RIPARIAN ROMANTICISM: AN ECOFEMINIST EXPLORATION OF THE REPRESENTATION OF RIVERS IN LATE-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY POETRY AND ROMANTIC TRAVEL WRITING

by

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the human-river relationship as it is depicted in *Teisa: A Descriptive Poem of the River Teese, Its Towns and Antiquities* by Anne Wilson, the Arun River Sonnet sequence in *Elegiac Sonnets* by Charlotte Smith, and *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* by Anna Brownell Jameson. I implement ecofeminism in my literary analysis of these texts, utilizing Donna Haraway's concept of "Situated Knowledges" and Val Plumwood's discourse on dualisms as the focal points of my theoretical framework. Romanticist scholarship has tended to focus on William Wordsworth's representation of rivers, forming a biased and generalized outlook on Romantic human-river relationships. My discussion of these three female authors seeks to expand current understandings of the Romantic human-river relationship and underscore the important and varying roles of rivers as they are represented in art, rhetoric and, broadly, human culture.

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Dedication

For my parents.

Introduction

Water is what we make of it.

Jamie Linton, *What Is Water?* (3)

The study of Riparian Romanticism offers a path to expand current understandings of how rivers come to represent, reveal, and transform human culture and identity. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines riparian as "living or growing on the banks of rivers and streams" (1b). The word also frequently denotes the "ownership of a riverbank" (1a). The combination of these definitions—ecological and possessive—forms a thought-provoking etymological history, especially when used in the context of Romanticism. This thesis considers the complexity of Riparian Romanticism in an examination of Romantic women's literature. It is well-known that rivers have a long history of symbolic literary significance, for they "provide fluid metaphors describing personal tides of emotions, shifting mental states, and the temporal progression of individual and collective lives" (Strang, "Substantial" 159). Overall, they have become "one of the most popular metaphors for life, time, and consciousness, and for death, timelessness, and dissolution" (Herendeen 3). This list of symbolic meanings is merely a start to the vast and varying representations of rivers that I investigate in this thesis. The following chapters explore how Anne Wilson's topographical poem *Teisa: A Descriptive Poem of the River Teese, Its Towns and Antiquities*, Charlotte Smith's Arun River Sonnet sequence in *Elegiac Sonnets*, and Anna Brownell Jameson's transatlantic travel narrative *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (*WSSR*) reflect and challenge social, political, and environmental attitudes of the late eighteenth-century through their relationships with rivers. Each author's unique experience with rivers clearly demonstrates that a homogenized Riparian Romanticism does not exist.

Among the big six[1] Romantic poets, William Wordsworth perhaps deals most extensively with rivers in his oeuvre, including poems that refer to the Duddon, the Thames, the Derwent, and more. Accordingly, understandings of Romantic human-river relationships are largely informed by Wordsworthian scholarship. Despite the versatility of river metaphors, scholars have concluded that Wordsworth's artistic use of rivers is limited to representations of his personal and poetic self. For example, Frederic S. Colwell suggests that the river is a "metaphor for [Wordsworth's] own mental journey" in *The Prelude*, and the spring and the domestic figures in Wordsworth's life collectively contribute to "the source of his own creative powers" in *The Triad* (18; 47). Though Stewart C. Wilcox suggests that Wordsworth portrays the river as a companion and thus avoids "identifying himself with the river" in *The River Duddon* sequence, still "the symbol of the stream becomes identified with the life-stream of Man himself" (135; 140). Jonathan Bate confirms these observations, stating that the river in *The Prelude* "becomes a figure for the poet's developing mind" and the human-river relationship in *The River Duddon* "is built upon a sustained correspondence between the course of the river and the course of human life" (*Song* 221). Overall, Wordsworth's river-as-self metaphor has dominated the discourse on Romantic human-river relationships.

To be sure, I observe a similar self-river metaphor arise in Wordsworth's poetics. This metaphor is evident in Book One of *The Prelude* where Wordsworth contemplates life as he looks upon the Derwent:

> O Derwent! travelling over the green plains
> Near my 'sweet Birthplace' didst thou, beauteous Stream
> Make ceaseless music through the night and day

[1] In Romantic studies, there are six leading white European male poets including William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Lord Byron, and William Blake.

> Which with its steady cadence, tempering
> Our human waywardness, compos'd my thoughts
> To more than infant softness, giving me,
> Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
> A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
> That Nature breathes... (1.275-286)

This excerpt demonstrates how the Derwent acts as a steadying force for "human waywardness," so the river is constructed as a meditative guide (1.282). Further underscoring the impacts of nature on the human mental state, Wordsworth meets man's "fretful dwellings" with nature's "calm" (1.284; 1.285). Overall, this excerpt clearly demonstrates Wordsworth's appreciation for and connection with the river. That Wordsworth seeks the river as a tool to better his mental health and guide his journey emphasizes the importance of a healthy relationship with nature, and accordingly, he earns his title as one of "the first ecologists" (Bate, *Romantic* 57). However, his river-as-self metaphor is flawed in that it provides an egoistic engagement with nature often integrated in a way that reduces the river to a symbol that is useful only insofar as it reinforces masculinist power structures: "Wordsworth tends to subordinate the description of nature to the inward exploration of the poetic self-consciousness" (McKusick 25). Indeed, Wordsworth's oeuvre exclusively demonstrates the human-river interaction from a privileged male perspective which, as I suggest in the coming chapters, functions to subjugate women's voices and nature's agency. Scholars' continued use of Wordsworth's experience with rivers as the primary model of Romantic human-river relationships, therefore, does not accurately represent the entirety of the era's ecological consciousness. Thus, a wider assessment of Romantic rivers is advantageous in efforts to move beyond the dominant discourse and diversify academic literary discourse.

Aside from employing natural scenery to magnify the self, Wordsworth and the other "big six" Romantics tended to privilege nature over culture, which formed a philosophy coined *cultural primitivism*. Cultural primitivists developed a "preference for what is conceived to be 'nature' and 'the natural' over 'art' and 'the artificial' in any area of human culture and values" (Abrams and Harpham 315). Landing in the age of the Industrial Revolution, Romantic poets lived at a time when "environmental problems became much more severe and noticeable" (Hutchings, "Ecocriticism" 175). Accordingly, the pre-existing nature-culture dichotomy had "taken on new dimensions of meaning" (McKusick 1). Indeed, Onno Oerlemans asserts that Wordsworth founded "the idea that the natural world is a source of health and that cities and other forms of human culture produce pollution and disease, both physical and spiritual" ("Romantic Poetry" 212). This idea directly opposes the ways in which western culture postulates humans as superior to nature, for it instead presents the reverse as true. Ecofeminist Val Plumwood defines this swap as the "reversal of values strategy" (33). Unfortunately, this well-intentioned move to separate nature from culture in an effort to preserve or re-value the former uncritically affirms hierarchal thought; from an ecofeminist standpoint, "reversal reproduces the problem in a new form, an inadequate or incomplete movement beyond dualistic conception" (Plumwood 62). Moreover, Plumwood argues "that western culture has treated the human/nature relation as a dualism and that this explains many of the problematic features of the west's treatment of nature which underlie the environmental crisis, especially the western construction of human identity as 'outside' nature" (2). Scholars have observed, however, that despite Wordsworth's resistance to integrate culture with nature, his poetics implicitly advocate for a "harmonious relationship with nature" based on an idea of their "oneness" (Bate, *Romantic* 19; S. Wilcox 140). Such observations are evident in the above excerpt from *The Prelude*, where Wordsworth combines "ceaseless music" (the cultural) with the

"beauteous Stream" (the natural) to produce a soothing melody (1.277; 1.276). With these aspects in mind, I conclude that James C. McKusick's claim that Wordsworth "contributed to the fundamental ideas and core values of the modern environmental movements" remains pertinent (11). Nonetheless, I suggest that the study of Romanticism must strive to recognize traditionally marginalized voices as integral to the discourse, for they reveal unexplored human-river relationships beyond overrepresented Wordsworthian ideals.

There are two additional texts that analyze literary rivers. Focusing on the Renaissance period in his book *From Landscape to Literature: The River and the Myth of Geography*, Wyman Herendeen contributes an insightful yet androcentric addition to the study of rivers in literature; his analysis underscores the importance of rivers in the works of Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Spenser, and more. Herendeen frequently underscores the ways in which rivers are deeply meaningful in literature and beyond; for him, the Renaissance river "brings together geographical literary past and present" (118). Like Wordsworthian scholars, however, Herendeen finds that rivers in Renaissance literature appear during the process of "intellectual reflectiveness," and therefore, are limited to poetic self-exploration (118). In *Rivermen: A Romantic Iconography of the River and the Source*, Frederic S. Colwell similarly notices how rivers serve as a link between the literary past and present. Specifically, his analysis traces Romantic-era river poetics to their sources in Classical myth and epistemology. Following in Herendeen's footsteps, Colwell continues the pattern of androcentric literary river studies in his focus on the "big six." He does, however, note women's roles in classical mythology: "the river was most commonly in the keeping of a god: it was his domain or even his person, but its source was the precinct of the female deities who attend birth, prophecy, and poetic inspiration" (4). Indeed, many of Colwell's findings determine that Romantic rivers *are* feminized, though he does not meaningfully expand on the implications of this gendering. Thus, while

Herendeen's and Colwell's books certainly enhance the field of ecocritical literary scholarship, illuminate the significance of human-river relationships, and honour worthy writers, they also exemplify the problem that Anne Mellor addresses in *Romanticism and Gender*: "our current cultural and scholarly descriptions of…Romanticism are unwittingly gender-biased" (1). Scholarship that focuses on women writers has increased tenfold since the publication of Mellor's text, yet men's literary relationships with rivers continue to dominate the discussion of Riparian Romanticism—an issue that my thesis seeks to challenge and change.

While scholars have provided detailed analyses of writings by Smith, Wilson, and Jameson, there has yet to be a text that utilizes an ecofeminist framework when discussing female Romantics and their rivers. Succinctly stated, ecofeminism is grounded in the idea that "that the domination of 'nature' is linked to the domination of 'women'" (Adams and Gruen 1). Thus, "the liberation of one translates into the liberation of the other" (Vincent 23). Plumwood expands on this idea in her foundational ecofeminist text *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, stating that "the category of nature is a field of multiple exclusion and control, not only of non-humans, but of various groups of humans" (4). Donna Haraway holds the following Western dualisms accountable for the unjustified domination of all forms of otherness: "self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, reality/appearance, whole/part, agent/resource, maker/made, active/passive, right/wrong, truth/illusion, total/partial, God/man" (*Reader* 35). Plumwood would add one more dichotomy to Haraway's list that plays a particularly important role in Romanticism: that of emotion (figured as feminine) and reason (figured as masculine). For Plumwood, this dichotomy has been used as a means to oppress women: "Reason in the western tradition has been constructed as the privileged domain of the master" (3). Working against this dichotomy, Romantic poets tended to embrace emotion in their poetics. Take the widely anthologized Preface to *Lyrical*

Ballads, for example, where Wordsworth defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility" (251). While Wordsworth clearly demonstrates an appreciation for emotion, European women writers of the late-eighteenth century cannot so enthusiastically embrace an attribute that has historically been used as a tool of oppression. Therefore, the Romantic philosophy of emotion complicates the poetic landscape for female writers. Accordingly, ecofeminist theory pertaining to the realm of emotion will impact my readings of Wilson, Smith, and Jameson in the following chapters.

In addition to Plumwood's resistance to dualisms, my theoretical framework is influenced by Haraway's philosophy of subjectivity and objectivity as detailed in her essay "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." At its heart, this essay is a critique of scientific objectivity, as Haraway states that "science is rhetoric, a series of efforts to persuade relevant social actors that one's manufactured knowledge is a route to a desired form of *very objective power*" (577, my emphasis). For Haraway, scientific claims of objectivity signal efforts to dominate the Other. In response to this oppressive mode of thought, Haraway advocates for a "feminist objectivity" that she coins "situated knowledges"[2]. To enact situated knowledge means to acknowledge one's "limited location"[3] (583). In other words, situated knowledge enables one to walk through the world with a strong sense of their own positionality, with the aim to avoid appropriating the experience of a subjugated Other. This framework works against oppressive claims to knowledge, for there "lies a serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions" (584). In terms of human-river relationships, situated knowledge poses limits:

[2] I use the terms "feminist objectivity" and "situated knowledges" interchangeably throughout my thesis.
[3] In order to responsibly practice situated knowledges, I include my own positionality statement here: I am a white, middle-class, cisgender, settler Canadian woman.

western epistemology determines that rivers cannot speak for themselves, and thus, the voice of nature is an imaginative poetic creation informed by complex politics of mastery. Through situated knowledges, however, "the loving care people might take to learn how to see faithfully from another's point of view" can facilitate a feminist version of objectivity that allows authors to engage ethically with the unspeaking natural world (583). By pairing Plumwood's anti-dualistic thought with Haraway's situated knowledges, I form an ecofeminist framework that illuminates the intersections of identity and environmental ethics.

In *Romanticism and Gender*, Anne Mellor suggests female Romanticism can be understood by several characteristics that distinguish women's texts from men's:

> women Romantic writers tended to celebrate, not the achievements of the imagination nor the overflow of powerful feelings, but rather the workings of the rational mind…They grounded their notion of community on a cooperative rather than possessive interaction with a Nature troped as a female friend or sister, and promoted a politics of gradual rather than violent social change…that extends the values of domesticity into the public realm. (2-3)

Conducting her literary analysis at a time when Romanticist scholarship significantly lacked attention to a female-authored literary canon, Mellor honours these downtrodden poets with unwavering praise. In Mellor's eyes, female Romantics are both naturally caring and intentionally rational in a way that seems to posit them as ethically superior to their male counterparts. Mellor admits that this statement offers "crude generalizations" that refine as her discussion unfolds, but she willingly reinforces a binary logic that has historically fostered an "unwittingly gender-biased" field of Romantic scholarship (3; 1). While Mellor recognizes the harmful nature of the binary structure of her argument, she deems it ultimately "necessary" to the process of uncovering how gender impacts the production

of Romantic literature (3). In contrast, my engagements with Smith, Wilson, and particularly, Jameson, will demonstrate the dangers of this overly sympathetic approach to Mellor's universalized "female Romanticism." I work under the ecofeminist assumption that there is a shared inferiorisation of women and nature, and learn from Mellor's mistakes to avoid reiterating notions of gendered essentialism.

I begin my exploration of Riparian Romanticism with a literary analysis of labouring-class poet Anne Wilson and her poem *Teisa* (1778). Of all the authors I discuss in this thesis, Wilson is by far the least-known. She is briefly mentioned in the work of Robert Aubin and David Fairer, but Bridget Keegan is the first scholar to pay *Teisa* the attention it deserves. In her chapter on Wilson, Keegan asserts that "Wilson's poem is a neglected but important contribution to eighteenth-century nature writing" (101). Indeed, Wilson's poem merges the personal, political, and ecological to expand current understandings of Romantic human-river relationships. Just as I have noted above in my discussion of Wordsworth, Keegan also observes the tendency of late-eighteenth-century scholars to reduce the river to a symbol for the self: in "Romantic-period poems, the river serves a more personal function, which is to explore poetic vocation and the poet's specific or 'native' gifts" (116). Keegan questions the reliability of this widely accepted human-river relationship by finding larger social issues at play in *Teisa*; "several episodes speak directly to the relationship of the woman writer and the natural world and demonstrate the poet's deep awareness of the varieties of forms that this relationship can take: in agricultural labour, literary tradition, science and history" (103). This observation aligns with Anne Milne's advocacy for the wider inclusion of labouring-class women's texts, stating that this genre "offers us opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of discourses of nature in the long eighteenth-century and

to inquire and explore how laboring-class women writers actually experienced nature and represented nature within the dominant discourse" (23). One of my goals, therefore, is to answer Milne's call.

Though Keegan's analysis is thorough and insightful, Chapter One of my thesis expands her discussion of women's labour, poetic form, and the function of rivers by combining my ecofeminist principles with Elizabeth Napier's approach to the form that Wilson writes in, that is, topographical poetry. In *Writing Poetry of Place in Britain, 1700-1807*, Napier reimagines the typically rigid conventions of this form, arguing that they actually "invite original poetic voices to overstep those bounds, resulting in verse that allows while also tacitly concealing expressions of great personal depth" (2). In other words, the distance between speaker and landscape that is thought to influence topographical writing is actually a means to explore new modes of self-fashioning. This self-in-landscape approach differs from that of Wordsworth because Wilson's labouring-class politics, gender discourse, and ecological ethics resonate beyond the self in order to critique national issues. Ultimately, I suggest that the River Tees provides Wilson with an effective foundation on which to combine poetic language with poignant social and ecological rhetoric. As I examine key passages, I will illuminate the ways in which *Teisa* expands narrow and masculinist ideas of Riparian Romanticism.

In Chapter Two, I shift my focus from one of the least known to one of the most renowned female Romantics in both past and present eras: Charlotte Smith. As per my thematic attention to rivers, I analyze Smith's series of Arun River Sonnets which comprise a small part of her larger work, *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784). Bethan Roberts' *Charlotte Smith and the Sonnet: Form, Place and Tradition in the Late Eighteenth Century* has continually served as a point of inspiration throughout my research and close reading of the Arun River Sonnets. In her book, Roberts explores the "literary lineages of Smith's river sonnets and their significance" (30). Roberts traces the ways in

which Smith engages in the river sonnet tradition, stating that "her interest is in a male tradition, and her own place within it" (32). Kathryn Pratt similarly notes the ways in which the masculinist literary tradition looms over the sequence, stating that poet Thomas Otway "haunts several sonnets" (564). Roberts identifies further gendered tensions, as she finds that Smith's poems generate a river-sea dichotomy; the river serves as a "gushing" male literary space and the sea a "womb-like," "nonlinear," and "nonhierarchical" feminine space ("Literary" 664). Collectively, scholars conclude that Smith's river yields an overwhelming sense that it is and has long been a masculine space.

I take Roberts's and K. Pratt's analyses forward to suggest that this domineering patriarchal force oppresses both Smith and the feminized Arun, effectively propelling poet and river into states of gender-based melancholia. Unlike Wordsworth's self-fulfilling river poetics that work to enhance his mental state, Smith's melancholy inhibits her own landscape-inspired emotional development. Daniel Froid suggests that by grounding "seemingly sublime scenes in a sense of melancholy," Smith's poetry draws attention to gendered dynamics that "alienate the female speakers" and "restrict or suspend their agency" (605). Her relationship to the Romantic philosophy of emotion is, therefore, highly moderated by gender. By representing the impact that a masculinist tradition poses for women and rivers, Smith's proto-ecofeminism demonstrates that nature and culture are not isolated entities. Chapter Two examines Smith's four river sonnets chronologically: Sonnet XXVI "To the River Arun," Sonnet XXX "To the River Arun," Sonnet XXXII "To Melancholy: Written on the Banks of the Arun," and Sonnet XXXIII "To the Naiad of the Arun." By examining these four sonnets, I demonstrate that Smith's Riparian Romanticism is enmeshed in emotion in a way that interrogates the patriarchal power structures that inform the river-sonnet tradition.

My third and final chapter shifts from poetry to travel writing, where I analyze British traveller Anna Brownell Jameson's *WSSR* (1838). Specifically, I explore passages where she

narrates her relationship with Upper-Canadian rivers and the Indigenous peoples who steward them. In former and recent years, scholars have tended to offer sympathetic interpretations of Jameson and her narratives, going so far as to "valorize Jameson as an early feminist icon engaged in acts of solidarity with Indigenous peoples" (Akerman 1); for example, Clara Thomas observes that Jameson can "engage sympathy easily" and Judith Johnston praises Jameson's "open and sympathetic discussions on native people" (*Love* 133; 117). Considering that Jameson (like Wilson and Smith) wrote in a masculinist literary tradition, it is unsurprising that feminist scholars have engaged uncritically with this subjugated author's text. Indeed, female-authored travel narratives as a whole are often categorized as "proto-feminist" and "outside [of] the colonial enterprise" (Mills 29). I therefore turn to Erin Akerman, whose decolonial lens unveils the problematic racial tensions at play in Jameson's text. Akerman takes issue with the ways in which Jameson widely represents "Indigenous disappearance" in order to "legitimate her own presence on Indigenous lands" (5). Though less accusatory than Akerman, Jennifer Henderson similarly concludes that Jameson's enthusiastic idealization of Indigenous society falls under Laura Wexler's idea of "tender violence" because Jameson appears to stand in defence of a subjugated people while "serving to consolidate the liberal norms that would turn out to be dangerous to these objects of well-meaning solicitude" (99). In essence, Henderson suggests that Jameson's praise of Indigenous society does not function to champion Indigenous sovereignty but to instead promote a self-serving European feminist agenda. Though Jameson cannot be blamed for wanting a better life for European women, her progressive goals can no longer serve to absolve *WSSR* of its colonial rhetoric.

Chapter Three builds upon Henderson's and Akerman's critiques of Jameson by invoking Mary Louise Pratt's model of the "anti-conquest" in my analysis of Jameson's visits to Niagara Falls, Credit River, Thames River, and Sault St. Marie. M. Pratt defines anti-conquest rhetoric as

"strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (7). In other words, anti-conquest rhetoric consists of methods used by agents of colonialism to absolve themselves from oppressor guilt. It is this action that complicates Jameson's seemingly ethical relationship with both Indigenous peoples and the Upper Canadian environment. My analysis of Jameson's visits to Niagara, the Credit, and the Thames exemplifies the ways in which she invokes the "Vanishing American" trope while securing her own colonial innocence via sympathetic engagements with Indigenous peoples. I end this chapter with a discussion of Jameson's canoe trip down St. Mary's rapids, where she bypasses Haraway's concept of situated knowledges and instead employs her relationship with the river as a means to freely participate in cultural appropriation. In each instance, Jameson resists the nature/culture divide, though not in a way that promotes a proto-ecofeminist agenda like that which informs the work of Smith and Wilson. Rather, Jameson's combination of Upper-Canadian rivers with colonial rhetoric demonstrates that rivers can be transformed to serve as dangerous and powerful metaphors used to bolster an oppressive imperialist agenda. Overall, this chapter highlights a harmful human-river relationship in early nineteenth-century Canada, revealing that Mellor's idea of an ethically superior female Romanticism requires a critical reconsideration.

Just as ecocritics have contemplated how to define "nature" since the emergence of their discipline, I experience a similar challenge with the language that surrounds rivers. Simply stated, a river is "a large natural stream of water flowing in a channel to the sea, a lake, or another, usually larger, stream of the same kind" (OED 1a). Matt Edgeworth and Jeff Benjamin, however, point out that a dictionary definition is no longer an appropriate identifier because rivers "have been subject to extensive sculpting and shaping by human beings" (162). Therefore, rivers are detached from their natural state. The categorization of rivers is unclear as well.

Ecocritics problematize dualistic terms such as non-living and non-human in an effort to transcend binary oppositions and avoid reaffirming Eurocentric ontologies. Environmental laws across the globe have further blurred the boundary between living and non-living: in 2017, for example, the River Narmada that flows through Madhya and Gujarat in India was declared "a living entity" on the grounds that "the river is a lifeline of the state" (Kothari and Bajpai 103). The state-recognized personhood of the Narmada exemplifies that water not only supports the livelihood of others, but is a life itself. Indeed, "because water connects all elements of society, an integrative water ethic becomes essential" (Klaver 209).

Seeing issues with dualistic language, scholars continue to utilize anthropologist David Abram's term "more-than-human" when talking about the natural world. In his pivotal book, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, Abram opts to use the term "more-than-human" to refer to our immersion in a sentient realm where relationality is key. Succinctly stated, "'more-than-human' is not a synonym for 'nature' or 'nonhuman' but, rather, a term that highlights the primacy of relations over entities (including the 'human')" (O'Gorman and Gaynor 717). Additionally, more-than-human expands beyond the category of nature, as it indicates plants, animals, mountains, weather, humans, and realms outside of the human world, such as spirits. In essence, more-than-human aims to see the world as an interconnected network. Considering all the ways in which the natural world is categorized, I find it unrealistic and limiting to choose just *one* term to encompass all literary rivers. Accordingly, I take cues from each author to determine which term their text demands. This uniqueness once again emphasizes the multiple ways of knowing and interacting with rivers. Whether rivers are living, nonliving, somewhere in between, or somewhere beyond depends on the author's subjective experience. Thus, I find that "water is what we make of it" (Linton 3). If, indeed, "the river challenges our epistemological concepts,

our language and understanding," then the ways rivers are represented in nature writing have the capacity to shape our ecological mindset (Herendeen 3). Therefore, rivers as metaphors and rivers as material beings become more relationally bound than meets the eye.

By thematically exploring the representation of rivers in texts by Wilson, Smith, and Jameson, I endeavour to show how Romantic women's writing provides an important lens through which class, colonial, and ecological concerns can be viewed. The status of rivers in the late eighteenth-century is more uncertain than Wordsworth scholarship has suggested, and indeed, human-river relationships continue to be a topic of cultural, economic, and ecological concern in the twenty-first century; "how people relate to and through water is a topic of growing interest to researchers, particularly as threats to rivers and pressures on water supplies increase…yielding rich insights on norms that shape how water is known, used, and valued" (Jackson 1). A shift towards ethically interacting with rivers is essential because "rivers are the sinews of the world; without them life unravels" (Klaver 210). An exploration of Riparian Romanticism offers just one perspective on a much larger conversation of rivers in literature. Plumwood's ecofeminist discourse on dualisms and Haraway's theory of situated knowledges will serve as an apt guide throughout my survey of late eighteenth-century literature. Ultimately, Riparian Romanticism seeks a better understanding of human-river relationships of the past and present, and hopefully encourages a future that ensures meaningful and respectful human-river relationships.

Chapter 1

The Labouring-Class River: The River Tees and Poetic Form in Anne Wilson's *Teisa: A Descriptive Poem of the River Teese, Its Towns and Antiquities*

> I pay particular attention to those in the middle class,
> because they appear to be in the most natural state.
> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (3)

I concur with William J. Christmas's statement "that there is much still to be gleaned about eighteenth-century culture from recovering some of the period's forgotten poetry" (19-20). In a cheeky imitation of *Pride and Prejudice*, Donna Landry suggests that labouring-class poetics have been neglected from canonical writing circles even more so than women's writing: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that there were English women writers before Jane Austen. Less well known is that there were laboring class writers before John Clare" ("Forward" xvii). Labouring-class women writers, therefore, face a double disadvantage. The intersectional marginalization of these writers makes it all the more necessary to read their works because they "defy attempts by dominant discourses to unvoice them" (Milne 14). Despite the historical lack of scholarly attention to labouring-class writing, there has been recent interest in the study of texts from this genre. Jonathan Goodridge and Bridget Keegan's edited book *A History of British Working Class Literature* is a prime example of this growth. This collection examines politics, poetic form, gender, place, and more, altogether demonstrating the vast possibilities of the labouring-class genre. Taking guidance from Goodridge and Keegan, I follow in their footsteps to define labouring-class writing as "writing produced by individuals who have not enjoyed social, economic, and educational advantages" (1). A closer look at non-canonical labouring-class writing is imperative to forming a nuanced dialogue about these marginalized literary perspectives.

Any information that is known about Anne Wilson has been surmised from her poem, *Teisa: A Descriptive Poem of the River Teese, Its Towns and Antiquities*. As I previously noted, Keegan is the only scholar who has written extensively (a chapter's length) on Wilson, where she states that "little is known about her life, beyond the few self-deprecating and veiled comments she makes about herself in the poem" (102). Based on this single piece of work, one can assume that Wilson is at least familiar with the River Tees region and a citizen of England. Keegan further speculates that Wilson "was a well-read widow, most likely from the lower ranks of society, perhaps a servant of some kind" (102). Indeed, in *Teisa* Wilson does complain of her "humble lot," where her life is hindered by the need to work (381): "I must yet lament, / That in a hir'd-house all my days are spent" (385-6). Employing servants with poetic inclinations was not uncommon, according to Carolyn Steedman, who notes that "poetical maids were fashionable in the second half of the eighteenth-century" as they served the "proto-Romantic taste for humble genius" (7). Goodridge and Keegan expand on this labouring-class poet archetype, suggesting that the eighteenth-century public found it intriguing: "The phenomenon of the 'peasant-poet' was perceived as a species of natural genius, a kind of home-grown noble savage, whose poetry miraculously emerged from a rustic lifestyle, specifically without benefit from formal training and thus untainted with classicism or learned sophistry" (4). In other words, the labouring-class poet was exoticized and idealized. In a similar vein, "it is surprisingly still common in ecocritical scholarship [to suggest] that the rural poor (or women or Native Americans) are somehow 'closer to nature'" even though "polite poets presumably went outside too" (Keegan 6-7). Thanks to scholars such as Keegan and Landry, labouring-class women writers are deservedly being paid more attention in contemporary eighteenth-century criticism after centuries of dismissal from the literary canon. One of my hopes for this chapter, therefore, is to provide an early contribution to what will one day be a flourishing body of Wilson scholarship.

Because there "is no single style that can define labouring-class poetry," this chapter takes particular interest in the "descriptive" form in which Wilson wrote (Goodridge and Keegan 155). I am especially drawn to Wilson's use of poetic form because it is a neglected topic in scholarship: "'Why poetry?' is not a question asked about the plebeian and working-class writers whose work continues to be discovered" (Steedman 14). Anne Milne offers an answer to Steedman's query: "valuing the cultural importance of poetry and the status of the poet in the eighteenth century, labouring class poets took up the challenge of aspiring to what was then considered the highest art" (21). Thus, form is not only an intricately woven component of a poem's language, but also a politically charged aspect of writing. The "descriptive" or "topographical" form that *Teisa* takes has been praised for its proliferation in the eighteenth century: Bethan Roberts notes that the "popularity of landscape painting in the eighteenth century influenced the reflourishing of the topographical" (*Form* 44); M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham explain that "the poetic type had an enormous vogue" (403); and Robert Aubin urges that "topographical poetry is eminently worthy of notice" (viii). In his foundational text, *Topographical Poetry in XVIII-Century England*, Aubin defines topographical poetry as a "subspecies of 'descriptive'" where rather than just "'depicting nature in general,' 'topographical' poetry aims chiefly at describing *specifically named actual localities*" (vii, original emphasis). Based on Aubin's definition, Wilson's focus on the River Tees in *Teisa* makes the poem an excellent fit for the genre.

In addition to its focus on a specific locale, the topographical form consists of two other conventions. First, authors must attempt to distance themselves from natural scenery; John Wilson Foster insists that "the poet is very much a *detached* observer of his scene" (405, my emphasis). Second, the poem must be didactic in message; Foster states that the poet must view "nature through a prism of historical and moral reflection" (405). Richard Holmes explains that the didactic qualities of topographical poetry largely derive from the influence of Sir John Denham's *Cooper's Hill* and

Alexander Pope's *Windsor-Forest* (85). Pope, for example, claims that "the descriptions of places, and images rais'd by the poet, are still tending to some hint, or leading into some reflection, upon moral life or political institutions" (qtd. in Holmes 85). In other words, the topographical poet uses nature as a foundation upon which to deliver their moral or political rhetoric. Dwight Durling observes that this convention amounts to "didacticism" (194). Arguably, this combination of distance and instruction poses an ethical problem in which objectivity is linked to rhetorical authority. Additionally, I suggest that the poetic constraints of the topographical form—objectivity, didacticism, and specific natural description—produce a combination of conventions that are inherently contradictory. In many ways, Wilson follows this rigid masculinist tradition, as Aubin asserts that *Teisa* is nearly "the last topographical poem modelled largely on *Cooper's Hill*" (235). However, my close reading of *Teisa* reveals that Wilson subverts the genre by utilizing intimate natural description as a means to produce powerful political critique. Altogether, Wilson's text works to transcend masculinist tradition and avoid ethically questionable notions of objectivity through her eighteenth-century version of situated knowledges.

Elizabeth Napier's contemporary approach to the topographical form is well suited to my examination of the various ways in which Wilson challenges the poetic genre. Napier challenges the claim that objectivity is a component of the topographical form. Her approach considers the ways in which "attentiveness to personal place" serves as a means of self-fashioning: topographical poems "mark moments of tension as the demands of two quite different projects—that of natural description and that of self-expression—collide" (1). This description of the topographical form seems to me inherently Romantic, for "writing about natural landscapes becomes more overtly intertwined with details of personal life (as, most clearly [evidenced], in the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Clare, and Keats)" (Napier 2). While the lack of biographic information on Wilson makes it difficult

to determine any conclusions about her personal life simply based on her description of nature, Napier's approach confronts the assumption that the topographical poet is in any way detached from their environment, effectively blurring the nature/culture dualism. Moreover, Napier's emphasis on poetic subjectivity implicitly embodies situated knowledge, as she recognizes the limited location of one's perspective. The ways in which Donna Haraway, Val Plumwood, and Napier necessitate the connection between self and nature is hugely applicable to *Teisa* and labouring-class writers; it thus informs the ecofeminist perspective I take in this literary analysis.

In addition to considering the various characteristics of form in *Teisa*, it is important to contextualize Wilson's poetic descriptions within the history of the River Tees in order to account for the ways in which the river's materiality informs her narrative. The Tees is located in England and flows through several small towns. In 1969, Peter Barton noted that the Tees had "been an artery of trade for the last 800 years" despite its waterway being "both difficult and dangerous to navigate" (57-8). Due to its inconvenient waterway, the Tees became a topic of interest "in the eighteenth century when the country's rivers were being exploited to the full" (Barton 57). For example, in 1769 (less than 10 years prior to Wilson's publication of *Teisa*), a bridge was built across the Tees at Stockton—the first one since the thirteenth-century (Rennison 21). Talks of "improving the Tees" continued post-construction with the desire to straighten the river downstream of Stockton (Rennison 21). Jonathan Pickernell "recommended that a cut be formed through the loop in the river" in 1791, but no tangible action was taken until 1808, some 20 years after *Teisa* had been published (qtd. in Rennison 23). Though numerous factors influence the "improvement" of rivers, the idea that the Tees was "less important" (due to a lack of geographical advantages) than its neighbours, the Tyne and Humber, likely played a role in construction delays (Barton 59). The Tees, therefore, has been closely linked to labour while being simultaneously disregarded due to its perceived insufficiency, making Wilson's

text all the more important in efforts to gain an understanding of the Tees's cultural identity. Indeed, Keegan asserts that Wilson's engagement with the lesser-known Tees "is an act of revision and possible resistance" (104). Rather than write about a river with a history of high cultural value (such as the "proud Thames" that Charlotte Smith briefly praises in sonnet XXX), Wilson demonstrates that the Tees is equally deserving of aesthetic admiration. Because "the shipping activity here was still sufficient to impress a certain Anne Wilson," *Teisa* calls into question eighteenth-century "standards for natural beauty and the power relations they may represent" (Barton 71; Keegan 102). In taking the history of the Tees and labouring-class writers into consideration, it becomes clear that "Nature—variously defined—is never a socially neutral space, all the more so for the labouring poor" (Keegan 2).

In this chapter, I combine the extensive shipping history of the Tees with Wilson's labouring-class politics to form the idea that the Tees represents a "labouring-class river." By categorizing the river like this, I aim to add to David Fairer's suggestion that the Tees serves as "a thematic thread" to which Wilson "returns…periodically to shift her mood or move on to another topic" (209). Indeed, the Tees *does* provide a route for Wilson's narrative, but even more so, it is a key site for examining the ways in which the human-river relationship operates within labouring-class and gendered contexts. By employing the Tees as a foundation upon which to explore complex ecological and social issues, Wilson rejects the cultural-primitivist mindset that underpins the Western nature/culture dualism. Similarly, her lived experience as a female labouring-class poet and her narration of this experience exemplifies situated knowledge. Thus, I argue that Wilson simultaneously conforms to and defies the topographical tradition; through her combination of these two ecofeminist axioms and her intimate relationship with the Tees, Wilson offers a moralistic message while resisting the poetic convention of detachment from the landscape. This chapter begins by exploring the early

stanzas of *Teisa*, as Wilson's poetics immediately construct a relationship between women, rivers, and class. I then examine the aesthetic and political function of Wilson's convention-breaking Muse. Next, I compare the class tensions that arise amidst Wilson's representation of the privileged Muse and labouring-class women. Noticing Wilson's sympathy for both nature and animals, I will end this chapter with a discussion about the ways in which *Teisa* serves as a subtle yet poignant mode of social and ecological activism through its anti-hunting and anti-damming rhetoric. Ultimately, while Wilson's *Teisa* precedes the Romantic period, I argue that the poem is an essential precursor to Riparian Romanticism and serves as an excellent contribution to my overall analysis.

Within the first two stanzas, Wilson illustrates an image of the landscape that is both aesthetically pleasing and politically coded. She immediately engages matters of class, gender, and Romantic aesthetics when she writes:

> The virgin water from its marble bed,
> Fresh, airy, bubbling, lifts its chrystal [*sic*] head;
> Far from corrupting man, her purer source
> Pursues thro' rugged rocks, its infant course:
> Where the wild heath its purple dye displays,
> As on the russet plain we wond'ring gaze,
> The wand'ring eye is lost in mists, that frown
> Suspended o'er th' extensive horizon… (7-12)

Setting up a potential nature/culture dualism, Wilson informs the reader that the Tees is far from "corrupting man" (9). Despite the Tees's history with the trade industry, Wilson emphasizes the river's purity by using words such as "virgin," "chrystal," and "infant." With language alluding to the untameable nature of the land, such as the "rugged rocks" and "wild heath," she further illustrates the

Tees's uncultivated riverside. It seems that even the human gaze cannot penetrate through the naturalness of the scene, for "the wand'ring eye is lost in mists." This "wond'ring gaze" is not only "lost" in nature but seemingly disapproved of by nature, for the mists "frown" in the presence of the gazer. This personification of the riverside demonstrates nature's awareness of its status as an object of human contemplation, which overall implies that nature possesses a degree of agency that works to resist the mastery of the gaze. On the other hand, nature's frown may also suggest that there is some sort of unwanted attention or trespassing occurring in the scene, posing the possibility that the human gaze is a predatory force. Thus, contrary to my thesis, Wilson appears to locate the Tees in the tradition of cultural primitivism by highlighting the unspoilt riverside and avoiding images that convey human interference on the land in an effort to escape from the domineering force of human culture. Wilson's employment of this highly Romantic sentiment would raise concerns of dualistic thought for contemporary ecofeminists, but I discuss the ways in which *Teisa* actually subverts primitivist logic below.

The predatory nature of the human gaze is underscored by Wilson's feminization of the river. By the fourth line Wilson genders the Tees with female pronouns, referring to "*her* silver streams" (my emphasis). In reference to the river, the above excerpt similarly notes that "*her* purer source / Pursues" (9-10, my emphasis). Wilson feminizes the Tees not just by pronoun usage but by description as well; for example, her representation of the river's streams as virginal and pure to allude to notions of idealized female sexuality. This link between women and rivers as objects of the gaze is deeply political and implicitly ecofeminist because Wilson demonstrates that natural description is inseparable from the gender inequality that inevitably moderates her life. Importantly, this notion quickly interrupts the nature/culture dualism that is briefly established by primitivist language discussed in the above excerpt. Wilson's concerns with gender are further emphasized when she

feminizes the river in the same line that she disavows the "corrupting man," bringing forth a critique of male domination. It is, therefore, not culture but patriarchy that Wilson is critical of in *Teisa.* This distinction is essential to undermining nature/culture dualisms in Western thought, for Wilson challenges the idea that human-kind/culture as a whole is the issue. Additionally, this distinction suggests that healthy nature-culture and human-river relationships do exist because she locates the problem of ecological oppression in patriarchal domination. This idea shows how Wilson meets topographical conventions by merging natural description with moral instruction, and accordingly, subversively interacts with the literary tradition.

At times, *Teisa* overtly subverts masculinist poetic conventions. Primarily, Wilson resists ideas of distance and objectivity associated with the genre when she blends her subjective experience with natural description. She accomplishes this genre subversion through her use of the plural person pronoun "we" in the above passage (10); this plural pronoun effectively locates the author in the scene as a subtle act of closing the gap between poet and nature. Notably, this plural pronoun occurs in the part of the excerpt where the potentially predatory act of looking occurs: "As on the russet plain we wond'ring gaze" (10). Having established that Wilson is critical of patriarchy and not culture per se, I argue that what initially appears to be a threatening gaze is actually a shared moment between speaker and nature, both of whom are female. The shared gender of river and speaker transforms a masculinist gaze into an act of appreciation. The word "wond'ring" further resists participating in a predatory engagement with the land, for it denotes a curiosity rather than claims to objective knowing. In a similar vein, Keegan notes that Wilson's "sustained use of the collective pronoun 'we'…engages the reader in the work and further distinguishes Wilson's project from those of the 'gentlemen' poets whose works she elsewhere actively cites" (105). Keegan elaborates on the significance of this distinction with reference to Tim Fulford's link between artistic "views of the landscape owned by

gentlemen" and "representations of the legitimacy of their power" (qtd. in Keegan 101). In essence, the "we" pronoun associates Wilson with her surroundings, and by result, she avoids the practice of poetic authority and descriptive objectivity. The "frown / Suspended o'er th' extensive horizon" remains in question, potentially suggesting there is a larger grief that the river endures (12); I discuss this overarching ecological sadness extensively in Chapter 2 in regard to Charlotte Smith's melancholic river. Overall, the opening stanza constructs a strong link between women and rivers in *Teisa*, which effectively forms an ecofeminist foundation upon which Wilson later divulges concerns of gender, the environment, and the labouring-class.

Having established the Tees as a feminine space, I progress this chapter towards a discussion of Wilson's Muse—a character whose femininity, closeness to the natural world, and various privileges make her a compelling figure in *Teisa*. Wilson's inclusion of the Muse figure in her poem is on par with popular eighteenth-century tropes; "ornamental figures of charming Muses and other graces, Nymphs, and Dryads littered the actual, as well as the poetic, landscape, as indicators of good income and, it was supposed, good taste" (Bowerbank 162). That the Muse appears along the Tees at all, therefore, instantly links the Tees to good income and taste. Furthermore, the consistent emergence of the Muse throughout the poem from the river's source to mouth underscores the aesthetic and economic value of a locale that has been notoriously underappreciated by writers. In Wilson's writings, it is apparent from the beginning that the Muse figure conventionally demonstrates aesthetic values: "Fair TEISA's winding stream invites my lays; / Assist, O Sylvan Muse! in TEISA's praise: / What Muse assistance wou'd not gladly bring, / Her beauteous banks, her silver streams to sing?" (1-4). In this opening quatrain, the Muse appears to be a dependable voice to speak on behalf of nature for two reasons. Firstly, Wilson suggests that the Muse is a trustworthy source when she openly asks her for "assistance" (3). Secondly, Wilson's

ambiguous use of the pronoun "her" complicates this passage; grammatically, the feminine pronoun could refer to either the Muse or the Tees. This blurred pronoun usage associates the Muse with the Tees, which increases the value of both because "the purpose of identifying with nature is precisely so that one will wish to *avoid* harming those beings with whom one identifies" (Kheel 101, original emphasis).

Importantly in the above excerpt, Wilson invites the Muse to enhance her "lays" (i.e., "a short lyric or narrative poem intended to be sung") (OED 1a). Wilson continues to seek help from the Muse when writing poetic description elsewhere in the poem, as exhibited in the following lines: "these exhaustless scenes, my Muse should tell" (64); "Fresh leaves of baum the Muse wou'd next advise" (319); and "the Muses stand, / Ready to lead the poet by the hand" (451-2). In each of these instances, it becomes increasingly clear that the speaker believes that the Muse is more apt to aesthetically interpret the natural world than she is, thus questioning the "belief that the labouring-class poet has a special access to nature" (Milne 28-9). Despite the Muse's obvious knowledge of the natural world and persistent appearance throughout *Teisa*, Aubin dismisses her explorative autonomy as mindless whimsy when he observes that she "flies gleefully to hilltops or to didactic passages on cheese-making" (235). Contrarily, I suggest that the Muse serves as both guide and guardian along the Tees in that she occupies a typically masculine role of the explorer while employing a feminist ethic in her relationship with the river. This idea is effectively summarized by the following quatrain in *Teisa*: "Then come, O Muse! come bear me now away, / Sweet peaceful Muse! whose dictates I obey; / Fair TEISA's verdant banks will yet again / The rural breast, and poet entertain" (1097-1100). With her "sweet" and "peaceful" qualities, the Muse possesses traditional feminine gentleness coupled with a masculine authority whose "dictates" the speaker obeys. In demonstrating Wilson's reliance on

the Muse for aid in poetic description, this quatrain also disrupts essentialist assertions that women writers are inherently closer to nature, and reminds readers that "if we think that the fact of being female guarantees that we are automatically provided with an ecological consciousness…we are going to be badly disappointed" (Plumwood 10).

Just as Wilson manipulates and subverts the topographical form, so too does she transform the device of the Muse beyond eighteenth-century conventions. Indeed, it is clear that Wilson's Muse possesses "good taste" in the sense that Wilson relies on her for help with natural description; however, Wilson's employment of the Muse as an emblem of "good income" raises matters of class privilege. For example, Wilson states that

> Oft have I wish'd my humble lot was cast
> In some such blest retreat, where I at last,
> Abandoning all servile hopes and fears,
> Might quiet pass the few remaining years:
> But, with sweet Cowley I must yet lament,
> That in a hir'd house all my days are spent:
> Yet why do I lament, Oh! why did he?
> Since the muse, ever uncontroul'd and free,
> Can traverse earth, expatiate thro' the skies; (381-89)

This deeply personal and broadly political passage highlights the discrepancies in privilege between Wilson and the Muse. With adjectives "uncontrolled" and "free," Wilson suggests that the Muse exists outside of class hierarchies (388). The word "expatiate" (meaning "to roam without restraint" or "to speak or write at some length") further serves to emphasize the Muse's sovereignty and her ability to translate nature's beauty into language (OED 1a; OED 2). The Muse's limitless

access to nature stresses the hardships of the labouring-class, for Wilson is bound contrastingly to a life of "servile hopes and fears" (383). Confined to the home or the "hir'd house," Wilson is subject to forced domesticity that distances her from the natural world, making her ill-equipped to narrate nature independently from the Muse (386). Arguably, this distance from nature produces a politically motivated transformation of the topographical form. Instead of choosing to narrate nature from a distanced perspective like the literary tradition demands, Wilson experiences involuntary detachment from the natural world due to the confines of the domestic labouring-class sphere. Further, this excerpt forms a link between poetic description, class privilege, and gender norms by informing the reader that one's relationship with nature, and by extension, their ability to write about it, is dependent on their access to societal privileges, such as financial security, safety, education, leisure, and the ability to travel. In Chapter 3, I discuss women's lack of access to travel at length, noting that writers like Jameson are exceptions to the rule; but Jameson, too, is well-aware of patriarchal limits imposed on women's abilities to explore the Earth when, for example, she hopes that she "shall not be the last" female European traveller to canoe the St. Mary's rapids (499). Jameson's awareness that she is a trailblazer in this literary tradition is clear.

While Wilson longs for a "retreat" from servitude, her work does not figure labouring-class women as objects of pity (382). Rather, she depicts and commends a wide range of female labourers along the Tees, such as cheesemakers, weavers, and herb gardeners. This diverse range of women's work expands notions of what riverside labour consists of, and reveals the limits of "thinking of 'labourers' as composing a homogeneous or recognizable class" (Barrell 2). The following description of a milk maid is just one example of how Wilson's situated knowledge plays a key role in realistic representation:

> Ye rural muses come, and with me view

Yon busy housewife, from her grateful cow

Rich streams of milky juice, with both hands draws,

Until her pail with bubbles overflows.

A finer sight can proud luxury boast? (252-6)

When Wilson asks the "rural Muses" to observe the milk maid, the offer seems to extend beyond the figurative Muse character in the text and is instead directed toward her reader (252). Here, the gaze is once again reclaimed as a non-predatory act due to Wilson's "assumption that her reader is not a genteel male landowner but a female labourer like herself" (Keegan 105). Not only is this brief excerpt deeply feminist in its subversive relationship with an all-female audience, but it is also richly embellished with vivid imagery; such detailed language of the milk maid's specific duties continues for two more pages. The extensive information that Wilson provides reveals that she is likely speaking of her own lived experience, making this passage one of the most evident places where she exercises situated knowledge. Altogether, Wilson's representation of the labouring-class lifestyle forms an important counter-narrative to comparably objectifying portrayals of labouring-class women.

Landry laments that "on those occasions when the laboring woman has appeared in canonical eighteenth-century verse, she has been represented as an object of satire or pathos" (*Muses* 1); however, Wilson's depiction of labouring-class women is far from narrative mockery. Instead, she ensures to represent female labourers as valuable contributors of society. One instance that exemplifies this praise is in her depiction of riverside weavers and their sheep:

Their wool is long, and white as falling snow,

(From it fine threads our female artists draw)

The pride of Britain and of TEISA, they,

For their rich pastures, well, methinks, repay:

Yet this will not luxurious man suffice,

He (like the prowling wolf) demands their lives. (1231-1236)

This excerpt begins with an ecofeminist simile that compares the feminine/domestic sphere (via "fine threads") to nature/the natural (via "falling snow") (1232; 1231). Here, Wilson underscores the role women play in building harmonious nature-culture relationships. In *Teisa*, however, depictions of the labouring-class lifestyle are not limited to this link between women and nature. For example, Wilson relates the "herds and flocks" of sheep to the pride of both the Tees and Britain (1228). That this rural scene is integral to Britain's nationalism is, indeed, no small claim. Moreover, Wilson's zoomorphic depiction of "luxurious man" as a vicious predator provides a poignant juxtaposition to this otherwise healthy landscape. This assertion echoes her earlier critique of the corrupting man, and therefore, furthers Wilson's commentary on the harm of patriarchal domination.

Teisa demonstrates that the impacts of patriarchal domination are not restricted to the human world; in the eighteenth-century, "considerations of animals were inseparable from concepts of power and subordination" (Tague 111). According to Wilson, labouring farmers were not inclined to hunt, for "It is not rural life to hunt the game, / It is to bless what animals are tame" (1042-3). Indeed, David Perkins notes that hunting was a privilege enjoyed exclusively by the middle and upper-classes: "To take game was an exclusive privilege of the gentry…Game could be hunted only by persons who owned land worth at least £100 a year and others of equivalent social standing. The rest of mankind could not take game legally even on their own land, if they had any, and even if the animals were destroying their crops" (64). While Eurocentric in his radical generalization of "mankind's" hunting laws, Perkins statement attests to the idea that Britain's animal rights issues were bound to social and economic inequalities. Ethical considerations

similarly surrounded the topic of hunting in the eighteenth century. Chiefly, "those persons who believed animals feel pain as much as we do…regretted both the suffering of the animals and the human readiness to inflict it" (Perkins 70). By incorporating the eighteenth-century trend of animal sympathy and anticipating the Romantic embrace of strong emotions, Wilson provides a compelling piece of anti-hunting rhetoric that adds to her already politically charged topographical verse.

Wilson does not condemn hunting when it is done for sustenance; rather, she reserves her attacks toward hunting for sport. Her dialogue focuses on the brutality and ignorance of fowling. Because this sport typically took place along riverbanks, it is not just a demonstration of human-caused harm against animals. Importantly, the sport is also inextricably linked to the wellbeing of the Tees. The following excerpt begins the narrative:

> The fowler meditates their upward flight;
> They secret view on e'vry side the light;
> Then urg'd by bold necessity arise,
> And trust for safety in their native skies;
> But the destructive shot, alas! pursues,
> A sight too painful for the tender muse:
> With mangled limbs to earth they flutt'ring fall… (151-157)

Wilson's description of the fowlers as meditative suggests that they are both cunning and predatory in their hunting strategy. They are, therefore, portrayed as antagonists. That Wilson emphasizes the intentions of the birds prior to their violent death further highlights the fowler's offense. For example, she anthropomorphizes the birds by stating that they are driven by "bold necessity" with "trust for safety" (153; 154). These human-like descriptors establish the birds'

selfhoods by illustrating them as thinking and feeling beings. Therefore, this anthropomorphic description serves an ethical purpose, as it humanizes the birds in a way that may elicit sympathy from readers. The Muse's response to fowling serves a similar purpose because, as I have argued, she is employed as a guide throughout the poem. Just as her poetic interpretation of nature is idealized, the Muse demonstrates a sentimental reaction to the gunshot that may serve as a moral precept. Thus, Wilson's didacticism once again arises as per the demands of the topographical form.

Throughout the fowling scene, it becomes clear that Wilson's representation of sympathy is decidedly moderated by gender. By employing the Muse as an emotional witness in the above excerpt, Wilson aligns sympathy for animals with the feminine. Furthermore, Wilson calls on a "man with soft emotions in his breast" but she is met with "ye barb'rous ministers of death!" (159; 169). Thus, Wilson opposes masculine brutality to a feminine ethic of care. However, she later demonstrates that it is not just women that bear the emotional brunt of unethical hunting and patriarchal violence. The following excerpt describes the impact of fowling on a male bird:

> But hark! a call, some has escaped we see;
> O! 'tis the father of the family,
> Who ignorant of his poor young ones fate,
> Now calls on them, and his late faithful mate;
> She, ever at his side, was wont to share
> Every pleasure, every tender care:
> Tho' simple cates their meager life sustain;
> Yet safety, even here, they sought in vain. (161-168)

Wilson's anthropomorphic illustration of the birds is even more poignant in this passage. The poet's reference to the male bird as "the father of the family" is key here: the combination of interrupted motherhood and widowed fatherhood offers a striking allegory for the fall of the imagined nuclear family. This passage is a strong attempt from Wilson to provide a highly sympathetic image of animal lives. Once again it is clear that Wilson is not critical of men but of the ways in which male power structures, such as those associated with hunting, oppress women, animals, and nature. Her male gendering of the unfeeling hunter destabilizes the cultural value of hegemonic masculinity. In this mini-allegory, Wilson's depiction of the lone father of the family demonstrates that feeling and emotion are an ungendered and non-species-specific experience. Therefore, Wilson disproves the essentialist argument "that women have special powers and capacities of nurturance, empathy and 'closeness to nature', which are unsharable by men" (Plumwood 8). Overall, Wilson's sympathetic depiction of animals locates her in a tradition of female-led animal rights activism, where "in response to the cultural constraints that allied women with nature and with emotions, some [seventeenth and eighteenth-century] women chose to champion the need for responsible stewardship of the landscape and sympathy for non-human animals" (Drew and Sitter 234).

While Keegan notes that "when labouring-class writers address social issues, they frequently do so without employing an explicitly political rhetoric which would have cost them patrons and a chance at publication" (4), the excerpts I have discussed thus far border on eighteenth-century sociopolitical radicalism. The topographical form demands political transparency, yet Wilson's position as a labouring-class poet renders her at risk of censorship. Subversively, Wilson does not veil her critiques of corruption nor does she shy away from engaging controversial matters of gender as they relate to class tensions. For example, Wilson's critique of fowling undertakes a contentious

issue from the time period; defenders of hunting would urge that it is natural, necessarily masculine, and that it "instills warlike skills" (Perkins 65). Keegan notes that Wilson's depiction of hunting also contradicts topographical tradition, for Pope "celebrates the royal hunting grounds" in *Windsor Forest* (110). I find that despite her radical participation in this debate, Wilson does take measures to ensure the safety of her position as a writer. For example, she uses the Muse to express sorrow over the fowls' deaths (re: "A sight too painful for the tender muse") (156). Arguably, the Muse serves as a vessel for Wilson's own self-expression. For Napier, this act is considered an "under cover" strategy that produces "verse that allows while also tacitly [conceals] expressions of great personal depth" (2). The Muse's identification with the Tees again becomes important in the poet's veiled self-expression, for Keegan explains that "Nature provides an important metapoetic vehicle for labouring-class poets to comment upon their vocational formation and is a critical device in their literary self-fashioning" (4). Thus, Wilson strategically resists social and political efforts to intimidate marginalized voices into silence.

Though *Teisa* contains many scathing critiques of the rich and powerful, Wilson is careful to avoid depicting all men as perpetrators of harm. I first explored this idea in my discussion of Wilson's fowling rhetoric where she depicts the father of the family as a victim. Now, I turn to her representation of non-harmful male bodies in human world. The poet narrates the life of Tunstall, a man whose financial generosity, class blindness, and ascetic lifestyle distinguishes him from the greedy wealthy landowners mentioned elsewhere in the poem. Wilson narrates

> That a more worthy man was never born:
> As now the Muse, good Tunstall surely swore,
> No family around him shou'd be poor;

All ranks of men by Tunstall were receiv'd,

And all their wants by him alike reliev'd:

Thus, this divine man! purchas'd for himself,

Treasure, far beyond terrestrial wealth… (1116-1122)

Based on this description, Tunstall is an exception to the typical corrupt landowner that Wilson critiques elsewhere. The speaker praises Tunstall as a "worthy" and "divine" man due to his unprejudiced kindness (1116; 1121). This praise culminates when the speaker later names Tunstall a "god-like owner" (1173). Additionally, class divides dissipate in Tunstall's eyes. For example, he views "all ranks of men" as equally deserving of financial security, and he is willing to relieve their "wants" as he would his own family (1119; 1120). Overall, Wilson illustrates the behaviour of an ideal landowner in a desirable way. By result, readers of the upper-class (if there be any) may be influenced to adopt the traits of this praiseworthy character. Thus, this excerpt is an important piece of Wilson's topographical didacticism.

However, this Tunstall narrative is potentially unstable in its rhetorical implications. In effort to suggest that life's enjoyments do not depend on "terrestrial wealth," Wilson risks idealizing the poverty-like conditions that pervade rural life (1122). For example, one of the ways in which Tunstall does not participate in the luxuries of life that he otherwise has access to is by resisting "vicious appetites" (1127): "Nor did his palate other viands crave, / Than soop, which the fine flower of oatmeal gave" (1141-2). This celebration of a wealthy man's asceticism may lead to the denial of labouring-class oppression. Moreover, this sentiment bears resemblance to the pastoral mode, which is typically "a deliberately conventional poem expressing an urban poet's image of the supposed life and simplicity of the life of shepherds and other rural folk in an idealized natural setting" (Abrams and Harpham 268). This romanticized rural life stands in

contrast to the less-desirable "stress and frivolous consumption of city dwellers" (McKusick 20). Certainly, such anti-consumerist and vegetarian sentiments work to benefit an environmentalist agenda. Conversely, the pastoral mode shifts the responsibility of human suffering from societal hierarchies to the marginalized individual. In other words, these excerpts risk suggesting that labouring-class laments are merely a lack of appreciation for the simple life. This being said, I would argue that it is important to trust Wilson in her process; the potential benefits of the Tunstall narrative (encouraging ethical landownership) may, indeed, outweigh the negative (poetic idealization). In any case, her anti-capitalist verse is otherwise strong-willed and clear throughout the poem.

Much of Wilson's poem focuses on the people and animals along the Tees riverside, as Keegan notices "the speaker consistently looks from the river rather than at it" (103). For a moment, however, Wilson's discourse becomes river-centered when she addresses the detrimental impacts of damming on the ecosystem:

> Her lucid waters, next to Dinsdale run,
> But e'er they pass, large dams there are that turn
> The silver flood into a standing lake,
> Where they the beauteous speckled salmon take.
> In artful locks confin'd, the captive fish
> For freedom, now alas! too fruitful wish:
> Ah! What does all their finny strength avail,
> Their round watchful eyes, strong muscular tail!
> Like to the winged arrow from the bow. (1384-1392)

The transition of a once lively "murm'ring" stream to a voiceless halt is aesthetically unsatisfying and ecologically concerning (1380). Considering that "personification indeed was the stock method of treating rivers in Renaissance topography, [and] remained common enough in the eighteenth century" (Aubin 225), the image of a "silver flood" transformed "into a standing lake" is a sharp departure from this trend (Wilson 1386). In other words, human development has stripped the river from its vigour and vitality. Such human suppression of the Tees is heightened when the fish suffer by result. Though Wilson compares the fish to the boldness of "the winged bow and arrow," their agency is hindered by "large dams" (1392; 1385). This excerpt serves as a bleak contrast to her earlier observation of salmon: "the fish survey / The little dancing gnats that frisk and play; / At which they dart with such velocity" (183-5). The whimsical "dancing gnats" combined with the calculated fish who "dart with such velocity" demonstrate a once active river ecosystem. Now, the barricading of both the salmon's migration and the Tees's flow makes for a strong critique of unhealthy human-river relationships; indeed, "even as we depend for our lives on the rivers, even as we venerate them in every culture, we also pollute them, block their flow, divert them into lifeless channels, and desecrate them in every conceivable way" (Kothari and Bajpai 103). Wilson's poetics demonstrate this difficult reality.

The above passage is not just significant in highlighting the oppression of nature and animals, but there is a strong parallel between the dam, the fish, and Wilson's own labouring-class struggles. For Wilson, rivers are both personalized and politicized. Her image of the "captive fish" arguably represents her personal experience with societal constraints (1388). The idea of unobtainable "freedom" resurfaces here as well (1389). I discussed this issue earlier in relation to the speaker's envy of the "free-born" Muse, and now in relation to the dam's restriction of fish migration (429). Wilson, therefore, intertwines social and ecological concerns in an ecofeminist

fashion. Furthermore, the lack of freedom for both Wilson and the river is most noticeable when she compares the dammed Tees to a fish's prison: "These prisons all deliverance deny: / 'Tis death alone that now must set them free" (1399-1400). For Wilson, liberation is only found through death. The Tees and the labouring-class reflect each other's wounded agencies. It seems it is not just the fish who are emotionally, physically, and economically "spent," but also Wilson herself (1397). In in this moment, Wilson paints the Tees as a highly oppressed labouring-class river, making it difficult to accept Fairer's claim that the Tees "acts as a continual reminder of life's natural pace and level—almost a democratising principle" (210). Indeed, there is nothing natural about a river that has been artificially halted to form a lake.

I extend the prison/labouring-class metaphor to consider the ways in which the prison also represents the limits of writing in the topographical form, and broadly, in a masculinist literary tradition. I consider this idea extensively in Chapters 2 and 3, for Wilson, Smith, and Jameson all wrote in literary traditions that typically excluded female writers. I have already discussed how the masculinist constraints of the topographical form (i.e., distance, didacticism, unbiased natural description) are largely rigid and potentially oppressive, but the fact that they have been established by prolific male writers underscores the unstable nature of female authorship in the late eighteenth-century. Indeed, scholars[4] have observed that Wilson pays tribute to Pope in *Teisa*, but none have noted the obstacles attached to engaging with this tradition. By addressing the conventions of the topographical tradition throughout this chapter, I hope to have made clear that form/literary tradition can, indeed, function as a prison of sorts. Furthermore, this wide-reaching metaphor falls into what Keegan refers to as a "hybrid discourse" in labouring class nature poetry, which is "articulated by speaking subjects who are aware of their

[4] Robert Aubin, *Topographical Poetry* (235); David Fairer, *Economies of Landscape* (211); Bridget Keegan, *British Labouring Class Nature Poetry*.

cultural marginalization as they turn to nature as a resource to challenge or overcome their marginalization" (7). Wilson's depiction of confined salmon, therefore, offers another means of self-representation.

I conclude with a reflection on the epigraph of this chapter, which derives from a contested moment in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (*VRW*) where she states, "I pay particular attention to those in the middle class, because they appear to be in the most natural state" (40). It is the link between class and what is considered "natural" that has perplexed feminist critics. Though *VRW* is overall considered a remarkable proto-feminist pillar and necessary argument in favour of women's education, Wollstonecraft's choice to exclusively address middle-class women "has often been taken as a move to lend her own stratum of society normative status to the exclusion of differently situated women" (K. Wilcox 454). Landry, for example, argues that Wollstonecraft is flawed in offering her philosophy to the class to "which she herself belongs and which she identifies as the class most worthy of imitation" (*Muses* 266). In response to this critique, K. Wilcox defends Wollstonecraft's intent and states that rather than privileging the middle-class woman as "most natural," Wollstonecraft aims her philosophy to the women that are "least distorted by the effects of class" (455). To further defend Wollstonecraft, I add that her middle-class focus is an attempt to enact situated knowledge. By speaking from and for the middle-class, Wollstonecraft leads with her subjective experience and avoids appropriating the Other.

Batchelor argues that Wollstonecraft actually spent much of her literary career interrogating the gendered division of labour; "it can be surprising to the modern reader that so much of the *Vindication* is, in fact, devoted to valorizing working women as modern-day heroes" (118). For example, Wollstonecraft claims

> Many poor women maintain their children by the sweat of their brow, and keep together families that the vices of the fathers would have scattered abroad; but gentlewomen are too indolent to be actively virtuous, and are softened rather than refined by civilization. Indeed the good sense which I have met with among the poor women who have had few advantages of education, and yet have acted heroically, strongly confirmed me in the opinion, that trifling employments have rendered woman a trifler. (82)

This excerpt suggests that labouring-class women occupy an admirable position in society due to their ability to work and maintain domestic duties. Though this passage risks idealizing the lives of labouring-class women, Wollstonecraft's argument that women should have access to the public realm remains strong. However, it is problematic to overlook the inherent classism present in Wollstonecraft's text, for it speaks less to her personal prejudices and more to late-eighteenth century class ideologies as a whole. Therefore, Landry's suggestion that "no feminist literary history that seeks to trace a 'female' tradition while remaining blind to the operation of class difference, conflict, and deliberate or unconscious repression will come close to giving a sufficiently nuanced account of women's literary history" continues to be pertinent to feminist scholarship (*Muses* 2).

This chapter has attempted to underscore the literary intersections of labouring-class writing, gender, and the depiction of rivers in Anne Wilson's topographical poem *Teisa: A Descriptive Poem of the River Teese, Its Towns and Antiquities*. Napier argues that "loco-descriptive poems, prospect poems, pastorals, georgics—all of these modes and the literary controversies about them—call attention to the weight of place in this period, to the significance of environment, whether that environment be stylized, imitative, politicized, personalized, or simply aestheticized, for good or for ill" (15). Indeed, the importance of place cannot be overstated in a poem where a geographical

location provides an author with a means to simultaneously unfold so many overlapping issues of the time period. My argument has traced the ways in which place is tied to social inequality, gendered labour, literary tradition, and Wilson's role amidst it all. Though Napier's theory of form has guided my engagement with the poem and the masculinist literary tradition, my ecofeminist lens has informed my analysis of key moments in *Teisa*, such as Wilson's depictions of the Muse, corrupt landowners, and riparian labour. The labouring-class river, ultimately, offers Wilson a medium to explore the conflicting constraints of gender, class, and nature in an industrial, hierarchal, and patriarchal late-eighteenth-century society.

Chapter 2

The Melancholic River: The River Arun and Literary Agents of Patriarchy in Charlotte Smith's Arun River Sonnets

Then, from thy wild-wood banks, Aruna! roving,
Thy thymy downs with sportive steps I sought,
And Nature's charms, with artless transport loving,
Sung like the birds, unheeded and untaught.

But now the Springtide's pleasant hours returning,
Serve to awaken me to sharper pain…
Charlotte Smith, "April" (29-34)

Though Charlotte Smith published the first edition of *Elegiac Sonnets and Other Poems* in 1784, and therefore, technically during the final years of the eighteenth-century, she "was the first poet in England whom in retrospect we would call Romantic" because "she established enduring patterns of thought and conventions that became norms for the period" (Curran, "Introduction" xix). Such Romantic patterning could include the ways in which the Sussex-born poet connects with the natural world, her passionate engagement with emotions, and the sense of solitude which pervades her poems. Indeed, as Sarah M. Zimmerman notes, "the qualities responsible for Smith's appeal to William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge—solitariness, an attraction to natural scenes, and an emphasis on feeling—are recognizable in foundational accounts of Romantic lyricism" (42). Smith is considered "a poet of place and 'rural nature'" and is primarily known for "a literary Romanticism grounded on the expression of intense feeling" (Roberts, *Form* 2; Mellor 5). Smith's innovative use of these Romantic conventions caused her to be one of the most renowned female writers of her time.

Moreover, she "has in recent years come to be seen as one of the most paradigmatic literary sources revealing the artistic constructedness of gender" (Ozdemir 437). Such recognition of Smith's literary influence on both Romanticism and gender relations in the eighteenth-century makes her an exemplary writer to revisit in this thesis.

Raised in a middle-upper class environment, Smith's "youth was idyllic, lavishly situated between her father's London townhouse and Sussex estates, and indulged with the best of what then passed for a girl's education" (Curran, "Introduction" xix). The privileges Smith experienced during her progressive and pampered childhood did not last, however, for her wellbeing was later hindered by the dire circumstances of her marriage: "[Smith] was the voice of an intelligent, cultured woman, forced early into marriage to a spendthrift sot, who financially ruined and serially impregnated her, and left her to write ceaselessly, to sustain herself and her many children" (Wolfson 444). Though Anne Wilson is the most stereotypical labouring-class writer that I study in my thesis, Smith's financial dependency on her occupation as writer, as well as her gendered domestic duties, arguably situate her in this demographic as well. Jennie Batchelor discusses this idea at length, observing that Smith "wrestled with questions surrounding the nature and cultural status of women's work more than any other woman writer of her generation" (67). Her miserable marriage, indeed, served as a catalyst for the poet's urge to write, as "in 1784 at the age of 35, she found herself in severe financial straits as a result of her husband's embezzlement of a trust fund set up by his father (for which crime he was imprisoned)" (Brooks 13). She produced *Elegiac Sonnets* in the same year—the first of numerous successful editions.

Many of Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets* follow the Petrarchan form, that is, a sonnet that contains an opening octave (in which a problem or situation is introduced) and a closing sestet (in which a resolution is presented) (Abrams and Harpham 370). So renowned was Smith's use of this sonnet

form that Mary Anne Myers names her the "Petrarch for her era," honouring her emulation of the influential Renaissance Italian poet (239). This poetic form, however, was not necessarily appreciated during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries; before embarking on his own "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," "Wordsworth indeed claimed to have viewed sonnet writing as an almost procrastinatory activity" and once considered the form to be "egregiously absurd" (Robinson 449). Furthermore, late eighteenth-century readers apparently considered sonnets to be "mawkish effusions." Despite these critiques of the sonnet form, Smith's reputation did not suffer in the 1800s, as evidenced by the admiration she received from her successful male counterparts. As many scholars have pointed out,[5] Samuel Taylor Coleridge credits Charlotte Smith and William Lisle Bowles as the first poets who "made the Sonnet popular among the present English" (1139). These scholars have also noted that Wordsworth shared in Coleridge's praise, for he states that Smith was a poet "to whom English verse is under greater obligations than are likely to be acknowledged or even remembered" (*Note* 403). Despite this kind recognition, Wordsworth himself was reluctant to credit Smith when it came to his own poetry; he "never publicly acknowledged any debt to Smith or William Lisle Bowles…claiming instead Milton as his precursor" (Robinson 449). But, like Stella Brooks, "I do not…wish to praise Charlotte Smith's work by using that of her male contemporaries as model and measure" (13-14). My discussion, rather, assesses Smith's writing based on the content and function of her sonnets as they engage matters of gender, nature, and emotion.

Smith contributes four river-sonnets to the Romantic circle that address the river of her childhood home in West Sussex, England: the River Arun. In examining these sonnets, numerous scholars[6] have addressed the way Smith pays tribute to her male poetic predecessors who also

[5] Bethan Roberts, *Charlotte Smith and the Sonnet: Form, Place and Tradition* (1-2); Stuart Curran, "Introduction" of *Poems of Charlotte Smith, The Women Writers in English, 1350-1850* (xix); Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (58); Sarah M. Zimmerman, *Romanticism, Lyricism, and History* (42).
[6] Roberts, *Form*; Curran, "Intertextualities"; Pinch, *Strange*, to name a few.

incorporate the Arun in their poetics: Thomas Otway, William Collins, and William Hayley. While this association with a predominantly male literary tradition may appear overwhelmingly androcentric on the part of both Smith and Romanticist scholars, the relationships that Smith and her sonnets build with these writers is significant on a personal and literary level. Otway and Collins, for example, shared similarly bleak adulthoods as Smith: Otway "died in abject poverty" and Collins "suffered from a nervous disorder" (Roberts, *Form* 55). Moreover, both male writers were formally educated at Winchester College and Oxford, and both were subject to premature deaths. Given Smith's own literary education and persistent hardships, it is no doubt that she was able to empathize with their experiences and paid tribute to them in her Arun sequence accordingly. Shifting the dialogue from narratives of honouring the literary past, Roberts instead reads Smith's Arun sequence as a means of demonstrating the patriarchal constraints of the literary tradition, for Smith "presents the riverside as a male poetic space" ("Literary" 655). In the same vein, Katherine Pratt suggests that "the phantom of Thomas Otway…haunts several sonnets" (564). Essentially, my assertions, and those of Roberts and Pratt, transform the discussion of what the sonnet may be *trying* to do (paying tribute to literary predecessors) to what the sonnet may *actually* be doing (demonstrating the patriarchal shadows cast upon nature and female authors). These two different readings have the capacity to be simultaneously true, making for a complex engagement with the Arun sonnets' depictions of gendered and literary history.

This chapter investigates the influence that a looming patriarchal atmosphere has on nature, the speaker,[7] and the spirit of the Arun. As with many works in the *Elegiac Sonnets*

[7] I use "Smith" and the "speaker of the poem" interchangeably throughout this chapter due to the autobiographical nature of her poems. For example, in the preface of the sixth edition, Smith states: "I wrote mournfully because I was unhappy—And I have unfortunately no reason yet, though nine years have since elapsed, to *change my tone*" (5, original emphasis).

collection, all four sonnets narrate some form of grief, melancholy, or, as will be discussed later, fear. Though Smith is known for her "incessant invocation of loss, transience, and desire for oblivion," my literary analysis will demonstrate how the sombre state of her poems is inflated by the grief imbued by her predecessors (Roberts, "Literary" 67). Like Wilson, Smith is forced to write in a masculinist tradition. But it is not just Smith's poetic persona that bears the burden of this oppressive male sorrow, for the poems depict the riverside and the spirit of the Arun as being similarly affected. In drawing attention to the negative impacts of male sorrow on nature, I do not wish to minimize or dismiss the pain endured by men and male bodies—indeed, it is imperative to acknowledge and validate mental and emotional challenges of all genders—but I do hope to demonstrate how unresolved and uncontained grief spread by agents of patriarchy in the Romantic period served to subjugate both women and nature. My ecofeminist framework will guide my analysis of this link between masculine dominion, the landscape, and female distress prevalent in *Elegiac Sonnets*. Through close readings of each of the four sonnets, this chapter asserts that Smith's Arun sequence illuminates critical aspects of late eighteenth-century gender-based emotional distress through its depiction of the sentient, feminine, and melancholic Arun.

Because this chapter and Smith's sonnets rely so heavily on the Arun as a motif, it is important to contextualize the river and its relationship with culture over time. In particular, the etymology of the river offers an interesting perspective to incorporate into my literary analysis. Brian Morton notes the common misconception that Arun is named after the neighbouring townsite, Arundel. In actuality, "the Roman name for the river was Trisantona…This relates to two aspects of the river, *Trisanto* being the southern tidal flood plain, whose route 'wanders' or 'trespasses' and the 'flowing' (*arno*) northern region," altogether translating to "Great Wanderer" (33; 31). On par with the Romantic taste for solitude, contemplation, and wanderlust, the Great Wanderer's etymology

fulfills poetic conventions. Indeed, "Smith's river – upstream from the more populated, fished, and navigable Arun – is a peaceful, gentle, melancholy, and largely overlooked place of poetry" (Roberts, *Form* 45). Noting the personal significance of the Arun in Smith's life, Roberts states that it was "the river of her childhood" (*Form* 43). Like so many rivers around the world, today "the River Arun owes its form to the endeavors of generations upon generations of people, who have, since Neolithic times, attempted to tame the Great Wanderer, control its flooding and create new farmland" (Morton 34). As a result of this long history of environmental manipulation, the river contains "darkly stained outflowing water, loaded with loam and sediments from farmlands upstream" (Morton 117). Altogether, "understanding this topography is important, for the way Smith's sonnets move through it informs their intertextual relationships" (Roberts, *Form* 43).

With the physical, cultural, and personal significance of rivers in mind, this chapter moves to showcase the complexity of Smith's use of riparian symbolism as a means to blur the nature/culture dualism in the first sonnet of the sequence, Sonnet XXVI "To the River Arun":

> On thy wild banks, by frequent torrents worn,
> No glittering fanes, or marble domes appear,
> Yet shall the mournful Muse thy course adorn,
> And still to her thy rustic waves be dear.
> For with the infant Otway, lingering here,
> Of early woes she bade her votary dream,
> While thy low murmurs sooth'd his pensive ear,
> And still the poet—consecrates the stream.
> Beneath the oak and birch that fringe thy side,
> The first-born violets of the year shall spring;

And in thy hazles, bending o'er the tide,

The earliest nightingale delight [*sic*] to sing;

While kindred spirits, pitying, shall relate

Thy Otway's sorrows, and lament his fate!

This carefully detailed riverside provides a critical foundation on which the remainder of the sonnet and my analysis build. Of note are the "first born violets," the "earliest nightingale," and the trees that decorate this poem (10; 12). With blooming flowers and singing birds, the poem conjures images of Spring through depictions of new life. A closer look, however, demonstrates conflicting realities. In *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols,* Michael Ferber explains the many meanings that violets have traditionally held. One symbolic meaning in particular stands out: "On March 22, at the beginning of spring, the Romans celebrated the *dies violaris*, the day on which violets were put on graves…The violet's appearance in early spring, its brief life, and its dark blood-like colour lent it naturally to the cult of the dead" (Ferber 236). Rather than signifying birth, the violets Smith refers to may actually represent untimely death. This birth/death dualism is on par with Smith's own feelings toward springtime, for in a footnote to her poem "April" she writes: "The return of spring, which awakens many to new sentiments of pleasure, now serves only to remind *me* of past misery. This sensation is common to the wretched—and too many poets have felt it in all its force" (119). Additionally, this violet symbolism resonates with the image of "the infant Otway," in which Smith's depictions of flowers and youth converge to symbolize the brief life span of the poet (5). It appears, therefore, that the riverside imitates both Otway's tragedy and the weight of seeing the world as a poet, in general.

The nightingale—perhaps one of the most widely employed symbols not only in Romanticism, but in the body of English literature as a whole—also serves to disturb the setting of the riverside. Following the conventions of Greek and Latin poetry, Smith's sonnet refers to the nightingale's "beautiful voice, its mournfulness, its presence in early spring, and/or its invisibility, hiding among thickets or leafy trees," as she writes "And in thy hazles, bending o'er the tide, / The earliest nightingale delight to sing" (Ferber 146; Smith 11-12). Though Smith does not directly describe the nightingale's song as mournful, she does illustrate an eerie image of a bird singing amidst "spirits pitying" Otway's tragedy (13). Additionally, like the violet, the nightingale has represented youth and untimely death in literary works, for "the Greeks…imagined one of [the nightingale's] 'words' to be the name of a lost child"[8] (Ferber 145). Smith, therefore, spends a great deal of effort to allude to grief and loss at a young age, likely in relation to Otway and perhaps her own lost youth, as well.

Since violets have additionally symbolized modesty due to their preference for "out-of-the-way shady places," their safety is implicitly at risk in this sonnet (Ferber 237). Moreover, Ferber notes that this symbolic shyness influenced both Wordsworth and John Keats to associate violets with some sort of "secrecy" (237). The association of violets with shyness and secrecy becomes interesting because the speaker behaves in a similar way by distancing herself from the centre of the poem—an aspect that Wilson would have dealt with in the topographical form, but not one demanded by sonnet conventions. Indeed, despite implications that the speaker is located on the riverside, Roberts notes Smith's lack of "I" in her Arun sequence (*Form* 52). For Roberts, the lack of "I" indicates "an underlying personal and poetic disconnect from the landscape" (*Form* 52). Rather than interpreting this quiet literary persona as part of Smith's effort to

[8] Relating to this symbolism, Ferber notes from the Odyssey the myth of Aedon: "Aedon in a mad fit killed her son Itylos and now, changed into a nightingale, pours out a mournful song" (145).

disconnect herself from the land and waterscape, I argue that there is another relationship between Smith and the riverside at play here. Because Smith's poetic persona is not present in the poem, and because the violets are difficult to spot along the riverside, I believe that her use of symbolism offers another means of linking herself to the landscape. Both narrator and flower are particularly hard to discern compared to the towering trees and the lingering presence of male poets. Thus, Smith's lack of a poetic "I" functions to circumvent any direct communication of the hardships of her position as a female writer in the late eighteenth-century, and instead requires the reader to think critically about how gendered notions relate to the environment.

In addition to Smith's subversive illustration of the natural, her employment of religious imagery further disrupts the masculinist presence along the riverside. Smith begins, importantly, by distinguishing the river's spirit from Christianity: the Arun does *not* have "glittering fanes" nor "marble domes" that would signify the confines of the Anglican church (2). This distinction aids in Smith's work to construct the river's agency because "neither women nor water were seen as sacred in patriarchal religions," aside from "the water blessed by a sexually abstinent male priest" (Gaard 160). Women and water are not only undervalued but also subjugated in patriarchal religions; indeed, "the intensifying efforts to direct water to serve human needs…came hand in hand with more hierarchical social arrangements and with patriarchal religions promoting notions of human 'dominion' over feminized nature" (Strang, "Re-Imagining" 204). Therefore, by distinguishing the river from the church, Smith frees the Arun from patriarchal religious ties. However, this separation of the Arun from religious symbolism does not mean that the river has lost spiritual value, for "the poet—consecrates the stream" (8). Because the poet consecrates the stream (i.e., dedicates the river "to some sacred or religious purpose" which gives "the object itself a character of holiness" (OED 1a)), the river becomes valued in the same way as "glittering domes" and "marble fanes"

might be (Smith 2). Smith, by result, positions the river as an object worthy of worship, while ensuring that it remains distinct from patriarchal tradition.

Natural and religious imagery further collide in Smith's invocation of the trees in this sonnet, effectively blurring the nature/culture dichotomy that is otherwise prevalent in Romantic poetry. While oak, birch, and hazel trees each carry unique symbolic meanings, Smith's grouping of all three in the sonnet's sestet calls for a more synthesized interpretation. Accordingly, I believe a case may be made for the ways in which all three trees signify people; "in the Bible a tree often stands for a person, usually to distinguish the godly from the ungodly" (Ferber 230). Based on this symbolic use of trees in religious scripture, and considering the religious imagery throughout the sonnet series, these three trees may well signify the three male poets that Smith associates with the river, i.e., Otway, Collins, and Hayley. The oak and the birch trees loom over the violets, while the hazel tree bends "o'er the tide" (11). In one sense, these trees seem to serve a protective purpose, for violets require shade to blossom and the hazel tree provides safety for the nightingale to rest; though the sturdiness, longevity, and size of the trees arguably provide a second metaphor for the overpowering force of the masculine literary presence. Much like the violets, female poets—however vibrant and worthy of notice—are overshadowed. Overall, Smith's intertwining of ecological and religious symbolism produces poignant gendered metaphors that reveal that her Arun sequence is doing more than simply honouring the literary past.

The complex relationship between the poet's honouring of the literary past and critiquing it deepens the melancholia that pervades the riparian environment. Sonnet 26 likely takes inspiration from Collins' "Ode to Pity," for he wrote a similar sentiment about Otway's presence along the Arun. Several years prior to Smith's publication, Collins wrote of Otway that "Wild Arun too

has heard thy strains / And Echo, 'midst my native plains, / Been soothed by Pity's lute" (50-51). In Collins's version, the river is "soothed" by or soothes the lingering ghost of Otway. For Collins, the river and ghostly poet seem to have a relatively safe relationship. This ode provides a sense of security that is reconsidered and ultimately lost in Smith's eerie alternative portrayal: "kindred spirits, pitying, shall relate / Thy Otway's sorrows, and lament his fate!" (Smith 13-14). Here, the Arun's role is to mourn the loss of a male poet; the kindred spirits of the river relate to, lament, and pity the late Otway, altogether conveying a deep sense of melancholy that threatens the wellbeing of the river. Pratt observes the ecofeminist implications, for "the kindred spirit is a female speaker" (571). Ultimately, the discrepancy between the two poems highlights the patriarchal conditions in which Smith wrote, and reveals the ways in which gender moderates one's relationship with nature and poetics. Much like the way Wilson manipulates the conventions of the topographical form, Smith utilizes the natural scenery to communicate her personal tides of emotion.

After the ecological and religious symbolism that complicates the previously examined sonnet, Sonnet XXX "To the River Arun" addresses the link between a domineering masculine literary presence and capitalist culture:

> Be the proud Thames of trade the busy mart!
> Arun! to thee will other praise belong;
> Dear to the lover's, and the mourner's heart,
> And ever sacred to the sons of song!
> Thy banks romantic hopeless Love shall seek,
> Where o'er the rocks the mantling bindwith flaunts;
> And Sorrow's drooping form and faded cheek

Choose on thy willow'd shore her lonely haunts!

Banks! which inspired thy Otway's plaintive strain!

Wilds!—whose lorn echoes learn'd the deeper tone

Of Collins' powerful shell! yet once again

Another poet—Hayley is thine own!

Thy classic stream anew shall hear a lay,

Bright as its waves, and various as its way!

In the first two lines, Smith draws attention to the ways in which rivers have been commodified by "trade," notably using the Thames as her focal point (1). By stating that "other praise belong[s]" to the Arun, Smith communicates that the river's value is not based on its economic possibilities (2). Implicitly, then, the Thames cannot be "dear to the lover's and the mourner's heart" due to the impact of human manipulation on the riparian environment and the heavy boat traffic from trading ports (3). Because the Thames has been commodified, it seems to have lost the sentimental and poetic value that the Arun's unspoilt riverside is better equipped to provide. While this idea appears to follow the Romantic philosophy of cultural primitivism, the Arun sequence as a whole undermines this Romantic convention. At the time Smith crafted this sonnet, the Arun had not yet undergone "extensive sculpting and shaping by human beings," but I find that that it is vulnerable to another form of destructive capitalism—that of literary commodification (Edgeworth and Benjamin 162).

In Smith's sonnet, the Arun empathizes with the sorrow that pervades—or, as I will argue, commodifies—her river banks. This sonnet is the first and only poem in the Arun sequence in which all three of Smith's literary predecessors pay the river a visit, emphasizing the enduring efforts that have been made to benefit from the Arun while bringing forth a surge of

melancholia. The poem is overwhelmingly freighted with words of grief: “hopeless Love” and “Sorrow’s drooping form and faded cheek” both tell of the emotions that poets have sought from and projected onto the riverside (5; 7). Even prior to mentioning the poets, Smith suggests that the Arun itself has an innate sense of melancholy; for example, it is the riverbank that “inspired thy Otway's plaintive strain” (9). Similarly, the “Wilds” had already possessed “lorn echoes” (10). It is certainly notable that Arun’s echoes “learned the deeper tone / Of Collins' powerful shell” in the sense that the male literary presence seems to inflate the river’s melancholia (10-11). However, these pre-existing mournful and lonely aspects of the river signify the conditions to which the river has already been subject. By suggesting that the Arun was grief-stricken prior to its contact with male poets, Smith partially alleviates blame placed upon the poets themselves, and instead gestures toward a larger system that functions to oppress nature. Thus, I conclude that Sonnet XXX demonstrates the ways in which capitalist and patriarchal systems jointly subjugate both women and nature.

In a strategic subversion of the sonnet form, Smith ends this sonnet by questioning the authority of the literary tradition. Though her work is often located solely in the Petrarchan tradition, Smith’s closing couplet contains an “epigrammatic turn” that ironically sums up the entire poem. This turn is similar to that which structures and informs the Shakespearean sonnet. Smith writes: “Thy classic stream anew shall hear a lay, / Bright as its waves, and various as its way” (13-14). The surge of melancholia that occurs prior to this couplet is completely undermined by the bright and various lay (i.e., “song”), making for a highly ironic conclusion that offers a confused sense of happiness. Contrary to the harmful poet-river relationships that arise elsewhere in the poems, this couplet seems to depict a symbiotic relationship between poet and river; that the song heard by the Arun is both as “bright” and “various” as the river itself

suggests either that the Arun has played an influential role in the writing of the song, or that the poet was able to authentically represent an unspeaking entity. Either way, it seems that the poet and the river come together in harmony to produce a harmonious conclusion. However, I am hesitant to suggest that Smith's concluding couplet be read as an autonomous resolution in which the river can both persevere against a melancholic atmosphere and rectify a harmful relationship with the masculinist literary tradition. It is, after all, meant to be ironic. Where this couplet does assert agency is through its subversive merging of two distinct sonnet traditions stemming from Petrarch and Shakespeare. Thus, Sonnet XXX joins *Teisa* in transgressing a history of literary conventions.

Known for writing about her "intense sorrow," Smith titles the third sonnet in the Arun sequence "To Melancholy," subtitled "Written on the Banks of the Arun October 1785" (Zimmerman 54). Sonnet XXXII is quintessential Smith, for it "displays especially acutely the connection between melancholy and the literary transmission that runs through the *Elegiac Sonnets*" (Pinch 65). She offers a lens into the dualistic nature of asserting one's selfhood while experiencing the emotional challenges of literary marginalization:

> When latest Autumn spreads her evening veil,
> And the grey mists from these dim waves arise,
> I love to listen to the hollow sighs,
> Thro' the half-leafless wood that breathes the gale:
> For at such hours the shadowy phantom pale,
> Oft seems to fleet before the poet's eyes;
> Strange sounds are heard, and mournful melodies,
> As of night-wanderers, who their woes bewail!

Here, by his native stream, at such an hour,

Pity's own Otway I methinks could meet,

And hear his deep sighs swell the sadden'd wind!

O Melancholy!—such thy magic power,

That to the soul these dreams are often sweet,

And soothe the pensive visionary mind!

With words such as "mournful," "woes," and "sadden'd," this sonnet is highly melancholic (7; 8; 11). The poem's gothic atmosphere further enhances this mood. Setting the scene in "latest Autumn," Smith immediately conjures images of the final stages of dying, with metaphorical death waiting on the horizon (1). Adding to this dreary atmosphere, Smith engages the senses: she can hear "hollow sighs" and "strange sounds," and she can see "the shadowy phantom pale" (3; 7; 5). These visceral aspects suggest that the speaker is not alone along the riverside but is instead surrounded by supernatural spirits of both nature and of her literary predecessor. By detailing the liveliness of the riverside, Smith resists the conventional Romantic taste for solitude in nature. Furthermore, the sonnet's concluding sestet reveals that Smith is in conversation with her surroundings rather than being haunted by them. Her use of punctuation emphasizes this dialogue. The three exclamation points mark the ending of clauses that occupy half the lines in the sestet, making them substantial elements of her emotional expression. Indeed, in numerous poems in *Elegiac Sonnets* "[readers] can also 'hear' her: working within the conventions of sensibility, Smith's liberal use of exclamations, sighs, and pauses strives to approximate the cadences of spoken language" (Zimmerman 48). Because Smith documents the relationship between intense emotional expression, the natural world, and a supernatural setting, her most

melancholic sonnet in the Arun sequence is also the one that engages with the tradition of the sublime.

I am intrigued by the sublime as it relates to Smith's emotionality because, as Pipkin states, "any attempt to understand the complex position of women poets in the intertextual network of British Romanticism must take into account the gendered tropes of the sublime which circumscribe the aesthetic possibilities of female authorship in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries" (597). The legacy of the sublime can be partially credited to Edmund Burke and his exceptionally influential book, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. In this text, Burke defines the sublime as "whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the idea of pain, and danger" (58). For Burke, this idea manifests as a dichotomy; "we love what is beautiful for submitting to us, for being *less* than we are; we react with dread and awe to what is sublime because of its appearing greater than we are, for being *more*, and making us acknowledge its power" (Ferguson 8-9). Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that the binary opposition of the sublime and the beautiful parallels that of the dominant masculine and subordinate feminine. Because aesthetic discourse was highly entangled in eighteenth-century understandings of gender, the sublime is a particularly ambivalent tradition for Smith to engage in. But, as Daniel Froid notices, Smith does not narrate a typically masculinist vision of the sublime; rather, "Smith grounds seemingly sublime scenes in a sense of melancholy, alluding to personal miseries that alienate the female speakers, restrict or suspend their agency, and ultimately curtail the possibility of a sublime encounter" (605). In this sense, Smith's "subdued feelings" mute the sublime, and in doing so, offer an alternative emotional engagement with the environment around her (Froid 610).

It is interesting that sublime qualities appear in a sonnet that seems to be a turning point in the Arun sequence. Signalling a claim to selfhood, the absence of the poetic "I" in the Arun sonnets

comes to an end; "the speaker of this poem is much more palpably present in the scene than in most of Smith's nature sonnets" (Pinch 65). For example, Smith writes of enjoying the solitude and sentience of the land, stating "I love to listen to the hollow sighs, / Thro' the half-leafless wood that breathes the gale" (3-4). Not only does her use of the "I" finally engage with situated knowledges by recognizing her positionality, but it also poses a problem in fulfilling conventions of the sublime. This couplet, in addition to the multiple other ghostly descriptors throughout the sequence, illustrates a chilling scene. In theory, this image *should* elicit a sublime experience according to Burkean conventions. Smith, however, does not uphold expectations concerning emotional reactions to sublime aesthetics, and instead "love[s] to listen" to the lively environment around her. Mellor suggests that female Romantics who invoke the sublime offer a "domestic sublime," that is, that they locate sublime experiences within the home to communicate the lack of security offered by the domestic realm (94). Locating herself along the river, Smith's depiction of the sublime is arguably more complex and less constrained to the domestic realm than Mellor's generalizing claim would suggest. I favour Froid's argument, that is, "that in order to show the limitations of the sublime, and specifically its gendered implications, Smith must deliberately show seemingly sublime experiences to be neither extravagant nor intense but instead noncathartic and estranging" (606-7). Indeed, "Smith develops an alternative to the sublime, 'a type of wonderment' that resists the need to assert one's power over what one sees" (Ruwe qtd. in Froid 610). Smith's resistance to the sublime, therefore, is reflective of her situated knowledge.

Despite her eventual assertion of self through her use of the "I" pronoun, and her sonnets' "deflated version of the sublime feeling," Smith reminds readers that this emotional experience is shadowed by a masculinist literary tradition (Froid 605). For example, when she states that she is

"Here, by *his* native stream," the possessive pronoun presents a few possibilities (9, my emphasis). Smith may be suggesting that Otway has a degree of ownership over the Arun (likely more metaphorical than literal), though I am unsure that she would accuse a predecessor whom she respects of such entitlement. Alternatively, she may be suggesting that Otway has access to a strong sense of belonging on the riverside that Smith is alienated from. Either way, the ethics of the literary tradition are in question. Otway's overbearing presence continues when Smith can "hear his deep sighs swell the sadden'd wind!" (11). According to Pinch, this line suggests that "literary voices are naturalized and absorbed into the landscape" (65); however, I am not convinced that this process is natural nor consensual. On the contrary, this line demonstrates the ways in which a looming masculinist presence on the riverside inflates the atmosphere with melancholy and transforms a natural environment into an unwelcoming and undesirable area.

The spiritual foreshadowing present in Sonnet XXVI is fully realized in the final poem of this sequence, Sonnet XXXIII. Turning away from religious symbolism, Smith invokes Greek mythology in her last sonnet of the Arun series in the form of a naiad; hence the title "To the Naiad of the Arun." To clarify, a naiad is simply another name for a river nymph, which according to Mircea Eliade, was a name signifying "the divinities of all flowing waters, of all springs and of all fountains" (204). Moreover, river nymphs were very much feared as "dangerous" creatures because "anyone who saw them in the heat of midday became mentally deranged [as] the middle of the day was the moment when the nymphs manifested themselves" (205). In a similar, though less threatening vein, Eliade explains that "poets…were the friends of the nymphs" because "the water over which [the nymphs] presided possessed a mysterious potency which filled men with enthusiastic passion" (281). The myth of Lorelei and the Rhine River, for example, is "an invention of German Romanticism" that tells of an enchanting maiden who led a sailor to his death using her beauty and "irresistible power"

(Dieterle 96; Ruland 98). This story is just one of many, as Strang states that "for *most* of our history, prior to the emergence of agriculture…rivers were often personified as important deities" ("Re-Imagining" 204). Emphasizing the importance of this history, Bate explains that "myths are necessary imaginings, exemplary stories which help our species to make sense of its place in the world. Myths endure so long as they perform helpful work" (*Song* 25-6). And, thus, Smith's myth tells her own story:

> Go, rural Naiad! wind thy stream along
> Thro' woods and wilds: then seek the ocean caves
> Where sea-nymphs meet their coral rocks among,
> To boast the various honors of their waves!
> 'Tis but a little, o'er thy shallow tide,
> That toiling trade her burden'd vessel leads;
> But laurels grow luxuriant on thy side,
> And letters live along thy classic meads.
> Lo! where 'mid British bards thy natives shine!
> And now another poet helps to raise
> Thy glory high—the poet of the MINE!
> Whose brilliant talents are his smallest praise:
> And who, to all that genius can impart,
> Adds the cool head, and the unblemish'd heart!

Despite the relentless, unforgiving, and autonomous nature of the river naiad/nymph myths that I have described above, Smith suggests here that there is a sense of danger looming over the Arun, and that the nymph itself is at risk: the speaker shouts "Go, rural Naiad!" (1). The exclamation

point adds a sense of urgency. Though indirectly, the trio of male poets pervade this sonnet as well, for Smith confirms in a footnote to the sonnet that the "British bards" are, indeed, "Otway, Collins, and Hayley," making the poem "another celebration of the male accomplishment to which the Arun has given rise" (Roberts, "Literary" 660). Moreover, Roberts notes that the line stating "poet of the Mine" makes reference to John Sargent and his dramatic poem "The Mine." Therefore, the sonnet which has the most apparent female presence is largely about a male-occupied space. Thinking back to the myth of Lorelei, one should note that despite her powerful and relentless nature, her story ends with her being presumably seized[9] by "four hardy bold warriors" (Ruland 100). With the context of Lorelei's story, it is no wonder that Smith encourages the naiad to leave the river space for safety, making for a disheartening conclusion to a difficult sonnet sequence.

Importantly, however, Smith does not advocate for the nymph to disappear, but rather to "seek the ocean waves" (2). It seems that, while the Arun lacks security, there is a space beyond that may provide freedom for the naiad. Indeed, Roberts suggests that in contrast to the male-dominated riverside that Smith portrays in the first three poems, this sonnet demonstrates how "the sea constitutes a nonlinear, nonhierarchical space" ("Literary" 664). This association of the sea with the feminine is not exclusive to Smith's poetry, for "seeing the sea as a feminine force and flux has a storied history in the crosscurrents of Judeo-Christian thought, Enlightenment philosophy, and natural scientific epistemology" (Helmreich 29). In Norse stories, as well, the female sea is "alluring, self-willed, determined, and destructive" (Quinn qtd. in Helmreich 33). As Roberts notes, the sea space not only "frees Smith from the male literary tradition's alienating effects," but I would suggest there are also hints of empowerment associated with the sea

[9] It is unclear in the myth if they caught the maiden or if she was washed away by the storm; regardless, the men brought the "tidings of this wonderful event" (i.e., Lorelei's body) to the Count.

("Literary" 664): the reference to "the various honors of their waves!" conjures images of the British empire's naval forces and transforms them into euphoric female agency that emerges from distancing oneself from patriarchal shadows (Smith 4). Thus, Smith provides hope for an imagined oppression-free space in which women are able to celebrate themselves outside of the confines of a patriarchal society.

While there is hope to be found in this final sonnet, it is overwhelmingly bleak. The naiad may have a safe place to travel to, but she will be displaced from her home in the process. Additionally, Smith provides little consolation for the river's future health and wellbeing. If the sea constitutes a safe space, the Arun persists as an unsafe male-dominated realm. Since both Smith and the Arun share in the experience of functioning within a patriarchal shadow, Smith's own agency remains in flux by extension. Here, I would like once more to reflect on the myth of Lorelei who lingers as a ghostly figure after her body is seized. The myth states that "From this time forth, the Lorelei was never seen again. Only when night sheds her dark shadow on the hills, and the pale moon weaves a silver bridge over the deep green stream, then the voice of a woman, soft and low, is heard echoing from the weird heights of the rocks" (Ruland 102). Much like Otway, Lorelei remains a haunting presence on the land. Lorelei's indistinct voice becomes part of the place where she died, serving as a reminder of her life, death, and the problem of male violence. On one hand, Lorelei's echoes may serve as a means of resistance and resiliency despite attempts made by agents of patriarchy to silence her. On the other hand, a woman reduced to a disembodied voice does not indicate a particularly desirable future for women nor nature. Unlike Otway, her power and influence has been stripped.

Arguably, Wordsworth imagined Smith would experience a similar fate as Lorelei. Recalling his suggestion that Smith's impact on Romanticism would not be "acknowledged or

even remembered" to the extent that it should be, Wordsworth predicted that she, like Lorelei, would be rendered voiceless (*Note* 403). It is apparent that Smith transcended such expectations. Though Smith's agency was routinely hindered during her life, she left a legacy of texts that scholars are eagerly tending to. It is because of this outcome that I chose to begin this chapter with a passage from Smith's "April." In "April," the poet illustrates a peaceful spring scene with the river "roving," where "Nature's charms" are "Sung like birds" (29; 31; 32). This idyllic passage, however, is interrupted by Smith's ceaseless sense of melancholy: "the Springtides pleasant hours returning, / Serve to awaken me to sharper pain" (33-34). Thus, "April" articulates a contradiction in which Smith's emotions do not align with the natural world. She, therefore, posits herself as *un*natural, further speaking to the alienation she experienced in a literary tradition that was not made to serve women. There is a bittersweet quality to this excerpt that, arguably, functions as a metaphor to represent her lifespan and that of her work. Smith's suffering throughout life and her posthumous fame mimic the discomfort she articulates in "April." It is almost as if a truly joyful Spring is one that arrived after she passed away.

Ultimately, Smith's Arun sonnets demonstrate with great nuance the ways in which a patriarchal society impedes the health and wellbeing of both women and rivers. In my reading of a collection of poems where the land is simultaneously feminized and viewed as male property, I hope to have demonstrated how Smith's interweaving of the poet persona, the female Arun spirit, and male literary predecessors exemplifies how nature and women experience literary, social, and ecological subjugation. This attention to shared domination implicitly utilizes an ecofeminist framework. For this reason, I challenge Pinch's argument that it is "misguided to see Smith's poetry as even 'proto-feminist'" (71). In my discussion of Sonnet XXVI, I have analyzed the plant and animal symbolism surrounding the Arun to suggest that Smith's complex metaphors

often point to themes of gendered-based distress. In my reading of Sonnet XXX, I drew attention to the ways in which Smith links patriarchy to capitalism, and how these oppressive forces work together to inhibit the wellbeing of the river and the poet. I found that Sonnet XXXII was subversive in its engagement with gendered aesthetic values through Smith's use of sublime imagery. And finally, with the help of the German Romantic myth, my analysis suggested that Sonnet XXXIII reveals the lack of safety available for nature and women writers in a patriarchal society. Altogether, Smith's Arun River sonnets illuminate the ways in which social and ecological relationships are deeply intertwined.

Chapter 3

The Colonial River: Upper Canadian Rivers as Sites of Anti-Conquest Rhetoric in Anna Brownell Jameson's *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada*

My intention was to have given the result of what I had seen…

Anna Jameson, Preface to *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (1)

Diverging from the poetic modes of Anne Wilson and Charlotte Smith, I conclude my thesis with a study of Anna Brownell Jameson's 1838 transatlantic travel narrative of Upper Canada, *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (*WSSR*). Within this text, the Anglo-Irish writer details her journey in Canada from December 1836 to August 1837. She originally travelled to Canada at the request of her husband, Robert Jameson. He served as the Attorney-General for the British colony, and hoped his wife's arrival would "give his Toronto home the appearance of married solidarity" (Thomas, "Afterword" 591). Contrarily, Jameson had long felt that she and Robert were incompatible, and anticipated that the trip might lead "to some final separation agreement" (Fowler 146). Ultimately, her marriage proved unsalvageable (Fowler 150). As a prominent colonial figure, Robert and his politics were also unsurprisingly at odds with Jameson and her overt critiques of the Canadian government that appear throughout *WSSR*. For example, she claims that Toronto's ruling class is nothing but "a petty colonial oligarchy [and] a self-constituted aristocracy, based upon nothing real, nor even upon anything imaginary" (62). Jameson also laments the settler-colonial impulse to clear the land, and like Charlotte Smith, considers the ways in which the spirit of the environment is impacted by this harmful behaviour: "A Canadian settler *hates* a tree, regards it as his natural enemy, as something to be destroyed, eradicated, annihilated by all and any means…Alas! for the Dryads and Hamadryads of Canada!" (61). These fervorous critiques are merely fragments of Jameson's arsenal of politically-charged opinions in *WSSR*. Despite Jameson's distaste for the country's political climate,

the tree felling operation, and her tumultuous partnership with Robert, however, she sought and recorded rather sensational experiences during her time in Upper Canada. While she travelled independently from Robert, Jameson was never alone, for "at every stage along her route she found someone ready, or at least persuadable, to help her on her next stage" (Thomas, *Love* 133). Thus, *WSSR* unfolds across lakes, rivers, and lands that would be otherwise unnavigable for the unfamiliar traveller. Fiercely passionate and motivated to grow her literary career, Jameson aimed to immerse herself in Upper-Canadian landscapes and cultures—an act that, as I discuss below, Jameson readers have regarded as both subversive and deeply problematic.

Elizabeth A. Fay notes that eighteenth-century travel writing "came to denote a memoir-style approach to personal experience in neighbouring and exotic lands" (73). Noticing a gendered difference in the content of these accounts, Fay states that male travellers "documented their heroic explorations and discoveries" while female travellers "were read more for the discerning details they could provide about customs, dress, architecture, markets, music, and food" (76). For Fay, men's travel writing sought to inflate their sense of self, while women's travel writing offered a more holistic interpretation of a people or place. Further noting gendered differences, Patricia Jasen states that "the genre of travel writing was dominated by the works of men" (24). Moreover, Jasen illustrates the barrier that this masculinist tradition posed for female travel writers with a misogynistic excerpt from the *Quarterly Review*: "some of the most vigorous and forcible writing in the English language would lose all of its charm with a woman's name prefixed to it." Aware of her womanly disadvantage and discriminatory readership, Jameson prefaces *WSSR* with a modesty *topos*, that is, an "apology in which the woman writer denies her own authorial agency"[10] (Pender 1). Jameson approaches the reader with humility and a consciousness of preconceived notions about her gender: "This little book,

[10] Modesty *topoi* are not limited to female authors, but Patricia Pender notes that it appears more frequently in women's writing than in men's.

the mere result of much thoughtful idleness and many an idle thought, has grown up insensibly out of an accidental promise…and I am too sensible of its many deficiencies" (1). Accordingly, she adds, *WSSR* "is more particularly addressed to my own sex" (2). Though Jameson's apology may serve "to document patriarchal oppression in the period," Patricia Pender advocates for readings in which such apologies "function as 'authorial alibis' in the sense that they provide 'an excuse, a pretext, or a plea of innocence' to early modern strictures against women's authorship" (Pender 2; OED qtd. in Pender 3). Therefore, by diminishing her intelligence and the quality of her writing skills, and in limiting her audience to women, Jameson establishes a sympathetic ethos that shapes her literary persona (Pender 2); however, sympathy comes to be an unstable emotion in *WSSR*, and thus calls for critical interrogation.

When Jameson published *WSSR*, the colonial presence on Indigenous land in Canada was increasing tenfold. *WSSR*, therefore, documents the intersection of early nineteenth-century gendered tensions with imperialist agendas. Contrary to using the river as a means to subvert modes of oppression like Wilson and Smith, Jameson situates her rivers within colonial rhetoric to construct powerful metaphors that help to subjugate Indigenous stewards of Upper Canada's land and waterscapes. This issue is concerning because, as Sara Mills states, "in an attempt to construct a history of women travellers which depicts women in a positive way…[scholars] are very selective with the accounts they give of women travellers," and accordingly, "they leave out accounts in the original texts of cruelty or deceitfulness" (34). In other words, by hesitating to hold European women accountable, sympathetic readers implicitly implement the "reversal of values strategy" wherein they differentiate women writers from and position them above their male counterparts (Plumwood 33). The reversal strategy reaffirms dualistic thought while failing to consider the "web of oppression" (Plumwood 67). These oversights limit the complex possibilities of both the literary analysis at hand

and feminist scholarship as a whole. It is imperative to realize that European women "are not only the colonised in relation to gender, but are also themselves the colonisers (for example, in relation to other races and cultures, classes and species)" (Plumwood 67). Therefore, *WSSR* critics must reconsider the ways in which Jameson's intersectional identity influenced her interactions with both land and people.

Erin Akerman identifies the pattern of privileging white middle-upper class women in her highly critical article on *WSSR.* She notes that scholars who emphasize Jameson's acts of kindness towards Indigenous peoples cease to "sufficiently question Jameson's self-depiction as a sympathetic ally" (2). Adding to Akerman's critique of Jameson scholarship, I find that the persistent association of Jameson with traditionally feminine virtues (i.e., care, sympathy, and innocence) as a means to leverage her ethics is a dangerous endorsement of biological determinism. Arguably, Jameson's career-orientated drive, her refusal to become reliant on a husband, and her unwavering independence are enough to disturb any moves to categorize her as some sort of 'essential' female archetype. Thus, I avoid contributing to these essentialist, anti-ecofeminist accounts of *WSSR*. Like Mills, I conduct my analysis with the knowledge that Canadian women's "texts are, just as men's texts are, about the colonial situation" (39). This is not to say that gender is not an influential factor in women's writing, travelling, and authorship, but a broader intersectional scope offers more nuanced possibilities for the study of travel writing; indeed, "studies of white women's travel writing…enable us to raise important questions about cultural authority and projects of conquest, and about gender and environmental rhetoric, that can steer us away from notions of female exceptionalism" (Kollin 106). Acknowledging these authorial complexities is a necessary component of effective critical engagement with colonial texts because, as Carolyn Merchant concisely puts it, "narratives form our reality" (2).

I derive inspiration for the title of this chapter from two works of scholarship: Jennifer Bonnell's idea of the "Colonial River" in her book *Reclaiming the Don: An Environmental History of*

Toronto's Don River Valley and Mary Louise Pratt's theory of the "anti-conquest" in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturization.* The former study explores "colonial uses and conceptions of the river and its valley" with a focus on "improvement" narratives and colonial representations of the Canadian wilderness (Bonnell 4). In her discussion of John Grave Simcoe's colonial gaze on the Don River Valley, Bonnell invokes two ideas that will resurface later in my discussion of Jameson: Merchant's theory of "reinventing Eden" where the colonizer looks upon an uncultivated land with a desire to refine it into a paradise, and Albert Boime's concept of "the magisterial gaze" where the colonizer employs a commanding view of a land they long to conquer (Merchant 89-90; Boime 21). The second inspiration for this chapter's title derives from Pratt's decolonial theory which functions to expose "strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (7). By reading Jameson's experiences at Niagara, Credit River, River Thames, and St. Mary's Rapids through the lens of anti-conquest theory, my analysis will demonstrate how Jameson's Romantic taste for aesthetic values coupled with her "open and sympathetic discussions on native people" simultaneously conceal and reveal her colonial framework (Johnston 117). In this chapter, I do not aim to "valorize Jameson as an early feminist icon engaged in acts of solidarity with Indigenous peoples" as literary scholars have done before me[11], nor do I endeavour to anachronistically critique her by expecting her to conform to modern notions of appropriate allyship (Akerman 1). Rather, by underscoring the influence of rivers and the role they play when presented in a work comprising colonial rhetoric, I will demonstrate how racial violence disrupts a seemingly well-intentioned desire to engage in allyship. Ultimately, the ethical complexities within Jameson's work

[11] Clara Thomas, *Love and Work Enough: The Life of Anna Jameson* (1967); Judith Johnston, *Anna Jameson: Victorian, Feminist, Woman of Letters* (2016).

make *WSSR* a cautionary tale and relevant example of literary exploitation that continues to arise in contemporary Canadian literature.

In a final prefatory note to my literary analysis, I once more address the question and constraints of genre. Travel writing has been ambiguously and broadly categorized in genres ranging from autobiography to ethnography (Fowler 148; Roy 17). Combining different generic conventions, travel narratives tend to fall in the middle of these two seemingly dichotomous ends of the creative non-fiction spectrum. The autobiographical side of travel writing positions the speaker at the centre of the narrative while engaging in acts of othering both foreign lands and peoples; "the self is writ large in its alien surroundings" (Holland and Huggan 12). Ethnographic writing, on the other hand, "has tended until recently to play down the personality of its author" (Holland and Huggan 11). The self-fashioning strategies of autobiography and the rhetorical methods of ethnography combine to create a generic anomaly in which fact and fiction are blurred. To her credit, Jameson encourages readers to keep these confounding aspects of travel writing in mind, stating that "when a traveller goes to a foreign country, it is always with a set of preconceived notions concerning it, to which he fits all he sees" (Jameson 162). Though the male pronoun use in this argument seems to omit Jameson from authorial liability, her suggestion that travellers and travel narratives are "unsafe guides" implicitly invites readers to consider *WSSR*'s role in upholding false assumptions advocated by colonial agents travelling abroad (Jameson 162). Thus, I undertake my analysis of Jameson's travel writing with a cautious eye.

I begin with a discussion of Jameson's experience at Niagara Falls. Perhaps one of the most extensively documented tourist destinations, "Niagara Falls was the place where the tourist industry began, not only in Ontario but in North America" (Jasen 29). The awe-inspiring nature of the falls has created matter for countless depictions and rhetorical manipulations in travel writing; "writers not only

sought to describe Niagara mimetically and expressively to account for the powerful emotions evoked in the act of beholding it, but they also deployed it as a potent figure in both colonial and anti-colonial rhetoric" (Hutchings, "Romantic Niagara" 161). Kevin Hutchings illustrates this link between aesthetics, intense emotions, and colonial rhetoric by drawing attention to the following metaphor in *WSSR*, where Jameson writes of Indigenous people that "these attempts of a noble and fated race, to oppose, or even to delay for a time, the rolling westward of the great tide of civilisation, are like efforts to dam up the rapids of Niagara" (326). In other words, the force of colonization is impossible to stop.

By associating colonization with the "quintessentially sublime sight" of Niagara (Bentley qtd. in Matthews 46), Jameson's metaphor powerfully asserts the ideology of the Vanishing American trope[12]. Sad at best and violently racist at worst, this trope suggests that "savagery, in short, was frequently treated as self-extinguishing. The fantasy of auto-genocide or racial suicide is an extreme version of blaming the victim, which throughout the last three centuries has helped to rationalize or occlude the genocidal aspects of European conquest and colonization" (Brantlinger 2). Therefore, when present in travel narratives, the Vanishing American figure functions as an aspect of anti-conquest rhetoric wherein "the Other is lost, in disintegrating time and space, but saved in the text" (Clifford 112). Although the ethnographer grieves for the dying individuals, they are comforted by the notion that their writings are literary preservations of culture. For this reason, Patrick Brantlinger deems anthropology "a science of mourning" (5). This trope informed the nineteenth-century movement of salvage anthropology, in which "the threat of cultural loss, genuine curiosity, and the desire to exert control over new territories" motivated Europeans to collect and preserve

[12] The term "Vanishing American" is typically used interchangeably with the term "Vanishing Indian" in scholarship. I use "Vanishing American" in this thesis because my use of the term is largely informed by Brian W. Dippie's book *The Vanishing American*.

material artifacts and non-material information from Indigenous cultures[13] (Redman 9). The sympathy-inducing idea of the Vanishing American was particularly attractive to the Romantics because they "found the theme of a dying native race congenial, and added those sentimental touches to the concept that gave it wide appeal" (Dippie 11). Thus, the trope lends itself comfortably to the preferences of *WSSR*'s Romantic readers.

Clearly engaged in Romantic sentimentality, Jameson's depicted experience at Niagara exemplifies the Vanishing American easily and covertly. By representing the process of civilization as a force equal in power to Niagara, Jameson naturalizes both colonial violence and the death of Indigenous peoples. This metaphor further strengthens Jameson's rhetoric because it associates colonialism with the picturesque; if the falls are "tremendous," "beautiful," and "awful," then Jameson not only glorifies imperialism, but transforms an act of oppression into one worthy of aesthetic admiration (214-15). Indeed, Charity Matthews locates Jameson in the aesthetic tradition, noting "she was influenced directly or indirectly by the aesthetic treatises of Burke and Kant, both of whom formulated the categories of the beautiful and the sublime to account for distinct aspects of human experience in nature" (41). Categorizing *WSSR*'s Niagara as a "deconstruction of aesthetic binary oppositions," Matthews draws attention to the heightened sensuality that the sublime and beautiful falls elicits in Jameson in the following excerpt (57): "I stood there, lost in a thousand reveries…and in spite of the deep-voiced continuous thunder of the cataract, there was such a stillness that I could hear my own heart's pulse throb—or did I mistake feeling for hearing?" (Jameson 215). It is clear that Jameson is deeply moved by the falls. Thus, I relate Matthews's attention to aesthetics to Boime's idea of the "magisterial gaze" which, in its "searching for new worlds to conquer…is *profoundly personal and ideological at the same time*" (21, my emphasis). In combination, these two

[13] Hutchings notes that Jameson participated in the tradition of salvage anthropology via skull collecting during her Upper-Canadian travels, though she does not disclose this act in *WSSR* (*Transatlantic* 112-13).

scholars' insights reveal that Jameson's magisterial gaze is softened by her personal taste for aesthetics. Overall, her use of Romantic language at Niagara upholds expectations of the time-period, sets her apart from more overt cases of racial discrimination, and skillfully functions to veil her anti-conquest rhetoric.

Moving from the metaphorical to the literal, Jameson's anti-conquest discourse on the Credit River provides a rather straightforward narrative that similarly affirms the Vanishing American trope. Prior to discussing the natural scenery surrounding the riparian environment, Jameson is quick to establish the Credit area as a lucrative locale, where the inhabitants are concerned with "the want of means of money" (171). Further urbanizing the space, she describes the area as having a "clean, tidy inn, and some log and frame houses" (171-172). Jameson makes one final river-economy link in her discussion of the historical business exchanges that occurred along the Credit: "The River Credit is so called, because in *ancient times* (*i.e.* forty or fifty years ago) the fur traders met the Indians on its banks, and delivered to them on *credit* the goods for which, the following year, they received the value, or rather ten times the value, in skins" (172, original emphasis). Altogether, these descriptions de-naturalize the river by associating it with early capitalist economic activity. Much like the River Thames that Smith briefly mentions in Sonnet XXX, Jameson reduces the river to a resource. Jameson's illustration of Western structures and European trade additionally links the flow of the Credit to European notions of cultural progress, underscoring the important roles rivers play in shaping the cultural consciousness. Her discourse also demonstrates how rivers are prime sites of what D.M.R. Bentley terms "profitable beauty," which he defines as "areas whose fertility, terrain, and climate were amenable to successful agricultural settlement and, hence, to the eventual realization of the utopian ideal of independence and freedom based on prosperity" (66). With such an idea in mind, Jameson seems to suggest that the Credit River is not beautiful on its own

terms, but rather beautiful because of its economic potential. Slowing the economic potential of this river down, however, are the people whom she unfavourably describes in the surrounding area.

Jameson's hope for agricultural prosperity does not translate to hope for the Mississauga people who reside along the Credit. The Mississauga "struck [her] as gloomy" as they were "dirty" and "lounging about" (173). Jameson's disapproving description of the Mississauga is at odds with her aesthetic and economic idealization of the land and river. Additionally, the Mississauga's melancholy nature does not suggest a positive (if any) future for the healthy growth of a nation. It is ironic, then, when she includes in this passage a discussion of Chief Peter Jones, a Welsh-Ojibwe Missionary whom she describes as "a half-cast Indian" and "religious teacher" (Jameson 173). What is notable about Jones is that he wholly rejected the Vanishing American trope, for "he wanted to secure a title deed for the Credit River lands so that he could disprove the fatalistic claims of those who believed that Indigenous Americans were a doomed race—in short, so that his people could continue to exist as a people" (Hutchings, *Transatlantic* 212). The Aborigines Protection Society (APS), which Kenneth D. Nworah states "was one of the most significant checks on the sagging moral conscience in Britain during the later years of the nineteenth century," affirms Jones's mission (79):

> I will take the oldest Indian mission we have as an example and the one the most unfavourably situated, according to Sir Francis'[14] theory,—the river Credit mission…in 1827, there were 210 souls in the tribe, most of whom had been converted some months before, at the Grand River; now there are 245…The old

[14] Sir Francis Bond Head served as the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada from January 1836 to March 1838. He advocated for the removal of the Credit River Mississauga to a distant reserve on Manitoulin Island using the rationale that they would be "contaminated" by "civilization" if they remained (Head qtd. in Binnema and Hutchings 125). Theodore Binnema and Hutchings explain that "Head's writing soberly asserts that English influence did not improve Aboriginal peoples' condition but tended rather to corrupt and harm them" (129).

> chief stated the result as nearly as they could learn, that during the ten years immediately preceding their conversion, there were 300 deaths in his tribe; during the last ten years there had been from 50 to 60. This difference in the number of deaths during each of these two periods, the old chief feelingly ascribed to their becoming Christians. (32)

As noted by the APS, the Credit River Mississauga were not vanishing but rather increasing in population. There was evidently a drastically lower mortality rate, as well. Despite the APS attributing this decline in deaths to Christian conversion by imperial missionaries (effectively championing colonial agencies for bringing Christianity to Upper Canada), it nonetheless is a poignant piece of counter-discourse to the falsehoods of the Vanishing American trope to which Jameson contributes.

Jameson's publication of *WSSR* would not have played a supportive role in Jones's ambitions, for her rhetoric maintains the myth that population growth was diminishing without offering hope for future prosperity. Interestingly, Jameson's use of the Vanishing American trope is not couched with the sympathy for Indigenous people for which her text is known. Rather, she continues her economic conversation by lamenting the waste of government charity: "the government have expended a large sum in aid of this charitable purpose [i.e., to convert and civilize the Mississauga]" (Jameson 172). The suggestion that the civilizing mission is a form of charity secures Jameson's innocence on an individual and structural level, and her previously critical attitude toward the Canadian government shifts. In presenting the civilizing mission as an act of kindness, both Jameson and the imperialist government are absolved from responsibility of any negative outcomes the community may face. Similarly, the government's supposed generosity indicates that community dysfunction rests upon Indigenous peoples' inability to

civilize rather than holding colonizers responsible for the system's failure. Essentially, this passage articulates the benevolent colonialism pervading so many imperial texts and policies, both past and present. Just nine years after the publication of *WSSR*, the Mississauga were "forced to leave the Credit River due to pressures caused by white settlement" (Hutchings, *Transatlantic* 209). Therefore, if Jameson participated in "political activism," as Alessa Johns suggests, her politics privileged European needs over those of Indigenous peoples (121).

Where the Credit River is an economic hub, the River Thames is an ecological oasis for the articulation of Jameson's anti-conquest philosophy. One of the reasons the Thames is such a fruitful locale pertains to its ecological abundance; by claiming that "the banks are formed of extensive prairies of exhaustless fertility, where thousands of cattle might roam and feed at will," Jameson suggests that the riverside prairies had "glorious capabilities for agriculture and commerce" (323). A conflicting pair of sentiments arises here, where Jameson simultaneously exhibits an appreciation for environmental aesthetics while promoting an agrarian overhaul of the land. Jameson, furthermore, idealizes the lush environment of the Thames as "the very paradise of hope" in the same moment she denigrates the ways in which Indigenous people steward the lands: "The profuse gifts of nature are here running to waste, while hundreds and thousands in the old country are trampling over each other in the eager, hungry conflict for daily food" (323). This critique of insufficient land use participates in rhetoric used by colonial figures to "improve" the land. Such "improvement" narratives allege that "humans could better their lives both materially and morally by transforming natural terrain both at home and abroad, rendering 'wastelands' productive and capable of meeting the enhanced needs of expanding and shifting human populations" (Hutchings, *Transatlantic* 32). Additionally, Jameson's suggestion that land without agriculture is land gone to waste is supported by her concern for Europe's struggling lower classes. This sentiment functions as a successful use of anti-conquest rhetoric in

which her sympathy for poor Europeans validates her support for an increase of immigration to and "civilization" in the Americas. Regardless of its sympathetic intentions, such land use rhetoric negatively impacts Indigenous peoples' rights to territory ownership; "because the Indians did not 'use' their lands, argued many land promoters, the lands should be taken away and given to people who knew what to do with them" (Deloria 11). So potent is this rhetoric that the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, Sir Francis Bond Head, employed it in the Manitoulin Island Treaty, where he wrote to Anishinaabe chiefs: "If you would cultivate your land it would then be considered your own property in the same way as your dogs are considered among yourselves to belong to those who have reared them; but uncultivated land is like wild animals" (Treaty 45). The colonial rhetoric in *WSSR* closely resembles the unjust reasoning in the Manitoulin Treaty, further complicating the ethics of Jameson's travel narrative.

Jameson's discourse on the Thames is not without self-reflexivity. Indeed, the contradiction I have drawn attention to (i.e., Jameson's love of environmental beauty and her desire for the land's agrarian development) poses for her an emotional burden: "I am disgusted, or I am enchanted…these inconsistent and apparently contradictory emotions and impressions I set down as they arise, leaving you to reconcile them as well as you can, and make out the result yourself" (324). Sentimental moments such as this have landed Jameson the reputation of a sympathetic ally and environmental activist. Despite her inability to articulate for herself a conclusive message about the Thames region (and her Upper Canadian journey as a whole), her narrative choice to relinquish ideological authority to the reader is a challenging one. Her language does, arguably, steer the reader farther in one direction than the other; for example, she suggests that so long as employment remains low and lack of "improvement" persists, the settler community will develop a "brutified laziness" unworthy of such

fertile lands (Jameson 323). Such desire to cultivate the land while painting those who steward it as incapable of properly doing so is akin to Merchant's concept of "reinventing Eden." Where,

> to some settlers, the New World Eden was a bountiful land to be entered and enjoyed, to others it had the potential to become a new paradise, but required "improvement." A land of enormous "natural advantages," it would nevertheless require European refinement before it could be deemed "civilized." Forests, soils, and wildlife were not just nature's gift to humanity, but resources to be extracted from nature. (89-90)

This mode of capitalism informs Jameson's taste for aesthetic experience and discourse. Thus, while she narrates a personal dilemma, Jameson's worldview is evidently on the side of imperialism. Her suggestion that the occupants of this land are not using it productively promotes the displacement of Indigenous peoples, and just like at the Credit River, the River Thames becomes a place of profitable beauty. For this reason, among others, Akerman holds *WSSR* responsible for normalizing the inevitable theft of land, and with it, the fated death of Indigenous peoples (4).

The remainder of this chapter examines the events that transpire at, what I argue is, the most apparent site of Jameson's anti-conquest discourse: St. Mary's Rapids. According to records from U.S. army captain Dwight H. Kelton, St. Mary's River was the "only water between Lake Superior and the lower lakes" and spans about 75 miles long (6). Kelton describes the difficulty of navigating the river: "the channel…was, before improvement, obstructed in many places, but especially at the Rapids of St. Mary, 15 miles from the head of the river. In their natural state these rapids formed a barrier to transportation by water, and made a portage necessary" (6). Indeed, Kelton and other Europeans viewed the rapids with imperial eyes, perceiving the site as an "obstacle" to flatten in order to meet trade needs (Ripley et al. 6). Alteration of the rapids began as early as 1797 and

"impacts from over 100 years of industrialization, navigational construction and loss of habitat in the urbanized areas of the river have led to environmental degradation and listing of the river as an Area of Concern" (Ripley et al. 5). Although Europeans approached development on Sault Ste. Marie with a sense of urgency, archeologist T.A. Conway notes that Whitefish Island (located on the St. Mary's River) had "served as a year-round fishery for Ojibwa and other upper Great Lakes populations for 2000 years" (1). Conway's finding reveals that the river had long been functional for Ojibwe people and only recently became a problem area when Europeans arrived.

The river-as-obstacle narrative persists in Jameson's account of the St. Mary's Rapids, as her triumph of safely completing the canoe trip is a pivotal moment in *WSSR*—a conquering of sorts. Like each of the bodies of water I have discussed above, Jameson's interactions with this river do not simply speak to her admiration for the natural world but function to illuminate her politically charged agenda and colonial ideology. Importantly, this canoe trip earns her an Indigenous name, which in Jameson's eyes signals a formal adoption into the Johnston-Schoolcraft Ojibwe family, whose home she resided at this point in her journey. Jameson then utilizes her newly found Indigeneity to validate and authenticate her narrative authority to recite the history, lore, and personal experiences of the individuals she now deems "[her] relations" (499). Through a close reading of each of these moments that comprise her visit to Sault Ste. Marie, I will demonstrate the ways in which anti-conquest rhetoric serves as an apparently innocent guise under which the harmful act of illegitimate identity-claiming occurs. Ultimately, this study will demonstrate that just as St. Mary's River is "the channel of communication between Lake Superior and Lake Huron," so too is it a channel of communication in colonial rhetoric (Jameson 482).

Throughout *WSSR*, it is clear that Jameson possesses a strong appreciation for her surroundings; however, the aesthetic values she attributes to the natural environment become problematic when applied to human subjects. Jameson associates both Niagara and St. Mary's River with beauty, though she does so while displaying an authoritative attitude, referring to "*my* beautiful falls" and "*my* beautiful river" (288; 488, my emphasis). This sense of ownership towards Niagara and St. Mary's River transfers to human beings as well; for example, upon her return from the rapids, she claims that: "*my* Indians were enchanted" (499, my emphasis). Certainly, this use of "my" when referring to both nature and people may indicate her familial adoration for both the natural environment and Anishinaabe people. However, the language is inherently possessive, suggesting a sense of entitlement towards both land and people. In this way, Jameson embodies the "main protagonist" in her own anti-conquest narrative, for her "imperial eyes passively look out and possess" the landscape and those who reside on it (Pratt 7). With the unquestionable authority of her imperial eyes, these ethical complications remind readers that despite her ability to "engage sympathy easily," Jameson writes from the perspective of the colonial enterprise (Thomas, *Love* 133).

Jameson's implicit colonial agenda remains prevalent when, after she returns to the settlement from her canoe trip down the St. Mary's rapids, she states: "My Indians were enchanted…they told me I was the first European female who had ever performed it, and assuredly I shall not be the last" (Jameson 499). Wendy Roy addresses this common desire in travel writing texts to be "first," and notes Jameson's canoe adventure as an example of this tendency: "it…establishes Jameson as the first to risk and record (thus valorizing both the doing and the recording of the deed)" (21). Though Jameson is perhaps driven by a desire for literary fame, her account of the experience is not inherently negative. Considering, for example, the ways in which Kelton reduced these rapids to an obstacle to be "improved," Jameson's account positively re-enchants the rapids as worthy of admiration and

perhaps even respect. As if advocating for the rapids to remain untouched, Jameson articulates an enthusiastic expectation that more European women will be able to access the unique travel opportunities that she has experienced in generations to come. This expectation creates a guise of feminist hopefulness, and indeed, *WSSR* can largely be read as a proto-feminist "dramatic rendering" of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Henderson 48); however, while her feminist ambitions may have amiable intent, they also signal the first instance of anti-conquest expression. By securing her innocence as an aspiring feminist traveller, Jameson is able to promote the "great tide of civilization" that does not grant the same hopeful future to the Anishinaabe people who reside at Sault St. Marie (Jameson 326). For this reason, "it is necessary to accept that there are perhaps other elements which structure these texts other than simply authorial intention" (Mills 30). In essence, her enthusiasm and seemingly pure intentions cannot be invoked to diminish the harmful colonial undercurrent of her discourse.

In her account of the successful canoe trip through the rapids, Jameson describes her experience of adoption into the Johnston-Schoolcraft family under an Ojibwe name as follows: "I was declared duly initiated, and adopted into the family under the name of Wah,sah,ge,wah,no,qua," meaning "the woman of the bright foam" (499). With this statement, Jameson frames her Indigenous "adoption" as having been initiated by the Johnston-Schoolcraft family. This seemingly pleasant sentiment is, however, contradicted by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, whose diary records that it was Jameson who "*insisted* on being baptized and named in Indian after her sail down the falls" (qtd. in Thomas, *Love* 134, my emphasis). Certainly, Henry's accusations are not necessarily the most reliable source of historical documentation, as seen in his faulty translation of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft's poetry where "he took great liberties with the Ojibwe text" (Hutchings, *Transatlantic* 45); regardless, Henry's claim rouses a sense of critical suspicion that is confirmed by Jane Johnston Schoolcraft

herself: “She insisted on being baptized and named in Indian, after her sail down the falls. We named her Was-sa-je-wun-e-qua (Woman of the Bright Stream), with which she was mightily pleased” (qtd. in Roy 36-7). In analyzing this naming process, Roy notices the discrepancy between Jameson’s and Jane’s translations of the name. Where Jameson translates “shining foam” to suggest rolling rapids, Jane translates “bright stream” in a way that minimizes the life-threatening quality of Jameson’s canoe trip (37). Additionally, both Henry and Jane assert that Jameson “insisted” on being given an Indigenous name, so it becomes clear that Jameson fabricated at least some aspect of her supposed Ojibwe adoption. Her alleged insistence similarly calls into question the notion of consent because it suggests that her adoption was coerced rather than willingly bestowed. Altogether, these subtle details unveil the anti-conquest agenda behind Jameson’s Ojibwe adoption, which “legitimate[s] her own presence on Indigenous lands” while excusing her “ongoing participation in settler colonialism” (Akerman 5).

Jameson’s experience of being given an Ojibwe name is not an isolated experience in Upper Canada’s literary record. Settler Susanna Moodie, for example, relays a contrarily subdued experience of Indigenous re-naming in her memoir *Roughing it in the Bush.* Unlike Jameson’s hyperbolically meaningful experience of adoption, however, Moodie does not dwell on the interaction:

> The Indians, under their quiet exterior, possess a deal of humour. They have significant names for everything, and a nickname for every one, and some of the latter are laughably appropriate…I was *Nonocosiqui*, a “humming-bird;” a ridiculous name for a tall woman, but it had reference to the delight I took in painting birds. My friend, Emilia, was “blue cloud;” my little Donald, “frozen face;” young C——, “the red-headed woodpecker,” from the colour of his hair; my brother, *Chippewa*, and “the bald-headed eagle.” He was an especial favourite among them. (320)

Moodie's long list of settlers who were given Indigenous names draws attention to the importance of naming while simultaneously normalizing the process. It is clear, as well, that this is not a process of adoption in Moodie's eyes; rather, naming signals good humour and perhaps affection. Jameson's and Moodie's distinct accounts of Indigenous naming processes may boil down to their different perspectives—the former being that of a traveller and the latter belonging to a settler. Moodie is likely less inclined to seek validation for her presence on Indigenous lands because her permanent residency warrants a certain level of comfort (regardless of other problems informing her role in settler colonialism). Jameson's account is comparatively self-serving. Her egocentric actions are further emphasized when, in her self-glorification at being named, she does not name the steersman of the canoe; "The Indian," she states, "with astonishing dexterity kept the head of the canoe to the breakers, and somehow or other we danced through them" (498). Because Jameson otherwise records many names of the individuals she spends time with, it may perhaps be over-critical of me to draw attention to a minor piece of information she hesitated to include. Regardless, Jameson's melodramatic illustration of this event and her intentions in doing so are worthy of question.

Jameson's Indigenous "adoption" also signals a double standard in her colonial rhetoric: she believes she has the capacity to Indigenize herself but does not believe Indigenous peoples can become civilized. A key example of this logic is demonstrated by the following passage: "I am inclined to think that the idea of the Indians becoming what *we* call a civilized people seems quite hopeless; those who entertain such benevolent anticipations should come here, and behold the effect which three centuries of contact with the whites have produced on the nature and habits of the Indian" (Jameson 326, original emphasis). Although she indicts "the whites" for their adverse moral influence on Indigenous people, this excerpt demonstrates her scepticism towards Indigenous peoples' capacity to civilize and implicitly engages the Vanishing American trope. The options, Jameson writes, are for

the "Indian" to "set his hand to the ploughshare, or *perish*" (326, original emphasis). In other words, she rejects the possibility that Indigenous people can continue to exist in sovereign nations. Additionally, since Jameson has made it clear that she believes civilization is impossible for Indigenous peoples, perishing is all that is left. This belief makes her self-Indigenization all the more problematic. Indeed, Jameson commits the notoriously controversial and exploitative action of "going native" which, according to Mills, "is a phrase which describes the way in which certain European travellers and residents abroad adopted the dress and customs of the people of the colonised country, and potentially aligned themselves with that culture" (98). Simply put, "going native" is an effort made by colonizers to integrate themselves with the colonized. Mills suggests that while "going native" has historically caried strong negative connotations, it need not be so if the rhetoric demonstrates alignment with both imperial and Indigenous perspectives (98). Johnston embraces a similar logic, stating that when "sympathy like that of Jameson's emerges," it is possible to reclaim the phrase "going native" in a "non-pejorative way" (117). Considering the harmful implications of the above passages from *WSSR* and the tumultuous history of travellers "going native," I do not believe Jameson produces an effective example of ethical self-Indigenization, if such an example exists.

Jameson's participation in the "going native" trend causes her to commit an overt appropriation of voice. She uses her newly claimed Indigeneity as permission to re-tell stories of individuals and families whom she now deems her "new relations 'of the totem of the rein-deer'" (499). In his book *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Vine Deloria Jr. addresses the danger of "Whites claiming Indian blood," for they "generally reinforce mythical beliefs about Indians" (9). Deloria further critiques European representations of Indigenous cultures because European observers tend to over-generalize distinct groups of people while "making great reputations as 'Indian Experts'" (11).

WSSR contributes to this misrepresentation and generalization of Indigenous people because, according to Roy, Jameson's "representations of Anishinaabe people she encountered are in part anecdotal and in part those of an ethnographer whose purpose is to categorize the world" (17). To Jameson's credit, she endeavours to authentically translate Indigenous stories and avoid Deloria's concern about reiterating mythical fictions. This effort is evidenced in Henry Schoolcraft's diary, where he paraphrases advice Jameson allegedly supplied him: "The more exactly you can (in translation) adhere to the style of the language of Indian nations, instead of emulating a fine and correct English style—the more characteristic in all respects—the more *original*—the more interesting *your* work will be" (qtd. in Thomas, *Love* 135, my emphasis). Jameson's advice begins with a sentiment that seemingly demonstrates concern about accurate representation; however, the words from this excerpt that I have italicized for emphasis point to the issues I take with her advice to Henry, for they indicate the self-serving nature of her desire to experience Indigenous adoption. Henry's diary reveals that Jameson's desire for narrative authenticity is less concerned with accurate representation and more concerned with enhancing European audience intrigue via stylistic claims to originality. Unsurprisingly, this relationship between authenticity and audience intrigue is significant where it concerns profits, for Henry writes that "[Jameson's] plan of publication is, to divide the monetary profit with the publishers, and, as these are honest men and gentlemen, she has found this the best way" (Schoolcraft qtd. in Thomas, *Love* 135). Of course, there is no mention of compensating the subjects whose stories she profits from, and therefore, she reduces the land and people of Upper Canada to a capitalist resource.

Most of Jameson's lengthy Ojibwe storytelling section is devoted to detailing the life story of a man whom she now calls "my illustrious grand-papa, Waub-Ojeeg" (500). Her previous invocation of the anti-conquest trope makes it unsurprising that this narrative reiterates several racist portraits.

Zoomorphizing the Ojibwe, Jameson describes the "warlike" and "untameable" nature of their culture (500). Jameson's method of zoomorphism is notably different than Wilson's in *Teisa,* for the former uses it against the oppressed as a tactic of erasure while the latter uses it against the oppressor as a mode of resistance. Following this violent portrait, Jameson affirms a racist eighteenth-century myth, stating that, among the Anishinaabe people, "I am afraid, from all I hear, that cannibalism…is not unknown" (503). The anti-conquest paradigm is palpable in this quotation. On this excerpt, Akerman notes that Jameson's use of "I am afraid" secures her innocence and alludes to sympathy while asserting racist tropes (4). Additionally, knowing the fascination for "cannibalism, tomahawking, and scalping" among eighteenth and nineteenth-century readers (Roy 45), Jameson is able to invoke her self-Indigeneity to leverage such myths. By indulging in false myth-making for the sake of thrilling storytelling, Jameson risks validating European readers' desires to colonize Indigenous people. This focus on violence is particularly harmful because narratives of "intratribal warfare…fostered an unfavourable impression of native character, accentuating its negative attributes: ferocity, cruelty, a warlike spirit ever ready to be ignited by revenge…If war was the Indian's consuming passion, the morality of the white conquest could be seen in a new light" (Dippie 40). Jameson's discussion on Waub-Ojeeg concludes with an intimate description of his abusive parenting practices; for example, when his daughter misbehaved by not conducting herself "with proper wife-like docility," he "gave her a good beating with a stick, and threatened to cut off both her ears" (507). Overall, these excerpts indicate Jameson's willingness to affirm the "ignoble savage" trope that depicts Indigenous peoples as naturally violent, immoral, and fear-inducing (Bickham 57). Her self-ascribed Indigeneity, therefore, serves to authenticate her narrative authority while concealing the racist misrepresentations that concern Deloria.

Jameson's self-Indigeneity and storytelling evince one final ethical flaw, which is the fact that she tells stories that are not hers to tell. This action involves an overt disregard for situated knowledges, and there "lies a serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions" (Haraway, "Situated" 584). Jameson's Indigenous "adoption" provides her with an excuse to step beyond the bounds of her positionality—she moves from a locatable, partial perspective to a falsely objective standpoint. Emphasizing the harmful impacts of this appropriation of voice, Anishinaabe storyteller and poet Lenore Keeshig writes that "stories, you see, are not just entertainment. Stories are power. They reflect the deepest, the most intimate perceptions, relationships and attitudes of a people. Stories show how a people, a culture, thinks. Such wonderful offerings are seldom reproduced by outsiders" (34). Whether or not Jameson had known about the cultural significance of stories, her choice to narrate Waub-Ojeeg's actions in war, marriage, parenthood, and death demonstrates a lack of consideration for his personal privacy and care for his relations. While her Indigenous "adoption" seemingly absolves her from such accusations of appropriation, Keeshig would suggest otherwise, because "so potent are stories that, in native culture, one storyteller cannot tell another's story without permission" (36). In *WSSR*, Jameson does not provide any sense that this consent has occurred. What began as a journey down the St. Mary's rapids ends in an act of "culture theft" (Keeshig 34). Thus, *WSSR* continues to demonstrate how rivers serve as powerful cultural symbols, for better or for worse.

Ultimately, Anna Brownell Jameson's accounts of the Niagara Falls, Credit River, River Thames, and St. Mary's Rapids in *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* function as sites of the anti-conquest trope. Jameson transforms these large waterways and their watershed regions into symbols that bolster colonial rhetoric, such as the Vanishing American and ignoble savage trope. Her travelogue illuminates the ways in which aesthetic principles and natural imagery offer strong and

subtle ways of affirming imperialist attitudes. It is similarly evident that scholars must be cautious when associating women writers with traditionally "feminine qualities, such as the care that was felt for the 'natives' of the country" in order to alleviate their faults or to continue to portray women as having "a very secondary supporting role" in colonialism (Mills 34; 58). While Jameson does occupy a complex space in which she is both colonizer (in terms of race and nation) and colonized (in terms of gender), academic studies have largely failed to account for the ways in which this blurred dualism manifests in her text. As I stated early in this essay, it was not my goal to critique Jameson beyond reasonable bounds by expecting her to adhere to modern-day concepts of allyship—and, much of her feminist discourse and sympathetic mindset is deserving of the positive recognition it has received—but I hope that by observing and critiquing Jameson's ethical faults, this chapter has served as a more holistic view into her misinformed efforts at allyship. With an understanding that Jameson herself becomes, in her own words, an "unsafe guide," *WSSR* will continue to serve as a critical transatlantic text that demonstrates a distinctly European perspective on British-Indigenous relations (162).

Conclusion

Metaphor, Materiality, and Riparian Relationships

I am the river.

Sarah de Leeuw, *Skeena* (11)

Riparian Romanticism illuminates a wide-range of possibilities for human literary engagements with rivers in the late-eighteenth-century and beyond. As I have argued in this thesis, Anne Wilson, Charlotte Smith, and Anna Brownell Jameson challenge narrow assumptions about human-river relationships that have historically informed Romantic scholarship. Rather than utilizing William Wordsworth's self-river metaphor as a catch-all for human-river relationships in the Romantic period, my thesis has sought to reveal the dynamic nature of rivers as represented in literary texts. While Wordsworth's ecological consciousness continues to be an influential textual force, scholars' elision of female writers and their rivers calls for an urgent reconsideration of the human-river relationships depicted in this era. Due to this gendered exclusion, it should be no surprise that rivers function as politically charged entities in each text I discuss. Indeed, I find that there are gender, class, and colonial structures that influence the ways writers relate and respond to rivers. Offering a means to address these multiple layers of gendered and environmental marginalization, my ecofeminist framework threads the political with the natural, interrogates dualistic thought, and serves as a reminder of the importance of situated knowledges. Each aspect of this theoretical lens plays an important role in assessing the representation of rivers in the works of Wilson, Smith, and Jameson, revealing the ways in which their riparian environments uniquely inform socio-environmental thought.

Despite the diverse social and political issues that arise through these authors' engagements with rivers, there is more that binds them together than water. Each writer takes to the page knowing that they locate themselves in a particular male-dominated literary tradition: Wilson in the topographical tradition, Smith in the sonnet tradition, and Jameson in the conventions of travel writing. Because "rivers, streams, and sources often function as metaphors for literary influence, lineage, originality, and inspiration, in both poetry and wider literary discourse," it is inevitable that this issue is so visibly present in all three chapters (Roberts, *Form* 45). Jonathan Bate states that "artists try to tell you something about the world, about life—they hold up a mirror to nature—but they can only do so via a repertoire of techniques and conventions that are inherited from previous art" (*Song* 126). This default linkage of writers to their predecessors demonstrates the weight placed on all writers who attempt to make their way into a literary tradition, but it also acutely exemplifies the barriers present for female authorship. These traditions were formed by and for male authors, making it difficult and even transgressive for women to partake in them. At the same time, the challenges imposed upon female authors indicate that simply writing is itself an act of resistance against oppressive structures.

Wilson, Smith, and Jameson do more than confront masculinist power structures with their writing; as I have discussed at length, each author is relatively clear in their political messaging, so long as readers are willing to search for it. Wilson exceeds past and present expectations concerning labouring-class writers (i.e., that their writing tends not to engage with politics in order to avoid controversy that may impact their publishability and employment status) by critiquing unethical landownership and hunting practices along the River Tees. Smith offers an ecofeminist approach in her political messaging by representing the River Arun and the intricacies of the riparian environment as a means to demonstrate and critique the suppression of

women's voices in literary circles. Despite prefacing *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* by stating "I have abstained generally from politics," Jameson writes a particularly politically complex text by weaponizing Upper-Canadian rivers to reproduce common eighteenth-century racist tropes (4). Regardless of the intentions and results of their rhetoric, all three authors make clear that nature and culture are inextricably linked.

Each author also associates nature with sadness. Robert Aubin suggests that this sense of nature's melancholy was a common theme for literature of the period: "post-Renaissance poets…tended either to make rivers serve the useful purpose of unifying the description of the scenes along the banks or to employ them as visible expressions or backgrounds to their…own emotions, generally woeful" (225). As discussed in Chapter Two, Smith's work is perhaps the most explicitly melancholic text that I study in this thesis, but Wilson and Jameson discuss the sorrowful world around them as well. For example, Wilson exclaims "Sad TEISA weeps" in response to the hastiness of death (226). She further notes that "Upon this mournful scene my thought [*sic*] could dwell" (235). It seems, therefore, that Wilson recognizes the riverine environment as melancholic while also using it as a source of comfort. Jameson's vision of a melancholic riverside arises amidst her anti-conquest rhetoric. The following excerpt expands on my discussion of the Credit River in Chapter Three, where Jameson observes of the Mississauga that

> The greater number of those who remain are half-breeds, and of these, some of the young women and children are really splendid creatures; but the general appearance of the place and people struck me as gloomy. The Indians, whom I saw lounging about…wrapped in dirty blankets, with their long black hair falling over their faces and eyes, filled me with compassion. (173)

By detailing the Upper-Canadian landscape and the people who live on it as melancholic, Jameson solicits pity for them while affirming the Vanishing American trope. Here, I once again consider Bate's scholarship and his assertion that "we use nature to validate ourselves" (*Romantic* 56). All three authors confirm this claim in emotionally and politically motivated ways.

Because Wilson, Smith, and Jameson intertwine rivers with socio-political rhetoric, there may be concern for the ways in which these Eurocentric metaphorical representations of rivers overlook "Earth's intrinsic value" (Vincent 23). Stefan Helmreich considers a similar issue in his essay on bodies of water: "What happens when ocean waves as material-formal watery things are left behind, manifesting rather as mobile metaphors for thinking about social agency?" (37). I extend his concern about oceans to rivers. To address this question, I return to the epigraph of my thesis where the words of Jamie Linton offer an overarching theme: "Water is what we make of it" (3). The implications of this statement are perplexing and powerful; Linton "invites reflection on the ways in which people have thought about water in the past and heightens awareness of the consequences that will flow from what we make of water in the future" (Wynn x). By linking our imaginative conceptualizations of water to real-world outcomes, Linton offers a link between metaphor and materiality insofar as one has the ability to inform the other. Literary scholars often concern themselves with the ways in which narratives shape our reality, but the reverse is also true (i.e., that the material world shapes our narratives). This connection suggests that representations of rivers as metaphors for human agency do not negate the agency nor materiality of rivers themselves. Indeed, ethical eco-narratives should consider the possibilities for the ways in which human and river agencies can strengthen one another.

Haraway's and Plumwood's ecofeminist theories can offer further connections between river metaphors and materiality as they appear in the three Romantic texts that I discuss. Importantly, each author locates herself along a particular river. This narrative choice establishes rivers as real, tangible places and rejects abstract conceptualizations of rivers, thus forming three unique "situated" perspectives. The link between material and metaphorical representations of rivers similarly speaks to and dismantles the primitivist nature-culture dualism that often appears in Romantic texts. By recognizing rivers both as entities of their own and as an integral part of human culture, ecocriticism can offer an avenue toward the health and safety of the planet's waterscapes. In Plumwood's words, a strong and ethical nature-culture relationship "requires recognition of both continuity and difference," which "means acknowledging the other as neither alien to and discontinuous from the self nor assimilated to or an extension of the self" (6).

While I assert that the transformation of rivers to serve as personal, social, or political metaphors does not inherently negate the materiality of water, modern readers may inevitably find that Riparian Romanticism falls short of adhering to the critical tenets informing contemporary environmental activism. Thus, much critical work remains to be done. Because this thesis is not an exhaustive analysis of the diverse human-river relationships represented during the late-eighteenth century, and since it does not scratch the surface of human-river relationships as represented over time, I believe a holistic analysis of riparian literature is the next step—one that interacts with riparian texts pre- and post-eighteenth century. If Wilson's, Smith's, and Jameson's rivers teach us anything, it is that riparian relationships are vast, varying, and "beyond tidy representation" (de Leeuw, "Rivers" 258). For this reason, I conclude this chapter with a discussion about the book that, upon reading it during my early undergraduate years,

instilled in me a devotion to rivers and served as an early catalyst for taking on this project. That book is *Skeena* by Sarah de Leeuw.

Of all the breathtaking *Skeena* excerpts that I could have chosen as an epigraph for my conclusion, I find that this line speaks urgently to the connectivity between the metaphoricity and materiality of rivers. Speaking from the point of view of the Skeena River, de Leeuw writes: "I am the river" ("Skeena" 11). This line offers a starting point to thinking about the river as body, being, and more-than-human. By emulating the Skeena's voice, de Leeuw reveals the porous possibilities of human-river relationships. In her geopoetic essay on rivers, de Leeuw states that if "we gave ourselves over fully to rivers, with recognition of the anthropocentric privilege one has to have to give oneself over to anything, something beyond imagination might result…Something of us, in us, flooding and life-giving" ("Rivers" 258). Literature offers an avenue for us to attempt to give ourselves over to rivers, or to at least conceive a reciprocal relationship with them. Indeed, just as "water is what we make of it," it is important to remember the ways in which "water is always making us too" (Linton 3; Neimanis 22). Ultimately, the eco-lyric of *Skeena* is just one example of the numerous ways that rivers are conceptualized in contemporary environmental thought, in which Riparian Romanticism serves as an essential part of the conversation. There is much to learn from rivers.

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