TEXT, NATURE AND REPRESENTATION: AN ECOCRITICAL READING OF SELECTED CARIBBEAN NOVELS

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me, and it is a record of my own research work. It has not been submitted in any previous application of a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and the sources of information are duly acknowledged by means of references.

_____ _____

ISMAILA, ORICHA AZEEZ **DATE**

CERTIFICATION

This thesis titled *Text, Nature and Representation: An Ecocritical Reading of Selected Caribbean Novels*, by Ismaila Oricha Azeez, meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in literature of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Almighty God.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis titled "Text, Nature and Representation: An Ecocritical Reading of Selected Caribbean Novels," examines the depiction of nature in relation to culture in Michael Anthony's The Year in San Fernando (1965), Herbert G. De Lisser's Jane's Career (1972), Earl Lovelace' The Dragon Can't Dance (1979) and Rene Maran's Batouala (1922). The thesis deploys the insights and poetics of Ecocriticism to the evaluation of the selected novels to demonstrate their signification of the interactivity of nature and culture in their interdependence and mutual constitutiveness in Caribbean ecosystem. The involvement of man in the exploitation of nature and the effect it has on the social texture of the society is also part of the focus of the study. The study is located in the second wave of the literary development of the field. The broadening of the purview of the first wave to bring man into the scheme and locating vestiges of nature in urban areas, consequent upon the re-theorizing of nature accounts for the emergence of second wave of Ecocriticism. It thus makes for the possibility of analyzing works not necessarily interested in nature since the selected texts had been written before Ecocritics proposed the various strands of the theory used to examine nature-oriented works. In a careful survey of Caribbean literary works that have been subjected to Ecocritical interpretation, the selected texts are found not to have been given Ecocritical attention as done here. That is the gap that this study attempts to fill. The authors attempt to open up a community of people connected to the natural world in their socio-cultural life. The texts reveal that man is solely and indiscriminately involved in causing ecological violence or disequilibrium to the landscape which in turn, endangers human and non-human life. They argue that there is a confluence of environment and identity formation in the understanding of Caribbean literature. As such, the texts express a common ideological position of raising ecological consciousness. This is because environment is as much social, cultural and ideological an entity as it is a physical one.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

This research titled *Text, Nature and Representation*: *An Ecocritical Reading of Selected Caribbean Novels,* undertakes a critical assessment of the representation of nature in relation to human existence in Michael Anthony's *The Year in San Fernando* (1965), Herbert G. De Lisser's *Jane's Career* (1972), Earl Lovelace' *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979) and Rene Maran's *Batouala* (1922). The study stemmed from our interest in the on-going research to examine the representation of nature in its connectedness to human culture in Caribbean literature. Previous studies of Caribbean novels have given little attention to the implication of nature on human culture in the selected texts. In other words, the study evaluates how the chosen novels depict the location or the "where" of man's socio-economic activities and the responsibility to cater for the well-being of the earth that is incumbent upon humanity.

The study is also premised on the assumption that the adoration and massive deployment of science and technology to meet human needs have caused serious destruction to the environment. From his ecological law of optimum, Dansereau (as cited in Phil-Eze, 2009) posits: "no species encounters in any given habitat (environment) the optimum conditions for all its functions" (p.390). Man attempts to modify the environment to satisfy his needs and desires. In doing this, ecological balance is affected, thus, causing disequilibrium or ecological violence. It can therefore be said that scientific inventions are beneficial to man, but each of its successes creates unexpected threat to human life and the earth. "For all the material blessings economic progress has provided, for all the disease and destitution avoided, for all the glories that shine in the best of our civilization", Speth (2008) posits, "the costs to the natural world, the costs to the glories of

nature, have been huge and must be counted in the balance as tragic loss" (p.1). Man has come to see the earth as a storehouse of materials to use in the pursuance of man's needs without paying commensurate attention to his obligation to the earth. Our understanding of the environment has come through the destruction of nature for agricultural and industrial activities and the accompanying rise of science and technology. Without environmental crisis, there might be no environmental imagination. This study deploys ecocriticism to examine the manner in which Caribbean literature specifically the selected novels uncover the ecological implications of Caribbean socio-cultural life. Ecocritics project the strength of literature to express the ecological values and realities that exist in the relationship between lifestyle and landscape.

This study is located in one of the three waves of ecocriticism. The first wave of ecocriticism is on natural history, celebrating the nature-culture binary relationship. It was a product of the revived interest in writing in the late twentieth century with focus on nature writing, ecocentric texts and natural history. Rooted in deep ecology, first wave sees human beings and natural world as diametrically opposed to each other. With the second wave, the meaning of nature started to gain a more sophisticated shape and perception. The redefinition of nature by second wave ecocriticism in tune with urban, surburban and wilderness complexities focuses on human and environment relationship as "interdependent and mutually constitutive" (Buell, 2005, p.2). It attempts to discover nature as present, hence construe environmental representation as relevant and significant category of literary aesthetics and political analysis. This is done taking into account class, gender, race, ecofeminism and environmental justice issues in literary texts. These expand the boundary of ecocriticism to include works not necessarily interested in the natural world.

The third wave of ecocriticism, according to Adamson and Slovic (2009), "recognizes ethnic and national particularities and yet transcends ethnic and national boundaries; this third wave explores all facets of human experience from an environmental view point" (pp.6-7). Its expansion is accounted for in its translocal and transnational conceptualization of the environment. The re-theorizing of nature by second wave ecocritics broadened the scope of the field to embrace works that are not essentially interested in natural history, as such, this study is suitably located in the second wave of ecocritical trajectory. Viewed from another perspective, the fact that the selected texts showcase important aspects of ecofeminism, environmental justice and issues of race and class in the evocation of Caribbean historical experience makes this research to be situated in the second wave of ecocriticism.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study expands the horizon of ecocritical perspective on literary works, specifically as it relates to Caribbean environment. Making use of nature and ecological issues in the historical representation of human existence,, the selected novels have depicted the implications of the environment in the formation of human culture. It is a fact that the selected novels are endowed with ecological issues, some of which have only been mentioned in passing in previous critical works, particularly in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* (2005); *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literature of the Environment* (2011) and *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (2011). They explore literature of the Caribbean in all languages of the region, the colonial myths of Edenic and natural origins and the sustainability of Caribbean aesthetics in the face of globalization and tourism. These studies are pertinent, but they have not accounted for man's exploitation of the environment for economic gains. Ecocriticism as a theory, particularly the relevant strands proposed by Heise (1999), Buell (2005), Reed (2005) and Bertens (2008) has not been used to evaluate the representation of nature in the

selected novels as combined for this research. This study attempts to fill that gap. The neglect of nature except for economic value in human relationships with nature threatens the survival of the dual entities of man and nature. As a result, this study is premised on the propositions that:

- The political commitment of Caribbean novels is prompted by environmental degradation which has become a serious challenge to life.
- The chosen novels, selected across vast disparity of time and space within the Caribbean show common ideological position on the environment.
- The "where" is inextricably tied to human culture and it defines the quest for socio-cultural identity in the Caribbean.
- The adoption of Ecocriticism as a new paradigm is suitable for the critical analysis of nature and ecology in Caribbean literature.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the value of place in man's relationship with it. The study evaluates nature in the selected Caribbean novels in relation to human sensitivity towards the environment and as a stimulus for a re-organization of Caribbean political thought. In other words, it contributes to the on-going attempts to raise ecological consciousness for the preservation of the natural world and human life. In this context, the study establishes that:

a. Caribbean novels depict nature and man as capable of affecting each other in their interconnectedness.

b. Socio-economic degeneracy of the Caribbeans is defined by the environment.

c. The chosen primary texts have the same ideological stance of raising ecological consciousness.

d. The poetics of ecocriticism is an appropriate theory for the evaluation of the value of the natural world in relation to human existence.

1.3 Justification of the Study

This study examines the interactivity between nature and culture in the Caribbean novels. A review of the relevant critiques of the underpinning connectedness of nature to human existence is an attempt to create a new perspective to the understanding of the relationship between nature and man. Edouard Glissant argued that the dialectics between "nature" and "culture" in the Caribbean that resulted in the troubled history of exploitation, migration, cultural identity formation and slavery have not been brought into product relations. *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture* (2005) examines, from the prism of ecocriticism, the colonial myths of Edenic and natural origins, the impact of colonial plantation and sustainability of Caribbean aesthetics in the face of tourism and globalization. *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (2011) and *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literature of the Environment* (2011) have also contributed significantly in this direction, making reference to the primary texts of this study in passing. Therefore, critical discourses on the Caribbean environment are limited in their perspectives because they have not examined the economic valuing of the natural world in the selected novels as combined for this study. It is important to broaden the existing body of knowledge by doing a critical evaluation of the essence of place in human economic activities in the selected novels. Man sees the non-human entities as less valuable except for economic reasons. Such economic perception of the environment represented in the selected texts has not been given critical attention as combined in this study. This is done by analyzing the connectedness of nature to man's socio-economic life. The study, on such premise, argues for the philosophical valuing of the natural world to prevent nature and humanity from more serious ecological problems. Each novel written across vast disparity of time and space, "has a specific message about how mankind not only must live in harmony with nature, but its very survival as a civilization depends on maintaining that harmony" (Mabry, 2011, p.1).

1.4 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The four works selected for this study possess requisite resources for an exploration of post Columbian Caribbean experience. This study attempts an ecocritical interpretation of Michael Anthony's *The Year in San Fernando* (1965), Herbert G. De Lisser's *Jane's Career* (1972), Earl Lovelace' *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979) and Rene Maran's *Batouala* (1922). These selected works capture the historical realities of the Caribbean. The writers have deployed different stylistic approaches to represent their common interest of exposing the ecological implications of human activities in the Islands. It is assumed that writers' concern about socio-cultural realities is expressed in their sense of imagination and creativity as they affect the society. However, while the study is restricted to the Caribbean, references are to be drawn from other relevant resources and fields to make the study comprehensive.

The chosen texts, as a consequence of what can now be regarded as their Ecocritical perspective, signify the necessity for the mutual co-existence of nature and culture to prevent man and nature from drifting towards apocalyptic direction. They are literary portraits that show sensitivity to the ecological violence or disequilibrium perpetuated by man on the natural world. Also, they reveal the ecological implications of the shades of unequal interactions between the poor and the rich in their economic needs and social dispositions

1.5 Organization of Chapters

The study is divided into six chapters as follows: chapter one is the introduction of the work. It contains the background, statement of the problem, aim and objectives, justification, scope and limitation, research methodology, the conceptualization of nature and environment in Ecocriticism, Ecocriticism as theoretical framework, the socio-historical context of the study and the Trinidadian carnival. Chapter two covers the review of related resources to the topic of study

and the waves of ecocriticism. Chapter three examines the depiction of nature in relation to human existence in Michael Anthony's *The Year in San Fernando* (1965) and Herbert G. De Lisser's *Jane's Career* (1972). In chapter four, the study investigates the implications of environment on socio-cultural issues in Earl Lovelace's *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979) and Rene Maran's *Batouala* (1922). Chapter five is a comparative analysis of the texts. Chapter six is the conclusion of the work.

1.6 Research Methodology

This research would adopt the explanatory and interpretative methods which fall within the qualitative research domain in the reading of the selected texts. In the words of Abrams (2005), to interpret a text "is to make clear the artistic features and purport in the overall work of which language serves as the medium" (p.135). It is a way of specifying the meaning of the language used in a text by analysis, focusing especially on theme, structure, images and effects. "Interpretation", therefore "should not be seen as a matter of common sense, but as a matter of criteria, procedures and techniques which are open to close examination" (Okunade, 2004, p.68). In the use of ecocriticism as an interdisciplinary theory, many resources from other connected disciplines - history, environmental science, ethics and philosophy - would be consulted. This study would make use of literary materials such as critical works, journals, conference and seminar papers, magazines, newspapers and published/unpublished academic works that examine ecological issues in the Caribbean and other parts of the world. Internet resources relevant to the study would also be used.

1.7 Socio-Historical Context of the Study

With reference to Safra et al, Akuso (2005) identifies three major Island chains in the description of West Indian geographic composition:

a. The Greater Antilles, comprising the Islands of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola (Haiti and Dominican Republics) and Puerto Rico.
b. The Lesser Antilles, including the Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadires, Barbados and Grenada.
c. The Isolated Island Groups of the North American Continental Shelf: The Bahamas including the Turks and Caicos Islands, and South American Shelf, including Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curacao and Bonaire"(p.3).

The original inhabitants of West Indies before Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of the Islands in 1492 were the Arawak, the Carib and the Ciboney (who were Amerindians). The Spanish adventurer, having "discovered" the new world (America) towards the end of 15th century, Spain, the precursor occupant possessed indisputable colonial empire, especially in the Caribbean throughout the 16th century. Having had her sway for about a century, in the 17th century, the Western powers of Holland, France and England, impelled by crisis and mercantilist ideas joined in the scramble to acquire territories in the Caribbean: France quickly established itself in the Lesser Antilles, originally occupied by the aboriginal Indians, the Carib. This Lesser Antilles was not rich in precious metals, but endowed with fertile soil for agriculture. It was this lack of gold or silver to mine that prompted the Spaniard not to put up strong resistance to the Western powers in contention for the Islands. Hence, "from 1635 onwards, the French were able to take control of the Islands of Martinique, Guadaloupe, San Cristobal, Dominica, Grenada, Santa Lucia, San Bartolome, San Martin and Santa Cruz" (Arguelles, 1978, p.32).The Islands where French had much power over were the only ones allowed to produce cash crops needed by France. In the

words of Arguelles once again: “all industry was forbidden in the Islands, as was any crop cultivation which might conceivably compete with that of the metropolitan power. The companies privileged to do so introduced African slaves to work on the land” (p.32).

The United States occupied Cuba and Puerto Rico at the start of the Spanish-American war in 1898. Danes, in 1917 sold Danish Virgin to United States and it also occupied Haiti (1915-35) and Dominican Republic in 1916-22. In the bid to protect their investments and project their vested interest, the United States established military bases in West Indies during the Second World War. Also present in the Caribbean as planters and overseers were the Chinese, East Indians and Portuguese. Their presence, including the early settlers was necessitated by suppressive tendency and monopolistic acquisition of resources, not unconnected to unemployment and religious persecution in their various country homes.

It is obvious that the arrival of Christopher Columbus opened the Islands to the epochal European intervention in the agrarian and indigenous cultural life of the people. The Europeans’ attempts to institute their exploitative culture, at a point in time, met brick walls as the Amerindians resolutely resisted it. Arguelles (1978) draws our attention to the acknowledged unfortunate fact:

> The Caribbean was a field of experiment for the occidental powers: first for Spain, and then for her rivals. From the beginning, strong and aboriginal resistance manifested itself in the region against the Europeans, a resistance as heroic as it was prolonged (p.32).

The European imperialists, having prioritized the exploitative and resource acquisition tendency over the need to develop the Caribbean “oriented their economies more toward the

hoarding of riches and the acquisition of luxury, than toward capitalization and productive investment in the Island" (p.34).

Found in large population among the three groups of aboriginal inhabitants of West Indies was the Arawak. Their agricultural practice before the plantation system was subsistence farming and fishing based on the symbiosis between man and nature. Man worked harmoniously with nature to produce the crops and fish to meet the needs of the people in the ecosystem. Akuso (2005) affirms that the Ciboney engaged in fishing for quite sometime before they were forcibly displaced which affected their initial preoccupation with fishing. They later took to hunting and gathering. The Carib, like the Arawak, practised farming and fishing but distinguished themselves from the others by their aggressiveness.

The exploitation of the Caribbean landscape, especially gold mine, exposed the Islands to serious hazards. The pre-colonial system of agriculture before the incursion of the colonial powers was subsistence farming. Hence, Caribbean agricultural dependency is traceable to colonialists' introduction of plantation system. The arrival of different European nations into the Islands led to the "discovery" of good land for agriculture, especially sugarcane. The evolution of taste and quest for sugar as a necessary commodity brought significant social and economic change. Caribbean Islands with abundant sunshine, plenty rainfall and no frosts accounted for the suitability of the landscape for sugarcane farming for sugar factories.

The failure of the European imperialists to further their economic adventure of gold and precious metal mining using the not enough Arawak labour force prompted them to, in the 16th century, source for Africans. African citizens were forcefully brought to West Indies to cultivate the new sugar and tobacco plantations. Arguelles (1978) accounts for the specific number of slaves in some of the Islands dominated by the French: "by 1701, there were already 44,000

negroes on the three main Islands: 8,000 in Guadaloupe, 16,000 in Martinique and 20,000 in Santo Domingo"(p.33). These thousands of African slaves were brought to the Caribbean Islands to facilitate the production of luxury crops for the international market. It affected the landscape. The rapid and wide expanse of deforestation of the dense and moist tropical forest eventually led to erosion, soil depletion, landslide and climate change.

The Trans-Atlantic slave trade to the Americas, to a large extent, accounted for the population density of blacks in the region. The resultant contention is the unfounded superiority claim of the Europeans over the deprived races, thus, leading to loss of self-dignity by the slaves and their descendants. The Western powers, especially Spain, France, Britain and Portugal were hardened convicts in this theatre of absurdity driven by the destructive and acquisitive economic motive. They regarded the Caribbean people and their natural environment as objects to be exploited and suppressed. This diametric opposition created racial inferiority complex on the dominated races, hence the entrenchment of racism in the Island.

Pertinently, race and class issues were concomitant with the growing complexity of the state of socio-economic affairs in the Island. The blacks, the deprived majority were conscious of the evil machinations of the white imperialists toward establishing and sustaining their control over them. Taking us down memory lane, Parry and Sherlock (1978) claim that in the 1990s', the West Indian sought to reject how they were been treated by colonialists to develop new concepts for themselves and the whole Islands (p.45). The inhuman treatment of the blacks incurred their wrath to sometimes, put up resistance against the white. This consciousness latent with political force translated into full, but sure and slow independence of the Islands. The delay in the movements after the Second World War was not unconnected to economic problems of the individual territories.

In the Caribbean region, the interactions between man and natural environment, especially early in the post encounter period was represented by the establishment of the sugar plantation which caused untold ecological trauma. It is within the various interactions with the Caribbean environment to satisfy the Europeans' gluttony that the Islands' environmental issues in relation to social problems emanated. The peoples' pattern of culture was hinged on the scale and intensity of dependence on nature. . The Caribbeans found themselves cultivating a unique but dynamic culture reflecting their environmental circumstances. The cultural history of the Caribbean has been a record of exploitation, degradation of nature by the European imperialists, signaled by the "discovery" of the Island by Columbus in 1492. The representation of the environment as an active character in relation to the formation of human culture in the selected Caribbean, lends itself to ecocritical interpretation.

1.8 The Trinidadian Carnival

The emergence of Trinidadian annual carnival celebration is traceable back to the arrival of the French speaking planter immigrants and African slaves in the 18th century. At the abolition of slave trade in Trinidad according to Warner (2004), carnival which was "celebrated by the masses was seen as originating from the minority French settlers who had flocked to the Island with the promise of land holding and inexpensive labour to work them" (p.137). Another claim as to the origin of carnival from Africa is due to the large population of Africans in the Caribbean. This fact is substantiated by the "similarities in some of the carnival's characters – the stilt walker or moko jumbie, and the overall style of masking, for example – as proof of this origin" (p.138). Apparently discernible is that the elements of African and European cultures are integral constituents of the carnival which therefore give credence to the two claims.

Before emancipation, carnival had been an integral social affair of the upper class settlers. It was originally designed to amuse the slave masters as it was mainly valued for its entertainment. Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe (1987) describe the celebration as thus:

> A major season of diversion and entertainment, a season of unlimited gaiety, of music, dance and masquerade during which as planters they could even permit themselves to fantasize about slaves they held, to assume their roles, mask their costume and dance (p.64).

Warner (2004) describes this celebration as a "theatre in the street, with characters, individually or in group, performing on the vast stage" (p.143). The historical event which hitherto was the exclusive of French speaking planters began to incorporate other planter immigrants. The preponderance of other groups and races, especially Spanish, French and English speaking people after British conquest of Trinidad in 1797 accounted for the population increase. Both African slaves and the free ones form part of the congregation of diversity in Trinidad. This composite of human races affected the modification of the carnival.

The stringent rule of colour difference excluding slaves from the celebration weakened because of high population density that emanated from the emancipation of slaves. The freed slaves chose as subject of evocation their condition of life in the plantations. This posture was a negation of the planters' earlier mocking of the slaves as they " took liberties and mocked the authority of the militia, staging mock battles, parodying the very authority which had wielded so much power over them" (Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe, 1978, p.65). The carnival gradually progressed in this mood until the freed slaves took complete charge of the celebration. Efforts by the ruling class to reclaim the carnival from the mass revelers met stiff oppositions. Now, the ritual effect has been detached from the initial thrust of the elite to the plantation experience of

slavery, taking different dimensions of drumming and procession. The peak of the celebration is marked with massive parade of the bands specifically on Monday and Tuesday. What raised comment were the sexually offensive appearances of the Jamet carnival.

Also, the scanty use of costumes by women led to complaints about the lewdness of the festival – a chauvinistic attempt to deny the female folk the enjoyment of the carnival. Trinidadian males wanted to externalize and ritualize their quest for dominance. The revelers rebuffed the allegation that "carnival is a time for total freedom, and that the suggestive dancing in public is nothing more than an open and harmless celebration of the vibrancy that lies at the depth of the society" (p.149).

In the history of the carnival, calypso a form of verbal art, was an integral part of the celebration that was connected to post emancipation "take over". It was initially the pre-occupation of the liberated slaves, but later the urban folk. The form of calypso then was of different mode compared with what obtained at the outset. The gradual transformation of the carnival with the accompanying changes in the varieties of expression and form were the reasons for the present form of calypso. The carnival celebration was theatrical with songs, street dancing, drumming and stick-fighting which attracted criticisms. Commentaries of rival groups at the carnival, apart from being directed at each other, were also directed at the ruling elite. This spirit of rivalry ensures that almost every class of the population is criticized. The annual celebration of carnival brought more the organization and preparation of songs with themes in consonance with the masquerade bands. The celebration, Warner (2004) writes:

> Is inconceivable without music. The hypnotic state to which many masqueraders are driven is the result not only of their total involvement with the new self beneath the disguise, but also from the infectious music that accompanies all carnival activities (p.146).

The Calypsonian style of performance was important to the carnival celebration. They strived to attain high quality of verbal commentaries and manipulation of the oral rendition of lyrical form to pass their messages across to the audience. Warner (2004) further notes: “it is calypso tent where the new calypsos are sung, and where eager audience often gather to hear not only the latest dance songs, but also the latest update on political and other intrigues in the society” (p.141).

The frequency in the performances of lead singer and band resulted into the institutionalization of special band that performed, though not so elaborate, throughout the year. The vigorousness of the band is always brought to essence during carnival celebration when calypsonians weave the theme of the carnival band into their songs. Accepted feature peculiar to the calypso was the scathing social comments that lie beneath the superficial entertaining music and performance. The Calypsonian keenly observes the human behaviour in the society and chastened moral with humour to expose prevailing social ills. According to Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe (1987), politically-oriented satirical comments were sourced from two cases: “the clash between the politicians’ self-image and the calypsonian depiction of it, and from the jarring effects of those songs attack couched in the forming of earlier jingoistic calypsos” (pp.73-74)

The Calypsonian who assumed the role of the conscience of the society, as social commentator displays the skills of language and rhythm to express beyond the surface meaning of his song. Also, as a form of verbal tradition, calypso was endowed with special technique to help give shape to a good number of Caribbean imaginative works. For example:

> There is in West Indian literature what we can call a ‘calypso style’, usually involving a certain way of presenting a situation and

> a particular way of manipulating both language and 'audience'…the rhythms of the spoken words are captured in prose narrative: well-known images are manipulated and combined with the favourite side, 'the line', 'old talk' and the popular joke, giving prose narrative the flavour of calypso song (Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe, 1978, p. 74).

Lovelace represents calypso in *The Dragon Can't Dance* as language and movement; music and dance. the structural and rhythmic effect is reflected in this sentence: "there is dancing in the calypso. Dance! Dance to the hurt! Dance! If you catching hell, dance, and the government don't care, dance! Your woman take your money and run away with another man, dance! Dance! Dance! Dance!" (p.6).

1.9 The Conceptualization of Nature and Environment in Ecocriticism.

The view of nature predicated on deep ecological perception of the concept which pre-occupied the literary thought of the first wave ecocritics assumed that it is "a location removed from culture, a space that is open to all" (Campbell, 2010, p.5). This constricted perception of nature to the first wave ecocritics broadened when the second wave ecocritics began to assign meaning quite extended compared to that of the first wave, which hitherto, saw nature to consist of the non-human where the interference of man was undesired. It saw place as having only a natural character, having distant relation to populated areas, thus excluding all the inhabitants of that place.

The emergence of ecocriticism in the USA was necessitated by the need to study environmental non-fiction referred to as "nature writing", produced largely in the Western states. First wave of ecocriticism was a product of the revived interest in the late twentieth century on natural history. The wave, rooted in deep ecology saw human beings and nature as opposed to

each other. It advocated environmental criticism that would help protect and preserve the natural environment from the exploitation of human culture. As a result of its rapid growth, based on its strength of making connections, it is now a complex field that evolves multidisciplinary approach to analyzing environmental issues. It therefore become problematic to apply the USA type of criticism to other literatures that are non-fictional, other environments and ecological theory, thus preparing the way for the second wave "to unify the dualism" perceived in the first wave. Second wave ecocriticism cashed in on this weakness and therefore attempts to deconstruct the binary opposition of anthropocentricism and ecocentricism. It identifies nature as present, though silent in literary texts. Hence, construe environmental representation as a relevant and significant category of literary aesthetics and political analysis. This is done taking cognizance of class, gender and race issues in literary texts, thus, expanding the boundaries of the field to include works not necessarily interested in the natural world.

Put differently, with the advent of technological advancement followed by rapid urbanization, the meaning of environment began to get a more sophisticated shape and perception. From the understanding of Albert Einstein (cited in Phil-Eze 2009), the concept of environment should be defined from human angle as "anything that isn't me" (p.391). In the succinct words of Enger and Smith (2006), "environment is everything that affects an organism during its lifetime" (p.5). Senapati (2013) defines nature as "matter, energy and forces that constitute the universe and compose all life" (p.10). The implication of these definitions of environment and nature is the thrust of Chisum (2012): "technology has permeated the 'natural' and that without new, more flexible definitions of nature and environment, we will not make any progress towards reconciling the green left with the conservative, production/consumption-focused right" (p.98).

This paved the way for a re-theorizing of nature in line with urban areas complexity. The shift of focus ecocriticism has experienced might appear substantial that going by its initial perception of the meaning of nature, according to Kovacik (2011), first wave loses an ability to contribute to the discourse on environmental issues, whose scope is no longer solely on 'nature' but has incorporated other fields of study such as feminism and environmental justice. The nature-culture conflict prevalent in the first wave is resolved by the shift in the perception of its meaning by the second wave. "Second wave literary critics no longer saw human beings and the environment as opposed to one another (sic), but instead focused on the ways in which they were interdependent and mutually constitutive" (Buell, 2005, p. 2).

Chisum (2012) goes further to mention Timothy Luke to have coined "urbanatura" to describe the world because of the thin and slippery boundary separating 'nature' and 'society'. In line with that premise, he mentioned Erik Swyngedouw to have claimed that no human creations are "unnatural" because humans are parts and parcel of nature. Therefore, "there is no way to isolate ourselves from the world: we are always in, constructing, and being constructed by our environment" (p.98). Consequent upon these polemics, the established synonymy between nature and environment would be applied in this study with the interchange of the terms to still retain meaning sameness as propounded by Timothy Luke in Chisum.

1.10 Ecocriticism as Theoretical Framework

To interpret environmental issues represented in a novel, Enger and Smith (2006) identify the following three primary theories of moral responsibility: the Anthropocentric theory which is human-centred sees the environmental responsibility to be derived from human interest only; the Biocentric theory being the broadest form of life-centred theory claims "all forms of life have an inherent right to exist"; and Ecocriticism maintains that:

> The environment deserves moral consideration and not one that is merely derived from human (and animal) interest. In ecocriticism, it is suggested that the environment has direct rights, that it qualifies for moral personhood, that it is deserving of a direct duty, and it has inherent worth. The environment, by itself, is considered to be on a moral par with human (p.2).

Based on the nature of this research, ecocriticism would be adopted as the theory of interpretation. This is to authorize and validate our approach to the study. It has been defined by Glotfelty (as cited in Alam 2011) as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (p.42). In the words of Buell (2005), ecocriticism is "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment, conducted in the spirit of environmental praxis" (68). Estok perceived the concept beyond the limitation of Buell: ecocriticism "takes stand by its commitment to natural world as an important thing rather than simply as object of thematic study and by its commitment to making connections" (p.87) to other disciplines. These definitions of ecocriticism have received applause as a theory that takes "an earth-centre approach to the study of text" (Gerrad, 2004, p. 1). Sharing the same intent and purpose with Glotfelty (as cited in Alam), Estok and Gerrad, Tosic (2006) posits: "ecocriticism is concerned with the relationships between literature and environment or how man's relationships with his physical environment are reflected in literature" (p.44). And, in an elaborate manner, Dobie (2012) views it as:

a. The study of the relationship between literature and the environment.
b. The study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyse the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the creation of the contemporary situation.
c. A celebration of the pastoral and the sublime (p.239).

It is discernable that ecocritics argue for priority attention to be given to nature in literature, that the role of nature in the formation of human culture should not be seen as a passive one. In the pursuance of this, ecocritics take nature as a consideration for critical and political analysis of texts. In other words, ecocritics focus on the way in which human cultures are conditioned by the natural environment. Ecotheory, therefore remembers the earth by accounting for the indebtedness of culture to nature.

As part of the attempts by ecocritics to draw a clearly distinct focus for the theory, a checklist for an interpretation of literary works is provided:

a. The non-human environment is present not merely as framing device, but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history.
b. The human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest.
c. Human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation.
d. There is some sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text (Buell, 1995, pp.7-8).

In the application of ecocritical approach to the examination of a text, nature is taken as an active character, as a significant interaction takes place between the author and place; character and place. Malamud (2005) claims that ecocritical ethics that include animals are in five general categories. Such ethics, according to him should encourage people to:

a. See animals without hurting them.
b. Understand animals in their own contexts.
c. Teach about animals' habit, their lives, their natures, their conditions as much as can be done from our limited and biased perspectives.
d. Advocate respect for animals on their own terms.
e. Develop a culturally and ecologically complex, problematized vision of what an animal means (pp.44-45).

Bertens (2008) articulates the various strands of the theory into five:

a. Deep Ecologists. For deep ecologists, nature takes precedence over human beings in their radical belief that the interest of non-human life on earth can only be truly protected by reduction of human population.

b. Marxist Ecologists. For the Marxist ecologists, our degraded environment is the direct result of unrestricted operations of international capital. The capitalist free market is held responsible for the world's environmental crisis.
c. Eco-feminism. Eco-feminism extends the unequal relationship between men and women to nature. Just as our Judaeo-Christian heritage and enlightenment constructed men as more responsible and rational than women who are regarded as more natural but less rational and therefore, inferior. Rationality is regarded as primarily responsible for the world's environmental crisis.
d. Social Ecologists. These are interested in the social cost of environmental problems like pollution and waste disposal.
e. Animal Liberationists. Liberationist critics seek to improve the fate of animals whose lives are often made miserable by man in his quest for self-fulfillment (pp.24-25).

Liberationist critics particularly advocate the collapse of the moral distinction between man and animal. The gap between man and animal may not be closed totally. The implication is that animals deserve more rights than they have presently.

Reed (2005), after due consideration from his perspective, came up with strands which he regarded as schools, "meant to correspond roughly to major sectors in the history and present environmental movements":

a. Conservationist Ecocriticism

Its concern is the relationship between man and nature, such that the natural world would be preserved and also endangered species protected. That is, it is the strengthening of man's ability to value or improve on his positive attitude towards the environment. It also focuses on ways to enhance the transcendental, which is the spiritual relationship between nature and man.

b. Ecological Ecocriticism

This involves the interpretation of literary tropes in relation to nature. In the examination of literary works, attention should be drawn to the "sense of rootedness in place in a particular ecosystem". It has to do with the use of "science' in ecology to analyze the representation of nature in literary texts.

c. Biocentric/Deep Ecological Ecocriticism

It looks at the centrality of biotic elements in place of man in the ecosystem. It analyses the extent of human relationship/interference with biotic life. It focuses on the separate existence/mutual exclusivity of man and the non-human biotic and biotic entities in literary works.

d. Ecofeminist Ecocriticism

It focuses on the interconnectedness in the liberation of women and nature in literature, that is, the feminization of nature and naturalization of women. What is the effect of gendering of nature and the naturalizing of women? It also addresses the question of how the "interrelations of race, class, and sexuality complicate the imagined and real relations between women and nature". In short, it concentrates on the liberation of women and nature.

e. Environmental Justice Ecocriticism

The focus of this school is to enhance the efforts of environmental justice movement, thus revealing the level of environmental destruction and hazards, especially to the people of colour taking disproportionate share. It questions the insensitivity and ethnocentricism of other schools with regards to race and class. Environmental issues like lead poisoning, toxic waste, uranium mining and incinerators are given critical attention (pp.3-4). The distinctiveness of the field from other critical approaches is articulated in the voice of Dobie (2012):

> Its social purposes establish it as a direct contrast to formalists, who tried to separate text from the world. Instead, ecocritics want to use texts as a way to get to the world itself. They also differ from post-modernists by rejecting the idea that everything is socially and/or linguistically constructed. To them, nature really exists as a force that affects human beings and which human beings can affect (p.240).

Based on the foregoing perspectives on the theory, it is discernible that apart from describing issues, it offers thoughts that inspire action-based articulation and provoke environmentalism. According to Kovacik (2011), "this type of writing dealing with a man's relation

to his environment has established for itself a stable category of literary works as well as its study called ecocriticism (p.14). As a consequence, it is assumed by Barry (2011) that the theory performs some specific functions in literature:

a Re-read major literary works from an ecocentric perspective, with particular attention to the representation of the natural world.

b Extend the applicability of a range of ecocentric concepts and using them of things other than the natural world – concepts such as growth and energy, balance and imbalance, symbiosis and mutuality, and sustainable or unsustainable uses of energy resources.

c .Give special canonical emphasis on writers who foreground nature as a major part of their subject matter, such as American Transcendentalism, the British Romantics, the poetry of John Clare, the works of Thomas Hardy and the Georgian poets of the early twentieth century.

d. Extend the range of literary – critical practice by placing a new emphasis on relevant 'factual' writing especially reflective topographical materials such as essays, travel writing, memoirs and regional literature.

e. Turn away from the 'social constructivism' and 'linguistic determinism' of dominant literary theories (with their emphasis on the linguistic and social constructedness of the external world) and instead emphasize ecocentric values of meticulous observation, collective ethical responsibility, and the claims of the world beyond ourselves (p.168).

It is understandable from the postulations of ecocritical scholars about the concept and its tenets that a common thrust of moral and political agenda runs through their perceptions, as the concept analyses the interactions (1) "between nature and culture focusing on people's involvement in those relationships (2) between human and non-human entities (such as dogs, cows, elephants, rivers, mountains, earth, etc)" (Jeanne, 2011, p. 1). In summary, it is fundamental to all the perceptions of ecocriticism that human culture is inextricably linked to the natural world, affecting it and in turn, affected by it. As such, what makes literary texts liable to ecocritical interpretation is the central tenet of the field articulated in the voice of Heise (1999): "ecocriticism analyzes the ways in which literature represents human relations to nature at particular moments of history, what values are assigned to nature and why, and how perceptions of the natural shape

the literary tropes and genres" (p.1097). Buell, Reed, Bertens' checklists and the central tenet of the theory articulated in Heise would guide the interpretative process of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section focuses on the emergence and waves of ecocriticism, assessment of critical comments, views and interpretations of Caribbean literature and the primary texts to show their orientation and limitation in relation to this study. Nature-oriented literature aligns its thought process in relation to the natural world. Writers who gave ecocritical perspective to their works existed long before the term 'ecocriticism' was coined in the second half of twentieth century. This has to do with the evolution and growth of ecocriticism as an approach to literary studies. "Eco", according to Johnson (2009), is derived from the Greek word "oikos", meaning "house". She traces the German word "oecologie" (ecology) to have appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1876, "the branch of biology that deals with the relationships between living organism and their environment"(p.7). Thus, ecology becomes the study of the "house", and ecocriticism, the study of the "house" as represented in literature.

The birth of ecocriticism, to Johnson, can be traced to William Ruekert whose essay in 1978 titled "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" captured the coinage and concept of the term to involve the "application of ecology and ecocritical concepts to the study of literature," (p.8). Ruekert's essay appeared in the edited work of Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm titled *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. The text gave the field, after several years, remarkable benchmark because of its in-depth, large expanse and diversity of themes. Branch (1994) posits that Ecocriticism was not put to active use until in the 1989 Western Literature Association meeting where Cheryll Glotfelty activated it in the critical vocabulary and urged its adoption to mean "the study of nature in writing" (p.6).

However, Johnson (2009) mentioned two precursor works to ecocriticism: Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* and Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City*. Marx's text sees "the machine as the advancement of technology in what was considered by many to be the virgin land of America" (p.9). In Britain, Williams' work, just like Marx's, prepared the fertile ground for ecocriticism. His work is an exemplification of urban life in competition with the pleasant aspects of the English countryside. In England, what counted as the originator of non-fiction writing was Gilbert White's *A Natural History of Selbourne* (1786). Rachel Carson's *The Silent Spring* shot her to prominence with focus on indicting the destruction of life by pesticides, thus inaugurating the literature of ecological degradation. She artistically gave an insight into the supposed role of literary writers to save the earth and human species from ecological problems.

To answer what exactly prompted the emergence of ecocriticism as a field of inquiry in the United States, were environmental problems conspicuously written on newspapers which drew the awareness of literary scholars. However, Ozdag (2009) claims:

> Today what is less voiced is that the environmental problems leading to a formation were only a by-product of a growth economy that created an excess of consumerism and a wasteful kind of living which has permeated American life in the past several decades – a lifestyle that went on until 2008 when global capitalism came to a crisis (although many certainly continued to live as if the current economic crisis has no connection to excessive consumerism) (p.128).

The concern of American literary writers was not essentially the environmental problems, but the increasing consumerism that reached climax in 1980s. This ignited the conscious search for an alternative simple and modest lifestyle enshrined in the works of American nature writers – Henry David Thoreau and his likes. Examples that easily come to mind in the pursuance of 'simple

living' include Alan Durning's *How Much is Enough: The Consumer Society and Future of the Earth* (1992), published in the same year when the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was founded and Donald Worster's *The Wealth of Nature* (1993). Ozdag observes:

> It was this same time that some radical economists deconstructing neo-classical economics and promoting more forcefully for the need to forge a new economy based on natural systems, on sustainability, on green business in service to the environment, to the communities, and future generations (p.128).

Dally's *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development* (1996) published the same time with *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm explicated his own perspective of "a steady-state-economy that takes the carrying capacity of the environment into account" (Ozdag 128). During this period, American ecocritics, with their publications and Dally's Steady State Economics (1977) gave credence to the emerging field of ecological economics. In Ozdag's summation:

> This explains more fully the rise of interest and the unprecedented enthusiasm in American nature writing and various environmental texts that lay heavy emphasis on 'simple living', fuelling the emergence of ecocriticism – a field of study whose founders may not have guessed, at the time, the path of its progression in the following decades (p.129).

Environmental issues, like in the USA, became front page news in Turkey. But, literary scholars in Turkey did not shift attention from the human dimension of issues to the underpinning connectedness of nature to it. They did not embrace the emerging ecotheory in US because there was no wasteful style of living. The economic policy of Turkey was not slanted towards consumption. However, Ozdag (2009) claims: "Turks, within two decades, created a systematic

culture of consumption and have now embraced a wasteful style of living" (p.129) as a result of economic policy of privatization that shares sameness with that of US. The growing population of man is consuming and producing for its needs but not paying commensurate attention to the damage caused on the life support system. The study and consideration of this matter was promptitude to the emergence of ecocriticism in Turkey because an umbilical cord connects growth economy and ecotheory.

In the 1990s, Tosic (2006) observes that the demonstration of attempts by scholars to show their commitment to giving priority attention to nature rather human beings, founded the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) and Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE) as journals. These developments were to enable critics establish a critical canon which came to fruition with the publication of *The Ecocritical Reader,* edited by Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination* in the mid 1990s which formally heralded the field of literary inquiry called Ecocriticism. Thenceforth, conferences assembling American critics began before it developed to gain international foothold. Meanwhile, Rigby (2012) identifies Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival* (1972) as the first work that used "ecocritical hermeneutics of suspicion to literature" (p.4). His critical disapproval concerned classical tragic works that encouraged anthropocentricism.

Towards the end of seventeenth century, according to Branch, it was a British naturalist, an explorer who described natural life in the American Southeast in his *A New Voyage in Caroline* that gave detailed exposition of the landscape. He however, goes further to note that a pre-Walden environmental book quite significant to the eighteenth century nature writing comparable to Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* of nineteenth century is William Bertain's *Travels* (as cited in Kovacik, 2011, p.49). Emerson's essay, "Nature" including other nature writing which founded the

American Transcendentalism, prepared the ground for Thoreau's *Walden*. Kovacik claims that these pioneer works on nature before the division of ecocritical disciplinary development into waves (First and Second) by Buell could be termed the "zero wave" of ecocriticism (p.49). Therefore, ascribing the fatherhood of nature writing to Thoreau is just to put a significant benchmark in ecocritical history. Kovacik puts it succinctly:

> If we look at the contents of the nature-oriented books of the zero wave of ecocriticism, it may be safely noted that the highest value they carried was the one to natural history. The books were mostly observations of natural phenomena, of various species of animals and plants, later in a combination with narrative. The value of Thoreau as a
>
> Naturalist is certainly high but to stay only on his level of evaluation would be under appreciating his qualities. Thoreau goes on a level spiritual, social and practical (p.52).

Thoreau's contact with early nature writing, his solitary observation of nature and society and engagement in social matters set in motion a phase of nature writing whose works became the object of focus of the first wave ecocriticism. The theorizing and re-theorizing of the concept of nature in line with rural simple life and urban sophistication respectively in the disciplinary growth of the field account for the occurrence of the different interlocking phases refered to as 'palimpsest'. That is, the trajectory of ecocritical hermeneutics is calibrated into waves that are not a strict consecutive sequence of one wave after another. It is a stretch of overlapping phases in the disciplinary development of the field. The perceptions of the waves are premised on the changing dynamics of nature in relation to human activities. The first wave of ecocriticism rooted in Deep ecology enjoins nature preservation and protection. It concerned itself with the static stability of nature and its dialectical relationship with man. This allowed for the Universalist

perception of nature and the focus on nature/non-fiction texts in the United States of America, which accounted for the narrowness of the wave. The first wave seeks to connect readers' awareness to environmental ethics. It was mainly the literary enclave of the white male authors with severely narrow ecocritical ability to discuss literary works outside the seemingly universal nature that offer comfort without little consideration of other environmental experiences. The change in phases is a reflection of the shifts in the perception of the meaning of nature and environment. The seed of contradiction in the first wave ecocriticism was ironically contained in its goal of reconnecting readers with nature, as it ignored urban spaces and heavily populated areas, maintaining the culture nature dualism. Put differently, the perception of the 'natural' consequent upon technological development and urbanization broadened the re-theorizing of nature. It thus incorporated artifices of nature in urban areas and texts not necessarily interested in the natural environment to set forth the phase of second wave ecocriticism.

The fluidity of the field makes its scope to constantly broaden and refocus as observed by Taylor: "ecocriticism is an inherently polemic form of scholarship (most often ecological) because in examining cultural constructions of environment, ecocriticism suggests a revaluation of the reader's own cultural construction of environment" (as cited. in Kovacik, 2011, p.27). It is the first stage of broadening that is encapsulated in the perception of second wave ecocriticism, allowing the fluidity to focus away from environments of natural characters and man's correlation with it to "locating vestiges of nature within cities and /or exposing crimes of eco-injustice against society's marginal group" (Buell, 2005, p.24). Environmental literature responds to and alerts about environmental issues. It does this using mainly texts imbued with human experiences in places by which it recalls the significance of their relation. The existence of literature that focuses on environmental issues provides a chance for humanity to shift from homo-centrism to ecocentrism. Characteristic of second wave is the recognition of the artificially constructed environment as

substantial to the field. It also puts the human species back to the picture, against the preceding wave's priority attention to the non-human nature. As Kovacik (2011) further observes:

> The second–wave Ecocritic is no more a 'mere' man of letters, educated only in writing but studies his ever changing environment with all its elements, whether it be elements human or non-human, in an environment urban or natural. Such critic ceases to represent a traditional conception of that term, being required to become engaged in various directions, such as issues of minority, nature preservation, sustainable living, environmental justice, etc. (p.58).

Second wave ecocritics examined literary construction of nature beyond the discussions of setting to discussing how gender, race and class mediate the perception of environment. That is, the perception and construction of the environment would not be monolithic; it has to bring in the aspects of ecofeminism and environmental justice and other related variables. Acholonu (1995) observes: "since the past thirty years, the world has been experiencing unprecedented interest in matters concerning women on one hand, and ecological issues on the other" (p.23). The concern of ecofeminism, in the words of Halkes (1991), is double-faceted as "the men not only try to dominate the nature outside but it is also the nature of women and nature as woman which must be tamed" (p.12). Ecofeminist critics draw a connection between the domination of women and nature, and thus argue that women have been considered closer if not equal to nature than men especially in a patriarchal society. The resultant effect of this association is the exploitation and subjugation of both. Ecofeminism examines how women are adversely affected by their unfavourable environmental conditions and what women do to combat the problems, including sexism, racism and other obstacles they face. It also examines how these issues are different across cultures, languages and borders. It tends to address the relation between women and nature and the implication of identifying women with nature, taking cognizance of the

differences that exist from one community of women to another. This would push backwards the 'universal' perception of nature by first wave ecocriticism.

Also important to second wave disciplinary growth is the aspect of environmental justice which enlarges our spectrum and understanding of what constitutes an environment. Adamson, Stein (as cited in Campbell, 2010) define environment as "the place in which we live, work, play and worship" (p.7). Environmental justice, sometime referred to as 'environmental equity', means fairness. In the United States of America, a working definition by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), according to Enger and Smith (2006) provides for "equal protection from environmental hazards of all individuals, groups or communities regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status" (p.28). This reminds us that environmentalism which is in "the defense of nature is virtually interconnected with the pursuit of social justice" (Rigby, 2012, p.154). This is a belief which corroborates Bate's (2000) postulation: "ecological exploitation is always coordinate with social exploitation."(p.48). It demonstrates how environmental destruction and social issues are inextricably linked, hence, sees literature as an effective tool for voicing concerns which are not restricted by either time , place or reality. Labeled as 'Vanguard' by Buell (2005), it adds more urban-centred literature to the purview of second wave, thus helping to expand and complicate the notions of nature and environment (p.113). Literary critics are therefore privileged to examine environmentalism and social justice. That is, environmental justice criticism would move further from the traditional question of how nature is affected by environmental destruction to: who does the polluting of the environment; how has environmental degradation been connected to environmental consciousness and concern; and why are certain groups of people exposed to more pollution than others in the environment? First wave ecocriticism connected reader to the environment with only one aspect of nature (unbuilt environment). A broader perception of ecocriticism by the second wave ecocritics therefore, include ecofeminism and environmental

justice as “it gives the field more material and steers the field away from the ‘universal’ nature comprised of (sic) mainly white men, allowing a variety of readers to recognize their realities within a broader genre of environmental literature” (Campbell, 2010, p.10).This incorporation of environmental justice and feminist literary criticisms make second wave diverse.

The third wave of ecocriticism accounts for the study of the conjunction between literature and environment that transcends geopolitical borders to assume a truly global status. In the words of Adamson and Slovic (2009), it “recognizes ethnic and national particularities and yet transcends ethnic and national boundaries; this third wave explores all facets of human experience from an environmental viewpoint” (pp.6-7). With the emergence of third wave attention is now focused on artistic representation of environmental conditions and experiences of various cultural groups around the world; environmental justice criticism, urban and suburban experiences, beyond the valorization of wilderness. The complex nature and multifaceted engagement of ecocriticism, for instance, with such cultural matters: race, ethnicity, gender, identity and with social matters: operations of imperialist system of political, economic power, globalization of social injustice, environmental justice and its recent trans-local and trans-national conceptualization of place and human experience account for the expansion of ecocriticism. In this regard, Murphy posits:

> In order to widen the understanding of readers and critics, it is necessary to reconsider the privileging of certain national literatures and certain ethnicities within those national literatures. Such consideration would enable a greater inclusiveness of literatures from around the world within the conception of nature-oriented literature. It will also enable critics and readers such as myself, who focus primarily on American literature, to place that literature in an internationally relative and comparative framework (as cited in Slovic, 2010, p. 6).

The thrust of Murphy's exhortation here is a call for ecocritics to go beyond the scope of the first and second waves to situate their own national/ethnic literatures within international and comparative perception. Slovic (2010) enumerates the main characteristics of the third wave which make it distinct, yet, still connected to the preceding waves:

a. Global concepts of place are being explored in fruitful tension with neo-bioregionalist attachments to specific locales, producing such neologisms as 'eco-cosmopolitanism', 'rooted cosmopolitanism', 'global soul" and 'translocality'.
b. Placing ethnically inflected experience in broader, comparative contexts (including post colonial texts).
c. Earlier varieties of ecofeminist scholeadership have evolved the new wave of 'material ecofeminism, which has become part of the general trend towards new gendered approaches in ecocriticism, ranging from eco-masculinism and qeer theory.
d. Intensified focus on the concept of 'animality' (evolutionary ecocriticism, ecocritical discussion of animal subjective and agency in works, linkages between practice and lifestyle choices such as vegetarianism or omnivorianism, and expansion of the scope of environmental justice to encompass non-human species and their rights) (p.20).

In the attainment of these, scholars are to harness new and old ways to connect their works to social transformation. It is also being used to illustrate sustainable lifestyle and as agent of environmental criticism. Mount (2012) brings to our knowledge that De Loughrey, Gosson and Handley, identify, despite the fact that colonial structures still hold sway in the Caribbean, four directions in which literary discourse is pushing the Caribbean environment:

a. The way in which Caribbean texts reveal the impact of colonial and plantation economies on the local environments.
b. Through re-visiting and re-writing myths of the Islands' Edenic origins.
c. Making connections between paradigms of purity vs. Creolity in both the natural and the human world.
d. Ways in which Caribbean aesthetics might usefully articulate a means to preserve sustainability in the wake of tourism and globalization (p.137).

Most Caribbean literary works have their orientation and limitation in view of the fact that they were at the outset, pre-occupied with issues of cultural affirmation, class distinction and slavery. Glotfelty (2008) confirms this:

> You would quickly discern that race, class and gender were the hot topics of the late twentieth century, but you would never know that the earth's life support systems were under stress. Indeed, you might never know that there was an earth at all (p.xvi).

That is, oblivious of the fact that there is "no work of culture which is not simultaneously exploitative of nature" (Rigby, 2012, p.153), critics de-emphasized ecological thought behind the cultural formation in the Caribbean Islands. They did not link human culture to nature or view nature as capable of generating human culture. This was because ecocriticism, particularly the second wave, which collapsed the imaginative schism between nature and environment had not been proposed by critics, that seek to broaden the focus of the field to include works that are not necessarily interested in the natural world. Hence, nature or environment in imaginative works was neglected by critics unless as foils for human actions and experiences before the emergence of ecocriticism. Akuso (2005) expatiates unequivocally that the issues of race, displacement, miscegenation and plantation foregrounded the alienation and misrepresentation of the Caribbeans in European literature. This negative representation of the Caribbeans in a sense, jolted Caribbean writers literary consciousness to begin to write to demystify and, or exorcise the inferiority complex implanted in the psyche of the Caribbeans. In Akuso's incisive words, Caribbean literature "cannot be divorced from the various social formations and productive relations from which it emanated in the first place and to which it reacts" (p.46).

Caribbean colonial experience dominated the origin and development of Caribbean protest literature and rendered it opposed to Western standard aesthetics and political analysis. The rejection was reinforced by the general impression that Caribbean Island needed to evolve a literature that would not imitate the concern of the colonizers that have undervalued their cultural peculiarities. They desired to stamp their feet towards establishing authentic Caribbean literature which would affirm their cultural identity and advocate a prosperous future. There emerged a socially and politically conscious literary tradition necessitated by the improvement in nationalistic awareness and education. It was characterized with rigorous rise in political and anti-colonial agitation in the quest for socio-political change. Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe (1987) observe:

> Between 1937, when widespread rioting and strikes broke out on the Islands leading to labour unrest and demand for self determination, and 1962 when the West Indian Federation broke up, constitute the most vigorous in the literary history of the Island. (p.14)

The emergence of labour movement called "Beacon Group" beefed up the nationalist struggle with their inclination for politically productive literary activities in the Islands as they weaved themes of political and social relations in their works. De Lisser's *Jane's Career* is informed by the social realities of the Islands. Literary workers of the "Beacon Group" presented wider perspectives of social life and colonial society of the Islands, especially in Alfred Mende's *Pitch Lake* (1934) and *Black Fauns* (1935) and CLR James' *Minty Alley* (1936). *Pitch Lake* flays the hollow, spiritually impoverished world of the middle class Portuguese in Trinidad, and *Minty Alley* confronted its educated hero with the lowly, pinched world of the yard.

In poetry, Una Marson and A. J. Seymour's works are representatives of socio-political consciousness. In this form of political thought, V.S. Reid's *New Day* (1949) emerged thus evoking

the perception of slaves as objects of history; not subjects of history. Reid's work, tend to widen the implication of such irrational irony. Reid therefore, "for the first time an imaginative writer placed the West Indian black in the context of the west Indian history" (Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe,1987, p. 16). The rigorous anti-colonial literary posture of the 50s especially had Martin Carter's *Poems of Resistance* (1954) exemplifying the trend. Works of this period fictionalized historical past, giving them the impetus to examine the implication of the Caribbean history. The confrontation with the past was to enable the people gain an insight into the future: "self-knowledge, their identity and the reintegration of their personalities" (p.17)

Towards the end of fifties and early sixties, poets and novelists gathered more strength as they sought to define and clarify Caribbean experience. True freedom of the people was in part, the focus of Lamming's *Of Age and Innocence and Season of Adventure*. According to Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe (1987), "true freedom to Lamming was dependent on the quality of protest, and rebellion which were in turn related to the people's sense of history and their link with the rural organic world of the peasant" (p.20). Lamming's concept of freedom seemed defective from Naipaul's stand point because "true freedom, the link with landscape and the sense of community as envisaged by Lamming seemed an impossibility" as "the irrevocable disability it endangered created barriers between the colonial and true freedom"(p.24). This is exemplified in A *House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Mimic Men*.

In the plantation period, women were defined by their utility and commercial values. That is, the essential value of women was in their ability to produce labour force. Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe (1987) have a counter view from a spiritualist feminist stand point. It states that the slave woman was a mother: "the bond between mother and child was as sacred as the bond between the earth and creativity" (p.43). However, the socio-historical circumstances in the

Caribbean have changed the portrayal of women's image in literature. There is the image of rural women, poor, abandoned to care for her child(ren)'s upbringing strengthened by the shared confidence she gets from people around her community. Instances abound in Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, *Of Age and Innocence.* Also, new priorities and ambitions tend to pre-occupy women's minds as a result of the changed circumstances. There was exodus of rural male population to the city and for the women so confused and determined to make ends meet, resorted to casual labour or sex labour. Available examples include the ones depicted in De Lisser's *Jane's Career* and Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*.

There also existed the recreation of carnival in Caribbean literature. It was an annual theatrical event as old as Trinidad's history of community and slavery. It was celebrated to entertain slave masters of eighteenth century Trinidad. It became the festival of white and free-colour. The stringent rules of the festival collapsed at the liberation of slaves. Freed slaves thus forced their way into the entertainment, bringing in aspects of their plantation life and condition to bear on the entertainment. "Freed slaves took liberties and mocked the authority of the militia, staging mock battles, parodying the very authority which had wielded so much power over them" (Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe, 1987, p.65). Caribbean novelists, poets such as Brathwaite and Lovelace have recreated the carnival in "Caliban", "Tizzic" and *The Dragon Can't Dance* respectively.

The literary practice in the Caribbean therefore, derives ideological orientation from the negative perception of the colonialists about the Caribbeans; and the Caribbeans self historical experiences which prompted them to struggle for the establishment of their cultural identity. The first literary works that departed from mere imitation of colonial convention emerged not from within the enclave of Anglophone Caribbean (French and Spanish Islands). Based on the

connectedness among the black communities in the Caribbean, beginning particularly in the 1920s, notable writers such as Aime Cesaire of Martinique, Luis Pales Matos of Puerto Rico, Jacques Roumain of Haiti, Nicolas Guillen of Cuba and Leon Damas of Gulana came out with outputs established Caribbean literary identity. This continued until after World War 2 when the British West Indies rose up to the task of developing Caribbean consciousness. Precursors of this tradition are not limited to Vic Reid who published *New Day* (1949), George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), V.S Naipaul's *Mystic Masseur* (1957) and *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961). Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe opine: "race has always been a crucial issue in colonial relations and has surfaced in various dimensions in the literature of the West Indies"(p.31). The issue of racial superiority/inferiority accounts for the stratification of the Caribbean society. Racism became a definer of value in the colonial Caribbean society. This was between the European imperialists and the various shades of people of colour. This was because the freedom of slaves created another form of the earlier by the importation of the indentured labour from India. There was an atmosphere of contempt and suspicion, conflict and violence amongst the white, African and East Indian such that "it instilled in the black slaves an overwhelming awe of everything white and at the same time bred a sense of inferiority and self debasement in his innermost consciousness" (p.31). An example that clearly showcases this trend is Reid's *The Leopard* (1958). It explores the awareness of racial identity to, in part, rebuff white oppression. It explicates the relationship that exists between mulatto and blacks; and between blacks and whites. Lamming's *Water With Berries* and Walcott's *T-Jean and His Brothers* and *Dream on the Monkey Mountain* evoke the nullification of the superior image syndrome exemplified in the white Goddess as in *Dream*, or in the Devil as in *T-Jean*, or in the Dowager as in *Water With Berries*.

However, Akuso (2005) posits: "the first writer to develop an inward looking artistic form, which expressed militant black view point against imperial assumption, was the Jamaican poet and

novelist, Claude Mckay (1890-1948)"(p.24). Mckay's *Banana Botton* (1933) was an exemplar of his literary ingenuity inspired by his involvement in the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and experiential knowledge of racism in the United States of America. The Negritudist Movement in Cuba, led by Jose Tallet, Alejo Carpentier and Roman Guirno was also consequential to the white negative propaganda and Caribbean process of identity making. Walcott's "The Arkansas Testament" (1987) explores the identification of Caribbean self in a multi racial context emanating from the colonial period. It stresses the antithetical educational system of the British to Caribbean sensitivity. His works serve as ethnographic documents in the quest for culture and identity.

Characteristic of the 20th century Caribbean was the relationship between the imperialist colonizers and the Caribbeans which Wilson Haris weaved into his novel, *The Guina Quartet*. It is a recreation of historical experiences of victory and defeat and the likely reconciliation for a life anew. This period regarded as "Victor-Victim Stasis" by Haris dominated his literary sensibility. Rene Maran followed suite in his *Batouala* (1922) to explore the stasis. It is a pioneer work that starkly condemns French colonial rule as it celebrated the nostalgic feeling for the organic, natural and balanced way of living our cherished customs. Maran recreated his experience, having worked as an administrator in the French colonial service. Africans were faced with 'forceful' human labour and exploitation, "carrying voluminous packages from when sun rises to when it sets. These trips last… days little matter to them the weight of these packages …. And long live the worst weather, provided the whites are sheltered" (Maran, 1922, p. 29).

Akuso (2005) notes also that there was economic depression necessitated by the drought which ravaged the sugar industry that was already running deficit in foreign competition in the world market. This economic problem showed itself in the high level of unemployment especially of African peasants. The lean economy led to low wages not commensurate with human labour

and social condition. It was about frustration and escapism. It involved a situation where urbanization and industrialization led to the abandonment of the slum. The issue of migration and slum life became themes that pre-occupy *Jane's Career* (1972), Roger Mais's *The Hills Were Joyful Together* (1953), *Brother Man* (1954) and Orlando Patterson's *Children of Sisyphus* (1964). Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe (1987) give a synopsis of *Jane's Career*:

> The novel contrasts the life of the woman in the rural and urban environments in Jamaica, concentrating on the young woman's vulnerability in the new grasping and exploitative Kingston environment. The heroine succeeds in the city, getting herself a husband, a house and also ironically a servant (p.46).

King (1979) posits that Mais' *Brother Man* (1954) shares the same setting of Kingston yard with De Lisser's *Jane's Career* (1972). They both depict the despicable and deplorable pattern of life in the slum and the attempts by the slum dwellers to keep their heads above water. What one discerns from the squalor of the yard is the unfavourable condition of post plantation Caribbean traceable to their colonial experience. Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe explains the intent of Michael Anthony's *The Year in San Fernando* (1965):

> It deals principally with crucial year of adjustment in the life of a child. A young rural boy is constrained by his family's poor circumstance to move in with a better-off family in the city and the novel charts his responses, perceptions and personal growth in the course of a year (p.40).

In the evocation of Caribbean historical experience, *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979) tends to fictionalize the demeanour of women during the American occupation of Trinidad in 1940s with its attendant negative consequences in their struggle for survival (Rohlehr, 1978, p.76). It is a post emancipation parody of racial discrimination, joblessness, penury, loneliness and the struggle to subdue these social problems. Another instance of decadence which women endured for survival

echoed in the voice of folk women is in “The Dust” where Brathwaite evokes the consciousness of the rural women, showing the apprehension of their environment, demonstrating their endurance and identifying their cosmic understanding of time.

The environmental implication of human behaviour in Caribbean literary works just recently started getting critical attention. Shona N. Jackson opines: “Such a relation to the land and how we must inhabit it has so far only begun to emerge in Caribbean literary discourse, which seeks to push forth an idea of humanity as coextensive with nature” (as cited in Mount, 2012, p.137). In ecocritical history, the 1990s marked a significant point in the literary criticism of racism, cultural domination and post colonialism, taking into account their ecological implications. The paradigm shift is based on the complexity, spate and scale of environmental challenges which have confronted humanity. The attempt now is to embark on a new horizon, to transcend cultural affirmation to configure the increasing environmental crisis as a property of any text to restore sanity and justice to human environment (Buell, 2005, p.114). Writers in the Caribbean thus, attempted to project and protect their political mission and vision of literature to help the society awaken her consciousness about its environment in relation to the social problems. This is because the involvement of nature in creating human culture has not been given much attention in some respects in the study of Caribbean literature. The limitation of the critical sensibility of scholars to examine the representation of nature in relation to human existence in Caribbean literature is the vacuum which this study attempts to fill.

Ecocriticism remembers the earth by interpreting the correlative indebtedness of human culture to nature. This is in view of the fact that there is “no work of culture which is not simultaneously exploitative of nature” Culture provides the lens through which we know and understand nature (Rigby, 2012, p.153). Notable instance is the use of the Creole medium of

expression to intersperse the use of English to resurrect and develop the Caribbean extinct language. Roger Mais and Lovelace's description of their novel's locale especially *Brother Man* and *The Dragon Can't Dance* respectively is vivid with unique imageries as creative use of the language of the environments in which they write. With that, "Lovelace had made unparalleled contribution to the development of the West Indian literary voice" (Hodge, 2006, p.3). It is in fulfillment of the necessity to reforge English language, according to Braithwaite (1984) in ways that "approximate …the natural experience, the environmental of the Caribbean society. It is instructive to note therefore that language as a product of social process shapes the way we understand or perceive the natural environment; giving us a transparent view of nature. Language thus becomes the window through which we see the world; not a code that organizes and gives meaning to nature. This is in view of the fact that "language" in the words of Vital (2008) "constructs our apprehension of the material world ("nature")" mindful of the fact that language itself is "always mediated by culture and society" (p.93).

The advent of European imperialists set in motion devastating historical experience in the Caribbean traceable to environmental issues that still linger in the Islands today. Caribbean literature derives impetus, according to Wilson-Tagoe "consistently and painfully"(ix) from historical experience of slavery, indentured labour, pacification and colonization. This makes us to believe Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe's (1987) contention: the common experience of colonization, displacement, slavery, indenture, emancipation and nationalism which has shaped most West Indian environments and created unity of experience that can be identified as particularly West Indian"(p.13), makes Caribbean literature susceptible to Ecocritical interpretation. The Caribbean natural environment is therefore, a source of inspiration for ecocriticism. The displacement and dispossession of the Caribbean aboriginal inhabitants of their land, their subsequent enslavement

and also the millions of Africans transported to work in the Islands' sugar plantations qualify this study to take an account of the ecological implication of the human culture in the Caribbean.

The epochal "discovery" of the Caribbean in 1492 by Christopher Columbus kick-started the exploitation of nature for economic motives which concomitantly led to the pauperization and dehumanization of the Caribbeans. The historical experiences have imaginatively been re-created in the works of Caribbean literary writers. Writers have employed ecological images metaphorically to show man's relationship with the natural world. In the reading of Caribbean literature, they clearly show the connection between the literary and the environment, emphasizing the interconnectedness between environmentalism and social injustice (Rigby, 2012).

Ecocriticism offers alternative perspective to the understanding and analysis of nature, its conservation and development. From the various definitions of ecocriticism, it is clear that the field goes beyond treating the natural environment as mere background setting for human activities. Rigby (2012) argues that ecocriticism as a form of activism is in part associated with political advocacy against ecological impoverishments. Man's experience of natural disasters and the endangered human health indicate that nature does not accept the passive role arrogated to it in its relationship with man. It is an indispensable partner in the formation and transformation of culture. Caminero-Santangelo (2007) asserts that ecocriticism is tuned towards understanding the destruction of the natural world and offering ways of harmonious living with nature outside the pattern provided by modern science and technology. The cultural and social problems that emanated from the abuse of the natural environment cannot be understood and solved by science alone. According to Buell (2005):

> The success of all environmental efforts finally hinges not on "some highly developed technology, or some arcane new science" but on "a state of

> mind: on attitudes, feelings, images, narratives", all of which can be found in "acts of environmental imagination" (pp.1-2).

Caribbean literature emerges and operates within the Caribbean historical spectrum. The relationship between man and nature in the Caribbean Island is determined by the ecological crisis represented by the establishment of the sugar plantation. The aboriginal Arawak culture was based on subsistence agriculture in harmony with nature. In the words of Paravisini-Gebert (2005) "Pane's collection of Arawak myths and legends articulates poignantly the symbiotic relationship between man, nature and gods that was the foundation of pre-Columbian Caribbean cultures" (p.183). He further submits, in attestation to Pane's in Friar Bartolome de las Casa's *A Brief Account of the Devastation of the Indies* (1522):

> Arawak native emerges as a noble savage living in harmony with the environment - the Indian as classic hero – an image to which Caribbean writers will return again and again in search of symbols of pre-conguest, pre-slavery cultural wholeness (p.184).

Victor Reid's *New Day* celebrates the anxiety that is connected to nature and religion. There, Bogle, the rebel leader, portrayed as an ancestor god, exemplifies the wish of the peasants to reconnect himself to the land. Paravisini-Gebert articulated an environmentalist thought connected to religiosity in the Caribbean novels portrayed in "houngan", the chief conservator of the balance between nature, man and the spirits. Through the characterization of "houngan", the priest healer, she makes ecocritical readings of Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of this World* and Mayra Montero's *In the Palm of Darkness*. Bron Taylor's *Dark Green Religion* (2010) is a portrayal of the intersection of nature and human religion. It dwells on the spiritual innovation of the 'dark green religion' that emerged to take the place of the extant traditional religion in different ways in North America and Europe. Jacques Roumain's *Master of the Dew*, from Paravisini-Gebert's

perspective, is a work in point in the trend of development of Haitian novel. The protagonist of the novel, Manuel, comes home from a sugar plantation in Cuba to be welcomed by his drought-ridden village. Following the advice of their voodoo priest, the villagers came together to construct a canal from the nearby mountain that is not devastated by deforestation where a thin thread of water flowed through the plain and the peasants were exhilarated.

The notion of chemical contamination of the earth also became a theme that pre-occupied literature, especially John Gardner's *Michelsson's Ghost*. It explores how Peter Michelsson's new farm house located in a remote mountainous community has been contaminated with chemicals. Saul Bellow's *The Dean's December* celebrates how the soil, water and air have been contaminated by lead disposal. The attempt to clean up a toxic dumpsite by an old man pre-occupies John Cheener's *What a Paradise it Seems.*

Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* accounts for the protagonist's development as he has no choice than to ignore the "empty" modern life to find the longing peace which he believes and wishes can be derived when he lives harmoniously with nature. It is a representation of the characters' sourcing for the type of life that Thoreau, Emerson, Carson and Rousseau articulated in their understanding of nature. It is a depiction of the weight of economic enterprise of civilization leading to the intoxication of the mind about nature in post independence Indian society. Billy, fed up with the sterility in the false value system of life, gathered escape velocity for the Maikala hills. The text according to Nawale (2011), "is a scathing attack on the materialistic civilized society and an exaltation of the ancient culture wherein lies the panacea for the ills of the modern society" (p.57)

Looking at Achebe's posture in *Things Fall Apart*, it is critically apt to interpret it as trying to explore in depth the organic relationship that existed before the imperialist West's inglorious

footprint on African soil. In other words, the task that Achebe shoulders is to recreate the past as natural and organic as it were to African readers to dispel the inferiority complex induced by colonial stereotyping of Africa and Africans. Irele (2003) summarises it all that the text "deals with the social and psychological conflicts created by the incursion of the white man and his culture into the hitherto self-contained world of African society and the disarray in the African consciousness that has followed (p.80).

Ngugi's creation of nature-conscious novels, *Petals of Blood* especially, was inspired by ecological cues from the Caribbean landscape. The involvement and interconnectedness of *Petals of Blood* to the Caribbean is located in Walcott's "The Swamp". It is an ecopoetic work involving Caribbean landscape and mindscape (soil and soul):

> Gnawing the highway's edges, its black mouth
> Hum quietly: Home, come home…
> Fearful original sinnosities! Each mangrove sampling
> Serpent like, its root obscene
> As a six-fingered hand,
> Conceals within its clutch the mossbacked toad,
> Toadstools, the potent ginger-lily, Petals of Blood
> (Walcott, 1969, p. 11).

Ngugi articulates the dastardly exploitation of nature and man by the elite and corporations to subdue the less privileged masses. A cursory perusal of Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* reveals also the outright dehumanization and suppression of the Kenyan masses by the bourgeoisie who view nature as worthless beyond economic value. Slaymaker (2007) acknowledges that the Kenyan writer, articulates his creations on "the natural relations of the

Agikuyu to their lands" (p.688). Thus, giving credence to ecocritical undertone of Ngugi's works which prompted Caminero-Santangelo (2007) to cite *A Grain of Wheat* as "aligned with much early nationalist and anti-colonial African literature which embraced a pastoral vision of pre-colonial order aligned and in tune with nature over and against a corrupting, mechanized European modernity" (p.703).

Kamal Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* is a representation of rural life disrupted by the arrival of the missionaries, like Achebe's *Things Fall Apart.* It establishes its environmental bent through Rukmani and her husband. *Nectar in a Sieve* portrays Rukmani's marriage to Nathan, a tenant farmer. As a mark of love and to instill prosperous anticipation on Rukmani, Nathan with a handful of grains says "such harvest as this, you shall not want for anything". Rukmani herself brings to memory the reference made to nature in respect of her beauty and comfort in her marriage to Nathan:

> While the sun shines on you and the fields are green and beautiful to the eyes, and your husband sees beauty in you which no one has seen before, and you have a good store of grain laid away for hard times, a roof over you and a sweet stirring in your body what more can a woman ask for? (p.8).

In the Caribbean literature evocating childhood experience, Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack Monkey* (1970), Nicholasa Mohr's *Going Home* (1986), Michael Anthony's *Green Days* are literary portraits of Caribbean Island's landscape and the effects of the environment on the character development of children. They give varying representations of the Caribbean environmental condition as they affect the identity development of the children. The texts incorporate the natural environment and also have adults embodying the experiential environmental knowledge as guides to the characters especially the protagonists, to chart their ways out in life. Michael

Anthony's *Green Days* portrays a Trinidadian boy's childhood focusing specifically on his response to the landscape and the world around him with necessary calculations and compromises. Hodge's *Crick Crack Monkey* celebrates a growing girl's divided consciousness on the class and cultural milieu of 20th century Trinidad. Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe (1987) give a synopsis of the intent of the text:

> Hodge's heroine walks in two worlds, one that is open, natural and unsophisticated but warm and comforting, and other that is polished but stilted and unsure. The heroine's response to the carnival becomes a mirror of her inner conflict and divided self (p.70).

All the forms of suffering meted out to the Caribbeans as social consequences of ecological crisis offer a path for an ecocritical interpretation of the relationship between the Caribbean culture and landscape. The metaphorical use of ecological images to show the white-money; black-labour relation, to Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe (1987), is located in Samuel Selvon's *Turn Again Tiger*. The text explores the social and ecological context of colonial plantation life with its officials: Time-keepers, supervisors, overseers and labourers. It celebrates the moral and psychological reflection of the protagonist as he confronts the colonial situation. Walcott's *The Castaway* focuses on the writer's response to historical experience and Caribbean landscape. Dabydeen's *Slave Song* is a depiction of the lives of slaves and Indian colonial peasants as they are affected by the brutality of plantation life and some few moments of order. Caribbean writers' choice of evocating the ecological underpinnings of human actions is in consonance with the belief that the colonized author, with the intent of opening a brighter alternative pattern for his society ought to be equipped with historical past. Such a hopeful preparation, Douillet (2010) believes:

> Is often based on the power of the landscape . It is through a clear and concentrated engagement with (his) landscape that the author searches

> for fresh, indigenous metaphor. Once they are bridged and synthesized, the classical tradition and the West Indian environment and culture become a source of strength and renewal (p.7).

Paravisni-Gebert (2005) admits in line with the foregoing that Caribbean literature is derived from landscape where the natural environment is the sole determinant of the ideologies that preoccupy the characters' thoughts. A good number of writers weave environmental implications of historical issues of slavery, post colonialism and quest for identity into their works, because works of art are inspired by historical and social realities of a place as exemplified in works explained above. But, to the researcher's knowledge, there is scarcity of critical reactions and interpretations of nature as actively involved in human socio-economic life in the selected works. They have variously explicated Caribbean experiences for a common purpose of awakening socio-cultural consciousness. Also, some critical works that evaluated Caribbean literature using ecocritical hermeneutics, only mentioned them in passing. The novels of Michael Anthony, Herbert G. De Lisser, Rene Maran and Earl Lovelace specifically selected for this study have not been found to be subjected to ecocritical reading in such a combined form as this. This thesis attempts to fill that gap. This is because each novel written across vast disparities of time and space, using different styles, share related experiences and has a specific message that the continuous survival of nature would only depend on man's harmony with it.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Nature and Human Existence in *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career*

This chapter focuses on Anthony and De Lisser's depiction of the relationship between nature and human culture in *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* respectively. These novelists wrote, in part, to illustrate the embeddedness of human existence and history on the natural world. The embeddedness specifically involves the symbiotic and exploitative relationship between man and nature and the exploitation of man by man defined by the environment. Nature, as re-conceptualized by Timothy Luke (cited in Chisum) and Eric Swyngedouw is taken to mean all the elements that surround a man which affect him and are affected by him. It is the built and unbuilt objects which man interacts with in an environment and these include flora, fauna, rivers, hills, land, mountains, weather, vehicles, houses and many more. Human existence involves the conscious interaction of man with non-human life and other natural entities in the ecosystem. The analysis examines the texts to show that the authors wrote the novels with what would now be regarded as keen ecological consciousness. This would be illustrated through the delineation of the manifold relationships between man and nature to reveal the effect of the changing seasons on the characters' health and human relationships. It would also evaluate the characters' negative dispositions to the natural world, especially in the destruction of the environment for economic reasons; and the protection and preservation of nature to avert the drifting of the natural world and humanity towards extinction.

In the authors' narratives, nature is not solely represented as a passive entity for the transcription of human history and the inscription of victim-hood. It is primarily active and capable of generating human culture. Culture is seen to be the "dialectic between conditions and consciousness" (Hall as cited in Anderson,2012, p.38). The novels in various ways, explore the interactivity of nature and man's historical experiences to reveal a Caribbean environment hobbled by economic inequality. The economic discrepancy between the opposing classes of the rich and the poor is existential. That is, it is connected to the physical terrain, for instance, ghetto,

rural and urban areas; and labour relationship. The consequence of a plantation economy is the division of Caribbean society into the rich and the poor classes. This is reflected in the separate physical locations of the two opposing groups of the haves and the have-nots in the city; and slum and rural areas respectively. The rich are found in the central, well developed parts of the city, for instance the Government Reserved Area (GRA); while the poor people occupy the city slums and rural areas where there are few or no opportunities and social amenities to meet the needs of the people. As a consequence, poor parents send their children to the city to get improved standard of living and education, while they remain at home to survive by serving those that are well-to-do for pittance. The representation of the repetitive activities of Francis in his servitude, for instance, is riveted on some basic social conventions linked to the natural world: looking at the cane fires, going to the market, hiding among the concrete pillars of Mrs. Chandles' house, sweeping the house, watering the flower plants, listening to the swiss-swiss sound of vehicle tyres during rainfall and traffic flow, and thinking of people and nature around him. These series of human activities in relation to the natural world demonstrates the sense in which the environment is depicted as a process rather than as fixed, given entity in the novels. This is an ecological desiderata enshrined in Buell's checklist for the criticism of nature-oriented works. Interpretative priority would, therefore, be given to the natural world as ecological underpinning of human relationships and reactions are examined in the novels.

3.1 Seasonal Change and Human Reactions/Relationships in *The Year in San Fernando*

The Year in San Fernando is an autobiographical representation of the author's experience at the age of twelve while working for a family. Set against the passage of seasons, the author fictionalized as Francis because of his impoverished home background, was sent to San Fernando

as a househelp to Mrs. Chandles. This was because Francis became an orphan in infancy. His mother hence, became the bread winner of the family. But, her widow's might could not meet up with the daily needs of the family. Under Mrs. Chandles' care, Francis is to work in return for being fed and clothed, attend school but he ended up being treated like a slave. It is the experience of his servitude in relation to nature and life in San Fernando that influenced his vision in *The Year in San Fernando.* This is Anthony's comment (as cited in Poynting, 2014) on his childhood experience and its underpinning connection to nature:

> I think both past life and the fascination of landscape play a most important part in my work. My infancy has been very important to my literary development and so far almost everything I have written – certainly my novels are very autobiographical (p.4).

Anthony considers the one year he spent in San Fernando during his infancy as significant to his life, which he in turn, recreates in his literary development. His stay in San Fernando was made momentous by his interaction with nature and people who constituted his physical and social environments respectively. The temporal setting of the novel is the Caribbean history of post colonialism, houseboyship and environmental destruction. The institution of slavery was a significant issue in the history of the Caribbean. Africans, Indians and Chinese were cut off from their ancestral homes to work in sugar plantations. "In the Caribbean area," Arquelles (1978) writes, "the plantation meant sugar, and sugar was synonymous with slavery" (p.40). It is the use of anthropocentricism to presuppose eurocentricism that actualized the ill-formed perception of the Caribbean "indigenous culture as "primitive" , less rational and closer to children, animals and nature" (Plumwood as cited in Huggan and Tiffin, 2010, p.5) thus, rendering them liable to exploitation. Ironically, this confirms the symbiotic relationship between the Caribbeans and nature; and the exploitative relationship between the white settlers and nature, and the Caribbeans. What seemed like slavery in post plantation period was given euphemistic label of

house-help (male/female) in San Fernando. This was in accordance with the harsh living conditions of the people, being a carry-over from plantation economy.

The Year in San Fernando explores the exploitation of blacks after emancipation through the portrayal of Francis in relation to the environment. That relationship is defined by Francis' servitude to Mrs. Chandles. African slaves and the dispossessed aborigines, after the plantation period are left to grope in unfavourable socio-economic circumstances in order to keep their heads above water. This is the misfortune that befalls Ma, with four children, Francis inclusive, without a husband to assist her in the family up-keep. The little resources at her disposal are not enough. This depraved situation is promptitude to Francis' houseboyship with Mrs. Chandles while Ma remains back home to serve Mrs. Samuel. Ma does virtually everything in Mrs. Samuel's house – "to wash, iron, cook, sweep-up and to run errands". The people in the neighbourhood "could not help seeing how Ma slaved" (p.5) as she is immersed in the service. But, they were not aware of the paltry pay that keeps Ma and her four children from starvation. This accounts for Ma's exploitation akin to slavery of the plantation period.

Mrs. Chandles and Mrs. Samuel belong in the category of the emerging elite from among the several people of colour after emancipation. They stepped into the shoes of the colonialists in the exploitation of the less privileged, like slaves, especially househelps. This is thus illustrated in the househelp service of Ma and Francis within the enclave of the people of colour in the Caribbean. It is microcosmic of the colonial system of wealth distribution, where the poor were to the rich what Caribbean people were to the European imperialists. The environmental factors around Ma are inspirational to her decision over her children, especially Mrs. Samuel's luxurious house. Mr. Chandles and Mrs. Samuel's status as forestry workers and Marva's education constitute the socio-environmental factors that inspire Ma to encourage Francis to acquire

education. Arguably, environment is as much social, cultural and ideological an entity as it is a physical one. The physical environmental factor that inspires Ma to urge Francis into what later became a slave-like condition attests to the strand of Buell's ecocritical theory that the non-human environment in a novel is not merely a framing device. It is capable of affecting human actions.

In Mrs. Chandles' house, there are no clear boundaries between outside and inside; and between man and nature. For instance, her house is covered with "a lot of flower plants along the veranda and along the sides of the steps" (p.12). The flower plants also creep inside through the windows and some are found growing in the crevices of the walls. She is not comfortable with the intruding presence of the flower plants into her personal space. This is expressed in her own voice: "I did not want the world to sneak in on me". She feels her integrity is being undermined by the blurring demarcation between nature and herself. Another implication decipherable from the unkempt flower plants is that Francis has a lot of work to do within his period of stay in San Fernando to record significant change in life. The physical world around Francis in his companionship with Mrs. Chandles is clearly defined – the Chandles house, the wharf, the market, the school, etc. Francis' pattern of behaviour based on some repetitive activities – watering of the flower plants, sweeping the house, rubbing Mrs. Chandles' legs with scroll and going to the market confirm Buell's ecocritical proposition that the environment is a process. These activities are located within the natural cycle of seasonal variation in San Fernando. In a more elaborate language, Anthony (1965) argues that:

> All the novel's repetitive activities are varied by and become increasingly integrated with the progress of the changing year. The daily round of the market changes subtly as the fruits of different seasons appear on the stalls, at the end of the dry season Mrs. Chandles' legs do not have to be rubbed; and the listening boy's ears pick up the swish-swish of tyres on the wet road announcing the arrival of the rainy season. In the dry season,

> the cane-fires are seen drawing closer and closer from the distant fields as the crop comes to an end; and at the same time the plant watering routine modified into twice a day and different hours to cope with the aridity and heat (p.ix).

Anthony illustrates the cycle of seasonal change in relation to Francis' routine activities in his houseboyship and Mrs. Chandles changing health condition. That is, the seasonal change has effect on the health of the flower plants and the well-being and disposition of Mrs. Chandles. Mrs. Chandles' emotion, induced by nature, is manifested in her ill- disposition, especially to Francis as the drought seems to desiccate her mind of amiability. Her overbearing attitude intimidates Francis. With the passage of time, the changes in the mood and behaviour of Mrs. Chandles and Francis are reflective of the seasons. It is for instance observed that:

> Mrs. Chandles spirit and flesh wilt in the drought of crop season and come to understand the reasons for her ill-temper. At the same time, Francis' self is growing powerfully and he begins to acknowledge his feelings, both positive and negative. There is a brief season of rain when Mrs. Chandles is released from her pain and the two meet as open and giving personalities…. Throughout the dry season he has painstakingly tended her shriveling flowers, and oiled and massaged her protesting limbs (Poynting, 2014, pp.2-3).

Anthony draws a link between the cropping season and Mrs. Chandles' health as her "spirit and flesh wilt in the drought of crop season". It is a demonstration of how the people's loss of energy and enthusiasm is induced by colonial exploitation represented in the dry season. The blazing sun makes the plants to appear dehydrated and in a dying state. For Mrs. Chandles' flesh to wilt reverberates beyond the literal meaning of the word. It likens the lifeless flesh of Mrs. Chandles to the dry and scaly flower plants caused by the scorching sun. Such discomfiture makes

Mrs. Chandles angry and impatient with Francis. The hotness of the crop season increased by human economic activities affect Mrs. Chandles and the health of the plants. The toll of the harsh weather is such that:

> Mrs. Chandles became very irritated by the weather and she opened all the windows very wide that whatever breeze that was might come into the house, that it was mainly the heat from the Usine Ste Madeleine, and from the burning cane fields, that make the crop time so unbearable, and she said it would be a blessing when a little rain come down (p.42).

Mrs. Chandles identifies "the Usine Ste Madeleine and the burning cane fields" as the causes of her discomfort, especially in the crop time. They are images of burning heat; and pollution of the environment with the emission of toxic industrial smoke that is hazardous to human health and the biosphere. The heat from "the burning cane field" is a form of environmental destruction that contributes to global warming, depletion of ozone layer, and reduction of soil fertility. These activities in the pursuance of pecuniary benefit, increase the hotness of the weather unbearably. Mrs. Chandles finds it necessary to douse the heat with natural breeze to give her some comfort, hence, opens her windows wide for cross ventilation. And, Mrs. Chandles acknowledges the contrary, but soothing effect of the cold weather if "a little rain come down" to douse the heat. By implication, the myriad environmental problems make life uncomfortable and they can only be solved when there is a change of attitude from exploitation and destruction of the natural world to the preservation of it. However, the unfavourable weather condition to Mrs. Chandles is advantageous to Francis. After rubbing her limb with the Indian Sacrool, his mistress takes a nap. He exploits the opportunity to visit Julia's house and also play around and go to the hills with the boys in the neighbourhood. By these, Francis secures a temporary respite from the tension-filled situation between his mistress and himself; and the one

between Mrs. Chandles and his son, Linden, especially when she is irritated by the unfavourable weather condition.

However, it is pertinent to point out that Brinetta does not connect absolutely the cause of the nagging and ill-disposition of Mrs. Chandles to the crop season and the emission of heat from the sugar factory. Brinetta claims "the old lady really wasn't so bad, it was the old age" (p.35). The credibility of Brinetta's observation, in the voice of Francis, can be located in the example of Julia: "Julia was a sharp contrast. She looked even fresher and younger than I had known her , and she seemed as playful as the girls at school" (p.56). What of Brinetta herself and Edwin whose emotion\s and health were not affected as such by the change in the weather condition? In line with Brinetta's belief, the interface of "season of rain" brings out the oppositional but friendly side of Mrs. Chandles as she is relieved of the excoriating pains and looks bright. The rainy season diffuses the impatience and anger caused by the drought and the two characters of Mrs. Chandles and Francis relate in an unstudied manner. Francis tells us the effect of the rain in their relationship:

> The rain outside seemed to isolate us from everything. It seemed to bind us together. It seemed to be making relative of us. I hoped this would not change but would remain as it was. And yet I know it would change. I know there was a name for the way we were feeling and that this feeling came from the weather (p.83).

By "the rain outside seemed to isolate us from everything,…to bind us together,…to make relative of us", the author demonstrates the connectedness of the down pour of the rain outside and the joy between Mrs. Chandles and Francis. The usual pensive mood of Mrs. Chandles is doused by the cold weather of the rain and Francis enjoys the frictionless interaction. The feeling of bonding between them shows that such cordialness as the one they experience existed

amongst the Caribbeans especially in the pre-colonial period. There is a mark of good disposition exhibited by Mrs. Chandles in her relationship with Francis which is also connected to the cold weather of the rainy season. During one of Mrs. Princet's visits to Mrs. Chandles, Mrs. Chandles looks at "the begonia beside her and she straightened the flower"(p.54) appreciably, commending Francis. However, to enhance his work further, she cautions him mildly on the need to moderately water the flower plants as too much water could make the roots rotten. In the voice of Francis, Mrs. Chandles is "much milder now. She spoke to me without anger and, on occasions she was even jovial with me"(p.74). As it rains, Francis acknowledges that she does not wear the "bewildered and irritated look which the hotness of the day" (p.79) usually gives her. By implication, Mrs. Chandles is more comfortable with the Caribbean pattern of life compared to the Western culture signified in the hot weather. Apart from the noise from the rainstorm outside which enlivens her, "the coolness of the day seemed like balm to Mrs. Chandles' temper and she was hardly ever harsh with me" (p.88), Francis attests.

Mrs. Chandles has emotional link with nature expressed in her constant consciousness of the condition of the flowers based on her own changing body condition, thus asking Francis to take prompt charge, especially of watering "the shriveling flowers". This brings Francis 'closer' to the flower plants in his daily routine; and also to his mistress as he "oiled and massaged her protesting limb". The discomfort that the crop season causes Mrs. Chandles is reduced with the change to rainy season when there is no much heat. In consonance with Buell's strand of ecocriticism, the non-human elements are present not as foil to human interactions and reactions. It shows that human history has underpinning connectedness to natural history.

The "cane fire" heralds the coming of the dry season (the European imperialists) and their strength at devastating the Caribbean environment. The sugar content of the cane connotes the

juicy nature of the Caribbean environment exploited at their detriment. The soil "aridity and heat" shows the plants inability to take nutrients from the dry earth that is also hot. Plants look frail in such condition. Thus, related to human condition, it implies the inability of the Caribbeans to enjoy the natural endowment of their land. It shows that the imperialists that exploited Caribbean environment are responsible for the deplorable social condition of the Caribbeans. The heat from the sun makes the plants to shrivel, thus necessitating Francis to change the watering routine to twice a day (morning and evening). As a mark of exploitation, she increases his labour hour without commensurate rise in pay. Faced with this excruciating embarrassment, the Caribbeans thought of possible respite in terms of self-rule. It is that attempted self-rule that is the thrust of De Lisser's *Jane's Career*, represented in the characterization of Jane.

Francis, at the beginning of the year, sees what looks like an endless green field as an image of hope for a fruitful life after the exploitation of the people and their environment. The enthusiasm and optimistic tendency is induced by the freshness (quality) and boundlessness (quantity) of the plants. And later, the burning fire which catches his eyes is an image symbolic of global warming and despair in his ambition. These seasons as images in the novel mark the gradual progression of the boy's stay in San Fernando, which however, were ordinary to him. This form of getting familiar with the various fruits of the seasons, Mrs. Chandles' house and her seasonal health challenges, cane-fires, flower plants watering routine and his relationship with other people is an exemplification of Buell's ecocritical hermeneutics that sees the environment as a process rather than as constant or given in *The Year in San Fernando.* This can affect our inference that human history is implicated in natural history. With the passage of time, the boy gains confidence from frequent contacts with the different sections of the town and his routine activities at home

The unfair treatment of Francis begins when it is time to go to bed. Francis has a different expectation: he says "I was looking on a much smaller room which was neat and had nothing on its walls and had a big dinning-table in the centre" (p.14). The pieces of beddings which look good have been taken away as Mrs. Chandles "suddenly remembered the newspapers and thought they were just as good" (p.16). By the change in Francis' sleeping environment, Anthony exemplifies the slave-like condition under which the deprived people live in the city contrary to the expectation of the rural people. It is quite an over-turn of expectation as Francis is seen to be running away from heat into the fire. The emancipation of slaves from plantation life does not mean liberation of the poor from economic tether highlighted in the social divide of the two opposing classes. When Francis compares life in Mayaro with the little experience of his present environment, he is rapt in thought of whether San Fernando, particularly Mrs. Chandles' house would be a home for him. Mrs. Chandles advises Francis: "you have to try and forget home for now" (p.16). Implying that, Francis should not connect his rural experience with urban life. That he should face city challenges as they present themselves. Inferably, he should not expect all his desires to be fulfilled in a changed environment. Mrs. Chandles' remark is illustrated in the pieces of furniture.

The luxurious pieces of furniture in Mrs. Chandles' sitting and drawing rooms are among the objects of nature that are aesthetic and valuable to nurture Francis' stay and comfort in San Fernando. Francis acknowledges that every piece of furniture in Mrs. Chandles' sitting and drawing rooms "seemed to be of great value and well laid in"; unlike what he had seen back home in Mayaro. Yet, upon all the beautiful and impressive features of the house, he sleeps "on the floor" (p.35). The cloth-covered chairs with cushion on them that are fine-looking give high expectation of comfort to Francis. That feeling changes with the image of the floor which shows the slave-like treatment of househelps. More important is that an element of rural nature can be

located in urban setting as the floor is neither covered with tiles nor piece of rug. For Francis to sleep on the floor in Mrs. Chandles' luxurious house, Anthony reveals that "the complacency of the upper class and the artificiality of civilized world are no way better than the simplicities of the primitive life" (Rao as cited in Nawale, 2012, p.61). Francis here expresses a feeling of "sameness" despite the limited resources at Mayaro. It is a village left as such by the rich to house those on the lower rung of the ladder. The consignment of the lower class to such habitat accounts for the negative feature exhibited by the Caribbean upper class. "The physical environment", Robert, Rovetz and George (2009) reiterate unequivocally, "are increasingly segregated and privatized, so that the wealthier will buy their way into environment quality by passing the risk and insecurity represented by other social groups" (p.63). This is environmental injustice. Environmental injustice refers to the unfairness, disproportionate share of environmental hazards to the categories of people in an area, especially in favour of the affluent.

Also important to Francis' historical experience is his reaction after Ma's visit to him in San Fernando some months after he had left Mayaro. Much is expected from the visit, but, it is overturned by Mrs. Chandles' behaviour to get Ma's approval of her pretentious kind disposition to Francis. They could not have mother and son *tete-a-tete*. This affected his emotion. The deflated Francis parted dejectedly with his mother. Francis expresses his feelings; and observation of some phenomena:

> I thought of the bus speeding away and I walked slowly back to the house. I walked right down the street…. In the little spaces between the houses I could see red flickers. They were burning out – I could hear the crackle and the way the flames roared in the wind. This was the last of the cane fires. They had started from far away in that great expanse of green. Now the fires were blazing out the last patch, near the town. I stood up at the big gap between the school and our house, and the fire I could see stretched over some distance, and the flame-tongues licked the air, and they reddened a large part of the sky between the houses. Away over the brown open field I could see the dusk coming (p.65).

"The bus speeding away and …walked slowly back to the house" appear cryptic. The bus that his mother boards speeds away, creating a seeming irreconcilable gap between his thought and chance of escape. It looks as if it was the day he was leaving the village for the city. He parts with his mother for a house that was not a home. The chance is not there for Ma to make Mrs. Chandles' residence a home for him, even for a while, through motherly warmth and words of advice. "Red flickers" expresses destruction, discomfort caused by the irritating capitalist economic policy of the imperialists, especially as regards the exploitation of human labour and the environment. "Flames roared" is imperialist personified to explain their desperation in clearing the "expanse of green" for their mercantilist interest in the Caribbean. :"School and house" are images of nature that mean knowledge and environmental consciousness respectively. This can be deduced from Ma's statement: "stay and take in education, boy" (p.67) from your servitude to Mrs. Chandles. The increasing destruction of the Caribbean environment beyond the physical structures to the biosphere is embedded in the image of "flame-tongues lick the sky". The mowing or burning of the vegetational cover exposes the "brown open field" to wind, water and heat from the sun. "The dusk coming" is a symbol of nature imbued with oracular meaning: the raging anger or storm of dejection which was taken away a while ago by his thought of the evidence of the end of crop season. Francis' movement back and forth the pavement and the road is an expression of the feeling of agitation symbolic of the storm. Just as the marks of exploitation were written in scars on the social life of the Caribbeans, their natural environment too is etched too with scars of deforestation, burning of sugar cane fields, felling of trees and noise pollution.

There is pollution of the environment which is not connected to the emission of smoke from the chimneys or vehicle exhausts. It is noise pollution which involves the various unpleasant

sounds from human beings or non-human entities as pollutants that constitute nuisance to the environment. The level of such sounds is annoying and dangerous to human health. It is a form of disturbance that either attracts/distracts people's attention, thus, causing disequilibrium to the environment. According to Bhargava (2011), "the presence of pollutants (substance, noise, radiation, etc) may cause harm to human health, on the proliferation of living organisms and on the equilibrium of the ecosystem, making the environment unfit for human use" (p.71). When Francis and Mr. Chandles get to Princes Town on their way to San Fernando, Francis notices instances of noise pollution in the town:

> All around, cafes and rum shops were open. The noises of the people talking and noises of the cars and trucks and buses rose and fell but never died away. There was no silence here. Life was not settling down for the night. The vehicles came roaring from the wide road ahead – the San Fernando road. The noises of the town rose and fell like waves running up and down a beach in the night (p.9).

Everywhere, there was noise pollution of the environment. It is noticed that through the process of increasing urbanization, the environment for instance, is polluted by "noises of cars and trucks and buses". According to Onwumere (2015), "our health is suffering due to the bedlam our city has become"(p.3). In the first morning of Francis' stay in San Fernando, it is environmental noise that wakes him up:

> The sounds of the heavy traffic, and the tooting of the car-horns and bus-horns was very clear. And so were the many other noises of the town. For the whole place was coming to life now. First, on the street at the front – Romaine Street – there were the noises of the car engines and bicycle bells and the talking of the early workmen (p.20).

The novel demonstrates the pollution of the environment in the exceedingly loud noise of the people, cars, trucks, buses and other vehicles that roared in San Fernando. The noises were sustained as they did not die down but only fluctuated comparably to the waves of the sea. According to Odogwu (2013):

> Environmental noise leads to a disease burden that is second in magnitude only to that from air pollution. One in three people experience annoyance during the daytime, and one in five has disturbed sleep at night because of noise from roads, railways and airports. (p.23).

The noise does not allow the people to sleep after the day's work. Similar instance of noise pollution is portrayed in Mrs. Chandles' and her son, Noah in their exchange of words. Noah's brother, Edwin visits their mother amidst heightened tension noticed in Noah's silence and Mrs. Chandles' laconic expressions to Edwin. The row resumes after the departure of Edwin. There is noise pollution as "Mrs. Chandles sounded like the screeching of some bird and Mr. Chandles in his anger was loud and booming, and you could almost feel the house shake when he talked" (p.48). Anthony sources for vivid images of nature from the screeching noise of bird to give a comparative description of Mrs. Chandles' outrage while Noah's exasperation and explosion is expressed onomatopoeically in his "booming" voice. Francis makes a pithy remark based on the verbal conflict between mother and son: "never was there such a windless night. Never was there such a blank, cheerless sky"(p.98). The author's repetitive use of the phrase is to emphasize the frequency of the tension-filled situation and lack of happiness signified by the "hot windless night" and "blank cheerless sky" respectively. These forms of pollution are man-made. There is the natural noise pollution that causes discomfort to man in the environment. Francis recounts an experience:

> In the class one day we all jumped because of a sudden noise and it was thunder, and the thunder cracked again and we all put our hands to our ears. Two or three stunning peals followed and there was a flash of lightning … The teacher did not say anything but went to close the windows. As he closed it the thunder came rumbling from far and then cracked as if it wished to split the earth… And then we began to hear an occasional tap-tap and then a low drumming and then the rains broke violently upon the roof (pp.75-76).

"The thunder cracked", "stunning peals" and "thunder came rumbling" are images of sound got from nature as noise in the environment. It disturbs the teaching and learning process with the rumbling and cracking sound capable of breaking the earth. The teacher has to stop teaching and quickly close the windows and doors to reduce the explosive noise of the thunder. The sound of the thunder filled the class. But it quietened to allow the "tap-tap", a drum-like sound of the rain. These environmental noises that affect human existence confirm Bertens' strand of Ecocriticism that is interested in the social cost of environmental pollution. Also, the employment of onomatopoeic sounds from nature give credence to Heise's claim that ecocriticism analyzes how the perception of the natural world in relation to man shapes the literary tropes.

With regards to the destruction of nature, the novel explores the unkempt precinct of Pa as an anthropocentric tendency. This is made known through the voice of Francis: "Our yard was always untidy and the lime trees were untrimmed, and since Pa died the grass in the yard was uncut, and around the mango tree it had grown rather tall without our bordering about it". The vividness of the description of the neglected environment is accentuated by its comparison with Mr. Chandles' appearance that is "tidy-looking and neat" (p.2). The dingy appearance of the yard is described in "the lime trees were untrimmed" and the "uncut" grasses. The neatness of the yard and cutting of the grasses ceased with the death of Pa, but not with the enjoyment of the mango

and orange fruits by Ma and her children. Their lack of commitment is a demonstration of disinterest for the environment especially the children, not Ma who is often engrossed in her servitude to Mrs. Samuel. Francis' thought is further explored in relation to the colonialists' destruction of nature after his mother's visit to San Fernando. As Ma took off, Francis walks away dejectedly, looking at the cane fire and thinking of the sugar cane clearing and its subsequent manufacturing for economic value with its accompanying toxin from the mills' chimneys:

> Tomorrow the cutters would come with their cutlasses, and the field, having been scorched of vermin and needless leaves, would be quickly cut down. The mills at the Usine Ste Madeleine would still be grinding, and the three chimneys would still be puffing smoke. Tomorrow when I got home from school I would see brown earth where the last patch of green used to be (p.65).

Francis claims that he sees "brown earth" as a result of deforestation, thus exposing the earth to direct heat from the sun and erosion. Apparently, Francis laments: "where the last patch of green used to be" because every available resources would be cleared to the barest level, especially sugar canes to get enough for Usine Ste Madeleine. The earth is thus, exposed to hazards. "Hazard", according to Bhargava (2011), "is a situation which poses a level of threat to environment that negatively affects the society" (p.69). The concern of Francis is the level of exploitation and destruction of the natural environment to satisfy the mercantile drive of the whites. This, he thinks, makes the living condition of the Caribbeans to deteriorate day in day out. No hope for improvement signified in the continuous grinding and puffing of the Usine Ste Madeleine and the three chimneys respectively. They are images of exploitation and environmental degradation. This is what Wordsworth (cited in Abrams, 2005) refers to as "the outrage done to nature" (p.75) by the factories that despoil the air. Raw materials are sourced and manufactured in the Caribbean using human labour, while the finished products are transported

for use in Europe. The Caribbeans bear the brunt of the environmental degradation. This confirms Bertens' Marxist ecological strand of Ecocriticism that man's despoiled environment is a consequence of unrestricted international capitalist exploitation. Francis then left for home with the feeling of anger "coming like a storm" (p.66). Correspondingly, Francis thinks that his present condition is a spiral or ripple effect of capitalist exploitation of the environment. His feeling of dejection, caused by the exploitation and the destruction of the natural world and the "failed" visit of his mother, explains why Francis is in his present condition akin to slavery. Also, in one of Francis' steal visits to Julia, she requested for the low-down of his experience in San Fernando so far. Francis narrates the harvesting of sugar-cane and its subsequent processing for economic motive and the implication of the gas released in polluting the air as he goes to school:

> One morning as I walked to school the sugarcane field would be white with the mist, and in the near parts you could see the workers already chopping down the canes… The Usine Ste Madeleine was only a few miles away across Navet. Its three giant chimneys were always puffing smoke now, and at nights we could see the lights of the many houses, and if it was quiet, we could hear how the machines crushed the canes (p.40).

The "cane field would be white with mist" signifies at one level, the whites as owners of the numerous sugar plantations. At another level, it illustrates how early "the workers…chopping down the canes" start their work before the heat from the sun dissolves the fog of the cold weather. The human activity involved in cutting down the canes illustrates the exploitation of human labour. The processing of the raw material in the Usine Ste Madeleine is also propelled by the non-stop work (by men shifting duties day and night), to show the high level of man's quest to maximize profit. The mist appears slightly dense and gloomy such that one cannot easily see through it. With this, the writer demonstrates the myopic thought and foresight of the Caribbeans that resulted from the use of the superstructure on their psyche by the elite. It means that some

of them who acted hypocritically hardly see reasons beyond the present situation where they eat crumbs. The combined denseness of the mist and the smoke from the chimneys is an image which signifies the combined efforts of the European nations in alliance with the Caribbean middle class to exploit the deprived majority and the natural world. The smoke from the chimneys which contains toxins affects human health and non-human life. The capitalist activity is therefore responsible for the world's ecological crisis. Obviously, no industry adopts pollution of the environment as a corporate policy, but capitalist economic drive has made the biosphere to experience disequilibrium. Ecocriticism portends philosophical valuing of nature, not economic one. According to Gras (2001):

> The catastrophe that awaits us is due to anthropocentrism. We ignore nature except as a material resource to serve human ends and, as we continue to exploit nature arguably our most basic relationship – we take on a bogus position with it harming both nature and ourselves (p.65).

It portends that humans have been granted a unique position of superiority, (whether reached by evolutionist natural selection or creationist assignment by God) over the rest" (Kovacik, 2011, p.32). The consideration of man as the central being for all other references in the ecosystem (anthropocentricism), is the bane of human and nature's drift towards extinction. "In destroying the earth," Gras (2001) asserts, "man willy-nilly sets himself at edge. In building and helping to safeguard his environment, man aids in sustaining the process that empowers his life and brings out his statutory essence as a living being". Inferably, man should not conquer nature. Philosophers such as Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Rachel Carson, in the words of Enger and Smith (2006), thought of "nature as a refuge from economic activity, not as a resource for it" (p.24).

3.2 Nature and Man's Search for Independence in *Jane's Career*

De Lisser's *Jane's Career* uses iconic events to determine the role of the environment in shaping historical experience. It "reveals the ways in which dominant Western patriarchal ideologies and a history of violent colonialism exploit and harm both women and the environment, and the ways in which women's bodies and the land are inscribed with this history" (Fitzpatrick, 2008, p.1). De Lisser's narrative is hinged on Jane's transient journey towards self-definition. Through her immersion in nature, she is empowered to struggle to attain self-rule. Jane finds strength in her cordial relationship with nature, especially in going to the market, shop, washing clothes and any other domestic chores to transgress the boundary of dream to reality. It involves looking at Miss Burrell's labyrinthine search for success in Kingston. The narrative unveils nature and ecological implication of Jane's story and relates it dialogically to other stories in the novel. The Burrells are caught on with the harsh realities that accompany the exploitation of the land and human labour, thus compelling them to live in their homes as such and allowing Jane to accompany Mrs. Mason to Kingston in search of improved living condition. She pursued her career and eventually got married to Mr. Vincent Broglie.

The novel's central character, Jane, is a negro whose thoughts and actions are deeply examined to illustrate Caribbean post plantation slave-like experience. "The negroes were poorly fed, poorly clothed and loaded with work, driven to despair by their miserable existence" (Arguelles,1978, p.33). In the words of Xue (2011), Jane "is the novel's frame, the window onto the landscape that the narrator looks out upon when he wishes to conjure up that deeply felt connection with the land that is beyond language"(p.32). She is portrayed to experience immersion instead of confrontation; challenge in the stead of problem reflecting the Caribbean sense of struggle.

Jane's history of exploitation is rooted on the exploitation of her parents through slavery and the plantation economy; and the systematic destruction of the Caribbean natural environment. This implies that the women are exploited using the same logic that makes nature liable to exploitation. This results in the degradation of their socio-economic life. The pressures of poverty make the treatment of women as natural resources to be exploited and discarded. Onukaba (cited in Oziohu, 2012) asserts: "domination has to be justified by one way or the other. And, there is something in human nature which makes us to affirm our success or power only in relation to other's failure or weakness" (p.99). This means that the logic that affirms man's superiority is only meaningful when compared with the perceived inferiority of women and nature. Ecofeminism makes connections between environmentalism and feminism. It battles "environmental degradation and social injustices" on women and nature "from the premise that how we treat nature and how we treat each other are inseparably linked" (Gaard, 2001, p.162). Ecofeminism primarily attempts to pull men from capitalism and the domination of nature through Western mode of development. It portends that "women have the freedom of not receiving ego-gratification as men from the system" (Sydee and Beder, 2001, p.291). The mendacity of this fact is however not justifiable because women are embedded in capitalist exploitative culture as the men. Evidences abound in their work ethics as mistresses.

This brings to attention the ill-treatment that Mrs. Mason's servant girls experienced. Jane engages in househelp work of cleaning the house, washing clothes, running errands and so much more. She is also a casual labourer washing bottles under the supervision of Mr. Curden after leaving Mrs. Mason's house. Slave-like condition is common in the life of the growing up negro girls because of their poor social condition. For instance, after discussing with Jane on her going to Kingston, "Mary and Elizabeth went towards a small coffee plantation where they had arranged to spend the rest of the afternoon in cleaning coffee, thus earning three pence each" (p.13).

According to Sydee and Beder (2001), “the work the women fill is largely part-time or casual, with little status, low pay and little security” (p.285). By locating human exploitation in the slave-like treatment of the girls and nature, the question of human dignity and preservation of the environment is thrown to the garbage heap by man. This is a confirmation of Bartens and Reed’s strand of ecocriticism which requires that people’s awareness be directed to the way in which the feminization of nature and naturalizing of women justify the exploitation of nature and women. Ecological crisis and degradation of women are two interconnected outgrowth of the one ailment – exploitation.

In Jane’s search for improved condition of living, she leaves her rural life for a city, Kingston, to work as a housegirl to Mrs. Mason. Daddy Buckram lectures Jane on how to behave when she gets to Kingston: “Satan goeth about like a roaring lion in Kingston; seeking who he may devour. Don’t stay out in de street in the night, go to church whenever you’ employer allow you” (p.2). The author likens the spirit of destruction to the lion in the jungle that angrily makes a deep loud noise when hungry. The spirit of destruction meant here is metaphorical of the various temptations from people she would come across with that can make her to derail from the path of righteousness. Daddy Buckram specifically mentions “night” to emphasize the perpetuation of evil using the darkness of the night if Jane allows her conscience to be taken over by the spirit of destruction. And Satan only destroys the conscience of those not steadfast in their devotion to prayers. He cautions Jane to beware of the pattern of life that may likely tempt her to the destruction of her career in Kingston. From a broader perspective, the imperialists depicted as the “roaring lion” are out to exploit the fortune and destroy the future of the Caribbeans in their adventurous contacts. Jane’s mother offers the Elder “some sugar and water and fruit” as refreshment. Filled with excitement, away Jane “danced rather than walked, her strong legs and bare feet springing off the hard limestone road as though they were made of rubber” (p.3). Jane’s

joy-filled moment is a consequence of her desire to improve her material condition. The fact is that most Jamaicans have grabbed the opportunity to have education and can go out to look for jobs outside their rural homes which the cities – Kingston, Costa Rica and Panama - offer, especially to the negroes. Jane does not quickly internalize the import of "Satan goeth about like a roaring lion", just like some Caribbeans who could not see beyond their noses or think beyond the depth of their pockets. Such people were filled with joy at the initial stage contact with the colonialists, which they believed would translate into the development of the Caribbean Island. The author's metaphorical use of natural entities to describe human experiences, according to Acholonu (1995) "is a result of the interaction between human mind and the physical environment that humanity has created for himself" (p.116). These natural entities (lion, water, rubber, fruit and limestone), attest to Heise's claim: "the perceptions of the natural shape the literary tropes" used in the text".

De Lisser creates a balanced evocation of Kingston boys through Celestina. She disagrees with the sweeping statement by Daddy Buckram that Kingston boys are "all a roarin' lion". She makes reference to a good experience she had with her guy when she was in Kingston. She claims that she had a male friend that gave her financial support to meet up with her needs which her poor salary could not afford. On this premise she cautions Jane that she may "suck salt through a wooden spoon"(p.4) if she does not have a job and, or a friend. This is a pithy statement that means going through hard time in Kingston or outright failure to achieve her parents' dream. Celestina uses a single personal experience to urge Jane into the intricacies of city life, fraught with "roaring lions". Bad job and an open-handed friend combined, makes life worth the while in Kingston as the condition of service is often hectic and exploitative. However, she fails to note the probability of agonizing relationship with female friends. Instances of sour a relationship can be located in Jane's friendship with Sathyra. It can be deduced from Celestina's point of view that not

all European nations are “roaring lion” that would drain the Caribbeans dry as hay. But, how true is it? The Caribbeans lost the fertility of their land to the continuous cropping of sugar cane and the burning of cane fields. The available mineral resources like gold are mined and their end products taken to Europe. Human labour is exhaustibly exploited in the plantations and manufacturing industries with the environmental hazards at the detriment of the Caribbeans. Daddy Buckram’s metaphorical lion and the oppositional stance of Celestina impress on Jane that she is going out into a “new” world to, with all sense of endurance and determination, tread in the balance to carve a niche for herself and the Burrells at large.

In her search for independence, “Stony Hill” is where Jane stops-over in her journey to Kingston. Jane thinks she has reached, as it were, the boundary line between her old life and the life that is to begin that day. Jane’s entry into Kingston is a ‘forceful’ change from rural environment to the threshold of city life marked by sophisticated domestic activities. Forceful, in the sense that after the destruction and exploitation of the Caribbean natural world, Jane is compelled by her family’s poor condition of living to endure to be treated like a slave. This reality is portrayed in Jane as she carries a heavy bundle of Mrs. Mason’s luggage into the room and carelessly drops it on one of the Mahogany tables: “the bundle contained, among other things, a can of wet sugar; and some of this sugar had leaked out of the can and through the cloth” (p.30). Inferably, it is the joy in Jane’s stay in Mrs. Mason’s house that leaked out of the luggage. No wonder, Jane had little or no happiness in her period of stay with her mistress. This was ordinary to Jane who in this context did not feel the missing link between her rural and urban life. Jane’s connectedness to the “mahogany table” exposes her rural experience and afterwards, her willingness to confront the brokenness in her life. She must learn the skills of survival and open herself up to the natural world in order to fill the emptiness within her due to her rural background. Put against her experience back home, “her wish had been to do what was right; and

as in her own home she would certainly have placed a parcel on a table, no matter if it contained silk or green bananas" (p.31). Jane's action is therefore out of ignorance as she does not know the clear cut boundary between rural and urban life at that moment. And, Mrs. Mason fails to understand that as at that moment, a wide gap exists between Jane's rural and urban experience. It is a surprise to Jane that such an effort demands an apology and a change. The argument is that Jane is to throw away some aspects of her past rural experience which have no bearing on the present urban life and struggles. When she enters Kingston, her "emptiness" is also revealed in her giddiness of the bustling of the urban environment:

> The numerous little shops, the houses standing close to one another, the bustle of the street, the number of people she saw moving in all directions, or lazily leaning against doors and fences …Everywhere were cabs and carts and people, and once or twice a bellowing motor-car rushed past which seemed to her to rival that of lightning (p.28).

Jane is awe-struck by the strange physical and social environment of Kingston. The movement of the people, cabs, carts; and tall, beautiful buildings in large number and sophistication cannot be likened to Jane's village. The traffic flow and swift movement of cars compared to the speed of lightning is a consequence of her home experience of dull activities. That hyperbolic comparison demonstrates Kingston's difference from Jane's village that looks dull. Later, in Jane's servitude to Mrs. Mason, she is loaded with domestic works and rules restricting her from making friends, even within the neighbourhood. And, any act of default in her duties resulted in the deduction of some money from her paltry salary. As a consequence, and with the precedence which Mrs. Mason has set with earlier housemaids, Jane escapes in pursuance of an independent life.

Jane's disappearance from Mrs. Mason's house puts her integrity into question because Mrs. Mason had predetermined mind-set about negro servants' insincerity and cruelty. She lived under suspicion in every assignment given to her or relationship with people. This was the main cause of the rifts that Mrs. Mason had with Amanda and Sarah that made her to sack them without the slightest compunction. De Lisser demonstrates Mrs. Mason's unfounded proof to substantiate Jane's alleged iniquity and doubtful integrity, as she searches her cupboard and also inquires about her indebtedness from the nearby shops. The cupboard and shop images express the conscience of Jane whose contents as human behaviour are hidden from Mrs. Mason. The "cupboard" and "shop" are also images that represent Caribbean conscience which the whites probe to be sure of their open-mindedness. To the dismay of the whites represented in Mrs. Mason, the people are found to be good natured. Jane's moral rectitude is also put to test in relation to nature when she is sent to buy fish and other soup ingredients from the market. She does not cheat her mistress. Yet, Mrs. Mason is always over-meticulous to find faults with the quantity and quality of items compared with their price value. The lack of proof against Jane from investigations all vindicates her from the wrong perception of Mrs. Mason, and even Mrs. Mason's niece and nephew.

In Jane's transient search for better condition of living and independence, her honesty is also put to question as Sathyra tries to stage-manage her exit from the room they shared. Sathyra accuses Jane of stealing her three shillings and six pence which she keeps under the glass mug: "Sathyra marched ostentatiously into the room, went up to the table, and began with much clatter to move the jugs and glasses on it. She searched diligently, while Jane looked on; naturally she found nothing". The virago is not done with her intrigue yet. As Jane goes out to make the issue open to public witness, "Sathyra threw herself against the table, and sent one or two cups and plates crashing to the floor" (p.128). This is done to indict Jane as a liar and kleptomaniac,

who, with affront, destroys Sathyra's property. While Sathyra seeks evidence against Jane in the "glass mug", "plates" and "floor"; Jane seeks witness from public view and attention to Sathyra who destroys her property for the achievement of her bestial intention.

Similarly, the honesty of Amanda is also put on scrutiny from "a little heap of sweet potatoes" (p.83) that she brought from the market. Mrs. Mason is particularly suspicious and deliberately mischievous as she becomes critical to facilitate the quick replacement of Amanda. This distrustful air is also predicated on the erroneous belief especially of Mrs. Mason that dishonesty is the operative word of the negro servants because, from Sarah's remark to Jane, "dem all tink you is a slave an' a tief" (p.34). The tendency is always there for Caribbean mistresses to discharge their maids with ignominy. This confirms Buell's ecocritical strand that the non-human environment is not a foil for human activities, but capable of affecting human dispositions. There is, therefore, connectedness of natural entities to the investigation of human integrity especially female negro servants. Mrs. Mason takes advantage of the economic hardship on the negroes to change servants at will. The import is the peripatetic servitude of the maids which makes them "a rolling stone that gathers no moss". The search for independent life brought untold hardship far beyond what Jane experienced when she was with Mrs. Mason and her sojourn with Sathyra. At home, she cuts the cost of her meal to reflect her present financial strength: "Thin soups and rice figured prominently in the weakly menu; the frequent appearance of boiled green bananas and breadfruit recalled the diet of earlier days; herring often took the place of saltfish, and meat was a rarity" (135). At work also, she cuts down the cost of her lunch:

> She managed ingeniously. Instead of continuing to take from the general caterer at three pence per day, she ate bread and raw salt fish instead, or bread and fried fish, or a pint of can of hominy, and so reduced the cost of her lunch by one half (p.134).

Linked to Jane's lean purse are "bread and raw saltfish", "bread and fried fish" or "a pint of can of hominy" whose prices compared to what she used to eat would lift her fifty percent above the former cost. Her adjustment at home does not escape the lens of Anthony. For instance, "Herring" becomes her choice in place of "salt fish" while the taste of "fresh meat" is a pipe dream. The "thin soups" she now prepares are unlike the nutritious ones she enjoyed with Mrs. Mason and Sathyra. Inferably, her situation with Mrs. Mason and Sathyra was better than her present experience in this context. However, Jane's determination to attain self-rule is stronger than her fear of the unfavourable social environment. In this situation, we can discern the pains and stress which Jane goes through in her interaction with the environment to attain independence. This implies the level of economic stress which the Caribbeans went through to get self-rule. That is having being pauperized through the exploitation of human labour and environment.

Still in the pursuit of independent life, the novel portrays the "where" of the unfriendly attitude of Sathyra and Jane to each other in the yard and in the street. The two friends who were once united, though each lived in different locations then, against Mrs. Mason, now live in the same compound. But, they are separated by their uncompromising attitude and the mud wall as thus:

> Next door was Sathyra; so when Jane went out she took good care not even to glance in the direction of her late residence. Similarly, Sathyra acted as if no such person as Jane existed when they chanced to pass each other in the street (p.139).

The proximity of their rooms is signified by "next door". But the unhealthy relationship between them makes this physical nearness a distance or non-existent. The same assumption is replicated in "the street" to each other as if they were never for once cordial. This form of

relationship existed between the poor and rich, colonial powers and Caribbean such that the Caribbean environment represented in the "residence" and "street" underpins their antagonistic relationship. However, Sathyra cannot deny knowing more about Jane from casual inquiry. Also, Father Daniel, though not on Jane's request gives information about the separation of Sampson and Miss Morrison to Jane through the fence in the evening:

> The old man's means of conveying information being through the fence which separated the two yards, a wooden fence some parts of which had here and there fallen away through old age and the activities of industrious young people searching for small bits of firewood (p.139).

The dilapidated "wooden fence" is a symbol of wretchedness and security in the yard. The old-looking and weak fence as a result of weather condition is co-ordinate with the pauperized condition of the yard dwellers. It is now exploited to reveal what transpires between Sathyra and her intended, Sampson to Jane. An import discernible from the image of the dilapidated wooden fence is the Caribbean environment that was increasingly exploited and destroyed by the European capitalist adventurers. This is signified in the parts of the fence that have been peeled off by industrious people looking for bits of firewood. The people of Caribbean are parts of the instruments of cultural destruction in their daily violation of Caribbean culture through hypocrisy.

Jane's familiarity with the poor condition of the yard enables her to recognize the opposing luxurious parts and the slum of the city. Found in the city centre are beautiful houses, good net-work of tarred roads and many more social amenities. In opposition to this display of affluence is the poverty of urban slum succinctly expressed in the descriptive words of De Lisser (1972):

> The sun played havoc with the paint upon the houses, and the dust assisted the sun in its work of destruction. With one or two exceptions,

> every street was covered with an inch-deep carpet of dust, and, when there was wind the dust swept along the whole length of the street like a mass of vapour, but infinitely more distressing to the eyes and lungs (p.67).

The frequent clearing and burning of bushes expose the earth such that " the dust assisted the sun" to deface the houses. The houses and street look unattractive with "an-inch-deep carpet of dust" eroded from the exposed earth by the dry season wind. The air-borne dust is fraught with viruses not good for human health. By implication, the Caribbean middle class is represented as the "dust". The essence of the balanced lifestyle of the Caribbean people is not understood by imperialists because of the hypocritical activities of the middle men. This was an attitude which facilitated the destruction and exploitation of the Caribbeans and their natural world by the imperialists. The middle class is present in all the Islands of the Caribbean as signified in "every street was covered with an inch-deep carpet of dust". They indulge in their hypocritical activities with impunity. The destructive activities of the middle men disturb the people of Caribbean from having a critical evaluation of the present and also the future. They not only becloud the sight of the future, but the whole body is affected as the spirit of destruction puts the system in a palpable state.

De Lisser further laments the colonial period with reference to the built environment of the rural area. He uses the image of the hut with thatched roofing of palm fronds to symbolize the pre-colonial period. The later painting of the interior and exterior into white colour signifies the arrival of the imperialists "civilized" culture that relegated the Caribbean culture to the background:

> The hut was of wattle and plaster, and thatched with the plaited branches of native palm. It had once been coated on the outside and inside with a

> layer of whitewash; but the wash had faded, and so the hut was mud-coloured and somewhat dilapidated in appearance (p.8).

By “coated on the outside and inside with layer of whitewash”, the novel illustrates, how the colonialists brainwashed the Caribbeans, thus changing their mind-set towards embracing their weird culture. The exterior parts of the Caribbeans, especially agriculture and mining, operated on the capitalist policy. They took control of the agricultural practice which they changed from subsistence to plantation economy. They also sourced for mineral resources which they combined with agricultural produce as raw materials used by the manufacturing industries that were exclusive preserves of the whites. The Caribbean was “an historical, organic whole disrupted and set upon the path of the history by the brutal entry of the Europeans” (Kortennar as cited in Alam, 2011, p.44). Both the interior and exterior that were whitewashed later faded off, making the hut to later retain its original mud-colour to signify the rebirth of the Caribbeans’ conscience, towards the reclamation and affirmation of the Caribbean environment and cultural dignity respectively. There was serious environmental degradation located in “the negative impact of pollution on the equilibrium, the quality of life, the salvage of heritage and the aesthetic values of human community” (p.71). Much had been lost to the colonial powers for the long period of their occupation of the Islands. The novel demonstrates “a history of colonial domination that has brought appalling human and environmental exploitation” (Spencer, 2001, p.33) and that no doubt, “the catalyst that destroys the fabric of the community and upset the balance that sustained it is the coming of the white man” (Kortennar as cited in Alam, 2011, p.40).

Thus, having thought of the deplorable condition of the slum, Jane questions the reason for the poverty of the black people in relation to their rich natural environment: “everything belong to white people … brown people. We only have de leavings” (p.xi). Put more elaborately,

Jane's remark describes the excruciating level of exploitation of the Caribbean people. Their present deplorable condition is not different from their plantation experience. They are estranged from enjoying the natural endowment of the Islands expressed in their inability to get good standard of living in terms of physical location and economy. The moon by its nature spreads out its light as boundless as the sky to illuminate the night. But for it to "stream down upon the yard" shows specifically the "dilapidated fence, ramshackled range of rooms, the little superior two-roomed cottage …" as images that expose the low level of their economic wellbeing. De Lisser chooses the moonlight using darkness as a foil to clearly reveal the drab condition of the yard. It exposes the condition of the yard to draw the people's social awareness in relation to their ecological consciousness. The humane essence which defines them is in the threshold of collapse. The people have virtually lost hope because of the economic value attached to human relationship with nature. This was a weird pattern of life not in conformity with the Caribbean culture. The non-human entities in the yard are represented as active characters imbued with literal and symbolic imports that correspond with Buell's strand of ecocritical paradigm that treats the natural world not as a framing device.

Almost in the same condition with the yard, and not very far from the Western side of Mrs. Mason's house are buildings whose appearances are metaphoric of the prevailing poverty in the city-slums. The dingy streets in opposition to the parts occupied by the wealthy people "were long streets filled with buildings in all stages of decay; houses gaunt and weather-beaten, revealed in all the ruin and decrepitude by the blinding sunlight that poured down from the bright blue sky twelve hours and more a day" (p.66). By "all houses gaunt and weather-beaten", the novel illustrates the completely low and deplorable condition of the environment and people's economic wellbeing. The plantation system of the colonial period and post emancipation life of the people is fraught with unfavourable social and economic policies which confine the poor to

the ghettoes. The evidence of poverty exemplified in the sordid state of the environment may not be well perceived except with "the blinding sunlight that poured down" on the slum. De Lisser earlier revealed the condition of the yard using the moonlight, but later chooses the sunlight to give a broader and in-depth exposure of the slum at large. Cryptic is the Caribbean way of life that is seriously blighted by the colonialists' culture signified in the "blinding sunlight". This ironically makes the people of Caribbean not to appreciate the value, if there was, in their civilized pattern of life.

Similar to the filthy street is Smith village, another slum in the suburban part of Kingston where life seems detached from the main city because of its environmental condition: "It possessed a few gas-lamps, but these were placed at such long distances apart that great spaces of its streets were always shrouded in darkness. Most of the gutters were unpaved, and in all of them black, fetid water stagnated …" (p.110). By "a few gas-lamp" in the slum, the novel reveals that there are few educated individuals in the ghetto whose efforts at sensitizing the people are reduced because of suspicion necessitated by the hypocritical attitude of few ones amongst them. "Shrouded in darkness" refers to the perceived "uncivilized" ways of the Caribbeans and the poverty that engulf slum life which incapacitated them from seeing the value of Western education. Most of the people found in this category are blacks, expressed in "black fetid water stagnated" who are still primitive and poor. The symbolic point of these images of nature agree with the pauperized condition of the slum dwellers. This is because ecological condition is always co-ordinate with social condition. This condition is further illustrated in the different pieces of iron plates put together as human abode:

> A number of five-gallon kerosene cans had been collected, and flattened out, nailed together and used to form the walls and even the roofs of residences. Other houses had been built of some odds and ends of board

> and looked like ugly patch work; a few were of bricks and wood. Every yard was a kraal, everywhere were trees and thorny shrubs (p.110).

The "five gallon kerosene cans" and "odds and ends of board" make the residences ugly shacks of many colours. This implies the various races brought together in the same geographical location as a result of Europeans' economic adventure. These shacks are easily destroyed by wind and flood. This portends the fragile compatibility of the different races in the Islands. According to Su'udi (2014), the people have taken advantage of "the importation of goods from overseas with this container … due to its already-made nature. The cost of building or paying for rent is minimized at high environmental cost. … The metal absorbs and keeps heat beyond the level safe for human health" (p.33). The few ones with bricks belonged to the middle class Caribbeans who sacrificed their cultural integrity on the altar of boot-licking to have the buildings and feed their families. The "trees" and "thorny shrubs" signify the abundance of abject penury in the sea of affluence. The urban slum is metaphorical of "a kraal", an area fenced to house animals. This despicable condition of the poor people of the city slum as scum of the earth is also reflected in their work relations. The class of poor people is made to engage in unskilled labour. There is poor welfare package and little or no attention is paid to their work hazard. This leads to Chichi's remark to Jane over the unceremonious departure of their Foreman: "them don't count people in displace. Them treat y'u as if y'u was a stick. Y'u mean to say Mr. Charley couldn't even say, 'Good bye, dog' when him was going, away on Saturday night? (p.143). The inhuman consideration of the Caribbean casual labourers, especially Jane at the departure of the foreman is likened to the little value attached to a "dog" or none at all to "a stick", except when needed to be exploited. The abject penury expressed in the poor condition of the people and their desolate environmental condition attests to Bertens' Marxist ecocritical strand that our degraded environment and wretched life is a consequence of capitalist mercantilism.

With regards to the complementarities in the interactions of the Caribbeans with nature, it is defined through the maintenance of the food crops and the satisfaction which Jane and her mother derive from them in times of need. They maintain relationship with nature through labour. Jane partakes in the subsistent labour two years after leaving school in working the piece of land they own:

> At the bottom of the declivity she found her brother, who was digging yam holes with a hoe, and he directed her to plant the yams as soon as he had finished each hole. This she proceeded to do, squatting herself on the ground covering up the yam roots with bare hands (p.13).

This is an exemplification of Jane's rural life that she feels most deeply about in her sense of connection with the land. Also, for every hut to be surrounded with food crops and also poultry and goats, though on a free range system, are demonstrations of man's symbiotic interactivity with nature:

> Every hut was surrounded by a field in which yams and potatoes and coffee grew, and sometimes sugar-cane, and always bananas and bread-fruit. Fowls and one or more goats were kept by the better off peasant, and wandered about at will. Some of the people owned donkeys. Even the poorest seemed to have a starving dog (p.8).

With this, De Lisser shows that the yams, potatoes, coffee, sugar cane, bananas, fowls, goats are kept and maintained for consumption and donkeys as beasts of burden. The love and maintenance of human relation with nature has not been affected by their poor economic condition especially in keeping "starving dogs" from their little resources. They derive their needs and pleasure from co-habiting with the non-human life. Hardly anyone built without providing for a flower garden in front of his house and sometimes, with a vegetable garden behind as an

evidence of man and nature interdependence. An instance of this mutual constitutiveness of man and nature in an environment is shown in the depiction of Campbell town. The people there display their love for nature in such a way that almost each house has “a flower garden” in front, and sometimes “a vegetable garden behind” (p.191). This confirms Buell’s strand of ecocriticism that anthropocentricism should not be prioritized over ecocentricism. And that the ethical orientation of *Jane’s Career* is human accountability to the natural world. Correspondingly, the interdependence of man and nature evocated is also in consonance with Reed’s strand of conservationist ecocriticism which focuses on how to value and improve man’s attitude towards the natural world. The mutual constitutiveness/interdependence of nature and man is explicated here in the urban setting which hitherto was not possible in the first wave that perceived a dialectical opposition between nature and man. The people’s awareness of the effect of environmental degradation on the wellbeing of man and the non-human life makes man to change his negative ways of interacting with nature. Man’s intimacy with nature is demonstrated when dinner is served to Jane’s father and other members of the family:

> The children dined in the open air, while Jane and her mother remained in the kitchen and ate their meal. While they were eating , the father accompanied by his son, who had met him on the way, came in; they sat down at the table to eat their dinner out of earthenware plates and with knives (p.16).

“The children dined in the open air” while Jane’s father together with his son who had met him on the way from the farm, eats their dinner out of the “earthenware plates” as marks of man’s cordialness and dependence on nature. This can be bolstered by Maszewka’s (1996) claim: “lack of protection of house during sleep hours provides for an intimate contact with nature” (p.68). Another level of intimacy with nature is found with Jane’s “father, after drinking a little

rum, lighted a clay pipe stuffed with coarse tobacco, and remained seated by the table smoking and digesting his food" (p.17). However, the toxic effect of the smoke from the "coarse tobacco", endangers human health and in part causes ecocide.

Equally, an aspect of man's positive use of nature is illustrated in Mrs. Mason's kindness to Jane when Jane's mother visits her with some food stuff. Mrs. Mason "glanced at the small heap of yams, potatoes, and ripe bananas which still lay at the threshold of the door; stooped down with reckless generosity broke off two of the bananas and handed one each to the girls" (p.74). Her kindness is induced by the availability of "yams, potatoes and ripe bananas", and more pertinently, the social context, that is, the presence of Mrs. Burrell. Mrs. Mason's profuse kindness intent in her "reckless generosity" to Jane is cut short or eroded by the frugal quantity of bananas shared between Jane and her friend, Kate. To Jane, for her mistress to have given her a banana is an unusual kindness. What De Lisser attempts to point out in this context is the deliberate maltreatment of househelps, even where there are available resources.

Obviously, her kindness is tinted with some artificiality, in that left alone to Mrs. Mason and Jane without the affecting presence of Ma, Mrs. Mason would have been otherwise. With this de-motivation from Mrs. Mason, coupled with the cues from precedence (Rachael, Sarah and Amanda that were frustrated and dismissed), Jane resolves not to give her mistress the opportunity to treat her like "a dawg" (p.86). What is cryptic about this remark is that the small heap of yams, bananas and potatoes is brought to Mrs. Mason's name but in reality, it is because of Jane. Jane's situation is in the likeness of the proverbial dog that hunts but gets little or nothing from the kill. Possibly from this remark, that single banana gift would be the only thing that Jane would enjoy from what her mother brought from the village. What underlie this context is that the Caribbeans are the bonafide owners of the natural resources, yet they are estranged from it and

kept under slave condition. It is the colonial masters have it all! This is an image drawn to show that Jane may not be considered beyond her likes as a negro house girl. Sarah, for instance, attests to their mistress' frugality: Mrs. Mason "is so mean dat if y'u teck a piece of stale bread dat she don't want, she will miss it and ask y'u 'bout it" (p.4). Sarah further explains to Jane the degree of Mrs. Mason's stinginess when she buys banana for their mistress during Jane's orientation in the market: "Mrs. Mason is so mean, she wouldn't even gie y'u de banana skin, so I teck it myself, an' I givine to y'u a piece" (p.40). This confirms the miserly generosity of giving a banana each to Jane and Kate, because ordinarily, she would not give them even "banana skin". However, Jane continues sincerely and devotedly to her duty, for it not to betray her inner thought of leaving for prosperous independence.

In general, both *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* tell us that Caribbean society has suffered consequences of human labour and environmental exploitation. In *The Year in San Fernando,* industrial heat and seasonal change affect Mrs. Chandles' health and emotion. She is always uncomfortable with her limb as a result of the heat from crop season and the one generated by the sugar cane factory. As a result, she is unfriendly with the people around her, especially Francis. Francis' one year stay in San Fernando offers him an opportunity to interact with both the social and the physical environments, changing his rural and thus, broadening his urban experience of life. For instance, the seasonal changes that seemed ordinary to him in his rural up-bringing assume some importance in their links to the health and emotional disposition of his mistress. In *Jane's Career*, Jane pursues her ambition and discovers that nature and human interactions in Kingston are really at variance in some important respects compared with what obtains in her rural home. The vicissitudes in her search for independence started in her first experience with the load which she carefreely drops on Mrs. Mason's mahogany table, through to her sojourn with Sathyra. It is unknown to Jane that Sathyra is a broken reed. Jane's exploitation

continues to be measured against her deplorable environment until there is a leap in her life when she meets Broglie who eventually marries her.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Environment and Socio-Cultural Issues in *The Dragon Can't Dance* and *Batouala*

This chapter examines socio-cultural experiences and their links to the natural world in Lovelace' *The Dragon Can't Dance* and Maran's *Batouala.* Socio-cultural issues are the various sets of ideas, beliefs and ways of behaviour involved in human relationships. Socio-cultural issues are often linked to environmental issues, emphasizing issues of environmental injustice. Environmental justice is the concern for "the ways disparate distribution of wealth and power

often leads to correlative and social upheaval and the unequal distribution of environmental degradation and/or toxity" (Adamson, Evans and Stein, 2002, p.5). *The Dragon Can't Dance* specifically explores the people's post plantation life, especially carnival celebration, rebellion, prostitution, poverty and calypso with their underpinning connection to the environment. To the deprived people of the Islands, the celebration of carnival became a means of creating ecological consciousness of social issues in the society. It argues that the perception of the carnival celebration " must go beyond the ritual shout, that finally each generation must interpret it in terms of its political situation and needs" (Dabydeen and Wilson-Tagoe, 1987, p.68). The agitation of the slum dwellers is for a change in their degraded environment and impoverished social conditions being the evil machinations of man.

The Dragon Can't Dance is a literary description of the historical root of the ambivalences of Trinidadian custom of carnival Monday. The carnival was an annual theatrical event that involved traditional mask performers. But, it is now reduced to a mere parade pleasant to human senses of sight and sound. The novel delves into the meaning and importance of the carnival celebration especially in the 20th Century Trinidad. Lovelace, according to Dabydeen and Wilson – Tagoe (1987), evokes the Trinidadian slum in relation to the characters' disposition, "using the festival as both metaphor and form dramatizes its potential as a ritual of regeneration and self-assertion while at the same time exploring its meaning and significance for the deprived characters of the slum"(p.68). The various inhuman treatments meted out on the slaves in the plantation economy and a variant of such a harsh treatment in the post emancipation period especially in their segregation to occupy the ghetto reveals the social injustice, the unequal relationship between the classes of the rich and the poor. The people's environmental consciousness is linked to their deplorable social condition and this eventually leads to the characters' insistence on regeneration as the thrust of the carnival celebration.

Batouala is a representation of the Caribbean people's nostalgic feeling of a complex, diverse and fruitful relationship with their environment before colonialism. The invasion of European imperialists disturbed their harmony with nature. The overwhelming culture of the colonialists resulted in the split in the spirit of oneness and erosion of Caribbean socio-cultural life. Since colonial invasion disturbed the balance that existed in pre-colonial Caribbean, Caribbean readers of the text with ecocritical lens, would now be aware of the mutual constitutiveness and interdependence of their forebears with nature before the advent of colonialism. That is, this reading raises their consciousness about the harmony which the Caribbean people should have to enhance their positive reconnection to the natural world. It would further instruct and instill in the Caribbean readers some confidence in their culture, regardless of its weakness. It is arguable that Maran's attempt at representing the people's past makes the Africans in the Caribbean to have a grasp of their memory of Africa (Searle, 2004, p.61). The socio-cultural issues that ensued from a bond, or otherwise, between man and his natural environment are evidenced in the texts.

4.1 Nature and Socio-Cultural Interactions in *The Dragon Can't Dance*

According to Campbell (2008), "the historical root of exploitation is traceable to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonization in the Caribbean and Africa and South Asia"(p.3). The intellectual and cultural reasons which prompted the imperialists can be understood from the ecological exploitation of the Caribbean Islands. Caribbean history, therefore, cannot down-play the embeddedness of nature and ecology in the human experiences of colonialism, slavery, indentured labour and racism. The European colonizers scrambled to carve out areas of influence where the teeming influx of Africans is used as slaves, especially in sugar, coffee and cotton plantations. The dispossession of the aboriginal inhabitants of their lands and their subsequent enslavement with millions of Africans, Indians and Chinese transported there to work in these

plantations marked the beginning of exploitation in the Caribbean. The Caribbean became "a place for struggles for economic monopoly, material gain and political subjugation" (Akuso, 2014, p.71). In the pursuance of their economic aim, the plantation workers faced series of hardship and brutalization such that:

> When they could not perform to get that escape that would take them away from the scene of their brutalization, they took a stand in the very guts of the slave plantation, among tobacco and coffee and cotton and canes asserting humanness in the most wonderful acts of sabotage they could imagine and perform, making a religion of laziness and neglect and stupidity and waste: singing hosannahs for flood and hurricane and earthquake, praying for damage and pestilence (p.2).

In the Caribbean Islands, brutality was synonymous with plantation life of the slaves. The dehumanization took place in the tobacco, coffee, cotton and sugar cane plantations where the slaves had to work without commensurate treatment in return. The slaves expressed their anger in being indolent and wastefuls of resources. The saving grace in their labour which they prayed for, were flood, hurricane, pestilence and earthquake as nature's form of revenge for the action of men against nature.

In the colonial period, slaves faced harsh consequences of either death by torture, assault, or mutilation for theft or attempted escape. Slaves were not given the right to marry as they were regarded as property. When the slaves later acquired freedom, it was a "Trinity of Idleness, Laziness and Waste" (p.3). This was because the ex-slaves refused "to be grist for the mill of the colonial machinery that kept on grinding in its belly people to spit out sugar and cocoa and copra" (p.2). Liberated slaves left plantation work. They were replaced by Indian indentured workers. This event was in part, to supply the needed labour. More importantly, it was to compel Africans to work so that general labour wage would be reduced (Harewood, 1975, p.18). in the

words of Wilson-Tagoe (1998), “the collapse of slavery had weakened the foundations of political and economic life in the colonies … The disappearance of such a major social order had to have some effect on the texture of society” (p.20). Some developed a low esteem of themselves while others asserted their humanity in rebellion, prostitution and other vices. As thousands of them moved from plantations to towns, slum developed co-ordinate with their socio-cultural and economic life in different areas of Calvary Hill. They are easily distinguishable from other inhabitants of the Hill by the broadness of their shoulders from “cutlassing cocoa and felling mora trees and asking a man for a cigarette”. The ex-slaves have acquired no vocational skill as a result of indulgence in the unskilled plantation works. Pariag, for instance, escapes New Land Sugar Estate where he engaged in “cutting sugar cane in the day, cutting grass for the cattle in the evening” (p.69) to where he can better utilize his potentials to improve his standard of living. Such environment accounted in part for the poverty of the liberated slaves and was consequential to the predatory lifestyle especial of Fisheye.

Fisheye, because of idleness, engages in brutalizing people to extort money from them at the Street Corner. His father with dark complexion like the underside of “a tannia leaf on a dark night” (p.16),taught him the act of stick-fighting. With the skills, whenever he is at the street corner, he often mischievously displays the strength and fearless traits inherited from his late father. Fisheye intimidates and extorts money from the deprived people with impunity: “he began to stand on the street corner, the gateway to the Hill, demanding money from the new comers or working men who were so timid to refuse him” (p.56). He, particularly for the umpteenth time extorted money from Pariag. He also instigated other fellars to take jaundiced view of Philo’s improved standard of living. They branded him toady to the rich because they connected his improved condition to the rich. However, freed slaves suspected one another and this can best be understood if one takes retrospective steps into history of plantation system when African slaves

were replaced with Indian indentured workers. Philo is not discouraged in his relationship with his clique. He gets to the street corner with a bottle of scorch for the usual spree, “pouring a little on the ground” (p.153) to seek the group’s communion with their ancestors. This does not change Fisheye’s predisposed rejection of Philo. The negative actions of Fisheye and other fellars are consequences of idleness. After liberation, the ex-slaves had the right to marry, but they have been pauperized into celibacy. Aldrick Prospect especially, “ not knowing where his next meal was coming from, would get up at midday from sleep, yawn, stretch, then start to think of where he might get something to eat …” (p.3). Aldrick’s idleness and laziness make him to sleep, almost throughout the day until hunger reminds him of his joblessness.

However, “a large West Indian peasantry made up of ex-slaves had emerged , more willing to establish subsistence holdings than to work in plantations for small wages”(p.21). This is exemplified in the characterization of Pariag. It was thus “a perspective that envisaged him as a free and component member of developing society, free like other men to exercise personal desires and preferences” (p.21). Pariag’s act negates the belief that “ex-slaves, naturally indolent and inferior, were incapable of progress, unfit for the franchise, and deserving to be subjugated” (p.23). The individual struggle for self-definition of the characters like Pariag, an escapee from his familial background is hinged on the prevalent colonial inheritance. The freed slaves were once owned as property and therefore prohibited from acquiring property of their own. This marked the beginning of poverty in their lives. It is an exemplification of Heise’s postulation that an ecocritical interpretation focuses on how literature evocates nature in relation to human beings at a particular time in history. And as they migrate to the urban areas, they are consigned to the ghetto, an environment which is coordinate with their socio-economic condition. The poverty-stricken slum with its attendant hardship and daily starvation is symbolized in Lovelace’ depiction of the natural environment:

> This is the hill, Calvary Hill, where the sun set on starvation and rise on potholed roads, thrones for stray dogs that you can play banjo on their rib bones, holding garbage piled high like a cathedral spire, sparkling with flies buzzing like torpedoes; and if you want to pass from your yard to the road you have to be a high jumper to jump over the gutter full up with dirty water and hold your nose. Is noise whole day. Laughter is not laughter; it is a groan coming from the bosom of these houses –no- not houses, shacks that leap out of the red dirt and stones, thin like snake, fragile like kite paper, balancing on their rickety pillars as broomsticks on the edge of a juggler's nose (p.1).

The image of "the sun set on starvation and rise on potholed roads" illustrates the inadequacy of food for the poor throughout the day. The poor wakes up the following day with empty stomach is signified in the "potholed roads" asking to be filled up. The dogs are emaciated such that their conspicuous ribs can be likened to the strings of guitar, a musical organ. "Stray dogs" expresses the moving around of the poor people with their frail physical appearance as a manifestation of their bad condition looking for means of survival. Also constitutive of Calvary Hill environment is the rubbish heaped up so high comparable to the height of a tower. The residual food eaten by the affluent people are heaped high with flies hovering around to have their fill. Lovelace uses "flies buzzing like torpedoes" as an image to express the attitude of the people desperately looking for what they could lay their hands on to survive the daily starvation. "Gutter full up with dirty water" implies that the filthy water is infested with disease causing agents. What may be regarded as happiness shown through laughter in this situation is the cry for attention demonstrated in the dragon dance and the holding of the police hostage. The rickety wooden houses have broomsticks as pillars expressed in "fragile like kite paper" that would cave in with little stress. The wooden houses take, apart from the literal value, a figural meaning of the eroded socio-cultural life of the Caribbeans. The people that were supposed to uphold the cultural integrity were toady to the imperialists because of the crumbs they enjoy from them. The struggle

for survival becomes the "in- thing" in such an environment where the determining creed is "you eat or you are eaten … You fatten on another or you are fattened upon" (Ngugi, 1977, p.294). This is in consonance with Blake's vision of a society where the exploiter, parasite ignores the effect of its activity on the man and nature that are being sucked dry. The various social problems inherent with this type of condition such as prostitution, exploitation of the weak, rebellion and predatory tendencies are variously embodied in the characters as reflection of the underlying condition of the environment. The people struggle to survive in the slum confronted with dreadful social condition that shortens the lives of the people. The images used confirms Buell's strand of ecocriticism that the non-human environment is present as active, symbolic of human deplorable socio-cultural condition. Lovelace nostalgically depicts the spirit of endurance and sustained struggle represented in the "plum tree":

> It is a yard before which grows a governor plum tree that has battled its way up through the tough red dirt and stands now ,its roots spread out like claws, gripping the earth, its leaves rust red and green, a bouquet in this desert place: a tree bearing fruit that never ripens … the children, lean and hard like whips, their wise yellow eye filled with malnutrition… children imitating the grown-up laughter and the big man pose of their elders, who survived here, holding their poverty as a possession, tending it stubbornly as Miss Cleothilda tends her flower garden (p.2).

By reference to "a governor plum tree", it implies the resilience and tenacity of the dispossessed people. The author takes us back into history to remember the good old days when the aboriginal inhabitants, Arawak, Carib and Ciboney, represented in the tree's three colours, struggled in spite of the intimidating forces of the Europeans, to assert their presence no matter how little in the Islands. "The tree bearing fruit that never ripens" implies the people of the Island especially the middle men who hardly contributed to the affirmation of their cultural dignity and

people's economic well-being. Their slim and dry stature encoded in the "lean and hard like whip" is an apt comparison with the objects of nature to show the degree of malnutrition.

Lovelace further depicts the poor condition of the slum, relating it to the poverty of the slum dwellers. Aldrick, for example, wakes up after carnival with the thought of the "shacks, teetering on their rickety pillars, abandoned". He perceived poverty which he actually connected to "the scent of the stale water" from a heavy washing which remains stagnant and unstirred for some days. Aldrick thinks aloud of this poverty-stricken yard as a home: "these pathetic and ridiculous looking shacks planted in this brown dirt and stone, this was home" (p.121). The thought of Aldrick about the weak patch-houses and the "stale water" as evidence of abject penury whirls in his mind. What likely good things could come out of their life is a mirage. The stench of slum filth is ubiquitous. Nobody from amongst the elite in the town would choose to stay in the slum. Aldrick is irritated that with this condition of the ghetto, it is still a home. The physical condition of the shanty area speaks for the wretchedness of the inhabitants. The wretchedness in relation to the environment is portrayed in a banter between Aldrick and Sylvia over why she chooses to elope with Mr. Guy. She asked if Aldrick would marry her so that she would jilt Mr. Guy. Aldrick is down to earth as he reveals his economic status in relation to his physical environment: "I can't afford a woman. You don't see how I living? No chair, a little bed in a little room …" (p.41). Aldrick justifies his inability to marry from the lack of chair, the size of his bed and the room. The only excusable item of possession in his room is the dragon costume. The size of the room can inconveniently take a person, likewise the bed. The dragon costume has no monetary importance, neither is it tenable as a material item to negotiate for marriage. Yet, Aldrick indulges in prostitution with some girls in the Hill.

As a consequence of poverty in the slum, prostitution becomes a notable, negative social attitude of the inhabitants. Sylvia "at seventeen, ripening like a mango rose" (p.151) is a symbol of temptation and sexuality as she is the most desired girl on the Hill. Her mother's inability to pay her house rent prompts her to send Sylvia to Mr. Guy to pay through sexual exchange. Aldrick sees her shadow on the wall from his window as he "lit his cigarette boldly" (p.24) and puffs twice to launch his presence into their privacy. "Ripening like a mango rose" describes Sylvia's fresh beauty desirable to men in the slum. It is her tempting beauty that her mother capitalizes on, while she sends her to Mr. Guy who already hopes for such an opportunity. Aldrick's action with the cigarette, apart from directly being a health hazard to himself and possibly the lovers, is an image of worsening global warming. Sylvia becomes undaunted in her coquetry. With all sense of effrontery and bravery "week nights she slips across to Guy's place, boldly now, no longer the frightened deer approaching the hunter, boldly, with a kind of insolent challenge daring any one condemning her" (p.130). Sylvia, now a deer personified, takes advantage of the night in her whoredom. Sylvia's mother, apart from the poverty in the slum, also exploits the cover of the night to facilitate the immoral behaviour. The day light would expose their immoral scheme if it was perpetuated in the daytime. Sylvia thus, finds the night conducive for the act and she now keeps on, without the instrumentality of her mother again, but the prompting material and monetary gains. Sylvia, depicted in the image of the deer is the character that Lovelace uses to epitomize a likely social consequence in the city-slums where the condition of living is unbearable to the women.

Similarly, Lovelace reveals through the voice of Miss Cleothilda, the incompatibility in the amorous relationship between Sylvia and Talbot. The figure of Talbot can be likened to "a broomstick with a wrong sided cashew seed on top of it, with boots on, and a cap and a bush jacket" (p.210). Talbot is thin and "lifeless" like a broomstick. The frail body with the oversize

head like the "cashew seed" makes his figure unattractive. Thus, Talbot's "handsomeness" compared to Sylvia's "mango rose" beauty leaves much to be desired. However, the unfit broomstick body and cashew head have been subdued by Talbot's open-handedness to Sylvia as the quest to survive poverty is given higher preference over human dignity in her life. Also, Talbot's unfit stature, hence not comparable to the queen-like beauty of Sylvia corroborates the incompatibility of Mr. Guy with Sylvia, except for monetary and material benefits. While the tempting "mango rose" is likened to Sylvia's beauty, "broomstick and "wrong sided cashew seed" are negative images that describe Talbot's awkward appearance. It is obvious that *The Dragon Can't Dance* presents Europeans' economic enterprises that impoverished individuals and resource communities. The instance of sugar economy is a microcosmic of the historical forced transition of the people's subsistent existence to cash economy. This situation necessitated Sylvia to demean her integrity for material and cash exchange from Mr. Guy and Talbot to survive. Lovelace' tropes signal the centrality of simile and metaphor rooted in nature as an "organic aesthetic …indigenous to the culture" (Quayson, 2004, p.833) of the people to make contrast between Talbot and Sylvia. The author's use of figures of speech thus exemplifies, in tandem with Heise's ecocritical tenets, "how perceptions of the natural shape the literary tropes".

As a further depiction of the poverty in the slum, Cleothilda stands in the yard, taking a cursory observation of the fence. It is made of "wood slats and stubs of hibiscus, drying and drying and knotted and old, the more enduring of them sending out thin, willowy stems of a pale anaemic green, that threw out a flower now and then to startle the yard"(p.184). This is metaphoric in relation to the poor condition of the inhabitants. 'Wood slat and stubs of hibiscus" describe the residual appearance of the slum dwellers that faced harsh economic condition. The dry season and heat from the sun have made the wood and hibiscus brittle and twisted. This condition is analogous to those people who are "lean and hard like whip", inhabiting the yard as a

result of poverty. They express the ways and manners the different occupants of the yard and the Hill at large combine assortment of the available resources to build their shacks and also, to make ends meet. “Flowers now and then startle the yard” reveal the various occupants of the yard that attempt to look bright just to show that they are not overwhelmed by their poor condition. The “thin willowy stem of pale anaemic green” explains the unhealthy and sickly physical condition of the slum dwellers that need humane attention of the upper class to provide them with resources. An instance is located in the depiction of Pariag’s wife, Dolly. She appears “slim like a rice stick”. The rice stick thinness explains the poverty of ghetto life after plantation system. Lovelace goes beyond Dolly’s physical appearance to her “big old ramshackled wooden house with the country smell of green grass and cow dung” (p.71). Dolly’s shack epitomizes the fragile and wretchedness of human existence in the slum. They always face the threat of being destroyed by rainstorm and flood while the odour of “green grass and dry cow dung” is the rural and closeness of the slum dwellers to nature, exemplified in their planting of crops and not intruding into the personal space of nature, especially the flora. Lovelace uses the sickly looking condition of objects of nature to show that of human beings. This shows that the author is aware of the dialectic in the degradation of nature and man. To the author, in line with Heise’s strand of the theory, nature is the source of the most vivid comparison. The non-human images in consonance with Buell’s stripe of Ecocritical hermeneutics, are imbued with meanings symbolic of man’s poor social condition.

As a result of the poor social condition, the novel thus, explicates the “where” of the fellars’ rebellion in the Street Corner and later, the Woodford Square. It is a form of remonstrance against the harsh economic policy that resulted in the poor post-plantation condition of the people in relation to their estranged location. The climax of the conflict between the opposing classes is attained when Fisheye, the local hoodlum, Aldrick and a few other slum fellers hijack a police van and hold two policemen hostage. Fisheye, Aldrick and the other fellars often situate

themselves at “the corner, boxed increasingly into the rectangle pavement and street at the side of the shop at the foot of the Hill” (p.158). It is here that they make impromptu attack to hold the police hostage and their other nefarious activities especially those of Fisheye. The rebellion exhibited in hijacking the police van takes place at the Street Corner and later dragged to the Woodford Square, with the announcement that the People’s Liberation Army demands environmental/social justice.

The argument is when the environmental problems are addressed, the condition of living improves. In the same token, when social condition improves, it is connected to better environment. Aldrick sensitizes the people not to make peace but justice with their natural environment/social condition: “Make no peace with slavery. Make no peace, for you have survived. You are here filling up shanty towns, prisons, slum, street corners, mental asylum, brothels and hospitals. Make no peace with shanty towns, dog shit, piss…” (p.171). “Natural environment” implies the very condition or state of the dispossessed created by their depravity, exploitation and dehumanization. “Shanty towns, prisons, slums, street corners, mental asylums, brothels and hospitals” are all images of wretchedness, suffering, illness, hooliganism, disease and prostitution to show the inhuman consideration for the deprived people’s condition which needs to be improved upon or completely eliminated. Large population of the deprived people is found in the “shanty towns”. When they commit little offence especially in their agitation for social justice, the state law unduly finds them guilty, hence, are sentenced to jail. Victims of the suppressive law are Aldrick and Fisheye who paid price for their futile remonstrance. That is, while the liberated slaves assert self-regeneration in their agitation, the Caribbean elite subdue such efforts at preventing them from sustaining their hegemony. Brothels are built in city-slums to enhance immoral act of prostitution while “dog shit, piss” account for the general unhealthy situation that engulfs their environment. These images of suppression and dehumanization, for

instance prison, court and law enforcement agents are used in the city, slum and rural areas, to sustain the yawning gap between the unequal classes of the rich and the poor in the society.

The imperialists enacted inhuman law that weighed heavily against the agitation of the deprived people for social change. The young lawyer thus voluntarily acts as the people's advocate and benefactor. He is rhetorical in his ecological stance, questioning the underpinning relatedness of the protesting characters' desolate condition to their environment:

> If the people had been deciding for themselves how they should live, do you believe they could choose such streets in which to live, such houses to shelter them, such condition? Do you believe they would choose street corners for their son and prostitution for their daughters and hungry bellies for their infant children? (p. 176).

The young lawyer draws the connectedness of "prostitution", "hungry bellies" as social problems of the environmental issues. Apparently, the questions draw resounding answers in the affirmative to show that the novel reveals the existence of better races and class in the Caribbean Islands. And, more importantly, that the Caribbean pre-colonial period was a long stretch of complete darkness, without anything substantial to arouse nostalgic feeling. By implication, environmental exploitation should not be considered as capable of causing social problems. What is oracular about the young lawyer's position is that the questions demand appropriate negative answers to address the social and environmental problems which the deprived people yearn for, to account for lack of racial and class discriminations.

The interdependent existence of man and nature is expressed in the value of the trees to the people and the people's preservation of them. Philo's school has, with other flower plants, two trees in the yard that give other values apart from reducing environmental warmth: "there were two trees in the yard, a drownes tree and a tamarind tree. The drownes tree provided fruit

for the children, the tamarind tree provided, apart from fruit, whips" (p.219). The import of the drownes producing fruit and tamarind fruit and whips is the acquisition of education as a form of human capacity building for a better tomorrow. That is, the education of the people to be well equipped with adequate knowledge for future challenges. Mustapha (2014) succinctly elaborates that the human development in the drownes and tamarind fruits border on "ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life-skills as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life …" (p.2). The whip expresses the rules and regulations that would aid the tailoring of human development, morally and academically, for the benefit of the society.

In a similar vein, Paravisini-Gebert (2005) acknowledges that the spirit of the Haitian first healer, Loko, known as "he of the trees" draws the necessary properties from trees to prepare herbal charms or concoctions to treat ailments (p.182) in man. Correspondingly, such value of nature for the treatment of illness beyond the need for food to human being is depicted in the novel through Aldrick's boyhood schooldays in Port of Spain:

> Along with a piece of bake and saltfish or bread and accra…he carried a bottle of tea brewed from wild Senna, a herb long sanctioned by his grandmother as a purifier of the blood. On weekend, he drank it, boiled to blackest green, as laxative, and in the week it was brewed as tea (p.122).

"Wild Senna" serves three purposes: it removes solid waste from the body and cleans the body of harmful substances and as tea to warm the body system. It shows that when plants are not wantonly destroyed or purposely destroyed in the process of exploiting the environment, the pay back is beneficial to man This portends the various uses of the resources of nature as purifier, laxative and tea, beyond the monetary value attached to nature by the imperialists which is still in agreement with nature's law of "live and lets live". It illustrates that blacks had their own ways of

removing harmful substance found in the blood or solid waste from the body before the advent of colonialism.

Man's ecofriendliness is exemplified when Cleothilda, the mulatto woman, discovers that a plant is unhealthy and looks shriveled. She "begins to favour the blossoming tree with a few cups of water – to justify wetting the earth around its perched and grasping roots" (p.184). This action is done to make the earth soft enough for the plants to draw nutrients and reduce the burning heat. By implication, it expresses the sensitization and little provision of conducive environment for the survival of the poor Caribbeans whose condition appears to go beyond irredeemable state. Miss Cleothilda further exhibits ecocentric disposition in "tending her flowers and fern hanging in the wire basket from the ceiling of the narrow veranda" (p.9). It appears that in spite of Cleothilda's shortcomings, inferable from her haughtiness and doubtful seasonal love for Philo, the only express way to her heart is revealed in her love for the flower plants. Philo discerns this from a chat with Cleothilda: "what you going to do with a old woman like me? She would ask, tending her plants on the veranda. An undaunted, Philo would reply: "I could water your garden" (p.127). As Cleothilda is a lover of nature, to "water her garden" is an excuse for Philo to warm himself into her heart. It is, from a literal understanding, to care and lessen her burden of watering the flower plants by herself. An implication of Philo's reply lies in his strength as a young man to live up to expectation in satisfying her sexual desire as she possibly has stayed for a long time without conjugal relationship with a man.

Cleothilda and Philo are found to be in the same social class as defined by their physical environment. There is no issue of dualism with regards to race because, according to Campbell (2010), "the dualism of White/Others leaves no room for discussing people who are both white and other. One half of identity must be ignored in order for bi-racial persons to fit the dualism"

(viii). This also does not allow us to examine the difference that exists between them effectively. The argument of Lovelace is that to penetrate the mind of a person who has been playing hard to get, one should seek out the object of nature which the person holds dearly. Then, you show concern for it and the person's mind would be opened to embrace you. Cleothilda's love for flower plants, the preservation of the drownes, tamarind and Senna trees attest to Buell and Reed's ecocritical principle that proposes human preservation of the environment to enhance the valuing of it. Lovelace, by implication, presents the relationship between nature and women as a positive connectedness for the preservation of the environment. This is what he has done with the configuration of Cleothilda and Sylvia's relationship with nature. Also, the friendly disposition of man to the natural environment is depicted in Sylvia's room which though not luxuriously furnished, still shows comfort in her prospective matrimonial life. She has "her furniture and knick-knacks and her plants and would have a dog" (p.198). The enabling environment is further equipped such that " a large straw mat almost took up the entire floor" (p.190). It portends that the entities of nature would, in the tight-coupling of Sylvia to her husband, play significant and indispensable role.

However, the unfriendly disposition of human beings to the restoration and preservation of the natural world form a crucial aspect of Lovelace' portrayal of characters. Aldrick's late uncle, Freddie, for instance, "lived for fifteen years on the Hill in an old house, a shack, never planting a flower, discouraging any effort to beautify or repair the broken down houses. He died there, with the old house falling down on him" (p.123). Uncle Freddie fails to understand that "to preserve nature is to preserve man". He does not rehabilitate the dilapidated shack or have flowers planted in his compound. He lives in the wooden house that could not withstand strong wind. The weak structure collapsed because Uncle Freddie is anthropocentric. If man is not ecocentric , the resultant effect is not only on the natural environment, but on his wellbeing which he appears to

hold so dearly. This form of environmental neglect epitomized in Uncle Freddie can be likened to the white masters who only think of the economic benefit in their relationship with nature. The wellbeing of man and the environment is endangered. The attitude of Uncle Freddie confirms Rao's (1995) claim:

> Nature is like wild animal that you have trained to work for you. So long as you are vigilant and work warily with thought and care, so long will it give its aid; but look away for an instant, be heedless or forgetful, and it holds you by the throat (p.39).

Rao likens the lack of care and maintenance of the environment to beasts that could destroy man if they are neglected or not tamed. The disastrous result of anthropocentricism is what Uncle Freddie experienced in the shack that killed him. Lovelace reveals to us that nature is capable of registering its anger on man. It portends in general that excessive negligence or human economic activities on nature can result into earthquake, tsunami, landslide, flood and many more.

The Trinidadian carnival celebrated seasonally is a "ritual for regeneration and assertion" of cultural dignity of the freed slaves. To herald the coming of the masquerades on Monday, the morning "breaks upon the backs of these thin shacks with no cock's crow , and before the mist clears, little boys are found costumed in old dresses, their heads tied, holding brooms made from the ribs of coconut palm leaves"(p.112). Morning "breaks upon the backs of these thin shacks" explains the coming of independence, emancipation granted the Islands with deliberations held in Europe amongst the colonial powers. The contending colonialists discussed the liberation back home, agreeing on the kind of freedom to be granted the Caribbeans. Against the natural way of telling time by cocks, there is specialty in the morning as no cock is aware how the time passes for

it to announce the dawn of the day. “No cock crow” signifies no sign to show the dawn of emancipation in the Islands as the colonialists were still vigorous in their nefarious activities up to the last minute. This is partly because the slaves who bore the brunt of the exploitation and mortification were not by rule part of the people or nations to discuss the liberation issue. It happens also that before the heat from the sun chases away the mist, little boys in the Hill bear brooms which they made from “coconut palm leaves” to symbolize the agitation and sweeping away of degradation of human socio-cultural life and natural environment.

As part of the people’s efforts to reclaim their cultural dignity, Philo sings a tract titled “Axe Man”. Physically, he does not look like an Axe Man neither does any of the slum dwellers; but their determination for change and; the source of his inspiration makes him to sing it as such: “ if it wasn’t for the rain that night he might never have sung it – that night every Calypsonian had decided to sing something slow and cold like the weather”(p.221). Invariably, the inspiration derived from the cold weather makes Philo to think of a song to create social awareness and also eulogize the strength of the dispossessed people in making positive change. It is the combination of different sides of natural variation – rain and night- that makes Philo to sing soft tunes in consonance with the cold weather, and the night which was also not noisy. If it had rained in the day, or not rained at all, a different tune more rigorous would have been chosen to kindle the people’s enthusiasm.

The rain and the night are not the only natural phenomena that affect Philo’s inspiration in his calypso that laments the ravaging effect of the European frenzied mercantilism. He could see the far houses which appear to be the same except in colour difference under the “surrounding green mountain”. “Far houses” which appear to be the same except in colour difference signify, on the one hand, the different European nations but, the same exploitative

intention. On the other hand, it means the different races, Africans, Indians and Chinese, now bound together by the same geographical location and unpleasant historical experiences of slavery, lose of cultural identity and environmental degradation. None of the colonizing European nations has the good intention to develop the Caribbean as a compensation for their obnoxious activities. Paramount in their relationship with the Caribbeans is the exploitation of the agricultural and mineral resources signified in the "surrounding green mountain". Moreso, the surrounding green mountains which attracted the imperialists to hold tenaciously to mercantilism also inspires the notion of "sameness of everything" in the mind of Philo expressed in his calypso:

> The new people so new, you know nobody
> Don't know who is who
> They so all the same all of them carry
> The same kinda name
> Same kinda dog, same kinda wife, all of them living
> The same kinda life (p.205).

Philo's calypso here clears off the divide between man and nature, the thrust of second wave ecocriticism. By implication, he also advocates the collapse of the boundary between the opposing classes in the society. Man should not misinterpret what God said about man's dominion over nature to exploit the others that are less privileged and the non-human nature. Inferably, it urges the wealthy to close the yawning gap separating them from "the wretched of the earth". As far as human beings live on earth with abundant resources, symbolized in the "surrounding green mountain", racism and exploitation should be discouraged to enhance man and nature bonding, which Lovelock refered to as 'tight-coupling' to have a better society. Philo's connectedness to the objects of nature that were inspirational to his musical production exemplifies Buell's strand of

ecocriticism that nature is not a framing device. It is capable of affecting human culture. The thrust of Philo's calypso bolsters or forms the basis of what the young lawyer advocates, between man and nature; the rich and the poor; when he defended the deprived class represented by Fisheye and Aldrick in the court of law.

After Aldrick's jail term, he goes round to visit his friends. Pariag sees him pass by his shop. He is concerned but confused of what type of welcome to give Aldrick. His confused state of mind is observed when he gives Caroline "five pounds of onion" instead of "half pound saltfish". This is contained in Caroline's voice: "the madam giving worries or what? I asked you for half pound saltfish and look, you giving five pounds of onion" (p.199). Pariag taking "saltfish" for "onion" expresses the impromptu state of confused agitation of the slum dwellers which was just a dragon dance. This was because they lacked proper organization and strategy to register their grievances and reclaim their degraded socio-cultural dignity and natural environment.

The evocation of human exploitation started with the metaphoric examination of the connection of the human spirit to nature. Discernible from the overall concern of the text is the exploitation of the Caribbean labour and natural resources which resulted in the co-ordinate socio-cultural issues like carnival celebration and negative social attitudes that manifested themselves in prostitution, rebellion and predatory tendencies. The consignment of the liberated slaves to the ghettoes coupled with the weather condition, prompted Philo to sing inspirational songs. Fisheye, Aldrick and few others held the police hostage to register their discontent over their poor environmental/social condition. It however ended up as a mere dragon dance as the intent of the remonstrance died with the arrest and incarceration cf the principal culprits. The deprived people celebrated the carnival to affirm their cultural dignity that was subdued when the

colonialists were solely exploiting their natural resources and human labour. The argument of the text is the entrenchment of social and environmental justice.

Nature and Man's Pre-Colonial Life in *Batouala*

Batouala celebrates the nostalgic feeling for the organic pre-colonial life of the Caribbeans, with its strengths and weaknesses and their underpinning connectedness to the natural world. It specifically emphasizes subsistence life style, traditional marriage system, rituals, adultery and superstitious beliefs of the Caribbeans and their links to the environment. The argument of the text intent in the words of Alam (2011) is that it reveals "how the coming of imperialism had impacted adversely on the lives of the people who had been dwelling in harmony with nature and how the coming of the whites had disturbed the balance achieved" (p.49) by their relationships. Hitherto, the people and their local chief, Batouala, were contented with the primitive ways with which they have lived interdependently with the flora, fauna, landscape, hills and rivers as entities of his environment. "Colonial presence", opines Ozdag (as cited in Speth, 2008) "created violence in the landscape and changed the environment in the Caribbean". With reference to Professor Erin D. James, he claims: "there is no place on earth altered as much as the Caribbean" (p.135).

The novel explores the story of a Banda chief of Ubangui-Shari. It reveals the tranquility that is inherent with human relationship with nature in the pre-colonial Caribbean. According to Mwangi (2004), the novel depicts black man's "village life and its richness as an organic self-sustaining forest which has almost everything that the West – in its arrogance – claim to have come to introduce" (p.2). It is a representation of the nostalgic feeling for a simple living advocated by the first wave ecocritics. Maran showcases the joy in savagery as exemplified in the relationship between Bissibin'gui and Batouala's wives; and the primitivism in the burial of

Batouala's father, subsistence life and polygamy. From the wrong perception of the Europeans, writes Shadpour, blacks "were divided into two groups: the noble savage and the depraved cannibals. The noble savage was a man in nature and this nature was related to primitivistic myth" (p.212) which the whites believed was against progress. European imperialists "claim to understand nature and her ways, but at the same time they deride her and show no respect for the ways of nature. Nature is primitive, and since modern civilization has no respect for the primitive, it has no respect for nature" (Acholonu, 1995, pp.53-54). Ubangui-Shari community is given attention especially in its practices of hunting, marriage system and superstitious beliefs. The ugly side of noble savagery is portrayed in the illicit relationship between Bissibin'gui and two of Batouala's wives. In *Batouala,* the hitherto stereotyped black character is being replaced by a more human character faced with more human situations. For the fact that Maran "did not believe in the exploitation of the blacks, he makes a realistic depiction of African traditional life and the unfair treatment of the blacks in French Equitorial Africa. Maran believes evidently that French policy of humanism to the blacks was only realistic on pronouncement. "French policy" in the words of Lloyd (1967), "stemmed largely from when edicts abolishing slavery had declared that all men, without distinction of colour, are French citizens and enjoy all the rights assured by the constitution" (p.59). According to Smith (2014) in line with Lloyd's claim:

> Maran felt that the natives were indeed in need of France's aid: an abusive method he observed were beneficial to them with only examples of civilization at its worst. It was therefore this conflict in what France's colonial represented in France to the world and what was actually taking place in French Equitorial Africa that prompted Maran to write so critical a preface to *Batouala* (p.19).

Maran's "manifold importance comes at least in part, from the view of him as a 'connecting spirit', a figure who through his writing connects the continent of Africa and the

Americas" (Campbell, 2003, p.11). Intent in Campbell's acknowledgement is that the formation of African and Caribbean sensibility could not be divorced from their landscape and historical experiences. Maran attempts to concretize that nostalgic feeling to the world that the Caribbeans have "made their landscape a place where memory, work, cultural practice and ritual intermingled, creating a balance in their lives that made life meaningful for them. People had become one with place and culture" (Alam, 2011, p.49) before the colonial incursion. But, on their arrival with a different culture, human existence became traumatized and the ultimate ties forged between nature and society was eroded as a result of the action of the imperialists. Alam asserts that Maran writes to "erase the cultural distance between the false binaries" (p.59) of nature and culture, which according to Lovelock (cited in Campbell, 2003) "is derived from a theory of ecological science which proposes the notion of interdependence or "tight-coupling" of human and non-human life and furthermore, the interdependence of life on non-life"(p.16). The aim of Maran in writing *Batouala*, Alam writes is to:

> Realize what it was to dwell in a harmonious relationship with the world thereby raising what we would now term their ecological consciousness, that is to say their sensitivities about the importance of preserving the intimate link between the land and themselves (p.49).

The thrust of *Batouala* therefore, is to collapse the schism between nature and man. It depicts the symbiosis between the two entities, with emphasis on the cordiality in the pre-colonial life. The posture of *Batouala* is in consonance with Buell's ecocritical desiderata that anthropocentricism should not be the sole interest of a text. Maran fulfills an artistic vision of evocating colonialists' attempts at dispossessing and estranging the Caribbeans from nature. It portends that there was exploitation of nature at the advent of colonialism. The European nations scrambled for areas of influence within the Caribbean Islands. Their desperation was prompted by

the rich resources of the Islands. They then had the settled mind that “it was a place for struggle for economic monopoly, material gain and political subjugation” (Akuso, 2005, P.72). Inferably, “political possession and the freedom to inhabit a geographical space”, Campbell (2003) writes, “is indivisible from a historical and psychological sense of connection to that land” (p.2). As a consequence, they started to destroy indigenous culture and replacing it with theirs. Major and Mcmurry (2012) observe that in the Caribbean situation, “to an alarming extent, the economy is seen to supersede ecology, and despite the catastrophic stupidity of that view, ecology continued to be indentured to the economy” (p.4). The inability of Western culture to blend and its infringement on Caribbean culture, thus turning them against nature prompted the Caribbeans to seek an escape. The people took their “vassals, goats, children and ducks, retreated to Krebeje” (p.71). The novel demonstrates the point in the people’s cordialness with those items of nature as they run away to avoid the onslaught of exploitation from the imperialists. For instance, the Ciboneys who were mostly fishermen, were displaced and therefore changed from their initial fishing to hunting and gathering of valuable objects of nature. So also were the Arawaks and the Caribs that suffered displacement. The sense of oneness with nature where one feels at home appears to be lost. The symbiotic relationship with nature exemplified in their subsistent system of existence gives way to the plantation economy. Their place of abode and the surrounding condition were not good enough to give them that feeling of home because they are transient to escape the imperialists’ scheme to cause disharmony between them and their environment. For their escape, the “few rivers” that they put behind to settle at Griko on “ the shores of Kouma, whose waters are fresh and full of fish” were enough a distance. The people now have the opportunity to once again continue their subsistence farming and fishing. But, no sooner had they settled down than the desperate colonialists landed in Griko “like a flight of vultures on carrion” (p.73). The European colonialists depicted as vultures are after the Caribbeans human labour and

their richly endowed natural environment like carcass, to meet their mercantile drive. At this juncture, Alam (2011) reiterates:

> The sense of oneness with nature, the sense of dwelling of an environment where one feels at home is gone; the harmony and balance that sustained the community have disappeared; and the traumatized villages have lost their sense of place and consequently have no sense of direction any more (p.46).

This is the situation that confronts the people in their attempts to get the hitherto cordial relationship with nature that sustained them. That is, as their lives were "disconnected" from nature, they still strived to get connected to nature in their struggle and other activities. The novel for instance, depicts nature as the provider of convenience and joy in rest. A night was when Yassigui'ndja could not sleep because of so many thoughts running riot in her mind. The weather becomes cold as it rained that "dying night," such that the gentle noise of the rain that beats the "thatched hut" deepens her sleep and as she wakes up she makes this remark: "it is so nice to dream idly in the house while it rains on the bush" (p.45). "Dying night" is indicative of the situation when the night becomes so quiet because virtually all the people around have gone to bed, when the night is pin-drop silent. Thus, the quietness of the night combined with the soft touch of the rain on the thatch makes her to sleep deeply. Batouala too finds comfort in the dried grass from the mat on which he had just spent the night. Batouala who is familiar with the various objects of nature as beddings remarks: "the skin of a freshly-killed wild bull could not really surpass it in warmth and softness" (p.17). Maran connects the "dried grass from the mat" and the "thatched hut" to reveal the degree of the dependence of man on nature in rest. He draws a comparison using nature to vividly express the convenience, the extent of the warmth and softness enjoyed from "the skin of a freshly-killed bull" and "dried grass".

Batouala at a point feels there is no way to continue his sleep as "the mist was edging itself little by little into his house". The mist which sometimes follows down pour drifted into the chief's room to make the room too cold for his comfort. Also connected to the disturbances are the "tree frogs, buffalo toads and roaring frogs that croaked outside, imitating each other" (p.18) and mosquito hummed around the chief's ear for him to sleep no more. The low loud roaring and croaking noise of the "tree frogs and the buffalo toads" constitute noise pollution. The smoke from the fire fizzles out as the wood does not burn again. The aim of Batouala in kindling the firewood is to provide him with warmth while the smoke chases away the mosquitoes. Maran uses this to demonstrate the issue of global warming and pollution of the atmosphere. The burning fire produces heat that goes beyond Batouala's house to the open air and the smoke makes the air dangerous for human and non-human life. According to Ozovehe (2009):

> Air quality is fast deteriorating at warisome rate as it poses a serious threat to a plethora of health, environmental, livability of life… Air pollution contributes to global problems such as climate change and greenhouse gas (GHG) emission…Air pollution is known to as well have adverse effects far beyond city boundaries (p.24).

The mosquitoes particularly, that disturb Batouala are metaphoric of the imperialist nations scrambling to exploit Caribbean natural resources. The mosquitoes bite and suck Batouala's blood causing him some discomfort. The exploitative activities of the European nations can be likened to that because the colonialists came on exploitative mission, on our natural resources and human labour. They constitute themselves a nuisance to the people's tranquil life signified in the chief's sleep. Batouala is also aware of the disturbances from the domestic animals within his house: the quarrelling goats had gone outside at the cock's crow" while "chickens stayed in which meant a racket" (p.18). The "chickens" are symbolic of African middle-class who,

out of timidity, is toady to the imperialists. They are themselves not united except in their hypocritical activities. The active ones go out to source for their crumbs while the ones not so active stay behind working on the psyche of available blacks towards accepting Western antics. The "quarrelling goats" implies the European nations who are not united too at home, but have all come to acquire spheres of influence in the rich geographical entity of Caribbean. Columbus' awareness of the Caribbean Islands in 1492 and the disclosure of its existence to Spain and other European nations is signified in the "cock's crow".

Also in harmony with nature, Yassgui'ndja prepares to meet Bissibin'gui in their secret amorous relationship in a forest near the Pombo. She takes along with her "a wicker basket in which she arranged as well as she could three gourds, a pair of hoes, two earthen-cooking pots and a little cassava" (p.49). The three gourds signify the Africans, Indians Chinese brought to the Caribbean for plantation economy. "A pair of hoes" indicates, no doubt the exploitation of nature and human labour with diminutive benefit to the people of colour implied in "a little cassava". The "two earthen-cooking pots" are images of the manufacturing industries making use of the Caribbean natural resources. Arguably, in the Caribbean, the wealth generated from land and human labour ended up in the hands of the colonialists. The centrality of the author's effort at evocating ecological and social consciousness is germane. The items, collectively or individually cannot be linked to Yassigui'ndja's ulterior motive around that area. She is even confronted that morning with fog on her way to their meeting point. Despite the difficulty in her mission connotative of the fog, she is not daunted. It explains, by implication, the arrival of the colonial masters in disguise of attractive developmental framework to hoodwink the Caribbeans to their peril. The people fell flat to the colonialists' empty promises of improving their standard of living which ended up otherwise.

Batouala, Yassigui'ndja's husband, is a subsistence farmer. In line with the notion of the need for possible helping hands, he marries as many wives as possible: "Batouala studied the sun as he walked…their wisdom in child bearing and motherhood allows for the man to marry other women to reduce the burden of the nursing mother and also to cater for the needs of the man" (pp.35-45). But, Yassigui'ndja, Batouala's head-wife, turns upside down the import of this chauvinistic tradition, and traverses the vegetational plains to meet Bissibin'gui in fulfillment of her sexual desires. The indulgence in adultery, to Yassigui'ndja, is neither caused by her husband's inability to provide her food, shelter nor clothing. According to Yassigui'ndja, her husband was "beginning to grow older and seem eager only to smoke his pipe"(p.45). For the fact that her husband is more interested in deriving warmth from smoking and the food he eats than his wives who serve him, she thinks it "reasonable" to disregard the sanctity of marital injunction. Undejectedly, Yassigui'ndja defies "the waning fog and sprinkling rain" as "she skirted a cassava plantation, and plunged into a cornfield where she surprised a company of warty-snouted boar" that dispersed into the forest. Yassigui'ndja and Bissibin'gui choose a place of vegetational cover to conceal their illicit companionship. She does not know that she is in a pivotal move as she is overwhelmed in anticipation of the joy in the warmth of Bissibi'gui's body. "The waning fog and sprinkling rain" signify that in no distant time, Batouala would discover the adulterous relationship between his wife and Bissibin'gui. Also, her determination is not doused by "the grasses whose tall stems had bowed to the rain, beat her with sprinklings and cuts as she went by" (p.51). The actions of the grasses, "beat her with sprinklings and cuts", serve to discourage her of the illegal relationship. However, as she braves the odds, a feeling of happiness mixed with disappointment is evoked in her by the actions of the plants. She forges ahead in such a confused cheerfulness. It is a demonstration of high level of desperation in adultery connected to the flora and rain, aiding and also de-motivating her. Thus, related to the imperialists' incursion, they were not daunted by

any form of hardship or attempt to reject the exploitation of Caribbean natural environment. The various connectedness of human actions to objects of nature confirms Buell's ecocritical strand that nature, in its relationship with man is not a foil for human actions, but capable of affecting human activities.

Moreso, as an expression of love and oneness in a hay day between Yassigui'ndja and Batouala, she "collected her husband's clay pipe, smoked watching the savory grill of fat white worms from the corner of her eyes" (p.28). Conversely, the nicotine jeopardizes the life of human beings and the non-human life in the environment. The burning of fire wood makes the warm land to smoke with haze, thus causing disequilibrium to the environment and threatening the survival of man and other co-life in the ecosystem.

Human leisure is portrayed in Bissibin'gui as he tells the story of M'bala, the elephant and Gato, the chicken while he relaxes in the mat. He takes Batouala's "clay pipe and filled it with "nago" leaves which the white call tobacco and dropped embers on them" (p.39). As a form of display of leisure, Batouala is found in the centre of the vassals and old folks who are repositories of the surest Banda tradition having an assembly. In this congregation, Batouala "filled with hemp and tobacco all the "garabos" in his reach and those passed to him, lit them, took a few puffs according to custom and passed them round" (p.67). This act shows that the spirit of love and oneness is located in the sharing of "hemp and tobacco" before the intruding individualistic culture of the whites. Good as the spirit of oneness is demonstrated, and the hemp as a potent grass used by the people during the carnival to achieve a lift, they are fraught with serious hazard that can torment human brain. The people likewise indulge in taking local brew of corn and millet beer refered to as *Kene*. When this brew is taken, it heightens happiness, fun and chatting amongst the people during celebrations. Excessive in-take intoxicates them to misbehave, of

which drunkenness, for example, is being accepted for Bissibi'ngui's uncontrollable lewdness with people's wives in the village. The drinking of *Kene* and smoking of hemp and tobacco are negative tendencies in the social activities of the people which have more serious consequences than the joy derived from them. This is man's dependence on nature which ironically endangers his life. Human leisurely interactions embedded in nature exemplifies Buell's strand of ecocriticism that nature is capable of inducing human mood.

Before the incursion of the European imperialists into the Caribbean Islands, there existed traditional means of announcing the death of a person or the commencement of certain festivals. The burning of wood which Batouala did earlier serves a personal, positive purpose to warm his stifling limb and the smoke to suffocate the humming mosquitoes from constituting nuisance to him. Maran equally demonstrates the use of wood burning for the fire and smoke to attract and direct people to where Ga'nzas, the circumcision festival, is being celebrated. The woods normally used for this purpose are "acrid and black" that generate "a thick smoke from the multitude of fires" (p.64) when lighted. The "thick smoke" having its primary purpose of communication, pollutes the biosphere, endangering human life and the life support system. Meanwhile, the celebration of Ga'nzas is heralded by "a terrible tornado, closing with havoc a season of more than disastrous rain" (p.55). The leaves moved away by heavy wind shows that arrangement for Ga'nzas as per making the environment clean is necessary. The change from rainy season to dry season, just like the torrential down pour with the heavy wind that announces the coming of Ga'nzas is heralded too "through the thick fog and koungbas' croak. It was dawn, a dawn of the dry season" (p.90). The "thick fog" and "Koungbas croak" towards the end of rainy season" tells us that the traditional life is giving way to the Western culture: the people's change from the organic and agrarian lifestyle to the empty and weird imperialist lifestyle. The thickness of the mist is a metaphoric espousal of the white people's disguise as representatives of virtue.

This played out in the imperialists' brainwashing of the Caribbeans towards accepting their second fiddle position as a natural phenomenon.

Similarly, the death of Coquelin, the white hunter, who was killed by M'bala is made known to the public through "the shiny black bird" (p.134) that roved the sky at his death. A contrast exists between Coquelin and "the shiny black birds" that herald his death, at least in terms of colour difference. By implication, the whites, consciously or unconsciously, are linked to the Caribbean nature. Possibly, if not for the sky-borne black birds, the death of the white hunter would not have been known so soon. It means that the blacks are discriminatory, but not to the point when a white settler dies. Quite apparent is the unfriendly act of the white hunter demonstrated in his attempt to kill the elephant. But, he ended up being killed by M'bala. This event gives credence to the fact that, similar to earthquakes and flood which are nature's vengeance on man, nature's other way of fighting back is demonstrated through the killing of Coquelin by M'bala. Coquelin's attempt is an illustration of the white man's anthropocentrism. However, he is reconciled with nature, though unconsciously, through the black bird and mother earth at his death and when he is interred. Coquelin was, before his attempted killing of wild life, cordial with nature as "he had only a bogbo,… that spread out mat" (p.132) on which he sleeps before his death.

Batouala's brother, Macoude engages in subsistence fishing. Acholonu (1995) asserts that Macoude is a "fisherman satisfied with having caught enough fish for the day, relaxing beside his boat and enjoying his pipe, is in tune with the environment and with nature" (p.51). Sometimes, he expresses kindness in sharing with other people that are intimate with him. His kind gesture in nature is illustrated when he "found two plump fish in his nets" (p.56) and he invites Batouala to share in his meal of fish. Macoude similarly extends his kindness to Bissibi'ngui

by having “a meal of potatoes, fish and *kene*” together (p.118} when Bissibi’ngui is about to visit Batouala, after the rift between Bissibi’ngui and Batouala had been resolved. He refuses to eat in Batouala’s house. It can be argued that Bissibi’ngui’s refusal to eat is not just because he has had his fill with Macoude, but because he insinuates being poisoned because of his illicit affair with Batouala’s wives. Macoude’s kindness to the duo, especially Bissibi’ngui, is incidental not in anticipation to abet Batouala’s likely evil intention. It is a natural kindness from Macoude without pre-empted thought.

Just like the people’s belief in the connotative meaning of the black bird; and smoke from the fire to direct people to the venue of Ga’nzas, the people of Ubangui-Shari have their own way of legalizing the union between a man and a woman. The items for the payment of dowry, sourced from nature, are intrinsic to the Bamba tradition. The various items combined serve a purpose of uniting two families, a system in place before the advent of the “white” wedding of the imperialists. The items are various:

> Ten goats, thirty yellow or white chickens, twenty new hoes ready to have handle put on them, a little captive of the Mandjia race, twelve baskets of red millet, as many baskets of white, five elephant tusks, and finally the traditional throwing knife (p.46).

Each item contained in the dowry package symbolizes different meanings in the people’s tradition. In the first place, the exchange in totality signifies unity, oneness between the families of Batouala and Yassigui-ndja. The hoe, in this context, is symbolic of Batouala’s willingness when called upon by his father-in-law to assist in his farm work. It is in form of a pact that the feeding of his father- and mother –in-law is part of his prerogatives. The joy of Yassigui’ndja in Batouala’s house would not be wholesome if it is not inclusive of her parents, no matter how little. The

baskets of white elephant tusks show strength and peace in being part of that family. His positive impact should be felt when the need arises. The white colour of the tusk is identified with tranquility and cordialness amongst the members of the families. This is because Batouala is now a "member" of his wife's family. To cause disharmony amongst the family members of his father and mother in-law is tantamount to slurring red on the integrity of the Batoualas at large. The "throwing knife" expresses Batouala's determination to defend that family with the last drop of his blood when the need arises. This would be premised on the belief that a foe to his in-law is equally his enemy. There are possible instances where sons-in-law betray their wives' parents. If Batouala is found in such act, he is bound to commit suicide using a knife. The items for contracting marriage, Mcaoude's fish and the non-human nature connected to Ga'nzas, are functional as they confirm Heise's proposition that an ecocritical interpretation gives priority attention to the values assigned to nature and why such values are so assigned to nature. The items are active in the formation of human culture.

This is further illustrated in the connectedness of nature to the confirmation of a man's death in Grimari before the corpse is committed to mother earth. The traditional way to confirm a person's death considered derogatory by the whites is exemplified with the corpse of Batouala's father: "the body of Batouala's father was tied to a tree for eight days and nights" (p.92) before burial. The tree is believed by the people to be appropriate to expose the corpse to confirm to the people whether it is really dead. The movement of any part of the body would easily be seen against the static tree. This decision is founded on the fact that the people's ancestors aware that at times the one who was believed dead was indeed confirmed to be alive while preparing them for burial. So the only sure way to confirm someone's death is through the stated process. There is a corollary, to support the connectedness of man death to nature. In Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*

(1995),Angel's mother, after birth puts Angel outside in a birch tree to receive the death hands of cold weather.

Another form of the people's belief system is how a corpse is buried after being tied to a tree for eight days. A typical instance is portrayed in the burial of Batouala's father: two ditches are dug, "they filled the second ditch – the one into which his legs extended – with wood, and then with earth" (p.97). It is discernable from this single event of a part of the ditch filled with earth during interment, the collapse of the slippery boundary between man and nature. Man was made from earth and onto earth shall he return. This, in a way, justifies the view of ecocriticism that nature should be considered to be on a moral par with man. "Every natural object", opines Kusi (2011), "seems to be in a possession of a soul and capable of intense communion with man" (p.9). This indicates that man lives partly in a world of some traditional belief systems linkable to nature. But, there appears to be a disconnect between the dead, especially when it is not interred, and the natural environment. Maran demonstrates this through the inability of Batouala to notice the intruding presence of Bissibin'gui and Yassigui'ndja because of the zero effect of the fire, which hitherto gave him warmth:

> He didn't know that Bissibin'gui and Yassigui'ndja were there, in his house separated from each other only by the fire which couldn't warm him any more. He didn't know that Djouma, the red little dog, snored as usual, head to tail, on the rubber gathering basket at the back of his hut. He did not even hear the goats bleat … (p.147).

Batouala is not conscious of his social environment again, especially with Bissibin'gui and Yassigui'ndja in their love making spree in his house. As the fire burns, "Djouma, the red little dog snored" and the "goats bleat", Batouala drifts to the land of the "Kolikombo". He can no more agitate against the illegal union of the duo, neither can he commune with Djouma or feel irritated

by the goats' bleat and toads' croaks. The inability of Batouala to respond to his environment, in addition, corroborates that of his father who, when tied to a tree for eight days shows no sign of being alive, but only decomposed gradually. Batouala would be reconnected to the earth on burial like his late father. But, the duo is so engrossed in the love making that the noises of the animals did not disturb them. The fire burns to show the burning enthusiasm in the amorous relationship between Bissibin'gui and Yassigui'ndja, different from the effect it had on Batouala when he was alive. A mark of the unequal interaction between the colonialists and the Caribbeans is the exploitation of human labour. To illustrate this fact, Maran uses the image of dog to explain the embarrassment meted out on the Caribbeans:

> A dog is less than nothing. If they use him a little, during the season of brush fire, it's because he knows how to flush out games and excel in chasing it. Apart from that, since he is useless, they pay no attention to him except to thrash him (p.20).

The value of blacks in the image of dog is appreciated when used for economic gain. That is, it is only when they need the black man's labour in achieving their mercantile aim that the colonial masters know their value. This gives credence to Chichi's remark to Jane when Mr. Curden left without saying "goodbye" to her, the one perceived to be the most intimate of the workers to him. "Season of brush fire" means the time of economic enterprise when labour is utilized to source for raw materials and subsequent factory work which attracts little pay.

Maran particularly uses the image of Djouma, the red little dog, to elucidate black man's suffering. Djouma embodies the pitiable condition of the blacks and attempts to react in a mild way to the non-conformity of their present condition of living with that of pre-colonial period: "On his body, wrinkled by semi-starvation, one could hardly see anything but his ears – long, straight,

pointed and alert. He shook them from time to time in order to startle the flea, the thick, or the yellowjacket which was bothering him" (p.18). The rough and scaly nature of the dog's body signifies the people's malnutrition which makes them to emaciate such that it is only the ears that are the most conspicuous parts of their body at a glance. The dog is poorly fed and the parasites continue to suck the dog dry. The dog's ears which it shakes to drive them off so as to have respite are not potent enough to even kill the weakest of the parasites or scare them away for a long period of time. It is a situation of double suffering that would eventually lead to the demise of the dog. This form of relationship is further expressed in the voice of Batouala: "I'm well aware that they amuse themselves with us as Paka, the wild cat does with a mouse. Paka almost ends up devouring the mouse he playing with". The white is the metaphoric Paka and black the mouse as prey. The "cat" and "mouse" comparison expresses the unequal and predatory relationship between the two opposing classes. In spite of the parasitic effect of the relationship, the Caribbeans still "keep the French as one keeps his own lice" (p.70) which feed on them to great discomfiture. The blacks have to keep them as such because the French have changed the people's ways of survival. For instance, the French policy of Assimilation was only on paper a reality. The people were in a dilemma: to refuse them from exploiting the natural world was difficult; and not to sell their labour in the plantations or manufacturing industries to keep body and soul together was suicidal. The "flea, the thick, or the yellowjacket" are metaphoric of the colonial masters who suck the wealth of Caribbean natural environment that eventually make them to wallow in abject penury. The images of dog, cat, burning fire and sucking and biting insects are consonant with Buell's strand of ecocritical hermeneutics that natural entities are depicted not as frames for human actions but, imbued with meanings as active characters.

The imperialists' determination to continue with their economic drive was stronger than, if there was, their moral consideration for the exploitation of human labour and the colossal

destruction of the environment. As they vividly express their zeal in the exploitation, the novel achieves a balance as it expresses their fear, not for the mortification of human body in labour or degradation of nature. They are afraid of the living natural entities causing them pain and discomfort as a form of caution or revenge for the degradation of nature: “whites fret about mosquito bites. The sting of “fourous” irritates them. They fear mason bees. They are also afraid of the “Prakongo”, the scorpion who lives, black and venomous, among decaying roofs, under rubble, or in the midst of the debris” (p.30). The white colonizers are not comfortable with the various insects and scorpion that sting and bite them. These various insects are metaphoric of the different races in the Caribbean that have had encounter with the whites in their economic venture. Every of the races show their discontent by launching the offensive, no matter how weak on the whites. The scorpion is metaphoric of the blacks whom they have seriously exploited. The “decaying roofs, under rubble, or in the midst of the debris” is an exposure of the debilitated environment and the people’s desolate social condition.

The environment has grossly been drained of precious raw materials such that the residue has no value as such to the people. What Maran demonstrates is that the oppressed people think of the possible ways of reclaiming their land from the European imperialists. They are not considered beyond slave status in their own land. But Batouala’s father reminds them that “when Bamara the lion roared, no antelope in the area dared to make a sound” (p.77). The intimidating strength of the white is personified in the lion while the weak and powerless is embodied in the antelope. The Caribbeans were “like a startled animal with ears erect, sniffing the silent, ominous air and not knowing which way to run” (Achebe, 1958, pp.76-77). By implication, the peace which they want depends on their ability to exercise quietude and restraint in the presence of the whites. The oppressed people are to conceal the anger in the most affected conviviality. They should adopt the “panther style”: “ Mourou, the panther, is the cruel beast who prowls through

the brush, especially on moonless nights. With claws and fangs, slowly, she dismembers her prey" (p.95). The image of panther through brush in moonless nights" explains the people's diplomacy to hatch their plans in secrecy so that the long awaited reclamation of natural environment and cultural dignity would be a reality. It is arguable that the overall structure and many of the tropes in the novel show the complexity of the author's vision and the difficulty of incorporating a radical environmental consciousness into Caribbean culture. The perceptions of the natural which have actually shaped the literary tropes are in consonance with Heise's Ecocritical desiderata.

Other chains of activities that took the attention of Batouala in relation to nature are also explored. As a result of the rain, "the fog was so dense that it would have been impossible for him to see the houses where his eight wives and the children they had given him were sleeping" (p.124). He has to rekindle the "dying fire". And, to do that successfully, "he needed just a few twigs of dead wood and a handful of straw" (p.17) to warm his body and, by implication, the weather. Batouala squatted close to the fire and the "friendly warmth of fire completely revived his stiffened limb" (p.24). The "dying fire" is an image symbolic of the dampened morale or determination of the people to affirm their cultural integrity and recover their lost natural environment from the colonizers. To ignite and sustain their determination successfully, Batouala needs "a few twigs" and "a handful of straw", are images of one not doing it alone but with the understanding and co-operation of the other races in the Islands. It portends that when the consciousness of the people is raised through sensitization, the "explosion of the dry cracklings of the smoke would rise, its spiral acrid and suffocating. And finally the leaping flames, preceding the invading heat" (p.17) would quell the imperialists' conquering machinations. The "spiral acrid and suffocating" combustion signify the strength in togetherness to fight one cause, heightened by the "leaping flames", that is, people's strong determination to agitate for cultural liberation. The images of nature evoked have symbolic meanings that are related to human existence. Such

corresponds with Buell's Ecocritical strand that demands of nature not acting as a passive entity in literature.

Also noteworthy are the ritual activities of the people to celebrate some heavenly bodies and other non-human entities. It involves the people's established tradition of singing and dancing, in relation to what they benefit from the heavenly bodies and other objects of nature. That is, in spite of the occasional harvest as a result of inclement weather condition which cannot be ruled out, it often time supported the diligence of the people. In bounteous harvests, the people revered the earth, the sun and air and therefore sing and dance:

> To celebrate Ipeu, the moon, or to praise Lolo, the sun. We dance the dance of water, of the land, of the sky, the dance of the fire,the dance of the wind, the dance of the ant, the dance of the elephant, the dance of the trees, the dance of the leaves, the dance of the stars, the dance of the earth …(p.73).

The dance in several forms labeled accordingly, are in tune with the people's mood in relation to what they derive from nature. The dance to praise Lolo is premised on the fact that it is impartial in the spread of its warmth to both the poor and the rich; whites and blacks, flora and fauna. It is the sun's magnanimity that sustains the people's subsistence on plants and animals. Ipeu helps in illuminating the night with its brightness. The older ones tell folktales to the younger ones noting their didactic values to the children and the society during the moonlit nights. It also helps in the counting of the successive months for the celebration of festivals, for instance, Ga'nzas; and the cycle of seasons: rainy and dry. The dance of the earth is for good and bountiful harvest, and the celebration of reduced number of people committed to its bosom. The coming of the imperialists led to the loss of the cordialness between nature and human activities, such that monetary value becomes attached to the events. They eventually put price on every dance which

is a desecration of the sanctity of these ritual activities.. The colonialists claim that since the moon, sun, water, land and sky, are inanimate objects, the need to celebrate them looks weird and uncivilized. What Maran attempts to point out here is that the people's reverence for these natural entities would not allow them to exploit the objects, and supposedly also, the settler-imperialists. Shadpour and Moslem (2013) remind us of the people's pre-colonial life:

> The culture of African people did not allow them to abuse nature. In fact, they asked their needs from the earth and sacrificed to appreciate its gifts and favours. The reason for which the colonizers destroy this culture was because this culture did not allow the colonizers to exploit human beings and nature" (p.213).

Shadpour and Moslem emphasize the mutual constitutiveness of the blacks and the non human life in the ecosystem. It was a relationship which has been disrupted by the colonial masters in their economic enterprise. They impressed anthropocentricism on the blacks to facilitate their disharmony and exploitation of the natural world. This is against the background knowledge that it would be difficult to achieve their exploitative intention where the natives are in harmony with their natural environment. This attests to Heise's ecocritical strand which demands the examination of the values assigned to nature in its connectedness to man. That is, the long coming obsession of Caribbean criticism to the cliché of racial, psychic and cultural disorientation has shifted to the pedestal of the role of nature and ecology in human culture.

The examination of *Batouala* shows that the Caribbeans had bonded with their physical environment in their socio-cultural relationships before colonial invasions. That is, it reveals the strength and weakness of the people's organic lifestyle in relation to the natural world before the coming of the colonialists. They are exemplified in the people's kindness, infidelity; ritual and marriage practices, especially polygamy embodied in the characterization of Batouala. Batouala

gives money and also the necessary valuable materials in exchange for his wives which joined them together legally. The bestial attitude and infidelity of Yassigui'ndja and L'douvoura violate the sanctity of their marriage. The connectedness of the people's life to natural entities like sun and moon; earth and water in their ritual practices are thwarted by the whites to suit their capitalist orientation. This implies that pre-colonial Caribbeans did not 'impose' their manliness on nature. They have shown that their landscape is a place for socio-cultural practices and rituals that made life worth living for them. The embeddedness of human culture in nature allows for the examination of significant tropes and myths that shape our environmental imagination and actions. The argument therefore, is that the whole ramifications of human socio-cultural life in *Batouala* are inextricably tied to the natural world, affecting it and affected by it.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Comparative Analysis of the Primary Texts

This segment looks at the various arguments of *The Year in San Fernando, Jane's Career, The Dragon Can't Dance* and *Batouala* from ecocritical perspectives. The authors display different approaches in their narrative and representation of Caribbean culture and landscape. It particularly dwells on the areas of similarity in man's socio-economic relationships and their underpinning connectedness to the environment. The common concern of the texts is instilled by the various environmental and social issues that are consequences of post-plantation through pre-colonial life of the peoples of Caribbean Islands. The texts would also be examined to show the crucial differences in their approaches towards a common cause of raising ecological consciousness. That is, it would investigate the differences in the ways the texts have represented socio-cultural life and their connectedness to the natural world. These would be viewed against the checklists proposed by Buell (1995), Heise (1999), Reed (2005) and Bertens (2008) for the

analysis of nature-oriented works. The application of the various suitable strands of ecocriticism in the interpretation of the texts would attest to the validity and stability of the theory.

5.1 The Polemics

The socio-economic life of the Caribbeans after plantation period did not really change for the better because of the intense and protracted devastation of the environment by the colonialists. The liberated slaves were not employable because they did not learn any trade and, or skills to either qualify them for employment in the civil service or for self-employment. They were therefore not gainfully employed or did anything lucrative because they were ruined by colonial rule. Emancipation was a pivotal change to a harsh condition akin to colonial period. It is analogous to the situation that confronted the deprived people of Ilmorog in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* (1977), after their exodus to Nairobi, to agitate for a change in their poor socio-economic condition. Their situation thereafter, became worse than how it was before the march to the city. The split between the few rich and the poor that constitute a larger segment of the society is reinforced by the differences between urban, slum and rural levels of living. The dualism is further heightened by a division on racial background, so that a small enclave of the privileged ones claimed superiority.

Jane's Career, The Year in San Fernando and *The Dragon Can't Dance* are parodies of Caribbean post plantation life. They delineate Caribbean life after emancipation, using different subject matters in their connectedness to nature. *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* celebrate specific periods in the growing up of male and female negroes respectively. This is in the process of getting improved living condition against their changed rural background to city life. In the two novels, the writers illustrate, through their interaction with nature, how children embark on identity development. Nature, in these texts, functions to sustain human culture. Francis and

Jane make physical movements from rural to urban locations for the same purpose of getting improved living condition. The authors involve the natural environment to reveal the character development of the protagonists. *The Dragon Can't Dance* is an evocation of Trinidadian annual carnival where the ex-slaves ventilate disenchantment over their social and environmental conditions. After plantation period, ex-slaves had the right to marry, but the exploitation of their environment pauperized them into celibacy, especially Aldrick: "Aldrick Prospect, in this condition, not knowing where his next meal was coming from, would get up at midday from sleep, yawn, stretch, then start to think of where he might get something to eat …" (p.3). Idleness makes him to sleep in the day time before hunger reminds him of his joblessness and laziness. To the imperialists, " the collapse of slavery had weakened the foundations of political and economic life in colonies … The disappearance of such a major social order had to have some effect on the texture of the society" (Wilson-Tagoe, 1998, p.20). Men who were supposed to be "gainfully" occupied with plantation work are now idling away, famished, with long period of sleep.

Each text, as a result of what can now be termed its ecocritical orientation, argues from various perspectives the need for the mutual constitutiveness and interdependence of nature and culture. Culture is seen as a "dialectic between conditions and consciousness" (Hall cited in Anderson, 2012, p. 35). Mutual constitutiveness and interdependence of man with nature is explored particularly, in the growing up of Francis and Jane with rural experiences that changed at the threshold of city life. The interactions of Francis and Jane with nature divided into the rural and urban enable us to assess the built and unbuilt environments as they affect the attitude of the characters. The argument of *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* in this respect is the expansion of the perception of nature to capture its vestiges in urban setting. Francis and Jane now live in the city, interacting with urban environment. They are "far" removed from rustic nature. This is because the two main characters, Francis and Jane, have spent some time in the

urban areas, having interacted with unbuilt nature in their rural background. Jane is depicted to be cordial with nature in her rural setting when she assists her brother in sowing the yam seedlings in the farm. Her interactions with built nature are different in Kingston, especially in Mrs. Mason's house, streets and market. Francis spends one year in San Fernando with the seasonal variation dictating the mood of his relationship with Mrs. Chandles, especially in watering the flower plants, going to the market and several other objects of nature. Their history, in line with Buell's Ecocritical desiderata, is therefore implicated in natural history.

Francis and Jane had similar experiences as they got to their mistresses' houses on their arrival to the city. Francis is welcomed by the "blindingly bright light", thus giving him a tip of an urban environment. The connectedness of Francis to the luxurious nature of Mrs. Chandles' house is captured in his voice: "I was reluctant to sit on such fine-looking chair but then I sat down. I could not remember being in any place so grand and rich-looking" (p.13)". Francis continues: "Things in this house were so many and of such richness. There were nice pictures and nice cabinets and there were new chairs in the drawing room" (p.35). As for Jane, she soiled Mrs. Mason's Mahogany table, exposing her rural experience that would likely impede her struggle for self-independence in the city. Jane's impression on her entry into a sophisticated setting is succinctly captured in these words:

> When Jane enters Mrs. Mason's house, she had never seen such large house before; in a vague sort of way she wondered how many hundreds of persons lived in them, so spacious did the villas of Kingston gentry appear to her unsophisticated eyes" (p.28).

These experiences launched them into the threshold of urban life, to feel what obtains between the rich and the poor; mistress and maid with underpinning connectedness to the environment. The rich, by law of natural determinism live in beautiful houses located in the

central parts of the city while the deprived people live in congestion, in shacks and thatched houses, in shanty environments and rural areas. Jane is awe-struck in the ostentatiously furnished house of her mistress. It implies that in spite of the collapse of the schism between built and unbuilt nature as a result of science and technology, the seeming difference still induces certain feeling of rurality in them.

Conversely, for a central city dweller to live in a rural area when "compelled" to change environment, certain urban experience may not find place in the rural setting marked predominantly with unbuilt nature and social life co-ordinate with it. However, no such situation is depicted in the texts, except in the case of Francis who, after spending a year in the city is compelled to go back to his rural home. Anthony leaves us to imagine the possible ways that Francis would relate with rural environment, having interacted with urban nature for a year. As for Jane, she leaves her rural home to pursue a career in Kingston and never came back home despite the odds. However, it cannot be ruled out that she possibly did not come back on visitation after her marriage, to experience rural nature which she had left long ago.

The consignment of the deprived people to the ghetto is stage-managed to draw an irreconcilable divide to curtail the irritating intrusion of the poor into the personal space of the rich. It is believed by the rich, except there is need for the poor to come to the town for certain purposes beneficial to the elite, that the slum/rural life is good for the poor. This is buttressed by Mrs. Mason's request for a househelp, likewise Mrs. Chandles. The city experience of the househelps, of moving vehicles, hustling and bustling of the people, the effect of the bright electricity light on Francis' eyes, Jane's inability to differentiate between the elegant Mahogany table and the 'low quality' type in her rural home, shows that the environment, in consonance with Buell's Ecocritical strand, exists as a process in the life of the two negro servants. It is also

indicative of the broadening of the perception of nature by the second wave of ecocritics because their experience of ruralscape is changed to cityscape. The experience of the rural dwellers, Anthony and De Lissser argue, are narrower compared to the one got from cityscape, because city experience allows the poor to interact extensively with the built nature. Going by Lovelace' depiction of ghetto life as a contrast to what obtains in *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career,* city-slum experience is wider than rural experience but narrower than city experience. In the city, slum life in relation to nature is reminiscent of slave life while rural is not developed to the level of city/slum.

Also important are similar situations that obtain in *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career*: the visitations of Francis and Jane's mothers to San Fernando and Kingston respectively to see how their children are doing in a changed environment. Their mothers purposely intend to briefly create a homely feeling to reinforce their children in the pursuance of their ambitions. Intent in this similarity that Anthony and De Lisser draw is the awareness of the possible effect of rural experience in struggling for an attainable goal in the city. This is because brighter opportunities appear to be available in urban areas that pull the rural dwellers to the city which seemingly turns out to be a little below their expectation.

Also, racism, an inevitable evil of colonial era, shows itself in the distrust of negro servants in post colonial period, particularly in *Jane's Career* and *The Year in San Fernando.* In *Jane's Career*, this is brought to limelight in Jane's connectedness to some objects of nature that make Mrs. Mason to question her integrity which aggravated the already sore relationship between them. Specifically, Jane's intention not to cheat her mistress or be indebted to retailers in the neighbourhood dispels the rumours of iniquity and insincerity leveled against her. Similarly, in *The Year in San Fernando* certain distrust is found in Mrs. Chandles' disposition to Francis until the

weather condition changed from dry to rainy season, thus allowing her to relate in an unstudied manner with Francis. Investigations into Jane's alleged iniquity vindicate her and the favourable weather condition of rainy season exposes Mrs. Chandles' unfounded distrust for Francis, Mr. Chandles and his lover, Julia. The import of this context, in Anthony and De Lisser's view is that the rural background of negro servants is endowed with purity as a consequence of their connectedness to unsullied nature in the rural setting. Such purity has therefore induced the integrity of the negroes especially in their relationship with those privileged to have more resources than them. It can therefore be argued that both Anthony and De Lisser, in confirmation of Buell's Ecocritical hermeneutics, do not use the natural world around the negro servants as a foil for their actions but to bring out certain positive attitude which the other people of different colours have had erroneous impression about previously. It portends that racism, which the non-whites detested with vicious intensity as a negative social attitude during the plantation period, became the prevailing social problem perpetuated by the other people of colour against the blacks as a result of economic motive. Therefore, racism and slave-like conditions as human historical experiences are implicated in natural environment, an attestation to Buell's strand of ecocriticism. The interactions of the negro servants with nature reveal their integrity which the Whites and the Caribbean elite glossed over or misinterpreted as synonymous with iniquity.

As a mark of difference, De Lisser fails to note the effect of the seasonal change throughout Jane's stay in Kingston, good or bad, on Mrs. Mason's health and emotion, unlike what happened to Mrs. Chandles. It implies that old age accounts to some extent Mrs. Chandles' susceptibility to the heat from the burning cane fields, crop season and chimneys of Usine Ste Madeleine. De Lisser argues that there is change in weather condition, but its underpinning effect does not belie Mrs. Mason's ill disposition to Jane or affect her health. In other words, Mrs. Mason might not be as old and vulnerable as Mrs. Chandles to feel the impact of the heat from the dry

season, the burning canes and Usine Ste Madeleine. This gives credence in part, to the excuse by Mr. Chandles that old age is the cause of Mrs. Chandles' ill-disposition to Francis and himself, not solely the harsh weather condition and heat from Usine Ste Madeleine. This accounts for the difference in the historical experiences of Francis and Jane despite the fact that they shared the same geographical region Caribbean. It boils down to the fact that Mrs. Chandles' constant concern for nature around her is the philosophical valuing of nature because of the respite she gains from it. Explicated in *The Year in San Fernando* as an instance, is the connectedness of Mrs. Chandles' pride and joy to the healthy growth of the flower plants in her compound. She takes pleasure in taking her visitors round her precinct for them to admire the flowers. She particularly and surely, shows Ma the healthy and flamboyant flowers when she visits Francis in San Fernando:

> The morning glory flaunted bright red flowers and the begonias spread out thick and undignified, send up tall flower stalks to overshadow small plants. But the Prim Anthuriums were the pride of the veranda. These gave Mrs. Chandles much pleasure, and so did the roses… the flowers gave brightness to the houses and to the streets" (p.89).

Implicit in Mrs. Chandles' positive attitude towards the health of the plants is not mere concern for their well-being. It is presupposed by her ill health. She feels that her joy and recuperation is connected to the good health of the plants. Anthony illustrates Mrs. Chandles' concern through the frequent watering of the flower plants especially during cropping season to give them healthy growth. The "morning glory" connotes the joy and tranquil nature of Caribbean pre-colonial life. The "bright red flowers" and "begonias flamboyant stalks" express brilliance and steadfastness in the cultural growth of Caribbean. The dullness of the house and the street is thrown into brightness by the plants' healthy leaves and warm colour flowers, indicative of the people's enthusiasm and hope in their prosperous future. The lost organic lifestyle would be brought back again. She sees the flower plants experiencing the same unfavourable weather

condition like herself, symbolic of the colonialists' rash policies in Caribbean and thus, asked Francis time and again to cater for their frail and sick condition by watering them frequently. By implication, if not for the harsh weather on her and the pleasure she derives from the flamboyant growth of the flower plants, Mrs. Chandles would not have been as such friendly with nature as she appears to be. This context confirms the interdependence of man and nature as enshrined in the second wave which attempts to bring man into the scheme.

The representation of "sameness" in the people's sufferings and struggles right from the pre-colonial to the post colonial period in the texts is succinctly expressed in the images of trees and wind, particularly in *Batouala*: "the leaves of the Kapok trees stopped moving at moment. The breeze stopped caressing the giant grasses. In the distance smoke columns climbed straight upward. But, inflamed, hallucinated, unquenchable, the song of the cicadas had intensified (p.32). To the blacks, the presence of the European imperialists made life to be static and monotonous as signified in "the leaves of the Kapok trees stopped moving". The traditional life of the Caribbeans has been suppressed by the overwhelming Western culture of individualism and exploitation. The people have no rest of mind as the oppositional Western antics do not benefit the Caribbeans who have suffered cultural humiliation and environmental degradation, "the breeze stopped caressing the giant grasses" confirms this. "The song of the cicadas is metaphoric of the people's murmuring for a possible way of going back once again to unite with their natural world and traditional life. The Pombo has its own way of symbolizing the going home of the people:

> With a hoarse and sweet voice, the Pombo, swollen with rains of the night and with the contributions of its tributaries, hummed the beautiful laments that water murmurs night and day to the river banks which listen and drink in his words (p.50).

The exploited people represented by the Pombo, is a formation of several people of African, Indian and Chinese descents. With their various experiences they lament the unsuitability of Western culture in the Caribbean soil. “Night and day” is used like the continuous grinding of canes in Usine Ste Madeleine in *The Year in San Fernando* to express the persistent cry for cultural liberation similar to any other elsewhere.

It is the habitual practice of Miss Cleothilda and Philo that Philo goes to Miss Cleothilda’s two-room apartment strictly on invitation. The exploitation of Philo is connected to the haughty and selfish behaviour of Miss Cleothilda to satisfy her seasonal mood in preparation for the carnival. Philo’s movement within the apartment is restricted to the sitting room. Whereas, Sylvia goes to Mr. Guy’s room on her volition after the first prompting by her mother. Unlike Philo and Cleothilda, that of Guy and Sylvia is not seasonal but perpetuated throughout the year. However, Philo’s infatuation which is perceived as a weakness, is what Philo considers good enough to strengthen Guy and Sylvia’s relationship. Philo observes that Guy may not value the beauty and potential of Sylvia, just like the proverbial blind man and the garden. This is because, to Guy, anything that lacks pecuniary value is piffle. As such, “he would destroy without even knowing it, for how could a man who is blind (and foolish too) avoid trampling on the plants in a garden through which he walks believing it to be a high way” (p208). The ‘where” of the couple’s relationship is in their rooms in the city slum. In opposition, Bissibi’ngui and Yassgui’ndja in *Batouala,* at the beginning of their amorous relationship, engage in the illegal love making spree in a nearby forest. This essentially exemplifies the connectedness of man’s activities to rustic nature. It was after the couple has had some fun in the forest that they subsequently shifted their rendezvous to Batouala’s house, and even after his death. The argument of Maran is that the exploitation of nature is depicted in the image of Yassigui’ndja. Lovelace, on his own part, argues

that what obtained in the pre-colonial Caribbean was also obtainable after contact with the whites, but, in a different place, city slum.

With regards to the thrust of *The Dragon Can't Dance,* the nature of existence of the people is 'survival of the fittest'. The rich are very much involved in exploiting nature and human labour to keep the deprived people below poverty line. The available resources are not harnessed to the advantage of the generality. This is illustrated in the work-houses and factories where man's labour, an abstract quantity, is remunerated based on the employer's whims and caprices. This is in a situation where the poor and the rich are separated or identified in relation to their places of dwelling and social interaction. The divide between the rich that constitute a narrow segment of the society and the large population of the poor is reinforced by the differences between urban and slum/rural levels of living:

> The difficulty created by dualistic society is not simply the prevalence of inequality, but the absence of interaction, at any rate positive, mutual beneficial interaction between the two opposing classes. In a situation where the physical locations of the rich and the poor are still segregated, "there is no development as poverty has not, either directly or indirectly, been relieved (Seers and Joy, 1971, p.71).

There is social stratification and the economic exploitation of nature is skewed against the poor. There is no development as whatever achievement recorded is meant to sustain the yawning gap between the opposing classes. *In the Year in San Fernando,* the clearing of the sugar cane fields and continuous crushing of the canes and lots more are indicative of the exploitation of nature and man by man. They disregard the fact that it is not morally good to "carry out any activities on the land and indigenous people that could cause environmental degradation, or that would be culturally inappropriate" (Ajibade, 2012, p.16). The change in the peoples' love and lack of attention to nature is caused by the need for people to survive the harsh economic condition.

The poor have to shift interest from the hitherto philosophical valuing to economic valuing of nature. In the economic valuing of nature, man labours to destroy nature, and ironically, humanity. Anthony argues that the stress in the life of the poor can cause a change in their hitherto cordialness with nature, because the poor who were in harmony with nature are now forced not to be ecofriendly, through the sale of their labour to destroy the natural environment.

In a different form, especially in *Jane's Career,* man's connectedness to nature is evocated in Jane's peripatetic search for improved condition of living, from Mrs. Mason's house through Sathyra's one room apartment to the factory before her eventual matrimony with Broglie. She changes place of work and accommodation in search of better condition of living. The reason for Jane's move to the urban area also applies to the men in their decaying village:

> The men had left their properties to be looked after by the girls and women, and had either gone to dig the Panama Canal, or had migrated to such parishes at Portland, and St. Mary, where millions of bananas were grown, where labour was better remunerated than in the village where they had lied so long (p.6).

The desperation to survive the prevailing hardship prompted the men to migrate to urban areas to sell their labour. This action is taken with reckless abandon, such that the women have to take charge of their husband's responsibility to fend for the family. This context is used by De Lisser to reveal, not just the complementary role of the women, but the moral and economic function the women perform at home that attest to the claim of materialist ecofeminists or Acholonu's Motherism that corroborates the role of Nnu Ego in Buchi Emecheta's *Joys of Motherhood*, when her husband left her without the slightest compunction. By so doing, similar to what obtains with Ma, Jane's mother is instrumental to Jane's change to urban environment for improved life.

Batouala's dissimilarity from the other texts lies broadly in the depiction of the agrarian, simple life of the people advocated by first wave Ecocriticism. It, by implication, exemplifies the mutual constitutiveness and interdependence of man and nature in the ecosystem. It is purely a reflection of the rural experience of the people of Caribbean before the coming of the European colonizers. The differences in the placeness of human relationships; and man's relationship with nature that are located between the three texts and *Batouala*, ironically accounts for their convergence as one, in the common task of raising environmental awareness. That is bringing to bear on our understanding of the texts the collapse of the thin boundary separating nature and environment by Timothy Luke and Eric Swyngedouw. This is reflected in the contact of Francis with the natural world in the city that is reminiscent of his rural experience as he sleeps on the floor in Mrs. Chandles' house, thus locating an element of rurality in urban setting. *The Year in San Fernando, Jane's Career* and *The Dragon Can't Dance and Batouala,* in their various ways, used different historical experiences to explicate the same ideological position of creating ecological consciousness. This is a focus which the authors of the texts never thought of when recreating human historical experiences. As a consequence, the arguments of the texts fall within the ambit of the second wave of Ecocriticism. Specifically, the argument of the texts is that socio-cultural life cannot be divorced from natural history. This is because environment and place are as much social, cultural and ideological entities as they are physical ones.

The Dragon Can't Dance, unlike *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career,* expresses the suffering that binds the male characters especially together as portrayed in Fisheye, Aldrick, Philo and Pariag. Fisheye is pauperized such that he has nothing doing to earn money. This resulted in his brutality to extort money from people by the street corner. Aldrick is immersed in knitting the dragon costume for the carnival, an enterprise that is not lucrative. Philo is engrossed in producing calypso to express nostalgia and inspire the deprived people to take their destiny into their hands.

Pariag is involved in selling petty items until he breaks away to start something meaningful. Aldrick, Fisheye, Sylvia, Cleothilda with other characters, each represents particular aspects of human sufferings, for instance, prostitution, rebellion, envy and brutality. These social consequences are linked to the "natural world" around them. The thoughts and actions of these characters represent the whole deprived people of Caribbean agitating for self-assertion and regeneration.

The Year in San Fernando, Jane's Career and *Batouala* exhibit marked difference compared to *The Dragon Can't Dance* in their detailed and close assessment of the main characters in relation to the environment. In the first two novels mentioned, the protagonists are fully developed, with their dispositions embedded in nature – from rural to urban. *Batouala* is of rural setting, while *The Dragon Can't Dance* is urban and slum unlike *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* that are rural and urban works.

The issue of class segregation is illustrated in the luxurious furnishing of Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Chandles' mansions and their locations compared with the poorly furnished single rooms of Jane, Sathyra, Miss Cleothilda, Pariag and the other less privileged in the slum that speak of their oppositional condition of living. The text describes, for example, the pieces of furniture in Mrs. Mason's house with attention to the objects of nature from which they were made and their arrangement:

> A room about fifteen feet square, furnished with three American yellow cane-seated rocking-chairs, four black Austrian steam-bent chairs, a small marble-topped table (which stood in the centre), two small mahogany tables which were arranged opposite to each other against the wall, and horse chair sofa of uncertain age. (p.29).

The assorted pieces of furniture: “American yellow cane-seated rocking-chair”, “small marble-topped table”, and “mahogany table” are all items which Mrs. Mason uses to beautify and provide comfort in her drawing room. Visitors are often received there with Emma and Cynthia to discuss issues bothering on immorality and iniquity of negro servants. These objects of nature are images depicting the complexions of the inhabitants of the Island. For instance, the marble table tells us of the presence of the whites (Europeans) and blacks (Africans) indicated in the white and black colours of the marble. The Red Indian is portrayed in the mahogany (brown-red colour). These corroborate Akuso’s (2014) claim: “the Caribbean is made up of a culture combining the European, African, American and Asian influence. The culture of the Caribbean, therefore is a fusion of all divergent cultures of the people who today make up the population of the region” (p.72). The different races struggle for survival in an atmosphere of distrust signified in the opposing seating arrangement of the chairs. Without the opposing classes physically present in such an environment, one can easily perceive what the material items symbolize with regards to class and racial discrepancies.

Anthony, De Lisser and Lovelace exploit the natural law of determinism to depict the connectedness of nature to human existence by giving such a balanced evocation of the two opposing conditions. *Jane’s Career* and *The Year in San Fernando* as parodies of post plantation slave-like labour, have re-invented facts of history to link people’s condition with nature. This time, slave-like service is euphemistically termed househelp. The servitude relates to Francis’ in Mrs. Chandles’ house. Mrs. Chandles, for instance, conscious of the weather condition, would call Francis to find out “if he had watered the plants yet”. This casts a doubt on whether Francis lives up to expectation in his routine of watering the flower plants, and by implication the effect on her health. This is a routine activity that is done morning and evening so that the heat from the sun would not make the plants “dry and withered and sickly looking” (p.40). The effect of the dry

season on the plants can be likened to the harsh condition meted out to the Caribbeans by the colonialists; and the Caribbean elite to the poor.

In this regard, *The Year in San Fernando* depicts the development of male negro child while *Jane's Career* celebrates the female negro in slave-like condition, relating them to their different physical and social environment in post emancipation Caribbean. Put differently, Anthony and De Lisser are principally concerned with the explication of the struggles of teenage Caribbeans defined by environmental factors. The deplorable condition of the Caribbeans' post plantation life prompted Jane and Francis to go into househelp service where they ended up in slave condition. There is a common point of argument in the two novels: the male and female Caribbeans suffered related degrees of exploitation as a consequence of the exploitation of their environment. However, while Jane's stay in Kingston with its attendant environmental forces ended up gracefully in her marriage with Broglie; Francis, not really in despair, came home by the end of the year from San Fernando after being boxed here and there by the vagaries of urban social and physical environments. De Lisser is more elaborate in his exposure of the dehumanization of the female folk. He portrays Jane's attempts to negotiate with poverty in her service with Mrs. Mason, and subsequently in her place of work.

The dissimilarity in Jane's mother's gift of fruits and yams, unlike Francis' mother is to register her presence and care in nature. However, implicit in Jane's reaction outside the understanding of parental love expressed in the fruits, is the de-motivating social condition in the house of Mrs. Mason which the gift items could not ameliorate. The objects of nature are not used to frame human actions, but imbued with meanings that reverberate beyond their literal presentation. This attests to Buell's strand of ecocriticism which states that nature is an active character. The sudden departure of Jane to avoid the inhibiting social condition attests to the

ineffectuality of her mother's gesture in nature. Ironically, women are involved in the feminization of poverty as female servants experience harsh conditions in their servitude to their mistresses, comparable to slavery and, or the exploitation of nature in the plantation period. It is the same poor condition of living that prompted Mary and Elizabeth, to expend their labour in the coffee plantation, thus illustrating the feminization of poverty.

Lovelace explores the understanding of the deprived characters in *The Dragon Can't Dance* as liberated slaves who are not really free. The socio-economic life of the people as defined by the environment is tied to the dictates of the comprador bourgeoisie. Post-emancipation life was just a replica of colonial life. The elite believe that the free slaves have sloughed off their integrity, as they are tied inextricably to the dictates of harsh economic policies in order to survive. In the novel, the recurring issue is the process of identity formation that has its roots in the rejection of the imperialists' exploitation of nature and man. Apparently, the selected novels show accountability to the environment in their depiction of the natural world as an active character capable of influencing human actions. It is not the hitherto human dimension of criticism before the emergence of ecocriticism. As a consequence and in line with ecocritical precepts, *The Dragon Can't Dance* distinguishes itself from the other texts based on its physical setting in the city slum. The inability of the liberated slaves to cope with the unfavourable economic policies of city life necessitated their withdrawal to the ghetto, commensurate with their social status. Meanwhile, the rich class occupies the central and other well developed parts of the town where there are available social amenities for human use. On the contrary, *Batouala's* peculiarity lies in its pre-colonial setting. It is the influx of the imperialists that changed the agrarian nature of human existence in Ubangui-Shari. The implications of city, rural and urban slum life are revealed in the shades of interaction between the poor and the rich in their economic needs and social dispositions.

The Year in San Fernando and *Jane's Career* explicate similar circumstances which mark them differently from *The Dragon Can't Dance* and *Batouala*. Rural life is present in *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* before Francis and Jane changed environment by their impelling socio-economic condition. But, in *The Dragon Can't Dance,* the depiction of the deprived people is in relation to the city slum, not rural area as found with *Batouala* and the 'early' part of Francis and Jane's life which are not fully explored in *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* respectively. What Anthony and De Lisser attempt to point out in the rural to urban life of Francis and Jane is a vivid contrast between the two different environments as they relate to the growing up of the young negroes.

As a subsequent development in a reaction to the unfavourable environmental condition, Lovelace uses his characters especially Aldrick, Fisheye, Philo, Small and Pariag and few other slum fellars to argue for the collectivism in the struggle for social change, particularly holding the police hostage as a form of remonstrance against their drab social condition. These characters are of different racial background, but they de-emphasize the cause of individuality and pursue that of generality, because they are bound together by the same historical experience. That is why the characters, especially Miss Cleothilda Alverick repeatedly says, "all of we is one." Regardless of their different ancestral homes – Africa, India, China and Caribbean Islands – they are bound together by the same environmental issues which when addressed would positively redefine their social status. The spirit of collectivism is not in the other primary texts of this study. Specifically, *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* show male and female individuals respectively trying to carve a niche for themselves in the face of hardship. The collective struggle in *The Dragon Can't Dance* shows some elements of similarity to the one depicted in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* (1977) where the exploited majority shows collectivism for a positive change. Contrariwise, Chui, Mzigo

and Kimeria, of different racial backgrounds exhibit, in a negative way, collectivism in the exploitation of the less privileged.

Maran uses *Batouala* to showcase the agrarian nature of the pre-colonial life of his people. He depicts Batouala in his interaction with rural nature to bring out his argument. He underpins Batouala's relationship with other characters in nature to reveal man's harmony with it which was a feature of pre-colonial experience. Instances are Batouala's use of the various objects of nature to pay his wives' dowries, his connectedness to Djouma, the red little dog and other domestic animals in his compound, the sharing of "garabo" with his kinsmen in a congregation and many more. Whereas, in the interactions of the individual characters with nature in *The Year in San Fernando, The Dragon Can't Dance* and *Jane's Career,* the respective authors point out the connectedness of built nature to the hardship and tension in the struggle by the individual characters and collective agitation to achieve success in life.

The presence of Mr. Chandles in San Fernando, is often dreadful to Francis. He is relieved gradually as he gets familiar with certain situations from the interaction of Mr. Chandles with some resources natural, especially in signifying Mr. Chandles' going back to Mayaro. This is expressed in the voice of Francis:

> I could hear the tap water running and being sucked down the drain. Then the water stopped running and I did not hear him for a little while. Then came his footsteps, and when the front door opened and shut again, my heart was pounding. The next moment the gate slammed. I was wildly glad (p.38).

The connectedness of the running tap to Francis' emotion is a sign of relief that would soon come from the departure of Mr. Chandles. But, "the front door opened and shut down again", giving Francis another rethink of the possible undecidedness of Mr. Chandles on what to

do, which meant hell to him. However, the sound of the gate, opening and closing, finally assured Francis of Mr. Chandles departure. Whereas, in *Jane's Career*, Mrs. Mason's nephew, Cecil, is a torn in Jane's flesh. But, for the fact that he does not go outside Mrs. Mason's house as frequently as Mr. Chandles, Jane is not relieved of the pent-up emotion. The conditional reflex actions established in Jane and Francis are mediated by the silence in Mrs. Mason's house and the opening and closing of Mrs. Chandles' gate respectively.

As a mark of difference to the other texts, the depiction of Francis is representative of the young male folk experiencing ecological violence in their growth to adulthood. *The Year in San Fernando*, unlike other texts showcases the destruction of the natural world through the voice of Francis. This degradation of the environment is done by cutting down trees, burning cane fields thus leading to depletion of ozone layer and increasing the atmospheric temperature. Included is the emission of smoke from the chimneys of Usine Ste Madeleine with its toxin that pollutes the air. What Anthony points out in this context is that man is solely involved in causing environmental hazards and global warmth which threaten also the health of man. Kingsley (2015) reiterates that "unabashedly and at will, we emit gases, burn grasses, cut down trees, throw out non-biodegradable substances, and these are down indiscriminately and without regard to the evolving consequences" (p.24) on nature and man.

The Dragon Can't Dance, and *Batouala* are peopled with grown up characters such as Aldrick, Fisheye, Batouala, Miss Olive, Macoude, Bissibin'gui, Miss Cleothilda Alverick and Yassigui'ndja to illustrate an element of similarity as the characters could decide on their fate in relation to the environmental circumstances. Likewise, though a childhood novel, De Lisser demonstrates his awareness of the emergence of independent female in Jane as capable of taking decisions for herself as a result of environmental factor and the implication of that emergence in

the future of the Caribbean society. This debunks Wilson-Tagoe's (1998) claim that De Lisser's *Jane's Career* is thus:

> Really only a chain of happenings, an accumulation of incidents reflecting the surface character and atmosphere of a particular age, and his novel, in the end, had no historical message beyond the obvious one that the Jamaican society of the time was rotten and degenerate (p.41).

This assertion is credible where a critique is not stretched beyond the human dimension. Its ecocritical interpretation has shifted attention from that angle to locate the "where" that underpins the "rotten and degenerate" Jamaican society, especially the exploitation of the natural world at the detriment of the masses.

The consequence of the exploitation of Caribbean environment which resulted to prostitution as depicted in *The Dragon Can't Dance* is not same with what obtains in *Batouala*. In *Batouala*, Yassigui'ndja indulges in illicit sexual affair because of Batouala's reduced libido. That time the economic valuing of nature had not been entrenched in the Caribbean as colonial presence was probably a matter of imagination. The adulterers sought privacy in perpetuating the act in the bush. Contrariwise, the act in *The Dragon Can't Dance* as perpetuated by Miss Cleothilda and Philo is a consequence of the prevailing social condition after plantation economy. The "where" of their love making is Cleothilda's two-room apartment. Also, Mr. Guy and Sylvia had their affairs in Guy's room. The points that account for their difference in this regard are place (built and unbuilt nature) and economic milieu which are inextricably connected to the immoral act and the nature of society as at the time these acts were committed: in *Batouala*, it is pre-colonial while in *The Dragon Can't Dance,* it is post-colonial affected by the carry-over of colonial economic valuing of human relationships.

With regards to the literary trope of the texts, the figures of speech and imageries used are drawn from nature. However, one significant figure of speech, onomatopoeia, distinguishes *The Year Can't Dance* from the others. Few from the numerous examples used suffice: "screeching" and "booming" describe the sounds of Mrs. Chandles and Mr. Chandles' voices in their row at home. Also, the "rumbling" sound of thunder and "tap tap" of the rain are phonological representations used by Anthony to express sound effect. This employment of the sound effect of nature is not found in the other texts. Importantly, as a mark of dissimilarity, *The Year in San Fernando,* and *Jane's Career* scarcely make us of animal imageries, either to embody human qualities or epitomize unpleasant human condition. One can suggest that the three texts essentially dwell on post colonial Caribbean life that hardly have little or no connection to wild animals in their socio-cultural interactions. But, *Batouala* is pre-colonial, hence the life of the characters is embedded in rural nature and their mutual interactions particularly with the fauna. This is demonstrated in their power of creative imagination to draw imageries from nature, for example, M'bala, elephant, and Gato, chicken to tell stories. The combined memories of African home with plantation experience brought folk expressions and folktales, using animals as characters in the stories. The tales, as celebration of the human spirits, are filled with emotions of sorrow, love and hope. An instance out of many is the tale of M'bala, the elephant and Gato, the chicken. Maran shows that the people are immersed in safari life rich in wild animals. Apparently, Maran chose the imageries of non-human life to teach certain morality, human strength and weakness. In general, it confirms that the perception of the natural, as articulated in the voice of Heise, shapes literary trope.

The novels link their ecological stance to the post plantation through the pre-colonial life of the Caribbeans. But, the quest for ties with the root necessitated Maran's literary sensibility to locate French Equatorial Africa as part of the locale of *Batouala*. Obviously, other

texts are imbued with African sensibility, but it is only *Batouala* that exhibits much affinity with African experience compared with the other texts investigated. Therefore, nature, either raw or transformed, tends to bolster the claim that human history is implicated in natural history and that Africa looms large in the Caribbean imagination. *Batouala*, being much of pre-colonial experience, exemplifies the embbededness of ritual in nature unlike the other texts. As an instance, the people had a way of tracing the cause of the 'untimely' death of their sons, and also obituary announcements to the general public in Ubangi-Shari. An instance is located in the death of Batouala's father where "they opened the throat of a black hen" (p.82) to cast a spell on whosoever is instrumental to his death. By implication, the fate of the black hen would be replicated through spiritual means on Yassigui'ndja, the principal suspect. Yassigui'ndja believes however that Batouala is behind the diabolic machination to ruin her life like the black hen, in revenge of her coquetry. Also, the death of Coquelin was announced by the shiny black bird that hovered in the sky at his death. The point of emphasis not found in the other texts is that the hen and the bird are united in colour sameness and both portend sorrow. This is symbolic of the oneness and unity between the blacks in Africa and those in the Caribbean Island with related colonial historical experiences of exploitation of their labour and environment.

In the evocation of socio-cultural experience in relation to nature, the aspect of superstition is silent in *The Year in San Fernando, Jane's Career* and *The Dragon Can't Dance.* But, *Batouala* explicates the embeddedness of superstitious beliefs in nature. Superstitious beliefs may be didactic, to teach socio-cultural values that would develop the society and individuals. "Women", for example, "who wanted to be mothers could eat neither goat flesh nor turtle meat. Those who fed themselves would be stricken by sterility while those who ate of the turtle would have only prematurely old children (p.122). The traditional belief of being struck with infertility and premature children are linked to the people's natural world. However, the substantive

connectedness between the cause and the effect of the belief is still hollow, but has become established in the society for certain moral lessons. Kusi (2011), based on his earlier assertion in the previous chapter, draws a link between the cause and the effect by assigning a soul to the non-human, thus, reiterating the likelihood of companionship or relatedness between them.

In general, what is distinctive about *Batouala* compared with other chosen texts is the way it explicates the connectedness of socio-cultural life with nature in the pre-colonial era. This brings to memory Fanon's (1961) remark about Maran's posture that it is "the passionate search for a national culture which existed before the colonial era" (p.371). Fanon claims that a writer that exposes colonial experiences should have gone through three phases of evolution: "the writer, in the first place assimilates the culture of the occupying power"; second, "he decides to remember who he is" by recollecting the past experiences and third, "the fighting phase" (p.377). In this last phase, he writes to arouse the consciousness of the people that have passed through the experiences. In this context, it is the arousal of ecological consciousness. *Batouala*, of the primary texts, shows closest affinity to Africa's socio-cultural life and natural environment especially in the practice of polygamy, rituals and superstitious beliefs. This is exemplified in Batouala's marriage to Yassigui'ndja and L'ndouvoura making use of objects of nature such as cowries, hoes, he-goats and lots more to formalize the union.

All the novels celebrate human existence in relation to terrestrial, avian and aquatic nature. Aquatic nature is portrayed especially in the connectedness of Macoude to the fish that he ate with Batouala and Bissibi'ngui; and Mrs. Mason's likeness for the red fish not carite. Avian nature has to do specifically with the black bird and black hen while terrestrial involves the connectedness of human activities to the earth, especially husbandry (farming and keeping of animals). The import of mutual constitutiveness and interdependence between man and nature

rests on the conviction that man's history is inseparable from natural history. The authors attempt to open up communities of people connected to land, water and animals from socio-cultural and economic angles. They argue that there is a confluence of environment and identity formation in the understanding of Caribbean literature. The common historical experiences of the Caribbeans make generalization of West Indian literature possible. This is part of what this study highlights as the selected texts in vast disparity of time and space show a comprehensive representation of the shades of common experiences across Caribbean Islands.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study investigates ecocritical perspectives of Caribbean novels. It particularly explores *The Year in San Fernando, Jane's Career, The Dragon Can't Dance* and *Batouala* in their various explications of nature in relation to human existence. The examination of these works shows a shift of critical attention from human dimension to the relationship between man and the natural

world. That is, the general import of the novels is that nature has become an important variable in literature to be assigned priority critical attention in relation to human existence. The selected works were written before the emergence of ecocriticism, but have now shown that in part, they are endowed with ecological inclination, both at the rural, slum and urban settings. The representation of images of built nature: land, animals, rivers, hills and plants; and built nature: houses, automobile, furniture, were evoked as active characters in connection to human activities –subsistence farming, slavery, colonialism, pollution, prostitution and deforestation. These novels thus illustrate that the natural world in literary creation is not passive, but capable of influencing human culture. It is therefore not to be relegated to the background because it is not a framing device for human actions. The study essentially examines the Caribbean historical experiences of slavery, plantation economy and identity formation as they shape the casting of the characters in relation to the natural world. For the fact that the novels were originally written without the intention to create ecological consciousness, the characters related with nature to suggest that they were not aware of the social and cultural contexts of the natural world.

In the evaluation of the texts, critical attention is skewed on the physical and affective connectedness of man to nature. In *The Year in San Fernando*, Anthony depicts the unfavourable effect of the heat of the crop season and the burning cane fields on Mrs. Chandles' health and the irritating attitude that they induce in her towards Francis and Linden; and her concern for the health of the flower plants. *Jane's Career* explore the depiction of Mrs. Mason's generosity expressed in the gift of bananas to Jane and her friend, and Jane's interpretation of the gesture as a cloak of wickedness in the presence of her mother. In *The Dragon Can't Dance*, Lovelace reveals Miss Cleothilda Alvarick's overflowing pride depicted in her purchase and display of crab, white chicken and yellow plantain on her way from the market and seasonal intimacy with Philo connected to the approaching carnival festival.

Of the three theories for interpreting environmental issues – anthropocentricism, biocentricism and ecocriticism - that have been highlighted, the one considered appropriate to examine the selected novels is ecocriticism. This is due to the fact that anthropocentricism is human-centred while biocentricism embraces all forms of life in the ecosystem. The thrust of the ecotheory is that nature deserves moral consideration and should be at par with human being. The perceptions of scholars such as Heise Ursula, Cheryl Glotfelty, Tosic Jelica, Michael P. Branch, Johnson Loretta, Kate Rigby, Jeanne Yacoubou and Greg Gerrad on the nature of ecocriticism are explored and; the strands of ecocriticism highlighted. Buell (1995), Heise (1999), Reed (2005) and Berten's (2008) suitable strands of the theory as tools, are used to guide the critical evaluation of the texts.

Adopted for this research is the interpretative method of data analysis that involves certain critical procedures and techniques to critique the interconnectedness of nature and man. In the course of investigating the interconnectedness of the two entities, we tried to work within the ambit of what might be termed nature-oriented texts. Our perception is hinged on the purview of the second wave of ecocriticism. The conceptualization of nature in the first wave of ecocriticism places man outside nature. It tried to establish mutual exclusivity of man and nature. It drew the two entities in binary opposition such that the interference of man in nature's life is an infringement on its law of "live and let's live". It was further broadened to include urban environment by the second wave ecocritics. This was contingent on their ability to establish sameness in the re-conceptualization of nature and environment, thus collapsing the thin boundary which hitherto allowed critics to perceive their meanings differently. This sameness established between nature and environment allows for their use interchangeably both in the urban and slum/rural settings. Thus, the banality of urban nature is investigated through the thoughts and actions of the characters.

Chapter one dwells on the socio-historical context of the study, where the people's lifestyle and physical environment before and after colonialism are examined. It explores to a reasonable extent the economic interest and enterprise of the European imperialists with regards to the exploitation of nature and human labour in mines and plantations. Also highlighted is the Trinidadian annual carnival as part of the socio-historical context that accounted for a major activity which the colonialists used to mock the slaves sensibility. The liberated slaves later took control of the carnival ritual, for regeneration and affirmation of the integrity of their races – Chinese, African, Indian and Caribbean. Moreso, the re-theorizing of the concept of "nature" and "environment" as "urbanatura" by Timothy Luke (cited in Chisum); and Eric Swyngedouw, thus blurring the slippery boundary between them is examined. It allows the fluidity of the concepts of nature and environment (interchangeably) in both rural and urban setting.

Importantly too, the three hermeneutical phases of ecocriticism are explored. Labeled as first, second and third waves of ecocriticism, the phases are not strict demarcations of principles or periods. It is an overlapping of one wave into another, termed "palimpsest". The first wave of ecocriticism premised on deep ecological principle considers man's interaction with nature as intruding or interference into the personal space of nature. The second wave ecocritics broadened their perception of nature in line with the notion of Timothy Luke, thus locating vestiges of nature in urban setting. The wave brings man into the picture as it focuses on the mutual constitutiveness and interdependence of man and nature. The third wave of ecocriticism recognizes the experiences and conditions of the various cultural groups in the world in relation to nature, in a comparative framework. The susceptibility of this study in the second wave is premised on the fact that they do not essentially dwell on natural history. This is as a result of the fact that second wave of the field broadens the ambit of the theory to include works not primarily interested in nature, thus, bringing man into the conceptualization of the field.

The second chapter reviews the related resources to the study. It concentrates on the examination of critical perspectives, assertions and investigation of Caribbean literature and the primary texts to show their orientation and short comings in relation to this study. Critical works on the primary texts are surveyed and they show that a vacuum exists: the selected texts have not been given ecocritical attention either singly or as combined for this research. This study attempts to fill that gap.

The third chapter examines *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career*. Francis and Jane negotiated with the changed environment to make significant improvement in their stay in San Fernando and Kingston respectively. They changed environment from rural to urban in their pursuance of improved standard of living. They have to adjust to cope with the changed environment. We were able to examine the connectedness of the characters to the urban nature. For instance, Francis waters the flower plants to resuscitate them from their dehydrated condition caused by the heat of the crop season, symbolic of the exploitation of the blacks by the whites. There was also the extremely bright light in Mrs. Chandles' sitting room which affected Francis, compared to the lack of electricity in his rural home. This is analogous to the false civilization which the imperialists brought into the Caribbean. On arrival to Kingston, Jane's carelessly drops the small sack of bananas on Mrs. Mason's Mahogany table. That is an infringement of rural experience on urban life which is unknown to Jane. Peripatetic in her search for independence defined by the environment, she also sojourned with Sathyra in a wretched house just like the ones in her rural home. Her experience of the environment is reminiscent of the rural nature, an experience far below her expectation of Kingston.

Chapter four is on *The Dragon Can't Dance* and *Batouala. The Dragon Can't Dance* explores the depiction of the dragon dance of the freed slaves in the carnival festival where they

expressed the desire for a change in their socio-cultural condition of living. It examines the ecological aspects of the carnival in relation to the characters of Pariag, Aldrick, Miss Cleothilda, Fisheye and Small. It essentially looked at the poor social condition of the slum dwellers and the underpinning connectedness of it to the natural world. The "where" of the slum dwellers' remonstrance is the street corner where they held the police hostage, down to the City Square. In *Batouala*, we explore the traditional lifestyle of the Bamba people, interpreting their underpinning connectedness to nature. Aspects of their lifestyle include marriage system, superstitious beliefs, subsistence farming and hunting while their natural world are bulked with beasts, dogs, mountains, vegetation, rivers, and trees. Batouala especially, embodies some key traditional aspects of Ubangui-Shari, particularly in the use of items of nature to pay the dowries of his wives. He is also found in harmony with nature in his subsistence farming. So also was Macoude that engaged in his fishing for the sustenance of his family. The advent of the colonialism displaced these traditional practices for economic motive.

The fifth chapter is a comparative view of the novels with regards to their arguments premised on ecocriticism on the relationship between man's historical experiences, economy and nature. Events that show similarities/dissimilarities between and among the texts are highlighted to point out the common thrust of the novels in creating environmental awareness. *The Year in San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* celebrate the development of a young male and female character respectively and the implication of the rural and urban environment in their life. *The Dragon Can't Dance* evokes man relationship with the natural world of the city slum: their poor social condition and its connectedness to the deplorable ghetto condition. *Batouala* is a parody of Caribbean life before the coming of the colonial masters. African imagination is found with other texts, but *Batouala* exhibits a link directly to the physical environment of Africa. Marked with the weakness and strength of primitive life in relation to the natural world, Maran reveals the nostalgic feeling

for harmony with nature. Just like Francis and Jane in *The Year* in *San Fernando* and *Jane's Career* respectively, Batouala is depicted by Maran to be the main window through which the reader discerns man's mutual constitutiveness and interdependence with nature. But, this is not really true of *The Dragon Can't Dance* where several social ills of the society in relation to nature are portrayed in different characters. However, the difference in the treatment of subject matter, time and locale of the texts appears to strengthen their common stance of awakening people's consciousness to environmental issues.

This thesis is the first doctoral work that has applied ecocriticism to interpret selected novels of Anthony, De Lisser, Lovelace and Maran as done here. It contributes to knowledge by virtue of their selection as classics across vast disparity in time, space, and writers' orientation. Put differently, the researcher's recognition and choice of these novels for investigation is a significant contribution to moving forward the frontiers of knowledge, especially in Caribbean discourse. We recommend that more works be explored to raise ecological consciousness in the Caribbean literature, especially those of urban setting. It is also recommended that the theory be applied in the criticism of literature texts in senior classes of our secondary and higher institutions because, no literature text is not endowed with ecological issues.

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