



Byron's Environmental Imaginings in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

Savo Fouad Karam

Professor, English Department,
Lebanese University, Tripoli

Corresponding Author: Savo Fouad Karam

E-mail: savokaram@hotmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Several scholars have tackled scientific fields that attracted Byron such as astrology, cosmology, geology, paleontology, catastrophism and global cataclysm. However, Byron's cultural ecology and interest in natural science have received scant attention. In fact, some of his works do craftily portray how culture and nature are interactively interconnected and how the natural world becomes a household, a dwelling place for humans and nonhumans. What basically enlightened him and was a poignant influence on his creativity was the growing trend toward industrialization and the increasing interest in science as the major determinant of reality. In this respect, Byron's fervent affiliation with nature, upon which his creativity is dependent, deserves to be brought to the limelight – that is, his dwelling in and with nature. It is this understanding of man and nature's dynamic cryptic interconnections that allowed him to reunite with the world and at the same time project a new mode of Being and dwelling in the universe. With particular reference to Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, this paper would attempt to highlight Byron's unique environmental imaginings by applying Martin Heidegger's notion of dwelling together with Edward Wilson's biophilia hypothesis. Doing so serves to support the argument that Byron is an environmentally attuned nature poet who chooses to dwell in nature—the oikos that enhances his biophilic temperament—to experience the transcendence that leads him to attain a unique oceanic feeling.

Keywords: Biophilia, Dwelling, Heidegger, Oceanic Feeling, Oikos, Transcendence.

Introduction

Nature dwelling, oikos, biophilia and oceanic feeling are terms specific to ecocriticism, environmental thinking and Romantic ecology. They will be identified in the following thorough examination of Lord Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage to highlight his environmental thought and reveal how the Romantics integrated with nature, their harmonious abode, to the extent that it became their meaningful, spiritual dwelling. In this respect, Byron's intriguing and insightful affiliation with his natural surroundings in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage will be analyzed to draw attention to the manner in which he is essentially a Being in harmony with the environment.

The major premise of ecological thinking is connecting with the natural environment and developing a deep understanding of one's existence. Not unlike nature poets' interaction with the environment, Byron's views are as creative in achieving ecological insight. However, his underlying message was far-reaching and based on instilling a sense of ethical responsibility towards the environment.

His poems implicitly address public consciousness in order to restore readers (especially those immersed in a mechanized age) back to their natural home (the earth), put them on track of their existence/Being in the wholeness of their environment and impart the truth about how the natural environment shapes all facets of existence.

Nature poetry essentially emphasizes man's natural, innate desire to connect and create a relationship with the surrounding environment. As such, what this need points to is the notion of dwelling and its biophilic affiliations. I therefore argue that Byron is a *biophilic dweller* who expresses an innate urge to inspire active and meaningful interactions with the natural environment. As a philosopher of nature and an ecological thinker, he thinks of poetry in relation to place and the environment, and as a nature lover and observer, he draws his inspiration from the natural milieu to unravel its inner secrets. In fact, Byron seeks to achieve a sense of oneness with the natural world, which makes it necessary to point out this passion for nature that penetrates his Being, mind and emotions in order to know more about this often misunderstood poet. No matter where he resides or sojourns, his mind and heart remain unchangingly in the wild.

This affiliation between the human and the nonhuman world is subtle, intricate and ambivalent and has always been on the mind of Romantic poets. To discover the correlation between humanity and nature, Byron, albeit Harold, becomes a recluse. In this sense, it is effectively nature rather than culture which stimulates the development of Byron's environmental foresight. At the height of his desolation and disappointment with mankind, he is conscious of estrangement, not only from society but also from his own self/Being, a situation that urged him to seek a novel manner by which to connect with his immediate surroundings and develop a deep awareness of his own Being.

As he attempts to have an original rapport with nature, which he considers as a vital part of his character, Byron investigates his immediate environment and identifies with the ecosystem through an intimate and intellectual exchange with the natural milieu. He realizes that reconnecting with a human and spiritual dwelling on earth would strengthen his spiritual temperament, and would allow him to locate his spiritual experience of Being and to depict his biophilic ties and ecological concerns.

Literature Review

Overall, Byron's ecological views and connection with nature have been marginally tackled since not much has been written on Byron's significance as a Romantic nature poet. Even more so, neither his sense of rootedness nor his biophilic inclinations and oceanic feeling have received much attention. In fact, there are those scholars, including Timothy Morton in "Byron's *Manfred* and Ecocriticism," who blame Byron for developing a negative attitude towards nature (165). By the same token, Jason Pauly in "Designing Byron's *Dasein*: The Anticipation of Existential Despair in Lord Byron's Poetry" analyzes Byron's Being in relation to despair. Moreover, in *Byron: A Survey*, Bernard Blackstone infers that Byron's desperation leads the poet to attain "negative transcendentalism" (288-343). However, I will deal with Byron's awareness of Being in light of a gratifying reconnection with the natural environment and will argue that Byron fully achieves an enriching transcendental experience of both dwelling and oceanic state.

Byron has often been stereotyped as an anti-nature poet and a "social poet" instead of a nature poet. In *The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry*, Joseph Beach condemns Byron as "one who has the least tincture of the philosophical, the 'transcendental' [interpretation of nature]" (35). Similarly, Ernest Lovell in *Byron: The Record of a Quest Studies in a Poet's Concept and Treatment of Nature* concludes that Byron is a superficial nature admirer who has no philosophy of nature (47, 67-86). Similarly, Meyer Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* does not consider Byron a Romantic writer, and since Romanticism is associated with nature poetry, Abrams does not consider that Byron belongs to this category (13). In the same vein, Harold Bloom in "The Internalization of Quest-Romance" argues that Byron is not a Romantic writer for his "major poems hardly approximate nature poetry" (10). However, this does not entirely hold true because Byron, as will be argued through an analysis and discussion of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, is an environmentally attuned poet. With the exception of Jonathan Bate who tackles "Darkness," Karl Kroeber who discusses *Cain*, Mark Lussier who studies *The Giaour* and Timothy Morton who analyzes *Manfred*, romantic critics have neglected reading Byron's poetical oeuvre eco-critically.

Although Byron is associated with rootedness, in "'Living in Shattered Guise': Doubling in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto III," Daniel Westwood elucidates how Byron's exasperated soul refuses to dwell in nature which adds an air of uncertainty to Byron's "own existential wanderings" (136). This cannot be a firm argument since Byron successfully creates a sense of place and determines a meaningful existence in nature. In fact, Andrew Hubbell in "Byron's Cultural Ecology" explains how Byron displays "cosmopolitan rootedness" and that "*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is Byron's first major expression of his environmental consciousness, a product of the existential embeddedness he achieved during his 1810–11 tour of Greece" (BCE 185, 183). Furthermore, in "Question of Nature: Byron and Wordsworth," Hubbell claims that Byron "gained... environmental knowledge while *traveling*, not *dwelling*" (16). From here, this analysis will reveal how Byron's ecological awareness and environmental connectedness are the aftermath of a unique state of dwelling. To further support Hubbell's focus on Byron's "ecstatic dwelling," and how it made the poet recognize that men and "their culture evolve from their landscape and climate" (BN 67), this paper will foreground a unique form of rooted dwelling which I refer to as *biophilic dwelling*.

Furthermore, since Hubbell does not analyze Byron's work through a Heideggerian paradigm and merely speculates on his existence through a nature-culture interconnectedness and on his involvement with "the European polis" (culture) more than with his dwelling experience in the *oikos* (BN 3, 5), the bulk of this study will highlight Byron's interest in finding an *oikos*, a home or dwelling place in nature.

Furthermore, Hubbell's "Byron's Cultural Ecology," provides an ecocritical reading of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* by mainly focusing on the poet's environmental consciousness. He bolsters Byron's Philhellenism and how this environmentalism, which he refers to as "cultural ecology," expands into a visualization "of Europe and the Mediterranean as a bioregion connected through its waterways" (183). However, since he does not touch upon Byron's biophilic affiliations nor his oceanic state, this paper will attempt to answer such an oversight.

Byron and Dwelling

Our involvement in the world determines the perspective of our existence which has deep roots in ecology and the indispensable attribute of dwelling. According to Paul Davies, "Ecological theory has one principle at root: the universe is one being and not an assembled mass of separate objects" (31). The idea of recognizing one's place in the universe was primarily proposed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Later, with Martin Heidegger's existential philosophy and his belief that human existence is determined by interactions with the nonhuman world, a deeper understanding of Being/existence in nature became more significant in determining man's Being-in-the-world.

As a notion adopted from Heidegger, dwelling signals a connection between humans and space and constitutes the essence of Being. In Heidegger's thought "The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *buan*, dwelling" which "is *the basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals exist" (145, 158). According to Heidegger, dwelling is a genuine mode of Being which conjures a sense of belonging indicating rootedness. As part of Heidegger's existential philosophy of *Dasein* (existence), dwelling provides a distinct picture about the interconnectivity between man and the natural environment: "The word for existence, *Dasein*, is used... in the traditional sense of presence and as a synonym of Being" (135). Human existence then is characterized as *Dasein*, meaning presence, being-there.

Consequently, in order to genuinely dwell, humans have to bolster their rapport with the environment. Authentic dwelling then is experienced by delineating a relationship between humans and the environment. Lawrence Buell refers to dwelling as "existential embeddedness" (14), that is the state of being instinctively attuned to earth, to dwell or to be embedded within a particular physical place. This theory of dwelling is also called *rootedness* and is a basic requirement of a nature poet. Therefore, considered in theory and practice, dwelling is synonymous to rootedness, which is a mode of both Being (belonging) and knowing (thinking).

It is through dwelling that it is possible to recognize how the environment dynamically functions as a system. In re-thinking the notion of place, Byron portrays how the earth is rendered a dwelling place for a symbiotic (interdependent) biological community? He reveals how his identity blends, physically and spiritually, with the surrounding place until he eventually becomes an integral part of it and makes it his dwelling-place or home. Home as dwelling has its origins in the Greek word *oikos* meaning "the home or place of dwelling" (Bate 75). As Bate elucidates: "Poets who find their home in a specific environment have an imaginative, not a proprietorial interest in belonging" (280). In other words, one's home is not related to man's existence in the sense that it has nothing to do with material possession or owning a dwelling-place, but with a sense of identification, belonging, rootedness and place-meaning.

In support of poetic acquisition of dwelling, Heidegger affirms, "we can imagine that poets do on occasion dwell poetically" (211), and considers that "It is the way of poets to shut their eyes to actuality... What they make is merely imagined.... Making is, in Greek, *poiesis*. And man's dwelling is supposed to be poetry and poetic" (212). Dwelling is associated with concrete structures designed for shelter, comfort and safety; however, "through what do we attain to a dwelling place? Through building. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building" (Heidegger 213). Poetic dwelling is therefore associated with creativity, fantasy and imagination, and interestingly, Heidegger's belief that "poetically man dwells" is remarkably captured in the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* where the wellspring of Byron's imagination illustrates the intense poetic effort involved in what is an ongoing imaginative construction of the "Soul of [his] Thought":

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth, (vi)

The spirit of Byron's thought is manifested in an imaginative activity of "environing the self" or the "I" and is effectively Byron's "poetic labor of building a dwelling in the *oikos*" (Hubbell BN 39).

Moreover, Heidegger's notion of poetic dwelling is characterized by the interconnection between human existence and the natural world. It is this connection that makes existence meaningful, and according to Heidegger, is identifiable through "poetic dwelling" since "[p]oetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling" (216). In brief, habitat is in essence poetic and is experienced in the harmonious interconnection and bond between persons and their surroundings as being at one with the world.

Essentially, Heidegger acquires the idea of poetic or poietic dwelling from the 'dwelling poet' Hölderlin who perceives man as "Full of merit, yet poetically, man/ Dwells on this earth" (qtd. in Heidegger 216). Byron's poetry seemingly fits within such a Heideggerian framework, especially since he mentions in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* that it is imagination that makes existence—or Dasein—more pleasurable: "The beings of the mind are not of clay;/ Essentially immortal, they create/ And multiply in us a brighter ray/ And more belov'd existence..." (IV, v). His outlook towards human existence is clear here as he associates existence with gratification: "...Did man compute/ Existence by enjoyment..." (CHP III, xxxiv), adding "I feel almost at times as I have felt/ In happy childhood; trees, and flowers, and brooks,/ Which do remember me of where I dwelt" ("Epistle to Augusta," VII). In this regard, Byron is in line with Kellert and Wilson who state that, "in our relationship to the natural world [there] exists the likelihood of achieving a more personally rewarding existence" (70).

When Harold wonders "What is my being?" (III, xcv), he mouths Byron's concern about the nature of human existence and the meaning underlying it and thus anticipates Heidegger's existential philosophy of dwelling. In *Don Juan*, his existential and philosophical concerns become more visible when in the sixth canto he describes his "tendency... to philosophize" and continues by asking these thought-provoking rhetorical questions: "What are we? and whence came we? what shall be/ Our *ultimate* existence? what's our present?/ Are questions answerless, and yet incessant" (VI, lxiii).

Byron and Biophilia

Broadly speaking, biophilia deals with man's affiliation with nature. Since relationships linking humans to their surroundings point to a connection unique to dwelling, then the biophilia hypothesis is a strongly related concept. It stresses how residing in nature is equivalent to coming home and reinforces rootedness. Thus, dwelling is an essential prelude to developing biophilic affiliations.

The term "biophilia" was first used in 1973 by the German social psychologist and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. Later, in the middle of the 1980s, Edward O. Wilson, a famed American socio-biologist and ecologist, popularized the biophilia concept by defining it as an instinctive "urge to affiliate with other forms of life" (85). Essentially, the biophilia hypothesis points towards a "human dependence on nature" that fulfills "the human craving" for "spiritual meaning and satisfaction" (Kellert and Wilson 27). This suggests that humans have an inclination and an instinctive drive to connect with the natural environment. A biophilic also has "feelings of deep emotional attachment to individual elements of the natural environment" (Kellert and Wilson 56). In essence, a biophilic thesis proposes that humans have an affiliation to other life forms and that they harbor innate emotional affinity, attachment, attraction and natural predilection not only to living systems but also to natural settings. It is a genetically founded passionate love for what is living and nonliving. Unfortunately, this affinity has been repressed with the advent of the industrial age and man's material concerns.

Another feature of biophilia is that it helps develop a mutually rich and advantageous bond between humans and nonhumans. Wilson provides insightful advice stating that, "to explore and affiliate with life is a deep and complicated process in mental development. To an extent... our existence depends on this propensity, our spirit is woven from it, hope arises on its currents" (*Biophilia* 1). Kroeber also posits that the Romantics are the precursors "of a new biological, materialistic understanding of humanity's place in the natural cosmos... [who] believed that humankind belonged in, could and should be at home within, the world of natural processes" (2-5). In this respect, it is difficult to ignore Byron's affinity with this category.

Moreover, writers who have a biophilic view of nature are concerned with the future, and Byron does reveal such a far-sightedness in his portrayal of nature and his interest in scientific knowledge. Anticipating Wilson's biophilia hypothesis, Byron foresees that the future of human existence is based on fostering kinship with living and nonliving beings and that biophilic relations are crucial to human existence. In this regard, Blackstone has observed that Byron is an environmental conversationalist who forecasts the delicate relationship between man and nature. He praises Byron's ecological consciousness considering him as "the first 'conservationist' among our poets, conscious of the extreme fragility of the man-nature symbiosis" (7). As an environmentally committed poet, Byron manifests his knowledge of nature by expressing an inevitable intimate relationship between man and the natural milieu. He is a confirmed biophilic who creatively expresses an innate attachment towards living and nonliving nature. Being deeply responsive to his natural surrounding and human relations inherent within it, he insinuates that humanity and nature are a unified cohesive unit, reaffirming the equivalence of the human (organic) and nonhuman (inorganic) world and

thus inspiring a vision of biophilic affiliation. This being said, his scientific interest in nature made him realize that man is not only equal to nature, but also an indispensable part of it.

Although the correlation between human culture and the natural environment is fragile and complex, Byron does not discriminate between nature and culture but conciliates these binary oppositions that form an interconnected, coherent physical environment. As an ecologically conscious poet, Byron conjures the image of a holistic worldview of a synthesized earth. Envisaging the biosphere as one homeostasis fits within the paradigm of the biophilia hypothesis. In the second canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Byron writes in favor of the "Monastic Zitza" as a "favour'd spot of holy ground." He envisions this natural and civilized integration ecologically. Those who inhabit this convent are entirely integrated in such a cheerful and hospitable ecosystem/environment; here earth is a dwelling place of a symbiotic biological community: "Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,/ From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze" (L). Both "the caloyer" and "the passer by" are "welcome" to enjoy "kind nature's sheen," thanks to the presence of the prevalent winds displaying an interdependence between humankind and the natural environment: "Here dwells the caloyer, nor rude is he,/ Nor niggard of his cheer; the passer by/ Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee/ From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see" (CHP II, xli).

In this image which is ecological at root, Byron allows nature to explain itself; here is an inclusive environment where human presence is as essential as that of a physical place since both entities display mutual dependence and constitute one ecological whole. The dynamic equilibrium of how the weather, landscape and culture autonomously, smoothly and intimately interact is shrewdly penned by the poet who reveals how the natural environment is fashioned by human culture and vice versa. In portraying such a perfect nature-culture symbiosis or coexistence, Byron's intense poetic insight penetrates the sublime harmony of pristine nature, creatively including and reharmonizing with it those dwelling in the middle of this holy landscape. What is also apprehended here is Byron's interest in cultural ecology. The hospitable Greek climate is key to an understanding of Byron's engagement in such a welcoming environment. In this context, Hubbell describes Byron's immersion in Greece as an "ecstatic dwelling" that provides insight into how humans, along with their particular cultures, develop from their clime and landscape (BN 67). This cross-referencing between culture and nature demonstrates how humans and nature are an interrelated part of the environment. Hubbell also explicates that Byron envisions "Greece as a place that depends upon preserving the integration of natural and built environments in order to retain its identity as the spiritual birthplace of European concepts of freedom" (BCE 183).

Basically, a dynamic vision of natural symbiosis confirms Byron's proclivity toward a biophilic view of the natural world. Such affinity is further justified by the poet's vivid description of the battle of Waterloo in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* where the portrayal of blood mingling with soil seals the interconnected and inevitable fate of humans and nonhumans. The poet narrator describes how the physical and nonhuman environment is the final resting place of all creation. Unnamed soldiers who perish in battle, along with their deceased enemies and horses, lose their identity as they become part of the soil or nature: "The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,/ Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,/ Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!" (CHP III, xxviii). In this manner, they renew their bond with the natural environment, for in their death they return home to mother earth. When death approaches, the dichotomy between humans and nonhumans vanishes, and their identities mix and blend in a single red burial ground. The inherent earthiness in the above selection reveals a close affinity to the Biblical image of Adam who was fashioned from red clay.

Through this all-encompassing environmental portrait of coexistence, the poet confirms an interconnected kinship with all creation. With the view that all parts of the ecosystem stem from one life and one single source, earth then becomes a dwelling-place, the *oikos* in which all living things eventually meet their fate in death. Such an organic relation is reflected in Byron's biophilic tendency when he draws a picture of "trodden" mortals meeting the same fate as "trodden" grass which in turn regrows on top of the buried soldiers when their carcasses are blended with earth. The biophilia notion is subtly identified through the usage of the word "like" which compares the deceased warriors to grass: "Over the unreturning brave,—alas!/ Ere evening to be trodden like the grass/ Which now beneath them, but above shall grow" (CHP III, xxvii). In their ultimate burial home, "[a]ll that mingled there below" from flora (grass), fauna (horses) and mortals (warriors) disintegrate and reintegrate to become indistinguishable as they intermingle in harmony. Wilson scientifically describes this process of decomposition as such: "the individual organism simply dissolves and assimilates whatever appropriate fragments of plants and animals come to rest near it" (15). The integration mode the poet constructs foresees syntheses and holism. Byron's social ecology makes it possible to envisage that natural elements and living beings become one interconnected whole conserved in earth: once again pronouncing that man is part of nature. The following figurative suggestion of deep interfusion is another mode of kinship between man and nature: "When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,/ He [Man] sinks into thy depths [ocean's] with bubbling groan,/ Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown" (CHP IV, clxxix).

Moreover, the following stanza from *The Siege of Corinth* predicts the biophilia notion that humans, animals or things will eventually lose their original identity and remix with nature. *Being* loses its literal meaning and transforms from corporeal into spiritual:

The thousand shapeless things all driven
 In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
 By that tremendous blast...
 Up to the sky like rockets go
 All that mingled there below:
 Many a tall and goodly man...
 When he fell to earth again
 Like a cinder strew'd the plain:
 Down the ashes shower like rain; (xxxiii)

When the human body is transformed into ashes, it returns to where it belongs, to be ultimately reunified with nature. In this image, the poet sharply claims an explicit kinship with nature, providing insight into his profound ecological understanding of interconnectivity (of mankind and nature) which underpins the perspective of the natural sciences.

As a poet of nature, Byron enjoys physical and spiritual unity with the natural world. His spiritual communion with nature is intensified to the extent that it allows him to experience moving impressions. "Feel all I see..." (CHP III, lxxiv) is a declaration of his intense affinity with whatever is within the circle of his vision to the extent that even his sense of touch is affected. He highlights the importance of passionate sensitivity to our existence as spiritual beings in his famed letter on feelings: "The great object of life is sensation—to feel that we exist, even though in pain. It is this 'craving void' which drives us to gaming—to battle—to travel" (BLJ 3:109). Hence, Byron displays biophilic traits in line with Kellert and Wilson's proposition that a biophilic is one who possesses an intense and harmonious connection with nature which includes "affinities for mountainous landscapes" (Kellert and Wilson 448).

One fundamental aspect of the biophilia concept is "aesthetic pleasure and emotional enticement associated with nature" (Kellert and Wilson 146). Innate affinity and emotional involvement with natural forms is an effective, consciously felt experience enriching our understanding of our existential status. It is a feeling of being in the world and being at home (in the *oikos*). To further illustrate, one notices the spiritual relationship between Byron and the mountains; its profound emotional attachment resembles that between two friends. Mountains are no longer inanimate objects, but are congenial to Byron. This biophilic relationship is expressed thus: "High mountains are a feeling" (CHP III, lxxii) – an integral part of his existence. With nature being essentially based on sensation, mountains acquire an added social dimension and become, not only the poet's companion, but also his home. This intuitive closeness and affinity with the natural world—which becomes an "inherent human need" to the poet—confirms the biophilia hypothesis and at same time helps him achieve spirituality: "The human need for nature is linked...to the influence of the natural world on our emotional, cognitive, aesthetic, and even spiritual development" (Kellert and Wilson 47).

Nature: The *Oikos* that Embraces Byron's "Biophilic Dwelling"

Heidegger's critique of human existence adds a biocentric perspective to environmental thought, accentuating an understanding of nature that incorporates a meaningful, equal and interdependent presence of the human and the nonhuman world. The Romantic call for reunification with nature is a profoundly affective biophilic dimension that includes the notion of dwelling in such a manner that allows Byron's interpretation of the natural realm to surpass that of other Romantic poets. As an advocate of environmental justice, he communicates on behalf of the nonhuman other and attempts to rethink their relation to the world. Since environmental consciousness has always been at the heart of his thought, he realizes that the nonhuman world has the right to exist, gives it a voice and allows it to merge with the rest of creation.

As a poet of nature, he not only loves the natural world, but also has "insight into the works of creation," so he "must see in nature so much of truth" and be "uplifted into the realm of the spiritual and ennobled to see the things that are invisible" (Ulrich 147). Thus endowed with penetrating insight, Byron divulges nature's inner spiritual truth: the interconnectedness of all forms of life. Doing so enables him to envisage his individual Being as interconnected with those of other beings and forms. It is a vision of man's unity with living and nonliving nature that anticipates Wilson's biophilia hypothesis. This innate awareness of the essence of existence makes Byron a farsighted nature poet whose environmental imaginings are worth questioning and discussing.

What are the aspects of Byronic dwelling? What is its nature and what defines it? How does Byron behold nature? Where does he find himself, and how does he design his Dasein/existence? Concerning the nature of Byronic dwelling, it could be understood through the poet's biophilic affiliation which reveals meaningful environmental connectedness. A distinctive mode of dwelling underpins Byron as a unique nature poet who expresses his Dasein through what I would refer to as *biophilic dwelling*. This is how he dwells differently by identifying with nature. Through his expression of biophilic dwelling on earth which promises an enhanced future for both humans and nonhumans, Byron initiates a notable existential connection between humanity and the world. This study provides a new perspective for understanding Byron's environmental consciousness and ecological vision of rootedness in nature attained through the experience of *dwelling* and not through that of *travelling* as Hubbell claims (BN 16).

Dwelling conditions/determines environmental thought and since it is referred to as "*the basic character of Being*" (Heidegger 158), it carries within it a desire to belong to the natural world– to be at home in the environment. Byron conditions his Being to be attuned to the earth. In fact, Being-in-the-world is a recurrent motif in his poems manifested through the experience of dwelling. For Heidegger, the experience of dwelling is rendered as an abstract existential mode (an implicit reality), but Byron endeavors to explicitly concretize it by designing an *oikos* that enhances his biophilic dwelling.

Heidegger asserts that, "We attain to dwelling, so it seems, only by means of building" (143). One innovative way Byron does so is through the creation of place: building an *oikos* in nature that preserves ecological harmony. In this home which is of symbolic and human significance, he maintains a cosmic, organic union and sense of oneness with nature. Byron's biophilic immersion is also expressed by his profound identification with Greek mythology and nature that has gained him the reputation of being the hero of Greek independence and the title "Byron of Greece" even after returning to England in 1811. Following his intense immersion in Greek life and culture, he wrote *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, an allegorical pilgrimage of spiritual discovery. More importantly, the experience of dwelling is seemingly complete in this lengthy autobiographical poem, which denotes a voyage into the inner spaces of Byron's poetic self, in which he experiences dwelling not only as a virtual activity, but also as a semi-physical one. Interestingly, Byron's distinctive manner of expressing the bond between humans and their environment is more experience-based than descriptive.

In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, he recognizes the Romantic fantasy of escape from the material world to reunite with natural elements for the purpose of designing a home away from home. The reason why Harold, "sore sick at heart," (I, vi) dislikes dwelling in "his native land" is that he feels forlorn and lonely: "Then loathed he in his native land to dwell,/ Which seem'd to him more lone than Eremite's sad cell" (I, iv). "Self-exiled Harold" (III, xvi) then decides to "visit scorching climes beyond the sea;" (I, vi) to eventually build a fit *oikos*: "And seek me out a home by a remoter sea," (IV, viii) that reinstates his physical and emotional robustness and safeguards his biological integrity.

Nature poets have always expressed the exhilaration that is a consequence of a liberating communion to the natural world. Wilson affirms that the world of nature "is the refuge of the spirit, remote, static, richer even than the human imagination" (11-12). On his part, Byron recognizes its spiritual role and partakes of its delight. Both "pleasure" and "rapture" are palpable in the poet's communion with nature which he admits to sincerely "love" more than humans. After integrating with the solitude of the natural surroundings, Byron's soul is free to merge with that of nature. The enriching spiritual outcome of his transcendental imagination is difficult to "conceal" and "express" due to the intensity of nature's force that is innately sensed by the poet. The following stanza reflects the nurturing power of nature. There is a startling, active, eternal energy with which Byron is in harmony which is the reason why for him, working in nature is spiritually fulfilling. He thus shares with his readers the power of environmental influences which hones his sensitive imagination and reconnects him with the environment:

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal. (CHP IV, clxxviii)

As a pilgrim, the poet narrator chooses to retire from the culture zone to permanently build a dwelling in an ecological setting characterized by biodiversity and creativity. Connecting with the familiar wild, Byron listens attentively to the mystical voice of nature summoning him "[t]o mingle with the Universe." In the isolated, uninhibited "pathless woods," he explores freedom and creates a sanctuary as his dwelling, his abode, his spiritual *oikos*, the home to which he innately belongs. Consequently, Byron is in line with Heidegger's concept of dwelling elucidated thus: "We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are *dwellers*" (146). Thus, as a biophilic dweller, Byron constructs his spiritual *oikos* as reflected by his persona Harold who, as one of the "pensive" displaced "pilgrims," innately designs a spiritual abode where he "clings to wonted home" and finds his "kindred cheer" and a "welcome[ing] hearth." The poet narrator secures a place in Athens which is sought by Western pilgrims for its symbolic significance as the spiritual *oikos* of Western liberty (Hubbell BN 88).

For Heidegger, "to dwell... signifies: to remain, to stay in a place" (144), and "[b]uilding as dwelling, that is, as being on the earth ... remains for man's everyday experience that which is from the outset "habitual" – we inhabit it" (145). This form of place-attachment is celebrated in the following ecological portrait that reflects Heidegger's thinking. Byron expressively and meticulously describes the Greek dwelling place he establishes which eventually becomes a welcoming "home" ready to be inhabited: "The parted bosom clings to wonted home,/ If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth;" (CHP II, xcii).

Furthermore, Byron's spirituality is so intense and enhanced that he is capable of disclosing the secrets underlying nature's inner soul. According to Doyle Ulrich, a nature poet studies its secrets (146), and as a visionary nature poet, Byron reveals the secrets of the innately mysterious natural world. His belief in one and only one life (an all-extending life circulating universally) within man's inner and external world is worth dwelling on. This concept of one life, which Byron could perceive in the elements of nature, is also raised by Coleridge in "The Eolian Harp." As "the one Life within us and abroad," man becomes more attuned with nature's universal, indwelling spirit. In order to surrender to the origin of one universal life, Byron longs for a union with nature. This reaffirmation of man's extensive connectedness to the natural world, is no doubt a biophilic trait. Interestingly, "elements of the 'nonliving' environment—earth, mountains, rivers, lakes, ice, snow, storms, lightning, sun, moon, stars—all have spirit and consciousness" (Kellert and Wilson 221). Since Harold understands the reality behind elemental things in the way he senses a spirit rolling through everything in nature, he embarks on an inward pilgrimage towards the origin of life and pursues "the Spirit of each spot" since his spirit and that of existing nature fuse together:

When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot? (*CHP* III, lxxiv)

These lines evoke a declaration of a "warm" intimate kinship. On discovering the mysterious truth of his Being, Harold makes a home in every spot, thus becoming a dweller of the cosmos. Once he co-creates a new identity by adapting to his *oikos* in nature, he feels a sense of belonging and attains a meaningful existence. Eventually, his dynamic and rejuvenated soul is free to roam about its newly fabricated home and decides to entwine with "the immortal lot" while his body after death is biodegraded and absorbed in earth. In this case, he enjoys genuine, unalienated life since he is no longer isolated; both body and soul enjoy earth's warmth and hospitality. The lengthier time spent in nature, the deeper his experiential and actual observation of the wild which allows him to attain a profound knowledge about his affinity with the earth as his dwelling. This creative self-transformation of being part of "The Spirit of each spot" is in fact part of the poet's imaginative being enabling his transformation into a Being-in-the-world. Nature as a living entity has a life, a spirit, of its own, and returning to nature makes the poet connect to all life forms. Thus, through this satisfying interconnected unity, he achieves meaningful wholeness that transcends his individuality. In this respect, Byron shares Wilson's opinion that: "Humanity is exalted not because we are so far above other creatures, but because knowing them well elevates the very concept of life" (22). The poet seems to fathom how "the natural environment is critical to human meaning and fulfillment" (Kellert and Wilson 32). With this newfound understanding of a fulfilling existence, Byron feels that he is an indispensable component of a superior reality: mankind and all elements in nature harmoniously coexist since humans, flora and fauna are interconnected by the same life force. At this stage, Byron, as a biophilic dweller, reveals a humane relationship with the environment and earth as the abode of all.

Byron's affiliative temperament continues to develop as is evident in his poem. After "mingl[ing] with the Universe," the poet's biophilic instinct instigates him to "claim some kindred with" the stars that embody the emblem of "life" because his intense insight envisions that man's "fate" is being "kindred" to inanimate natural objects. An interesting point related to the poet's nature of dwelling arises in Byron's apostrophizing of the stars. This craving for an intimate communion with elements of nature is another mode of Byron's biophilic dwelling, and below is how the poet considers preserving the fated, innate coexistence between the living and the nonliving:

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgive
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star. (*CHP* III, lxxxviii)

In the above quote, Byron shares some vital ecological insights regarding humankind's relationship with nature: since humans arise from the surrounding environment, they instinctively partake of it. The notion of global interconnectedness is at the heart of his ecological thought, with Byron expressing a certainty that this biological link between man and nature—hinted at through the frame of allegorical kindred independence—is not only a natural, inherent feature of human nature, but also helps develop a sense of unity and the lasting endurance of mankind and its environment/ecosystem.

Such an "intimate interaction" with the natural world dovetails significantly with Kellert and Wilson's proposition that "strong tendencies" towards nature lead to an "enhanced capacity for bonding" (57) more specifically, to emotional bonding. Henceforth, "human life is enriched by its broadest affiliation with the natural

world" (27). Being in direct contact with the environment, Byron exists in close symbiosis with nonhumans. As a member of a biotic community, he is aware of man-nature symbiosis nurturing his environmentalist philosophy and consciousness. Affiliating/connecting with nature evokes a meaningful existence for poets who undergo an empirical sense of oneness with the natural environment. For example, in "Ulysses," Tennyson confirms "I am a part of all that I have met," which resonates in Byron's "Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part/ Of me and of my soul, as I of them?" (*CHP* III, lxxv). A harmonious self-existence is sensed here since nature is inherent in Byron's consciousness. This is evidence that the poet, who believes that nature is deep-rooted in humanity, is not separate from the natural world but a part of it. Interpreting nature this way, the poet proudly announces equality between nature and himself and reveals his desire to become part of the wild by establishing an individual relationship with the biosphere. It is in this scenario that Byron chooses a way of being in the world and gages his essential bearings to become a Being in nature. His coexistence with nature testifies to his biophilic dwelling.

More importantly, becoming part of a whole sustainable environment is another mode of the poet's biophilic dwelling. Byron's modern ecological thought is distinctly focused on a holistic way of perceiving the human-environment relationship. He plays the role of an ecologist who designs an innovative model and divulges the vision of the whole in which all-natural forms and elements flawlessly function within an intricate, delicate web. Through such cosmic integration, both humans and nonhumans achieve a self-sustaining wholeness, fusing into one inseparable entity. Authorized to "become a part of what has been,/ And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen" (*CHP* IV, cxxxviii), Byron roots "himself in an epigenetic process" (Hubbell *BN* 130) and attains biophilic dwelling in the process.

In nature, Byron is never isolated but chooses to exist in relation to the whole, extending his Being to its elemental forms. The following lines, "My altars are the mountains and the ocean,/ Earth, air, stars—all that springs from the great Whole,/ Who hath produced, and will receive the soul" (*Don Juan* III, civ) reveal how Byron reflects upon the natural environment and his relationship with it. Byron's self, which "springs from the great Whole," reveals his holistic thinking (which is similar to that of a naturalist) and testifies to his kinship with nature. Eventually, nature "will receive the soul," claiming back not only the dead bodies but also their souls.

It is evident that Byron is preoccupied with how humans emerge from and ultimately merge into nature. The wholeness of Being which is a feature of Byron's biophilic dwelling is clearly visualized in his poetic world. In the midst of sublime transcendentalism, his freely-willed self undergoes an act of creative self-giving as it embraces/loves the natural world and reveals his innately emotional and biophilic affiliation with nature. That is why his curious, active and uncontrollable "I," drawn towards outdoor spaces and natural landscapes, is absorbed/engrossed in the skies, stars, plains, mountains and oceans, affirming interconnection between the observer and the observed. Readers note that he is not only interested in the sublime beauty of the picturesque landscape but also in how the natural world is a habitat for the living and nonliving. This organic connection, which Byron foresees between men and the land they inhabit, bestows longevity and imperishability upon mankind. Recognizing an intuitive connection and renewed coexistence with other natural forms, Byron discovers not only his nature but also his essence since he feels embedded in both the earth and what lies beyond. In this sense, he disregards his physical existence by embracing nature's bosom, the natural home for his body and psyche. Such innate/natural and soul awakening immersion with the surrounding environment is a primeval bond, profoundly deep-seated in Byron's human memory and psyche. Byron feels immortal as his energetic soul transcends his physical self to ecstatically unite with the natural environment which becomes his soul's eternal *oikos*, his everlasting dwelling place. His quest for a home or a euphoric dwelling in nature elicits a sense of an intrinsic belonging which is undoubtedly a Romantic and an ecocritical trope. This self-transcendent experience is an overwhelming ecological revelation of a metaphysical and dynamic interrelation between living and nonliving beings.

Another instance of profound affinity that confirms Byron's biophilic tendency with nature and the unity of existence is evoked in the following stanza: "...I become/ Portion of that around me; and to me..." This line of verse capitulates Byron's bone fide experience of embeddedness in Greece. In the wild, he becomes alert to his genuine Being. Penetrating deeply into the spirit of nature, he rediscovers his human nature and his own innate wildness, experiencing the urge to renew the intrinsic sense of kinship with his surroundings. This is how he spiritually interacts with his environment. In such an inclusive ecopoetic vision, Byron responds to the natural milieu by being a segment of it. In the perfect synthesis of matter and spirit, the poet's body and mind become part of the great Whole. As a biophilic dweller, he depends on the natural world to become complete, expecting nature to satisfy his spiritual desires. He loses himself in nature to the extent that he feels one with the world in relation to his existence, affirming: "And thus am I absorb'd, and this is life." He transforms himself from a social to a spiritual being so the fine line between his self and external world (other species) no longer exists. Thus, no difference is detected between him and any other living "creatures." Seen in this light, Byron shares Wilson's conviction that "[i]ndividual people and other organisms are no longer distinguishable" (43) in the living world. For this reason, the poet's escaping spirit naturally blends "not in vain" with other elements of nature because this is where his soul belongs:

I live not in myself, but I become
 Portion of that around me; and to me...
 Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
 A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
 Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
 And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
 Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.
 And thus am I absorb'd, and this is life: (CHP III, lxxii-lxxiii)

As a confirmed biophilic dweller, Byron instinctively recognizes the merits of natural surroundings that "represent the best chance for people to experience a satisfying and meaningful existence" (Kellert and Wilson 65). As he goes through the process of individualization and self-representation, the poet narrator, Harold, feels that his existence becomes more meaningful when he genetically posits himself in "a fleshly" "link" "[c]lassed among creatures." As an ardent nature lover, Byron's sense of kinship with other creatures is the sign of his genetic connection with the natural world. Undeniably, he predicts Wilson's belief that humans are "are literally kin to other organisms" (130) and as "a biological species" they "will find a little ultimate meaning apart from the remainder of life" (81). Moreover, there is a profound indication here that the poet has a passion for living and that his love for life is innate. The nonhuman environment becomes the embodiment of his identity/individuality. In fact, this is an explicit reference to a biophysical basis of connectedness: the poet forms an organic unity with other species due to his confirmable genetic relationship with all life forms. It is most likely that Byron can envisage that humans' "persistence as a species will depend upon cognition of [themselves] as part of nature" (Kellert and Wilson 23). Understanding the oneness of nonhumans and humans together with the accompanying promise of longevity and continuity constitutes the essence of Byron's ecological vision.

Remarkably "there is a tendency to include in biophilia certain phenomena that are only remotely or marginally biological, including affinities for... water" (Kellert and Wilson 448). In this respect, Byron displays biophilic features as he innately affiliates with watery landscapes and unbridles the rein of his imagination which allows him to dwell in lakes, seas and rivers: "Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake/ With the wild world I dwelt in ..." (CHP III, lxxxv). In this stanza, the narrator-persona identifies with the "wild World" that he "dwelt in" the tranquil Lake Leman and willingly and freely decides to come back to that peaceful dwelling several stanzas later so that he can be finally at home to "resume/ The march of [his] existence" (CHP III, xcvi). The wild reminds Byron of his own nature and is what attracts him to dwell there. It is a homecoming which permits readers to understand Byron's Dasein as, being-there – a 'Thereness' of existence reminiscent of Heidegger's existential philosophy and of Wilson's biophilia hypothesis which emphasize "that much of the human search for a coherent and fulfilling existence is intimately dependent upon our relationship to nature" (Kellert and Wilson 47).

Nature: The *Oikos* that Hones Byron's Oceanic Feeling

The correspondence between Sigmund Freud and the mystic French writer Romain Rolland led to the coinage of the phrase "oceanic feeling" which is used by the latter to evoke "a sensation of eternity." According to David Fisher, Rolland interprets oceanic feeling as "a prolonged intuitive feeling of contact with the eternal" (256). In the first chapter of *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud construes oceanic feeling as featuring "an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole" (65), displaying "limitlessness" (68) and experiencing "oneness with the universe" (72). This natural feeling of experiencing unity, connectedness, dissolution and fusion is, according to Freud, the result of self-defense or running away from distress and harsh truth (65). To Arthur Koestler, "That higher entity, of which the self feels a part, to which it surrenders its identity, may be nature, God, the anima mundi, the magic of form, or the ocean of sound" (258).

Oceanic feeling is an existential feeling, featuring a world experience that deals with reconstruction of one's ecological relationship with the world. It is a sentiment about the dissolution of the boundaries between humans (the self and emotions) and the nonhuman surrounding; consequently, the Romantic poet's emotions become one with the entire external world. Hence, the effective feelings that nature rouses in the poet could be translated into poet-nature interconnectedness. Through this existential feeling, the poet embraces the universe/nature as a whole. Reaching this creative, mystic oceanic experience, poets concretize their fantasies as they sense an intuitive union with eternity experiencing embracement, oneness, concord, sublimity, security and bliss.

The most efficient way to demonstrate a poet's relationship with the world and his/her artistic dwelling is to trace within the paradigm of oceanic feeling states of communion, bonding and connectedness with the universe as a whole. As a feature of Romantic sensibility, oceanic sensation is an expression of an original unity with any part/element/form of the surrounding environment. Although Byron reveals his eternal feeling and spiritual unity with many facets of external nature such as the plains, mountains, stars, sky, tempest, waves, sea and many more, I choose to highlight one representative natural element (the ocean) as an effective medium of his unitive oceanic process. This aquatic medium helps him develop potential feelings of symbiotic oneness and all-embracing unity between his own self and the universe.

Portraying oceanic consciousness is one of Byron's offerings to the Romantic vision, and is an additional innovative mode through which he attunes himself to the earth through dwelling. Oceanic depth perception is being aesthetically evoked in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* by a poet who masters the Romantic trope of oneness of things. Moving from the ordinary sense of sight to the extraordinary creation of fancy, Byron transcends the material world of the senses to probe into the mysteries of the invisible where he is fully at home. Since he deeply recognizes the unfathomable depths of the unchanging, eternal ocean, he names it: "The ocean of eternity" (*Don Juan* X, iv). Byron's "oceanism" is revealed in the way he reflects a natural, intrinsic tendency (biophilic temperament) to bond with his environment and with immortality.

The natural world has always refined Byron's spirituality as well as his creativity, constantly piercing his Being and shaping his thinking. Byron's fervent affection for the ocean has brought felicity to his childhood, and his oceanic thinking materializes at a significantly early age. Grasping at an early age that the ocean is meaningful to his existence, Byron develops an innate affinity and personal affection to the "watery plain": "Our friend of youth, that ocean" (*CHP* IV, clxxv). Watery aspects of nature have particularly fascinated him. Having a great passion for swimming as a boy, Byron has always been drawn to the sea, a renowned image of maternal presence. Establishing a bond with the water domain is a natural affinity, and as Rachel Carson elucidates: "life itself began in the sea, so each of us begins his... life in a miniature ocean within his mother's womb, and in... his embryonic development repeats the steps by which his race evolved from gill-breathing inhabitants... to creatures able to live on land" (28-29). Considered as the origin of life, the sea becomes a universal, environmental icon that symbolizes life and eternity. The natural symbiosis Byron creates between the natural surroundings and the human community is imagined as an embryonic bond, a reminder of a permanent relationship with the wild, the live habitat in which he achieves Being at home in nature, his *oikos*.

These lines of verse testify to Byron's innate attraction to the ocean as often expressed in his poetry: "And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy/ Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be/ Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy/ I wanton'd with thy breakers..." (*CHP* IV, clxxxiv). Ostensibly, the poet's display of oceanic feeling is both personal and poetical. Out of this visceral and emotional attachment (physical pleasure) to this familiar natural element, a deep sensation of kinship and innate, mutual affinity with the ocean have been unveiled: Byron admits that as the ocean's child, he is instinctively and substantially attached to this embracing aquatic existence: "For I was as it were a child of thee/ And trusted to thy billows far and near,/ And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here" (*CHP* IV, clxxxiv). Undoubtedly, Byron, the sea-dwelling poet, understands how to relate intensely to the nonhuman world and be genuinely involved in it; his desire for an eternal union of the self with the world is pre-intentional, inborn, permanent and genetically rooted in his psyche.

Although Byron is attracted to the sublimity of the ocean, he is not a mere observer of sublime beauty but chooses to dynamically participate in the surrounding living world. Through the mystical interpenetration of the vast ocean, Byron would like to personify nature itself and endeavors to totally submit or lose himself in it. As such, he makes of himself a devoted follower of the ocean; thus, he asserts an instinctive sense of kinship with the aquatic environment which becomes a part of his dwelling places. The ocean offers its dweller a holistic nurturing existence/presence; that is why it becomes a meaningful place, an apt *oikos*. Thus, Byron's place-connectedness could be imagined via the lens of affiliation, empathy and intimacy with natural elements and forms. This subtle imaginative place identification enforces Byron's sympathetic and biophilic embeddedness in such a select space that has a physical and spiritual meaning.

Developing a sense of place, an identity in nature, the poet visualizes the ocean, his embodied world, as *oikos*, a homeland of his thinking and imagination. In *Don Juan*, he asks rhetorically: "Have you explored the limits of the coast,/ Where all the dwellers of the earth must dwell?" (XVI, iv). At the start of the first canto of *The Corsair*, Byron, as he cuddles the sea, parades the espousing nature of his sensation of eternity, a feeling of unity, happiness and freedom. The following lines suggest the effect of an aqueous landscape on Byron's psyche through such watery poetic image which describes the poet's visceral pleasure of the ocean's encirclement: "O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,/ Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,/ Far as the breeze can hear, the billows foam,/ Survey our empire and behold our home!" Caught in an eternity of ecstasy, the poet roots or shackles himself in a watery landscape that he considers his nurturing home. Hence, the ocean, the natural habitat for Byron's spirit, becomes his *oikos*, a perfect spiritual fitting.

Employed as a fluid medium representing the journey of life, the ocean is perceived by Byron as a spiritual birthplace in which he sought to reclaim his identity. Byron willingly ventures as a seaweed into the midst of the ocean (to dwell with it) where he veritably thrives as he connects his wild and unrestricted self with the external world, accordingly attaining authentic existential immersion. The spiritual experience of existential immersion with watery settings unveils Byron's biophilic aspirations that man evolves from water and has a solid affinity with it. The following oceanic metaphor suggests the presence of oceanic depth perception or a sense of sublime interconnectedness or wholeness with something beyond oneself which engenders a sense of security. A swaying seaweed drifting weightlessly on top of the water is what Harold compares himself to: "Still must I on; for I am as a weed,/ Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail/ Where'er the surge may sweep, or tempest's breath prevail" (*CHP* III, ii). Imagining

himself as an aimlessly floating weed confirms the poet's utter natural integration with nature. On becoming a wild plant, the poet listens to the call of the wild and surges with the might of the ocean and its unvarying moving surface: "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!" (*CHP IV*, clxxix). He relishes being cradled in the infinite belly of the ever-flowing ocean, serenely floating endlessly in Being. The ocean becomes Byron's cradle as he allows himself to be rocked on the surface throughout his poetical pilgrimage and life's voyage. Both his body and soul are freely and thoroughly immersed in the flow of the ocean "Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home;" (*CHP III*, xiii). Thus, the ocean becomes the poet's *oikos* of freedom. The site of deliberate Being, the ocean, calls Byron into his dwelling. The free-flowing ocean resembling the enduring stream of time becomes the poet's secure dwelling. Consequently, Byron situates himself and embraces the ocean as if it were the most genuine dwelling places on the planet. Remarkably, the vast ocean enfolds the poet in return. A mutual friendship and a nurturing effect exist between poet and place: the ocean houses the poet, and its watery environment intimately connects him to the world.

Enthralled by a natural element, Byron goes beyond it to something never-ending and universal. The eternal is seemingly associated with existence in an infinite aquatic world. Being lured by the oceanic/timeless immensity of the unbounded horizon and endless watery realm of nature is a typical Romantic fascination. The theme of the eternal unfolding of time as well as the motif of the sublime, all-inclusive existence is crystallized in Byron's visual sea image that provokes the notion of infinity. The following line of verse recognizes Byron's vision of entrenchment in a world of endless waterways, an abode of dreams and immortality reminiscent of divinity. The infinite ocean "Which changeless rolls eternally;" (*Siege of Corinth XVI*) becomes a magic place of entrapment that rolls on endlessly to bring the poet closer to eternity. The ocean, like eternity, provides the poet a momentary relief from thought. In due course, the poet's imagination conducts him to a watery sphere of Being where he is peacefully at home with perpetuity: "Dark-heaving;—boundless, endless, and sublime,/ The image of Eternity, the throne/ Of the Invisible..." (*CHP IV*, clxxxiii).

According to Wilson:

The living world is the natural domain of the most restless and paradoxical part of the human spirit.... [T]he greater the knowledge, the deeper the mystery and the more we seek knowledge to create new mystery. This catalytic reaction, seemingly an inborn human trait, draws us perpetually forward in a search for new places and new life. (10)

Evidently Byron, who is venturing to new, remote undiscovered places in order to partake in fresh experiences, is in line with Wilson's quest of discovering novel habitats. Celebrating his own imaginative, ineffable mobility, the poet's soul is in one synthetic whole with the soul of nature. This metaphysical and mystic embracement of the ocean promotes distinctive feelings of tranquility, connectedness, bliss and safety. Moreover, exploring nature's soul enables Byron to explore his own soul and reveal his oceanic consciousness and expresses his mystical position upon earth: being at one with the never-ending ocean through the feeling of unity with all parts of nature.

The ocean has a pronounced effect on Byron's poetic emotions. Being in and part of this vast space instils intense emotions and leads to an intense lived experience: "All is concentrat'd in a life intense,/ Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,/ But hath a part of being, and a sense/ Of that which is of all Creator and defense" (*CHP III*, lxxxix). The consequence of living passionately/ardently involves becoming "a part of being" in all elements of nature. Potential feelings of symbiotic oneness and all-embracing unity between the self and the universe is evident in this organic and existential interconnectivity which is "felt" in the oceanic feeling as it "stirs the feeling infinite." Hence, the cosmic "truth" of "our being" creates an everlasting "harmony":

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm...
Binding all things with beauty... (*CHP III*, xc)

Byron's own Being or authentic dwelling can be visualized in the image of eternal bonding (classified as oceanic) with the world. Immersion and transcendence in nature are directly connected. In order to practice immersion and Being in an environment, the poet experiences transcendence which "stirs the feeling infinite" so the poet's "being" is infused in nature's charms to eventually attain "[e]ternal harmony." This way he finds an opportunity to expand his sense of place and be in touch with limitlessness.

Byron's imagination keeps spawning more oceanic images. Perhaps the most dominant image of his oceanic poetry is the one that carries a holistic concept of unification and mystical identification with the marine world. Byron's fascination with the sea as a poet/person is obvious as he refers to it as an eternal return. When unable to obtain sufficient pleasure from such a physical and poetic binding with the sea, he seizes the opportunity to be "Once more upon the waters! yet once more!" (*CHP III*, ii). This oceanic state, which is a self-world experience, reflects the poet's artistic creativity and is authentically related to the affective life of the nature dweller and his home-returning—returning to the eternal realm of the natural world. Communion with the ocean is a criterion that helps Byron discover

and recover his selfhood simultaneously. Eventually, Byron's spirit discovers its real particular home, a water environment that suits his own nature. In reality, Byron is comfortable or at home from all angles with the ocean. Ending the poem with images of eternal return to the sea, the poet, unquenched by the experience of being one with world's wonders, longs to culminate his pilgrimage and return to his final cradle, the ocean-home. Subsequently, he settles on the watery universe to be his eternal necropolis, thus attaining spiritual interconnectedness with creation as a whole. Byron's romantic expression of the oceanic sensation stimulates an all-encompassing vision (nature and spirit) of the infinite and of being one with the entire external universe. The liquescent reality of Byron's existence is not only defined by *Being* but also by *becoming* an integral part of the aqueous domain, of the oceanic universe. Understood in this manner, the self of the poet expands and mystically dissolves in the salty fluid, his final resting place, where he feels entirely at home. Willingly surrendering to the ocean's mystic energy, Byron foreshadows his impending death and depicts it as a natural process through which he is integrated with both nature and the creator. Eventually, the poet's existentialist pilgrimage ends. Concentrating his existential attention on the ocean, Byron draws increasingly closer to his Being-there, to his Dasein.

Sharing his sense of belonging, Byron, instead of steadily wandering, fitfully and harmoniously dwells within his environment. To thoughtfully and attentively dwell upon nature is to be in harmony with language (word) and immediate surrounding (world). Through this dwelling immersion, the poet is embedded in nature and part of the natural world through poetic language. The ocean becomes the dwelling place of Byron's human existence. In understanding this residence, it is possible to establish how the poet-narrator desires to dwell poetically upon earth. He is motivated by the hospitality of the ocean to embrace, identify and belong to it while reaching a biophilic dwelling in nature.

Conclusion

This study focuses on how Byron, the Romantic nature poet and the architect of biophilic dwelling, explores/understands his genuine place in nature and not only becomes a living, organic being partaking in a living world but also a "living poet" (*Don Juan* XI, IV) rediscovering his dynamic connection to the universe by choosing his human/poetic dwelling place in nature, the *oikos*, which allows him to manifest his biophilic affiliation and his oceanic feeling. These dimensions, which become the essential nature of his Being, help him to fit-in and become innately attuned to the natural environment.

Searching for an authentic way to find himself in the world, Byron endeavors to be at one with the natural surroundings, proposing that the reality about existence is discerned in nature. Consequently, the more Byron bonds with nature, the closer he draws towards humanness. The more he gets involved with nonhuman nature, the more he fully understands his own nature. Byron has now attained an enhanced understanding of nature and what being human entails and has definitively learned to dwell innately and securely with his eternal home: the natural environment which offers him a sense of individual, human meaning and wholeness. Byron's keen ecological awareness is epitomized in his recognition of the cosmic truth: the interconnectedness of all creation. Through this sense of innate connectedness, he achieves a fulfilling human existence—a meaningful, peaceful, authentic and inescapable immersion in the world. Such existential engagement in nature is vital for him to attain physical and psychological well-being as well as environmental commitment and knowledge. As Byron attempts to restore the relationship between man and his natural surroundings, he promotes genuine environmental concerns and evokes a powerful biophilic temperament reminiscent of the Heideggerian concept of dwelling and Wilson's biophilia and prompts an ethical environmental responsibility. To conclude, the Romantic spirit, which savors man's interconnection to the universe and creation, could also be traced in *Manfred*, *Cain* and *The Corsair*.

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