensibility. Rather, their writing is motivated by travel, tourism, and their own aesthetic experience of the waterway. It is from this vantage point that we can determine an ecological crisis that pervades the Thames in accordance with, say, 'pollution' or 'habitat destruction', in a way that situates a concern for the environment amongst the realms of commercialism. Thus, ecocritical theory enables a reading of ecological crisis though pollution within the Pennells' travel narrative.

The suggested hierarchies in the Pennells' tale is reinforced through their explicit description of the steam-launch consumers. As they describe how the steam launches disturbed the anglers, campers, idlers, and artists on the Thames, the Pennells refer to the steam-launch users as "people who turn their backs on the river and play 'nap' and drink beer or champagne" (Pennell, 1891, p.50). Through this representation, the Pennells seems to suggest that these users of the steam launch do not respect the Thames, and that their presence upon the privileged River should be questioned. Ackroyd describes how the steam launches "brought hordes of unwashed cockneys to the relatively sylvan setting of the Thames" (Ackroyd, 2008, p.254), before explaining how the primary concern regarding the steam boat was the intrusion of engines and machines upon the rural landscape of the Thames. Dickens JNR aligns capital with the use of the steam launch by describing the process of payment, which was implemented by the Thames Conservancy:

> [T]he people who pay their £5 5s. a day for the hire of a launch, and whose idea of a holiday is the truly British notion of getting over as much ground as possible in a given time. Parties of this kind […] appear to enjoy themselves considerably as they contemplate the

> anxiety and discomfort of the occupants of the punts and rowing boats which are left floundering helplessly in their wash.
>
> (Dickens JNR, 1994, p.237)

This description resonates with the Pennells' representation of the steam-launch user, indicating a widespread pejorative attitude towards them. Dickens JNR points out the impact of these steam launches on the more well-to-do River user who have their own boat. Through highlighting the different 'kinds' of Thames leisure-goers in association with the cost of hiring a launch, Dickens JNR recognises that there were hierarchical differences along the waterway. Therefore, despite the fact that leisure along the Thames became more holistic, a segregation amongst the classes existed in accordance with the type of boat that was used to navigate the River. This segregation along the waterway meant that social hierarchies were being imposed on nature, thus constructing an anthropocentric river that existed in accordance with humanity's societal structure.

1.3 Joseph Ashby-Sterry's *A Tale of the Thames* (1896)

Both Leslie's *Our River* and the Pennells' *The Stream of Pleasure* revealed the experiences of middle class leisure-goers along the Thames during the *fin de siècle*, from an experienced boater's and an amateur boater's perspective respectively. Joseph Ashby-Sterry was also an experienced boater, and during his lifetime he was highly regarded as an "authority on matters connected with pleasure-boating on the Thames, of which he [had] always been an ardent devotee" (Stedman, 1895, p.680). His boating expertise and knowledge of the River were fundamental when writing *A Tale of the Thames*, as the characters within the novel leisurely navigate the waterway from its source to London, and specifically refers to actual places along the way.

Ashby-Sterry also wrote other pieces of writing that were either about the River or set in and around its banks. This fact potentially highlights his longstanding passion and admiration for England's longest waterway. He was better known for his poetry and, prior to *A Tale of the Thames,* he published *The Lazy Minstrel* (1886) which included a number of songs and poems set in and around the Thames environment. This work is quoted by the Pennells' in *The Stream of Pleasure* along with a reference to Ashby-Sterry, who they describe as "an authority on the Thames" (Pennells, 1891, p.41). This not only strengthens the existence of a network of River writers (see Appendix Three), but also highlights the rationale to include Ashby-Sterry within a chapter on leisure and the Thames during the *fin de siècle*. He later wrote a collection of verse entitled *The River Rhymer* (1913) that was dedicated to different parts of the River. As recorded in his obituary in *The Times*, these works were said to reflect "his love of the river. He knew the Thames as intimately as he knew London, and his favourite recreations were rowing and sailing" (*The Times*, 1917, p.5). The primary research indicates that Ashby-Sterry was one of the most prolific writers of the Thames during the *fin de siècle*.

Ashby-Sterry's *A Tale of the Thames* demonstrates two ways in which the Thames is used as a leisurely pastime. His main characters have "a vague notion of making a tour of the Thames, partly on foot and partly by boat or canoe, but as yet they had no very definitive view on the subject" (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.3). The idea of a 'tour' within Ashby-Sterry's novel evokes a sense of 'travel writing' that, in addition to being an expression of pleasure through experience of the waterway, could be positioning the tale within the confines of commercialism. This is because 'travel writing' is a form of writing that is linked to capitalist modes of production and therefore, by writing about the Thames, the waterway is situated as a commodity.

The beginning of the journey in Ashby-Sterry's tale bridges the gap between popular leisure traditions of the early nineteenth century and ones that were popularised during the *fin de siècle*: the Romantic walking tradition and the Victorian boating phenomenon. The latter evokes Romantic conceptions of leisurely pursuits, namely the walking tours, made popular by writers including Gilpin and Wordsworth, and furthermore, as Bate writes, Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy "derived so much of their spiritual nourishment from walking" (1991, p.49). The relevance of Romanticism here was determined through consideration of Kerridge's work on Thomas Hardy's late-Victorian novels. Kerridge identifies "two forms of pleasure in the natural world" by describing two types of 'nature-lovers': "The first is a native, deeply embedded in a stable ecosystem; the second is a Romantic, a tourist, a newcomer, and a reader" (Kerridge, 2001, p.134). The labelling of Ashby-Sterry's characters as 'tourists', as they self-proclaim to be taking "a tour of the Thames" (1896, p.3), positions them within the category of the Romantic, according to Kerridge's theory. Therefore, the link to Romanticism strengthens the association between nature, tourism and capital within Ashby-Sterry's novel.

By the end of the nineteenth century, walking seemed to have been substituted for boating as a primary recreational choice for 'nature lovers'. Ashby-Sterry hints at this substitution when he describes walking as "[a]n exercise that seems to stand a chance of altogether falling into disuse" (1896, p.3) and moreover that it is a "natural but neglected pastime" (1896, p.3). Certainly, Ashby-Sterry's tone here is ironic; however, it is worth pointing out the shift in leisurely pastimes throughout the nineteenth century that can be understood through analysis of Ashby-Sterry's novel. Despite his claim that walking, as a

popular leisurely pastime, was falling into decline, Ashby-Sterry continues to echo this Romantic tradition in his representation of the Thames. His two protagonists, Ralph Claymer and Guy Stillmere, walk in search of the River's source. Therefore, I argue that through a journey of the River, *A Tale of the Thames* creates a link between the Romantic recreational tradition of walking and the Victorian love of boating.

The ubiquity of literary representations of the Thames and their alignment with pleasure and gratification contrasted with the darker, degeneracy narratives that were also associated with the River. The commemorative or pleasure-focused aspect of the waterway has been primarily considered through the recreational act of boating so far in this chapter. However, despite fellow Thames-writer Jerome also focusing on boating, he outlines another recreational purpose for taking a trip along the Thames, which was for a "[c]hange of scene, and absence of the necessity for thought [to] restore the mental equilibrium" (2004, p.5) and, similarly, Ashby-Sterry's protagonists went for reasons of human gratification or, as they proclaim, "to discover the Source of the Thames" (1896, p.3). Jerome's novel, published in 1889, suggests a journey of discovery, which establishes the natural environment as a source of adventure, or as a quest to be undertaken by humanity for physical and psychological enrichment. This idea is echoed within Ashby-Sterry's tale in 1896, where the Thames is viewed as a challenge, or as forming part of an ambition, for those seeking pleasure within nature.

The association between human ambition and nature has been examined within contemporary ecocriticism. In a study that considers representations of the natural environment

within Shakespeare's *Macbeth,* Kerridge (2011) describes the ecosystems that exist at the heart of the play:

> [T]he references to weather, birds, animals, flowers and trees, so constant throughout the play as to represent the continuous presence of an ecosystem in which the human characters and their desires and actions are embedded.
>
> (Kerridge, 2011, p.201)

I do not claim that a correlation exists between Shakespeare's play and Ashby-Sterry's tale, but rather the principal concern here is the cultural linkage of human desires and nature. In the ecological sense, the source of a river, as Alan Wykes explains, is "a consequence of the precipitation of the water in the earth's atmosphere" (1966, p.15). Therefore, by focussing on the source of the Thames at the beginning, and by following the course of the Thames downriver throughout the novel, Ashby-Sterry embeds both his novel and the characters' desires amid the River's ecosystem. This way of reading the Thames appears to be somewhat ecocentric. However, this focus wanes as the narrative progresses and the characters travel towards the City where an anthropocentric relationship emerges between the River and the novel's characters.

The theme of ambition, particularly when going in search of a place, can also be aligned with the genre of travel writing to which I argue Ashby-Sterry's tale belongs. *A Tale of the Thames* refers to real places and is both geographically and ecologically accurate in its reference to place and the River. Thompson describes these fictional travel accounts as a 'literary travel book' or a "fictional novel *about* travel" (2011, p.16), and he further makes the connection between this genre and the mythical quest:

> [T]hese accounts are underpinned, either explicitly or implicitly, by the mythic motif of the quest [which] typically begins with the narrator setting out from his or her home, either in search of some specific goal

> or else generally seeking adventures, new experiences and interesting stories.
>
> (Thompson, 2011, p.16)

This study does not propose a link between myth and Ashby-Sterry's novel, but rather it is significant as a way of identifying the novel as a piece of travel writing. Ashby-Sterry's protagonists similarly have a goal in that they are seeking the source. However, their journey has already begun at the start of the novel as they are in the vicinity of the source. Thompson further writes that, according to Paul Fussell, two types of quest exist: the 'picaresque' and the 'elegiac' or 'pastoral'. It is the latter that is significant in relation to Ashby-Sterry's tale, as features that define the pastoral quest include how "the emphasis is on seeking out the last vestiges of a vanishing way of life, or a culture perceived as less complex and less stressful than the traveller's own" (Thompson, 2011, p.17). By reading Ashby-Sterry's novel as a 'quest', or specifically as an elegiac, or a pastoral journey, it is possible to see how changes in Victorian society (including the railway, sanitation, or the Industrial Revolution) led to a changing way of life along the Thames waterway.

Ashby-Sterry presents the journey of going in search of the River's source as a pilgrimage, which can be aligned with a person's belief system. Byerly describes the ancient tradition of going in search of a river's source, and argues that it is a way "of seeing the origin of a river as symbolic of the wellsprings of human thought" (2013, p.96). This idea establishes a link between the natural environment and the human imagination, or perhaps the beginning of an ecosystem and the beginning of an idea. The symbolic link between the source of a river and the human imagination is also found in Ashby-Sterry's novel when he describes the act of traversing the River as a type of pilgrimage (1896, p.12). This suggests that experiencing the

Thames, in Ashby-Sterry's tale, is driven by human ambition, whereby the River's representation once again leans towards a human-centredness.

Ashby-Sterry's reference to a pilgrimage along the banks of the Thames conforms to a tradition that was popularised by early Victorian writers, as Byerly points out by giving the example of Charles Mackay (1839). However, a 'Thames pilgrimage' can be seen slightly before Mackay's work, with Pierce Egan's *The Pilgrims of the Thames: In Search of the National*, who declares that "the principle object of their journey was to view the Source of the Thames" (1838, p.360). A later example that connects a pilgrimage to the Thames is exemplified in Richard Jefferies's autobiographical *The Story of my Heart* (1883), which frequently references the Thames, and recalls how he "made a pilgrimage almost daily to an aspen by a brook" (1923, p.74). Significantly, Ashby-Sterry is not only pointing out another way in which the Victorians engaged with the Thames through leisure, but he is also contributing to a nineteenth-century tradition of associating walking journeys and rivers, or waterways, through his description of the journey as a pilgrimage.

The spiritual nourishment derived from undertaking a pilgrimage of the Thames, as Ashby-Sterry recounts, echoes the transcendental experience that Wordsworth and his sister derived from walking. By aligning the River with a pilgrimage, a religious journey, the novel hints at a unification of man and nature, which reflects Romantic thought, understood as pantheism. Sharon Ruston defines pantheism as "[t]he belief in an immanent God who exists within the physical world" (2007, p.136). This idea is presented to us by Ashby-Sterry as he positions spiritual gratification in the source of the Thames and also regards the characters' journey as a pilgrimage. Interestingly, the evocation of pantheism within the novel

contradicts the anthropocentric relationship that has been detected so far between nature and humanity, with it leaning more towards a symbiosis. However, the fact that the source is discovered by page ten of the novel, and that the remainder of the story focuses on their return journey to London, eradicates the notion that the purpose of the novel is a journey into nature. The source of the river, or nature, is therefore juxtaposed with the beginning of the story, which gradually moves away from the rural environment and towards the urbanism of the City. The purpose of the source in Ashby-Sterry's tale is to begin his narrative and as such it can be perceived as a narrative device for the construction of art but also, a work of art that engages with the tenets of travel writing, which means that the pilgrimage becomes immersed within a genre that encourages visitors to natural destinations and promotes its monetary value.

Ashby-Sterry's journey to the source of the River becomes secondary within his narrative, and this is exemplified through the language used to describe the 'source' once it is discovered. Although, at first, the description seems to negotiate an appreciation of the Thames's ecologies, and this is transcended as Ashby-Sterry adopts a human-centred discourse when the characters listen to the River's waters:

> A spot hard by the canal embankment, shaded by bushes and overshadowed by trees. They listen, and amid the faint flutter of the foliage they hear from time to time an intermittent trickle, a sort of occasional tick, like a demoralised cricket, or a lazy clock of irregular habits, and they find they have discovered the tiny silver thread, which, as it strengthens and brightens and flows away towards the sea, represents such a kingdom of infinite enjoyment, such an empire of poetry, such a world of romance.
>
> (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.10/11)

Here, Ashby-Sterry describes nature as a process, or as an ecosystem, through his use of dynamic verbs such as 'flutter', 'trickle' or 'tick', which imitate the movement in nature. However, from an ecocritical perspective these words indicate the presence of an ecosystem,

but notably this is a retrospective reading because the term 'ecosystem' is a twentieth-century term. The addition of the bushes, trees, and foliage that surround the Thames strengthens this ecological image. Ecocritic Lawrence Buell argues that an environmental text should have a "sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given" (1995, p.8). This can be retrospectively applied to Ashby-Sterry's description of the 'source' to suggest that his work conforms to the tenets of an environmental text. However, the lessening of the significance of the 'source' in Ashby-Sterry's tale challenges another tenet set out by Buell. He argues that "[t]he nonhuman environment is present not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history" (Buell, 1995, p.7). To some extent, this applies to Ashby-Sterry's account of the River if we refer to the notion of undertaking a pilgrimage of the Thames. However, as we have established, the use of the source as a narrative device that begins the story, rejects the view of it as a holistically environmental work, but more appropriately, a novel that hints at an environmental imagination before engaging in a human-centred narrative.

The description of the River's 'source' places greater emphasis on the materialism of the Thames when it refers to kingdoms, empires, and poetry, which can be interpreted as a possible dismantling of the River's ecological vision. This materialism expands as the narrative gets closer to London, which was considered to be the capital of the British Empire during the *fin de siècle*. The Thames is arguably associated with nationhood that attaches it to a metaphorical power within Ashby-Sterry's novel. However, the description of the source as a 'tiny silver thread', together with the flow's description as 'demoralised' and 'lazy,' creates an insignificant image of the Thames within the rural setting of Trewsbury Mead. It is unlikely that Ashby-Sterry, with his love of the River, deliberately chose to represent the Thames in a pejorative way. However, through reading the narrator's description

of visiting the 'source', there seems to be a disparity between the value of the 'great' River that people sought their leisure from, and the actual 'source' of the River. This could suggest that the Thames was seen as more powerful, or more significant, within the City and its surrounding environments, because of London's powerful status during the late Victorian period. Ecocritically, however, the Thames would not function without a 'source', and therefore Ashby-Sterry's novel reveals a human centredness that existed amid rural and urban representations of the Thames.

The divide between the rural and the urban river in *A Tale of the Thames* is in concert with Raymond Williams's work. Williams (1973) argues that these contrary spatial spheres have acquired both complimentary and pejorative associations, as he reflects on generalised attitudes towards them. He argues that many view "the city as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition [and] the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation" (Williams, 2001, p.1). The ambition that is aligned with the city, as Williams describes, can be seen through Ashby-Sterry's protagonists who originate from London and who set themselves the objective of reaching the Thames's 'source'. Meanwhile, the limitation Williams refers to concerning the country could be applied to the limited flow of the River at its source, which prompted Ashby-Sterry to describe it as 'lazy', and through these examples, the urban and the rural are treated as two opposing types of place. However, this is problematic because, ecologically, the rural and the urban Thames are connected despite their differing identities. I suggest that Ashby-Sterry's novel demonstrates how the supposed binary opposition of the rural and the urban can often be undermined when these spaces become connected by nature.

The significant change in how the Thames is represented between the rural and the urban in Ashby-Sterry's novel, where it supposedly 'strengthens and brightens' as it flows towards the City, contrasts with the Pennells' tale where they describe, upon advancing London, how they "had left the Stream of Pleasure and were now on the river that runs through the world of work, as the big barges and the steam tugs told us" (1891, p.136). Interestingly, the change in the Thames is so distinct that the Pennells suggest two separate rivers: one for leisure and one for work. Ashby-Sterry, instead, describes one river that strengthens as it flows toward London which was, at that time, the heart of the British Empire. It could be argued that Ashby-Sterry cultivates the power of the Empire through the natural flow of the river as it travels from the rural to the urban and, as a result, it is possible to construct an urban hegemony over the rural landscape. This dominant image of London, as suggested by Ashby-Sterry's tale, mirrors Williams's description of the City, when he talks about a transformation that led to the "dramatic extension of landscape and social relations" (Williams, 2001, p.281). Williams further suggests that these changes occurred around 1880 and that meant that London became "the powerful, the prestigious and the consuming capital" (2001, p.281). Williams's association of place and consumerism is significant to our understanding, within Ashby-Sterry's novel, of the association between the Thames and capital due to the ecological association of the waterway that connects the rural and the urban.

The symbolic power, as the Thames traverses towards the City, has also been identified within Romantic writing. Bate argues that "when the greatest of English rivers nears the sea, it becomes, as Blake saw in his lyric 'London,' 'the chartered Thames' – licensed out for commercial use, sullied in the pursuit of gain" (Bate, 2001, p.219). Bate's suggestion that the River becomes tarnished by its commercial gain as it reaches the City in Blake's poem contrasts with the praise that Ashby-Sterry attributes to the Thames, as he describes the way

"it strengthens and brightens and flows away towards the sea, [representing] such a kingdom of infinite enjoyment" (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.11). The contrast between what Bate identifies in Blake's poem, and what I am suggesting in Ashby-Sterry's novel, could be an indication of the lessening commercial reliance upon the Thames that had occurred throughout the nineteenth century, due to the emergence of modernities including the railway. Unlike commercialism, which is directly associated with processes of capital, leisure can be considered a more discrete way of attaining power because of its association with pleasure. Therefore, whilst Blake's Thames becomes tarnished, Ashby-Sterry's Thames becomes more powerful, in a statement that could be symbolic of the changing role of the River during the nineteenth century.

As they observe Thames at Lower Mill in the early stages of its course towards the sea, Ashby-Sterry indirectly reflects on two significant usages of the waterway in the rural and the urban setting – the aesthetic and the functional:

> They are particularly struck with the purity and clearness of the water as it flows silently on. There is a certain amount of deliberate ease and dignity in its almost imperceptible movement that you would think its mission was ornamental water in a ducal park and nothing more, that it would never condescend to turn mills, to float boats, to support regattas, to be in any way associated with trade or any of the numerous avocations it undertakes long before it reaches the sea.
> (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.25)

The water's 'purity', 'clearness' and 'ornamental' description relates to the aesthetic of the Thames, and consequently to the pleasure derived from looking at the River. This way of seeing the waterway connects Ashby-Sterry to Leslie, the Pennells, and the network of writers (see Appendix Three) who placed an emphasis on the aesthetic value of the Thames. However, this description also conforms to an ecocritical anthropocentricism that exists within his tale.

In contrast, the River's propensity to 'turn mills', 'float boats', and 'support regattas', relates to the functional usage of the Thames. This positions the River back into the realm of leisure and commercialism, which once again evokes a human-centredness. It could also indicate how humanity rely upon the River for leisure and commerce because without the natural ecology of the river, with its shifts, turns, and depths, then navigation would be impossible.

The description at Lower Mill correlates with the changing identities of the Thames within the rural and the urban setting. The silence of the waterway in this part of the River is similar to Williams's description of the countryside, where he states that "the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue" (Williams, 2001, p.1). The 'natural way' is certainly true of Ashby-Sterry's description as it appears to be a 'passive' river in its more ruralesque setting; in contrast to the 'active' waterway that it represents as it approaches the city. Ashby-Sterry highlights this changing identity of the Thames in two different settings in another of his works, *The River Rhymer*, where he muses, "So, when weary of town and of riot, // And if for calm rest you have need – //You will find the most exquisite quiet // In Trewsbury Mead" (Ashby-Sterry, 1913, ll.9-12). Ashby-Sterry seems to consider 'sound' very important in his writings of the Thames and, while here we refer to the silence, I shortly refer to how he associates music with the River.

The idea that the Thames may be less significant or less useful in the earlier stages of its course, or the closer it is to the 'source', as I argue to be the case within Ashby-Sterry's tale, is reinforced by the voice of the omniscient narrator as the characters approach the first weir along the River:

> [T]he tiny forerunner of some fifty successors that are designed to keep Father Thames in order on his way to the sea. You cannot, however, dignify this babbling brook by such a paternal appellation. It is most emphatically the Baby Thames, and the Baby Thames it will remain, at any rate, till it reaches Cricklade.
>
> (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.18)

Interestingly, the Thames's past patriarchal status as 'Father Thames' is notably absent in this section of the waterway because it does not have the power to harness humanity's recreational or commercial activities. It is therefore reduced in both size and function. Ashby-Sterry is likely to be simply referring to the size of the waterway here, but through adopting ecocritical theory, it is possible to suggest that the reduction of the Thames to a 'baby', could indicate an apathetic attitude towards this section of the River. Whilst it could also indicate some mode of affection towards the waterway, it seems more likely, as a keen boater, that he perceived the River, or indeed up until Cricklade, with less purpose. This proffering is in line with an argument put forward by Bate (2000) where he suggests that the natural environment is often perceived in its usefulness to humanity.

Fellow-boater William Morris also addressed the Thames, in its early stages, as the 'baby Thames', which is documented in his letters (Schneer, 2011). Historian Rosalind Williams has examined Morris's relationship with the Thames, and she insightfully claims that whilst Morris fully realised "that the Thames was a highway for the flows of commercial and political power […] He did not project his awareness of the city's misery onto the river, nor did he reduce his experiences of the river to the logic of capitalism" (Williams, 2013, p.158). As a socialist and a keen boater, it is possible that Morris would have been aware of the inequalities, amongst river-users, that took place upon the Thames, which could be why the narrative for his socialist utopian novel *News from Nowhere* (1890) includes the abolishment of tariffs along the waterway. This political stance is also offered by Ashby-Sterry, who asserts

that "[w]e certainly require a Conservancy […] that will prevent the river degenerating into a mere water street" (1896, p.214). Both Ashby-Sterry and Morris, by declaring the River the 'baby Thames', highlight the value of the Thames at the beginning of its ecological course, and how this affects them, as recreational users. This is in contrast to the greater significance that it poses as it travels toward the City, and becomes more politically, commercially, and recreationally viable.

Gifford (1999) argues that perceiving the rural, implicitly or explicitly, in relation to the city is one defining feature of the 'pastoral'. It is precisely with this notion that the ruralesque spaces of the River are realised in *A Tale of the Thames*. The opening of the novel begins in the pastoral tradition, both explicitly by directly referring to the 'pastoral', and implicitly through his use of idealised language.

> It was a morning when the very fact of existence was a pleasure; when you were quite content with simple surroundings; when to bask in the bright sunshine, to inhale the fragrant breeze, to listen to the music of the leaves, to gaze on the cloud-flecked sky, to hear the song of the birds and the distant lowing of cattle gave you untold joy. It was an occasion when you had a pastoral symphony all to yourself.
> (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.2)

As Gifford explains, the "pastoral is a discourse, a way of using language that constructs a different kind of world from that of realism" (1999, p.45). Ashby-Sterry creates this world through his idealised language and, in doing so, he positions the Thames as not only a font of leisure, but also, he fashions writings on the Thames as a "discourse of retreat" (Gifford, 1999, p.46), where his characters can escape the commercialised and industrialised pressures of the city. This discourse is in concert with the genre of travel writing, which has "been serving a function of pastoral retreat for [its] readers since [its] inception" (Gifford, 1999, p.78). This association between the pastoral and the genre of travel writing is significant because the latter

situates Ashby-Sterry's novel within the realm of commercialism and, as a consequence, the Thames, through a pastoral vision, becomes a waterway for Ashby-Sterry's characters to escape the everyday banal of the city.

The emphasis on the rural and the pastoral image of the Thames is developed further through the evocation of the shepherd figure, which is reminiscent of ancient Greek pastoral poetry. Gifford states that "to refer to 'pastoral' up to about 1610 was to refer to poems or dramas of a specific formal type in which supposed shepherds spoke to each other" (1999, p.1). Thus, in applying the 'pastoral', as Ashby-Sterry does, the shepherd is immediately suggested and, in the context of *A Tale of the Thames*, the rural figure is framed within the theme of leisure. However, the shepherd becomes an explicit part of the tale when Guy, one of Ashby-Sterry's protagonists, muses on feeling pastoral as he walks along the banks of the Thames. In response, Ralph declares: "Quite agree with you. I feel that I am quite the shepherd swain. I begin to fancy myself to be a Strephon or a Corydon" (Sterry, 1896, p.5). The cultural implications of specifically referring to Strephon and Corydon, both of which are traditional names of shepherds in ancient Arcadia, echoes literary associations made between the shepherd and the Thames. Corydon also features in Edmund Spenser's poem *Faerie Queene* (1596) which refers to London's river as the 'wealthy Thames'. He later featured in Samuel Ireland's *Picturesque Views on the River Thames* (1792) which, through reference to the picturesque, has already been suggested as being associated with commercialism through tourism.

The introduction of the shepherd figure, given its occupational status, situates the Thames into the field of 'work'. And, 'work', in the context of the nineteenth century, was associated with the Industrial Revolution, and thus, indirectly, with capitalism. Concerning

literary representations of the Thames and the shepherd, including Michael Drayton's *Songs from the Shepherd's Garland* (1593) and Edmund Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579), Williams argues that "the life of the shepherd could be made to stand for the life of nature and for natural feeling. This convention was worked to a thread, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries" (2011, p.22). However, with the role of the shepherd in nineteenth-century society in decline, as a result of different occupations emerging through the Industrial Revolution, it is possible that the cultural representation of the shepherd figure changed.

The use of the pastoral to commercialise the Thames landscape is in keeping with contemporary ecocritical thought. One of the novel's protagonists, a London worker, emphatically declares himself to be a 'shepherd'. This is somewhat problematic, given the gentle nature of the shepherd and the world of London work that is arguably bound with tenets of capitalism, including exploitation. However, one way in which the shepherd can be imagined in the context of nineteenth-century capitalist hegemonies is through the concept of ownership. I suggest that through the ownership of cattle for purposes of livelihood, the shepherd can be perceived as using nature to survive economically, which underpins a physical survival. This would indicate that the shepherd figure amidst the recreational environment has predominantly become a symbol of capital, in contrast to the symbol of nature that it had once represented. In the context of contemporary culture, Greg Garrard writes "how the pastoral landscape ideal has commodified and altered the rural environments onto which it has been projected" (2010, p.55). This projection is exemplified within Ashby-Sterry's novel, where he makes use of real places along the Thames and combines this with the pastoral to produce a form of travel writing that resonates with capitalist processes. Another link with the pastoral that features in *A Tale of the Thames* is the connection between nature and music.

The association of sound with the Thames is a significant motif within Ashby-Sterry's novel because references to sound are frequently alluded to, precisely the sound of music, and also a lack of sound, to determine humanity's engagement with the River. Carmen Casaliggi and Porscha Fermanis claim that music has a "unique ability to reach the masses" (2016, p.141). This perception of music correlates with the way in which the Thames, through leisure, was being enjoyed by people of all classes, and thus it was also reaching out to the masses, despite the hierarchies that were imposed along the waterway, as demonstrated through the Pennells' tale. With this in mind, Ashby-Sterry's use of musical discourse possibly highlights a socially inclusive Thames. However, I would also suggest that as music is one of the objects considered within aesthetic criticism, according to Pater (1873), then Ashby-Sterry's novel is more appropriately associated with a specific, middle class, Thames-goer that is indicative of the network of writers within this thesis.

Ashby-Sterry's musical discourse is used to describe the ecological movement of the waterway that is pertinent to an ecocritical reading of his novel. Julia K. Wood (1995) has found how music was strongly associated with the Thames during Restoration London; she notes how following the coming together of the English monarchy, a series of celebrations occurred along the River that involved music. The alignment of music with the Thames, therefore, did not emerge during the Victorian period, but rather the connection echoes historical traditions associated with the River. Given that music is another cultural form, its association with the Thames enables another way of interrogating humanity's relationship with nature.

The unknown narrator describes how the characters paused by the bridges to gaze at the houses and streets beside the Thames, and then later how they admired the farm animals beside the River. During these descriptions, music is aligned with the River: "the Thames gurgled musically at their feet" (1896, p.29), and later "[t]he stream gurgled musically as the light craft flew over its waters" (1896, p.48). From an ecocritical perspective, both of these quotations suggest a hierarchical relationship between Ashby-Sterry's characters and the River. The first quotation juxtaposes the sound of the waterway with the physical attribute of a human; this alignment of the water gurgling with human feet highlights the physical positioning between humanity and nature, whereby spatially the Thames is positioned beneath humanity. This positioning forms a symbolic hierarchy where the River can be perceived as subservient to the forces of humanity. The second quotation offers a similar hierarchical structure, although, in this example, Ashby-Sterry uses a boat instead of a human feature. The fact that the boat is a human construction means that it can also be viewed an extension of humanity. Like the feet, the boat is also physically positioned above the water. While these may seem like obvious points, because a human or a boat would not traditionally be beneath the Thames in the physical sense, I suggest that it is Ashby-Sterry's use of language that enables a symbolic hierarchy that ignites a social ecology within his work. Also, the repetition of 'gurgled' when Ashby-Sterry aligns music with the Thames suggests that he is trying to create a distinct sound. This can be understood by considering the definition of 'gurgled', which is "to flow in a broken irregular current, with intermittent low noises, as water from a bottle, or a stream among stones" (*OED*). It is possible that Ashby-Sterry is attempting to convey the most natural sound of the waterway that reflects the River's current within his novel. As such, the description of the sound of the water contains an ecological insinuation that is culturally aligned with music, which relate to Romantic principles (as discussed shortly).

Ashby-Sterry further makes the connection between music and the weather climate of the Thames as the protagonists describe navigating the Thames upon leaving Cricklade. They note "[t]he weather was much less sultry; there were ominous black clouds to be seen occasionally as the breeze freshened and made music amid the willows and the sedges" (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.47). Here, instead of the Thames creating music, Ashby-Sterry proposes that a musical symphony is created by the coming together of the wind and flora and fauna that surround the River. For Ashby-Sterry, the naturalness surrounding the Thames and the waterway itself is a source of musical pleasure where he derives enjoyment. This human-centredness brings us back to Bate's argument that the natural environment is there for the pleasure of humanity and, whilst Ashby-Sterry exemplifies this through music, the Thames is ultimately being aestheticized.

Music, the Thames, and climate are historically associated with one another. Wood (1995) aligns music with celebrations and processions that took place along the River for commemorative purposes, including the Lord Mayor's Day and royal water pageants. However, she also writes that

> Music was played on less formal occasions too, diverting people as they travelled on the river, or even (in the long hard winter of 1683–4) walked or skated on its frozen surface, visiting the celebrated Frost Fair.
>
> (Wood, 1995, p.556)

Wood establishes a significant connection between music and the navigation of the Thames during the Restoration. This association is mirrored in the actions of Ashby-Sterry's characters who continually make references to music, thus demonstrating the continuation of a cultural tradition (concerning music and the Thames) during late-Victorian literature. Also, the link between frost fairs and music is relevant because the last fair to take place was in 1814

(Schneer, 2005), which means that the novel implicitly refers to environmental change in the landscape that took place during the nineteenth century. Thus, Ashby-Sterry's references to music allude to a different climatic landscape, one that had an environment cold enough for it to be frozen, and this creates a reminder of the Thames landscape of the past.

With reference to Wordsworth's poetry within the Preface to *Studies in the History of Renaissance*, Pater described the poet's potential to convey a "strange mystical sense of a life in natural things, and of man's life as a part of nature, drawing strength and colour and character from local influences, from the hills and streams and natural sights and sounds" (1873, p.xi). Pater explains the process of conveying natural sounds within art as being an agent for communicating the relationship between man and nature. This is a fundamentally ecocritical concept, thus supporting the rationale for a study concerning ecocriticism in the context of late Victorian aesthetic theory. Through his application of the sounds of the Thames, Ashby-Sterry's novel can be seen to merge ecocriticism and aestheticism, thus forming an eco-aesthetic. Despite Ashby-Sterry's *A Tale of the Thames* being a work of prose, his alignment of nature with music could also be seen as upholding a poetic sensibility, which is demonstrative of the lyricism of Romantic poetry. By associating Ashby-Sterry's use of music with poetry, it is significant to note the titling of Bate's seminal study *The Song of the Earth*, but also his declaration that "[p]oetry is the song of the earth" (2001, p.251). This establishes a correlation between poetry, music, and ecocriticism that can be linked to British Romanticism.

Concerning poetry, music, and Romanticism, Casaliggi and Fermanis refer to Coleridge's 'The Eolian Harp' (1795) and insightfully explain how this poem "beautifully symbolises the union of nature (the wind) and man (the musical instrument)" (2016, p.9).

Ashby-Sterry similarly demonstrates this union through his juxtaposition of the melodious description of the weirs along the Thames and the emotional feeling of one of his characters. Although the weir is an artificial construction, the 'music' that is heard by Dora, is created by the natural force of the Thames's waters against the weir:

> The intense happiness she felt in the morning appeared to be, now, quite an event of her early life-something that happened very long ago, of which she seemed to be once more reminded as she listened to the sound of the rushing weirs. The music of the weir had such a joyous melody then, but now, alas, it seemed all changed. There was an inexplicable sadness mingled with its melody.
>
> (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.199/200)

Here, the union of nature and man is formed through the interconnectedness of the 'rushing weirs' and Dora's changing emotion from joy to sadness. Ashby-Sterry further describes how Dora "sobbed as if her heart would break" (1896, p.200), which juxtaposes the flowing tears and the rushing sound of the weirs. Casaliggi and Fermanis elaborate on the connection between music and nature during the Romantic period, before concluding that "poetry and music work hand-in-hand, as symbiotic forms" (2016, p.9), thus highlighting the significant affinity between music and poetry at the time. The symbiosis between music and poetry is diluted in Ashby-Sterry's tale through the characters' pursuit of navigating the Thames for their pleasure. This dilution occurs because travel and pleasure are foregrounded within the narrative and music becomes a way of representing experiences of the River, and so, the waterway becomes saturated with cultural formations, including music, which highlights Ashby-Sterry's human-centred representation of the Thames that hints at Epicurean aesthetics.

These Romantic associations of poetry and music have also been noted by Byerly (1996) who specifically refers to Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. She observantly mentions how "the river Derwent symbolizes the power of nature to create a music that, combined with

the Aeolian strings of the 'correspondent breeze,' helps to generate Wordsworth's own song" (Byerly, 1996, p.96/7). Byerly points out the role of nature in the evocation of music within Wordsworth's poem, which is quite similar to Ashby-Sterry's. Unlike Coleridge's harp, which refers explicitly to an instrument, Ashby-Sterry's tale, just like Wordsworth's poem and the River Derwent, requires the movement of the Thames to create the music. Instead, the weir becomes symbolic of the musical instrument, and therefore, just as man is needed for an instrument to be played, nature is needed for Ashby-Sterry's music. However, while Wordsworth generates his own song simply through the combination of the natural breeze and the Derwent, which implicitly empowers nature, Ashby-Sterry's 'natural' music is somewhat limited as it relies, albeit not primarily, upon the artificial weir. As such, man's creation becomes more of a significant factor in the representation of music and the Thames in Ashby-Sterry's novel. This emphasis on artificiality to create music during the late Victorian period signals a possible shift from the Wordsworthian method at the beginning of the nineteenth century, suggesting a symbolism of the changes that took place along the waterway between the Romantic period and the *fin de siècle*.

The association between the Thames and a lack of sound is also significant within the novel as Ashby-Sterry's characters refer to a beautiful scene upon leaving Cleve Lock. They describe "entering a lake, with the hill, in all its beauty of colour, all its tenderness of tone, all its ever-changing aspect of sun and cloud shadow, rising grandly" (Ashby-Sterry, 1896, p.123). This description, especially the reference to 'colour' and 'tone', resonates with a vocabulary that is associated with art, an idea reinforced by the characters' further musing on whether Keeley Halswelle had painted the scene. Halswelle was a Victorian artist who illustrated several collections of the Romantics' work, including Byron (1861) and Wordsworth (1863), and also painted *The Valley of the Thames* (1882, Fig.7, p.138). The scene prompts the

Fig.7 Halswelle, K. (1882) *The Valley of the Thames* [oil on canvas]. Liverpool: Sudley House.

characters to cut off the sound of the boat's engine so that they could appreciate the scene "noiselessly" (1896, p.123). This highlights a different engagement with nature than that which uses music; it is one that commands silence. Ashby-Sterry appears to be prioritising sight over sound here or possibly, art over music, and thus a tension is created between the two cultural forms. This tension detracts from the Thames, and therefore constructs a distance between the reader, or the characters, and the naturalness of the River.

However, Ashby-Sterry also highlights how music and art can feature together with the Thames when the characters arrive "at Rushy Weir and the music of its waters on that lovely day in June formed a picture and melody" (1896, p.77). This alignment of music and art with the waters of the Thames is another way in which Ashby-Sterry evokes the relationship between nature and humanity. Culture, here, is centralised and thus is perceived as having more dominance than nature through the language. George Dunlop Leslie similarly makes the connection between art, music, and the Thames, when he describes the process of painting the River and how it "is helped by the reflections, repeating the composition in a gently subdued manner, like a beautiful refrain in fine music" (Leslie, 1888, p.198/9). Leslie's description, like Ashby-Sterry's, emphasises the aesthetic indulgence of the Thames. Through multiple references to music, and as indicated here, to art, Ashby-Sterry demonstrates how the River is interconnected with multiple cultural forms.

This chapter has revealed how representations of the Thames in the works of Leslie, the Pennells, and Ashby-Sterry, focused on the pleasure derived from experiencing leisure upon the River. From this, an ecocritical reading has shown how these works can

predominantly be understood as anthropocentric in relation to the waterway. Through the theme of leisure, examples of Thames-commodification were located in each of the three works, and they were shown by examining features including ownership, art, picturesque tourism, commercialism, hierarchies, and alternative cultural forms such as art and music. Strong links between the authors were also acknowledged, including the references to each other's works, or the authors' links to aestheticism and art. As a result of the primary research, I argue that representations of the Thames were often considered in their usefulness to humanity, particularly in relation to the theme of leisure because the purpose of the latter is to go in pursuit of pleasure. These conclusions were drawn through considerations of the Leslie's, the Pennells', and Ashby-Sterry's works as forms of travel writing, because they each (although not directly) promote the visitation of natural spaces. Leslie encourages boating along the Thames through personal experiences, as do the Pennells, and they both specifically offer advice to the prospective River-tourist. Meanwhile, Ashby-Sterry's boating knowledge of the Thames assisted him in writing his fictional narrative that could also be a form of travel writing. However, Ashby-Sterry's account does highlight the potential to show a shifting relationship between nature and humanity, as it briefly hints at a pantheism existing within the novel, which points towards a symbiosis.

This more reciprocal relationship is explored further in Chapter Two alongside the Thames and another commemorative avenue of Victorian society: national identity and imperialism. Schneer explains that "[f]rom their recreations and entertainments, Londoners learned that British imperialists were heroes, the colonized peoples were inferior, [and] imperialism benefitted all Britons" (Schneer, 2001, p.93). As such, we can consider imperialism as a commemorative and celebratory aspect of Victorian society, despite a retrospective postcolonial view of imperialism that sheds light on its damaging effects.

Imperialism was an integral part of both the Industrial Revolution, and the British Empire, and for these reasons, Chapter Two examines national identity by drawing largely on the act of imperialism. The following chapter also transitions from the focus on prose to poetry when considering how the River could be symbiotically connected with a multitude of national identities, together with my claim that a natural identity of the Thames could be seen to unite different nations.

2. Chapter Two – "The Praise of Thames": National Identity and Symbiosis

"Flowing through rich alluvial soil … It would be indeed impossible to over-estimate the value of the Thames to the British capital"

– Mr & Mrs S. C. Hall, *The Book of the Thames*, 1859

As the Thames runs for 215 miles from the County of Gloucestershire, through the City of London, and out towards the sea via Kent, it is physically positioned in England and is therefore likely to be deemed a feature of 'English' national identity. However, it has been critically argued that Victorian representations of the Thames symbolise an English and/or British national identity (Cusack, 2010). A consciousness of a national identity did not emerge with the Victorians, as Robert Colls (1986, p.29) locates the emergence of a national awareness as far back as the fourteenth century, during the Hundred Years' War. Adams (1888) points out that the alignment of national identity with images of the Thames have been commonplace in poetry for centuries. He describes the stately, nationalised and majestic image of the River with reference to Spenser, Milton, Pope, Cowper, and Wordsworth. Adams further reflects "how prominent a place the Thames has always held in the heart and mind of those poets who have come within the sphere of its influence" (Adams, 1888, p.113). Adams also makes reference to the lesser known poetic contributors of the Thames including Joseph Ashby-Sterry, Eliza Cook, and Aubrey De Vere. Adams's essay praises the Thames as a symbol of national identity and further points out that this is a well-established concept.

This chapter also identifies aspects of Englishness, or Britishness, within the following four selected poems: Aubrey De Vere's sonnet 'To the Thames', first published in *The Search after Proserpine: Recollections of Greece and other Poems* (1843) and later in *The Poetical Works of Aubrey De Vere* (1884); Mathilde Blind's sonnet 'To the Obelisk: During the Great Frost, 1881', published in *Prophecy of Saint Oran and other Poems* (1881); Edmund

Gosse's pastoral elegy 'The Shepherd of the Thames', first published in the collection *Firdausi in Exile: And other Poems* (1885), and John Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment' (1909), first published in *Fleet Street and other Poems* and that I argue echoes the typical features of the traditional ode. However, through analysis of the poems and their authors, I further suggest that poetic representations of the River during the *fin de siècle* unified different nations (including Irish, Scottish and German), and that these identities could also be found within the poems. Within this chapter, I also question the stability of national identities by scrutinising examples of displacement and exile. Although comprised of four nations, Britain was often primarily linked to that of an English national identity during the *fin de siècle* since the other three countries "could have no meaning other than its satellite relationship with the cultural life of England" (Dodd, 1986, p.12). This limited view of Britain, or England, meant that its national identity did not encompass migrants who had settled in England, and considered themselves English, such as Mathilde Blind. Therefore, I argue that the Thames functions within selected literature as a way to negotiate a unification of national identity, through the construction of natural identities.

The four poems form part of a wider selection of poetry that contain representations of the Thames during the *fin de siècle* (see Appendix Two), and that also contained aspects of nationhood. However, these four were specifically selected because the authors are connected to other primary texts or authors examined in this thesis, and therefore each of them contributes to the network of Thames-writers that I argue existed during the late Victorian period (see Appendix Three). The significance of these poems is also underpinned by their representation of the Thames which, as this chapter argues, is decisively ecological, but also, each poem contributes to the construction of the ecopoem in different ways. In De Vere's sonnet, it is the tension created between the Thames and the City; Blind uses an artificial

image that poetically interacts with the climate of the River; Gosse's poem encompasses the traditional aesthetic of the pastoral, an Arcadian image of the Thames and a natural biosphere to form a national and natural identity, and Davidson's poem, through the representation of industrialism and the naturalism surrounding the Thames, negotiates a symbiosis on a local level through the River's environment, but also on a global level through the earth. The process of poetic form and ecology working together to project a sense of national identity is conceptually new, and I further claim that this process expands upon our understanding of the 'ecopoem' through a cultural symbiosis between nature and humanity.

As a result of the dominant English, this chapter adopts two phrases for exploring the *fin de siècle*: a British national identity and an English national identity. However, the primary research reveals how the Thames can be seen to merge identities, and by questioning the fixedness of national identity, I demonstrate how the River unites different nations and forges new identities. Alongside their representations of the Thames, the four poems both implicitly or explicitly refer to aspects of history, politics and culture that are considered to be 'British', whether they are English, Welsh, Scottish, or Irish. Therefore, I examine historical, political, or cultural features that supposedly construct national identities, and that are connected to the River. In relation to history and the notion of 'Englishness' during the period 1880 to 1920, Colls writes that "[t]he serious study and teaching of history as 'public doctrine' […] was advanced by the establishment of the English Historical Review in 1886 and the Historical Association in 1906" (1986, p.48). This idea that the past functioned to promote a sense of 'Englishness' in the late Victorian period is further explained by Alun Howkins (1986), who claims that 1876, the year Queen Victoria became Empress of India, was the year that imperialism became central to English life. Historically, this indicates how Britain's imperial status (as an Empire) contributed to its national identity.

Colls also notes how Westminster, situated on the banks of the Thames, "stood to specify the very meaning of the English as a nation" (1986, p.31). I refer to Wordsworth's sonnet 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge' as an example of poetry that unites both the national symbol of Westminster and the River Thames, with the latter's "mighty heart" (Wordsworth, 1802, l.14, cited in Wu, 2006, p.534–5) as a signifier of nature within the urban landscape. Jonathan Bate states further that having written a series of sonnets during 1802, "Wordsworth established himself as a poet of nation, having previously been pre-eminently one of nature" (2001, p.208). This literary example highlights the significance of culture in forming a national identity, given Wordsworth's position as a Romantic poet (and a former British Poet Laureate) in Britain's literary heritage.

As Philip Dodd (1986) reminds us, and as shown through references to Wordsworth within this chapter and Nicholas Rowe in the Introduction, literature influenced and contributed to a British national identity through what he terms a "dominant English cultural ideal" (1986, p.7). This 'national tradition' saw literature often preoccupied with colonial and imperial themes that, inimically or favourably, portrayed Britain's status as an imperial nation. One of the most prominent examples that showcases the workings of imperialism during the *fin de siècle* is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). This example has also been identified by Simon Schama who described the Thames as "Conrad's imperial stream" (1996, p.5), whereas Steven Barfield describes Conrad's Thames as "Imperial London's gateway to the world" (2007, no page number). Conrad emphasises the 'service' that the Thames delivers to the Empire, both commercially and imperialistically. He describes how "after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth" (Conrad, 2007, p.4). Conrad highlights how the waterway connects Britain to other nations so that acts of

imperialism, such as those that take place in the Congo, are made possible. He then refers to "[t]he tidal current [which] runs to and fro in its unceasing service" (Conrad, 2007, p.4), indicating the relentless industrial dependence that was bestowed upon the Thames. Drawing on British histories that include the political (examples include references to the monarchy or the Empire), and the cultural (literary movements such as Romanticism or Pre-Raphaelitism), this chapter demonstrates how each of the four poems construct a British or English national identity, but further suggests that these identities can be destabilised, forging natural identities via the Thames.

The dominant literary form for the Victorian period was the novel, and Isobel Armstrong (1993, p.1) argues that Victorian poetry held a transitory status between Romanticism and modernism, where it does not seem to contribute on an important level. Armstrong even points out the absence of criticism on Victorian poetry in many twentieth century works, including Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society* (1958). However, this chapter offers a new way of reading Victorian poetry that resonates with the period's attitude towards progress in areas including Darwinism and ecology. I argue that avenues of ecological progress featured in cultural discourse, as knowledge of these subjects became increasingly widespread in literary circles. One example includes Robert Louis Stevenson, close correspondent with Edmund Gosse (see Appendix Three), who wrote about the natural prowess and ecological process of rivers in his travel work, *An Inland Voyage* (1878), where he explicitly refers to the Oise River:

> [T]he Oise, which had been so many centuries making the Golden Valley, seemed to have changed its fancy, and be bent upon undoing its performance. What a number of things a river does, by simply following Gravity in the innocence of its heart.
>
> (Stevenson, 1878, p.165)

Stevenson's awareness of ecology enables him to describe the movement of the river, in that the gravitational push is a significant ecological factor in the functioning of the waterway. This quotation also highlights the relevance of reading Victorian literature from an ecocritical viewpoint. The dialogue between ecology and Victorian poetry has been precipitated by John Parham in his insightful study *Green Man Hopkins: Poetry and Victorian Ecology* (2010) and, where appropriate, references to this work are made throughout this chapter.

Through their explicit or implicit allusions to national identity via representations of the Thames, I argue that each of the four poems can be regarded as 'ecopoems'. From researching and critically engaging with a number of ecocritical debates (as outlined in the Introduction), I suggest that an ecopoem contains the following features: a symbiosis between humanity and nature; representation of nature as a process; the idea that a poem can function as an ecosystem and fourthly, the construction of a bioregion. Whilst this list is by no means exhaustive and can be added to or reduced, it prevails that these four characteristics can be identified within the selected poems of this chapter. Richard Kerridge reminds us that when we adopt literary ecocriticism to enable us to understand the environment, we are not "looking for a single form of literature that meets all the criteria at once" (2014, p.369). Therefore, each poem is considered in relation to the features of the ecopoem that they best reflect, and are not fixedly measured against the four characteristics that have been outlined.

In his study 'Ecocritical Approaches to Literary Form and Genre: Urgency, Depth, Provisionality, Temporality' (2014), Kerridge recognises the pertinence of form in an ecocritical study and suggests the following:

> [I]n poetry and novels, nature writing is able to integrate personal stories into the wider picture provided by science and cultural history. If a new commitment to environmental care does spread through modern culture, it seems likely that an essential part will be a renewed willingness in industrialized societies to find social and personal meaning in seasons, landscapes, and the drama of life and death in nature.
>
> (Kerridge, 2014, p.372)

By adopting this view, I suggest that the structures of the sonnet, the elegy, and the ode, demonstrate a 'renewed willingness' of late Victorian society to locate national identities in the Thames, its environments, and its biospheres. To an extent, the grandeur of the River that is shown through these three poetic forms (relating to its spatial dimension and ecological function) is commensurate with a discourse of power, strength, and status. Arguably, these were all staples of Britishness during the *fin de siècle* due to the expansion of the Empire, suggesting that by the mere use of these forms then a British national identity is automatically formed. However, as this chapter demonstrates, each of the poems do not always negotiate a British and/or English national identity.

Through secondary research of nineteenth-century poetic form, I suggest that there are two primary features of the sonnet that enables it to be read as an ecopoem. These relate to what Linda Hughes refers to as "its boundedness in form and infinite capacity to express mind, spirit, feeling, nature, and belief" (2010, p.74). In addition to its diverse subject matter, as Paula Feldman and Daniel Robinson argue, including "disappointed love, radical politics, the natural world, friendship, art and aesthetics, historical and political figures, religion and spirituality, birth and death, and parents and children" (1999, p.4). The sonnet's economic use of language coupled with its inclination to be about subjects of importance means that it is suitable to explore different facets of the ecopoem, such as the workings of an ecosystem along with an exploration of the Self through national identity. These could potentially lead to an understanding of our natural environment beyond culture. The sonnet was regarded as an

important form of poetry during the Romantic period, where it "became a poetic staple and a means for poets to assert themselves as proficient in the art of lyric poetry" (Feldman and Robinson, 1999, p.4). This supports the claim of the authority that was attributed to the sonnet, and I show how this continued throughout the nineteenth century by examining De Vere's and Blind's poems. Both poems use the form of the sonnet and the subject of the River as a way of condemning British imperialism, or what Patrick Brantlinger terms, the "ideological phenomenon" (1988, p.19). This condemnation, by De Vere and Blind, creates an unstable British national identity and suggests an unfixed natural identity, where differing national identities are adrift.

The elegy as another 'high' form of poetry is described by M. H. Abrams as "a formal and sustained lament" (2005, p.77), which means that it traditionally elevates or commemorates its subjects. Therefore, the elegy was an appropriate form for selection from the poems unearthed during the primary research (see Appendix Two), because of its commemorative nature that meant it can be linked to the progress associated with Empire. Furthermore, the elegiac form was associated with the Victorians; Seamus Perry points out that the word 'Victorian' is synonymous with "a body of writing with the most modern act of devoted mourning" (2007, p.115). This is supported by the fact that former poet laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson's elegy *In Memoriam A. H. H.* (1850) was regarded as one of the most revered during the Victorian period. In the context of the Victorians, I would argue that the elegy was symbolic of Britishness in itself and possibly understood as the main poetic form of the period. John D. Rosenberg supports this view by explaining how the Victorian period was a time of change and because of this "connecting with their past became for the Victorians a sort of survival strategy" (2005, p.2). Moreover, he views the "most moving literature of the English nineteenth century [as] one long song of mourning" (Rosenberg, 2005, p.4). Rosenberg's link

between the elegy and the English past correlates with one of the features of the pastoral (Gifford, 1999). It is with reference to Gifford's work that Gosse's poem is established as a pastoral elegy. However, this traditional form is re-evaluated to highlight the significance of ecology in 'The Shepherd of the Thames'.

In order to establish Davidson's poem as an ode, I refer to two different definitions of the ode: a Victorian definition by Edmund Gosse (1881) and a contemporary one by Abrams (2005). Like the elegy, the ode was favoured by Poet Laureates and this links it with the British monarchy (who appointed such poets), which in turn positions the ode within a British cultural tradition that had been ongoing for centuries. During the seventeenth century, Poet Laureate Thomas Shadwell regarded the ode as his standard form, which then became "the recognized costume in which a poet must approach his monarch until Southey was permitted to divest himself of these laurels in 1816" (Gosse, 1881, p.xvi). From one Poet Laureate (Shadwell) to another (Southey), this suggests that the Romantics signalled an important change in the form of the ode. The inclusion of an ode for an analysis also links to British Romanticism, with further links being made throughout the chapter, and it also relates to the aestheticized vision of the Thames that was prominent in Chapter One.

The significance of the ode in the context of Romanticism has been addressed by a number of critics (Curran, 1986; Schor, 2010; Casaliggi and Fermanis, 2016). With specific reference to the work of James Chandler, Carmen Casaliggi and Porscha Fermanis observantly mention how the ode "ultimately decrees the suitability of the poetic experience as an arena not only of personal […] but also of political and philosophical reform" (2016, p.55), before referring specifically to Shelleyan and Keatsian odes to explain how the form, in the context of Romanticism, "can be read as 'progressive' experiments on works of art" (2016,

p.55). These perceptions of the Romantic ode are significant as I argue that they are echoed within Davidson's poem, which was written nearly one hundred years after several of the Romantic odes. 'The Thames Embankment' reveals a correlation with British political reform through reference to themes of industrialism and imperialism, and the philosophical reform through the conveyance of the Self or, more specifically, national identity. However, contrary to the Romantic ode as a 'progressive' form of art, Davidson's poem is 'progressive' in the context of science, namely ecology, and this is in accordance with post-Darwinian thinking.

2.1 Aubrey De Vere's 'To the Thames' (wr.1843, pub.1884)

De Vere's poem can be read as a projection of the relationship between dominant and subjugated nations onto the Thames and the City of London, where the power of nonhuman nature is suggested. Given De Vere's Irish origin and the timing of the poem's original publication, his sonnet could be an allusion to political tensions between England and Ireland during the 1840s, which culminated in the Irish Potato Famine. This destabilises the idea that the Thames reflects a solely British or English national identity, and instead could be seen to unify these identities along with an Irish identity. De Vere wrote a series of letters to an English Member of Parliament referring to the national conflict, a few years after the publication of the poem and during the Famine itself. These letters were later published as *English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds: Four Letters from Ireland, addressed to an English Member of Parliament* (1848). They are significant as they offer both an insight into De Vere's view of an English national identity, and his use of natural metaphors, which relates to my argument that his sonnet adopts characteristics of the ecopoem.

In *English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds,* De Vere addresses "the Imperial parliament" (1848, p.6) and its "imperial nation" (1848, p.263), thus highlighting his views on those who govern England (the former) and those who populate its nation (the latter). This could suggest that De Vere feels imperialism defines Englishness. He then differentiates between two attitudes that he believes the English adopt – one that is politically-minded and the other that is more natural:

> England is not one, but two; and that while the loftier influence reigns in her brain, and looks forth from eye to eye, the more earthly spirit that masters her hand, and miserably simulates her voice. It is the latter England […] with which I have at present to converse.
>
> (De Vere, 1848, p.4)

De Vere recognises that England, or the English, possess both a national pride that is driven by forces including imperialism and a more functional, natural, pride that is grounded in the natural environment of where they inhabit. He specifically appeals to the compassionate nature of those in charge at Westminster, as opposed to their political mindset, by metaphorically claiming that he wants to speak to the 'earthly spirit' which defines England. De Vere differentiates between a 'natural' England and a 'political' England by describing the former as "noble, wise, and strong" and the latter as a "sordid England" (De Vere, 1848, p.3). This political/earthly dualism is reflected within De Vere's sonnet, where he considers the relationship between the City of London and the River Thames. De Vere's poem mirrors the serious subject-matter contained within De Vere's letter, where he condemned England's treatment of the Irish people during the 1840s. As a consequence of this mirroring, De Vere's sonnet, through its critique of imperialism and representation of the Thames, constructs an image of English identity that becomes acquainted with an Irish identity.

Through examination of the sonnet form, De Vere's literary influences, and his use of Wordsworthian language, 'To the Thames' can be linked to the British literary tradition. This is despite the sonnet form's original association with Italy, because I consider how the sonnet has been adopted and redefined by British writers. Linda Hughes argues that due to "the sonnet's association with Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth […] it became another cultural site for articulating British national identity" (2010, p.75). As such, De Vere conforms to a British poetic tradition when he writes in the sonnet form, but also when he uses it to write about the theme of national identity. De Vere's work is likely to have been influenced by former British sonneteers, a point that is strengthened as Charles W. Spurgeon refers to De Vere as a "disciple of Wordsworth" (2008, p.169). Furthermore, in his biographical work *Portraits and Sketches* (1913), Edmund Gosse recalls meeting Aubrey De Vere in 1896 and questioning him on his greatest influences, to which De Vere cited Wordsworth. These Wordsworthian influences are significant as they are evident in 'To the Thames', a sonnet where a river and imperialism are the subjects. Similarly, Wordsworth had written a collection of poems entitled *The River Duddon: A Series of Sonnets: Vaudracour and Julia: And Other Poems* (1820). One poem in this collection, albeit not a sonnet, was 'To the Rev. Dr W–', and it is the language within this poem that mirrors De Vere's words of "The Imperial City's agitated ear" (1884, l.2), as shown here: "Hence, while the imperial city's din // Beats frequent on thy satiate ear" (Wordsworth, 1820, ll.73-74). It is interesting that De Vere, like Wordsworth, described an 'imperial City', and that the image of the river is seen as a bodily counterpart to the city. De Vere's echoing of British canonical literature allows the Thames to be read as a symbol of national identity through its association with cultural patterns.

From an ecocritical perspective, De Vere's sonnet implicitly represents a natural ecosystem that suggests an ecocentricism alongside a literary technique of personification that

suggests an anthropocentrism. I suggest that these two processes create a cultural symbiosis that enables De Vere's sonnet to function as an ecopoem. Firstly, the poem indirectly addresses the fact that the waters of the Thames exist as part of an ecosystem, namely the 'water cycle'. This natural power, as implied by the poem, has the potential to override the political power of the Empire, a key political characteristic underpinning Britain's national identity, and it is exemplified in the opening lines: "River, whose charge is from the winds and sky // The Imperial City's agitated ear" (1884, l.1– 2). De Vere adopts a warlike discourse by referring to the River's 'charge', which attributes power to the Thames. Alfred Lord Tennyson would later use the term repeatedly within 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' (1854), a narrative poem depicting the plight of soldiers fighting during the Crimean War. Therefore, De Vere's use of 'charge' to describe the River, positions the naturalness of the Thames within a sphere of conflict which could allude to an ecocentricism where the capabilities of nature are elevated above those of humanity. However, the second line's explicit reference to imperialism metaphorically interacts with the natural ecosystem to negotiate a symbiosis in the framing of an English national identity. The water cycle functions with the wind assisting in the evaporation process and the sky being the space where this takes place, before the river continues the cycle towards the sea. The fact that the poem begins with the river, the wind, and the sky, softens his critique of human-centred acts of imperialism (that resonated with an English national identity), enabling a more nuanced poetic reading.

The water cycle is an integral part of both nonhuman and human nature because without it, as Haydn Washington asserts, "life could not function on Earth" (2013, p.16). In addition to being a natural human life source, the Thames plays a major role in strengthening Britain's economy through being a site of commerce and industry. Consequently, this meant that during the late Victorian period the River contributed to the power of the Empire. In De

Vere's poem, the Thames and the water cycle are significant because of the use of the elevated sonnet form to construct a cultural space for the grandeur themes of national identity and imperialism. In the first two lines of the poem, the wind and sky (key components of the river's function), are juxtaposed with imperialism (key component of the Empire's function). This positions both nature and politics as holding equal significance within 'To the Thames', and thus we can see how representations of the River and the theme of imperialism work together as a cultural ecosystem. This reading, which adopts an ecocritical concept that has been debated by critics (Bryson, 2002; Elder, 2002; Clark, 2011), enables a reading of Victorian poetry that develops a cultural understanding of the symbiosis between nature and humanity. De Vere's poem establishes the potential for the workings of the water cycle to be likened to operations of imperialism through power: both natural and political. De Vere begins the poem by juxtaposing a natural lexis with an imperialist lexis, which constructs a blend of Irish (through De Vere), English (through the Thames) and British (through imperialism and Empire) identities.

The use of personification in the sonnet leans towards an anthropocentricism, and this is determined in two ways. Firstly, De Vere adopts the rhetorical device of the apostrophe to address the Thames, and secondly, he humanises the River by describing it as an 'agitated ear' to the 'Imperial City'. In doing so, human life is culturally injected into the natural Thames, and De Vere brings together the nonhuman natural world and humanity's acts of imperialism. Chris Baldick (1990) reminds us that, traditionally, the apostrophe was a technique used within the ode and elegiac forms of poetry. Both of these forms were traditionally 'high' forms, and so the sonnet, in the context of Victorian poetry, is elevated through De Vere's use of the apostrophe. From an ecocritical viewpoint, despite the apostrophe being a form of personification, its usage to address a natural landscape within De Vere's

sonnet makes the reader more aware of nonhuman nature or specifically, the Thames. Scott Knickerbocker argues that poetry is more effective "at awakening one to the natural world through the emotive and rhetorical power [it has] over readers" (2012, p.3). In relation to De Vere's poem, this awakening may relate to the human consciousness of both the natural environment and identity, which is achieved through the subject of the Thames and the rhetoric of the apostrophe.

The literalness of the Thames is evoked through a direct reference in the poem's title, 'To the Thames', and through the implicitness of the first word of the poem, 'River'. These references create a link with the poem's overall critique of imperialism. However, the Thames is also figuratively evoked through the use of the apostrophe, as I have discussed. Knickerbocker (2012) argues that the literal and the figurative are not oppositions and neither do they exist as a dualism; more accurately, Knickerbocker maintains, both the literal and the figurative operate as a dialogue. This dialectic is exemplified in De Vere's poem between the speaker and the addressee (the Thames), and between the speaker and the subject (imperialism). The poem's apostrophe calls upon the Thames to tell the 'I mperial City' that victory achieved through acts of imperialism is short-lived and that "Triumph is allied to Terror" (De Vere, 1884, l.12). This joint elicitation of human and nonhuman nature, through the subject of imperialism and the Thames, correlates with the political status of Britain and its Empire during the nineteenth century. As such, the apostrophe awakens different national identities by critiquing British Imperialism from the perspective of an Irish poet, with the Thames used to negotiate this critique. I argue that this forms a symbiosis between culture and nature, where De Vere's poem can be considered, retrospectively, as an ecopoem.

De Vere once again personifies the Thames when he describes it as being "[t]he Imperial City's agitated ear" (1884, l.2), which alters the assumed boundary between nonhuman nature and human nature. This quotation could suggest that the Thames overhears, and just as an ear is physically connected to the body, the Thames is physically connected to the City. In the context of De Vere's sonnet, the River is therefore regarded as being a part of the City's imperialist deeds. This idea is strengthened through consideration of Egyptian art, where the ear, or as it is referred to in Egyptian mythology the 'ear stelae', was used to "symbolize both a prayer and an assurance that the god will hear it and show his compassion" (Zivie-Coche, 2002, p.64). One of the gods, or deities, that is linked to the 'ear stelae' is Isis which, interestingly, has been used culturally in the past to personify the Thames. This cultural link between the Thames and Isis was noted in Chapter One in relation to Leslie's *Our River*, where it was concluded that references to the Isis were driven by human power and capital. Isis is evoked through symbolism in De Vere's poem whereas Leslie's work refers to Isis explicitly; the difference in form could be a reason that explains the different evocation of the Egyptian goddess. With Leslie's work being a piece of travel writing or picturesque tourism, and De Vere's work being a poem, this could potentially indicate the significance of form in negotiating an anthropocentric or a symbiotic relationship between nature and humanity.

By repeating the imperative "Tell her" (De Vere, 1884, l.7 and l.9), the speaker calls upon the River to warn the City that "Triumph is allied to Terror" (1884, l.12). The speaker attempts to elicit a sense of compassion from the River, due to the destruction and 'terror' that is caused by imperialism. The poem arguably sees the Thames as playing a role in the nation's power and the wealth that was accrued, albeit not singlehandedly, by acts of imperialism. Therefore, the speaker appeals to the spiritual influence of the power of nature, and once again posits the figurative Thames in dialogue with the literalness of imperialism.

The River's suggested role within imperialism is also exemplified in other late Victorian texts. In the commencement of a journey for the purpose of colonialism within Africa, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) situates the beginning and the end of the narrative upon the Thames. By using the River as a narrative frame for a story that shows the effects of colonialism, Conrad highlights the Thames's role in the Empire's expansion, just like De Vere's poem. However, whilst Conrad's Thames frames colonial discourse, De Vere's Thames is personified and, through the sonnet form, is called upon for its natural and spiritual capaciousness to dissipate acts of imperialism.

De Vere's description of the size and appearance of the Thames contributes to the symbiotic reading of the poem that points to it as an ecopoem. The interconnectedness of nature and human identity occurs as the speaker addresses the River to remind its nation of the dangers of occupying an imperial status, by commanding the waterway to "[t]ell her, whilst on thy broad and glimmering mirror" (De Vere, 1884, l.9). The 'her' is a reference to London, which feminises the City, and subsequently by association the Empire. In turn, considering the theme of patriarchy, the speaker, therefore, posits London within a secondary sphere, which lessens its authoritative status for the purpose of the poem. The Thames's status is then raised through the dominance of its 'broad' size, which is suggestively masculine. Meanwhile, the description of the Thames as a 'mirror' relates to ecocritical enquiry. Gifford argues that poetry of place includes the feature of "nature as mirror" which seeks "to articulate often unconscious connections between inner and outer nature" (2011, p.158). I suggest that these unconscious connections exist within De Vere's sonnet through the implied role of the Thames in the imperialism of the City, which can be visually represented, as De Vere suggests, through London's reflection, which is seen in the waters of the Thames.

London's built environment is reflected in its natural feature, the River, when the speaker describes "The shadows of her turrets tremble and slide" (1884, l.10). The image of the turrets trembling, representing London's landmarks, suggests that they are unfixed as if the buildings are about to crumble and fall. Given that these buildings, or landmarks, are presumably symbolic of London's powerful status, De Vere may have been suggesting the impermanence of empires. De Vere then strengthens this notion by 'shadowing' the turrets, which makes them less prominent and as such, he creates a less powerful image of a British identity. As per Gifford's ecocritical argument that reflections are embedded within an unconscious, De Vere's critique of imperialism, or possibly the Empire, also remains within the unconscious of the poem and therefore, the authoritative, and developed image of the Empire is maintained. De Vere's use of reflection can also be considered alongside the interconnectedness of nonhuman nature and humanity, which has been outlined by Timothy Morton in his study *The Ecological Thought* (2010):

> Nature was always "over yonder," alien and alienated. Just like a reflection, we can never actually reach it and touch it and belong to it. Nature was an ideal image, a self-contained form suspended afar, shimmering and naked behind glass like an expensive painting.
> (Morton, 2010, p.5)

Here, Morton describes how nature has been represented as separate to humanity in the past, whereas now we can begin to consider it as interconnected. However, despite the fact that De Vere's poem was written during the Victorian period, I argue retrospectively that the Thames can be viewed as being interconnected with humanity. The 'glimmering' river could allude to an idealism, but the fact that it contains the political landmarks in its waters, albeit a reflection, creates the symbiosis between the River and a political English identity. As such, De Vere's 'ecopoem' is a space where the Thames exists alongside political English landmarks and themes that allude to the British Empire, thus forming a conflation of national identities that are linked symbiotically with the River.

In a collection of his unpublished memoirs, De Vere asserted that "a poem should reflect the time and place" (De Vere, 1847, cited in Ward, 1904, p.74). His sonnet 'To the Thames' conforms to this statement by evoking the contemporaneous power of the Empire, along with a natural and artificial sense of place through the Thames and London respectively. However, our perception of time and place is by no means fixed, and De Vere alludes to this through the natural movement of the River, which raises the significance of change within De Vere's poem, or perhaps the need for change. Arguably, the flowing of the waterway is juxtaposed with the implicit suggestion for political change and, it is likely that De Vere would have been referring to the tense political relationship between England and Ireland during the 1840s, the decade when the poem was first published. However, with its republication in the 1880s, the sonnet can be seen to represent potential tensions between other nations that were harnessed through acts of imperialism. The natural movement of the river is exemplified in the lines "[d]o thy great, pious task perpetually" (1884, l.4) and "from bridge to bridge in smooth career" (1884, l.6). The bridges remind us how the River cascades between artificiality during its course, which connotes an image of interconnectedness between nature and culture within the poem. Furthermore, the fact that it is perpetual could hint at the endless ecosystem that flows naturally from the mountains and drifts towards the sea.

De Vere creates the relationship between the Thames and London by speaking to the River, and repeating imperatives such as "Tell her", which refer to the City. The notion that De Vere's poem is mirroring attitudes and events that took place during the nineteenth century is congruent with the form of the sonnet genre. In relation to poetic form, Stuart Curran explains how "[t]he spaces between microcosm and macrocosm are essential to the sonnet genre" (1986, p.56). As such, De Vere's construction of the Thames and London relationship

could be perceived as a microcosm of tensions between England and Ireland. In doing so, De Vere constructs a symbiosis between the political, as in London's power, and the natural, as in the River, to present the image of an English identity during the Victorian era. Gifford explains that "[s]ome poets have used images of external nature to mirror tensions in their own nature" (Gifford, 2011, p.158), and De Vere's exposition of the natural environment and the politically constructed environment of imperialism arguably supports this view and conveys a relationship that is in dialogue with the other.

Further reference to his memoirs indicate that De Vere believed that the "Church, which is, not metaphorically, but symbolically, mother of us all, is extended over all places and times" (De Vere, 1847, cited in Ward, 1904, p.61). By associating De Vere's church symbolism with the significance of place in De Vere's sonnet, then religion becomes relevant, although not central, to our reading of the poem as a symbiotic projection of national identity, which culminates in the formation of an ecopoem. In a study of rivers and Ancient Rome, Brian Campbell suggests that "[t]he religious aura of water [has been] derived from a variety of factors [which includes] its very movement, the running water of a river suggests a cleansing quality" (2012, p.129). Therefore, the Thames's movement, which is apparent in the sonnet, can be said to possess a cleansing power that is symbolic of religion, and this is further supported through De Vere's use of religious diction when the movement of the River is described as 'pious'. The pontifical tone of the poem, with its continuous use of imperatives, elevates the Thames as if to suggest its power can influence the nation. It is possible that De Vere creates a divine river to inoculate the City against the atrocities caused by the imperialism of its nation.

By drawing on the divine status of religion and the ecology of the waterway, De Vere's poem negotiates a further interconnection between humanity and nature. This is because the divine status of the Thames mirrors the reliance that humanity has on rivers in general, specifically water, for its existence, as Washington points out:

> All forms of biodiversity are generated and maintained by natural ecosystems. Axiomatic as this may seem, we need to remind ourselves that no one can exist without the life support basis supplied by natural ecosystems.
>
> (Washington, 2013, p.104)

The correlation between religion, nature and nationhood is also addressed by De Vere in his autobiography *Recollections* (1897), where he explains that "to the different nations different vocations are assigned by Providence; to one, an imperial vocation, to another, a commercial one; to Greece an artistic one, to Ireland, as to Israel, a spiritual one" (1897, p.354). Therefore, De Vere suggests an involvement of divine intervention in establishing a nation of 'imperial status'. However, by elevating the Thames above the imperial politics of the nation, De Vere suggests that nature, or in this case the River, has a greater supremacy and can perhaps overrule a nation's vocation. By the end of the poem, this divinity is transferred to humanity in the form of a nation, which means that the reciprocity, or the symbiosis, actually takes place in the locale of the poem and that perhaps, a natural identity is formed.

The interconnectedness of the sonnet form, the Thames, and national identity is augmented in the final lines of the poem. Whilst the remainder of the sonnet had used the River as a platform to voice critical thoughts on acts of imperialism, the ending rhyming couplet adopts natural metaphors that can be related to Knickerbocker's theory of ecopoetics. Conventionally, as Abrams informs us "the final couplet in the English sonnet usually imposes an *epigrammatic* turn at the end" (2005, p.300). This turn is exemplified in 'To the Thames'

as the closing lines privilege both human and nonhuman nature in favour of the materialism accrued through imperialism that includes wealth or power. In doing so, De Vere points towards a commemoration of nationhood that signals nature to be a stronger defining feature in its construction, as he writes "Demons their nests in ship-mast forests hide– // By nobleness, not gold, are Nations deified" (De Vere, 1884, ll.13-14). De Vere's diction creates an ambiguity that rests between human constructions and natural formations. The 'nest', in the literal sense, is a natural formation as in a bird's nest. However, it can also refer to the crow's nest that is manmade and appears at the top of the mast of a ship. Also, 'gold' is a natural metal, but De Vere uses it as a metonym for wealth, which is not natural; similarly, the reference to 'nobleness' is traditionally a social and/or political rank but is used by De Vere as an example of human behaviour.

In his work on ecopoetics, Knickerbocker draws upon Bruno Latour's work, specifically, the "hybrid notion of 'nature-culture,' in which nature is simultaneously real and constructed" (2012, p.9), and it is this feature of the ecopoem that can be applied to De Vere's final couplet. However, Knickerbocker's analysis of works by Emily Dickinson and Gerard Manley Hopkins offer a different conclusion to what I suggest here, in my analysis of De Vere's sonnet. Whilst Knickerbocker claims that "their work [Dickinson's and Hopkins's] powerfully demonstrates the ecocentric promise of poetry's natural artifice" (2012, p.8), I argue that 'To the Thames' is an example of an ecopoem that offers a symbiosis between nature and humanity. This is because of the structure and content of the sonnet form, specifically the epigram and the form's inclination towards important themes, coupled with the application of ecocritical theory. This coupling both hybridises nature and culture and recognises that "artifice *is* natural" (Knickerbocker, 2012, p.8), thus signalling the significance of poetic form and implicit ecologies to produce political national identities. The conclusion of a symbiotic relationship

is more appropriate than an ecocentric one because the value in De Vere's poem is not human-centred nor is it nature-centred. But rather, the Thames is positioned as a subject and is used as a means to negotiate a mode of human identity, which establishes the two as working together within the poetical space of the sonnet.

The reference to hybridity in the previous paragraph evokes the postcolonial criticism of Homi Bhabha (1994, p.159), and this could also be relatable to De Vere's poem because, like ecocriticism demonstrates a symbiosis between nature and humanity by using the Thames and nationhood, postcolonial criticism reveals the oppression of one nation by another through the River. This oppression could allude to the Irish and English relationship, but also to the relationship between Britain and Egypt with the former's invasion of the latter occurring in 1882 – two years before the republication of De Vere's sonnet. These dates enable us to forge a link between De Vere's Thames, the longest river in England, and the River Nile, the longest river in the world. Interestingly, in his early years De Vere spent time with Leigh Hunt, close friend of Shelley and Keats, and in his *Recollections* (1897) he describes Hunt's sonnet 'A Thought of the Nile' (1818) as his finest. I am not proposing a link here with the Romantics, but the evocation of a blend of national identities – Irish, British, Egyptian, English – indicate that just like the flow of the Thames (or any river), national identity is unfixed and the only entity to potentially connect us fixedly is nature, or the earth.

2.2 Mathilde Blind's 'To the Obelisk: During the Great Frost, 1881'

The publication of Mathilde Blind's 'To the Obelisk' also correlates with tensions between Britain and Egypt that had begun a few years before Britain's official invasion. The obelisk, or Cleopatra's Needle, is situated on the Victoria Embankment and was given as a gift from Egypt to Britain and erected in London in 1878 (Dickens JNR, 1887; Schama, 1995; Ackroyd,

2007). This material artefact connects the two nations in reality, but also within the context of Blind's poem, where the natural environment is also used to further harness this connection. The idea of Blind's sonnet as an ecopoem, I argue, is established through the poem's emphasis on place; both political and natural ideas of place are significant, including the geographical demarcation of lands (Egypt and England), and natural formations (the Thames and the Desert). Given that the subject of the poem is the obelisk, an artificial construct, it is hard to conceive how Blind's poem can be considered an ecopoem, or even a poem about the Thames. However, the way that the obelisk is centralised within the poem occurs through place(s). These include the Eastern origin of the poem, the English space in which the obelisk resides, and more specifically, the obelisk's positioning beside the Thames. In support of the network of Thames writers that I argue existed during the *fin de siècle* (see Appendix Three), other poets have also reflected on the significance of Cleopatra's Needle alongside the natural space of the Thames that also configures a conflation of national identities. Welsh poet Sir Lewis Morris's *On the Thames Embankment, August 1897* includes a fleeting reference to the monument, whilst Richard Gilder's 'The Obelisk' (1881) and George Barlow's sonnet 'Cleopatra's Needle' (1903) centralises the statue and contains references to the Thames. In contrast, Blind's sonnet includes references to the artificial and natural environments of the Thames, and significantly, how they work together in negotiating a national identity.

Blind's construction of the poem as a Petrarchan sonnet contributes to it functioning as an ecopoem because it is organised "into two main parts: an octave […] followed by a sestet" (Abrams, 2005. p.299). This structure enables the poem to work symbiotically between the two parts, and Blind achieves this through allocation of an Egyptian identity to the octave and an English one to the sestet; both the obelisk and Blind's descriptions of the natural environment merge these identities to form a natural identity that signals the ecopoem. The

symbiosis between humanity and nature emerges within the poem through the structure of the sonnet, alongside the representations of the Thames and national identities. Blind's use of the Petrarchan sonnet form also reflects, as Baldick (1990) informs us, the popular use of the poetic form in the English language. Dodd (1986) writes that the English language can be associated with national identity, and therefore the form of Blind's poem is immediately bound with Englishness. Dodd further stated how late nineteenth-century attitudes believed that the English language occupied a dominant status because it was often imposed on countries that were being colonised by the British, and this meant that English was seen as a superior language. The Petrarchan form also conforms to Victorian convention, which perceived "British national prestige [as being] pegged to literary "correctness," and Victorian critics pronounced the Petrarchan form most authoritative" (Hughes, 2010, p.75). 'To the Obelisk' is therefore situated amid a British poetic tradition and, in writing about the monument within the Petrarchan form, Blind signals the importance of the foreign object in establishing a cultural understanding of British national identity. With British, English, and Egyptian identities all being evoked through the poem, Blind arguably presents the impermanency of national identities, like De Vere, and grounds them in representations of the artificial obelisk and the natural Thames.

Blind forms a relationship between the octave and the sestet by designating these parts of the poem as East and West respectively, both of which represent spaces that the obelisk has occupied. This division evokes binary oppositions that are concomitant with the postcolonial criticism of Edward Said (1978), where he argues that the East was often represented in literature in stark contrast to the West. In some ways, this leans towards an ecocritical postcolonial response to the poem. This way of reading the poem emphasises the dominance of one nation over another and I further argue that a 'blend' of national identities is

destabilised because of the demarcation of the structure of the poem. However, through ecocriticism I argue that Blind's poem emphasises the connectedness of national identities by framing them within the confines of nature, which ultimately connects us all. One example is the different weather climates that are associated with each nation, which is revealed in the title of the poem. The obelisk, a former monument of Egypt, is juxtaposed with the British climate: the Great Frost of 1881 (*Royal Meteorological Society*, 1907, p.36). Blind's octave then projects the grandeur of "Egypt's fierce sun" and the Desert's "seas of sand", and thus more is written on the obelisk's origins in Egypt than its current position in London. In contrast, when describing the monument within the City, Blind offers a dismal climatic discourse by noting the "wintry grey"; "blocks of ice" and "rayless orb" that creates a dull and lifeless environment. These wintry images could symbolise the cold and hostile nature of the British towards foreign nations, particularly Egypt who Britain was about to colonise the following year. Florence Boos argues that Blind's sonnet represented the "Egyptian desert, forced to endure the physical and psychological chill of a wintry day by a remote river under an etiolated northern sun" (2004, p.260). In response to Boos's criticism, I suggest that through metaphorical use of the weather, Blind hints at Egypt's oppressed status due to the imperialist actions of the British Empire. Furthermore, through exploiting the fact that both nations have a different weather system by interweaving climates into the Petrarchan form, Blind constructs a cultural ecosystem whereby national identity can be considered in relation to nature, specifically the weather, and it is this feature that enables us to read Blind's poem as an ecopoem.

National identity is further determined in Blind's poem through a contrasting lexis of freedom and confinement to describe the natural landscape of the Desert and the riverscape of the Thames, in order to differentiate between the two nations. Traditionally, the Petrarchan sonnet would initiate a question or dilemma, a condition, or an occurrence within

the octave, and then a resolve in the sestet (Abrams, 2005, p.300). The focus on the Egyptian landscape in Blind's octave, according to Abrams's definition, connotes conflict through the use of oppressive language, which I argue suggests the tyrannical treatment of Egyptians under colonial rule. For example, by describing travellers across the Desert, Blind refers to the "beasts of burden" and "their flagging hearts". The first quote presents the image of a working animal that carries heavy loads, whereas the second describes the owner of these animals, where the verb 'flagging' indicates weakness or fatigue. These oppressive images are contrasted with those of the Thames in the sestet, with the "blocks of ice drift" and the "drifting stream", which indicates movement that signifies freedom. Thus, Egypt's land is represented as oppressed through its people and its animals, whereas the Thames is used within the octave to represent British liberty (in the context of the Empire colonising Egypt). This view is supported by Boos, who notes that "Blind's poem expressed wry but kindly empathy for an emblem of the Egyptian desert" (2004, p.260). However, the freedom that is associated with Britain is established in Blind's sonnet through the representation of the Thames, and it is in line with late Victorian Liberalism, which Colls (1986) argues was a dominant force between 1880 and 1920. He further states that "the idea of the English as a free people […] Liberalism matched Englishness" (Colls, 1986, p.31). Thus, the contrasting ideologies of oppressiveness in the octave and freedom in the sestet are linked to a sense of national identity for both nations.

The English and Egyptian landscapes are represented through the use of a watery metaphor and a fluid discourse that indicate the unfixed inclination of national identity. The Desert's "seas of sand" and the Thames's "drifting stream" both offer a sense of movement and place, and given that the Desert is used to symbolise Egypt and the Thames signals London, both quotations contribute to a shifting national identity that mirrors the fluctuating political identities of both nations during the nineteenth century, which include Britain's expansion as

an Empire and Egypt's submission under British colonial rule. This transient representation of national identity is concomitant with the body of water that makes up England's largest river and, in defining each nation by its natural landscape, Blind's poem draws upon an ecocritical argument that harnesses a 'bioregional idea', a concept outlined by Clark:

> The bioregional idea seems very suited to such traditional conceptions of literature as a mode of communicating the particular, affirming the specific and otherwise untranslatable nature of life worlds as opposed to modes of language more complicit with generalisation and commodification.
>
> (Clark, 2011, p.132/3)

The poem's use of three proper nouns (Desert, Egypt, and the Thames) correlates with the *specificity* of the 'bioregional idea'. Furthermore, the idea that water flows between the octave and the sestet undermines the idea that both parts of the poem work in opposition (as Said's postcolonial criticism would suggest) but rather, as the water implies, a symbiosis is formed through the natural *particulars* of an Egyptian and British identity. Therefore the sonnet's structure (octave and sestet) and bioregionalism (British and Egyptian landscapes) share a reciprocity that projects a national identity that is more adrift, just like the obelisk, which also forms the ecopoem.

Whilst Blind's octave establishes a problem, as exemplified through the implicit oppression experienced by the Egyptians, there does not appear to be a solution offered in the sestet. This absence could be due to the Empire's continuous colonial rule in Egypt. Blind ponders the scenario of the obelisk physically positioned within Egypt in the octave where she describes it as occupying a "monumental pride" (1893, l.2), which augments a powerful image of the obelisk in its original landscape: the Desert. However, by the sestet, the obelisk has transcended the pride it occupied in the octave and instead it "risest o'er the alien prospect" (1893, l.11) in the sestet. The obelisk has also been reduced to a secondary status as it is "reared

beside our Thames" (1893, l.9), which signals a lesser status attributed to the obelisk in London. Between the structural shift of the octave and the sestet, the Petrarchan sonnet "usually coincides with a 'turn' (Italian, *volta*) in the argument or mood of the poem" (Baldick, 2008, p.312). This structural shift, or the volta, mirrors the spatial shift from Egypt to London or East to West with the obelisk present in both sections of the poem. Blind culturally displaces the obelisk through poetic form, from Egypt to London. Boos argues that "Blind expressed her own idiosyncratic sympathy for the plight of exiled, alienated and displaced statuary" (2004, p.259). Whilst there is no indication that the poem is autobiographical, it could be significant that Blind was exiled in childhood from Germany to Belgium, and then to Britain in 1852 (Avery, 2002, no page number). As such, the obelisk could be symbolic of Blind's displacement and exile, as Boos suggests, which means that, potentially, in attempting to gain a consciousness of her own national identity, Blind projects her personal feelings of displacement onto the obelisk. The fact that Blind travelled frequently but considered herself to be English (Diedrick, 2017, p.4) could mean that she uses the Thames to bring these identities together, and the obelisk to destabilise the significance of place in the identification of the Self.

The presence of Cleopatra's Needle in literature of the *fin de siècle* may have acted as a symbolic reminder of the imperial relationship between Britain and Egypt that existed at that time. Britain's colonisation of Egypt in 1882 has been described by Brantlinger as an "invasion and crushing of Egyptian nationalism" (2009, p.79). This breakdown of Egypt's national identity can be seen through the symbolism of the monument itself, and the reader's perception of the monument, which is constructed through the environment of the Thames where the obelisk resides. A monument, such as an obelisk, is defined as a "statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a famous or notable person or event"

(*OED*). Therefore, by occupying the same physical space (in London) as the obelisk, the Thames, to an extent, becomes embroiled within a commemorative sphere – both in reality and in the context of Blind's poem. The obelisk serves as a symbol of Egypt within the space of London and also, as the opening line of the poem demonstrates, a "sign-post of the Desert" (Blind, 1893, l.1). This line gives the obelisk a sense of purpose, whereby it functions as a geographical object to direct Egyptians to the desert. It also aligns the monument with nature as it becomes a symbol of the Egyptian natural landscape. However, the navigational purpose of the obelisk, as suggested by Blind in the octave, is averted as the obelisk enters the poem's sestet where it is represented in the environment of London. Here, the obelisk occupies a space "Where blocks of ice drift with the drifting stream, // Thou risest o'er the alien prospect" (Blind, 1893, l.10–11). This is a stark contrast to the dry landscape of the desert where the obelisk was once positioned and so, by describing the River as 'alien' to the obelisk suggests a sense of displacement.

Blind's poem shows the unification of a number of national identities, specifically Egyptian, English, and British, but also German, due to Blind's birthplace. The poem also demonstrates how Blind was influenced by a number of British authors from a range of nineteenth-century cultural movements, namely British Romanticism and Pre-Raphaelitism. This extends the different national identities that can be linked to the poem further. Through analysis of motifs, Boos (2004) has linked Blind's poem to Shelley's 'Ozymandias' (1817) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'The Burden of Nineveh' (1856), with all three poems being inspired by monuments or stone statues. If we consider that Shelley died in exile and that Rossetti was of Italian descent, then this strengthens the idea of national identities being adrift within the poem. This correlates with Blind herself, who used the pseudonym Claude Lake, which James Diedrick argues was "guaranteed to evoke Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey […] as well

as the Romantic poets more generally", alongside the "Continental 'Claude'" (2017, p.35). This blend of national identities also links Blind to the network of Thames writers during the *fin de siècle* (see Appendix Three); it further connects her to the aestheticism that was described in Chapter One. She was a close friend of Algernon Charles Swinburne, and was influenced by Pater's work – Diedrick claims that the latter and Blind were both "interested in epistemic shifts and the ways in which literature represents them" (2017, p.73). This idea can be applied to her sonnet whereby national identities are revealed through different influences (Shelley and Rossetti), the identity of the obelisk and the natural environment, including the Thames.

Blind was part of what Diedrick terms a "Shelley circle" of writers that researched his life and convened to discuss his work (2017, p.42). Boos (2004) has already linked Blind's poem to Shelley's sonnet 'Ozymandias'. However, Shelley's sonnet was composed in a poetry competition between himself, Keats, and Leigh Hunt, and Blind's knowledge and reverence for Shelley and his work offers a comparison to De Vere, who highly revered Hunt's sonnet from this competition. Blind was also close friends with other aesthetes including William Rossetti; Morris; Gosse and Ford Madox Brown. She also received a marriage proposal from American writer Joaquin Miller (Diedrick, 2017), who wrote the poem 'Westminster Abbey' (1909) where he described the Thames as "turbid" (1909, l.1), a reference to its opaque image. These relationships are worth considering because it demonstrates Blind's links to other Thames writers but also, in the context of this chapter, it shows her position amid English literary circles and British aestheticism during the *fin de siècle* that culminate in a variety of national identities.

In terms of a British literary tradition, Blind's poem resonates with representations of national identity through Romanticism, aestheticism, and Pre-Raphaelitism.

I specifically argue that if these nineteenth-century shifting cultural movements are linked to Blind's description of the Thames as "drifting", then it is possible to read Blind's sonnet as an ecopoem. This description of the River creates nature as a process and, similarly, unfixed cultural forms indicate that culture is also a process, which can relate to ecocriticism in relation to form, as Kerridge outlines:

> The idea that there are clear boundaries between self and external world, humanity and nature, or conscious and unconscious beings, is challenged by an array of alternatives: co-evolution, shared ancestry, hybridity, system, process, energy flow, symbiosis.
> (Kerridge, 2014, p.367)

The idea of a boundary between the Self and the external world, or national identity and the Thames as I propose, is dissolved through Blind's juxtaposition of the flow of the River alongside her British literary influence. The alternative offered is a hybridization of nature and culture where the Thames and Cleopatra's Needle are conflated to form a representation of national identity. The construction of place through the representation of an object, such as the obelisk, and also nature, such as the Thames, was also exemplified in Wordsworth's sonnet 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802', where Wordsworth used the landmark of Westminster Bridge alongside the River. By adopting a paradigm of writing that is congruent with the works of Wordsworth, Shelley, or Rossetti, Blind's sonnet becomes positioned amid the British literary imagination.

The dissolution of boundaries including the breaking down of systems or energy flow, that Kerridge (2014) proposes, can be negotiated through Blind's representation of the sun which, ecologically, functions as a source of energy in most ecosystems including the water cycle, which has already been fundamentally allied with the Thames in relation to De Vere's poem. Blind portrays the sun as both powerful and dynamic in Egypt (exemplified in the

octave) by writing how it was "blazing far and wide" (1893, l.3), and refers to the obelisk as being "shadowless" (1893, l.5). In contrast, Blind's sestet negotiates the presence of the sun where "blocks of ice drift" (1893, l.10) indicating a lack of heat, and a "rayless orb who lurid gleam // Tinges the snow-draped ships and writhing steam" (1893, l.12–13), which emphasises a lack of sunlight. From an ecocritical perspective, this can be understood as the speaker of the poem drawing upon the ecological function of the sun to highlight its changing features in accordance with place, a point that she makes when she questions in the final line, "Is this the sun which fired thine orient day?" (1893, l.14). To some extent, Blind's poem supports Bate's claim that there exists a "long tradition of European thought which associated a temperate climate with a liberal society and excessive heat with oriental despotism" (2001, p.6). However, Blind also challenges this tradition by dissolving the boundary between East and West through the use of nature, or the sun, as a unifying factor. Although, Blind's rhetoric in the final line suggests that she may be indicating that whilst the East and West share the same source of heat and light, the British and Egyptian nations are, politically, remarkably different.

The natural image of the sun is stronger than the natural image of the Thames as it is included in both halves of the poem. However, the significance of the River can be understood through consideration of Blind's 'To the Obelisk' as a poetic ecosystem. The changing image of the sun correlates with the change of nation, from Egypt to England; a change of natural landscape, from the Desert to the Thames; a change of temperature, from hot to cold; a change of lightness, from bright to dull, and finally, a change in the sonnet, from octave to sestet. These physical, structural, poetic and ecological changes work together as a cultural ecosystem that highlights the reciprocity between nature and culture. The role of the Thames within this ecosystem is that without it, the identity of the waterway that is described in the poem would be anonymous, and unaffiliated with a nation, and thus, Blind's poem as a

representation of national identity would falter. This posits an emphasis on place in establishing 'To the Obelisk' as an ecopoem, which compounds Gifford's deliberation on the features of the poetry of place which, he argues with reference to contemporary poets Heaney and MacLean, includes the notion that "[c]ulture is located in a poetry of place" (2011, p.159). By applying this to Blind's sonnet, I argue that the cultural symbol of the obelisk that lays at the heart of the sonnet functions with Blind's composition of place, and it is this that forms the ecopoem.

2.3 Edmund Gosse's 'The Shepherd of the Thames' (1885)

Edmund Gosse's pastoral elegy blends the act of mourning with the idealisation of nature, and this projects a sense of Englishness that functions with the poem's representation of the Thames to construct features of the ecopoem. This poetic form was popular with the Romantics, and Abrams writes that it was commonly used "in English poetry throughout the nineteenth century" (2005, p.77). Gosse was specifically influenced by the works of Keats and, upon reading *Endymion* (1818) declared, "I, too, will be a poet" (cited in Thwaite, 2007, p.59). Keats's use of Greek mythology is also adopted by Gosse, who refers to Arcady in his pastoral elegy, which I argue disrupts the sole construction of an English national identity and instead offers a unification of national, natural, and mythological identities of place. Gosse's use of the pastoral elegy may link him to English culture of the nineteenth century, but also his writing of the Thames links him with the network of writers that I argue existed during the *fin de siècle* (see Appendix Three). Furthermore, Gosse regularly met and corresponded with members of the Pre-Raphaelites, describing them as belonging within an "aesthetic sphere" (cited in Thwaite, 2007, p.104), regularly attending literary salons at Ford Madox Ford's home, and frequently reading the works of other aesthetes Swinburne and Morris.

The elegy's tradition as a 'high' form of poetry, the form's affiliation with the Victorian period, and the pastoral's emphasis on nature, all contribute to the symbiosis that I suggest exists within Gosse's poem. This symbiosis exists between national identity (humanity) and the Thames (nature). The pastoral is traditionally a way of perceiving the English countryside (Gifford, 1999), and I argue that this is characteristic of national identity. This national association between culture and nature, or England and the countryside, is a common trope in English literature. Curran explains that through Britain's "deep cultural ties to the land, pastoral elements are everywhere in the history of its fiction" (1986, p.86). This means that nationhood, the pastoral, and literature, can all contribute to a sense of Englishness, and these features, I suggest, can all be located within Gosse's poem.

Unlike De Vere's and Blind's sonnets, which are set in London, Gosse's 'The Shepherd of the Thames' (1885) is set along the rural regions of the River. Whilst Gosse does not specify a particular region, another of his poems from the *Firdausi* collection entitled 'A Ballad of the Upper Thames' shares similarities with his pastoral elegy, and therefore it is possible that 'The Shepherd of the Thames' also alludes to the Upper Thames. Tricia Cusack notes that, "the upper Thames was associated with Englishness and an ethnosymbolism connected to the past" (2010, p.94). Gosse's setting of the English countryside, along with his use of the Thames, creates an English geographical identity that is harnessed by the naturalness of the River, whilst the idealisation of nature within his poem is commensurate with the pastoral tradition. The combination of poetic form, the pastoral and geographical spaces can be likened to Peter Brooker and Peter Widdowson's argument that the "equation of poetry, nation, and spiritual Empire could be seen as rooted in the geographical and linguistic heart of pastoral

England" (1986, p.118). This means that culture, nature, and landscape can be equated to a sense of Englishness, and this becomes evident in Gosse's poem.

In addition to awakening the theme of national identity, the poem also alludes to the theme of friendship and a shared experience of the landscape between important English figures. Gosse's biographer, Ann Thwaite, has described the poet's close friendship with the Victorian sculptor W. Hamo Thornycroft who, like George Dunlop Leslie, was a member of the Royal Academy of Arts. Thwaite writes that the Thames "became a major theme in their relationship" (2007, p.195). The pair would sojourn along the River until Thornycroft was married and afterwards their time together lessened. Michael Hatt has examined the poem in the context of homoeroticism and has suggested that "Gosse bemoans the loss of Thornycroft to marriage" (2003, p.31). Hatt has also made the pastoral elegy connection between Gosse's poem and Matthew Arnold's work, by arguing that "'The Shepherd of the Thames' is no less a homoerotic reworking of Matthew Arnold's 'Thyrsis'" (2003, p.31), a poem that commemorates the death of a loved one. Gosse's friendship with Thornycroft is therefore significant in understanding the context of the poem, and minor references to this friendship are made throughout the analysis where they crossover with the ecocritical reading of the poem.

Reading the poem ecocritically, it begins by contrasting the rural and the urban which, as Gifford (1999) claims, is a key feature of pastoral literature. I referred to this feature in Chapter One, where I argued that Ashby-Sterry's use of the pastoral in *A Tale of the Thames*, a work that was arguably a form of travel writing, was to idealise the Thames as a leisurely space where Victorians could escape the commercialism of the City. Thus, Ashby-Sterry's account of the Thames was read as anthropocentric. However, Gosse's pastoral, whilst being an unconfirmed dedication to his leisurely trips along the River with Thornycroft (Hatt, 2003),

reflects an English national identity that is channelled through a symbiosis of the urbanism of London and the rural locale of the Upper Thames, as shown in this section of the poem:

> Here where the soul of London is one moan,
> Here where life breaks upon a dusky shore;
> Ah! was it wisely done to leave me thus,
> For is it not mine the magic crook that makes
> The iron cloud pearly and luminous?
> (Gosse, 1885, ll.3–7)

The speaker, who has been left behind in London, views the City as a space to lament his time spent in the countryside environment of the Thames. Gosse's only reflection of the City occurs in the opening stanza, before the setting changes to the Thames countryside through the speaker's imagination. In these lines, Gosse conflates rural and urban imagery, the 'magic crook' that is associated with the shepherd and thus a symbol of the English countryside, together with the 'iron cloud' that is associated with the industrialism of London. He does this to highlight the fact that whilst the speaker is physically in London, his mind and imagination are firmly within the rural. These ideas resonate with Howkins's work on national identity, where he explains that England had "been an urban and industrial nation [since 1851] yet the ideology of England and Englishness is to a remarkable degree rural" (1986, p.62). This shows that culturally, as per Gosse's poem, Englishness was still read through the rural spaces of the country, despite the contemporaneous association of Victorian society with industrialism.

'The Shepherd of the Thames' predates Ford's *The Soul of London* (1905), however it is possible to draw a comparison with the phrasing used in Gosse's poem and the title of Ford's work. This strengthens the idea of a network of writers that were writing about the River, but also, Ford makes reference to the naturalness of the Thames, just like Gosse does in his poem. Ford describes the Thames as the "very origin of London, the first cause of its existence" (1995. p.). The emphasis that these writers place upon the naturalness of the River,

and its relationship to the City, suggests that the fact that the Thames was naturally constructed before the social construction of London lay at the heart of their writings. Gosse was also a regular attendee at the home of Ford's grandfather, Ford Madox Brown, meaning that Ford was likely to have been familiar with Gosse's writings.

The relationship between the urban and the rural is also revealed through the 'dusky shore', which is neither night or day or land or waterway, and this creates an ambiguity that mirrors the physical presence of the speaker in London and the emotional presence of him in the rural. As Gifford suggests, the pastoral form "was written for an urban audience and therefore exploited a tension between the […] people and nature" (1999, p.15). I argue that this tension is shown in Gosse's poem concerning the 'iron cloud', a likely signifier of either the plumes of smoke caused by the industrial railway, or the conflation of factory smoke and the vapours of the Thames within the City. Within one image, there is the conflation of natural and artificial imagery that is symbolic of nature and the River's ever-changing character. The shifting identity of the Thames within Gosse's poem can be likened to Elder's (2002) definition of the ecopoem, where he explains how poetry can augment an ecosystem's propensity to adapt. Therefore, the identity of the River in 'The Shepherd of the Thames' adapts to its surroundings, whether urban or rural or even as Gosse claims it to be an 'Arcady', which transforms the Upper Thames to an idealised image of the countryside. This means that an English national identity is by no means fixed in Gosse's poem, but instead, several identities of place exist. For example, the 'Arcady' reference evokes both a mythological identity and a Grecian one.

However, Gosse's creation of an Arcadia resonates with an English literary tradition that emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries where an interest in

neoclassicism, or more specifically Hellenism, became evident in literature. Gosse's Arcadia is used as a metaphor for the rural spaces of the Thames, and is established in the opening line: "Thou hast gone back to Arcady once more," (1885, l.1). He also creates a cyclical effect in the structure of the poem, which arguably mirrors the cyclical process of an ecosystem, as he writes the following in his closing lines: "Ah, tell me, tell me, was it sagely done // Thus to go back to Arcady once more?" (1885, l.64–65). In doing so, he suggests that although they may not frequent these places together anymore, the place remains an Arcadia within his memory. In addition to Gosse conforming to an English tradition of appropriating Hellenism (popular with the Victorians), he also contributes to a pastoral tradition that was popular with Shakespeare. As Gifford (1999) points out, Shakespeare created an English Arcadia through his representation of the Forest of Arden in his play *As You Like It* (1623).

Through adopting the Hellenistic tradition, Gosse commits to a sense of Englishness that ultimately rests within a Grecian identity, meaning that the Thames once again brings together these different national identities. Victorian poet and critic, Matthew Arnold, explains in his seminal text *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), that "we English, a nation of Indo-European stock, seem to belong naturally to the movement of Hellenism" (Arnold, 1932, p.141). This 'natural belonging' that Arnold describes is exemplified within Gosse's poem and points towards an English and/or Grecian identity. However, to establish the significance of Arcady as a feature of the pastoral that can be linked to the ecopoem, I examine Gosse's reference to Arcady as a symbol of the symbiotic. Working on the basis that a symbiotic relationship between nature and human is an in-between space amidst anthropocentric and ecocentric relationships then, similarly, Arcadia can also be considered an indeterminate space that is symbolic of the symbiotic within Gosse's poem. This symbolism can be explained as Arcadia is a place linked to perception, as opposed to physical experience. Even Gosse can

only imagine the real Arcady, as it is effectively linked to a real place where he has had real experiences. Thus, the space between perception or imagination and experience or physicality can be likened to Arcady, just like the space between nature and humanity. The examination of perception and experience is further developed through consideration of ecocritical theory. Gifford explains how poetry functions to enable us to understand ourselves when he asserts that "[n]otions of nature are, of course, socially constructed and determine our perception of our direct experiences, which, in turn, determine our communications about them" (2011, p.36). Through this, we can see how Gosse's experiences of the Upper Thames are perceived as an Arcadia, and he communicates this through poetry, or more precisely, through the English literary tradition of the pastoral elegy. It is the poet's experience of place, and his imagination, that work together in the context of the poem to form a multitude of shifting identities.

The Arcady of Gosse's rural Thames environment features nature as a process that moves through the landscape, which is enhanced by the inclusion of nymphs in the poem. Traditionally, pastoral elegists invoke the muses and then continue "to make frequent reference to other figures from classical mythology" (Abrams, 2005, p.77). This evocation is evident in the poem as the speaker writes about his physical experiences in the Thames setting:

> Between the river and the hemlocks rank,
> Thou'lt find the hard prints that our feet once made,
> Our racing feet, along the dewy grass,
> What time shy Oreads of the woodlands fled.
> (Gosse, 1885, ll.42–45)

By writing about humanity's footprint upon the natural setting, Gosse highlights how humanity contributes to a transformation of the landscape, which suggests an anthropocentricity that was commensurate with the ideas set out in Chapter One and particularly Kerridge's (2001) work on the tourist's footprint. However, as the Oreads are explicitly a mountain nymph, which evokes another natural formation, the human-centred reading of the poem is undermined as

Gosse uses the Oreads as a metaphor for the speaker and his companion. This technique conforms to Knickerbocker's argument that figuration is "not only a part of 'nature' but also inevitably political in the broadest sense of the term, in that it motivates and shapes the way we behave in the world" (2012, p.5). Therefore, Gosse's metaphor shapes the symbiotic in-between status of the poem as the Oreads are mythological and therefore cannot be regarded as humanity or the natural formation that they represent. The representation of the Thames through the pastoral elegy was also highlighted in Oscar Wilde's 'Pan: Double Villanelle' (1880), published just five years before Gosse's poem. Wilde laments the passing of time and refers to the Thames when constructing a rural Arcadia. The utopianism of Arcady within ancient Greece exhibited a simple and pastoral way of life that idealised nature, and Gosse adopts this idealised vision when establishing different identities.

Gosse draws upon one important feature of the pastoral, as Gifford reminds us, the "idealised descriptions of their countryside" (1999, p.1), to elevate the Thames and to evoke the English landscape. Gosse describes the "twilight comfrey-beds" (1885, l.18) that create a soft image of the landscape, and this is caused by the position of the sun beneath the horizon. The effect of the sun is also felt as the Thames is described as 'sparkling', and further, Gosse states that "[s]urely for thee no mellowing sunset sheds // Its radiance through the soft and flashing rain?" (1885, ll.21–22) to create an idealised image of the English countryside. The image of light on water creates a pastoral landscape that conforms to a romantic nature but yet, the image is also decisively ecological. The sunset indicates the natural movement of time, and the 'flashing rain' constructs an image of light and water working together to create a picture of pastoral beauty. I argue that if we consider these images as an entire process, then the pastoral elegy becomes a cultural ecosystem, whereby nature is seen to be functioning as a process within the sphere of the poem, and thus forming the ecopoem.

In addition to natural processes, the poem also reveals human processes in the form of reminiscence; this process is coupled with the imagery of the natural landscape to create a bioregion, whereby the Upper Thames is defined through the wildlife and plantation that form its environment. Gosse describes a "black-cap swinging in the osier-brakes" (Gosse, 1885, l.4); a "melting briar that breathes upon the wind" (1885, l.12) and a "shy white orchis" (1885, l.13). In an attempt to define bioregionalism, Tom Lynch, Cheryll Glotfelty and Karla Armbruster (2012) make the connection between nature and human identity and how this is underpinned by place. They argue that

> bioregionalism proposes that human identity may be constituted by our residence in a larger community of natural beings – our local bioregion – rather than, or at least supplementary to, national, state, ethnic, or other more common bases of identity.
>
> (Lynch, Glotfelty and Armbruster, 2012, p.4)

Gosse's poem constructs a bioregion by questioning what it means to experience the rural environment of the Thames, and not simply the English countryside, and through this Gosse's poem undermines a national identity in favour of a Thames bioregional one. However, given the poem's strong conformity to the pastoral tradition that functions within the English countryside, the role of nationhood in 'The Shepherd of the Thames' becomes significant. Therefore, Gosse's bioregionalism functions alongside the projection of national identity. The wildlife and plantation that exist within the elegy, together with the pastoral vision that surmounts the poem, constructs a bioregion where the projection of an English national identity and a natural identity is enabled.

The natural wildlife and plantation are perceived as equal to the 'false shepherd' and the 'light wanderer' human figures within the poem. I argue that this is because both nature and humanity exist as one within the sphere of the poem, and that they both contribute to the

image of the landscape, as Gosse makes no explicit distinction between the two. Nature is ascribed with human features including the inclination to breath or wave, whereas the human speaker reflects on the River and how "a glory streamed above our heads" (Gosse, 1885, l.20). The speaker's experience is enmeshed within the image of nature, and this is in accordance with bioregionalism. Poetic rhetoric is the only way in which humanity and nature can be differentiated, on the basis that we assume humanity has the consciousness to listen. Gosse uses the apostrophe to address the human figure within the poem, which is contrary to De Vere's 'To the Thames' where the apostrophe was used to address the River as a way of elevating it above the City. The use of apostrophe conforms to Knickerbocker's theory of 'sensuous poesis', which "operates from the assumption that humans (and their tools, including language) are both distinct and inseparable from the rest of nature" (2012, p.2). The employment of sensuous poesis within Gosse's poem not only undermines the binary between nonhuman and human nature, but also brings the landscape of the Thames and human consciousness together to form a bioregion of both human and nonhuman nature.

Gosse's Thames bioregion creates an image of a sustainable running of natural resources that relate to both humanity and nature. In addition to dwelling and reinhabitation, Lynch, Glotfelty and Armbruster emphasise the significance of sustainability in bioregional discourse, and describe it as a "term that refers to the practice of living within the ecological limits of a place in a manner that can be continued by future generations" (2012, p.5). Sustainability is evident in Gosse's bioregion, as exemplified in the following lines:

> Ah me, push on, and bathe there in the sun,
> And listen to the clacking of the mill,
> And dream that we are lithe young shepherds still,
>
> (Gosse, 1885, ll.36–38)

This image offers a sustainable way of living where water is provided both for leisure and the functioning of the mill, whilst the 'young shepherds' symbolise working in the countryside.

This scene demonstrates how humanity can utilise the landscape but also how the landscape is sustained through these practices and is not damaged in any way, thus contributing to a mutually beneficial relationship. This means that sustainability, as formed by Gosse's bioregion, exists as a way to negotiate the poem as an example of an ecopoem.

Clark (2011) establishes the link between the sustainability of the natural environment and human identity as a way of determining a bioregionalism when he proposes the following:

> Bioregionalism proposes that human societies, their modes of production and cultures should reform themselves from the bottom up, decentralising to become communities with close and sustainable relations to their local bioregions […] This would also be to let the geographical, climatic and biological nature of a region become once more a crucial agent in human identity.
>
> (Clark, 2011, p.131)

This observation suggests that if a place is determined via a bioregion, as opposed to political districts, then human identity can be defined by nature. The consequence of this would mean that those who inhabit the environment of the Thames in, say, Oxfordshire, could potentially have a shared identity with those living in and around the River in the City of London. This is despite the different experiences that each population would acquire through their environments. In the context of Gosse's poem, this shared identity is alluded to through the poem's opening in Arcady, which is Gosse's Upper Thames, and the brief movement to London in the first stanza, before the setting in Arcady is resumed. The fluid movement between the Upper Thames and London is symbolic of the continuous flow of the River, but also by moving between the two, Gosse reminds us of the natural resource that both places share, which creates a bioregionalism of the Thames. It further strengthens the notion of an unfixed national and/or natural identity that can be linked to the River.

Lynch, Glotfelty and Armbruster explain further how "human imagination and stories create bioregions and other places, organizing human perception as people 'recognize' and label the natural and cultural features that they use to define their places" (2012, p.14). It is possible to apply this theory to Gosse's use of memory to recreate the landscape. In the final stanza, Gosse refers to his "cheerful memory" (1885, l.54), which is ignited by the "visionary stream" (1885, l.58). Having already referred to the sustainability of natural resources, these images draw upon a sustainability of human nature. Gosse highlights the importance of memory and its sustainability, when he contemplates that if the speaker and the addressee experience the 'Arcady' once again, then it "might undo the magic of the dream" (1885, l.61). Through the speaker's memory, the poem combines the natural features of the landscape with cultural references, including Arcady and the Oreads. This dual natural and cultural representation of the landscape contributes to the way Gosse portrays the Upper Thames, and therefore he forms his own bioregion that has memory at its heart.

So far, this section of the thesis has considered select parts of Gosse's 'The Shepherd of the Thames' to establish the bioregion of the River. However, through consideration of the poem as a whole, along with Robert Thayer's definition of a bioregion, I suggest that the poem functions together as an ecosystem to establish humanity's symbiotic relationship with nature. Thayer explains how

> a *bioregion* is literally and etymologically a "life-place" – a unique region definable by natural (rather than political) boundaries with a geographic, climatic, hydrological, and ecological character capable of supporting unique human communities. Bioregions can be variously defined by the geography of watershed, similar plant an animal ecosystems, and related, identifiable land forms.
>
> (Thayer, 2003, p.3)

If I apply this definition to Gosse's poem, then the pastoral elegy becomes the 'life-place', an exclusive Thames region that is defined through the wildlife, plantation, ecosystems and

natural resources that are in place in an around the environment of the waterway. Gosse refers to all components of the water cycle (the sun, the wind, the river, and the rain), a cyclical ecosystem and similarly, Gosse's poem cyclically begins and ends in his constructed Arcadia. Whilst, as discussed, an Arcady is an idealised place, the bioregional is an ecological place, and both are not defined by political boundaries. However, Gosse's Thames bioregion and his romanticised Arcadia both retain their significance in establishing this poem as an ecopoem. The ecological significance of the bioregion functions with the Englishness that resonates with pastoralism through the construction of an idealised countryside.

In 'The Shepherd of the Thames', the theme of mourning is conveyed through the speaker and the addressee, who are respectively the mourner and the mourned, and this is projected onto the natural landscape. This is a trope that is commensurate with the tradition of the pastoral elegy "which represents both the poet and the one he mourns" (Abrams, 2005, p.77). Gosse uses the flora and fauna that surround the Thames to symbolise his, or the speaker's mourning. This symbolism is achieved through the demarcation of the past and the present. The speaker reflected on the past when he and his companion experienced the Upper Thames, as they "shipped thine oars and laid thy boat by mine" (Gosse, 1885, l.25). These experiences now exist in the present tense in the form of a memory, alongside the physicality of the flora including the "willow-herb now fringes the high bank" (1885, l.31). We can see that upon the landscape, the boat, which acts as a physical symbol of their experience, has been replaced by the willow, which symbolises the speaker's mourning. This temporal shift, from past to present, also redirects the speaker's focus on the human usage of the Thames to the natural environment that adorns the River. The particular reference to the willow in the present tense of Gosse's poem evokes not only mournfulness, but also desertion, and this can be associated with an English literary past. Michael Ferber (1999) has highlighted the presence

of the willow in Shakespeare's plays to denote the theme of abandonment, including Ophelia's drowning in *Hamlet* and, as Desdemona sings beside the river before she is murdered by her husband in *Othello.* Gosse's speaker in the poem also denotes a sense of desertion as he declares in the second line that the subject of the poem "hast left me here alone" (1885, l.2). The symbolism of the willow is therefore used to construct both a sense of loss and isolation that is felt by the speaker, and also a sense of natural place, which demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between nature and humanity.

The significance of the willow, the Thames, and mourning, can be examined further through consideration of Victorian art, specifically Sir John Everett Millais's Pre-Raphaelite painting *Ophelia* (1851–2, Fig.8, p.189). Both Gosse's poem and Millais's painting use the image of the willow and water (explicitly the Thames in Gosse's poem and implicitly the Thames in Millais's painting) to convey a sense of mourning. However, whilst Gosse adorns the River with willows to honour the loss of shared experiences with a companion of a natural space, Millais decorates his painting with willows to commemorate the loss of an iconic English literary figure. Millais's painting offers a visual representation of Ophelia's death and in doing so, positions Shakespeare's tale within the Victorian cultural tradition of death and mourning. It is significant that the setting of Millais's painting was the Hogsmill River in Surrey, which joins the Thames at Kingston and is, therefore, as Christopher Winn (2010) reminds us, a notable tributary of the River, which is how the Thames is implicitly evoked through the painting. Through consideration of Gosse's inclusion of willows, and Millais's use of willows to replicate a scene from Shakespeare, the willow, and the Thames become enmeshed within an English cultural tradition of mourning. Furthermore, the comparison of Gosse's poem to Millais's painting extends the remit of the network of Thames writers to artists of the period, but also links Gosse to the movement of aestheticism through the Pre-Raphaelites, just like Blind and her sonnet was traced to Rossetti's work.

Fig.8 Millais, J. E. (1851-2) *Ophelia* [oil on canvas]. London: Tate Gallery.

Gosse's reflection on the past and the mourning of the loss of experiences upon the natural landscape (the Thames) is commensurate with the elegiac form, as it is often written to represent "a vanished way of life or with the passing of youth" (Baldick, 2008, p.105). The use of memories together with the poem's absorption of the Thames landscape, symbiotically functions to enhance the notion of a national or natural identity. The speaker of the poem reflects on how "We saw the silent river at our feet" (1885, l.16). The emphasis here is on their experience of seeing and their admiration of the waterway, and it is worth pointing out that the Thames has been silenced. However, the ecological power of the River is disclosed in the following line as it begins "pushing downward through the springing stems" (1885, l.17), and this ecological force underpins the strong emotive feelings of the mourner, thus highlighting a symbiosis between the natural world and humanity. The positioning of the Thames at the speaker's feet was also discussed in relation to Ashby-Sterry's novel in Chapter One, where he notes "the Thames gurgled musically at their feet" (1896, p.29). However, I argued that this was considered to be decisively anthropocentric, which is in contrast to the symbiotic reading that is being suggested here. The difference between the two is that Ashby-Sterry's description imposes a musical culture upon the Thames, whereas although Gosse's description silences the water, the human emotion appears driven by the dominant ecology of the waterway. Silence is also a mark of respect, particularly during the process of mourning, and to support the idea that the Thames is working symbiotically with humanity, it is possible that the River is silenced at this point to allow the speaker to mourn.

The Thames is not silent throughout the whole poem, however, as before this, it is described as "the sparkling Thames" (Gosse, 1885, l.14). Now, whilst the adjective 'sparkling' denotes sight, there is the inference of faint sound. This way of describing the Thames echoes Matthew Arnold's poem 'The Scholar Gipsy' (1853), which also reflects on the loss of time through the form of the pastoral elegy, whilst including a reference to the

waterway. Arnold's poem refers to Elizabethan England and offers a simile to describe how life shifts just like the River: "And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames" (Arnold, 1912, l.202). This simile compares life to the Thames riverscape, which juxtaposes humanity and nature. The fact that Arnold's poem refers to a part of English history, together with his status as an English poet, means that Gosse continues a tradition where the Thames is viewed in a similar manner by English poets, thus giving credence to the poetic status of both Gosse and Arnold.

It has already been suggested that this poem is about Gosse mourning the end of his time spent with Thornycroft upon the Thames. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Thornycroft was married in May 1884, after the years 1879 to 1883 when the two spent a lot of time together, and Gosse described the years as the best of his life (Thwaite, 1984). Furthermore, 'The Shepherd of the Thames' was written in 1885, shortly after these dates. Although they remained friends, Gosse and Thornycroft spent less time together after the latter's marriage. In addition to the Thames, this point of mourning can also be aligned with national identity when considering the profiles of both men. Both Gosse and Thornycroft were linked to distinctively English institutions that contributed to a national identity: Gosse had a lectureship at the University of Cambridge whereas Thornycroft was a member of the Royal Academy of Arts. Dodd (1986) argues that such institutions were the pinnacle of Englishness and that culturally, they contributed to a sense of national identity. This alignment of English institutions with the Thames is also evident through another poem that was written the same year as Gosse's elegy: Domenichetti's *The Thames* (1885), which reflects the cultural history of the River and won the Newdigate Prize competition at Oxford University, another distinctly English institution. Therefore, English figures (Gosse and Thornycroft), English institutions (the University of Cambridge and Royal Academy of Arts), and an English River (the Thames), are all bound within Gosse's poem to convey a representation of English national identity.

This representation of national identity is also evoked through floral imagery and the historical landscape of the Thames, which work together symbiotically in the context of the elegy. It is common that elegies, since the Renaissance, "include an elaborate passage in which appropriate flowers are brought to deck the hearse" (Abrams, 2005, p.78). In the absence of a hearse, and given the poem's pastoralism, Gosse appropriates flowers to 'deck' the banks of the Thames, which posits the River as one long waterway of mourning. Historically, this is reminiscent of majestic traditions that occurred after the death of a royal figure. For example, Queen Elizabeth I's coffin was carried down the Thames, and Anne Boleyn was transported along the River to her death. Cusack argues that the Thames was a symbol of national identity because it was used as "a site for royal and corporate display" (2010, p.57). This suggests a more celebratory commemoration, as opposed to one of mourning that is being suggested here. However, Cusack makes the regal connection with the Thames, and this is relevant because I argue that through floral imagery, which implicitly evokes the commemoration of royal figures, Gosse projects a representation of British national identity that correlates with the River. This regal connection redirects the notion of an English identity to a British one, thus demonstrating the fluidity of these identities.

Gosse's use of the closing consolation, a convention of the elegy, is used to reveal the symbiosis between the human imagination and the natural landscape. Abrams describes the consolation as "the lyric reversal from grief and despair to joy and assurance typically occurs when the elegist comes to realize that death in this world is the entry to a higher life (2005, p.78). Whilst this consolation relates to a Christian elegy, the definition remains appropriate in relation to Gosse's poem as a change occurs in his final stanza. In the opening line of the final stanza, Gosse laments that "[w]e shall not taste our showery spring again" (1885, l.53). His recognition that it is impossible to experience the same place, in the same

way, twice, is consoled by the development of the human imagination: "We have grown wise and cold with worldly lore" (1885, l.65). The external factors, such as knowledge or understanding that would likely alter an individual's personal experience of a place is highlighted by Gosse. In defining the 'elegy', Stephen Siddall notes that in "Old English literature the word 'elegy' denoted a poem that meditated on the transience of the world" (2009, p.49). Gosse recognises this transience as he comes to terms with the fact that he will no longer share experiences upon the Thames with his friend. Siddall (2009) further suggests that the traditional elegy also proposes a new era, and this is evident through Gosse's consolation, thus indicating that the speaker is entering a new era in his experiences of the Thames, perhaps one that is more solitary. This new era could possibly be referring to the River during its period of significant change. To explain, given the plight of the Thames during the nineteenth century, which has been documented throughout this study, this new era could be referring to either a leisure-focussed river (see Chapter One) or a sanitised waterway (see Chapter Three). If this is the case, then Gosse's consolation may be aligned with an English history based on the changes that took place along the Thames, which is further supported by the fact that change is commensurate with the elegiac form (Perry, 2002).

One of the primary ways in which Gosse's poem evokes a symbiosis that contributes to our reading of it as an ecopoem is his binding of the natural landscape with human grief. In his collection on ecopoetry, Bryson writes about the interconnectedness of mourning and nature in contemporary poetry, and explains how "elegies in the work of poets like Kenyon and Oliver provide a third alternative that allows the speaker to recognize herself or himself as a member of the natural world and its life cycle" (Bryson, 2002, p.9). It is possible to see this retrospectively in Gosse's poem, where human sensation and memory is intermingled with natural imagery in these lines:

> We shall not taste our showery spring again,
> Yet cheerful memory makes it doubly dear;
> The leaves that had no scent when plucked, are sere,
> But smell like roses freshened with the rain.
> (Gosse, 1885, ll.53–56)

Here, Gosse describes how the leaves have dried up, much like his past shared experience on the Thames. However, he compensates for this by claiming that the leaves 'smell like roses' which, given the positive connotations attached to these flowers, is aligned with his 'cheerful memory'. The implication of the withered leaves, as symbolic of the speaker's mourning, is that Gosse evokes an ecology of the natural environment because the process involved when the leaves dry up is an ecological one. In addition, the fact that the rose is a historical symbol of England, embeds an English identity within the ecological processes that are occurring within the poem.

The projection of grief onto nature contributes to the symbiosis that is characteristic of the ecopoem. In a study of contemporary poetry, Gifford argues that nature can be used to "decentre" a poet's "own natural inner tensions" (2011, p.164). Similarly, the speaker shifts his grief of the passing of time onto nature, and in doing so, the Thames becomes an intermediary between his past experiences and his present mourning. Siddall also suggests that "if nature is personified and shares in the poet's grief, it seems more genuine and permanent than the busy world, which keeps moving on and has less time and heart to spend on commemoration" (2009, p.49). As such, it could be that as part of the consolation, Gosse shifts the grief onto nature to highlight the resilience of nature, but also to show the permanence of nature alongside the permanence of his memories. This permanence is then juxtaposed with the mutability of national identities that flow through the poem alongside the waters of the River.

2.4 John Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment' (1909)

The ode is another form of 'high' poetry that commemorates its subjects and reflects on momentous or historic themes. A contemporary definition of the ode recognises it as a "long lyric poem that is serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure" (Abrams, 2005, p.206). Similarly, a Victorian definition of the ode from Edmund Gosse's *English Odes* suggests that an ode must belong to "an enthusiastic and elevated order of writing" (1881, no page number). These definitions make the form relevant to discuss important themes such as national identity, imperialism and ecology. Moreover, an ode that appears to commemorate the Thames, or even its embankment, signals the waterway as a prestigious, and elevated theme within poetry which, I argue, was evident within John Davidson's *fin de siècle* poem 'The Thames Embankment'. The ode as a high order of writing also makes it a suitable form to scrutinise the complexity of the ecopoem, given that the latter contains varying attributes. Abrams's and Gosse's definitions of the ode are from different periods but share similar ideas, whereas Schuster (1940) points out that defining the ode can be problematic, in particular given the form's evolution throughout a number of cultural movements. From this, I believe that it is possible to allow a degree of flexibility when establishing particular poems as odes, and that this can be achieved through exploration of the features of the ode.

Firstly, it is common that most odes derive from two different models: the Pindaric or the Horation, which means that the form does not originate from one source and therefore cannot be definitively categorised. Secondly, Carol Maddison explains that "the earliest odes, those of Pindar, are both close to the epic in tone and intimately connected with religion" (1960, p.3). This highlights the fact that the ode is often understood in relation to other poetic forms, thus creating an ambiguity when attempting to define the form of the ode.

Finally, it is understood that the most common ode, the Pindaric, was modelled on a separate literary genre: the Greek drama, which means that categorising the ode is problematic as it was born from another art form. I suggest that these features highlight the mutability of the ode form, which means that it is not entirely conclusive, or definitive. Through consideration of the ode as an unfixed form, it can be likened to the continuous fluidity of the Thames but also, in the context of identity, the form is appropriate to the continual shifting movement of national identities. Davidson's poem has not been officially described as an ode, however given the form's adaptability and how Davidson's poem shares many characteristics of the ode, it is examined in accordance with this form. Furthermore, Davidson's poem conforms to Abrams's contemporary definition and Gosse's Victorian one, in that the poem highlights both Davidson's knowledge of science and ecology and his support of British imperialism, which underpins and 'elevates' his poem.

The setting of Davidson's poem redirects the focus of this chapter back to the Thames within the space of the City of London, in contrast to the Upper Thames of Gosse's elegy. The poem oscillates between the subjects of the natural and the industrial, and in doing so, both an English and British national identity is formed. This is bestowed by the poet's knowledge of the landscape, and his perception of industrialisation. To establish 'The Thames Embankment' as an ecopoem, it was important for me to consider the role of nature within the poem. In relation to the inclusion of any form of nature within a poem, Gifford argues that they "will implicitly or explicitly express a notion of nature that relates to culturally developed assumptions about metaphysics, aesthetics, politics and status, that is, in many cases, ideologies" (2011, p.38). In 'The Thames Embankment', Davidson highlights the role of the natural Thames amongst London's industrial processes, and these processes subsequently contributed to Britain's power and wealth during the Victorian period. Therefore, as per

Gifford's argument, the poem implicitly evokes the Thames's political role in the power of the British nation, and this is integrated with the English identity that is formed through the River's geographical occupancy in the City of London within the poem.

However, to apply this reading, Gifford elaborates that we also need "to be aware of the social group from which a writer comes, together with the place and time in which the text is written" (2011, p.38). The fact that Davidson was a Scottish poet writing in London brings together Scottish and English identities through the natural landscape of the Thames. Davidson's biographer, John Sloan (1995), claims that the poet renounced Christianity, adopted Darwinian ideas and was heavily influenced by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Davidson was also interested, and often promoted, the ideas of the Scottish historian and novelist John Cramb, and particularly Cramb's collection of lectures: *Reflections on Origins and Destiny of Imperial Britain* (1900). After the publication of this volume, which celebrated British imperialism, Davidson's promotion of Cramb's book resulted in him sending a copy to Edmund Gosse, where he referred to it as "the ablest, freshest, most imaginative and therefore most intelligent statement of British Imperialism" (Davidson, cited in Sloan, 1995, p.191). By having some awareness of Davidson's 'social group', as Gifford described, we can see that his poem, through representations of industrialism, may have been implicitly celebrating British imperialism. The increase in industrialism created a need for organic materials that were obtained from other countries through imperialism, and therefore Davidson demonstrates how the heart of British imperialism lay within industrial London. To support this view, in his work *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, Schneer argues that a subtext of imperialism existed in all avenues of "turn-of-the-century London" (2001, p.162), and through industrialism, an imperialist subtext can be read in Davidson's poem.

Through consideration of Davidson's social groups, together with his association with Gosse, I demonstrate how Davidson belonged to the network of writers that wrote about the Thames (see Appendix Three). Sloan (1995) writes that many of Davidson's London literary connections were made through his Scottish associations; through these, he met figures including Blind, Robert Buchanan (discussed shortly) and William Sharp, who wrote the poem 'On a Thames Backwater' (1884). He also read the works of Richard Jefferies, though there is no definitive evidence of him reading Jefferies's work on the Thames. His link to the aesthetes is evident through his contribution to the first issue of *The Yellow Book* with his poem 'London', which Sloan argues "echoes the feeling of Wordsworth's sonnet 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge'" (1995, p.102). The dinner launch of *The Yellow Book* in April 1894 was attended by Davidson, along with Elizabeth Pennell, and other contributors of the publication included Gosse and Henry James (Jones, 2015). Grant Allen praised Davidson's *Ballads and Songs* (1894) in *The Westminster Review*, and afterwards the two became friends (Sloan, 1995). Davidson also became friends with G. K. Chesterton, who is referred to in Chapter Three because of his treatment of the sun and the Thames that is suggestively apocalyptic and is comparable to Barr's work. Similarly, Davidson also experimented with the "apocalyptic marriage of the earth and sun" (Sloan, 1995, p.201) in *The Testament of a Man Forbid* (1901), strengthening Davidson's association with the authors of Chapter Three.

Traditionally, odes were encomiastic in style, "that is, they were written to praise and glorify someone" (Abrams, 2005, p.206), and this mode of commemoration is exemplified within Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment', as it elevates the unification of industrialism and nature within the space of the City and, more specifically, the Thames

environment. Davidson's industrial lexicon highlights the commercialism beside the natural landscape of the River, particularly in the following lines:

> The panelled firmament; but vapour held
> The morning captive in the smoky east.
> At lowest ebb the tide on either bank
> Laid bare the fat mud of the Thames, all pinched.
> (Davidson, 1909, ll.7–10)

The smoky east refers to the direction in which the sun rises and this has been tarnished by the industrialism of the City. Therefore, through the poetic blending of the sun and industrialism, a convergence between nature and work is conveyed. Despite the 'smokiness' contained here, this image strongly appropriates the natural within the Cityscape, forming a natural image of London. The idea that the 'morning' is held 'captive' by the smoky east, a derivative of nature and industry combined, demonstrates an interconnectedness that is concomitant with ecocritical thinking. Bryson suggests that one feature of the ecopoem is "the awareness of the world as a community" (2002, p.6), and Davidson has presented nature and industry as part of an interconnected community that is set on the banks of the Thames.

This community, to which Bryson refers, is specifically evident within Davidson's poem when considering the 'firmament', which is a reference to the natural atmosphere; the vapour or the tide from the River, and also, the 'mud'. All of these features relate to the ecology of the Thames, both directly through the body of water itself, and indirectly through the River's role in the water cycle. Through highlighting these features Davidson establishes how nature, or specifically the Thames, works as a process. In continuation, Davidson then showcases how industrialism operates as a process when he refers to "the viaduct trailing plumes of steam" (1909, l.18), or when he describes how the "trains clanked in and out" (1909, l.19). The movement of industry is pitted against the natural firmament of the

Thames and through this, an image of London where nature is seen as equally important to artificial features (in the workings of an industrial City) is formed. The notion of a community is also strengthened as Davidson inserts a flag within his poem, when he refers to "flags of smoke" (1909, l.15). A flag is perceived as being symbolic of place, and particularly national identity, so in having it covered in smoke from processes of industrialism, Davidson may have been alluding to the fact that Britishness was frequently bound up with industrialism. Although, as the flag is not specified, it could be alluding to multiple identities including British, English, Scottish, or the natural identity of the River and its environment.

Davidson's references to place also highlight the symbiotic workings between the natural and the industrial. His frequent references to nature, including the Thames, are juxtaposed with London place-names, including 'Chelsea Bridge'; 'Vauxhall Bridge' or 'Baltic wharf' – all of which are places within the Port of London. Schneer notes how the Port of London "sought to redefine the imperial metropolis" (2001, p.93) as it was a place that contained the "wealth of empire" (2001, p.93). Therefore, by setting his poem in and around the Port of London, coupled with the encomiastic tradition of the ode, Davidson's poem could be understood as a glorification or celebration of the industrial processes that contributed to imperialism. Despite this, it is worth noting that Davidson struggled financially and was often a critic of urban poverty (Sloan, 1995). This poverty was often caused by increased industrialism that led to a wealthier and more powerful middle class. It is therefore possible that the suggestion of wealth within the poem was indicative of Davidson's own lack of wealth, or his views towards the wealth in society. However, my suggestion that the Port of London is integral to imperialism within the poem is strengthened through Davidson's direct references to the Thames and the embankments, which had both become associated with the political identity of England and Britain. Furthermore, the references to the docks, a specific locale of

trade and commerce and therefore a feature of Victorian progress, are implicit commemorations of the wealth of Britain during this time. It was a widespread belief that "because of industry, trade, and liberty, Britain and its Empire were in the vanguard of world progress" (Brantlinger, 2009, p.3). The construction of London docks, in particular Victoria Dock in 1855, the first dock to be connected to the railway, led to the Port of London being one of the wealthiest in the world (Ackroyd, 2007). This connects the River with a British identity but, as this poem is being read retrospectively, this identity has now shifted on account of the end of the British Empire.

The poem also alludes to representations of national identity by drawing on British and English history in the context of the construction of the embankments, and specifically the British Empire. The completion of the embankments improved both the sanitation and the aesthetic beauty of London, but also, the Thames was where many departed to embark upon quests of imperialism and colonialism. The poem conjures the figure of the imperialist through the description of different ships and boats that are floating along the waterway:

> Barges at anchor, barges stranded, hulks […]
> Appeared ethereal, and about to glide
> On high adventure chartered, swift away
> For regions undiscovered.
> (Davidson, 1909, l.40 and 43–45)

These lines not only highlight the industrialism along the Thames embankments, but also the reference to the 'hulks' augments another aspect of historical London, and on a wider scale, Britain. The 'hulks', to which Davidson refers, were prison ships that were used to transfer criminals to work in the colonies. Whilst this may be seen as a degenerative representation of the River because of the hulks' association with criminality, it is possible to view Davidson's reference as a way in which Britain were cleansing the City and therefore creating a law-

abiding, morally-charged image of London, thus contributing to a stronger and more valued sense of British national identity. However, these 'hulks' also connect London, and Britain, to the rest of the world and the thousands who were being transported creates a displacement that was seen through the obelisk in Blind's sonnet. I argue that this displacement dismantles the dominant British identity that pervades Davidson's poem, as it becomes unified with nations abroad, indicating once again how the Thames unites different national identities, or even suggests a natural identity.

Later in the poem, the barges are being prepared for an adventure to determine 'regions undiscovered', which recognises the British as colonisers, an image that is consistent with ideologies of the Empire and imperialism. Whilst Nietzsche or Nietzschean theory is not a fundamental framework for this chapter, I do consider Davidson's use of Nietzschean discourse in his philosophical work *The Testament of John Davidson* (1908). This discourse highlights Davidson's views on the relationship between humanity and nature, in a way that evokes national identity, and these attitudes are further shown in his poem. In a description of the Englishman within his philosophical work, Davidson claimed that "[t]he Englishman is the Overman and the history of England is the history of his evolution" (Davidson, 1908, p.18). With reference to what he terms the 'Imperial man', a figure that was emerging towards the end of the nineteenth century, Patrick Bridgewater (1978) claims that Davidson's words were outlandish but yet, he acknowledges, they could be seen as carrying some weight during the *fin de siècle*.

Davidson's link between Englishness and evolution suggests a reciprocal relationship between the two ideas. Greg Garrard explains that "Nietzsche, like deep ecologists, seeks a biocentric perspective, but unlike them finds only nihilism in the process"

(Garrard, 2004, p.90). This can be applied to Davidson because despite his use of Nietzschean discourse, he is still able to find meaning within his poem by representing English and British national identities, which is achieved by hinting at London's history and recognising the value of nature in this construction of meaning. This raises the question as to whether Davidson is a deep ecologist, however I would contest this point as his affinity with imperialism and industrialism forms a balance that appreciates both man and nature. Through Nietzsche's idea of the 'overman', Davidson recognises the significance of English history and therefore he elevates the Englishman's identity to the metaphorical platform of the Thames embankments, which I suggest were symbols of progress or change in the Victorian era.

Through reading Davidson's poem from an ecocritical and retrospective point of view, I suggest that a biodiverse environment is formed that surrounds the Thames; this biodiversity consists of a number of different birds that are associated with English literature of the past, and thus it is possible to associate Davidson's poem with an English cultural past. This could link to what Dodd terms "[t]he dominant English cultural ideal" (1986, p.7), whereby canonical literature is deemed to be decisively 'English'. However, Davidson's own Scottish descent together with an ecocritical analysis of the birds (who are free to roam different nations) refutes this idea. The poem describes, "The mounting larks, compact of joyful fire, // Render the coloured sunlight into song" (Davidson, 1909, l.74–5) and the, "Adventurous and impassioned nightingales // Transmute the stormy equinox" (1909, l.76–7). These birds appear midway through the fourth stanza, and signal a change in mood, and a contrast from the opening of the stanza that contained gulls, or 'riparian scavengers', and the 'crashing noise' of the 'eagle's bark'. Prior to this change, the lark and the nightingale are introduced as "birds of homely feather and tuneful throat" (Davidson, 1909, l.71). The reference to 'homely' here could be an indicator of nationhood. However, Ritchie Robertson argues that the song-birds

in Davidson's poem "transform familiar sights and sounds into auditory beauty" (1983, p.107). Therefore, the homeliness, along with the song-birds' alignment with familiarity, construct a sense of national identity, which can be considered English, given the setting of the poem upon the embankments of the Thames.

The song-birds also echo two significant poems that formed part of the poetic imagination within British Romanticism: Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819) and Shelley's 'To a Skylark' (1820), thus linking Davidson's poem with a British cultural past. Although it is worth pointing out that both poets died in exile and are now buried in Italy, which destabilises the link to a strictly British cultural past. However, this connection of the Thames, the birds, and the Romantics, was directly referred to in Domenichetti's *The Thames*, a lyrical poem that reflects on writers who have inhabited the banks of the River in the past including Keats and Shelley. In this poem, the speaker addresses the Thames and asks "Have I known all thy loveliness, thy birds" (Domenichetti, 1885, l.5) before referring specifically to the 'lark', and then describing the waterway as a "River of England" (1885, l.34), thus establishing a more poignant connection between the Thames, the birds, the Romantics, and also nationhood. The inclusion of the lark and the nightingale in Davidson's more elevated poem contributes to the understanding of it being interpreted as an ecopoem. Ferber (2007) has traced the appearance of the lark in several literary works, and consequently the authors to these works form part of the English literary canon and include Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, Browning, and Tennyson. Ferber then makes reference to a wider spectrum of writers including Homer and Ovid when he examines the literariness of the nightingale. However, the same English writers remain prominent in their inclusion of the nightingale, and other examples are given including Chaucer, Keats, and Christina Rossetti. These connections situate 'The Thames Embankment' not only amid the English tradition of canonical writers, but also

establishes the Thames as an agent that connects the literary authors with different national identities. Furthermore, as the birds become linked with the Thames throughout Davidson's poem, a symbiosis is created between biodiversity and culture, or more specifically, the lark or nightingale and English poetry, where the Thames is used as a platform for this reciprocal relationship.

The reading of Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment' as an ecopoem is strengthened further as the aforementioned birds become intermingled with natural imagery and natural processes. Davidson connects the lark with sunlight as he writes that "The mounting larks, compact of joyful fire // Render the coloured sunlight into song" (1909, ll.74–75), before aligning the nightingale with the equinox as he describes how the "Adventurous and impassioned nightingales // Transmute the stormy equinox they breast" (1909, ll.74–75). The power of the lark to transform nature into culture, or sunlight into song, and also the suggested strength of the nightingale to alter the form of the equinox, attributes the birds with an authority within the poem. This authority occurs at the same time as they resonate with the English literary past, thus creating a cultural ecosystem that is demonstrative of the ecopoem. Ferber (2007) argues that the two birds are often seen as a pair within literature and cites Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) one of the most famous examples. Although this provides an example of literature by an English dramatist, the fact that the play is set in Verona destabilises the fixed notion of an English identity through the pairing of the birds within Davidson's poem. Certainly, the two birds strengthen the poem's link to an English literary imagination, but the propensity for birds to flee creates a natural identity whereby wildlife unites different nations, and in Davidson's poem it is the Thames embankments that are being connected to other nations.

In addition to the pairing of the birds, several dialecticisms are also conveyed in Davidson's poem that reinforces the ambiguity of defining the ode form. These aspects include art and poetry; Victorianism and modernism; the ode and the lyric; the natural environment and industrialisation, and the Thames and the City. These features are examined in accordance with the shifting movement of poetic form, the ecology of the waterway, and the different facets of identity, which function together in order to establish Davidson's work as an ecopoem. The poem operates as a system of binaries that are continually undermined. This is commensurate with Kerridge's ecocritical argument that "[e]cological perception dissolves unifying notions of selfhood and strong dualistic separations between culture and nature, subject and object or human and non-human" (2013, p.354), and this can result in a symbiosis.

The dissolution to which Kerridge refers, is exemplified in Davidson's poem through the binary opposition of natural light and darkness. In the opening stanza, the speaker describes the morning sky by referring to "Westward slabs of light // From vapour disentangled" (1909, ll.5–6). This description alludes to the rising of the sun, and how it emerges through the vapours, which could be an indicator of industrialism or the Thames. However, by describing the natural light as a 'slab', a word used for a large stone, Davidson dissolves the duality of the natural and the artificial. It then becomes evident how this natural light functions with the artificial objects upon the Thames embankment, including "Cranes, Derricks and chimney-stalks" (1909, l.11–12), to form "inverted shadows" (1909, l.13). This light and darkness binary opposition is used within the poem to establish the setting at dawn, but it can also been seen as a way of dismantling the night and day binary opposition. Therefore, a symbiosis is formed within the poem where the artificial is symbolic of humanity and the light and/or darkness is symbolic of nature, which contributes to the ecological tenet of the ecopoem.

The description of the Thames at dawn has also been the subject of poetry for many other writers. More famously, Wordsworth's 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge' (1802), which has already been referred to as a poem that includes symbolic images of English national identity. Another, less famous, example is Scottish poet Robert Buchanan's late Victorian poem 'A Morning Invocation (On London Bridge)' (1898). Buchanan constructs a pastoralism around the Thames that contrasts with Davidson's poem, despite Buchanan's clear setting in the City of London, and not the English countryside. The setting is also used to represent a national identity, however Buchanan imposes a Scottish identity through his use of imagery, which includes a reference to "purple crags" (Buchanan, 1898, l.2). This demonstrates how the Thames site, in its changing state at daybreak, is a shifting space in relation to identity, which is in accordance with the ecological movement of the River. Furthermore, Davidson's friendship with Buchanan strengthens the network of Thames writers that I argue was apparent during the *fin de siècle* (see Appendix Three).

Through consideration of Kerridge's (2013) ecocritical argument that boundaries between humanity and the natural world could be challenged, it is possible to read a symbiosis within Davidson's poem. The poem describes a "Woven of rainbows a dewdrop can dissolve // And packed with power a simple lens can wield // The perfect, only source of beauty" (Davidson, 1909, ll.30–32). Here, Davidson describes how the convex shape of the water droplet forms a lens that magnifies, and conventionally, we would associate a lens with manmade objects, such as a camera lens. However, Davidson adopts this artificial lexis to show how nature and humanity function together to project 'perfect beauty'. The reference to the lens is also characteristic of modernist literature, which endorsed technological progress in its works, and this mirrors Sloan's titling of Davidson's biography, *John Davidson, First of the*

Moderns: A Literary Biography. This is interesting, as the dissolution between the artificial and the natural becomes a dissolution between Victorianism and modernism.

The dissolving of natural and artificial forms is also made apparent in another of Davidson's poems, *London*, which strengthens the idea that his knowledge of ecology underpinned his poetic imagination. Sloan (1866) writes that Davidson was familiar with the works of Ernst Haeckel, a German biologist who coined the word 'ecology' in 1866. In reference to the City, he describes how it "swung in space of heaven's grace // Dissolving, dimly reappearing, // Afloat upon ethereal tides" (1894, ll.9–11, cited in Ford, 2012, p.453). This image can be compared to De Vere's sonnet, and the idea that the City is reflected in the waters of the Thames, a process that is notably ecological, which once again serves to remind the reader of not only the symbiosis of nature and humanity, but also the ecological knowledge that Davidson possesses. Davidson's knowledge of science gave him a strong awareness of ecology that underpinned many of his works, which is commensurate with contemporary ecocritic Timothy Morton's work, *The Ecological Thought* (2010). Through this ecological knowledge, the mood of 'The Thames Embankment' is elevated, which is characteristic of the ode form. Robertson describes Davidson's own ecological awareness and how this becomes apparent through his poem:

> Davidson becomes increasingly interested in the elemental forces underlying nature, just as his dramatic monologues are more concerned with the essential will than with the empirical personality. His nature-descriptions therefore combine sensuous immediacy with a more distanced, scientific, almost abstract apprehension of natural forces at work transforming the appearance of the world.
>
> (Robertson, 1983, p.107)

The notion that Davidson's poem is based on scientific knowledge that he possessed suggests that his poem goes beyond a cultural understanding of the symbiotic relationship between

nature and humanity. Examples include direct and indirect references to the water cycle, the equinox, the rising of the sun, or the earth moving on its axis. These are all used with an ecological sensibility, and it is through them that Davidson conveys the magnitude of both industrialism and imperialism that constitutes "the might of England" (1909, l.58), to which he refers within his poem, which constructs a powerful national identity that is in accordance with the status of the Empire.

Davidson invites a symbiotic reading through the water cycle when he describes the, "Huddled wharfs // A while, and then once more a reach of Thames // Visibly flowing where the sun and wind // Together caught the current" (1909, ll.47–49) and "The potent sunbeams, that had fished the whole // Enormous mass of moisture from the sea" (1909, ll.97–98). Here, Davidson highlights the interconnectedness of the 'wharfs' that were used for industry and which empowered the nation, and the water cycle with the moisture rising to the sky from the river, which augments the mutual dependency of nature and humanity. In other words, the wealth and power of Britain relied on the boats for commercial purposes, whereas the boats relied on the natural cycles in order to navigate effectively. Davidson's poetic description is consistent with Washington's ecological description of the water cycle:

> Water is evaporated from the sea […] but also from the land via the transpiration from the leaves of trees and evaporation directly from the soil. This water vapor condenses and falls as 'precipitation' (a term for rain or snow). This precipitation on land either runs off, or if it is snow, some or all melts during summer to feed rivers. The rivers flow to the sea, and the cycle continues.
>
> (Washington, 2013, p.15/16)

Albeit not word for word, Washington's scientific discourse can be compared to the poetic language used by Davidson in that it refers, ecologically, to the evaporation of the moisture. Morton argues that "[t]he ecological thought must interrogate both the attitude of science [and]

its detached authoritarian coldness" (2010, p.12). I suggest that Davidson does this to some extent, by using his scientific knowledge and transforming it into poetic language that has the potential to be understood by a wider audience.

Davidson therefore creates a stronger sense of both natural and manmade place through his poetic representation of the water system that functions alongside the commerciality of the Thames. This enables the reader to gain an understanding of the workings of Britain, in the context of commercialism and industry, but also in the context of nature, thus producing a cultural ecosystem that is characteristic of the ecopoem. In addition, this reading of Davidson's poem echoes both British Romanticism and the field of British ecocriticism. In a study of Keats's irregular ode, 'To Autumn' (1820), Jonathan Bate likens the poem to an ecosystem, and describes it as "a poem of both time and the weather" (2001, p.260). Arguably, if we consider Davidson's poem to be an ode then his work is adopting the Romantic trope of conflating nature, ode, and ecosystem, in a way that projects an ecopoem. This also aligns Davidson's *fin de siècle* poem with Keats's work, which places it in the tradition of English and British literature thus linking it to nationhood.

The opening and closing of Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment' functions as a cyclical ecosystem, just like the ones he symbolically represents throughout his poem. The references to the rising of the sun at the beginning is an ecological allusion to the movement of the earth. In the sense that, this is how humanity can see the earth moving. For the closing lines, Davidson pans out from how humanity see the sun from the setting of the Thames embankment, to metaphorically referring to the earth's axis, when he writes "And turned it to a thousand fantasies // Upon the ancient potter's wheel, the earth" (1909, ll.100–1). Davidson's metaphor of the earth's axis as a 'potter's wheel' evokes a creativity that is generated by the

hand of man. This rejects a divine creation of the earth, which supports Davidson's views as critics have examined the influence of Darwinism within his work (Schaffner, 2003). The various ecosystems and the fluidity of the Thames culminate in the ultimate movement of the earth in the final two lines of the poem. Given Davidson's support of Empire, the fact that he uses the Thames embankment as a platform to showcase these natural forces of the earth, suggests that they act as a metaphor for the power of Britain during the *fin de siècle*.

This chapter has demonstrated how 'high' forms of poetry, including the sonnet, the elegy, and the ode, can contribute to the workings of the shifting definition of the ecopoem through representations of national identity. It has also analysed the theme of imperialism in relation to British and/or national identity due to the status of Empire at this time. Through national identity, this chapter has demonstrated how De Vere's sonnet (through form and content) functions as a cultural ecosystem, and through the interconnectedness of human and non-human nature, De Vere's poem is symbiotic. It has compared cultural representations of England with Egypt in relation to climate, and has highlighted the significance of place in Blind's poem. An analysis of Gosse's elegy has established a Thames bioregion within his poem, and has highlighted the ecological presence in the act of mourning. Finally, Davidson's poem, which has been described here as an ode, augments the industrialism of London (that was symbolic of British identity) and the naturalness contained within the City; through its representation of birds, his poem also highlights the biodiversity of the Thames embankment; additionally, Davidson's ecological awareness was shown to be pivotal in establishing the ecological undercurrent that was evident through the poem.

The four poems also demonstrated a lack of fixedness concerning representations of national identity, and it was also possible to read a natural identity within the poems whereby different nations were unified through natural elements, such as the Thames. The selected poems reveal how a symbiosis is at the heart of an ecopoem, as opposed to an ecocentricity, as Bryson (2002) has suggested. Just as the term suggests, an ecopoem recognises the significance of both ecology and poetry, or more poignantly, nature and culture. Ecocentricity is, however, pertinent to representations of the River during the *fin de siècle*. Following the progress that was achieved during the Victorian period, the next chapter examines literary representations of the Thames in the context of sanitation. Through this, it is possible to extract an ecocentric reading of the River within literature, which differs from the anthropocentric reading of Chapter One and the symbiotic reading of this chapter. Chapter Three also returns to literary prose of the *fin de siècle*, with the focus being on three short stories written between the 1890s and 1910.

3. Chapter Three – "The Modern Thames": Sanitation and Ecocentrism

"The Thames, our longest fresh-water river, and its containing valley form the largest natural feature in this country"

– C. J. Cornish, *The Naturalist on the Thames*, 1902

Widespread usage of the Thames, both recreational and commercial, along with an increased population in the City during the Industrial Revolution, which meant more people were reliant on the River, resulted in higher levels of pollution. This is problematic and somewhat contradictory to my aim of examining the Thames amid a sphere of Victorian progress. However, I focus on the fact that interventions such as the introduction of the 1885 Thames Preservation Act; the implementation of the sewerage works and the construction of the embankments functioned as a way to reposition the River in a positive light, by placing an emphasis on sanitation.

Clean and sanitised natural environments became integral to Victorian health following a century of poor hygiene that had led to sickness and disease. Public health figures advocated the importance of clean air for good health, including Florence Nightingale who "insisted on open balconies and airy wards, to counteract any hospital-generated miasma" (Picard, 2015, no page number). The impact of poorly sanitised natural environments upon health led to an awareness, within Victorian society, of nature's hazardous effect on humanity. In its most crude sense, the clear message in relation to sanitation, according to Michelle Allen, was "that cleanliness equals health, while dirt and disease equal death" (2008, p.2). An awareness of the destructive potential of nature (that results in an endorsement of sanitation) highlights an ecological consciousness prevalent within Victorian society, and I suggest that this consciousness characterises a nature-hegemony that resonates with an ecocentric relationship between nature and humanity.

As explained in the Introduction, this chapter examines sanitation in two ways. Firstly, I suggest an environmental sanitation that is symbolic of nineteenth-century sanitary reforms, but through the demonstrative power of nature reveals an ecocentricism. This mode of sanitation is primarily examined through the natural sanitation of fog vapours and a volcanic fissure in Robert Barr's 'The Doom of London' (1892) and Grant Allen's 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe' (1897), respectively. The second mode of sanitation refers directly to the physical cleansing of the Thames and this is shown in Fred M. White's 'The River of Death' (1904), due to the story's focus on the possible spread of bubonic plague within its waters. From an ecocritical perspective, each story explicitly or implicitly portrays the Thames as an agent in the projection of an ecological consciousness and I argue that this can be linked to sanitation.

Barr's story focusses on an overpowering fog that consumes the city of London and its inhabitants, and the River is identified through subtle references to ecological processes such as the process of evaporation where the moisture from the Thames rises. The River is therefore seen as an ingredient of the fog that pervades London whilst being seen as an ecological link between the coexistence of air and water in the atmosphere. Allen's story is pertinent due to the setting within the Thames Valley, the geographical movement of his narrative is also significant as it is paralleled with the ecological movement of the River that shifts towards London. The narrative progresses in accordance with the volcanic eruption, and the moving lava which, in place of the waterway, is flowing through the Thames Valley towards the City. The authority of nature is revealed within White's tale through the River's potential to induce fear and social chaos amongst humanity, and also by drawing upon other natural features including the sun. The Thames and the sun in White's story function in the

context of sanitation to highlight an ecocentricism, despite the fact that cleansing the River meant a significant benefit to human health.

The ecocritical framework that is primarily applied to each story is Terry Gifford's (1999) theory of the post-pastoral, which showcases the ecocentricity between nature and humanity that is suggested throughout this chapter. Gifford draws upon Lawrence Buell's work on the pastoral, particularly where Buell points out the shift in representations of nature to an ecocentricism, where nature has become "a presence for its own sake" (Buell, 1995, cited in Gifford, 1999, p.148). This presence, I demonstrate, is situated within each of the three short stories and this is done by associating them with Gifford's post-pastoral. Gifford proposes six qualities to the construction of the post-pastoral, with variable differences between poetry and prose writing, and the premise that not all qualities may appear in one text. These qualities highlight the following: a sense of awe as a reaction to the natural world; the destructiveness of nature; the link between humanity's inner nature and the external natural world; the perception of "culture as nature" (Gifford, 1999, p.162); a consciousness that emphasises a biocentric perspective that enables humanity to coordinate its relationships with the ecological environment, and finally, that the mistreatment, misrepresentation, or marginalisation of nature can be aligned with the mistreatment, misrepresentation, or marginalisation of women and minorities. Some of these qualities may appear somewhat pejorative (notably the destructiveness of nature), and therefore a contradiction to the aims of this thesis that examines spheres of progress. However, it is actually through these features of the post-pastoral that an ecological consciousness is enabled, and it is this consciousness that makes it possible to view sanitation as an aspect of progress within the three short stories.

An ecocentricism is therefore interpreted by reading each short story through the lens of Gifford's post-pastoral. In Chapter Two it was noted that a dissolution of binary oppositions, such as nature and culture, resulted in a symbiosis between the two. Gifford also refers to binary oppositions when he clarifies his position on the post-pastoral, by explaining that it "is really best used to describe works that successfully suggest a collapse of the human/nature divide whilst being aware of the problematics involved" (2014, p.26). The collapse that Gifford describes results in an ecocentricism where humanity are reminded of the importance and the power of the natural world and its ecologies, contrasting with the dissolution of binaries that Kerridge (2013) associated with a symbiosis. Therefore, I argue that the post-pastoral landscape in each of the three short stories fortifies the reader's ecological consciousness by recognising the important role of nature in the sustenance of humanity.

Gifford (1999) argues that the post-pastoral could be found in many different literary forms. As such, and because all three of the selected works are in the form of the short story, minor references are made to the short story form throughout this chapter, in order to highlight its significance in constructing a public perception of ecology through the post-pastoral. The short story, as Paul March-Russell puts it, could be described as "a dissident form of communication" (2009, p.ix). With this in mind, it could be considered to be a less official, and a more immediate way of educating the mass population on issues concerning the natural environment. However, the 1890s saw the rise of the short story that went into the twentieth century (March-Russell, 2009), which meant that Barr's, Allen's and White's stories were published during a period of commercial viability for the literary form, thus leading to the potential for greater readership. Therefore, similar to how Chapter One explored the genre of travel writing and its relation to capital, it is also possible to view the short story in this consumerist context.

Adrian Hunter (2007) writes about the aesthetic categories that are associated with the short story form, and from his observations it is possible to observe how the short story contributes to the stirrings of an ecological consciousness within Barr's, Allen's and White's stories. He argues that

> writing 'short' might be less a matter of shrinking the novel into a tiny space than of making more artful and strategic economies, cutting away the kind of material we normally depend upon for narrative continuity and coherence, for example, and working with these tactical omissions to suggest and imply meaning, rather than stating it directly.
>
> (Hunter, 2007, p.2)

Like Hunter's description of the short story, all three stories are economical in their portrayal of characters and in their development of plot. It becomes clear that the natural environment is central to the plot as characters are either eliminated, given a lack of identity or depth, or focus is entirely given over to the landscape. For example, Allen's narrative is centred upon the erupting volcano or the flowing lava and, as Hans-Ulrich Schmincke asserts, volcanoes "are the most visible proof that planet Earth is alive and well" (2004, p.5). Given the amount of emphasis on the volcano and its lava, I suggest that the volcano could be the central protagonist of the story. This is because it is the volcano's journey that is relayed by the narrator, whereas the narrator's journey is determined by the course of flowing lava, which places him as secondary to the natural phenomenon. Furthermore, the narrator's displacement occurs because of the eruption and thus the story highlights the powerlessness of humanity against the dominant force of the natural world, which is shaped by the elliptical style of the short story.

The overbearing fog, the volcanic eruption, and the polluted waterway, are three environmental issues that are addressed within this chapter through the three short stories. Through these ruptures in the natural world, this chapter examines a secular form of apocalypse and, despite its pejorative connotation, argues that it can function as a device to create a consciousness concerning ecology, which Gifford describes in relation to the post-pastoral. In his insightful study *Approaching Apocalypse: Unveiling Revelation* (2007), Kevin Mills writes at length about the religious origin of the term 'apocalypse' in relation to the Book of Revelation, and the prominence of apocalypticism within Victorian literature. Mills argues that through means of apocalypticism "writers sought to influence the views and to modify the behaviour of the reader" (2007, p.15). In this sense, by asserting the dominance of the natural world into the short story, and aligning it with potential apocalypticism, it is possible that all three stories may alter the public's perception and behaviour towards the environment.

Mills also claims that apocalypse has "much to do with creation as with destruction" (2007, p.17). Focussing on the idea of creation, apocalypse is therefore in keeping with both Victorian progress because a sanitised image of the Thames has been created. This notion of creation can also be interpreted as change, and this resonates with Frank Kermode's definition of apocalyptic fiction which he explains, "ends, transforms and is concordant" (Kermode, 2000, p.5). Barr's, Allen's and White's narratives all conform to this notion of transformation in relation to the landscape. However, it is significant that apocalypse does not fully develop within all three stories but is merely suggested, as each narrator survives to tell the tale retrospectively. These particular features, as mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, resonates with the genre of science fiction and, therefore, this allows another way for the reader to engage in ecological issues concerning the Thames during the *fin de siècle*.

As this chapter views sanitation as an area of progress, I suggest that its alignment with apocalypticism means that the apocalyptic narrative can also be recognised as a feature that exists within the sphere of Victorian progress. In continuation of his assertion that creativity and destruction are a part of apocalypse, Mills identifies two modes of apocalypticism at play during the Victorian period: "rebirth versus chaos" (2007, p.74). These modes are pertinent to this chapter as it is possible to view the Thames as undergoing a 'rebirth' through the process of sanitation, which then challenges the chaos of pollution. This notion, which argues that a *fin de siècle* ecological consciousness was born out of a century of sickness and disease that plagued the waters of the Thames, supports Thompson's view that the apocalyptic genre is "born out of crisis" (Thompson, 1997, cited in Garrard, 2004, p.86). Significantly, the rebirth that occurs in each story is more closely related to an apocalypse where the lives of humans are affected or disrupted because of the natural world.

For this reason, the term 'environmental apocalypse' is used to describe the natural catastrophes that occur in each story. Greg Garrard argues that environmental apocalypse "is not about anticipating the end of the world, but about attempting to avert it by persuasive means" (2004, p.99). This avoidance is prevalent within all three stories, as we do not observe an end of the world but actually a form of environmental rhetoric. Whilst some lives are extinguished in both Barr's and Allen's narrative, the world remains, albeit in a somewhat changed state. As such, the use of 'apocalypse' to describe events is used implicitly, and this can be associated with contemporary ecocritical thought. Buell argues that

> apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal […] the rhetoric of apocalypticism implies that the fate of the world hinges on the arousal of the imagination to a sense of crisis.
>
> (Buell, 1995, p.285)

Whilst a retrospective outlook, the arousal of humanity's awareness of the destructive potential of the natural environment can only be a good thing. This is because it offers humanity the necessary knowledge to prepare themselves, or even change the way in which they interact with the natural world, suggesting an anthropocentric way of viewing the apocalyptic metaphor. However, as Chapter One demonstrated the anthropocentricity of humanity's relationship with the natural environment, this chapter emphasises the ecocentricity of the apocalypse metaphor to demonstrate that this relationship exists along a continuum that has the potential to shift.

Barr, Allen and White all adopt the apocalyptic metaphor differently, and this is why the literary device is examined within all three short stories. Barr constructs apocalypticism through his use of language that resonates with a lack of hope, and through his use of fog, which is culturally linked to a Dickensian use of fog that Mills (2007) argues is apocalyptic. The focus in Allen's tale is the imagery of apocalypticism that is created by the volcano, and how this relates to the notion of an eco-performance. The significance of the volcano in constructing an eco-performance is made clear through examination of Allen's short story. The term eco-performance has previously been critically considered within the context of theatre, and even in relation to an erupting volcano (Gough, 2012). However, I examine it differently in Allen's tale by considering the author's application of ecosystems, the use of spectatorship, and finally the association of the volcano with pyrotechnics. Whereas White's apocalypticism is formed through the social disorder and chaos that has been caused by the supposedly polluted Thames. This hints at a social ecology, a feature that was also revealed in Chapter One through the hierarchical usage of the River. However, a socio-ecology is revealed in White's story through the fundamental need for sanitation due to poor health, and not for the pleasure of recreation as outlined in Chapter One.

These stories also reveal the pertinence of the Romantic poets either via a direct authorial influence or through similar literary devices. The works of Blake, Shelley, and Byron, are particularly echoed in the works of these later *fin de siècle* authors. Representations of, and themes relating to, the natural world, including sanitation, the sun, rivers, darkness, and cataclysmic events such as volcanoes bore similarities between the two generations of writers. Parallels are also revealed between Barr's tale and Dickens's work. Dickens was known to write about many social issues of the Victorian period, however several critics have also identified environmental, or ecological, themes within his work (Parham, 2010; Sipley, 2011; MacDuffie, 2014). References to Dickens's work, and also some critical interpretations of his work, are therefore included within this chapter, as a way of establishing the significance of a post-Dickensian representation of the natural world.

Two eighteenth-century philosophical debates that consider the relationship between man and the natural world are drawn upon to negotiate a sense of parity with contemporary ecocritical thought. These include Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) and Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790). These are used to support the argument that an ecocentricity is prevalent in the three short stories, with regards to sanitation and the Thames. The role of aestheticism in the construction of humanity's relationship with nature is significant within this chapter, as it has been in Chapter One and Chapter Two.

Given the role it plays within this chapter and also its significance in relation to the theme of sanitation, Mary Douglas's anthropological study *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966) is worth mentioning at this point. Her emphasis on

order and disorder, purity and impurity, and consciousness and unconsciousness, are all central to our understanding of the ecocentric relationship between humanity and nature. Using Douglas's model of dirt and cleanliness, this chapter demonstrates how all three stories promote the need for clean, sanitised natural environments for the prolonged health of humanity, and through this, culturally, we are able to see the stirrings of an ecological consciousness. This connection between (im)purity and power that rests at the heart of Douglas's work, is evident within Barr's, Allen's and White's short stories. According to Douglas, "pollution is a matter of aesthetics" (2002, p.92) and therefore, through sanitised environments one can observe an ecological consciousness that leans towards an ecocentricity between nature and humanity. In turn, this ecocentricity can be said to mirror Gifford's aesthetic, 'the post-pastoral'. Fundamentally, Douglas's work strengthens the link between sanitation and an emerging ecological consciousness.

Although science is not the focus for this chapter, it is addressed briefly in the context of an evolving Victorian society where, as a result of science, the rise of effective sanitation was evident. Late Victorian debates between religion and science are also considered within this chapter to highlight the rousing ecological consciousness. Religion also forms a minor part in the analysis of Allen's story to demonstrate how he incorporates Darwinian ideologies, in order to signal a dominance of nature. Class and social hierarchies form part of the analysis in White's story, as a way of aligning poor sanitation with disorder. Notably, whilst references to class and social hierarchies are included, they do not form the focus of this chapter and are predominantly used to facilitate the link between sanitation and an ecological consciousness.

Considering that the three stories deal with issues of social chaos, the Sublime, apocalypticism, and an ambiguity that relates to the landscape, it is possible to view them as examples of the Gothic. These features of the Gothic, particularly where we see the helplessness of humanity in the face of a more forceful natural environment, also resonate with the post-pastoral (Gifford, 1999). Andreas Schardt recognises the changes that have been afforded to the Gothic in recent years, and questions whether "it makes sense to speak of 'post-pastoral' and 'post-Gothic' forms" (2015, p.130), before concluding that the "Gothic-pastoral insistence on representative vulnerability" (2015, p.131) demonstrates a continued validity for the Gothic genre. Like Schardt's argument, I would argue that there is certainly an argument to group Barr's, Allen's, and White's stories into the Gothic genre. However, if we consider the multifaceted tendency of the Gothic with its numerous definitions and features (Botting, 1996; Punter, 1996; Groom, 2012), I further argue that a critical work that foregrounds a natural landscape, such as the Thames, necessitates a degree of ecocritical taxonomy. This is achieved by adopting the ecocritical term post-pastoral, as it has the study of the relationship between humanity and nature at its core. Thomas J. Lyon questioned the need for 'A Taxonomy of Nature Writing', and suggested that whilst it was not essential to insist on an academic classification, offering different categories can "show the breadth of the spectrum" (1996, p.281) of nature writing. Similarly, by insisting on the post-pastoral within the three short stories, I am demonstrating throughout this entire thesis how different ecocritical perspectives can be applied to the Thames, and how through different categorisations, the relationship between humanity and nature exists along a continuum. Therefore, whilst references to the Gothic are included in this chapter, a predominant post-pastoral focus prevails.

3.1 Robert Barr's 'The Doom of London' (1892)

Glaswegian born Robert Barr was raised in Canada and returned to Britain in 1881 where he resided in London (Corton, 2015). Like Chapter Two, the fact that Barr has a Scottish Canadian

identity but chooses to write about the Thames, albeit suggestively, means that the River can unify different nations, whilst also positioning it as a symbol of identities that are adrift. His late residency in London and yet his inclination to write about the London landscape and its natural environment, is ecocritically viewed as a testament of nature's impact upon the human consciousness. Barr contributes to a host of writers who were born outside of London, or outside of Britain, and chose to write about the City, or the Thames. It would seem that the River was of national and international interest to visitors of the "heart of the empire" (Schneer, 2005, p.196). This outside interest in the Thames emphasises the importance of sanitation, as the River was evidently important for the image of the City, and consequently the Empire.

American born Joseph and Elizabeth Pennell were compelled to jointly publish an anecdotal piece of travel writing on their journey from the Upper reaches of the Thames towards London. Similarly, American author Henry James, in his travel writing piece *English Hours* (1905), which interestingly was illustrated by Joseph Pennell, described how "the natural fate of an obscure stranger [in London] would be to be trampled to death in Piccadilly and have his carcass thrown into the Thames" (James, 1905, p.8). However, James would later reflect on his own personal relationship with the Thames, when he claimed to "like it best when it is all dyed and disfigured with the town, and you look from bridge to bridge they seem wonderfully big and dim over the brown, greasy current, the barges and the penny-steamers, the black, sordid, heterogeneous shores" (1905, p.37–38). Despite James's fondness for the River, he does refer to the polluted state of its waters, highlighting another example of how sanitation and the Thames were interlinked in public consciousness. The more time James spent in London, the more he appreciated the Thames, as shown when he goes from describing how the urban landscape could be dangerous to a stranger to then affectionately engaging with the River.

Similarly, Barr's growing familiarity with the City inspired him to write about its iconic fog, having only been living in London for just over ten years. This forms a connection, as I suggest, between the natural environment and human consciousness because Barr had been prompted by his environment to write about it. Notably, the fog in 'The Doom of London' is partially formed by the Thames. Barr's decision to write specifically about air pollution, also meant that he was engaging in a subject that was very much embedded in the public sphere. This is because of the rise of pollution due to industrialisation that had impacted so greatly on public health. Barr first published his story in *The Idler* in London 1892, a magazine that Barr founded and co-edited with fellow Thames-writer Jerome K. Jerome, whose novel *Three Men in a Boat* (1889) emphasises the recreational aspect of the River. This association between Barr and Jerome strengthens the network of writers that represented the Thames in their work during the *fin de siècle* (see Appendix Three). The story was later published in the American publication *McClure's Magazine* in 1894. This image of foggy London, as a result of the Thames and industrialisation, was therefore transported globally via Barr's short story. Given the emphasis placed on the atmospheric condition of the City and the obvious need for sanitation, the story demonstrates how the theme of sanitation contributed to the global image of London, England, and the Empire.

Barr chose to publish the 'The Doom of London' in *The Idler* again in 1904 due to a series of foggy conditions that had invaded the City. His decision to republish due to the weather conditions explicitly exemplifies the transition between an awareness of our environment and its power, and how this can be interpreted to readers through the conscious act of highlighting the climate through writing. This idea is supported by Everett F. Bleiler who refers to 'The Doom of London' in *Science Fiction: The Early Years,* where Barr's story

is described as "[a] cautionary tale for preservation of the environment" (1990, p.39). Barr's tale, according to Bleiler, is more of a warning to humanity as opposed to a prediction of the 'end of things', in that it highlights the potential damage to the natural environment as a result of poor sanitation, and Victorian society's industrial activities.

As the Thames holds an indirect significance in Barr's story by being read through the fog, it is worth noting that there is no specific ecological reference to a river in the story, and that the proper noun 'Thames' is only mentioned once. However, due to the river's ecological significance (the rise of its vapours to form part of the fog) in relation to environmental sanitation, it becomes an important natural element of Barr's story. The River is channelled through ecocriticism in two ways: firstly, through Barr's reference to a watery surface in London, and secondly, by consciously considering the Thames as a key ingredient of the natural fog that pervades the City. The River is therefore suggestive, a feature of the short story that Barr outlined in an 1897 essay 'How to Write a Short Story'. He wrote that "a rightly constructed short story should always allow the reader's imagination to come to the aid of the author" (Barr, 1977, p.25). Barr's story achieves this by hinting at the Thames through his use of language that refers to water, enabling the reader to identify the underlying river ecology that underpins the fog. This establishes a correlation between ecocriticism and the short story form because the latter conjures issues of nature, whereas the short story creates a literary space where this elicitation is made possible.

At the beginning of his story, Barr adopts an ecological discourse to position the River in the reader's mind. Its presence is determined through the implicitness of the language adopted. 'The Doom of London' was not written out of a scientific sensibility; Barr was refashioning or simulating one. As Christine Corton (2009) informs us, Barr was aware

of the lack of scientific knowledge underpinning his story, and as a result he consulted two scientists – John Tyndall and Professor Thomas H. Huxley. Whilst Barr was disappointed with their adverse reaction to his story as scientifically plausible, I argue that there is some merit in his ecological accuracy. As he attempts to define the fog within his story, Barr demonstrates some knowledge of the workings of natural ecosystems:

> A fog was simply watery vapour rising from the marshy surface of the land or from the sea, or condensed into a cloud from the saturated atmosphere.
>
> (Barr, 2007, p.399)

Barr's use of 'saturated' in these lines refers to the industrial effluence that has already polluted the air, yet this unclean image is diluted somewhat by the natural 'watery vapour' that arises from the Thames, which is interpreted through the London setting. This description can be viewed as a recognition that the fog emerges from both natural and artificial sources, and this is established within the story through the merging of the two within the atmosphere. From an ecocritical perspective, the process that Barr describes is fundamentally ecological, and it highlights the effects of natural sources on poorly sanitised environments. Moreover, water as a key ingredient of the fog is also established as the catastrophe worsens, and Barr describes how the fog was "extinguishing life as if the city suffered from hopeless hydrophobia" (2007, p.399). This condition refers to a fear of water, and not a fear of smoke, which again highlights the relevance of water, or the Thames, in the analysis of Barr's tale.

Whilst adopting an ecological discourse to define the fog, Barr consequently evokes a cultural reference to the landscape. The 'marshy surface' adds a literary, specifically Dickensian, resonance to Barr's story that is reminiscent of the opening of *Great Expectations* (1861), which is set along "the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea" (Dickens, 1996, p.3). Barr's subtle nod to the River, just like Dickens's, highlights a shared interest in augmenting not only the imagery of the Thames, but

also the ecological fascination with it. In recognising the natural ecosystem at play within his narrative, Barr engages in an ecological consciousness that demonstrates his awareness of natural processes, just as Dickens highlights the course of the waterway and its relationship to the sea. Whilst Stephen Chapman (2012) has examined Dickens's representations of the Thames at length, a study that connects mid-Victorian Dickensian representations of the River to the *fin de siècle* writer Robert Barr is not apparent, though Corton (2015) has written about both authors in relation to fog. The implication, therefore, is that the *fin de siècle* style could be emulating a Dickensian way of writing the natural environment.

In her insightful study *London Fog: The Biography* (2015), Corton has situated Barr's story in concert with Victorian scientific thought. Here, she recognises the link between Darwinian ideas and the need for a sanitised environment:

> Darwinian theories of evolution had shown that in order to survive a race must continually adapt and improve. By refusing to clean up the environment, Londoners were unwilling or unable to adapt and were destined to become extinct.
>
> (Corton, 2015, p.100)

Ecocritically, 'The Doom of London' augments an environmental unease, and this unease was prominent across London during the nineteenth century as a result of the excess fog caused by both industrialism and the natural vapours of the Thames. Both of these reasons are considered within Barr's story. Corton refers to the fog as an agent of moral decline within Barr's tale, and further suggests that the "only possible outcome of such moral decline is catastrophe. Fog becomes a metaphor for the sickness of urban society; at its extreme it is used to portray the death of London in its entirety" (2015, p.105). However, Corton's focus on the degeneracy of the fog, and heretofore the degeneracy of the River, contrasts with the aims of this study which instead, augments the culturally developed aspect of the Thames in relation to sanitation towards the end of the nineteenth century. Whilst Corton emphasises

the industrialism of the fog in Barr's narrative, I argue that the role of the River is also significant.

Socially, London fog had become quite problematic and was often written about in the media. In 1892, the same year as the publication of Barr's story, a Member of the Society of Medical Officers of Health wrote a letter to the Editor of *The Times* about the problem of London fog and significantly, the role of the Thames in the formation of the fogs was recognised:

> It must be remembered, while the smoke may render a London fog darker in colour, being an absorbent, it has a beneficial effect as a sanitary measure by absorbing and, to some extent, disinfecting the emanations of sewer gas during a fog-in fact, without the smoke, and assuming the sewer-gas emanations to continue, it would become dangerous to walk in the streets of London during a fog. The Thames also is, of course, another source of the fogs which prevail in the metropolis, and, looking at the sanitary aspect of the question, the polluted condition of the river as it passes through London, especially below London-bridge, should also be carefully considered and be remedied as far as possible.
>
> (*The Times*, 1892, p.11)

This article successfully conveys the relevance of the Thames in sanitary discourse on the fog and industrial smoke during this period, making it worthy of consideration in relation to the study of Barr's tale. Here, the industrial smoke is seen as a 'sanitary measure' in combatting the fog, whereas the Thames is seen as a contributor to the polluted fog. This contrasts with the way in which the smoke is represented in Barr's story, where he makes explicit the industrial aspects of the fog (see also Corton, 2015) whereas the Thames is merely perceived as a natural ingredient.

An ecocritical reading of the Thames as a natural undercurrent of the fog within Barr's story, enables us to view the waterway as a symbol of environmental consciousness. In highlighting the industrial element of the fog, as Corton (2015) argues, which results in chaos, Barr synonymously highlights the importance of the natural environment. Garrard proffers that "[o]ne 'ecocritical' way of reading is to see contributions to environmental debate as examples of rhetoric" (2004, p.6). This becomes clear in Barr's tale. I argue, that the absence of the Thames, despite its significance in the formation of the fog, highlights the necessity of the natural world, as without it, Barr highlights a society that collapses as people are unable to breathe. This story can therefore be read as an example of 'environmental rhetoric', whereby the importance of nature is enforced through its absence.

The story imagines the deadly effect of poorly sanitised air as a strong fog takes hold of the City, forcing its inhabitants to evacuate, thus highlighting the impact of the environment on human health. Similar to the description of the fog in *The Times*, Barr writes about how "the atmosphere became denser and darker" (2007, p.404), the narrator's "usually busy office" (2007, p.405) is intensely silent, and the buses on the street contain "ghostlike passengers, equally silent" (2007, 406). The silence in Barr's story becomes important as a way of constructing the environmental rhetoric, as it can also be seen to represent the absence of the River. Therefore, the silence is not only characteristic of the dead, but it also serves to heighten Barr's removal of humanity in order to foreground the natural atmosphere that is characterised by its absence within the story.

The language that Barr uses to describe the events in his story, including "an appalling catastrophe, the doom of London" (Barr, 2007, p.398), establishes an apocalyptic metaphor that signals a fissure in humanity's relationship with nature. Barr echoes the story's

title in his use of the word 'doom', defined as "to condemn to some fate" (*OED*), suggesting that all hope has been lost and that all of humanity have been condemned to death. However, this environmental apocalyptic reading is problematic as we know that the story is being told retrospectively and therefore we already know that the narrator has survived. Through the narrative voice, Barr's subtle message indicates a rhetoric of hope where the notion of apocalypticism is consigned to a metaphor. The purpose of the metaphor exists to promote an ecological consciousness, but also to issue a warning to humanity of the dangers of poor sanitation. The connection between apocalypticism and fog was also evident in Dickens's work, indicating another way in which we can establish a post-Dickensian writing of the environment during the *fin de siècle*.

Mills's *Approaching Apocalypse* specifically examines the relationship between fog and apocalypse in the opening of Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853), a scene which is imbued in fog, as Dickens describes in the following quotation:

> Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snow-flakes — gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun.
>
> (Dickens, 1853, cited in Mills, 2007, p.69)

Drawing on Dickens's use of economic and geological language metaphors in this scene, Mills argues that "[i]t seems that civilization reproduces its opposite – chaos – within itself" (2007, p.70). Mills suggests that humanity have created hazardous environmental conditions for themselves, via the Industrial Revolution, and through this he emphasises the issue of how civilization has tainted the natural fog and therefore the chaos which ensues is caused by humanity. In the same way, Barr's narrative demonstrates how civilization corrupts the natural fog through the use of "vast quantities of a soft bituminous coal" (Barr, 2007, p.399), or through the description of how "clouds of black smoke were poured from thousands of

chimneys" (2007, p.400) that resulted in "a catastrophe from fog" (2007, p.399). Whilst these examples may appear to demonstrate humanity's dominance over nature through their propensity to transform, or exploit, the environment. However, this anthropocentric reading is challenged through the application of Gifford's post-pastoral concept.

One question Gifford asks as he outlines the post-pastoral is "[i]f nature is culture, is culture nature?" (2014, p.27) and, it is through applying this question to Barr's story that indirectly, the ecocentricity between humanity's relationship with nature becomes evident. 'The Doom of London' shows how through polluting the natural fog, nature has become the product of industrialisation, or culture. Equally, as Barr uses his imagination to write about the effects of culture on nature he is transforming culture into nature. The latter becomes apparent if we respond positively to another question posed by Gifford that, "[i]f the mind, and its imagination, is our material nature, isn't the culture it produces also nature?" (2014, p.27). In effect, the story that Barr's imagination produces is perceived as a form of nature, and thus we see the ambiguity between nature and culture that Gifford describes. However, it is worth considering that even though Barr highlights the industrial aspect of the fog within his story, this aspect is actually secondary to the natural source of the fog that exists prior to industrial processes, and that is the Thames. Therefore, the coming together of the natural river vapours and the cultural industrial smoke establishes the Thames as a post-pastoral landscape within Barr's short story. This means that by emphasising the importance of the need for clean air, Barr has simultaneously highlighted the role of humanity in the destruction of the natural environment whilst recognising the power of nature that rests at the root of the nature-humanity relationship.

The role of nature in sanitary reformation is once again established by the story as the narrator ponders a solution to the environmental catastrophe that has encroached upon London. Multiple features of nature are drawn upon, including the sun, the vapours, and the wind, mirroring an ecological system designed to clear the fog. This natural sanitation implicitly signals, in accordance with Barr's suggestiveness of the short story form, the processes involved in natural ecosystems and, by writing about these processes, Barr demonstrates an emerging ecological consciousness of his own:

> The sun would have absorbed the fog but for the layer of smoke that lay thick above the vapour and prevented its rays from reaching it. Once this condition of things prevailed, nothing could clear London but a breeze of wind.
>
> (Barr, 2007, p.400)

Barr's reference to the 'vapours' reminds us of the body of water in the City: the Thames. He then incorporates other natural elements in the encounter between the natural and artificial fog, including the sun and the wind. These elements are key components of the water cycle process, as Barr had alluded to in his earlier definition of the fog, and therefore would have been responsible for the origin of the fog, before it had been contaminated by the smoke. However, once the deadly fog moves around London, we can see how the sun's rays are weakened by the thick smoke. This imagery evokes the Dickensian 'death of the sun' that had previously been quoted from *Bleak House.* Allen MacDuffie (2014) has examined Dickens's novel in relation to the thermodynamics of the sun, and has described the death of the sun as, "a grand narrative of decline: a story about the cosmos moving from abundance to exhaustion" (2014, p.71). In Barr's tale, however, the sun exists but is not permitted to reach the vapours of the Thames on account of the smoke. The absence of the sun is therefore consistent with the atmospheric conditions and the density of the fog. This contrasts with

White's 'The River of Death' where the sun plays a prominent role in the discourse of sanitation and the worsening of the polluted waterway. Despite the separation of the vapours and the sun by the smoke, it is suggested that nature still performs a dominant role in the story because Barr refers to the 'breeze of wind', establishing it as the potential saviour of the environmental catastrophe and therefore, nature has the ultimate stronghold in determining a sanitised atmosphere.

Barr was one of a host of writers during the *fin de siècle* who created links between the sun, the clouds and the waters of the Thames, one example is Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897). In Stoker's novel, Dr Seward recalls "the wonderful smoky beauty of a sunset over London, with its lurid lights and inky shadows and all the marvellous tints that come on foul clouds even as on foul water" (Stoker, 2003, p.126). Despite Victorian attempts to cleanse London's environments, Stoker's repetition of 'foul' emphasises poor sanitation (in relation to the Thames and the air), demonstrating how it remained in a cultural consciousness. This is probably due to the fact that whilst vast improvements were made in Victorian sanitation, impurities still existed in the waters, which was exemplified in the previously discussed letter to *The Times* that was published in 1892. Another connection, where the Thames and the sun are interlinked, forming an apocalyptic mood, is G.K. Chesterton's novel *The Man who was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908):

> He walked on the Embankment once under a dark red sunset. The red river reflected the red sky, and they both reflected his anger. The sky, indeed, was so swarthy, and the light on the river relatively so lurid, that the water almost seemed of fiercer flame than the sunset it mirrored. It looked like a stream of literal wire winding under the vast caverns of a subterranean country.
>
> (Chesterton, 1910, p.53)

The images in this extract convey an ecocritical coexistence of the natural and the artificial environment that could be likened to De Vere's poem, referred to in Chapter Two where it

was understood to be demonstrating a symbiosis. The comparison of Barr's story to Stoker's and Chesterton's, two novels that adopt Gothic conventions, is unsurprising as Barr's tale could also be regarded as a Gothic short story. Barr adopts the meteorological (through the fog) and the material (through the suggestiveness of the fog as a veil), two features of what Nick Groom terms "the seven types of obscurity" (2012, p.77) that relate to the Gothic genre. Despite my insistence on an ecocritical taxonomy, Barr's linkage to these texts and writers position Barr amidst the Gothic sphere, potentially negotiating the case for what Andrew Smith and William Hughes (2013) term an ecoGothic.

It is also possible to view Barr's 'layers' and 'rays'; Stoker's 'inky shadows' and 'tints' and Chesterton's 'red sun' and reflective 'light' on the River, as an aestheticisation of the Thames. This aestheticisation was evident in Leslie's, the Pennells', Ashby-Sterry's travel narratives in Chapter One, where an anthropocentric ecocritical reading was determined. This link to aestheticism once again creates a pleasure-based way of viewing the River that can ecocritically be deemed anthropocentric. However, given Barr's emphasis on the fog's potential to metaphorically sanitise the City's artificial environment, together with the notion that the River forms the basis of the fog, then a more ecocentric relationship between humanity and nature is more appropriate in Barr's story. However, the symbiotic and anthropocentric relationship that has been suggested demonstrates the fluidity of humanity and nature's relationship.

In relation to cultural imaginings of London and the fog, several critics have included Barr's short story alongside discussions of the artworks of the French painter Claude Monet (Brimblecombe, 2004; Corton, 2015). This means that Barr's work forms part of a wider network of writers and painters that were depicting the image of the Thames and the

fog. One example of Monet's combinations of fog, sun, and the Thames was the painting *Waterloo Bridge: the Sun in a Fog* (1903, see Fig.9, p.237). Within this painting, the fog functions to blur the boundaries between the artificial landscape of Waterloo Bridge and the naturalness of the Thames or the sunset. Like Barr's tale, Monet's painting highlights the industrialism that has infiltrated the natural vapours of the Thames, as he shows through his use of darkening colours. However, the interaction between the sun and the River, as shown through the reflections, functions as a visual interpretation of the ecological relationship shared by the sun and the river in the course of the water cycle. This could indicate that despite the poorly sanitised atmospheric environment, ecological processes and subsequently nature, still prevail. The reference to Monet is also significant because his works were frequently critiqued, or compared to the works of Whistler by Elizabeth Pennell (Jones, 2015), which adds Monet to the network as suggested by this thesis (see Appendix Three). These links to French Impressionism, via Monet, also contributes to the idea that the Thames was a waterway that brought different nations together through culture.

In addition to the sun, a "breeze of wind" (Barr, 2007, p.400) is also introduced as a potential natural solution to the destructive fog, which is then contrasted with an artificial solution. At the time of the deadly fog, the protagonist works for Fulton, Brixton & Co, a company that dealt "largely in chemicals and chemical apparatus" (Barr, 2007, p.400), when an American inventor requests that the company become agents for his new machine that emits oxygen and that would be invaluable for anyone caught up in a deadly London fog. Whilst this may appear to be a convenient narrative device to ensure the salvation of the protagonist (the machine is left in his office when the fog takes hold), the American inventor's "so-called health invention" (Barr, 2007, p.403) does nonetheless emphasise the need for pure and clean air for the health and sustainability of humanity. Therefore, by introducing a device

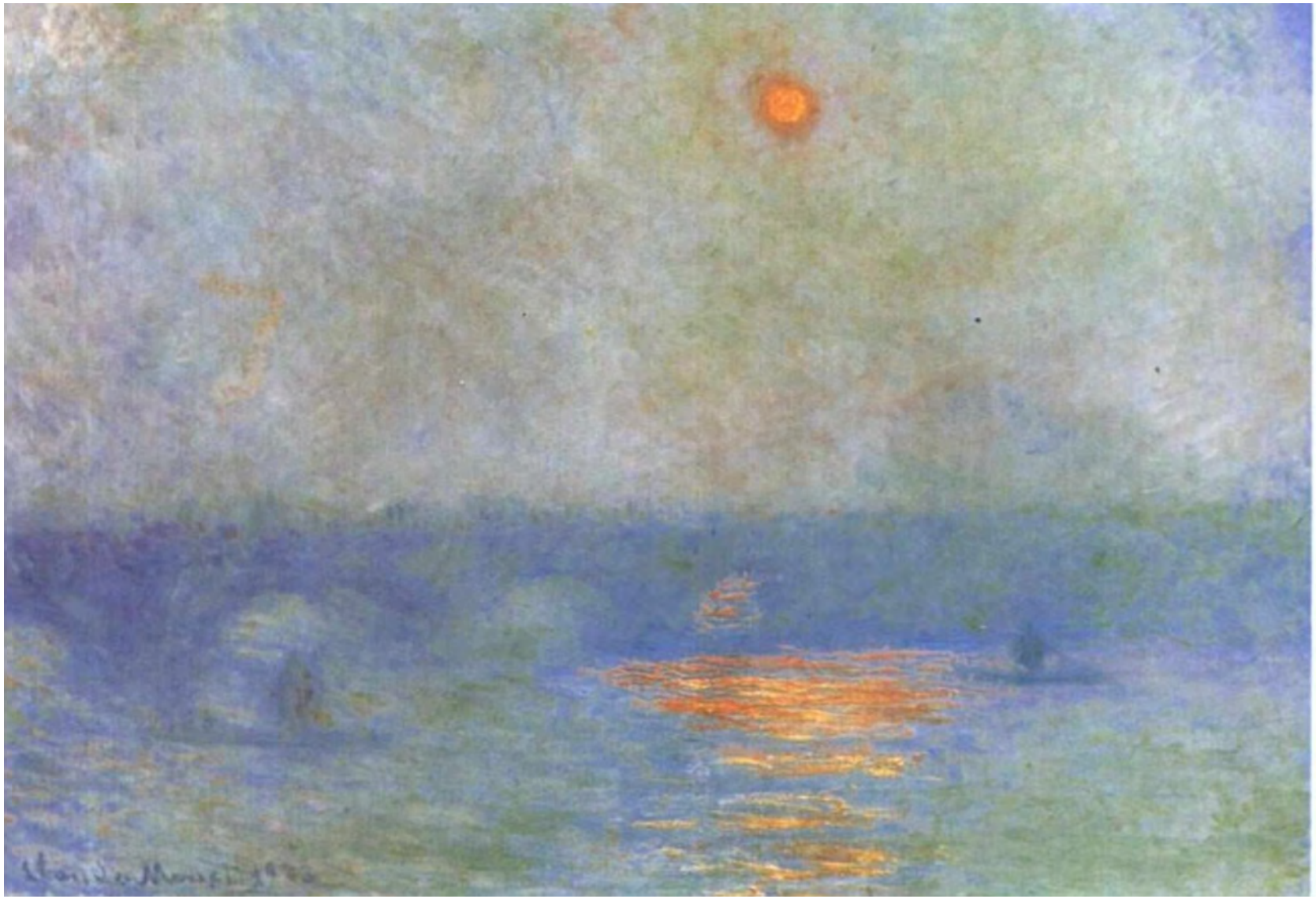

Fig.9 Monet, C. (1903) *Waterloo Bridge: the Sun in a Fog* [oil on canvas]. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.

that replaces nature in the sustainable future of humanity, the story almost disregards the way humanity relies on nature. However, as humanity empirically depend on natural factors such as air, water, and the sun, in order to survive, the machine is soon undermined and nature's efficacy is restored.

This process is affirmed as Barr demonstrates the permanence of nature by highlighting the temporality of the device when it is stolen from the narrator. Manmade devices are therefore pitted against natural forces in order to establish both the significance of nature, and the importance of sanitised natural environments. This again becomes evident as the protagonist uses the railway, another form of humanity's progress during the Victorian age, to escape the City and its fog. However, as the train crashes in Richmond we are yet again reminded of the impermanence of humanity's creations in contrast to the permanence of nature. The final contrast between nature and humanity to determine the validity of a sanitised environment occurs between the urban and rural setting. The protagonist truly survives once he has escaped the urbanism of London and is now in the rural village of Richmond, as we discover when the train speeds "across the Thames near Kew" (Barr, 2007, p.409). His survival, and the narrative, concludes in the setting of Richmond and thus, despite the artificial device of the American's invention and the railway, the ultimate continuum for human survival is nature as it is determined by a natural setting.

This escape to the rural is evocative of the retreat that forms part of the pastoral, thus suggesting that ultimately the landscape is envisaged through an idealised vision, contradicting the post-pastoral one that has been suggested previously. However, this idealised vision that encapsulates the pastoral is tainted by the image of "the ghostly trainload of the dead" (Barr, 2007, p.409). This supernatural language, together with the reference to

dead bodies, is once again evocative of the Gothic genre. However, an ecological sensibility is restored as the need for a sanitised, clean, and healthy natural atmosphere is emphasised by highlighting the role of experience within the story. The narrator retrospectively questions how Londoners could have been conscious of the fog when they had not experienced it before, by asking "[w]hy, then, should the people have been expected to prepare for a catastrophe from fog, such as there had never been any experience of in the world's history?" (Barr, 2007, p.399). This suggests that in order to develop an awareness of nature's powerful ways, then characters need to experience the destructiveness of nature for themselves (such as through the fog). The role of experience can also be understood to highlight humanity's apathetic attitude towards the natural environment, and the fatal consequences of these indifferences. This is shown through Sir John Brixton, the narrator's boss, who reacts angrily to the American character's pitch for Brixton & Co to become agents of his machine that "gave out greater or less volumes of oxygen gas" (Barr, 2007, p.401). Sir John exclaims that it was an insult for the American "to bring a so-called health invention to a robust man who never had a day's illness" (Barr, 2007, p.403). However, Sir John's attitudes are dismissed when he succumbs to the deadly fog. The use of disorder in relation to Douglas's work is significant because

> though we seek to create order, we do not simply condemn disorder. We recognise that it is destructive to existing patterns; also that it has potentiality. It symbolises both danger and power.
>
> (Douglas, 2002, p.117)

The idea that disorder can produce progress, or potential for progress, as per Douglas's statement, is mirrored within Barr's tale, when we apply the notion of disorder to nature. Therefore, Barr's narrative, whilst projecting environmental disorder, can be viewed as a narrative of progress that presents an emerging ecological consciousness and, in doing so, elevates Victorian sanitation.

The need for pure air and a sanitised natural environment for good physical health is suggested in Barr's story, shown through a developing ecological consciousness. However, Thornes and Metherell claim that London fog "became a metaphor that embodied confusion, foreboding and uncertainty about the future" (2005, p.111). These characteristics relate to mental health and, I argue, that the necessity of pure air in the preservation of good mental health cannot be overlooked in Barr's tale; this preservation is conjured through a post-pastoralised vision of the natural environment. Barr's protagonist describes being in "a state of bewilderment" (2007, p.409), and then subsequently refers to survivors of the catastrophe as having "never recovered their reason [whereas one in particular had] his clothes torn from his back in the struggle, was sent to an asylum, where he was never able to tell who he was" (2007, p.409). These references establish a link between poorly sanitised environments and reduced mental health, an attitude that was articulated by nature writer Edward Thomas in 1909. He explained that "the working of the brain in pure air and sunlight is good for body and soul" (Thomas, 1909, cited in Coupe, 2000, p.67). Significantly, Thomas's use of the word 'pure' highlights the importance of a sanitised natural environment in the workings of good physical and mental health; the latter correlates with the hints of 'madness' that are caused by the polluted air in Barr's narrative.

'The Doom of London' belongs to a tradition of nineteenth-century literature that offers a correlation between the natural environment of the Thames and the human psyche. Whilst the presence of Barr's river is notably subtle, other Victorian examples, as in Dickens's aforementioned marshy landscape in *Great Expectations* are more explicit, as shown here:

> [T]he dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond, was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.
>
> (Dickens, 1996, p.3/4)

Pip's fear and anxiety is perpetuated through the disorder that is the 'wilderness' and the 'distant savage lair', reducing Pip to a 'small bundle'. This lessening of humanity in the face of nature is consistent with Gifford's post-pastoral as it raises the question of whether "awe in the face of natural phenomena, such as landscapes, [can] lead to humility in our species" (Gifford, 2014, p.27). It can be argued that Pip's encounter with the marshes minimises his own existence, therefore offering us an example of the post-pastoral in Dickens's novel. Sipley (2011) has also examined this Dickensian scene through an ecocritical lens, and he argues that this interaction with the landscape both de-individualises and de-humanises Pip and, in turn, reduces him to "a collection of matter and energy that is imbedded in the larger physical world" (2011, p.19). Sipley's argument reinforces how Pip is minimised through being positioned against the landscape, and thus a post-pastoralism is established in *Great Expectations.* The analysis of Dickens's novel is significant because it reveals an existing awareness within Victorian literature of the affective relationship between nature and humanity. This relationship is later evident in Barr's short story where the disordering of the natural environment in an urban setting leaves humanity with a lack of reason that causes panic, anxiety and acts of violence.

The link between fog and mental health in Barr's tale is revealed when we see how the unsanitised fog impacts on the reasoning and mental wellbeing of the characters. In his work on the post-pastoral and by drawing on the work of John Ruskin, Gifford points out "that the character of a people is determined by their experience of their part of the earth, its

climate, geology, topography, flora and fauna" (1999, p.160). Therefore, the very fact that Barr was inspired to talk about the subject of the 'fog' meant that, in accordance with one of the tenets of Gifford's post-pastoral, Barr's writing conforms to the notion that "our inner human nature can be understood in relation to external nature" (Gifford, 1999, p.156). We see the external nature of the fog and how it is connected to human nature through mental disorientation within Barr's story. For example, the survivors were morally unable to separate good and bad behaviour, is demonstrated as those who "fought each other like demons, apparently for no reason" (Barr, 2007, p.408). Here, we see how an unsanitised environment has caused acts of violence.

In addition to constructing a sense of Giffordian 'awe' through the relationship between the unsanitised natural atmosphere and the mental health of humanity, Barr subsequently appropriates the Burkean Sublime to describe the effect of the polluted fog on the self. Edmund Burke describes the sensibility of the Sublime as "[g]reatness of dimension [...] vastness of extent, or quantity, has the most striking effect" (2008, p.66). These qualities of the Sublime relate to size, and Barr adopts a similar discourse to describe the full extent of the poorly sanitised environment when his protagonist refers to it as a "vast desert of deadly gas" (2007, p.406). It is this vastness that is comparative to Burke's aesthetic where Barr uses a natural landscape, the desert, to metaphorically describe the consuming fog. In using the desert to describe the 'deadly gas', Barr projects a sense of natural hegemony which destabilises the relationship between nature and humanity. The Sublime is not only evoked through the vastness of the fog but also through the fog's effect on the individual. When describing the fog, the narrator says the following:

> The street was silent and dark in the ominously still fog, and what now froze me with horror was meeting the same deadly, stifling atmosphere

> that was in the rooms. In falling I brought down the window, and shut out the poisonous air. Again I revived, and slowly the true state of things began to dawn on me.
>
> (Barr, 2007, p.406)

Once again, we can return to Gifford's first feature of the post-pastoral, that is a presence of "awe in attention to the natural world" (1999, p.152) leading to humility, in order to address the power of nature in Barr's environment. The 'awe', that Gifford describes, is contingent with the feeling of the Sublime that Burke addresses in his treatise. Once again, it is possible to establish a connection between the post-pastoral and the Gothic, particularly because the Sublime was a notable effect of the Gothic. Barr's story does highlight a sense of humility by rendering the narrator still or 'frozen with horror' as a result of coming face to face with the fog. This pausing of humanity, caused by a mixing of the artificial and natural environment, then leads to the narrator noting that it "dawn[ed] on me" (Barr, 2007, p.406). This phrase conjures a realisation of nature's powerful force, and therefore the use of the Sublime in 'The Doom of London' not only evokes an ecological consciousness but it also contributes to the reading of Barr's *fin de siècle* story as a piece of post-pastoral writing.

Despite most of the story taking place in London City, and Barr's continuous allusions to the 'vapours' that contributed to the deadly fog, the Thames is not referenced until the final page. Barr chooses to do this at the moment "[a] western gale had sprung up" (2007, p.409) and also at the point in which the protagonist escapes the City on the train that travels "across the Thames near Kew" (2007, p.409). This is a revealing moment in the narrative that is concomitant with the theme of apocalypticism. Based on the notion that the origin of apocalypse stemmed from the Book of Revelation, Mills argues that "[a]n apocalypse is an uncovering, a revelation to the eyes of the observer of what has been veiled up to this point" (2007, p.55). Similarly, in Barr's narrative, the Thames has been veiled up to this point and

has only had indirect references through an ecological discourse. It is not until the end of the story, where the protagonist reaches a level of safety away from the dangers of the atmosphere, that Barr decides to unveil the natural source of the fog and thus references the River. This is significant as we can almost observe a developing consciousness emerge throughout Barr's story, with the implicit 'vapours' signifying an awareness of ecology and finally, the use of the proper noun 'Thames' that signifies a consciousness has been attained.

It is also significant that the River is revealed as the protagonist reaches an unpolluted atmosphere, thus an alignment between a clean environment and the Thames is formed. This alignment could be an indicator of a century that had seen the Thames go from being a sickness induced waterway to a river of improved Victorian sanitation. This reach to the 'unpolluted environment' is also consistent with Britain's projection of a clean image of the natural environment in order to promote a strong nation. The idea of the River being associated with the rural sphere of England, and therefore a symbol of its identity, is typically evocative of the poetry from Chapter Two that engaged with nationhood and the Thames during the *fin de siècle*.

3.2 Grant Allen's 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe' (1897)

Grant Allen's Canadian identity, like Barr's, once again demonstrates how different nations were brought together through the act of writing the Thames, mirroring the imperialist nature of the Empire where different nations across the world became unified under British rule. However, whereas writing about the Thames emphasised a natural unification, imperialism highlighted a politically-constructed one. In addition to the link with the Thames and nationhood that echoes themes from Chapter Two of this thesis, Allen played a fundamental role in the valorisation of the short story that stemmed from a consumerist-driven culture where

leisure (including the short story) was increasingly being consumed (Flanders, 2006), connecting Allen to Chapter One. Allen's prolific writing career means that it is possible to consider 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe' as yet another commodity of leisure. However, this chapter scrutinises the story in the context of its potential, as I argue, to augment an ecological awareness. This does not mean that Allen wrote with an aim to promote ecological issues, despite the fact he popularised Darwinism (Morton, 2005), because his work was quite widespread, in terms of the amount he produced and also the fact that he contributed to a number of different genres – both in content and form. For example, his venture into science fiction produced the time travelling novel *The British Barbarians* (Allen, 1895), which Allen describes as a 'Hill-top novel' – and defines this as a book containing his "own original thinking […] on some important point in human society or human evolution" (Allen, 1895, p.xiii). In ecocritical terms, this could be viewed as Allen's foray into anthropocentric writing, but more significantly highlights the multivalency of his work.

'The Thames Valley Catastrophe' was first published in *The Strand Magazine*, a publication, as March-Russell describes, which "quickly became the archetypal model for the middlebrow English journal with its mix of romantic short fictions, human-interest stories, celebrity interviews and attractive presentation" (2009, p.48). Therefore, if we consider Allen's tale being interwoven amongst fact and fiction, it is possible to suggest the ecological validity of its subject. In other words, although Allen offers a cultural understanding of our relationship with the natural environment, it is possible, as the story was published amid fact and fiction, for it to be understood as a way of making its readers more aware of the natural world. This becomes even more so when the content of the story is considered alongside an underlying ecological narrative. *The Strand* magazine also published several stories by Robert Barr (Barr, 1977) and Fred M. White (Glashan, 2017), demonstrating how these three writers,

including Allen, could be linked together not only through their writings about the Thames, but also through different publishing houses (see Appendix Three).

During his career, Allen contributed articles of geological subject-matter to several specialised and mainstream magazines, including titles such as 'Evolution and Geological Time' (1880) to *Gentleman's Magazine*, and 'Geology and History' to *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* in June of 1880 (cited in Morton, 2005). This highlights some degree of knowledge and awareness of geological issues and, coupled with his decision to set his story within the Thames Valley, could suggest that Allen was subtly referring to a supposed fault that ran beneath the Thames (Whitaker, 1889). Furthermore, Allen's familiarity with the Thames, and his geographical knowledge of it, had already been established in the public eye as Allen had been responsible for writing the introduction to Wyllie's *The Tidal Thames* (1892), a series of Thames drawings. In addition to Allen's knowledge and interest in geology, the writing of the 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe' coincides with volcanoes being of scientific interest, which was likely on account of one of the deadliest volcanoes on record erupting on the island of Krakatoa in 1883.

The ecological aftermath of the Krakatoa volcano was felt across the globe, and was widely reported in newspapers. This meant that volcanoes seeped into the British public consciousness, resulting in volcanic eruptions filtering through to cultural spheres, as exemplified by Allen's tale. However, by setting the volcano within a more familiar landscape such as the Thames Valley, Allen strengthens the reader's association with the destructive volcano. The cultural significance of a volcano in the context of sanitation, or the cleansing of environments, can be found through consideration of Hawaiian mythology. Matsuoka et al

(1996, cited in Nimmo, 2011) explains how Pele, the goddess of volcanoes, used the destructive force of a volcano to highlight the importance of the natural landscape:

> Some believe that the lava flows represented her way of telling people that they were not properly caring for the land… If people did not *malama* [protect, honour] the *'aina* [land], then Pele had a way of cleansing it by restoring it to its most primal form.
> (Matsuoka et al, 1996, cited in Nimmo, 2011, p.191)

This cultural association strengthens the view that volcanoes could be seen as a symbol of cleansing the natural environment. It subsequently highlights the dominance of nature and its consequences, which are also seen in Allen's story through the eruption that destroys the lives of humanity but also artificial, manmade, landmarks. Allen's blending of the real (the Krakatoan disaster) and the fictional (the eruption in the Thames Valley) is consistent with the location of the publication of his story, *The Strand Magazine*, where stories of fact and fiction were commonplace and this allows a degree of continuity to take place between the story and the Victorian audience.

Whilst Allen does not refer directly to the Krakatoan disaster, he does refer to another historical volcanic eruption when he makes two references to the Western disaster of Pompeii. The first reference occurs as the narrator is discussing the difference between American and British volcanoes with the American geologist, whereas the second reference occurs as the narrator describes the eruption in the Thames Valley: "It is this complete combustion before the lava-flood reached them that I attribute the circumstances that no casts of dead bodies, like those at Pompeii, have been found in the Thames Valley Desert" (Allen, 1897, p.678). Similarly, Barr's 'The Doom of London' compared the Londoners during the fog disaster "with the inhabitants of Pompeii making merry at the foot of a volcano" (Barr, 2007, p.398). These examples indicate how Pompeii, a calamity that occurred in 79CE, was embedded within a literary consciousness and yet Krakatoa, one of the most deadly volcanic

eruptions that occurred within both Barr and Allen's lifetime, was left unmentioned. Nicholas Daly (2011) has heavily documented the cultural significance of the Pompeii disaster, which he claims was particularly prominent during the early nineteenth century. It would appear that Barr and Allen were mirroring this literary tradition. Interestingly, few British cultural references were made to Krakatoa, one example includes R. M. Ballantyne's children's adventure novel *Blown to Bits* (1889). Writing from a postcolonial ecocritical perspective (which is not discussed at length), it could be argued that these disasters were deemed insignificant due to their colonial status. In contrast, the Western disaster within Italy, despite the time lapse, is still, at the end of the nineteenth century, contained within the writers' consciousness and is deemed important enough to mention.

Allen's story begins in the setting of the Thames Valley and, along with the protagonist or unnamed narrator who observes a volcanic eruption, traverses towards the City of London. Interesting to note is that the movement of the protagonist and the narrative is, ecologically, juxtaposed with the direction of the Thames, which flows towards London before reaching the sea. Prior to the eruption of the volcano, an ecocentric narrative is suggested by means of dialogue between the protagonist and an American geologist, named George W. Ward, who talks to him about volcanic fissures. Bleiler criticises the American character, claiming that through his inclusion, Allen "destroys any possible conviction" (1990, p.11). However, I suggest that it is possible to view the American as an effective narrative device that successfully alludes to three ecological factors within Allen's tale. The first is humanity's awareness of the environment; the second, is humanity's continued apathetic response to these issues, which is later exemplified through the characters who dismiss the narrator's warning of the volcano, and the third, is that Allen highlights the potential damaging impact of nature upon humanity. Through his criticism, Bleiler inadvertently recognises the effectiveness of the

American character as he explains how the protagonist "has been psychologically prepared, he recognizes what is happening, tries to warn others, flees, and manages to save his wife and children" (Bleiler, 1990, p.11). The very fact that the protagonist has been prepared for the disaster, through being made aware of volcanic fissures by the American, establishes an ecological consciousness that takes place within the story.

This consciousness emerges as the protagonist attempts to caution those around him, whilst successfully escaping the catastrophe and becoming a survivor. Through his survival, he is able to relate the damaging potential of nature on humanity by narrating the story. This rousing of ecological consciousness through the protagonist's survival can be likened to Gifford's post-pastoral. In relation to his fifth feature of the post-pastoral, Gifford argues that "with consciousness comes conscience" (Gifford, 1999, p.163) and it is this consciousness that gives humanity the "opportunity to take responsibility for its ecological relationships and its ultimate survival" (1999, p.165). At the beginning of the story, the narrator has a lack of knowledge in relation to volcanism, but as his consciousness grows, he is able to escape the flow of lava which then leads to his survival. The transient inclusion of the American character, Allen's refusal to develop the character beyond his nationality and vocation, and the fact that he is killed, is consistent with characteristics of the short story. As March-Russell observantly mentions, "the form is not necessarily suited to character development" (2009, p.120). This is significant as the American character is arguably used to negotiate an ecological consciousness from the beginning of the story, demonstrated when the narrator reflects that "the mere accident of my meeting him gave me my first inkling of the very existence of that singular phenomenon" (Allen, 1897, p.675). The narrator also concedes that he had never heard of 'fissure-eruptions' before meeting the American, reinforcing the

notion that he is a narrative device, born out of the short story genre to prompt the protagonist's emerging ecological awareness.

Daly has insightfully described the use of volcanoes within cultural works as a "theatrical special effect" (2011, p.256) and has described the rise of the volcano narrative in the eighteenth century as a form of "popular spectacle" (2011, p.257). Daly compares the eighteenth and nineteenth century fascination with volcanoes to the rise in the use of pyrotechnics, which strengthens the performative use of the volcano within Allen's tale. It is important that we do not simply regard an eco-performance as a 'natural disaster' that takes place within a text, and the need to differentiate is explored later in this chapter. Through the story's title together with the discourse employed within it, the suggestion of a performance is created and, given the transient nature of performances, this mirrors the shifting attitudes towards the River that existed during the nineteenth century due to wavering levels of sanitation. Patrick Parrinder explains how, "*Catastrophe.* Like *comedy* and *tragedy,* is a word of theatrical origin which has come to be applied to social and natural events" (1995, p.61). Therefore Allen's application of a traditionally theatrical term to describe the natural process of a volcanic eruption compounds the notion of performance with natural ecology. From this, I would argue, an ecological performativity is established, reinforced by the fact that, just like a river and flowing lava, a performance continually shifts, changes and adapts. However, the lava, eventually, solidifies and its motion comes to an end, just like a performance whereas a river, through the stages of the water cycle, is continuous. This sense of impermanence and permanence that is ecocritically suggested by the story through the lava and the River respectively resonates with social processes of sanitation, in that the lava symbolises the pollutants that entered the Thames. The impact of having another natural element (the lava)

acting as a pollutant is that Allen's tale becomes primarily ecological, where an environmental sanitation is suggested.

Just as the river's cycle is continuous, humanity's consciousness shifts between different subjects, particularly when it is viewing a performance. We can thus establish a link between humanity's fluctuating consciousness and the motion of the river, meaning that the Thames Valley is being used to signify an ecological consciousness through the performance of the lava in Allen's short story. This is reinforced through the notion of having the volcano as suggestively the main protagonist of the story. In essence, an eco-performance is formed within Allen's tale that illustrates varying degrees of attitudes towards the Thames that was prompted by the lava in the story, and pollution in society, exemplifying not only an ecological consciousness through the story's characters, but also the readership of the nineteenth century.

This suggested eco-performance is strengthened through a discourse of spectatorship, where the narrator describes how "I realised that I was a spectator of the greatest calamity which had befallen a civilised land within the ken of history" (Allen, 1897, p.679). The protagonist's awareness becomes clear here through his realisation, but yet, the scale of the catastrophe is conveyed theatrically as he regards himself as a 'spectator', and not as a potential victim. The natural environment forms the basis of an eco-performance and, in this case, it is the lava flowing through the Thames Valley, whilst humanity, as spectators, are positioned along the periphery. This is negotiated through the narrative as the protagonist runs alongside the Thames, where the lava flows. Allen also gives the impression of an audience viewing the 'performance' as he describes how "[h]alf the population was gathered on the slope, looking down with wonder on the flood of fire" (Allen, 1897, p.680). The dramatic effect of the natural disaster causes humanity to gather, like an audience, and the ecological

consciousness emerges through the act of watching. By ecocritically reading the lava flowing along the Thames as a performance within Allen's tale, the River becomes embedded within the reader's consciousness and their gaze is directed towards the waterway.

In order to strengthen the idea of an eco-performance, and to avoid the simplification of compounding words, it is worth considering the ecological processes that are suggested in 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe'. Allen draws attention to these processes by engaging with the aesthetic experience of the Sublime, as the narrator describes how "[i]t was a terrible and yet I felt even then a beautiful sight" (1897, p.678). The sensation felt by the narrator is augmented when he sees the eruption of the volcano. The description of the volcanic geological process also contributes to the notion of eco-performativity within Allen's short story, as shown here:

> Barriers of red-hot lava formed themselves for a moment now and again where the outer edge or a vanguard of the inundation had cooled a little on the surface by exposure: and over these temporary dams, fresh cataracts of white-hot material poured themselves afresh into the valley beyond it. After a while, as the deeper portion of basalt was pushed out, all was white alike.
>
> (Allen, 1897, p.678)

Allen describes the cooling process of the outer layers of the lava as it is exposed to the atmosphere before it comes into contact with the waters of the Thames. By directing the reader's attention to this process, Allen makes the reader aware of our natural environment. Moreover, the role of the River is also significant during this process as, geologically, "there is hardly a volcanic eruption that has not been influenced in some ways by magma-water contact" (Schmincke, 2004, p.210). This magma-water interaction can be ecocritically interpreted through Allen's tale, as the protagonist looks "straight up stream" (1897, p.678) in search of the source of the volcano, strengthening the presence of the Thames waterway in this

scene. Interestingly, as discussed in Chapter One in relation to Ashby-Sterry's novel, going in search of the source of the Thames was commonly seen as a way of satisfying human gratification, whereas the 'source' that the narrator seeks out in Allen's tale is the centre of natural environmental cleansing. This indicates that there are two ways in which the source of the river can be read in *fin de siècle* literature, a way that favours humanity and another that highlights ecocentricism.

The key performative indicator within 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe' is the natural cleansing of the landscape through the movement of the lava as it makes its way towards the City of London. A comparison can be made here between the direction of the lava that flowed towards London, and the Pennells, who boated leisurely towards the City using the same journey, to fully illustrate the differing ecocritical narrative of anthropocentricity and ecocentricity that is being portrayed between both chapters. Also, an ecocritical reading suggested that the Pennells were altering the landscape by discarding their rubbish into the River, whereas in Allen's tale it is the solidifying lava that transforms the landscape as it prevents ecological processes such as the water cycle to continue. The notable difference here is that within the Pennells' story humanity is the cause for the change in the landscape, whereas within Allen's tale the landscape is being altered by nature, thus negotiating an ecocentric narrative.

This change in the landscape, caused by the lava, albeit destructive, can be interpreted as a natural cleansing of the environment. The notion of destroying the landscape, along with the pollutants and the life of nature, correlates with a theory proffered by Douglas (1966) that "[d]irt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment" (2002, p.2). In other words, chaos is required to

order the environment. Through the volcano, Allen strips the landscape of vegetation and biodiversity as the lava flows along the Thames waterway. This can be compared to when the Thames landscape was partly stripped of its vegetation to make way for the sewage system beneath the embankments, during the Victorian period. Contrastingly, the former offers the benefit to humanity whereas the latter, within Allen's tale, augments the destructive forces of nature. By the time of writing his short story, the embankments and the sewage system would have been firmly in the consciousness of the Victorian public and thus, Allen highlights how nature can override all modes of human interference of the landscape and can impose its own natural sanitation, which can also involve the permanent removal of humanity from living on its land. The correlation between humanity's concrete and nature's lava can be likened to Victorian discourse on sanitation.

The volcanic reaction taking place beneath the earth that detrimentally impacted on humanity above the earth in Allen's tale, is metaphorically comparable to the way in which the changes underground, through the implementation of the sewers along the Thames, favourably impacted sanitation on the upper ground in Victorian society. Interestingly, not only has Allen focused the reader's attention on the sanitised transformations along the Thames during the nineteenth century, but his story also resonates with the geological discourse of his contemporaries. In 1889, eight years before the publication of Allen's tale, geologist William Whitaker published the *Guide to the Geology of London and the Neighbourhood*, where he stated that "[a]t (or near) the Thames the beds are thrown down on the north by a fault which has been proved to run along the valley for some miles" (1889, p.10). Whilst there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that Allen was aware of this fault, his knowledge of the subject of geology was evident given the content of his aforementioned publications.

By describing the flow of the lava from the volcano, Allen's language resonates with an industrialism familiar with the Victorians: the implementation of the sewer system. This language serves as a symbol of sanitation, which can be linked to social progress. Through this, a link between a natural cleansing of the landscape and an artificial cleansing of the environment is established. The moving lava is described as follows:

> I was aware at first just of a moving red wall, like dull red-hot molten metal […] Next instant, a hot wave seemed to strike my face, like the blast of heat that strikes one in a glasshouse when you stand in front of the furnace.
>
> (Allen, 1897, p.676/7)

To begin with, Allen hints at the physical power of nature by using the dynamic verb 'strike' to describe the heat of the lava touching the face of the protagonist. However, it is the reference to a 'wall', an artificial construct, which is significant in cultivating ideas of sanitation. The 'wall' that is referred to by Allen is akin to Bazalgette's process of building "a concave river wall" (Halliday, 1999, p.160), as the latter implemented the sewer system. Just as the concrete used by Bazalgette was permanent, we are reminded that the present state of the Thames within Allen's story exists as a "black lake of basalt" (Allen, 1897, p.674), as it is being told retrospectively. Many Victorian users of the Thames were aware of the concrete beneath the surface of the water, as George Dunlop Leslie pointed out in his travel work, "large lumps of concrete being laid along the edges beneath the water, which are not very nice for punters" (1888, p.52). It is therefore interesting that Allen's protagonist's immediate reaction to the lava is to describe it as a wall, which could be an indicator of the changes relating to sanitation that had taken place during the Victorian period.

Within the same quotation, the protagonist changes his description of the lava from a 'wall' to a 'wave'. It is possible that as the character becomes more ecologically conscious, his discourse changes to mirror this consciousness, particularly as 'wave' is a word that is associated with water and could thus be considered a more natural discourse. The protagonist's emerging environmental perception, through seeing the consequences of nature (the volcanic eruption), as shown through the narrator's shift in language, evokes a Giffordian post-pastoral reading of the scene. His questioning of whether culture is nature or vice versa becomes apparent in the use of language within Allen's tale. It is reasonable to suggest that nature's processes have impacted on humanity's use of language, enabling an emerging ecological consciousness that has been achieved through the process of looking.

From the beginning of the story, through the act of looking, the narrator places himself in a position of power only for it to be challenged by natural forces throughout. The notion of attributing power to the occupier of the gaze resonates with the relationship between nature and humanity. Arguably, being in the position of the viewer automatically gives the protagonist, and heretofore humanity, power over the natural landscape, hinting at an anthropocentric relationship between the two. This echoes the way in which the Thames also belonged within the sphere of Victorian science during the nineteenth century, and therefore it was subject to a scientific gaze as a consequence of its poor sanitation. For example, medical persons including John Snow, and the acclaimed scientist Michael Faraday, contributed to discussions on the River's cleanliness (Halliday, 1999). It was this 'scientific gaze' that ultimately led to an ecological consciousness resulting in the cleansing of the Thames. However, Allen undermines the hegemonic relationship between the occupier of the gaze (humanity) and the receiver of the gaze (the natural landscape) by attributing power to the forces of nature.

As he reflects upon the catastrophe, Allen's protagonist recalls how he "was one of the earliest and fullest observers of the sad series of events" (Allen, 1897, p.674). His awareness of his role as an 'observer' suggests a 'consciousness' that resonates with our understanding of the natural environment from an ecocritical perspective. As Gifford notes, it is our "consciousness, which has for centuries appeared to set us apart from nature" (1999, p.165). In this instance, it is the protagonist's consciousness of his vision that distinguishes humanity from nature, which strengthens the former and an anthropocentric hegemony is constructed. Similarly, in an ecocritical study of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), where specific reference is given to the creature's gaze, Helena Feder argues that "[s]ight, like language, represents subjectivity, which really boils down to power. Here vision serves as a mark of consciousness" (2014, p.70). Feder's analysis of *Frankenstein* is comparable to this chapter's analysis of Allen's short story, because the significance of sight is crucial to forming a consciousness, specifically an ecological one.

The continual references to sight, and the protagonist's line of vision, I suggest functions to transform the human-centeredness of the gaze to a mode of ecocentricity. Examples of these references to vision include "I turned my eye upstream [and] I glanced back to see" (1897, p.676). Both of these references highlight humanity as being occupier of the gaze, and humanity therefore occupies the power, which undermines the notion of ecocentricity. However, Allen soon reminds us that nature has the stronghold as the protagonist describes the effect upon himself, from watching the natural eruption:

> I might have gazed at it too long – and one minute more would have sufficed for my destruction – had not a cry from the tow-path a little farther up attracted my attention. It was a wild, despairing cry, like that of a man being overpowered and murdered.
>
> (Allen, 1897, p.676)

Allen shows how the gaze, along with humanity's aesthetic indulgence, could have led to the character's demise. Whilst the narrator has been prompted to move, which has consequently saved his life, by a cry from humanity, it is actually the erupting volcano that has caused this 'cry' in the first instance. Thus, it is nature that has caused both the cry and the narrator's escape. Ultimately, man taking delight in the aesthetics of nature almost led to self-destruction but more significantly, vision is employed as a way of signposting an ecological consciousness, thus augmenting another instance of ecocentricity within Allen's tale.

Through humanity's gaze of nature within 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe', a literary transition emerges from Gifford's notion of the 'pastoral' to the 'post-pastoral'. For a brief time within the story, the Thames Valley is constructed as a place of pastoral Englishness in a similar way to Edmund Gosse's poem, 'The Shepherd of the Thames' (1885), which was examined in Chapter Two. The narrator describes "the stream divided into three separate branches, exquisitely backed up by the gentle green slopes" (Allen, 1897, p.676), creating an idealised image that is akin to pastoralism. Byerly (2013, p.96) has observantly mentioned how the Thames Valley was commonly regarded as a site of pastoralism in contrast with the industrialization of the City during the *fin de siècle*, whereas Parrinder claims that its location was used "for catastrophe fictions" (1995, p.58), to which there were many as he explains further:

> Thames valley catastrophe stories at the end of the nineteenth century is a result not only of London's pre-eminence as the imperial capital and hub of the world's trading system, but of the threat that suburbanization posed to the countryside, and, more specifically, the growth of the modern transport network which turned the river above London into a leisure resource for the capital.
>
> (Parrinder, 1995, p.59)

As has already been established the progress of sanitation played a major role in transforming the Thames into a leisure portal. Here, Parrinder highlights how these developments impacted on the literary representation of the Thames Valley, and how catastrophe functions as a symbol of modernity. This is in accordance with the narrative of progress that can be aligned with the Thames, as suggested by this thesis, and I further suggest that the catastrophe forms the representation of the post-pastoral within Allen's tale.

The transition, from the pastoral to the post-pastoral, is evident as Allen's narrator describes the natural environment before witnessing the volcanic fissure. Just as the pastoral was associated with Englishness in Chapter Two, Allen also makes this connection here:

> I could never pass that typical English view without a glance of admiration; this morning, I pulled up my bicycle for a moment, and cast my eye down stream with more than my usual enjoyment of the smooth blue water and the tall white poplars whose leaves showed their gleaming silver in the breeze beside it.
>
> (Allen, 1897, p.676)

The narrator's appreciation of nature and the softness of the image is created by the natural workings of the water, the poplars and the breeze. This idealisation of nature is consistent with the pastoral tradition (Gifford, 1999). However, almost immediately, the pastoral vision is interrupted and we see the emergence of the 'post-pastoral' as the narrator continues, "I might have gazed at it too long-and one minute more would have sufficed for my destruction" (Allen, 1897, p.676). The emotive lexis 'destruction' highlights the dominance of nature over humanity and, it subsequently serves as a way for the reading public, and the character's themselves, to be more well-informed of nature's destructive potential, and to be more conscious "of a creative-destructive universe" (Gifford, 1999, p.153), in accordance with ideas of the post-pastoral. Allen's transition between pastoral to post-pastoral is constructed via the powerful gaze of humanity upon the natural environment, a power that he undermines in his

narrative. In doing so, Allen's tale could be suggesting that the ultimate gaze lays with nature and it far surpasses humanity's gaze.

The narrator's personal consciousness, exemplified through his giving a firsthand retrospective account of the disaster, becomes a message for others to develop an awareness of humanity's relationship with nature. The consciousness is evoked through the narrator's continual insistence that his narration of events are "purely personal [and not a] public catastrophe" (Allen, 1897, p.678). This division highlights the need for every individual to develop an ecological consciousness, and to be mindful that ecological concerns are not necessarily a collective issue but that they need to be addressed by the individual. Gifford writes about this notion in relation to the post-pastoral, where he proffers the following:

> The post-pastoral does not so much transcend the problematics of the pastoral but explore them, seeking not a stable, complacent form of harmony in the human relationship with nature – our species' relationship with its home planet in its macro and its micro ecologies – but seeking a dynamic, self-adjusting accommodation to "discordant harmonies".
>
> (Gifford, 2014, p.28)

In this respect, Allen offers a discordance with the pastoral scene of 'blue water' and 'white poplar' by transforming the view into a catastrophe, and thus it becomes a post-pastoral vision. In contrast to the entire planet, the Thames is a micro ecology and this is shown within Allen's story, by focusing on the individual and his engagement with the natural environment.

Whilst Allen chooses not to offer a collective viewpoint of the narrative, by the end of the story, the protagonist enters a mode of epiphany where he transcends his "personal relief" (Allen, 1897, p.684). He relinquishes his own personal relationship with the environment by elaborating on it to consider how "[t]he universality of the catastrophe made each man feel as though it were selfishness to attach too great an importance at such a crisis to

his own personal losses" (1897, p.684). This creates the sense that whilst a consciousness concerning the environment should stem from the individual, in terms of scale, it should then become a shared issue. Allen continues by describing the atmosphere after the catastrophe as a "universal gloom" (1897, p.684) and claims that humanity "had all lost heart" (1897, p.684), highlighting not only the physical damaging impact of nature but also the emotional effect it had on the population.

The narrator's self-realisation acts as an epiphany that is consistent with the short story form. As March-Russell insightfully notes "epiphanies are frequently deflated so that the protagonist's self-revelation is drained of significance" (2009, p.120). Whilst I have argued that the narrator's sense of self has been overshadowed by how the catastrophe has impacted on all inhabitants of the Thames Valley and London, this mode of epiphany can also be linked to the protagonist's ecological consciousness. His own sense of self has not only been replaced by the rest of humanity, but rather the cause of this 'epiphany' has been driven by the volcanic fissure. This notion of the collective and the individual in relation to the engagement (through looking) with the natural world can be likened to historical discourse on poor sanitation that frequently reported in the collective sense, for example Schneer notes how the nineteenth-century cholera outbreaks in London killed "more than thirty-six thousand in all" (2005, p.146). Therefore, Allen's tale can be seen to raise awareness of the deadly impact of nature by use of the short story form, positioning it within the realm of Victorian progress by metaphorically suggesting sanitation through a natural environmental cleansing.

This metaphorical sanitation through the volcano can also be linked to the pleasure that was derived from the River through leisure, as explored in Chapter One. Nine years before the publication of Allen's story and five years after the disaster of Krakatoa, in

1888, British artist William Ashcroft was commissioned by the Royal Society to document, via a series of paintings, the atmospheric effects of the Krakatoa eruption, and he chose the River above Chelsea to record these sunsets. Ashcroft therefore formed a connection, as Allen does, between the Thames and volcanoes. Poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote a letter to science journal *Nature* in 1884, where he referred to the remarkable sunsets and their changing aesthetic quality that were caused by the Krakatoan eruption (Flint, 2000). Given the scientific publication of Hopkins's correspondence, and yet the aesthetic focus of his letter, the blending of science and culture in relation to both the geological and aesthetic impact of the volcano becomes evident, and this blending is exemplified in 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe'. Allen directly refers to the visual potential of the volcano by claiming that "one might almost have imagined a splendid triumph of the scene-painter's art" (1897, p.678). This emphasis on deriving pleasure from the aesthetic of the Thames echoes the pleasure bestowed by the authors of Chapter One, who documented their recreation upon the River.

The influence of the Krakatoa eruption on art and literature echoes another, more famous, volcanic eruption that impacted on cultural works of its time. Jonathan Bate (2001, p.97) describes how the Indonesian volcano Mount Tambora erupted in 1815 that led to the most horrible summer on record in 1816, later referred to as 'the year without a summer'. The reference to Tambora is significant as it shows how cultural patterns of the Romantic period relating to humanity's relationship with the natural world, were being recreated during the *fin de siècle* through literature such as Allen's. For example, Bate articulates that Byron's poem 'Darkness' was "most directly responsive to the global climate change of the Romantics' own time" (2001, p.102). Similarly, Carmen Casaliggi and Porscha Fermanis claim that Byron's poem narrates "a dark history of resource deficit and ecocrisis" (2016, p.17). Both of these assertions show how ecological catastrophes could be culturally understood through

literature, and I argue that this pattern also emerged during the *fin de siècle* as a response to the Krakatoa eruption.

Byron's poem was just one of the works that responded to the lack of sunlight during 1816, and it was conceived alongside a number of other famous works. These include Percy Shelley's *Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni* (1816); Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and John Polidori's 'The Vampyre' (1819), which were all produced during the summer of 1816 where all of the writers spent time together in Geneva. By comparing the production of these Gothic works to the construction of Allen's story, it once again instils the view of the latter being deemed a Gothic text. However, I would insist on an ecocritical taxonomy here (in addition to viewing it as Gothic), because of the impact that real ecological fissures have had on culture. So, in effect, nature has influenced writing in the work of the Romantics and Allen's tale, highlighting the significance between the real and the fictional. This can suitably be applied to the fictional narrative of environmental cleansing of the landscape by the volcano in Allen's story, and the real sanitation issues that pervaded the Thames during the nineteenth century, which led to progress in public health.

The link between Allen's story and the Romantics is enhanced through consideration of Allen's interest in Shelley. Peter Morton (2005), Allen's biographer, has recorded how Allen ordered a copy of Shelley's first official biography that was released in 1886. Whilst this does not establish a direct Shelleyan influence in Allen's story, the way in which the two authors apply the volcanic motif in their work is quite similar. With reference to poems including *Alastor, Mont Blanc,* and 'To a Skylark', Paige Tovey argues that "Shelley, in particular, gives much emphasis to volcanoes and their both literal and symbolic power for revolutionary cleansing destruction and subsequent rebirth and renewal" (2013, p.178). In a

similar way, I suggest that Allen's tale offers both a literal cleansing of the natural environment, and a symbolic reading of sanitation during the nineteenth century. Both of these situate ecology amid the public consciousness of a Victorian readership.

The volcano suggests a political and an ecological didactic message within Allen's story. The fact that the destructive eruption of the volcano results in the physical displacement of the government from London to Manchester, could hint at a political message where the City is always seen at the centre of governmental power, including its position as the core of the British Empire. Therefore, through a displacement of power to the North of England, it could be argued that an evocation of nature's dominance is prevalent. In addition, the Thames can once again be associated with the notion of displaced identities that was so prominent in Chapter Two. The ecological message, however, becomes clearer through an analysis of the lava and the environmental aftermath. Tovey elaborates on her point, and states that Shelley was

> interested in both the empirical and the symbolic. Thus a combined approach to the poetic imagery represented, in this case by volcanoes, is useful and informs Shelley's Romantic notions of revolutionary cleansing by fire.
>
> (Tovey, 2013, p.179)

Similarly, Allen may have been suggesting a political cleansing through the use of fire, in the symbolic sense. However, Allen was also interested in the role of experience or particularly the sensual aspect of experiencing the natural environment. This becomes evident in relation to sight, aesthetics and the volcano within his tale. In his first book *Physiological Aesthetics*, Allen highlights his interest in the senses, and places sight at the top of "the aesthetic hierarchy" (1877, p.134), which is clearly evident within his story through his emphasis on the image of the volcano.

The aesthetics of both the Thames and the lava contribute to the formation of apocalypticism within Allen's tale, and I suggest that this occurs through a merging of the Burkean Sublime and Beautiful. Barr also engaged with the Sublime within 'The Doom of London', however his Sublime was evoked through the vastness of space that had been polluted by the fog. Allen's use of a volcano, which is also understood from its vastness (see also Duffy, 2013), can also be accorded with the Sublime. The linking of the image of a volcano with the Sublime is strengthened if we consider Philip Shaw's historical study *The Sublime* (2005). Shaw describes the sensation of the Sublime as a "threat of violence [that] is mitigated by the effects of distance: an erupting volcano may well induce terror in the mind of one about to be engulfed by lava, but to the distant spectator the sight could be experienced as a form of delight" (Shaw, 2005, p.6). Therefore, the volcanic landscape together with humanity's aesthetic experience is characteristic of the Sublime. Allen's 'apocalyptic metaphor' is formed partly through the aestheticism of the Sublime, coupled with the suggested Shelleyan volcanic motif. This motif means that Allen's tale leans towards a Romantic apocalypse that, as Matthew Bradley (2012) argues, was prevalent in the Victorian *fin de siècle* imagination.

Shaw's connection between the volcano and the Sublime is evocative of eighteenth century Kantian philosophy. With specific reference to volcanoes in *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Immanuel Kant argues that the fortitude of natural processes enables humanity to reflect on our relationship with it. He claims that

> volcanoes in all their violence of destruction […] exhibit our faculty of resistance as insignificantly small in comparison with their might. But the sight of them is the more attractive, the more fearful it is, provided that we are in security; and we readily call these objects sublime, because they raise the energies of the soul above their accustomed height, and discover in us a faculty of resistance of a quite different kind, which gives us courage to measure ourselves against the apparent almightiness of nature.
>
> (Kant, 1892, p.125)

Kant's views on the 'almightiness of nature' are both consistent and at odds with the argument put forward in this chapter, which suggests an ecocentric relationship between nature and humanity. It is consistent as it elevates the role of nature in the nature-human relationship, by augmenting its destructive power, and this notion is akin to Gifford's principles of the post-pastoral. However, Kant's diction is somewhat reductive in the realm of ecocriticism because, as Gifford (1999) suggests in relation to the collapse of the nature-human binary, ecocriticism has gone beyond the notion of seeing nature and culture as a binary. It is significant to include Kant's views when looking at Allen's tale primarily because not only does Kant make reference to a volcano, but Allen's tale also shows the most destruction (out of the three stories). In addition, given Allen's scientific knowledge, the story itself is underpinned by relevant geological thought. Allen's narrator views the volcano from a safe place as his 'security' is the side-lines of the Thames, enabling him to experience the Sublime from a distance.

As suggested, Allen's 'apocalyptic metaphor' is constructed through the blending of Burke's two aesthetic categories and so, the Burkean Beautiful emerges through the narration of the story. Talking in the story's present, at the beginning of the tale, the narrator recalls how "most men still living can well remember a gracious and smiling valley, threaded in the midst by a beautiful river" (Allen, 1897, p.674). By locating the 'beautiful river' in memory, and therefore in the past, the reader is made aware of the transient image of the 'beautiful river' that, at that point, exists in Allen's story. The 'beautiful river' is then replaced with a "Glassy Rock Desert" or a "black lake of basalt" (Allen, 1897, p.674). This comparison to the 'desert', a notably Sublime landscape (Duffy, 2013) shows the transition of the Thames landscape from the Beautiful to the Sublime. Allen's use of both the Sublime and Beautiful, as exemplified, to describe the same space of the Thames Valley, causes a blending of aesthetics that constructs the 'apocalyptic metaphor'.

The unification of the Sublime and Beautiful is once again conjured as the narrator observes the lava flowing through the Thames Valley. He describes how "[i]t was a terrible and yet I felt even then a beautiful sight […] molten gold" (Allen, 1897, p.678). The use of the word 'molten' strengthens the notion of a blending together of the Sublime and Beautiful aesthetics. The combined feeling of terror through the Sublime and admiration through beauty culminates in a post-pastoral effect that raises an ecological consciousness in the form of the short story. Allen's interest in aesthetic theory and the two feelings here relate to his writings on pleasure and pain and how these sensations are interrelated, in *Physiological Aesthetics*.

Many of Allen's other works were steeped in scientific thought; he wrote *Charles Darwin* (1885), a biography of the naturalist, and shared a friendship with Herbert Spencer – another scientist who advocated ideas of evolution, meaning that there may have been a scientific undercurrent to Allen's story. Allen's apocalyptic metaphor, whilst secularised and environmental, is consistent with the insurgence of Darwinian thought and religious doubt that occupied late Victorian society. This is achieved as Allen positions nature at the forefront of his story and religion in the background, thus mirroring subtle changes that were taking place during this time. The protagonist describes reaching "Hedsor Church – whose shell still stands, scorched and charred, by the edge of the desert" (Allen, 1897, p.678). The reduction of the church to a shell on account of the powerful, natural, lava augments the 'almightiness of nature' that Kant described. As ideas of purity and impurity are grounded in religious discourse (Douglas, 1966), the significance of religion in Allen's tale is that through destroying the church, a disorder is formed as a way of establishing an understanding of the ecocentric relationship that exists between nature and humanity. It further promotes an ecological sensibility that was emerging during the Victorian period.

3.3 Fred M. White's 'The River of Death' (1904)

Fred M. White was born in West Bromwich, England, contrasting with Barr and Allen's non-English identity, as they were born in Scotland and Canada respectively. These places of birth are pertinent because they support the idea, examined in Chapter Two, that the Thames unifies different national identities through writing, proposing a natural identity instead. This can be considered here because of White's birthplace in the North of England, and the River's location in the South, meaning that the two become unified through White writing about the Thames in 'The River of Death'. Unlike his contemporaries, White kept a low profile, socially, but his high visibility within different periodicals during the *fin de siècle*, I argue, demonstrates his prolificacy as a short story writer. Therefore, his inclusion in this thesis, as part of the network of Thames writers (see Appendix Three), stems from an abundance of information relating to White's literary output, and the periodicals in which he published alongside several other writers.

As a regular short story writer of the *fin de siècle*, White arguably contributed to the valorisation of the short story that was driven by a new era of leisure where consumerism was abundant. He wrote for several of the mainstream periodicals during the late Victorian and the Edwardian period. For example, White was published along with Barr, Allen, Walter Besant, Elizabeth Pennell, and Conrad in the *Pall Mall Magazine* (Thomas, 2018). He also wrote frequently alongside Barr and Allen for *Chamber's Journal* (Thomas, 2018), where he first became published, and where he published another river-based tale entitled 'The Silver Stream: An Idyl of the Wye' (White, 1888). This short story foregrounded recreation through a boating trip along the River Wye, describing it as "a source of interest and pleasure" (White, 1888, no page number). This shows how White's works were not limited to themes of sanitation, or apocalypticism in relation to waterways, and furthermore, connects White with

the theme of leisure explored in Chapter One. In addition, the social ecology that became evident from reading the primary texts in Chapter One also emerges within White's 'The River of Death', but through the theme of sanitation. White initially trained as a solicitor, like his father, but then abandoned the law to become a journalist and author by his thirties (Glashan, 2017). Despite White's comfortable, middle class background, there is a socialist undercurrent within his writing (see also Jones, 2013), and I argue that this resonates within his story when he describes how charges for clean water were increased, and how this would have impacted on the lower classes who could not afford clean water.

'The River of Death' was published in *Pearson's Magazine*, the second most successful illustrated monthly in the late Victorian period, next to the *Strand Magazine*. Graham Law describes *Pearson's* as "populist and imperialist" (2002, p.26), which points at both the widespread readership and the suggested authority of this magazine. This meant that it had the potential to highlight significant social issues, such as the environment and the importance of good sanitation, in order to embed these ideas within the public consciousness. White's story was part of a number of 'disaster' narratives that made up a series of six short stories entitled *The Doom of London* which, given the theme of the story, seems an unlikely source in exploring notions of progress. However, it is precisely White's execution of the 'disaster' that promotes the need for clean waters to the public.

The periodical can be considered an effective mode of communication between the writer and the public. However, journalism was also a common method of communication between the scientist and the public. In a letter to the *Medical Times and Gazette* in 1854, albeit not a public mainstream magazine, John Snow issued a warning in relation to the diseases that were being transmitted by the Thames (Picard, 2015). Within this letter, Snow compared

the mortality rates to those that were caused by the plague, which is interestingly the disease that is the subject of White's 'The River of Death'. This communication relating to sanitation between scientist, journalist, and the public, is mirrored in White's story through the dialogue between medical professional and journalist. However, the information that causes panic and social disorder amongst the public is obtained immorally, as the journalist eavesdrops on a conversation between doctor and scientist. The fact that the journalist's news report is only based on a half-truth, as the Thames is not actually polluted, emphasises the power of journalism, and subsequently the short story (which were published in periodicals), in transmitting information to the public. This meant that journalism was an effective means of shaping the public's consciousness of the natural world, including the waters of the Thames.

White's story correlates further with Victorian sanitation when, as a result of pollution, one of the characters specifies the need to "cut off the contaminated water supply" (White, 1904, p.616). This echoes Snow's observations of the impure waters being located at a street-pump in Broad Street, which resulted in his meeting with the "parish Board of Guardians who agreed to disable the pump" (Picard, 2015, no page number). The process of alerting both political officials and the public to the need for clean water is addressed within White's story, particularly when the public bombard the House of Commons to demand a solution in a way that overpowers authority. This part of the narrative could also be likened to the disruption caused during the 'Great Stink of 1858', when the pungent smell of the Thames invaded the entire Houses of Parliament, resulting in an evacuation of MPs (Halliday, 1999). It is possible to conceive that nature, or a poorly sanitised natural environment, can impact pejoratively upon humanity, but also society and politics as a whole.

Unlike Barr's and Allen's stories, White's subject-matter, as per the title, directly addresses the issue of the Thames as a sickness-induced waterway. However, despite the pejorative implications of 'death', 'disaster', or 'disease', that infiltrate White's narrative, the central message seems to be the necessity for pure waters for the ordering of society. Once again, we see the significance of Douglas's work that dirt equates to disorder, and how disorder and chaos contribute to the notion of progress, and this can be understood from White's tale. He constructs fear and disorder deliberately by silencing the scientist Professor Darbyshire through hospitalisation, who is the only character that knows the truth about the cleanliness state of the Thames. His physical awakening at the end of the narrative leads to a revelation that, as he was discovering bubonic plague, he had, in fact, put in place a sterilising process to cleanse these parts of the River. The idea that humanity, or a scientist, challenges nature through a process of sterilisation that results in the saviour of humanity, conflicts with the ecocentricism that I suggest forms the basis of White's story. However, whilst White's narrative creates a cultural space that stimulates an ecological consciousness, it is through Darbyshire's rousing of consciousness that acts as a symbol of society's rousing of an ecological consciousness, thus the potential to transform society's attitudes and behaviour towards the natural environment is enabled.

The nature-centredness in White's tale is not only commanded through the plague-induced waterway, but also through the role of the sun in reprimanding humanity. Both the river and the sun work together culturally in White's story, in the same way that they do ecologically through the water cycle, to produce a heightened ecological consciousness of humanity's need for a sanitary natural environment. The relevance of the sun in enabling readers to consider the importance of their relationship with the natural world has already been

postulated in relation to Barr's and Allen's short stories. However, due to the different representations of the sun that each story adopts, it is examined in relation to all three stories.

In contrast to the analysis of Barr's story that considered the literary link between the sun, polluted clouds and the Thames, and the analysis of Allen's tale that considered the sun in relation to the historical effects of post-volcanic eruptions, the scrutiny of White's story in relation to the sun is done by considering how it is used to heighten the tension created by the lack of water in the City. This is evident in the opening of the story, as the narrator describes how "the furnace fires of the sun poured down till every building became a vapour bath with no suspicion of a breeze to temper the fierceness of it" (White, 1904, p.612). A description of the sun is offered before any of the characters are introduced, thus emphasising the importance of nature from the beginning. Furthermore, White's language inadvertently hints at the significance of water as he refers to how the sun 'poured' or how it transforms into a 'vapour bath'. This liquid discourse demonstrates how water, particularly the Thames, is embedded within the story's consciousness. The image of the powerful sun alerts the reader that humanity are not only burdened by the deadly waterway, as per the story's title, but that they are also be oppressed by the "stifling heat" (1904, p.612). From an ecocritical perspective, this highlights the interconnectedness of different nature systems, and also demonstrates how humanity relies upon nature. For example, during the heat, humans become dehydrated and need water. However, if the water is unclean then it poses a risk to the health of humanity. As such, humanity are reminded of their dependence upon nature and their role in maintaining a clean waterway.

The concept of humanity being reminded of their position upon the earth in relation to the sun is noted by Douglas, who claims that "[t]he first Copernican revolution [was]

the discovery that only man's subjective viewpoint made the sun seem to revolve around the earth" (2002, p.98). I argue that this awakening (which informed humanity that the earth revolved around the sun) is symbolically suggested within White's tale through the overbearing heat of the sun, ensuring that humanity are aware of its power. Douglas further notes how this Copernican narrative is repeatedly rekindled, and I further suggest this renewal is made apparent within White's story, as he continually makes reference to the sun and how it is inimically affecting humanity. This representation of the sun dismisses the positive ecological impact that the sun has, including the role it plays in the water cycle where it works alongside the rivers.

The cultural relationship between the sun and a river has previously been used within literature to highlight both cleanliness and uncleanliness. This is exemplified with reference to the Romantic period, and William Blake's representation of the sun in his collection *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789), suggesting another link between the Romantic poets and the *fin de siècle* writers within this thesis. In the 'Chimney Sweeper' poem from *Innocence*, Blake establishes the link between the sun and river through the idea of cleanliness, as he describes the innocence of the young chimney sweeper at the end of a working day. He writes, "Then down a green plain leaping laughing they run / And wash in a river and shine in the Sun" (Blake, 1789, ll.15–16, cited in Wu, 2006, p.183). The sun is important here as it is required for the drying process of the children after they have entered the water. However, its brightness enhances the playful and joyful mood of the children's laughter. The significance of the sun and the river is made clearer upon reading Blake's 'Chimney Sweeper' from the *Experience* section, especially as both elements are notably absent. Their absence means that the chimney sweeper remains "A little black thing among the snow" (Blake, 1794, l.1, cited in Wu, 2006, p.195). This not only heightens the importance

of the sun and rivers in good sanitation, but their absence is also felt alongside the suggested fatal demise of the young chimney sweeper. This association between sun/rivers/sanitation and human life is similarly recognised by White in the 'River of Death'. However, White develops this association by highlighting humanity's growing awareness of it.

The growing awareness of nature's destructive potential that is formed through the imagery of the sun in White's story is consistent with a post-pastoralism. With reference to the post-pastoral in Cormac McCarthy's contemporary novel *The Road* (2006), Gifford suggests that the sun "has the effect of unifying humbled humans with their environment in the face of cycles of elemental power" (1999, p.153). This unification is evident within White's story as the sun causes a breakdown in communication between the journalists and the public when White describes, "Even the cheap press had given up the sunstroke statistics. The heat seemed to have wilted up the journalists and their superlatives" (1904, p.612). The dissipation here of the exaggeratory style of journalistic discourse highlights how nature overpowers the communicative medium between scientific discourse and the public. The suggestion that the sun, or specifically nature, has an impact upon language supports Gifford's fourth feature of the post-pastoral, where an awareness of nature becoming culture and vice versa is visible. When outlining this feature, Gifford makes reference to a Victorian text: Matthew Arnold's poem Dover Beach (1867). Gifford claims that

> [f]or Matthew Arnold, language and culture was what kept us above the anarchy of nature's wild armies on our 'darkling plain'. But if culture is nature and language is wildness at work, we can now find our place among what we know to be a creative-destructive world out there, in here, on the 'darkling plain'.
>
> (Gifford, 1999, p.163)

Therefore, whereas Arnold felt that our use of language placed us hierarchically above nature, I argue that White's story suggests the opposite by having nature impact language. In

accordance with Gifford's post-pastoral, White's characters become increasingly aware of the creative-destructive world and this is shown through the journalists' breakdown of language.

Having focussed on the role of the sun primarily, this section now considers the effect of the sun on the waterway and, in turn, its effect on humanity, which is done through consideration of White's description of the atmosphere. He writes, "[i]t was grilling hot with a sun that made the pavement gleam and tremble in the shimmering haze and there was little to quench the thirst of the multitude" (White, 1904, p.623). White alludes to the evaporation of water that takes place under a hot sun, which is detrimental to humanity given their reliance upon water. The suggestion that the sun causes the pavement, a manmade object, to tremble echoes my previous reference to *Great Expectations*, where the landscape instils fear into the protagonist Pip. However, in this instance, it is the sun that instils a fear into a pavement, a creation of man, and therefore symbolic of humanity. Through this, White constructs a post-pastoralism where humanity become aware of their environment through the fear that is invoked within them, in accordance with Gifford's notion that "awe is transformed into humility" (1999, p.163). Ecocritically, it would seem that man's awe of the 'grilling hot' sun is transformed into an awareness of how this aspect of powerful nature can affect humanity.

In addition to the suggested evaporation of water, White's use of the words 'gleam' and 'shimmering' are evocative of sanitation, as they are often used to describe an object that has been cleansed. This highlights the role of the sun in maintaining cleanliness, and the connection between the sun and the waterway is further reinforced by White as he describes how, the "Thames has been little better than a ditch stagnating under a brazen sunshine" (1904, p.613), a "stagnant ditch under a fiery sun" (1904, p.616), and also "[u]nder a blazing sun […] the packed East-end was suddenly deprived of every drop of water" (1904,

p.618). The suggestion here is that, together with the pollution, the sun has stagnated the waterway, and in turn this has affected humanity. This creates a hierarchy where the sun resides over the waterway, but both are above humanity, instilling in the reader an ecocentricity that establishes an authority of nature, through consideration of the sun in the solar system and the river on earth.

Despite the progress that had been made in terms of cleansing the Thames, which had led to the waterway being deemed a portal of recreation and a symbol of national identity, a social awareness still existed concerning the pollution that plagued its waters. George Dunlop Leslie, in his work *Our River* (1881), where he celebrated the Thames on account of its propensity to afford him his leisurely pursuits, pointed out how processes relating to sanitation often affected his recreation. Upon frequenting the Thames at Hampton in 1876, Leslie describes the following scene:

> One of the most disagreeable objects on the whole journey I noticed when passing the Royal Park at Windsor, where through a small ugly black archway the sewage from the town or Castle found its way in an entirely unsophisticated condition, right into the river, and I declined the use of the pole until I had passed the lock. Yet here were quite a number of men in punts fishing for roach, which low-minded fish is taken in great quantities at this spot.
>
> (Leslie, 1888, p.52)

Leslie's description highlights the fact that even though many were enjoying the River, an awareness of the pollution was still visible. Whereas White's tale goes further and demonstrates how this awareness transmogrified into a fear of unsanitised natural environments. This fear, and its harmful effects, stirs the implied apocalypticism within White's story which may appear to be a degenerative way of considering the Thames and sanitation. However, the fact that an actual apocalypse does not happen means that we can

infer a different message, possibly an ecocritical one, where White's story raises awareness of the importance of the cleanliness of the Thames.

White's short story could be retrospectively regarded as a cultural artefact of the progress that was being made in the realm of sanitation during the Victorian period. It documents the crisis pertaining to the pollution of the Thames, including the fears that existed, whilst simultaneously augmenting the procedures that were taken to sanitise the River. These Victorian fears of natural environments evolved to include a fear of the artificial objects that were introduced to purify the water, as Bill Luckin explains:

> A fear of science in late-nineteenth-century London, and the belief, in particular, that the filters might break down and the capital be afflicted as Maidstone and Lincoln had been, by water-transmitted infection.
> (Luckin, 1986, p.49)

These fears are evident in White's tale when, upon reading the misinformed newspaper report that stated "[m]illions of plague germs flowing down into London" (White, 1904, p.617), the City descends into social chaos where "[t]here was terror in the mere suggestion of the plague" (White, 1904, p.618). This attitude towards the waterway, as portrayed by White, reflects Victorian society and how the public felt towards the Thames in particular. These fears were exacerbated by incidents such as the 1878 sinking of the *SS Princess Alice* pleasure steamer, near Woolwich, where hundreds of people died, not only from drowning, but mostly from the sewage and chemicals that were in the River. A report conducted after the disaster, where the waters were tested, concluded that the passengers were infected by the water they swallowed (Wykes, 1966; Lock, 2013). Despite the fact that the Thames authorities were in the process of improving its waterways and promoting it to the public for recreational purposes, this disaster was widely reported and led to an ongoing anxiety of the natural environment. Both the threat of the natural environment to humanity, and the cleansing of water as a narrative plot,

becomes apparent in White's tale. This representation of ecological catastrophes had become more widespread amongst *fin de siècle* literature.

Darryl Jones describes how "a cycle of politicized eco-catastrophe fiction in the last decades of the nineteenth century, following in the wake of the total destruction of London (by drowning) in Richard Jefferies's *After London*" (2013, p.187). It is possible to consider White's tale as a 'potential eco-catastrophe' tale, as Jones does. However, I would suggest that the destruction does not in fact take place because the social chaos that ensues is based on hearsay. I further claim that the very fact that White's tale does not end in entire destruction promotes the idea that his story is attempting to highlight the importance of sanitation. It shows that the public still have time to act on the way in which they treat the environment, a possible message that is evident from White's use of language:

> Try and realise that these two-thirds of six millions derive their water supply from an open stream that at any moment by the accident of chance might be turned into a hideous poison-cup.
> (White, 1904, p.618)

White's tone here is almost didactic, and it is as if he is deliberately pointing out the dangers of a polluted waterway to the reader. By doing so, he prioritises the need for sanitation within his story. Therefore, I argue that as opposed to considering White's tale to be an 'eco-catastrophe', it is more appropriate to suggest that an environmental message emerges through the use of a suggested apocalyptic metaphor.

This apocalyptic metaphor is constructed through allusions to destruction, such as "fruit had become as extinct as the dodo" (White, 1904, p.623), rather than actual 'deaths' or the 'end of things' within his tale. The precariousness of White's actual 'apocalypse' is further understood through consideration of contemporary ecocritical thought. Garrard explains how "[p]ollution has become a spectacle that is almost detached from any real sense

of threat" (2004, p.13), suggesting that the role of pollution within White's tale actually prevents apocalypse. Therefore, the 'end' within White's story is removed and what remains is an ecological consciousness. For this reason, I would describe White's tale as a metaphorical environmental apocalypse, and also because White deliberately withholds the fact that the water is safe to drink until the end of the story, when the scientist awakens and reveals he has already sterilised the water. However, the metaphorical environmental apocalypse is forged through the social fear and disorder that White conveys, as the public develop an ecological consciousness from the 'believed' knowledge that the Thames is polluted, and thus unfit for human consumption. Significantly, White does not address the sickness and fatal consequence that arises from drinking polluted waters, which supports the idea that his message is ecological, and not human-centred. The short story is an ideal medium for this communication as depth of character is not required, and therefore focus can be on the pollution or sanitation within the narrative.

The short story 'epiphany', which was referred to in relation to Allen's story, can also be found within White's story through the act of revelation. Drawing once again on the notion of metaphorical apocalypticism, Mills argues that many apocalyptic narratives "emphasize[d] some revealed message that was intended to communicate a kind of 'God's-eye-view' of human affairs" (Mills, 2007, p.14). Similarly, White's metaphorical apocalypse attempts to communicate an ecocentric narrative that invites a cultural understanding of humanity's position upon the earth in relation to nature. White claims that "[t]he upper waters of the Thames were poisoned beyond doubt" (White, 1904, p.616) within his narrative and yet, his careful positioning of science stabilises the aspect of progress associated with sanitation.

The opening of White's story takes place in the educated space of the scientific laboratory, where knowledge of the actual condition of the waterway is contained by the professional figures who inhabit this space. The act of 'seeing' is highlighted within the laboratory of White's story, as shown here:

> Darbyshire produced a phial of cloudy fluid, some of which he produced to lay on the glass of a powerful microscope. Longdale fairly staggered back from the eyepiece. "Bubonic! The water reeks with the bacillus! I haven't seen it so strongly marked since we were in New Orleans.
>
> (White, 1904, p.613)

This act of 'seeing' is in concordant with processes undertaken in the discipline of science, and science was paramount to the progress of sanitation during the late Victorian era. As per Allen's tale, the 'gaze' is once again occupied by humanity in White's story, which aligns man with power over nature. However, in White's tale, the unveiling of the pollution is bound to the 'scientific eye', and this is echoed in the use of scientific discourse. The reference to a 'microscope' can be considered alongside the telescope, as both are tools designed for 'looking' and, as Mills (2007) notes, Darwin compared the eye to a telescope.

This connection between the eye and the metaphorical apocalypse in White's tale brings together science and religion, as the eye is significant in Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, and the apocalypse originates from the Book of Revelation. This supports Mills's view that "[e]manating from the focal point of the human eye, 'a web of affinities' (to borrow Darwin's own phrase) is spun between *The Origin* and the biblical Apocalypse" (2007, p.56). The merging of these two within White's tale, through the unveiling of the polluted water, indicates a metaphorical apocalypse that resonates more so with science, given that White positions the scientist as the occupier of the gaze, and thus the occupier of knowledge and power. Fundamentally, whilst "St. John's Apocalypse continually draws attention to the experience of seeing" (Mills, 2007, p.56), White's tale echoes a Victorian shift from religious

orthodoxies to scientific progress in a post-Darwinian society. The revelation, which functions as the 'epiphany' to White's short story, is actually scientific, it is ecological.

As the 'perceived' threat of the waterway unfolds in White's tale, readers are reminded once again of man's fragility, because good sanitation becomes important to stabilise social order. White describes scenes where "small riots broke out" and "establishments were stormed and looted of their contents" (White, 1904, p.620). In terms of anthropology, and with reference to the work of Douglas (1966) on dirt and disorder, the emergence of dirt within White's story is aligned with the chaos that ensues including the mobs and riots. This linkage, between the poorly sanitised natural environment and the functioning of society, evokes Gifford's sixth characteristic of the post-pastoral, of whether "the exploitation of the planet is of the same mindset as the exploitation of women and minorities" (Gifford, 1999, p.165). This exploitation is evident as the lack of water meant "that mineral waters had gone up two hundred per cent, in price" (White, 1904, p.618). This shows how an exploitation of the Thames, or a lack of concern for the natural environment, is harboured alongside an exploitation of the poorer classes, who could not afford the increased price of the water.

The disorder that is formed through the lack of clean water suggests that in order to maintain an orderly society, the natural environment needs to be clean. This idea is supported by Douglas's view "that rituals of purity and impurity create unity in experience" (Douglas, 2002, p.3). This unity is created as the whole of society are in need of water, as White describes:

> [T]he Thames for some time past had been little better than a stagnant ditch under a fiery sun. Let that water only find its way into the pipes under London and who could forecast the magnitude of the disaster? Nearly all London derived its supply from the Thames.
>
> (White, 1904, p.616)

Here, the Thames becomes a homogenous space that can be likened to the sewage system that existed beneath the city. In her study of the Victorian underground sewage system, Allen (2008) explains how the implementation of the underground sewage systems meant that, beneath London where the sewage runs free, there was no distinction between the rich and the poor. Similarly, when the Thames becomes seemingly 'polluted' above ground, a disorder and lack of social hierarchies ensue.

White strengthens the notion of hierarchies being undermined when he describes how "Chelsea, East London, West Middlesex, Grand Junction, Southwark, and Vauxhall and Lambeth were all dependent upon the Thames" (1904, p.616). In listing these areas, which were a combination of rich and poor areas during the Victorian period, White makes no distinction between them in terms of social hierarchy. A breakdown of social hierarchies is seemingly commonplace amid late Victorian catastrophes, particularly if we consider Jones's analysis of William Delisle Hay's novella *The Doom of the Great City* (1880):

> The social injustice that has riven London and brought about this catastrophe is removed at a stroke: all are equal in death, from beggars to a member of the royal family, whose corpse the narrator stumbles upon outside Buckingham Palace.
>
> (Jones, 2013, p.187)

The suggestion here is that through catastrophe, equality exists in death, whereas White demonstrates how, in the face of a destructive nature such as a poorly sanitised Thames, all humans are equal as they all equally rely on water for survival, regardless of status or class. This socialist position supports Jones's description of White as a "socialist writer" (Jones, 2013, p.188), suggesting that perhaps White was highlighting a social and environmental concern that existed during the Victorian period in terms of public health and a polluted Thames.

Through augmenting both an ecological and a sociological concern within his narrative, White's story can once again be considered an example of post-pastoral writing. Gifford claims that our conscience "must address both environmental and social exploitation at the same time if there is to be social justice *and* a place for it to be practised" (1999, p.165). White inserts the public conscience into his tale and in doing so, his short story functions as the place where an ecological consciousness can be practised. Gifford uses women and feminism as his point of reference, which can be applied to the marginalised poorer classes that are made apparent in White's tale. Gifford claims that, "[t]o the ecofeminists there would be no point in liberating women from the exploitation if there were no healthy unpolluted planet for us to inhabit together" (1999, p.165). This means that in order for the two groups, the dominant and the inferior, or the richer and the poorer in White's tale, to become homogenised then there needs to be a clean landscape. However, the very fact that a polluted landscape is intimated within the story, means that these social hierarchies are determined by the natural environment. This link to the post-pastoral via social exploitation can further be considered through White's references to the foreign.

Foreignness, uncleanliness and disorder are firstly associated through Darbyshire's account of how the plague entered the river via a sailing ship called the *Santa Anna*. In this instance, it is the Portuguese who are seen as being a threat to the sanitised environment of Britain. Secondly, Longdale's reaction upon seeing the plague through the microscope is to exclaim, "I haven't seen it so strongly marked since we were in New Orleans" (White, 1904, p.613), thus associating pollution with another foreign place. Furthermore, the mouthpiece that spreads the news of the seemingly polluted Thames is the American journalist, James P Chase. Interestingly, the American figure was used in both 'The Doom of London' and 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe'. In Barr's tale the American is a useful figure in that he invents the artifice that momentarily secures the protagonist's survival, whereas the American

in Allen's tale foreshadows the disorder by augmenting an ecological consciousness in both the protagonist and the reader. However, White's American, and the deceptive way in which he discovers the information that the Thames is polluted, misinforms the public which leads to disorder. Arguably, if, as Douglas (1966) claims, 'dirt is disorder', then this posits the American in alignment with poor sanitation and therefore, the foreign is 'Otherised' through the representation of a poorly sanitised environment.

This forging of pollution and disorder with an exploitation of lesser social classes is also evidenced through another marginalised group, as White aligns pollution with the foreign, and thus he proposes a hierarchy whereby nature is hegemonised above humanity, whilst also demonstrating that that humanity is also divided. This means that whilst there has been an undermining of social hierarchies, national hierarchies are established through pollution and disorder. Politically, Maurice Hindle (2003) describes how the late Victorian period saw a notable change in the British economy and its dependence upon foreign nations and, as a consequence of this, 'foreign' figures appeared more prominently as scapegoats during this time. Of course, there is another way of viewing White's linkage of the Thames with other nations, and that is in concert with what I propose in Chapter Two: that the River, just like the Empire, had the propensity to bring together different nations in order to construct a natural identity. However, the anti-Americanism that White displays in his story rejects a unification of different nations, in contrast to the expansive way American writers Henry James and the Pennells sought to globalise the Thames.

This chapter has revealed how sanitation could be read, both metaphorically through Barr's and Allen's stories and physically through White's story. The metaphorical

sanitation was understood through, what I would term, an 'environmental sanitation', where natural phenomena acted as a cleansing agent, such as the breakout of a dense fog (on the basis that it stemmed from the River) or the eruption of a volcano. These phenomena would cleanse the artificial environment by transforming it. The physical sanitation shown in White's study echoes the ongoing problems that had taken place during the nineteenth century, in relation to the Thames and poor sanitation, and as a result reinforces the eco-cultural emphasis of this study. In addition to linking these stories with sanitation, by adopting an ecocritical perspective, it was possible to read them through the lens of Gifford's post-pastoral, augmenting a pre-dominantly ecocentric narrative. This post-pastoralism emerged through an ecological consciousness that was both implicitly and explicitly suggested by the need to maintain sanitation of natural environments such as the Thames.

All three of the selected short stories are important examples of the way in which authors were engaging with the natural environment in their work, and how they used their work to highlight a growing Victorian awareness of ecological processes. Rather than demonstrating an 'end of things', or an apocalyptic plot that texts such as Jefferies's *After London* portrayed in 1885, these later *fin de siècle* texts faintly use the apocalyptic metaphor to raise awareness of the Thames, or more generally, the natural environment. This supports Buell's assertion that "the imagination is being used to anticipate and, if possible, forestall actual apocalypse" (Buell, 1995, p.285). The apocalyptic metaphor therefore functions effectively with the elliptical and suggestive nature of the short story form, which makes it an appropriate form to highlight issues concerning ecology, or even to position natural landscapes as protagonists. Furthermore, the short story's epiphany feature is adopted by both Allen and White to demonstrate an ecological consciousness that emerges within the characters, and possibly within the reader.

Conclusion

This study began in 2012, the same year that Britain hosted the international summer Olympic Games, an event commemorated in the opening ceremony by Danny Boyle's short film *Isles of Wonder* (2012). The film begins at the source of the Thames, Trewsbury Mead (also known as Thames Head), in a small village called Kemble in Gloucestershire, and the camera follows its flowing course, traversing from the English countryside to the City of London. This commemorative film saw the Thames being projected across the globe and watched by approximately 900 million viewers (Ormsby, 2012), where it could be viewed as a natural symbol of Britain's national identity. In the same year, Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her Diamond Jubilee and during the televised opening ceremony a pageant took place along the Thames, once again projecting its image to the rest of the world, and suggestively marking it as a symbol of majestic power. Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy also marked these events with the poem 'The Thames, London 2012' where she opened with the lines "History as water, I lie back, remember it all" (Duffy, 2012, l.1). Duffy highlights the history contained by a natural landscape such as the River, and has written her poem from the perspective of the Thames to allude to the amount of stories it has to tell. She further writes, "I choked on sewage; my foul breath // shut parliament" (Duffy, 2012, ll.19–20). This poetical reference to the 'Great Stink of 1858' augments the significance of literary texts to convey history and, as Duffy suggests, history has the potential to be portrayed as fluid, and often in a state of flux, just like the River.

The Thames has also featured in other avenues of contemporary culture, particularly alongside themes of recreation, identity and ecological enquiry, reflecting historical and earlier cultural representations of the Thames. One example is Tony Mitchell's 2007 film *Flood* based on Richard Doyle's 2002 novel of the same name, which not only highlights the powerful force of nature through the Thames but also enables us to reflect on the

relationship between humanity and nature. In his novel, Doyle draws upon the 1984 implementation of the Thames Barrier, and the narrative rests on the strength of nature against the human construction of the barrier, ultimately resulting in the submersion of London. Another, more recent, work of literary fiction set along the Thames is Ben Aaronovitch's *Rivers of London* (2011), which not only positions the River into the realm of fantasy but also refers to both historical and mythological aspects of the waterway. Aaronovitch even refers to London's lost rivers by making the connection to the Victorian period, claiming that the rivers "had got lost in the mad Victorian steam-powered expansion of London in the latter half of the nineteenth century" (2011, p.237). Aaronovitch's reference to the Victorian period in relation to the waterways reminds us of the level of progress and development that occurred along the waterway during this time, primarily in relation to sanitation. There are similarities with the way the River is represented today and how it has been represented in the past.

This thesis has revealed how the Thames was aligned with three dominant themes that encompassed features of progress within Victorian society: leisure, national identity, and sanitation. It further found how each of these themes were primarily, although not exclusively, bound with the genres of travel writing, poetry, and the short story. Moreover, a network of Thames writers was discovered that formed part of a wider selection of authors who were writing about the River during the *fin de siècle*. Given that the Thames, a natural formation, was foregrounded in this thesis I felt it was appropriate to adopt an ecocritical approach to the ten selected works. From this, an underlying ecocritical narrative emerged that revealed a cultural understanding of the connection between nature and humanity via three different relationships: anthropocentric, symbiotic, and ecocentric. This conclusion addresses the fundamental features that placed the ten selected works within a *fin de siècle* eco-cultural context, and how this highlights the relevance of examining Victorian Thames ecologies today.

These features include literary form, aesthetics, capital, ecocritical methodology, social ecologies, nationhood, imperialism, displacement, public health, metaphorical apocalypticism, echoes of Romanticism, and Dickensian legacies.

At a recent conference, entitled *Landscaping Change* (2016) at Bath Spa University, papers were delivered by contemporary ecocritics that have been quoted at length throughout this thesis: Terry Gifford and Richard Kerridge. Both Gifford and Kerridge referred to, what they deemed to be, an important work in contemporary ecocriticism: Timothy Clark's *Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept* (2015). The significance of the reverence placed on Clark's study in 2016, by Gifford and Kerridge, is that it highlights the development of ecocritical theory since its beginnings with, arguably, Bate's *Romantic Ecology* in 1991, as discussed in the Introduction. Similarly, I have also traced the development of ecocriticism through the application of different ecocritical perspectives within each of the chapters. This has offered alternative ways of reading the Thames-humanity relationship within literature, beginning with the way humanity exploit the environment, to the way humanity and the natural world function together, and finally, to understand the stronghold that the natural world has over humanity.

Within his work, Clark (2015) claims that the concept of the Anthropocene first surfaced amid the Industrial Revolution at the turn of the nineteenth century. The term was later coined by atmospheric scientists in 2000 (Crutzen and Stoermer, 2000). Clark further argues that the Anthropocene "is characterized by the unprecedented fact that humanity has come to play a decisive, if still largely incalculable, role in the planet's ecology and geology" (2015, p.1). Whilst this is a contemporary way of viewing humanity's relationship with the natural environment, as these ideas were not necessarily articulated as such during the *fin de*

siècle, it remains that these ideas could be inferred by reading literature from the period. I claim that the act of taking current ecocritical debates and interspersing them with an analysis of literary texts from the past, enables a new understanding of ecologies derived from experiences described in a fictional or non-fictional way. As shown, for example, in Chapter One when I argue that the Pennells, as tourists, transform the ecology of the landscape even though it would not have been viewed in this light during the time. Or, how Allen's description of the lava engulfing the waterway can be metaphorically read as symbolic of the intrusion of the embankments, or the sewage system along the Thames during the nineteenth century. These ideas form a link between Clark's Anthropocene that specifies the Industrial Revolution, and this thesis that examines Victorian literature and society, forming a Victorian ecocriticism – a discipline that has been given greater critical attention in recent years.

Congruent to the aims of this thesis, Laurence W. Mazzeno and Ronald D. Morrison claim that "ecocriticism of Victorian literature is now an established and accepted practice" (2016, p.5). The word 'practice' here suggests that Victorian ecocriticism has something practical to offer a contemporary world. The practicality of their collection of essays, as Mazzeno and Morrison point out, is "what they reveal about human interactions with the environment" (2016, p.5) despite being underpinned by contemporary theory. This points towards the value of an ecocritical approach in determining humanity and the natural world's anthropocentric, symbiotic, and ecocentric, relationships that this thesis outlines. Mazzeno and Morrison explain why the ecocritical study of Victorian literature is appropriate, by posing the question that, "if ecology is the study of humankind in city as well as country, then where better to start than with an analysis of the literature that first described (and often decried) the modern urban environment" (2016, p.4). This notion works well in the remit of this thesis because due to the Thames's physical journey from rural Gloucestershire to urban London, the River could

be examined in the context of both the country and the city. My selected literatures occupy both of these spaces, for example the Pennells' and Ashby-Sterry's work traverse from the country to the city and vice versa. Leslie's work is predominantly focused on the countryside spatiality of the River, but occasionally refers to brief trips to London. Gosse's poem is grounded in the City but through memory it refers back to the country, whereas De Vere's, Blind's, and Davidson's poems remain in the City. In Chapter Three, Barr's characters escape from the polluted City to the safety of the countryside; the pathway of destructive lava in Allen's story chases the protagonist from the rural valley to the City; and White's supposed polluted Thames narrative remains in the City.

With reference to Taylor's questioning of a Victorian ecocriticism from the Introduction, he claimed that "[t]he vast majority of ecocriticism on the nineteenth century focuses on Romanticism, and ecocritical treatment of Victorian authors has often emerged as an outgrowth or offshoot of Romantic ecocriticism" (2015, p.879). Similarly, I have pointed out the significance of Romanticism in my exploration of *fin de siècle* literature and their authors. However, the significance of the Romantics in my study contradicts Taylor's statement that Victorian ecocriticism was an 'offshoot' of Romanticism, because my inclusion of them was to strengthen the network of Thames writers by demonstrating how all ten literary works were either comparable to specific Romantic poems, or by demonstrating biographically how the authors were influenced by these poets. For example, De Vere's admiration of Wordsworth was reflected in the Wordsworthian language he used in his poem; White's discourse on sanitation and purity echoed Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, and Gosse's esteem for Keats led to him becoming a poet. I have demonstrated how all ten of the authors in this thesis were in some way linked to, influenced by, or comparable with the Romantics, thus enabling a rounded and consistent approach to my claim of a network of

Thames writers. All of these connections highlight the importance of considering the poetry of the Romantics in an analysis of late Victorian literary ecologies. Notably, I focused on the 'Big Six' because the central aim of this thesis was not to locate echoes of Romanticism, but to examine literary representations of the Thames within selected *fin de siècle* literature. Thus, references to Romantic writers have been included as a result of the research undertaken, and also because of the Romanticism's cultural affinity with nature. Romantic aestheticism, including comparisons to the Sublime, Beautiful, and the picturesque, was also pertinent because of the *fin de siècle* emphasis on the pleasure attained through recreation along the Thames, and how this was often as a result of seeing the beauty of the River.

The aesthetic appeal of the Thames within literature was a common trend throughout each of the three chapters. Frequently, this correlated with the network of writers that demonstrated how late Victorian aesthetes including Pater, Morris, the Pennells, Blind, or Gosse were writing about the River in some way. Therefore, this thesis also reveals how the Thames was often a source of writerly inspiration for many of those associated with late Victorian aestheticism. This included the Pre-Raphaelites as Blind's poem was seen to be influenced by Dante Gabriel Rossetti's work (Boos, 2004), and Gosse's poem that I argue was comparable to the imagery established in Millais's *Ophelia* (1851–2) painting. However, the Thames was also important to the older generation artists such as the Royal Academicians, like Leslie, creating a natural link between the two modes of art criticism where pleasure and the aesthetic of the River could be seen as a priority for both. Aesthetic theory remained pertinent for Chapter Three, particularly in relation to Allen, who advocated the pleasure obtained through sight by creating a deeply-visual image of the erupting volcano in his story. This demonstrated how the thesis travelled via an aesthetic narrative, despite there being limited space for a deeper engagement with aesthetic theory. Beyond the realm of this thesis, I would

like to explore the idea of an eco-aesthetic of the Thames, by exploring the wider texts of the network of writers that was found.

As they were painting similar images of the Thames during the *fin de siècle*, and they because they belonged to the circles who attended soirees held at the homes of Ford Madox Brown or Mary F. Robinson, links were also established with the Impressionist painters Whistler and Monet. In addition, a connection was also made by Leslie with Turner's work on the Thames. In 2005, an exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London traced the "artistic dialogue between" (Tate, 2018) Turner, Whistler, and Monet, thus indicating a contemporary critical evaluation of the three painters. Furthermore, the symbolism that formed part of an Impressionist artwork was particularly relevant to this study where I examine both material and metaphorical allusions to the Thames. Within my thesis, I consider them in relation to the writers who were either depicting the River in a similar way to how these painters were painting the Thames, or through their connection to these writers. For example, through depictions of fog and representations of the Thames (both implicit and explicit), I suggest a correlation between Barr's story and the artworks of Monet. Both Barr's and Monet's works offer a stark cultural reminder of humanity's effect on the natural environment, particularly its air quality. A recent article in the *Guardian* newspaper, entitled 'Over 200 years of Deadly London Air: Smogs, Fogs, and Pea Soupers' (Heggie, 2016), highlighted the impact of industrialism on air quality in contemporary society. This article refers back to the Victorian period, and the reporting of these issues, thus demonstrating the significance of nineteenth-century cultural works such as Barr's and Monet's to raise an awareness of the protection of the natural environment in contemporary society.

Monet's paintings have not only been used in a contemporary context to construct pejorative connotations of London and the Thames during the Victorian period. In March 2017, a terrorist attack on Westminster Bridge in London resulted in several images of

Monet's and also John Atkinson Grimshaw's nineteenth-century paintings being shared on social media platforms including Twitter (Nayeri, 2017; Duhig, 2017). Despite the atrocity of this attack, the image of the Thames, through Monet's and Grimshaw's paintings, were used as a symbol of solidarity against acts of terrorism. Along with an image of Monet's *The Houses of Parliament, London, with the Sun Breaking through the Fog* (1904), one Twitter user wrote "a poignant vision at this point in time" (Nayeri, 2017). This is a powerful message and one that correlates with the authoritative way the River was used in *fin de siècle* literature in relation to national identity. In the same vein, and to refer back to Romanticism here, Wordsworth's sonnet 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge' was also being shared on social media platforms and to reinforce the message of unity, intimations of the poem were exchanged such as "London's heart remains mighty" (Barry, 2017) as a rewording of the final line of Wordsworth's poem.

Whilst this thesis adopted a thematic approach, there were occasional references to how literary representations of the Thames shifted throughout the nineteenth century, from Romanticism to the *fin de siècle*, by referring to Dickens's and other writers' work. Drawing on criticism that established connections between Dickens and the natural world (Parham, 2010; MacDuffie, 2014), I propose a correlation between Dickens and the Thames that was emulated in *fin de siècle* literature. Specifically relating to Dickens's use of fog that has been deemed both aesthetic (Ford, 2012) and apocalyptic (Mills, 2007), it is possible to locate Dickensian legacies in Davidson's poem 'The Thames Embankment' and Barr's 'The Doom of London' that offer two different interpretations of the relationship between humanity and the natural world: symbiotic and ecocentric, respectively.

In addition to Romantic and Dickensian influences, another common thread throughout each chapter has been the significance of form. In his work *How to Read a Poem*, Terry Eagleton argues that "poetry above all discloses the secret truth of all literary writing: that form is *constitutive* of content and not just a reflection of it" (2007, p.67). Notably, Eagleton's focus here is poetry, however his reference to 'all literary writing' makes his quotation a useful one to consider when reflecting on the significance of form within this thesis. It has been shown how features of travel writing, poetry, and the short story, all contribute to the construction of differing relationships between humanity and the natural world that include anthropocentric, symbiotic, and ecocentric. Firstly, travel writing, through its association with the picturesque and its promotion of natural landscapes that encourages tourism, highlighted the commodification of the Thames because it was seen as a key signifier of Victorian leisure, and this contributed to the anthropocentric reading of Leslie's, Pennells', and Ashby-Sterry's, literary representations of the Thames, as per Eagleton's argument that form establishes content.

This correlation between form and content was highlighted further in Chapter Two through the elevated poetic forms of the sonnet, the elegy, and the ode, which functioned with depictions of the Thames and different national identities to form a cultural ecosystem, thus contributing to an interpretation of them as ecopoems. The mutability of the ecopoem gave Chapter Two the opportunity to draw upon different theoretical perspectives of the ecopoem to create an overarching perception that highlighted four key features to it, which could be applied to each of the selected poems. This process of establishing a working idea of the ecopoem is supported by Kate Rigby's assertion

> that since the impact of any type of ecological art is ultimately decided on the level of reception, a variety of ecopoetics forms, as well as foci, are required in order to engage and inspire a range of differently situated recipients.

(Rigby, 2016, p.81)

With this in mind, it is possible to construct the ecopoem in a number of different ways using different ecocritical perspectives. It is significant that I argue that the ecopoem is not necessarily an environmentalist poem, or even a poem that has a 'green agenda' as such, but rather it is a poem that highlights nature working in tandem with humanity, as a process. Therefore, in terms of the 'practicality' of ecopoetry, this thesis views it in the pedagogical sense as opposed to the political sense, because it has the potential to educate contemporary readers about the past's cultural depictions of the relationship between man and nature.

Drawing on features that have been associated with the form of the short story, such as elision, lack of character development, and suggestion, I argue that the short story was an appropriate form to convey narratives of ecological significance. This is because by locating representations of the natural world, it was possible to negotiate the workings of ecology within the subtext of each story. In his work on the short story, and specifically his chapter on 'Popular Short Fictions', March-Russell (2009) highlights five subgenres in this category that includes science fiction. This is interesting because as the Introduction to this thesis noted, the selected short stories have already been critically examined in the realm of science fiction. More pertinently, March-Russell further claims that these sub-genres of popular short fiction are connected through "their preoccupation with *effects*, not necessarily in terms of the epiphany, but in ways that subvert their canonically low status" (2009, p.191). Similarly, the three short stories (that can each be considered amidst different features of the short story form) demonstrate the ecological effect in a manner that positions them as important literatures of the *fin de siècle* in terms of culturally understanding humanity's relationship with the natural world. The potential for these stories to be influential has also been noted by Christine Corton in relation to Barr's story when she claims that "the fact that depictions of fog were now

entering the realm of popular fiction shows how pervasive its influence had become" (Corton, 2015, p.93). This notion can be applied to the Thames and the fact that it was used as a primary setting in Allen's story, and as a main theme in White's story, which meant that the River and ecology were being transmitted to public consciousness via the genre of the 'popular' short story.

The ecocritical deductions from this thesis reveal differing relationships that exist between man and nature, and how these are formed through diverse representations of the Thames. The anthropocentricity of Chapter One was primarily determined through the pleasure acquired through the picturesqueness of natural landscapes, and the preservation of this beauty for recreation, as opposed to preservation for the sake of nature, thus resulting in an aestheticisation of the River. However, it was found that other factors also contributed to this human-centred relationship, including Leslie's suggestive 'ownership' of the Thames that was mirrored in news publications of the time, such as *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1899, no page number). Many of Leslie's engagements with the River were also defined through his recreational pursuit, suggesting a reification of the Thames. A social hierarchy amongst river-users can also be read within *Our River*, and also the Pennells' *The Stream of Pleasure* that establishes another link with capital, forming a social ecology that can be understood in relation to the Thames during the *fin de siècle*. The River as a recreational commercial space is formed by the Pennells' depiction of a tour of the waterway, where they describe the aesthetics of the built environment surrounding the Thames, and place emphasis on the weather systems. This is because the latter contributes to the enabling of various leisure activities upon the River, such as the sun being both a life source of a river and a factor in the amount of consumers of the Thames during a Bank Holiday. The consumer, disguised within a leisurely sphere as a tourist, is prominent in the Pennells' tale, but also in Ashby-Sterry's novel. The tourist figure grounds

these texts within processes of capital and consumerism. Furthermore, the tourist is associated with travel writing through the notion that it is a consumer of the genre. I would suggest that a commodification of the Thames existed and the implication of this meant that nature was also a product of a new culture of leisure.

Chapter Two highlighted how cultural representations of the Thames can symbiotically function with images of national identity, through allusions made to politics, history, and culture including imperialism, the Empire, and cultural movements such as Romanticism and Pre-Raphaelitism. The chapter went beyond examining these themes and also proposed that each of the four poems were ecopoems, having assessed them against the following four characteristics: a functioning symbiosis between nature and humanity; nature working as a process; the poem as a cultural ecosystem, and finally, the notion of defining place in accordance with natural features through the construction of a bioregion. Clark (2011) offers an appropriate description of the ecopoem that resonates with the network of writers that has been identified by this thesis. He claims that the ecopoem is "a process taking place both within the text and in relation to other texts, contexts and places" (Clark, 2011, p.140). This process occurs between De Vere, Blind, Gosse, and Davidson, and their respective poems, as each ecocritical analysis considered biographical information (Ward, 1904; Thwaite, 1984; Sloan, 1995; Avery, 2002), and many of the poets knew one another (see Appendix Three). This information was then examined alongside images of the Thames and its environments, thus signalling a symbiosis between natural processes and cultural ecosystems. The uniformity between ecosystems and identity relies on the idea of an interconnectedness between a physical existence and a cultural existence. The former relates to the natural world, where we are sustained physically by processes such as the water cycle, or the carbon cycle, and the latter relates to our identity within society.

Eagleton argues that "form and content are inseparable […] literary criticism typically involves grasping *what* is said in terms of *how* it is said" (2007, p.67). His reading of a poem supports the approach taken to De Vere's poem where an analysis of the imperialist subject matter and the image of the Thames was undertaken, alongside an analysis of the structure of the Shakespearean sonnet and how this contributes to the overall meaning. Through this, it was possible to view a symbiosis emerging within the poem between the construction of national identities and the representations of the River, thus establishing it as an ecopoem. These identities can be taken from De Vere's Irish origin, the setting of the poem in England, or also Egypt, because the period of the poem's republication is two years after British imperialists took control of Egypt in 1882 (Brantlinger, 1988), and as the poem deals with an imperialist subject matter then I suggest that this would seem appropriate. This reference to Egypt is more explicit in Blind's sonnet where the nature and culture binary is undermined, as per Kerridge's (2013, p.354) ecocritical theory, enabling the poem to function as a cultural ecosystem. It transcends between different climates, landscapes, and nations, with a mirroring of Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite traditions, in order to highlight the significance of both nature and culture in the frame of the Petrarchan sonnet to project a representation of different national identities, and also identities that are adrift via the Thames. Blind has received critical attention recently as a major contributor to the New Woman figure of the *fin de siècle* (Diedrick, 2017). Notably, she was President of the Women Writers' Dinner Club, where she influenced other female writers including Elizabeth Robins Pennell, once again reinforcing the network of those writing about the River whilst also highlighting the potential for further study on female writers of the Thames during the *fin de siècle*.

Gosse draws upon the wildlife and plantation that surround the Thames which, to an extent, lessens the pastoral significance somewhat as it emphasises an ecological one. This lessening almost transfers a national identity to a natural identity through the bioregional motif. However, Knickerbocker's 'sensuous poesis' (2012, p.2) is evoked through Gosse's use of the apostrophe to undermine the binary of national and natural, or specifically human consciousness and the landscape of the River, as another way of constructing the Thames bioregion. Similarly, in 'The Thames Embankment', Davidson suggests a biodiverse environment upon the banks of the Thames, but one that resonates with a British literary imagination. With particular reference to the lark and the nightingale, a connection between Davidson's poem and British Romanticism is established. It functions as an ecopoem through the symbiosis of different national identities (British, English, and Scottish) and ecological processes surrounding, and including, the Thames. On a wider scale, these ideas can also be read amid the larger ecological systems of the earth such as the equinox, so, in effect, these identities were unified by the space of the Thames embankment just like different nations around the globe were forced together through the imperialism of the Empire.

A metaphorical and physical sanitation of nature was suggested by the three short stories from Chapter Three, and this led to an ecocentric reading of the Thames. The metaphorical sanitation of the fog in Barr's 'The Doom of London' creates a haziness between nature and culture, a concept that resonates with Gifford's post-pastoral (1999), through the blend of fog that is made up of river vapours and industrial smoke. Barr does not explicitly state that the vapours contribute to the deadly fog, however, an ecocritical reading of the language that is used to describe the natural environment within the story enables a foregrounding of the Thames. Through his description of the fog, the reader can interpret the workings of natural ecosystems between the water vapours, the river, the atmosphere, and the

clouds. This highlights both the invisibility of natural ecosystems and how they function without a human consciousness and that, by identifying different aspects of an ecosystem within the text, literature opens up the potential of seeing natural processes and how they function to create meaning within literature.

Metaphorical sanitation is also suggested by Allen's 'The Thames Valley Catastrophe', where the use of the short story form heightens the role of the volcano and the destruction it causes, and also dismantles character development that would not only detract, but also limit an exploration of ecological issues. The volcano creates an eco-performance within the story that can be considered amongst contemporary ecocritical debates. The shifting lava signals a movement that will eventually cease when it solidifies (unlike the Thames in the context of the water cycle) and this is symbolic of a performance whilst the river functions as a platform to enact the ecological consciousness that arises as a result of this performance. Allen's story opens up the potential of discussing real-life natural disasters in the realm of culture, such as the eruption on the island of Krakatoa in 1883. Whilst there is no direct mention of Krakatoa, Allen's inclusion of a volcano just fourteen years after one of the most destructive volcanoes of the nineteenth century, could be a subtle nod to a geological consciousness during his lifetime. Ultimately, the power of the natural cleansing of the landscape to stir a cultural reaction positions Allen's story within the Victorian avenue of progress, whereby sanitation was perceived as a grand development.

The correlation between sanitation and the Thames waterway are made more explicit in White's 'The River of Death', given that the narrative centres upon the suggested pollution of the River. White negotiates a discourse on sanitation through authoritative figures such as a doctor and a scientist, the less reliable figure of the journalist who obtains the story

immorally, and the public who learn of the supposedly polluted Thames via the newspaper. Fundamentally, due to its overbearing presence, the sun heightens the tension between humanity and the supposedly polluted waterway of the River in White's story, suggesting the existence of a natural hierarchy between the sun and river(s). White makes no distinction between the rich and poor spatial areas of London in the context of a polluted water system; the fact that both classes are considered within the same realm as a result of a diminished natural system, indicates the ecocentric value within White's story.

As an aside, the credibility of the journalism profession is questioned throughout White's short story. This strongly resonates with contemporary journalistic practice in relation to the recent hacking scandal (O'Carroll, 2014). White's story demonstrates the consequences of reporting news that is based on half-truths in an exaggerative manner and, in today's era, where fake news has become the norm because of social media, it is interesting that White documents the harmful impact of reporting fake news. A recent article in the *Independent* newspaper questioned whether 'School children should be taught to recognise fake news' (Kershaw, 2017). This emerges as a result of their daily exposure to fact and fiction on social media websites, leaving it difficult for them to differentiate between real news and fake news. Given the publication of White's story in *Pearson's* magazine, a publication that included fact and fiction, it is possible to suggest a connection between periodicals of the *fin de siècle* and contemporary social media platforms in terms of exposure to news, and the precariousness of seeking out real truth. This observation demonstrates the potential for future research in this area, linking *fin de siècle* attitudes of the Thames with contemporary attitudes articulated on social media.

All three of the short stories demonstrate an apocalyptic metaphor to exhibit how the natural world is continually shifting, functioning as a process, and has the potential to control or transform aspects of human behaviour, or even society. Whilst the connotations of an apocalypse invites a reading of the end, or one of disaster and destruction, I re-evaluate this notion of the apocalypse. Instead, I suggest that it can also be understood, ecologically, in a way that engages humanity to develop a consciousness concerning the natural environment. Similarly to Barr's tale, a revelation is also used in White's tale that conveys a sense of apocalypse but the revelation is that the Thames is not polluted after all, which nullifies the deadliness of an apocalypse but leaves the characters, and the readers, with a knowledge concerning the importance of the natural world and humanity's reliance upon it.

In recent years, Ailise Bulfin (2015) has also identified the same three short stories as having a significance in establishing an awareness of ecology; she argues that "it is possible to see links emerging between 'natural' catastrophe and human activity in Victorian thinking and hence the development of an ecological awareness" (Bulfin, 2015, p.81). Bulfin also makes reference to other works of fiction during the *fin de siècle* that deal with similar issues of catastrophe such as Hay's *The Doom of the Great City* (1880) and M.P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud* (1901). These works highlight a greater potential for a future study on the Thames in other works of fiction during the *fin de siècle*, as the River also features in these stories. Despite the similarities between Chapter Three and Bulfin's work, this thesis has grounded its analysis in the context of the Thames, sanitation, contemporary ecocritical theory, and the short story form.

The wider implications of reading these short stories through the post-pastoral is the potential to ground them in the field of the post-human. In relation to post-humanist

criticism, Clark argues that nature "in the romantic sense, as the seeming other of 'culture' and a norm of psychic health and moral guidance – will seem far more problematic and in need of further clarification" (2011, p.71). The overlap here, between post-humanism and ecocriticism, has been demonstrated within the confines of this thesis to some extent. The romanticisation of nature for the aesthetic benefit of humanity was explored in Chapter One, where an anthropocentricity was established. However, by Chapter Three, and through the application of more recent ecocritical theory in the form of Gifford's post-pastoral, it became evident that the distinction between nature and culture was blurred, thus an ecocentricism prevailed.

This thesis has adopted the term 'ecocriticism' throughout to describe the critical approach to literary representations of the Thames. However, recent literature suggests a shift in the terminology of the discipline with the publication of *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities* (Heise, Christensen and Niemann, 2017). Heise proposes that the "environmental humanities have emerged as a new interdisciplinary matrix over the last decade" (2017, p.1), and has further suggested that terms including ecocriticism

> has in recent years opened up the possibility of closer connections with neighboring disciplines such as environmental anthropology […] and areas in political science and urban studies that converge around the theoretical paradigm of 'political ecology'.
>
> (Heise, 2017, p.2)

Certainly, the application of Mary Douglas's anthropological study *Purity and Danger* (1966) to the ecocritical analysis of the three short stories in Chapter Three, indicates a potential crossover of this thesis into the realm of environmental humanities. The role of disorder in relation to progress and sanitation in accordance with Douglas's work was a contributor of the ecocentric relationship that was portrayed in each of the three stories. Furthermore, this thesis has also addressed the political ecology of the demarcations between the urban and the rural.

There appears to be a convenient symmetry in all three chapters as they each highlight a different relationship between man and nature. However, it is possible to consider a crossover of some of these relationships, suggesting that they are unfixed and that have the potential to shift. For example, the personification of the Thames in Leslie's *Our River*, through cultural references to Thame and Isis, was deemed to be anthropocentric because it was bound with capital, and appeared to impose hierarchies along the waterway. In contrast, the personification of the River in De Vere's poem was considered to be symbiotic because it functioned alongside the implicit representation of a natural ecosystem. Further crossovers have also been identified throughout the thesis, such as the weather systems in the Pennells' tale, and the destructive weather forces in Chapter Three. The crossing of these relationships indicate that each relationship can be subject to change, pending on various factors such as literary form. Therefore, I would argue that each of these relationships exist, culturally, along what I would term an eco-continuum, and that irrespective of theme, or literary genre, each of the relationships has the potential to shift. To support this concept of an eco-continuum, further research in the field of nature's association with humanity would be required, perhaps through the focus on another natural landscape.

The practicality of ecocriticism, with the implication that it has the potential for interdisciplinary research, is further heightened by placing this thesis in the context of Clark's, more recent, ecocritical thinking. He argues that "[t]he Anthropocene names a newly recognized context that entails a chastening recognition of the limits of cultural representation as a force of change in human affairs" (Clark, 2015, p.21). This subdued perspective on the potential for culture or, in this case, literature, to transform attitudes towards the natural environment, or alter the way in which humans interact with the natural world, is one that I have addressed within this thesis. Mazzeno and Morrison argue that "the idea that literary texts

can have something to contribute to the larger debates about the future of ecological systems (of which humankind is a part) remains a relatively new phenomenon" (2016, p.2). As such, my research is situated amid new criticisms where the Thames, during its period of development, was centralised to offer a consistent ecocritical analysis. It has shown that the cultural relationship between nature and humanity is one that continually shifts and functions along a continuum. The shifting relationships that have been identified, within the ecocritical context, have been dependent upon a selection of variables, including the network of Thames writers (see Appendix Three), literary form (travel writing, poetry, short story), aestheticism (Sublime, Beautiful, picturesque, pastoral), an empirical understanding of the River and a cultural interpretation of the Thames's interaction with other natural elements, particularly the sun and the weather systems, and also the social, historical and political context that framed the changing landscape of the Thames during the nineteenth century. These features contribute to the originality of my thesis, along with the analysis of differing and shifting ecocriticisms, to offer a new way of reading selected literature of the *fin de siècle*.

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Appendix One: Primary Texts

Aubrey De Vere's 'To the Thames' (wr.1843, pub.1884)

River, whose charge is from the winds and sky 1
The Imperial City's agitated ear
To soothe with murmur low and ceaseless cheer,
Do thy great, pious task perpetually:
But add a warning voice more deep and high: 5
Borne down from bridge to bridge in smooth career
Tell her to whom the pomp of gold is dear,
Of Tyre that fell; of Fortune's perfidy!
Tell her, whilst on thy broad and glimmering mirror
The shadows of her turrets tremble and slide, 10
How brief the impress of victorious Pride,
How nearly Triumph is allied to Terror.
Demons their nests in ship-mast forests hide---
By nobleness, not gold, are Nations deified.

Mathilde Blind's 'To the Obelisk during the Great Frost, 1881'

Thou sign-post of the Desert! Obelisk, 1
Once fronting in thy monumental pride
Egypt's fierce sun, that blazing far and wide,
Sheared her of tree and herb, till like a disk
Her waste stretched shadowless, and fraught with risk 5
To those who with their beasts of burden hied
Across the seas of sand until they spied
Thy pillar, and their flagging hearts grew brisk:
Now reared beside out Thames so wintry grey, 10
Where blocks of ice drift with the drifting stream,
Thou risest o'er the alien prospect! Say,
Yon dull, blear, rayless orb whose lurid gleam
Tinges the snow-draped ships and writhing steam,
Is this the sun which fired thine orient day?

Edmund Gosse's 'The Shepherd of the Thames' (1885)

Thou hast gone back to Arcady once more, 1
False Shepherd, and hast left me here alone,
Here where the soul of London is one moan,
Here where life breaks upon a dusky shore;
Ah! was it wisely done to leave me thus, 5
For is it not mine the magic crook that makes
The iron cloud pearly and luminous?
For have I not the charmed voice that wakes
The black-cap swinging in the osier-brakes,
That stirs her heart until it thrills and sings? 10
Ah! without me, light wanderer, canst thou find
The melting briar that breathes upon the wind,
Or where the shy white orchis waves her wings?

Ah! that dark wood above the sparkling Thames,
Where through the honeysuckle pale and sweet 15
We saw the silent river at our feet;
And pushing downward through the springing stems,
Descended to the twilight cumfrey-beds!
Dream not that thou canst find that wood again.
Ah! what a glory streamed above our heads! 20
Surely for thee no mellowing sunset sheds
Its radiance through the soft and flashing rain?
Thou shouldst have waited by the lock for me,
Or where the streaming roots of crows-foot shine,
Have shipped thine oars and laid thy boat by mine, 25
Nor thus have gone alone to Arcady.

Yet if thou must, push on, and let me know
What foxgloves with imperial foreheads nod
Down the steep coppice, row by stately row;
And where the mullein lifts her amber rod. 30
What willow-herb now fringes the high bank,
Whence many a time we plunged above the weir,---
Cleaving the limpid pool with sinewy flank,
Till the wrecked water-lily's chalice sank
Swamped by the eddying flood in deluge drear? 35
Ah me, push on, and bathe there in the sun,
And listen to the clacking of the mill,
And dream that we are lithe young shepherds still,
Nor all our pastoral hour of pleasure done.

And surely in that cool and fresh arcade 40
By willows framed above the shelving bank,
Between the river and the hemlocks rank,

Thou'lt find the hard prints that our feet once made,
Our racing feet, along the dewy grass,
What time shy Oreads of the woodlands fled, 45
Yet paused to watch the white-limbed youngsters pass
Who never more shall skim the turf, alas!
With pliant feet, and breathless faces red,
Nor wrestle in the dappling light of leaves,
Nor lie, deep slumbering, through the noontide heat, 50
Nor in a nightly ecstasy repeat
Their faltering songs beneath the moonlit eaves.

We shall not taste our showery spring again,
Yet cheerful memory makes it doubly dear;
The leaves that had no scent when plucked, are sere, 55
But smell like roses freshened with the rain.
Perchance if we went back once more, and sought
That secret hill, that visionary stream,
Which gleam so brightly in the glass of thought,
They might not bring us all the charm they brought, 60
They might undo the magic of the dream.
We have grown wise and cold with worldly lore,
Our weary eyes have learned to dread the sun,
Ah, tell me, tell me, was it sagely done
Thus to go back to Arcady once more? 65

John Davidson's 'The Thames Embankment' (1909)

As gray and dank as dust and ashes slaked 1
With wash of urban tides the morning lowered;
But over Chelsea Bridge the sagging sky
Had colour in it---blots of faintest bronze,
The stains of daybreak. Westward slabs of light 5
From vapour disentangled, sparsely glazed
The panelled firmament; but vapour held
The morning captive in the smoky east.
At lowest ebb the tide on either bank
Laid bare the fat mud of the Thames, all pinched 10
And scalloped thick with dwarfish surges. Cranes,
Derricks and chimney-stalks of the Surrey-side,
Inverted shadows, in the motionless,
Dull, leaden mirror of the channel hung:
Black flags of smoke broke out, and in the dead 15
Sheen of the water hovered underneath,
As in the upper region, listlessly,
Across the viaduct trailing plumes of steam,
The trains clanked in and out.

Slowly the sun 20
Undid the homespun swathing of the clouds,
And splashed his image on the northern shore---
A thing extravagantly beautiful:
The glistening, close-grained canvas of the mud
Like hammered copper shone, and all about 25
The burning centre of the mirror'd orbs
Illimitable depth of silver fire
Harmonious beams the overtones of light,
Suffused the emboss'd, metallic river bank.
Woven of rainbows a dewdrop can dissolve 30
And packed with power a simple lens can wield,
The perfect, only source of beauty, light
Reforms uncouthest shapelessness and turns
Decoloured refuse into ornament;
The leafless trees that lined the vacant street 35
Had all their stems picked out in golden scales,
Their branches carved in ebony; and shed
Around them by the sanction of the morn
In lieu of leaves each wore an aureole.

Barges at anchor, barges stranded, hulks 40
Ungainly, in the unshorn beams and rich
Replenished planet of a winter sun,
Appeared ethereal, and about to glide
On high adventure chartered, swift away
For regions undiscovered. 45

Huddled wharfs
A while, and then once more a reach of Thames
Visibly flowing where the sun and wind
Together caught the current. Quays and piers
To Vauxhall Bridge, and there the Baltic Wharf 50
Exhibited its wonders: figureheads
Of the old wooden walls on gate and post---
Colossal torsos, bulky bosoms thrown
Against the storm, sublime uplifted eyes
Telling the stars. As white as ghosts 55
They overhung the way, usurping time
With carved memorials of the past. Forlorn
Elysium of the might of England!

Gulls,
Riparian scavengers, arose and wheeled 60
About my head, for morsels begging loud
With savage cries that piercingly reverbed
The tempest's dissonance. Birds in themselves
Unmusical and uninventive ape
Impressive things with mocking undesigned: 65

The eagle's bark mimics the crashing noise
That shakes his eyry when the thunder roars;
And chanticleer's imperious trumpet-call
Re-echoes round the world his ancestor's
Barbaric high-wrought challenge to the dawn; 70
But birds of homely feather and tuneful throat,
With music in themselves and masterdom,
To beauty turn obsessive sight and sound:
The mounting larks, compact of joyful fire,
Render the coloured sunlight into song; 75
Adventurous and impassioned nightingales
Transmute the stormy equinox they breast
With courage high, for hawthorn thickets bound
When spring arrives, into the melody
That floods the forest aisles; the robin draws 80
Miraculously from the rippling brook
The red wine of his lay; blackbird and thrush,
Prime-artists of the woodland, proudly take
All things sonorous for their province, weave
The gold-veined thunder and the crystal showers, 85
The winds, the rivers and the choir of birds
In the rich strains of their chromatic score.

By magic mechanism the weltering clouds
Re-grouped themselves in continents and isles
That diapered the azure firmament; 90
And sombre chains of cumulus, outlined
In ruddy shade along the house-tops loomed,
Phantasmal alp on alp. The sunbeams span
Chaotic vapour into cosmic forms,
And juggled in the sky, with hoods of cloud 95
As jesters twirl on sticks their booby-caps---
The potent sunbeams, that had fished the whole
Enormous mass of moisture from the sea,
Kneaded, divided and divided, wrought
And turned it to a thousand fantasies 100
Upon the ancient potter's wheel, the earth.

Henry Ellison's To the Thames, Above Richmond Bridge (1851)

Oh, gentle stream, that takest with an arm 1
Of love the meadows green by thy fair side,
Encircling their verdure with a wide
Embrace, and giving them their crowning charm;
Far hast thou come, not spreading rude alarm, 5
As doth a torrent, in its sudden pride

Of place, but like a gentle, faithful guide,
A messenger of peace, who none doth harm!
Thou dost embrace the beauty of this scene
As loth to part, and yet constrained away; 10
For, 'neath the glory and the outward sheen
Of Nature, she hath duties, day by day,
And from her loveliest works her heart doth wean,
To teach Man, like herself, how to obey!

Appendix Two – Record of Primary Research

Author / Historical Significance	Title	Date	Genre	Notes
Edmund Spenser	Prothalamion	1596	Poem	"silver-streaming Thames" "Sweet Thames". Nymphs. "Venus' silver team" "crown'd"
Denham, John	Cooper's Hill	1642	Poem	Ackroyd - 'Thames is a metaphor for human life' (7)
John Dryden	London After the Great Fire	1666	Poem	"The silver Thames"
Thames Authorities - management of the River	Composed of local Justices of the Peace (Ackroyd, p.153) - 1st one	1695		
Pope, Alexander	The Voyage on the Thames	1717	Poem	From The Rape of the Lock. "on the bosom of the silver Thames". Nymphs. Childhood.
Gray, Thomas	Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College	1747	Poem	"hoary Thames" "His silver-winding way" "Father Thames"
Thames Authorities - management of the River	Thames Navigation Commission	1751		19 yrs later, Thames commissioners were formally appointed (approx 600)
Burke, Edmund	A Philosophical Enquiry...Sublime and Beautiful	1757		Informs ideas of gendered waterscapes.
Wordsworth, William	Lines Written Near Richmond, Upon the Thames, at Evening	1789	Poem	River as "quiet soul"
Ireland, Samuel	*Picturesque Views on the River Thames*	1792	Travel Writing	
Blake, William	London	1794	Poem	"where the chartered Thames does flow"
Wordsworth, William	Lines Composed Upon Westminster Bridge	1802	Poem	"his own sweet will" "might heart" "its majesty" Gender / symbols of wealth
Peacock, Thomas Love	The Genius of the Thames: A Lyrical Poem	1810	Poem	
Cholera Outbreak		1832		
First London Railway Opened -	south end of London Bridge to Greenwich	1836		14-Dec
Victorian Period	Queen Victoria becomes heir to the throne	1837		
Dickens, Charles	Oliver Twist	1838	Novel	"Look at that dark water. How many times do you read of such as I who spring into the tide"
Cornish, Thomas Hartree	The Thames: A Descriptive Poem	1842	Poem	

Author / Historical Significance	Title	Date	Genre	Notes
Hood, Thomas	The Bridge of Sighs	1844	Poem	
Cholera Outbreak		1848		
Cholera Outbreak		1849		
Thorne, James	Rambles by Rivers: The Thames	1849		
Dickens, Charles	David Copperfield	1850	Novel	1849-50. Martha compares her life to the besmirched Thames.
Talfourd, Thomas Noon, Sir	V. To the Thames at Westminster	1852	Poem	Beauty of the Thames, Romantic - Wordsworth
Arnold, Matthew	The Scholar Gypsy	1853	Poem	
Cholera Outbreak		1853		
Germ theory	replaces Miasma theory in relation to the spread of diseases	1854		Jon Snow
Cholera Outbreak		1854		
Thames Authorities	Thames Conservancy	1857		management of the River
The Great Stink of London		1858		
Hall, Mr and Mrs S. C.	The Book of the Thames from its Rise to its Fall	1859	Travel Writing	
Dickens, Charles	Great Expectations	1860	Novel	1860/1. Drowning of Compeyson.
Bennett, William Cox	The Glories of Our Thames [from Poems 1862]	1862	Poem	Celebration of the Thames: wealth, power, majestic, Isis
1st underground Railway in the world:	between Paddington and Farringdon Street	1863		10-Jan
Dickens, Charles	Our Mutual Friend	1865	Novel	"great black river with its dreary shores"
Carroll, Lewis	Alice's Adventures in Wonderland	1865	Novel	Charles Dodgson - storytelling on the Thames
Bazalgette, Joseph W,	On the Main Drainage of London [...] River Thames	1865		
Cholera Outbreak		1866		
Dickens, Charles	The Mystery of Edwin Drood	1870	Novel	Rochester, River Medway - Thames tributary, foreigness

Author / Historical Significance	Title	Date	Genre	Notes
Cook, Eliza	The Thames [from The Poetical Works 1870]	1870	Poem	Female poet. Comparison to Rhine, Sublime - 'mighty Thames', Cook was a Chartist poet
Victoria Embankment Opened		1870		13-Jul
Ellison, Henry	London and the Thames	1875	Poem	*Stones from The Quarry*
Coutts, Nelson	What Old Father Thames Said: A Novel	1876	Novel	
Eliot, George	Daniel Deronda	1876	Novel	Female drowning
Stapleton, John	The Thames: A Poem	1878	Poem	
Hopkins, Gerard Manley	Binsey Poplars'	1879	Poem	
Dickens JNR, Charles	Dickens's Dictionary of the Thames	1879	Travel Writing	Guide for boaters/fishermen
Jefferies, Richard	Hodge and his Masters	1880		
Wilde, Oscar	Impression du Matin	1881	Poem	
Blind, Mathilde	To the Obelisk during the Great Frost, 1881	1881	Poem	
Leslie, George Dunlop	Our River	1881	Travel Writing	
Gilder, Richard Watson	The Obelisk	1881	Poem	
Riddell, Charlotte	Daisies and Buttercups: A Novel of the Upper Thames	1882	Novel	
Jefferies, Richard	The Story of My Heart	1883	Autobiographical	Thames is "the centre of human life"
Sims, George Robert	The River Demon	1883	Poem	
Gissing, George	The Unclassed	1884	Novel	
De Vere, Aubrey	XX. To the Thames [from Poetical Works 1884]	1884	Poem	Imperialism, sublime - 'Terror', beautiful - 'smooth'. Orig.pub 1843
Sharp William	On a Thames Backwater	1884	Poem	*Poems*
Jefferies, Richard	'The Modern Thames'	1885	Essay	Silver, majestic, "the Queen's highway"
Gosse, Edmund	Firdausi in Exile (1885)	1885	Poem	The Shepherd of the Thames' / 'A Ballad of the Upper Thames'

Author / Historical Significance	Title	Date	Genre	Notes
Jefferies, Richard	After London	1885	Novel	
Thames Preservation Act	Aim: Cleaning up the Thames	1885		promoting it as a leisurely space
Senior, William	The Royal River: The Thames, from Source to Sea	1885	Historical	
Domenichetti, Richard Hippisley	The Thames	1885	Poem	Newdigate Prize Poem
Hooper, H. G.	Poetical Sketch of the Thames: Seven Springs to the Nore	1885	Poem	
Davidson, John	The Thames Embankment	1885	Poem	
Ashby-Sterry, Joseph	The Lazy Minstrel	1886	Novel	
Manning, Eliza, F.	Delightful Thames	1886	Poem	
Ashby-Sterry, Joseph	A Riverain Rhyme	1886	Poem	
Blackie, John Stuart	Robert Burns I (The bright side; on seeing his statue recently erected on the Thames Emankment, London)	1886	Poem	Messis Vitae
Taylor, Julia Isham	Down the Thames in Victorian Days	1886		A trip on the Thames in 1886
Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria	20-Jun	1887		
James, Henry	'London'	1888	Essay	"wonderfull affair" and "the brown greasy current" - Thames
Adams, William Davenport	The Praise of Thames	1888	Essay	
Jerome, Jerome. K	Three Men in a Boat	1889	Novel	Thames as recreational space. Construction of childhood.
Wilde, Oscar	Symphony in Yellow	1889	Poem	"the pale green Thames"
Morris, William	News from Nowhere	1890	Novel	
Doyle, Arthur Conan	The Sign of Four	1890	Short Story	Tonga. Treasure in the Thames. Imperialism. Foreign artefacts / contagion. Orientalism.
Wilde, Oscar	'Lord Arthur Savile's Crime'	1891	Short Story	Cleopatra's Needle (foreigness), Septimus R.Podgers (Cheiromantist) thrown into river, drowns
Pennell, Joseph and Elizabeth Robins	The Stream of Pleasure: A Narrative of a Journey on the Thames	1891	Travel Writing	

Author / Historical Significance	Title	Date	Genre	Notes
Stephen, James Kenneth	Steam Launch	1891	Poem	published in Pall Mall Gazette
Barr, Robert	The Doom of London	1892	Short Story	"fog was simply watery vapour rising from the marshy surface of the land or from the sea"
Shaw, George Bernard	Mrs Warren's Profession	1893	Play	Rural setting in Haslemere, River Wey, tributary of the Thames. Gendered waterscapes.
Guiney, Louise Imogen	In the Docks	1893	Poem	*A Roadside Harp: a Book of Verses*
Gissing, George	In the Year of Jubilee	1894	Novel	
Grahame, Kenneth	Pagan Papers	1894	Essay	
Bickerdyke, John	Thames Rights and Thames Wrongs	1895	Travel Writing	Thames Preservation - "a sham", neglect of conservators
Ashby-Sterry, Joseph	A Tale of the Thames	1896	Travel Writing	Leisure and the Thames. From the Head of the Thames down to Staines.
Marsh, Richard	The Beetle	1897	Novel	foreign 'other'
Stoker, Bram	Dracula	1897	Novel	Dracula's Carfax House in Purfleet, along the Thames / He "can only pass running water at the slack or the flood of the tide" (2003, p.255/6)
Armour, Margaret	Thames Sonnets and Semblances	1897	Poem	
Allen, Grant	The Thames Valley Catastrophe	1897	Short Story	Published in Strand magazine. Allen also wrote *The Evolution of the Idea of God* (1897)
Roberts, Morley	Maurice Quain	1897	Novel	Begins with Maurice rowing down the Thames, saving a woman from suicide.
Bickerdyke, John	Her Wild Oats	1898	Novel	
Warren, Thomas Herbert, Sir	Natural Religion	1898	Poem	*By Severn Sea and Other Poems*
Conrad, Joseph	Heart of Darkness	1899	Novel	Thames "represented "[t]he dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires"

Author / Historical Significance	Title	Date	Genre	Notes
Belloc, Hilaire	The Historical Thames	1900	Historical	Non-fiction
Death of Queen Victoria		**1901**		**22-Jan**
Buchanan, Robert Williams	A Morning Invocation (on London Bridge)	1901	Poem	*The Complete Poetical Works*
Buchanan, Robert Williams	The Sphinx (On the Thames Embankment, London)	1901	Poem	*The Complete Poetical Works*
Cornish, Charles John	The Naturalist on the Thames	1902	Travel Writing	Non-fiction, poetic - "intense study of Virgil"
Barlow, George	Sonnet III Cleopatra's Needle	1902	Poem	*The Poetical Works [1902-1914]*
White, Fred . M	'The Four Days' Night'	1903	Short Story	Set in late Victorian period.
Birch, G. H.	London on Thames in Bygone Days	1903	Historical	Non-fiction, "silver Thames"
Besant, Sir Walter	The Fascination of London: The Thames	1903	Travel	Non-fiction
White, Fred . M	The River of Death	1904	Short Story	Pearson's Magazine
Myers, Ernest	A Song of the Thames	1904	Poem	*Gathered Poems*
Ford, Ford Madox	*The Soul of London*	1905	Survey	
Hopper, Nora	On the Thames Embankment (London)	1906	Poem	*Selected Poems*
Noble, Edward	A Story of the River Thames	1907	Novel	
Morris, Lewis, Sir	On the Thames Embankent	1907	Poem	*The Works*
Grahame, Kenneth	The Wind in the Willows	1908	Novel	
Thames Authorities - management of the River	Port of London Authority	1908		Managed docks and tidal river
Chesterton, G.K.	The Man who was Thursday: A Nightmare	1908	Novel	
Vincent, James E,	A Story of the Thames	1909	Historical	Welsh author
Thacker, Fred S,	The Stripling Thames	1909	Historical	
Davidson, John	The Thames Embankent	1909	Poem	*Fleet Street and Other Poems*
Miller, Joaquin	Westminster Abbey	1909	Poem	*Joaquin Miller's Poems*
Forster, E. M.	Howards End	1910	Novel	Chelsea Embankments
Kipling, Rudyard	A River's Tale	1911	Poem	From the perspective of the Thames

Author / Historical Significance	Title	Date	Genre	Notes
Ashby-Sterry, Joseph	The River Rhymer	1913	Poem	collection dedicated to different parts of the Thames
Blunt, Wilfrid Scawen	On the Thames	1914	Poem	*The Poetical Works*
Money-Coutts, Francis Burdett	The Thames	1920	Poem	*The Spacious Times and Others*
Binyon, Laurence	The Wharf on Thames-Side: Winter Dawn	1931	Poem	*Collected Poems of Laurence Binyon*
Thames Authorities - management of the River	Thames Water Authority	1974		After Conservancy expired
Thames Authorities - management of the River	National Rivers Authority	1989		
Thames Authorities - management of the River	Environment Agency	1995		

Appendix Three: Network of Thames Writers