

Human Destructive Behaviors against Nature in John Clare's Poetry

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الاساليب البشرية التدميرية للطبيعة في اشعار جون كليير

الكلمات المفتاحية : (جون كليير، شعر الطبيعة ، البشر ،الاساليب التدميرية)

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Abstract

John Clare (1793-1864), a Nineteenth Century Romantic poet and naturalist has defended the rights of nature in most of his poetry against human destructive behaviors. His knowledge of the English countryside, Northamptonshire in particular where he lived most of his life, engendered his full awareness of the negative impact of these destructive behaviors upon all life. The paper discusses Clare's inspection of these behaviors in his society, and his strong opposition to them, in his poetry. The poet criticizes all members of his own community; children, adult peasants, and government. He disapproves of their destructive tendency against nature in all its forms; plants, waters, and animals. He regards all behavior that causes damage to nature a negative behavior, from simply picking flowers to enjoy their beauty, to cutting trees and draining marshes by Enclosure Law, the law that legalized killing all nature. He compares this law to a brutal war against nature that serves no purpose but financial gain for the government. Moreover, Clare regards killing animals for no justifiable reason as another human destructive tendency, and even if it is done for some justifiable reason, like when peasants try to protect their property and crops from the harm some animals might cause, it has become later a destructive behavior when peasants have turned it into a sport practiced monthly or annually for the sake of pleasure and excitement. Clare ascribes these negative behaviors to people's ignorance of the physical and moral importance of nature to humanity, and their ignorance of the ecological relationship that connects every living thing to the other. Finally, the conclusion sums up the main findings of the paper.

جون كليير (1764-1798) هو شاعر روماني من القرن التاسع عشر وعالم طبيعي الطبيعة في معظم اشعاره ضد الاساليب البشرية التدميرية. ان معرفته بالريف الانكليزي وبالخصوص قرية نورثامبتن شير حيث عاش معظم حياته احدث لدى كليير وعي كامل بالتأثير السلبي لهذا التصرف على كل الحياة. يناقش البحث مراقبة كليير لهذه الاساليب في مجتمعه ومعارضته التامة لها في اشعاره. ينتقد الشاعر كل الاطراف في مجتمعه، اطفالاً و فلاحين و حكومة. وهو يستهجن الاتجاه التخريبي لهم ضد الطبيعة بكل اشكالها من نباتات ومياه وحيوانات . وهو يعتبر اي تصرف يؤدي الى الضرر بالطبيعة تصرف سلبي، من قطع الازهار للتمتع بجمالها الى قطع الاشجار وتجفيف الاهوار حسب قانون التطويق، الذي يقنن قتل كل الطبيعة. يشبه كليير هذا القانون بالحرب الوحشية ضد الطبيعة والتي لاغرض وراءها سوى الربح المالي للحكومة. واطرافه الى هذا يعتبر كليير قتل الحيوانات لأسباب لامبرر لها اتجاه اخر للبشر لتدمير الطبيعة. وحتى وان كان له مبرر، مثال على ذلك حينما يحاول الفلاحون حماية ممتلكاتهم ومحاصيلهم من اذى بعض الحيوانات تدميري عندما حوله الفلاحون الى رياضة ثمارس شهرياً او سنوياً لأجل التسلية او الأثارة. ويعزو كليير هذه الاساليب السلبية الى جهل الناس لأهمية الطبيعة المادية والمعنوية للبشر وجهلهم بالعلاقة البيئية التي تربط كل الاحياء ببعضها الاخر. وأخيراً، يلخص الاستنتاج النتائج الاساسية للبحث.

The frog half fearful jumps across the path,
And little mouse that leaves its hole at eve
Nimbles with timid dread beneath the swath
My rustling steps awhile their joys deceive,
Till past, And then the cricket sings more strong
Thus nature; human link and endless thrall,
Proud man, still seems the enemy of all.

(1-5 / 13-4)

These lines from 'Summer Evening' briefly describe Man's place in nature. Man, in Clare's poetry, represents a threat to nature and his nearness is synonymous with danger. He cuts trees and drains marshes and brooks to satisfy his greed for money and power. He, ignorantly, plucks flowers, tortures and kills animals for his amusement. He even endangers his own kind and labels this an (act of freedom) in order to right the wrong. Clare, on the other hand, puts himself in his poetry, as a defender of nature who speaks on its behalf, and pays attention to the tiniest living creature in it. The article examines Clare's portrayal of Humans' damage to nature in all its components; plants, waters and animals.

Born on the 13th of July 1793 in Helpston, a village in Northamptonshire in England, John Clare is the son of poor uneducated peasants. He has written his earlier poems in the intervals of hard manual labor in the fields¹, and he has found in nature his inspiration to rhyme. His love for nature has aroused in him the curiosity to know more about it which has led him to record natural history in prose and poetry. He watches trees, brooks, flowers, birds and insects with the eye of a naturalist as well as a loving poet. He presents nature as a living being in his poetry rather than a beautiful static picture, the matter which probably has made him different from most Romantic poets. He has taken nature out of its aesthetic frame. He conveys to the reader pictures of real nature he has seen himself and interacted with, rather than creating unrealistic nature based on individualistic point of view. Clare's nature poetry has formed new aesthetics of engagement with real nature instead of the aesthetics of spectatorship which is associated with most nature poets at the time.²

Clare's embarrassment of his own kind aggressive actions towards all that is living in nature has spontaneously provoked in him a strong urge to isolate himself and wish to live in a world which Keegan describes as 'the world without us'³. He presents shepherds, cowboys and ploughmen who are indifferent to nature as louts and clowns, unlike Wordsworth who might present them 'as natural in contrast to the artifices of urban humanity'⁴. Clare's favorite spot on earth is where 'flowers bloom untouched till they fade, seed and die' ('On Some Friends Leaving a Favorite Spot'⁵. Had these spots been exposed to human presence, then they will live under the continual threat of destruction and the loss of beauty. In most of Clare's flower poems human presence is almost always associated with either plucking or stepping on flowers. Keegan calls this case a human condition which 'may prevent us from a nonharmful coexistence with our natural environment'⁶. Clare describes the flower a 'living power' ('The poesy of Flowers'/4) whose 'beauty gives rapture in their sight' ('The poesy of Flowers'/10). Opposite to this is his description of how humans find this rapture in the sight of a dead flower. He shows how they use dead flowers to impart beauty to themselves. In 'The Holiday Walk' the boy prettifies himself by wearing a garland of dead flowers he plucks himself. Clare's outrage is clear when he describes him as 'vain as the rest' (243) or like a soldier proud of his decorated attire. The dead flowers are likened to 'baubles'; cheap jewelry. Both simile and metaphor imply false beauty, i.e., the flowers have lost their beauty after being plucked:

And bluecaps and cockle flowers, no matter what,
 To make a gay garland to stick in his hat,
 And now he stands out what a gesture he wears
 As proud of his colours as soldiers of theirs
 And why may he not be as vain as the rest
 Of proud folk were the proudest, as baubles at best.

(239-44)

In Clare's poems, children have the human destructive nature. They find their delight in damaging nature. Once they gather in a meadow, their only sport is to pluck all kinds of flowers. In 'Sports in the Meadows' Clare depicts a group of children making a mess of the flower field by trying to pluck every flower:

The basket-bearing children running there
 Do think within their hearts they'll get them all
 And hoot and drive them from their graceless waste
 As though there won't a coslap peep to spare.

(11-4)

On the other hand, Clare frequently juxtaposes his attentiveness for flowers with other's disregard for them,

And mark the flowers round us how they live,
 Not only for themselves as we may feel,
 But the delight which they to others give,
 For nature never will here gifts conceal
 From those who love to seek them-here amid
 These trees how many doth disclose their pride,
 From the unthinking rustics only hid,
 Who never turns him from the road aside.
 To look for beauties which he heedth not

('A Woodland Seat'/ 15-23)

And the caution with which the speaker approaches the flower in "To an Insignificant Flower" is contrasted with the carelessness of the rustics treading heavily on the flowers in "The Humble Flower that Buds Upon the Plane". These rustics are described as 'senseless rustics with unheeding eyes' (3) unlike the speaker in the previous poem who stoops to notice the flower

that is concealed from eyes. Surprisingly, in 'Ballad' the speaker stoops again for a flower, but this time not to notice it but to pluck it for his beloved. This might seem contradictory of Clare, However, it accentuates the idea of destructiveness as an unavoidable human characteristic. Nevertheless, the poet's disapproval of the plucking action is discernible when the speaker imagines the flower 'would turn a thorn to wound' him ('Ballad' 28). It is also obvious in his sympathetic attitude towards the withered flower; 'my poor flower' (32). This is most likely applicable if we take into consideration the descriptive style of Clare which would make flowers in his poems 'more tangible things to be considered for their own sake'⁷ rather than metaphorical or symbolical expressions.

Wordsworth expresses in *Prelude I* his fear in the presence of nature; 'sensibility fostered alike by beauty and by fear'(306)⁸ of Man in the presence of nature. Clare, on the other hand, reads the habitual performance of flowers as their fear and trepidation from Man. This presence could probably be of Clare himself who is mostly present in the spots that embrace the material of his poems about nature⁹:

The nodding oxeye bends before wind,
 The woodbine quakes lest boys their flowers should find,
 And prickly dogrose spite of its array
 Can't dare the blossom-seeking hand away,
 While thistles wear their heavy knobs of bloom
 Proud as a warhorse wears its haughty plume,
 And by the roadside danger's self-defy;
 On commons where pined sheep and oxen lie.

(' Fear of Flowers' / 1-8)

The contrast between Clare's positive treatment of nature and others' negative treatment of it is often present in Clare's poems. Either Clare is trying through this to distinguish himself from others when it comes to nature and the way to deal with it, or he might be trying to absolve himself

from the destructiveness of his social group. In 'To a Dead Tree' Clare draws a comparison between his view of a dead tree and other's view of it; 'The clown passeth by thee and heedth thee not/But thou'rt a warm source of reflection for me' -8). The word 'clown' could refer to the common peasant. However, it could also refer to poets as the word 'reflection' would suggest. Hence, Clare is perhaps attempting to draw a comparison between his view of this dead tree and other poets' view of it. Whereas the dead tree is a picturesque decay to reflect on by Clare, it has no aesthetic quality which would attract the interest of other poets. Clare has believed in his distinctness among other Romantic poets in relation to nature poetry in that they reflect their imagination in their poetry instead of reflecting nature itself. He believes that that could only mean ignorance of nature. In a letter to Keats, for example, Clare states that 'he [Keats] often described nature as she had appeared to his fancies, and not as he would have described her had he witnessed the things he described'.¹⁰

A tree for Clare is a record of the past; 'a silent witness to the past it has lived through'¹¹, that's why he regards them as the emblem of his past to which he attaches his childhood recollections. Moreover, they are the shelter for some animals, a home for birds. These are enough attributes to make Clare envision a law that would criminalize cutting trees:

My two favourite elm trees at the back of the hut are condemned to die- it shocks me To relate it, but 'tis true. The savage who owns them thinks they have done their best, and now he wants To make use of the benefits he can Get from selling them. O was this country Egypt, and Was I but a Caliph , the owner should lose His ears for his arrogant presumption; and the first wretch that buried his axe in their roots should hang on their branches as a terror to the rest¹²

Paradoxically the only law that is recognized concerning trees at the time has been Enclosure Law which demands cutting trees. The Enclosure Act of 1809 has made abrupt changes to Clare's native village, Helpston. The chief aim of this law is materialistic gain. The draughtsman working in the Parliament has suggested a plan to re-design the layout of the village of

Helpston to maximize the rents of the landlords. The Parliament's approval of the plan has led to environmental destruction for the sake of a linear landscape; 'The three large open fields around which crops were rotated and livestock moved were no more. The parish was divided into rectangular blocks. These, in turn, were subdivided by their owner and the space enclosed'¹³. For Clare, the Law represents a war against nature by which Man treads on all that stands in his way towards financial advantage; 'enclosure like Buanaparte let not a thing remain/ It leveled every bush and tree and leveled every hill', (Remembrances' 67-8) .Clare believes that trees are the victims of this war ; the martyrs that should not be forgotten, hence, he has felt inclined to immortalize them through writing what Johnne Clare calls 'enclosure elegies'¹⁴ to lament their death.

Clare laments three *old* trees. The word 'old' opens three of Clare's elegies to trees; 'To a Fallen Elm', 'To a Favourite Tree', and 'Burthorp Oak'. This means that Clare places high priority on tree's longevity. Clare is aware of these trees importance to all life, in addition to their symbolic importance to Clare's personal life. 'To a Fallen Elm' brings up the environmental benefits of old trees which are manifested nowadays in Dendrology; the study of trees. The Elm is presented as the source of life, a natural habitat occupied by animals and especially birds, a source for shade, and a windbreak. By identifying these benefits, Clare is attempting to show: first the serious consequences of cutting these trees, and second that Man's ignorance of these benefits explains his resolution to endanger all life including his own. Clare is considered the first nature poet who writes about the ecological relationship between living organisms; 'associations sweet each object breeds' (Shadows of Taste 129). A relationship which has been defined by modern sciences until (1972) by Krebs; 'the scientific study of the interactions that determine the distribution and abundance of organisms'¹⁵. Clare has realized that this relationship is a chain that links all living things together and which humans are threatening to break with their violence against other living things without realizing the danger of this action on his own kind. What Bates describes 'the sense of equality'¹⁶ Clare calls friendship in 'To a Fallen Elm'. Unlike his equals, Clare sanctifies this relationship. The Elm is the friend that provides him with 'protection' (1:

and the line a 'friend not inanimate' (29) asserts Clare's belief in the physical aspect of the protection. The multiple negation in this line implies Clare's reaction to the common view that trees are inanimate which might have been people's excuse to justify cutting them down. These contrasting views of Clare and his social group have created an inner conflict inside Clare. The same letter to Storey previously mentioned reveals this conflict:

This mourning over trees is all foolishness – they feel no pains – they are
But wood, cut up or not. A second thought tells me I am a fool: were
people all to feel as I do, the world could not be carried on,- a green would
not be ploughed- a tree or bush would not be cut for firing or furniture, and
every thing they found when boys would remain in that state till they died.
This is my indisposition, and you will laugh at it. ¹⁷

Two other elegies lament the land and the stream; the other two parts of the natural world which Clare believes have had their share of humans' cruelty. The elegies are 'The Lament of Swordy Well' and 'Lamentations of Round Oak-Waters'. These elegies also lament the ecological connections which have been broken by Man through stripping away vegetation emphasized by the recurring motif of nakedness and bareness¹⁸ and the negative consequences of this stripping on the life of other beings:

The bees around in feeble rings
And find no blossom by'
Then thrum their almost-weary wings
Upon the moss and die
Rabbits that find my hills turned o'er
Forsake my poor abode;
They dread a workhouse like the poor
And nibble on the road.

('The Lament of Swordy Well' 81-91)

In these two elegies, both land and stream are personified; the technique which Clare has not used in 'To a Fallen Elm'. This accentuates animism presented in 'To a Fallen Elm' as both land and stream are still alive while

the elm tree has died after being cut down. In 'The Lamentations of Round-Oak Waters', the reader comes across the word 'senseless' again which Clare uses to describe the farm labourer. To the reader's surprise the laborers are presented as the ones whose 'hands did wield/ the axe that gave the blow' (168-9). However, Clare displays the stream as sympathizing with the laborers despite the fact that they have performed the Enclosure Law that is enacted by the moneyed men:

But sweating slaves I do not blame
 Those slaves by wealth decreed
 No I should hurt their harmless name
 To brand' em wi the deed
 Altho their aching hands did wield
 The axe that gave the blow
 Yet't wasnot them that own'd the field
 Nor plan'd its overthrow.

(165-72)

Clare is a working class poet, A labourer and a son of a labourer in the fields of Helpstone; a village of Rural England. He is against enslaving the poor. He is a radical who has sought change through his poetry, but he hasn't been revolutionary. He raises his voice against enslavement, but he doesn't urge the labourers to raise their own against it. This is perhaps true of him or it could be what is made of him as his poetry has undergone reformation by his publisher, John Taylor, who could simply refuse to publish what he or his advisors do not like¹⁹. Clare has been presented and classified as a peasant poet, hence, we might assume that revolutionary poetry would be incompatible with Taylor's propaganda. Nevertheless, Clare's sympathy with the laborers does not mean that he completely supports their subservience to oppression as the word 'senseless' could imply.

The other living organisms which Clare's poetry proves them to be affected by humans 'violence are animals. However, Clare has a subjective

view about animals, and this view is based on the predators-prey classification. Obviously the speaker in 'Love Scorned by Pride' yearns for the place where helpless preys like nightingales and doves live, but not where birds of prey like the hawk live:

I wish I was a happy bird,
And then a true and timid dove:
Oh, I would fly the land of grief,
And rest me in the land of love

Oh I would rest where I love best,
Where I love best I may not be:
A hawk doth on that rose-tree sit,
And drives young love to fear and flee.

Oh, would I were the gold finch gay!
My richer suit had tempted strong.
Oh, would I were the nightingale!
Thou then hadst listened to my song.

(21-32)

In Clare's nest poems, the image of the bird's hidden nest from danger seems a recurring motif. The danger is mostly caused by predators as well as the predatory instincts of humans which Oerlemans describes as 'human cruelty'²⁰. Clare presents this cruelty as a human 'characteristic behaviour'²¹ and he vividly portrays it through descriptions of the nesting boys' intrusion and the hunters' brutal killing.

Nesting has always been a common cruelty of children. They find a pleasure in sticking pins through beetles or sicking dogs on cats²² and their ultimate diversion is to beat bushes with sticks searching for bird nests to destroy²³. In Clare's poems, the nesting boys are as dangerous to the birds

as the snakes that watch 'nests and seize the helpless young', ('A yellowhammer Nest' 28) Leaving 'a ruin nest' (928) and a 'mournful' (29) bird behind, also the nesting boys seek nests every morning and evening 'searching each bush and taller clump of grass/where'er was likelihood of bird to build' ('Sedge-Birds Nests' 7-8)) They climb up trees to search for the nests; scare the bird, and torture the nestlings. In 'The Sinken Sun is Takin Leave', Clare describes how these boys climb up a ladder 'to catch the sparrow on his bed/And kill em' (94-5). However, Clare knows that these boys are more of troublesome children than cold-blooded killers, therefore he describes them using words like (mischievous) or (rude). The vicious killer for him is the armed peasant who shoots birds. In 'The Robin' Clare associates him to a predatory animal. The speaker in this poem warns the bird not to fly near this peasant's house nor eat from his field:

But oh, little Robin! be careful to shun
 That house, where the peasant makes use of a gun,
 For if thou but taste of the seed he has strew'd
 Thy life as a ransom must pay for the food
 His aim is unerring his heart is as hard:
 And thy race, though so harmless, he'll never regard.
 Distinction with him, boys, is nothing at all;
 Both the wren, and the Robin, with sparrows must fall.
 For his soul (though he outwardly looks like a man,)
 Is in nature a wolf of the Apennine clan;
 Like them his whole study is bent on his prey;
 Then be careful, and shun what is meant to betray

(16-26)

Searching for nests among the bushes is not only the school boy's interest, but also a deep interest of Clare himself. The way birds hide their nests from danger represented by 'the very breath of man' ('To The Snipe' 10) has stimulated Clare's interest. He interprets this concealment to be the bird's attempt to seek refuge in 'saftys guard of pathless solitude', ('The

Nightingale's Nest' 63) Clare finds in the nest what Kovesi ter retreats Clare himself so frequently seeks'²⁴ from the society of Man. The revelation of the bird's hidden eggs has stirred inside Clare the tendency to record their different shapes and colours in natural history. However, he has felt the possible likelihood of his menacing intrusion. Perkins states that Clare's introduction of persons other than him to scare the bird and reveal its nest, proves that he has felt this imputation:

In 'The Yellowhammer Nest' the poet just happens to be looking on as a cowboy scrambles down a bank. The boy frightens a bird into flying up, revealing its hidden nest, in which the poet then sees ' fire eggs pen-scribbled over lilac shells/ resembling writing scrawls'. In 'The Pettichaps Nest' the poet ceases the nest-disclosing alarm, but he does so inadvertently as he walks a long, since the nest was built dangerously close to a public way. 'The Wrynecks Nest' is exposed by peeping idlers. In ' The Firetails Nest' the blue eggs are uncovered by a hedger.²⁵

Hence, Clare tries subtly to clear himself of causing harm to nature. Moreover, the idea of reassuring birds in some of his nest poems could be another subtle attempt to form a distinction between him and cruel humans:

Wi my own hands a nest
I'll gi ye shelter, peace, rest.

('The Sinkin Sun is Takin Leave' 107-8)

Come, come to my cottage; and thou shalt be free

To perch on my finger, and sit on my knee;
 Thou shalt eat of the crumbles of bread to thy fill,
 And have leisure to clean both thy feathers and bill

(‘The Robin’ 27-30)

Sing on Sweet bird! May no worse hap befall
 Thy vision, than the fear that now deceives
 We will not plunder music of its dower,
 Nor turn this spot of happiness to thrall;

(‘The Nightingale Neest’ 6 -70)

The lines above make sonnets like ‘Badger’ and ‘The Fox’ seem as if written by a different poet other than Clare. The two sonnets are mere descriptions of two brutal scenes that show humans’ cruelty against these animals. The description is free of the poet’s sentiment towards the animals which has led Clare to be ‘suspected of enjoying the cruelty for its own sake²⁶’ which is itself questionable as the poems do not show an attitude of excitement or joy. This neutral attitude in these poems emphasizes Clare’s subjective view about animals previously mentioned. Had the poems carried a sympathetic attitude towards the fox and the badger, it would have contradicted the sympathetic attitude towards the prey in his bird poems. Therefore, the unsentimental attitude should perhaps be expected of Clare in these poems, since the scenes described resemble a fight between predators and the predatory instinct of Man. Clare might have shown sympathy towards the prey, but as Mckusick points out, he avoids judgment of the predator’s aggressive behavior due to his awareness ‘of the role of predation in maintaining the population balance in natural ecosystems’²⁷. In ‘Badger’ and ‘The Fox’ Clare also avoids judgment of the peasants. There are no disapproval attributive adjectives like ‘cruel’ or ‘rude’ to describe the peasants, albeit their action is even more cruel and violent than that of the nesting boys whom Clare has mostly attributed these adjectives to :

He falls as dead and kicked by boys and man,

Then starts and grins and drives the crowd again;
 Till kicked and torn and beaten out he lies
 And leaves his hold and cackles, groans, and dies.

(‘Badger’ 94-52)

The ploughman ran and gave a shout,
 He found a weary fox and beat him out
 The ploughman laughed and would have ploughed him in
 But the old shepherd took him for the skin,
 He lay upon the furrow stretched for dead

(‘The Fox’ 3-7)

However, these scenes are an everyday routine to a farm laborer like Clare. He is aware that these animals are farmer’s worst foes due to the poultry and crops damage they cause. Thus, Clare considers killing these animals a defense strategy. The two poems are not criticizing the act of killing more than the method i.e., to turn killing into a sport which humans do for pleasure. Clare’s excessive use of action verbs enhances the detailed description of the method, and the verb ‘laugh’ which occurs in both poems connote the unjustifiable sadistic behavior of the peasants:

They get a forked stick to bear him [the badger] down
 And clap the dogs and take him to the town
 And bait him all the day with many dogs,
 And laugh and shout and fright the scampering hogs.

(‘Badger’ 21-4)

The ploughman ran and gave a hearty shout,
 He found a weary fox and beat him out,
 The ploughman laughed and would have ploughed him in
 But the old shepherd took him for the skin

(‘The Fox’ 3-6)

Conclusion

At the time when nature poetry praises an ideal nature, imaginary and mythical, a distinctive voice has been heard from a small village in Northamptonshire describing a nature new to the reader then; the real nature that has been ruined by one of its creatures, Man. John Clare, lives around that nature day and night, and he knows it more than any other poet of his time. Unlike most of his contemporary Romantic poets who write about visionary experiences of an urbanite walking in the fields, Clare writes about real experiences of a laborer toiling in the fields. His nature poetry has declared the danger that awaits all life, because of humans' destructive behaviors against nature, and it condemned that war which people have launched against trees, waters, and animals in order to achieve material gain. Clare has employed his poetry to expose his society's negative practices against nature. His nature poetry talks about children making a mess of flowers' fields, killing birds, and destroying their nests, as well as peasants cutting trees, and killing animals. He has become the patriot who defends his village, Helpston, against the Enclosure Law that authorizes war to disfigure the natural scenes of his village, and he is probably the first environmentalist who called for saving the environment from destruction

Clare is known as uneducated peasant poet among the Romantic poets. This self-taught poet has taught the learned the importance of nature to human life. His poems implicitly show human's ignorance of the growing threat they are gradually exposing themselves to as a consequence of their constant harm to nature. Clare has exhibited human's harm to nature as unintentional; happening because of the lack of knowledge, carelessness and insensitivity, or intentional; done for the sake of financial gain or amusement. Opposite to this harmful negative treatment is Clare's carefulness towards nature as he shows in his poetry. This carefulness makes Clare a role model to aspire to, if humanity is concerned about preserving the ecological balance. If one apprehends Clare's criticism of human's bad treatment of nature, one would realize that Man is the only creature that is degrading the ecosystem.

NOTES

¹Mark Storey, ed. *John Clare: The Critical Heritage* (London & NY : Routledge, 2002), p.301.

²See Scott Hess, " John Clare, William Wordsworth, and the (Un)Framing of Nature" *The John Clare Society Journal* .27July, (2008), pp.27-44.

³Bridget Keegan, 'The World Without Us: Romanticism, Environmentalism, and Imagining Nature'. *A Companion to Romantic Poetry*, ed. Charles Mahoney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), pp.554-571.

⁴David Perkins, *Romanticism and Animal Rights 1790-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.96.

⁵Roger Sharrock, ed. *Selected Poems of W Wordsworth* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1958), p.1.

⁶Keegan, p.562.

⁷ Simon Kovesi , ed. Introduction to *John Clare Flower Poems* (Bangkok: M&C Services, 2001), p. xv. All quotations from Clare's Flower Poems are taken from this book.

⁸Simon Kovesi , ed. The John Clare Page (www.johnclare.info). Retrieved on 27th, October, 2013. All quotations from Clare's Poems, other than his Flower Poems, are taken from this site.

⁹John Taylor, ed. Introduction to *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* (London: Taylor & Hessey, 1820), p.xv.

¹⁰ Storey, p.140.

¹¹ John Goodridge, *John Clare and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 114.

¹² Storey, p.138.

¹³ Fred Harrison, *The Traumatized Society* (London: Shepherd, 2012), pp.54-5.

¹⁴ John Clare, *John Clare and the Bounds of Circumstances* (Canada: McGill Queen's University Press, 1987), p.36.

¹⁵ Michael Begon, Colin R. Townsend, and John L. Harper, *Ecology from Individuals to Ecosystems*, 4th ed (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p.xi.

¹⁶ Quoted in Malbeka Sarker, *Moneta's Veil: Essay on Nineteenth Century Literature* (India: Dorling Kindesley, 2010), p.164.

¹⁷ Storey, p.138.

¹⁸ Goodridge, p.111.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Summerfield, Hugh Houghton, and Adam Philips, ed. *John Clare in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.158.

²⁰ Onno Oerlemans, *Romanticism and the Materiality of Nature* (Canada: University of Toronto, 2002), p.80.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Perkin, p.139.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Simon Kovesi, 'Her Curious House is Hidden: Secrecy and Femininity in Clare's Nest Poems'. *The John Clare Society Journal* 18July. (1999): pp. 51-63.

²⁵ Perkins, p.135.

²⁶ Porter quoted in Perkins, p.98.

²⁷ James C. Mckusick, *Green Writing Romanticism and Ecology* (New York : St.Martins Press, 2000), p.83

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