

II. *Black Beauty* and the Sewell's Advocacy for Animal Rights

This research attempts to analyze Anna Sewell's novel *Black Beauty* (1877) from eco-critical perspective. The novel is remarkable achievement for the activists fighting for the animal rights as it underscores the need of the better treatment upon the pet animals because they are as important as human beings for the earth. The horses are the representative of the animal kingdom which serves human beings from the time immemorial and thus, they have played crucial role for human development and progress. The novel is unique autobiographical narration of the life of the narrator, a strong and intelligent horse named Black Beauty. Letting the horse its own voice to narrate his experiences serving human society as a pet animal, the writer lets the readers to see the ordeals of the animals in human society and criticize the human beings for their mistreatment to their pet animals. Further it gives human beings the moral lesson that if we treat the animals better, they help us better with all their faith and honesty.

Anna Sewell's novel *Black Beauty* deals with the daily life of the horses and their experiences about mankind from the viewpoint of a horse, Black Beauty. He not only conceives this story as his personal story but also as the story of fellow horses. The story is full of hegemonic details of mankind to the animals. In the novel, Sewell tries to show the harsh human exploitation over animals exposing how horses are treated by human beings, why animals are taken as their servants and subordinates to conduct their lifestyle and to do their daily work. The dehumanization of animals actually brings imbalance in the nature and in its charm which may generate far reaching consequences for human beings. Even if human beings know all the consequences of the natural imbalance, they are prone to dehumanizing animals, on the one hand and exploiting, hegemonizing them on the other. Black Beauty gets sold three times in his life but with

his second master he gets injured. Because of that he is sold to another master. He sees many human cruelties over him and other fellow horses as well. Moreover he is used by his master to kill other animals in a jungle which is so much traumatic to him. Similarly he is unhappy with the novice drivers because they drive them wherever, whenever they like. More than that, the second master's boys regard them as their commodities, and machine or steam engine and believe that the horses must go as long and fast as a steam engine does. If they do not obey, they will be beaten, sold, brutalized and deprived of the food. But at any cost they have to fulfill their immediate desire of the boys.

The narrator, Black Beauty, begins his narration from the first home where he was born. He describes his early home as a place full of natural charm. The "large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it" (1), suggests the natural freshness is not corrupted by the pollution and the industrialization. The rural, pastoral setting is very useful to see the glimpse of the nature not defiled by the hazards of industrial progress. It is free from pollution and there is the harmony among the various aspects of the nature and ecosystem.

Black Beauty narrates his childhood in very pleasant natural setting. The man-made objects are few in number in the beginning part of the narration, thus, we do not see the human beings interrupting the various aspects of nature violating the rules of nature. As Cheryll Glotfelty observes in *The Ecocriticism Reader*, that "ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (xvii), this research brings the various physical objects existed in the nature and their roles in ecosystem and nature as a whole, under discussion. If any of the aspects of the nature is abused undermining their roles in nature, it certainly affects all the other aspects of nature because all the physical existence of the earth keeps functioning with the help of the various physical things affecting each other mutually in the chain

of Ecology and ecosystem. Such abuses, marginalization and devaluation of the roles of the each part of the physical existence affect the whole ecosystem and environment. Keeping keen eyes to see the use and abuse of the parts of ecosystem and environment and how the wrong use of certain parts of the ecosystem affects the other aspects of environment and leads to the disastrous consequences will be examined in the novel in the course of the research.

In the novel *Black Beauty*, the horses are instrumentalized, exploited, and commodified by their masters in order to solve their daily problems on the one hand and to earn a lot of money so as to build their future, on the other. This research attempts to divulge the human beings' act of dehumanization, commodification, instrumentalization of the horses which help to trace the anthropocentric attitude of human beings with sidelining their rights, ethics, emotions, and sentimentality.

Human beings and animals belong to the same category. But scientists or biologists try to define them as different entities. *Encyclopedia Environment and Society* defines the category of animal biologically considering its behavior "Animals are living entities that are equipped with nervous system and sensory organs that render them capable detecting and rapidly responding to stimuli" (42). It is said that human beings are capable of acquiring knowledge and intellect but animals too can detect the stimuli which suggests that they have their own kind of lifestyle and suffering. Similarly, it is said that animals operate on the brains of their instinct, whereas human beings use their rationality. Different definitions of animals themselves take animals as junior entities to human being. According to *Encyclopedia of Environment and Society*, human being designates animals as a category which is inferior of human beings pointing to the anthropocentric, hegemonic position of mankind:

They also critique the notion that humans are superior to other animals and nature, and that humans have the legitimate right to control the lives of animals without any ethical considerations. The word *specieism* is now entering the vocabulary of many people who are critical of these resulting prejudices. Humanity has inherited a complex legacy of ideas and assumptions about the relationship between humans and animals. A plethora of concepts circulating in most contemporary societies simultaneously presumes that humans are completely separate and superior in relation to all other animals *and* that animal and humans are ontologically linked at the same existential level, thus mutually affecting one another. This seeming contradiction reflects ancient philosophical debates. (45)

This definition has created the debate regarding the anthropocentric tendency in human beings. That sort of thinking is very anthropocentric which make human superior to animals forgetting the animal ethics and rights. After that animals are initiated to be adopted as commodities, earning sources and embarked on taking them one of the crucial parts of the human beings which herald that human beings value their existence and rest of the creations and things are used excessively to make their life successful and result-oriented.

In addition, *Encyclopedia of Environment and Society* further puts forth the animals as entities or commodities that are materialized as an object which can only be used by human being for their own purpose. They enter to the human societies as commodities and made to participate in the ideologies of human histories:

Animals also enter human societies as commodities. From this perspective, animals are studied as material objects in the form of goods

that are produced, bought, and sold within societies. There are social, scientific approaches that study the relationship between transforming animals into material commercial products and the histories of the ideologies and practices of different societies. (45)

This position is anthropocentric because it proposes that animals are here in the earth only to serve human beings. Moreover human beings take animals as their commodities and objects to be transformed into the commercial products. Similarly, Josephine Dohovan shows that human beings are taking animal as commodity and consumable objects “Animals—also subjects of a life—in the assembly-line meat production process are even more commodified than human workers in that their very bodies are turned into commodities—consumable objects—in the process” (203). The bodies and labors of the animals have been commodified in such a way that they think that they are only for this purpose. Their bodies are used until they help human being, after that their bodies are crucified for human beings satisfaction simply saying that human is rational and superior to other creatures. On the contrary, Dohovan finally urges everyone in the earth that they should consider the suffering, pain and the right of animals since they are equal to human being, “what underlies and permits these cultural practices is the ideology of *speciesism*, the assumption that animals are inferior to and subservient to humans. For these reasons, readers, critics, and indeed the authors themselves appear not to see the reality of an animal’s suffering” (212). Therefore value and rights of animals should be taken into account, only then is their right supposed to be possible in the earth otherwise their extinction will be on the way. Animals’ values emerge due to its relations to human beings because human beings are using them to carry out their work. It is said that animal should be evaluated along with human beings because their effort is equal to human being effort.

The human condition and lifestyle are determined by his or her behavior with the animals and surrounding environment. Therefore Paul W. Taylor mentions that “this is the fact that well-being of human is dependent upon the ecological soundness and health of many plant and communities while their soundness and health does not in the list depends upon human wellbeing”(330). He furthers that the main enemies of environmental crisis are the human beings that’s why that very existence of human being is unnecessary. Human beings are so human – center rather than being life – centered. They think of themselves their pain, suffering and problems and try to eliminate their entire problems through employing other non-human living entities. Therefore, they are anthropocentric “An anthropocentric viewpoint treats nature on those they sleep with age constitutional truly human identity” (171).

Human beings cannot survive without natural resources on the one hand and animals, on the other, and their treatment towards animal seems to be so mild, caring, sympathetic but actually they do all these things for the betterment of the their life. And similarly, animals are highly hegemonized and made them subservient to them; further they dominate and make them commodities for earning money. In other words, they domesticate the animal so as to make their work done. In the novel *Black Beauty* the narrator and other horses are hegemonized and at the same time exploited by their masters. In other words, they are colonized and reified at the same time. The writer exposes the troubles and anxieties the horse faces while following the order of the owner of the owner and explains what he has to do under his hegemonic exploitation and control:

It means to teach a horse to wear a saddle and bridle, and to carry on his back a man, woman or child; to go just the way they wish, and to go quietly. Besides this he has to learn to wear a collar, a crupper, and a

breeching, and to stand still while they are put on; then to have a cart or a chaise fixed behind, so that he cannot walk or trot without dragging it after him; and he must go fast or slow, just as his driver wishes. He must never start at what he sees, nor speak to other horses, nor bite, nor kick, nor have any will of his own; but always do his master's will, even though he may be very tired or hungry; but the worst of all is, when his harness is once on, he may neither jump for joy nor lie down for weariness. So you see this breaking in is a great thing. (10-11)

The extract reveals that how a horse is enslaved and taught some disciplinary acts.

These acts are imposed upon animals by their masters in order to smooth the functioning of their task. And their bodies are employed and restricted by human disabling them to go anywhere they like since their human harness is on. Through this training and act, they are obliged to think about them in such a way that they are the true commodity of the human beings. All their anxieties and pangs of exploitations have been told vividly by Black Beauty, the narrator of the tale.

Furthermore, human exploitation towards nature and animal is so high and rampant. The narrator's master rides the horse through the forest in order to hunt some animals. By using one animal they are shooting or killing other animal which displays the human cruelty towards the animal "They were shooting rabbits near the Highwood, and a gun went off close by; he pulled up a little and looked, but did not stir a step to right or left. I just held the rein steady and did not hurry him, and it's my opinion he has not been frightened or ill-used while he was young" (21). The narrator's master is shooting rabbits by riding the horse. In contrast, the narrator or horse -black beauty always says 'my master' which shows that human being is superior, rational but the animal is simply their commodities and material entities.

The horse Jolly kicked the master's boy because she hated the unnecessary pressure put on her which results in perennially flogging to her without discerning her emotion, spirit and desire. Moreover, she gets whipped until the blood oozes out of her fragile body. This act of cruelty towards the horse by his master's son foreshadows the act of dehumanization. Jolly narrates the sufferings she has to undergo and her resistance to human cruelty kicking her master:

The new bit was very painful, and I reared up suddenly, which angered him still more, and he began to flog me. I felt my whole spirit set against him, and I began to kick, and plunge, and rear as I had never done before, and we had a regular fight; for a long time he stuck to the saddle and punished me cruelly with his whip and spurs, but my blood was thoroughly up, and I cared for nothing he could do if only I could get him off. At last after a terrible struggle I threw him off backward. (32)

As already mentioned, the animals are commodified and dehumanized and translated as the sources of earning of the narrator's master. He sells the black beauty or narrator. Even that selling does not guarantee the freedom to him because that purchasing is not for their freedom rather that is their further extension of exploitation:

Soon I was sent to Tattersall's to be sold; of course I could not be warranted free from vice, so nothing was said about that. My handsome appearance and good paces soon brought a gentleman to bid for me, and I was bought by another dealer; he tried me in all kinds of ways and with different bits, and he soon found out what I could not bear. At last he drove me quite without a check-rein, and then sold me as a perfectly quiet horse to a gentleman in the country; he was a good master, and I

was getting on very well, but his old groom left him and a new one came.

(38)

The animals or horses have to placate the tension going through the mind of their master and his family because they think that they have invested their money in the horse and they are looking for their returns employing them as their servant, and treat them as an object without considering their emotions, sufferings, and pain that act as the trauma of horse or the animals in their life. Even the gentle horses are compelled to resist the harsh treatment of their owners:

Boys, you see, think a horse or pony is like a steam-engine or a thrashing-machine, and can go on as long and as fast as they please; they never think that a pony can get tired, or have any feelings; so as the one who was whipping me could not understand I just rose up on my hind legs and let him slip off behind -- that was all. He mounted me again, and I did the same. (44)

Boys think that the horse is a steam engine, an object which must go as long and fast as the steam engine does. But they do not have any idea that the horse can have also sentiment, feeling and emotions. They regard the horse as an instrument to do their work effectively and laboriously. It also reveals the domination and exploitation over the animal by the hand of the human beings. Similarly, the horse must be submissive, weak in front of the master or has to address him saying 'sir' and serve them according to their will and interest yet they are beaten, whipped without doing any harm. Black Beauty tries to convince and show the faults of the master's boy being so mild, submissive with the anticipation of the ceasing such cruelties which happen time and again:

Well, sir, I saw your son whipping, and kicking, and knocking that good little pony about shamefully because he would not leap a gate that was too high for him. The pony behaved well, sir, and showed no vice; but at last he just threw up his heels and tipped the young gentleman into the thorn hedge. He wanted me to help him out, but I hope you will excuse me, sir, I did not feel inclined to do so. There are no bones broken, sir; he'll only get a few scratches. I love horses, and it riles me to see them badly used; it is a bad plan to aggravate an animal till he uses his heels; the first time is not always the last. (67-68)

The beast has to serve man dutifully and effectively otherwise they are no longer workable for them. They need to be taught morality; discipline and other things which the master thinks can only control the beast very easily and can use them any time anywhere they like. The horses are beaten and used in such a way that the man does not seem to be very sympathetic towards the horses. The horse has to carry loads and reach them to the destination. If they do make any mistake, their master beat them mercilessly unless their muscles are strained and start oozing the blood from their bodies. The horse could not move ahead since the man is fiercely thrashing him which unfolds that human beings are devoid of any sympathy but always inclined to exploiting them until their interest is not fulfilled; they go on beating thinking that they are their property which has to obey them at any cost:

Here we saw a cart heavily laden with bricks; the wheels had stuck fast in the stiff mud of some deep ruts, and the carter was shouting and flogging the two horses unmercifully. Joe pulled up. It was a sad sight. There were the two horses straining and struggling with all their might to drag the cart out, but they could not move it; the sweat streamed from

their legs and flanks, their sides heaved, and every muscle was strained, while the man, fiercely pulling at the head of the fore horse, swore and lashed most brutally. The man took no heed, but went on lashing. (103-104)

Similarly the horses have to gallop as per demand of their master otherwise they are likely to be whipped and flogged severely. Their life is no longer their life as such. The narrator beautifully exposes the traumatic and painful condition created by the human beings in order to fulfill their daily works.

The narrator only discusses the dire straits of the horses or their community not only from its second master but others as well. Their life is the life which is being commodified or made an object for making money and used their bodies to figure out their master's daily problems. "Over this road, with one shoe gone, I was forced to gallop at my utmost speed, my rider meanwhile cutting into me with his whip, and with wild curses urging me to go still faster. Of course my shoeless foot suffered dreadfully; the hoof was broken and split down to the very quick, and the inside was terribly cut by the sharpness of the stones" (135). The horses are not only commodified but also made guinea pigs to experiment and to make play things. The horse even driven by the experienced driver got beaten and whipped but also new drivers are trying to ride as a 'job horse' and beating and molding them into their favors. The people are wishing to hire black beauty – the narrator to complete their works. The narrator seems very unhappy to the ignorant drivers who drive in such a way that they are travelling in the steam engine rail. They never think that they have also soul, breathing capacity and so on and they are very mindless while driving them:

Hitherto I had always been driven by people who at least knew how to drive; but in this place I was to get my experience of all the different

kinds of bad and ignorant driving to which we horses are subjected; for I was a "job horse", and was let out to all sorts of people who wished to hire me; and as I was good-tempered and gentle, I think I was oftener let out to the ignorant drivers than some of the other horses, because I could be depended upon. It would take a long time to tell of all the different styles in which I was driven, but I will mention a few of them. (146)

Moreover, the narrator tells that the horse riders think that they have bought the horse in order to finish their heavy task and use them to do everything believing that they are like steam engine. They could do anything because they are bought with money. And they have to carry loads and run as fast and long as they require them to do. They never show any sympathy and given any relief for which they are waiting and which act heralds the extreme exploitation of the animals by human beings. Human beings are being self-centered. They think about themselves; they do not have any interest in going beyond that periphery and think about animals as living beings rather they compare them to the steam engine and expect machine-like efficiency from them that aggravates the misery of the horses:

They always seemed to think that a horse was something like a steam-engine, only smaller. At any rate, they think that if only they pay for it a horse is bound to go just as far and just as fast and with just as heavy a load as they please. And be the roads heavy and muddy, or dry and good; be they stony or smooth, uphill or downhill, it is all the same – on, on, on, one must go, at the same pace, with no relief and no consideration. (152)

If the horse does work dutifully and efficiently, he is supposed to be on the cruel eyes of others. The good, mild, disciplined and dutiful horse is likely to be sold at any time. The

narrator is likely to be sold because he carries all the attributes and finally becomes another time the commodity to be sold to other. By using and playing with the horse human beings are fulfilling their day to day activities centering them and decentering the qualities, works, and labors and sentimentality of the laborious horse.

The horses are exploited in such a way that they are denied of a single day for the rest thinking that they are animals which do not demand any rest. And without carrying loads they are unlikely to be nourished good food. Horse or the narrator urges his master to give one day free for the rest because human beings are also given one day free in seven days. They are created by God as human beings therefore they have the rights to get one day free to take rest in the Sundays:

I should be proud and happy to do; but I can't give up my Sundays, sir, indeed I can't. I read that God made man, and he made horses and all the other beasts, and as soon as He had made them He made a day of rest, and bade that all should rest one day in seven; and I think, sir, He must have known what was good for them, and I am sure it is good for me; I am stronger and healthier altogether, now that I have a day of rest; the horses are fresh too, and do not wear up nearly so fast. (200)

This reveals that human beings are not human as such because they are not ready to use their common sense about the betterment of the animals. On the contrary, the horses are given a day for the rest but they could not take the complete rest since they did not use to get the rest before or not habituated for that. The horses are quite confused but they are provided their food with different taste. The little freedom in the life of horses makes them very happy and in the perfect harmony with the nature as the narrator recollects:

When my harness was taken off I did not know what I should do first -- whether to eat the grass, or roll over on my back, or lie down and rest, or have a gallop across the meadow out of sheer spirits at being free; and I did all by turns. Jerry seemed to be quite as happy as I was; he sat down by a bank under a shady tree, and listened to the birds, then he sang himself, and read out of the little brown book he is so fond of, then wandered round the meadow, and down by a little brook, where he picked the flowers. (210)

As already mentioned, the horses are commodified by the master in order to finish his business. They were the only means to carry load either in the village or in the city. One buys and intends to earn a lot of money by exploiting their efficiency, labor and bodies. They are only made the objects to earn money. No one talked about their life, spirit, and desire. But everyone is trying to mar themselves from thinking about the animals' ethics and treat the horse as their property and submissive being. If the horses don't do their works they are not given food, water but severely get beaten by the master. If they do not show their efficiency, they are not supposed to be kept together. Here the narrator the horse laments upon his body which is commodified for selling and buying and at the same time making business for profit:

They are doing, whipping and working with never one thought of what I suffer -- they paid for me, and must get it out of me, they say. The man who hires me now pays a deal of money to the owner every day, and so he has to get it out of me too; and so it's all the week round and round, with never a Sunday rest. (224)

The horses' minor demands are not fulfilled or taken into account by their master. In other words, the masters are not prepared to use even common sense for the betterment

of the horses. The horses are happy with the works but they need to be treated equally like their children and the master should understand their pain and sufferings and miseries. They also want to be as happy as human beings even if they are exploited by human beings for overcoming their purposes. As narrated; “We horses do not mind hard work if we are treated reasonably, and I am sure there are many driven by quite poor men who have a happier life than I had when , with my silver-mounted harness, I used to go in the Countess of W----'s carriage”(226).

Therefore human beings are human centered and put their hubris upon the animals treat them badly putting their problems prior to any anxiety of any animal. Their treatment towards animals is so pejorative and humiliating and at the same time lack of masculinity. In doing so, they use horse to make money because they are so costless.

It becomes clear by now that the writer tries to show the human treatment upon the animals especially horse vividly by making the horse its narrator. The narrator’s story is the history of the horses. Their lifestyle, way of living, their society have been trespassed mercilessly by the paws of human beings. Their free lives have been extremely assimilated with the life of human beings. They are instrumentalized to achieve their goals and fulfill their work. Moreover, they have been sold many times in their life which shows that their life is no longer their own because which is captured and enslaved by the cruel hands of human beings. In addition to hunting other animals, they are used which results that human beings are utterly against the animals’ ethics on the one hand and they are the main culprits to challenge the existing coherent sort of ecosystem or the environment, on the other. Human beings, after all, are trying to imbalance the natural system in order to feed their stomach mindlessly forgetting the well-being of their future generations.

All the creatures of the nature are interdependent to each other and they are equally valuable for the conservation of nature. The writer, in her novel *Black Beauty* giving the voice to the voiceless horse Black Beauty shows how the animals are very similar to human being and desperate to get the love, trust and better treatment of mankind. The young horse was called Darkie by his first owner Farmer Gray whose pleasant meadow and rearing full of love and care made Black Beauty strong and intelligent horse. Mr. Douglas Gordon buys and names the narrator Black Beauty. Mr. Gordon is the Magistrate of the district and is very conscious about the better treatment and love to his pet animals and decides the cases of mistreatment of animals with good punishment to the abuser. So, the narrator gets better treatment in the house of Squire Gordon in which he describes his pleasant time of his early life enjoying the harmony with nature. The morality and Victorian code of conduct was taught to the narrator by his mother where the hierarchy between the horses and their masters and hierarchy even among the horses have been established. Even though there may be the hierarchy between the good and evil, both are equally responsible for the nature and ecology. The Victorian codes for the horse anticipates the horses to be gentle, never kicking and biting others and never going hostile to the other aspects of the nature and environment. Teaching the narrator about the Victorian codes for the horses, his mother instructs:

I wish you to pay attention to what I am going to say to you. The colts who live here are very good colts, but they are cart-horse colts, and of course they have not learned manners. You have been well-bred and well-born; your father has a great name in these parts, and your grandfather won the cup two years at the Newmarket races; your grandmother had the sweetest temper of any horse I ever knew, and I

think you have never seen me kick or bite. I hope you will grow up gentle and good, and never learn bad ways; do your work with a good will, lift your feet up well when you trot, and never bite or kick even in play. (2)

The moral codes for the Victorian horses have been highlighted by the mother of the narrator as the narrator has the reputed lineage. Along with such Victorian codes the beginning chapter also throws light into the behaviors of human beings regarding the treatment of horses and other animals of the nature presenting the marked contrast between the narrator's master and a plowboy. With the contrast we see some people like his master are very kind to all the animals and the aspects of the nature and some bad people like the plowboy inflict pain upon them. The narrator narrates about his master as, "Our master was a good, kind man. He gave us good food, good lodging, and kind words; he spoke as kindly to us as he did to his little children" (3). It shows some people like his master in Victorian society are very conscious about and to the things in their surrounding and they are kind to the aspects of the nature. Such people believe upon their affinity to the natural things and very judicious to treat them. They value the chain of ecosystem in which all the aspects of the environment are interwoven.

In contrast to them, some people are mindless to treat the animals and the aspects of the nature. The plowboy called Dick was very mindless to treat the animals in bad manner, interfering the play of the innocent young colts. Sometimes the colts would get hurt with the stones or sticks thrown by him towards them. The narrator narrates about him as, "There was a plowboy, Dick, who sometimes came into our field to pluck blackberries from the hedge. When he had eaten all he wanted he would have what he called fun with the colts, throwing stones and sticks at them to make

them gallop. We did not much mind him, for we could gallop off; but sometimes a stone would hit and hurt us” (3). Thus, treatment upon the animals ranges from good to bad in the Victorian society.

Human beings only feel their own pain and sufferings but they never think about the pain and sufferings they mindlessly inflict upon the animals. One aspect of nature needs to feel the pain and suffering of the other aspect of the nature; only then there is smooth functioning of the ecosystem and good environment can be maintained.

In the second chapter of the novel that is entitled “The Hunt”, the brutality of human being to the animals has been presented with vivid portrayal of the sufferings inflicted upon the animals with the details of the barbaric sport of hunting in which a horse, a hare and the only son of Squire Gordon are killed. Human beings set animals against animal themselves for their interests inflicting the pain and creating dread among the animals of the nature. The dreadful scene of the hunting has been narrated by the narrator as witnessed by the narrator which has been imprinted as the horrific experience in his child psychology. Even though there is no actual enmity among the animals of the nature and they all are integral parts of the ecosystem, the barbaric men set the animals against each other meddling with their life spheres for their enjoyment. It has very adverse impact upon the ecosystem and environment. In the narration of hunting, we see the dogs chasing the hare as per the command of their masters and the horses are used in very difficult task of following the hunting dogs in very difficult track. The miserable condition of the hare and the joy of men looking at the injured and captured hare show that the men are blood thirsty and they are inviting the great deal of troubles in ecology due to their mindless, barbaric sport of hunting. The narrator narrates the incident of the dogs attacking the hare and its suffering:

The hare tried to get through the fence; it was too thick, and she turned sharp round to make for the road, but it was too late; the dogs were upon her with their wild cries; we heard one shriek, and that was the end of her. One of the huntsmen rode up and whipped off the dogs, who would soon have torn her to pieces. He held her up by the leg torn and bleeding and all the gentlemen seemed well pleased. (7)

It is very satirical to refer to the mindless, brutal men as the gentlemen who please themselves looking at the blood and pathetic condition of the helpless rabbit. The alternative use of the gentlemen as huntsmen is very helpful to see the barbaric side of the Victorian people who are destroying the environment and chain of ecosystem mindlessly killing the animals. The irony lies in the fact that they keep their life in the mouth of the death and keep horses they ride also in danger but such risk they bear is only for a little hare or some other small helpless creatures.

The black horse named Rob Roy is wrongfully led by George Gordon the son of Squire Gordon. While hunting the hare and they meet an accident. Young Gordon falls off the back of Rob Roy, breaks his neck and dies after some days. This death is suggestive of the destruction of human beings themselves if they keep on destructing the other creatures and other aspects of the ecological chain. The death of young Gordon also followed with the death of the strong and gentle horse Rob Roy. Both the human beings and animals are equally important and the death of one results the death of another aspect of ecosystem has been underscored by the writer. The dreadful hunting is very painful for the narrator and his mother Duchess. The death of all good horse Rob Roy is very painful to them. Later in the novel, the readers discover that Rob Roy was brother to the narrator himself and Duchess was the mother to both of them. Even being the witness of the death of her son Rob Roy, "She said she had

known that horse for years” (9). Whenever the horses are sold, there is no possibility to retain their relation as mother and son. Even though she is deeply troubled by the death of her son, she is unable to express her love to her son as the human beings create the distance between the animals.

The ‘breaking in’ comes as painful experience to the narrator. ‘Breaking in’ refers to the process in which the young horses are trained to work easily being habituated with the saddle, bit and bridle. ‘Bit’ is made of iron that is kept in the mouth of the horse. According to the narrator, ‘bit’ is very hard thing to get used to but the poor animals are bound to bow before the power of men:

Those who have never had a bit in their mouths cannot think how bad it feels; a great piece of cold hard steel as thick as a man's finger to be pushed into one's mouth, between one's teeth, and over one's tongue, with the ends coming out at the corner of your mouth, and held fast there by straps over your head, under your throat, round your nose, and under your chin; so that no way in the world can you get rid of the nasty hard thing; it is very bad! Yes, very bad! (11-12)

Thus, the freedom and normal life of the poor horses are confiscated by the human beings. Whatever bad they feel, they need to bear the pain and sacrifice their lives for human beings. Ecocriticism resists such invasion upon the environment and thus, environmentalism becomes the major tenet of ecocritical approach. As Richard Kerrige says in his essay “Environmentalism and Ecocriticism” that “Environmentalism is both a critique of industrial modernity and another product of it, a distinctively modern movement in which an indispensable role is played by science: by the methods and technologies, for example, that can identify chemical traces or analyze atmospheric data” (533). Though environmentalism is the study of

the adverse impacts upon the environment caused by the technological advancements we see the invasion of the technology in the pristine environment of rural England and the innocent life of the animals. The presence of train in the surrounding of the narrator arouses the sense of mortal dread in him and he gallops to the other side of the meadow:

I was feeding quietly near the pales which separated the meadow from the railway, when I heard a strange sound at a distance, and before I knew whence it came -- with a rush and a clatter, and a puffing out of smoke -- a long black train of something flew by, and was gone almost before I could draw my breath. I turned and galloped to the further side of the meadow as fast as I could go, and there I stood snorting with astonishment and fear (14).

The rush and the clatter of the train is the cause of the sound pollution to otherwise silent and peaceful meadow which affects the lives of various creatures living in the meadow. The smoke puffed by the train suggests the pollution in environment which is caused by the advanced machineries and industrial, modern technologies. Thus, to see the horse in contrast to the train is significant to see the impact of the technological modernity to the ecology.

The science and technology, industrialization are the part of modernity but they invade the environment and cause the adverse impact in the lives of the animals and cause pollution in the atmosphere. In addition to technology, nature's effect on culture forms the connection between man and the environment. In the same line, Cheryll Glotfelty's "What is Ecocriticism" explains that a lack of boundaries exists between nature and culture:

Despite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts language and literature. (22)

Literature connects nature and culture so one can better understand man's characteristics and weaknesses in relation to the environment. These traits become visible by affecting and being affected by both culture and nature. Thinking from the similar line, it is very fruitful to see the critique of the Victorian culture in the text of Anna Sewell. The Victorian society and its culture is largely shaped by the use of the pet animals like the horses, dogs etc. Horses are the part of the culture and the matter of pride of the then feudal lords as we see the characters are proud of their good horses time and again. In chapter 12, entitled "A Stormy Day", the narrator narrates how pleased his master was with him when he saved his master's life not crossing the damaged bridge in a particular stormy day; it points to the gratitude of the good masters to the horses for their intelligent service saving the mankind from various dangers:

Master said, God had given men reason, by which they could find out things for themselves; but he had given animals knowledge which did not depend on reason, and which was much more prompt and perfect in its way, and by which they had often saved the lives of men. John had many stories to tell of dogs and horses, and the wonderful things they had done; he thought people did not value their animals half

enough nor make friends of them as they ought to do. I am sure he makes friends of them if ever a man does. (64-65)

Even though, the animals play great roles in the life and culture of the people of the time, people do not value their contribution in their life. All the masters are not like the master of *Black Beauty* to value the importance of the animals in their life. They behave with the animals with rudeness. As we see with the instance of Ginger, we see the barbaric attitude of the mankind to the animals of the nature. The son of Ginger's former master Mr. Ryder, Samson regards the horses as the nonliving things or commodities. The rude attitude of Samson and his selfish treatment to the horses is explained that makes Ginger very angry:

There was no gentleness in him, as there was in his father, but only hardness, a hard voice, a hard eye, a hard hand; and I felt from the first that what he wanted was to wear all the spirit out of me, and just make me into a quiet, humble, obedient piece of horseflesh. `Horseflesh'! Yes, that is all that he thought about," and Ginger stamped her foot as if the very thought of him made her angry. (31)

Thus, the reader was made aware about the rigid, selfish and human-centered Victorian culture that hegemonizes the animals regarding them as commodities. The abuse of the man's power and energy to hegemonize the animal kingdom is the man's violation of the natural code that all the creatures are equally important for the smooth functioning of the ecosystem. The animals have been given the stereotypic representation as 'horseflesh' and their identity has been constructed as the slavish creatures.

The stereotypic treatment to horse as the machinery has devalued the role of horses in the existence of other aspects of the environment. Time and again, the

human beings undermine their roles not only in their life but also in environment and ecosystem. The discursive formation of the horses as the machinery rather than important aspect of ecosystem full of emotion and feelings has given the human beings the power over the helpless animals. Twelve years old and wise horse Merrylegs narrates the pain of being treated as machinery by the boys addressing them:

Boys, you see, think a horse or pony is like a steam-engine or a thrashing-machine, and can go on as long and as fast as they please; they never think that a pony can get tired, or have any feelings; so as the one who was whipping me could not understand I just rose up on my hind legs and let him slip off behind -- that was all. He mounted me again, and I did the same. (44)

The horses were compared to the steam engines and thought not as the animals having the feelings and sensation thought not as the machinery invented by science is even more disturbing. The thought of the cab drivers, the horses as machinery is very disturbing to see that the dynamic cycle of ecosystem and life of animals is narrowed down by the science and technology. The narrator narrates about the pain caused by the intervention of the machinery in their lifestyle:

Then there is the steam-engine style of driving; these drivers were mostly people from towns, who never had a horse of their own and generally traveled by rail. They always seemed to think that a horse was something like a steam-engine, only smaller. At any rate, they think that if only they pay for it a horse is bound to go just as far and just as fast and with just as heavy a load as they please. And be the roads heavy and muddy, or dry and good; be they stony or smooth,

uphill or downhill, it is all the same -- on, on, on, one must go, at the same pace, with no relief and no consideration. (152)

Thus, the critique to the technological and industrial modernity is very useful to see the intervention of science and technology in the aspects of the nature. It has the adverse impact upon the life-spheres of the various aspects of nature.

Fashion is another aspect of modernity that has created the pathetic life of the animals. It dictates animals in very painful way. The use of bearing rein to pull the heads upwards of the horses of the cabs of the Lady of Earlshall is the result of fashion. The heads of the Ginger and Black Beauty were pulled behind with the use of bearing rein that is very painful and destructive for the health of the horses. Ginger starts kicking as the resistance to the cruelty of her. Owner and their fashion that dictates even the little freedom to move their heads. Though the horse dealers and doctors know the hazards of the bearing reins on the health of the animals, they are compelled to practice it as it would affect their business as fashion dictates the business too. The pain of the bearing rein raising the heads of the horses high is very harsh and depressing to them:

Some people think it very fine to see this, and say, "What fine spirited creatures!" But it is just as unnatural for horses as for men to foam at the mouth; it is a sure sign of some discomfort, and should be attended to. Besides this, there was a pressure on my windpipe, which often made my breathing very uncomfortable; when I returned from my work my neck and chest were strained and painful, my mouth and tongue tender, and I felt worn and depressed. (122)

Fashion and its effects on horses show up in many variations in the novel *Black Beauty*. An old horse has his tail painfully docked, and is outraged that it was done

“for fashion!” The horse notes that this is done on dogs’ ears and tails, causing the animals’ great pain. And with the subtle irony that Sewell occasionally slips into this story, the old horse mentions that none of the puppies were drowned, “for they were a valuable kind” (50). Animals that have some value, or are perceived as fashionable, are kept by humans, though they are subjected to the pain of docked tails and ears. Animals that are not valuable, or fashionable, are easily expendable. The old horse sums it up by saying that “fashion is one of the most wicked things in the world” (50). And reasonably—and it does seem reasonable from Sewell’s well-portrayed animal point of view—the old horse wonders why humans do not dock their own noses for the sake of fashion or to look “plucky”. Fashion is the assemblage of the superficial, shallow values that form the superficial Victorian culture that is full of the personal interests and selfishness in human beings that does not let them think about the other affected sides of the nature. The animal’s point of view very effectively exposes the tortures given by human beings’ mindless values to the various aspects of the nature.

Sewell makes it apparent to the reader, via situations that the horses observe or are involved in, that the world includes people who are mean to animals, as well as people who care about animal welfare. In the first chapter, Beauty mentions a ploughboy who purposefully throws sticks and stones at the colts to make them gallop. Sewell contrasts the ploughboy’s behavior with his master’s. The master admonishes the boy and fires him. Sewell does two things here to effectively convey a message about the treatment of animals; she contrasts the boy’s bad behavior with a boss who is willing to fire the boy, and she presents the whole event through the eyes of Black Beauty. If Sewell had made a blunt statement directly to the reader about humans’ cruelty to animals, it is likely that the reader would feel preached at. Readers do not appreciate being given a sermon by the author. The event may have seemed

preachy if it had been told to the reader through the point of view of the farmer, for example. But because the reader assumes that a horse is naturally more innocent, and less judgmental and cynical than a human, the same event through the eyes of a horse is more effective. The horse is simply observing. Sewell uses this technique throughout the book to show the reader instances of friction among the classes, the importance of appearance, and ethical and moral attributes of other people in the story.

The longing for freedom and the play among factors of nature has been narrated by the narrator in nostalgic way in the chapter six. When the narrator starts working for his second owner Squire Gordon, he had all the facilities, nice care, comfortable stable and ‘best of food’ but his liberty had gone and the life of narrator became his master’s as he narrates, “I must stand up in a stable night and day except when I am wanted, and then I must be just as steady and quiet as any old horse who has worked twenty years” (26). After joining the work, only sometimes, the horses had their short liberty. In his early life, the narrator had the beautiful moments as he had been totally free for three and half year altogether before breaking in. Their joy in the little freedom shows how much the poor enslaved animals wanted their freedom. But the Victorian codes of morality and servitude did not allow them to be freedom-seeking animals but kept them in life-long bondage, subjugation and servitude to the human beings. Even though they have sufficient facilities, the value of freedom is very great for them. The narrator narrates about the little moments of freedom they occasionally got and savored:

It was a great treat to us to be turned out into the home paddock or the old orchard; the grass was so cool and soft to our feet, the air so sweet, and the freedom to do as we liked was so pleasant -- to gallop, to lie

down, and roll over on our backs, or to nibble the sweet grass. Then it was a very good time for talking, as we stood together under the shade of the large chestnut tree. (28)

Even though, the horses are equally important for the continual and healthy functioning of the cycle of ecosystem they have been controlled and dominated by the human beings. High-handedness of human beings to the cycle of nature and the natural aspects is counterproductive for the environment.

If animals are treated badly they generate the bitter sense of enmity towards mankind and as a reaction to the mistreatment, they behave in very bad way. Ginger tells about the generation of the sense of enmity to the boys and men due to their cruel and forceful behaviors upon them as, “A footpath ran through our field, and very often the great boys passing through would fling stones to make us gallop. I was never hit, but one fine young colt was badly cut in the face, and I should think it would be a scar for life. We did not care for them, but of course it made us more wild, and we settled it in our minds that boys were our enemies” (30).

Thus, mankind plants the seed of hatred in animals due to their cruel behaviors. Men regard themselves as ‘self’ and treat the animals as ‘other’ and such hierarchization has very negative consequence in the ecological aspects of the nature since the animals play vital role in ecosystem. That is responsible to create tussle and enmity among the factors of the ecosystem themselves, resulting to the destruction and unpredictable hazards upon the environment and the world.

Much of the book is devoted to exposing the various types of cruelty imposed on animals. Sewell expands the point about animal abuse in Chapter 13 to connect it to a general moral deficiency in human beings. The chapter is titled “The Devil’s Trade Mark” because the schoolmaster who punishes a boy for torturing flies equates

hurting the weak and helpless to the hard-heartedness and cowardice that is the devil's trademark in a person. The teacher says that "the devil was a murderer from the beginning, and a tormentor to the end" (69). In contrast, God's mark is love. When John Manly hears about the incident from James he agrees that people can talk all they want about religion but: "there is no religion without love, and people may talk as much as they like about their religion, but if it does not teach them to be good and kind to man and beast it is all a sham" (69-70). Thus, chapter 13 of the book becomes the landmark to relate all the aspects of nature with love and when they are connected by the love all the aspects of the nature become full of respect for each other, and full of the divine virtues. Then the nature becomes harmonious and the nature converts into the paradise. The ethical aspect of the good human behaviors has been underscored in the chapter and all the creatures ranging from very small flies to the bigger ones like the horses should be treated equally with the love and care as all the animals of the nature are equally important. Thus, the earth is the common house of the animals and all the creatures are like the offspring of the nature has been established.

"Eco" is from the Greek root *oikos* that means "house." The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the German *oecologie* as the first appearance of "ecology" in 1876, meaning "the branch of biology that deals with the relationships between living organisms and their environment" (272). Just as "economy" is the management or law of the house as *nomos* means 'law', "ecology" is the study of the house. Ecocriticism, then, is the criticism of the "house," i.e., the environment, as represented in literature. The nature has been thus clearly treated as common house of all the aspects of the nature in the novel *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewall. So, it is the ecocritical critique of the Victorian culture and its exclusive, superficial values.

Sewell created the character of Jerry Barker to supply most of her lessons on honesty and integrity. In scene after scene, Jerry makes decisions based on his strong moral convictions with statements including: “Every man must look after his own soul; you can’t lay it at another man’s door like a foundling, and expect him to take care of it” (204); “If a thing is right, it can be done, and if it is wrong, it *can be done without*; and a good man will find a way” (205). He will not take extra fare for extra effort because he finds sufficient reward in a job well done. Jerry also will not work on Sundays, not only because he believes the day is for church and family, but also because he is sensible enough to know the he and the horses must have a day of rest to stay healthy and work well the rest of the week. When he is criticized by his fellow drivers for turning down a good job just because it is on Sunday, Sewell uses Jerry to voice further lessons: “Real religion is the best and truest thing in the world; and the only thing that can make a man really happy, or make the world better” (204). Ecocriticism as a moralistic philosophy advocates for and takes the side of real, natural religion which believes upon the justice to all the aspects of the nature.

Even though humans in *Black Beauty* often consider themselves superior to “dumb” animals, Sewell also gives the reader instances where animals clearly understand more than humans. When Black Beauty refuses to cross a bridge because he knows something is wrong, Beauty recalls the words of his kind master, one human in this story who does understand the nuances of animals. The narrator narrates about the reaction of the master when he saved the life of the master in a stormy day not crossing the dangerous bridge. He narrates, “Master said, God had given men reason, by which they could find out things for themselves; but He had given animals knowledge, which did not depend on reason, and which was much more prompt and perfect in its way, and by which they often saved the lives of men”

(64). Sewell, through the words of a horse and an enlightened master, makes the point that animals often stand between life and death for a human. Humans lack the ability to sense and read situations as an animal can.

There are many instances in *Black Beauty* when humans intentionally mistreat horses, and there are also many instances when humans are oblivious of their actions and the effects on the horses. These instances of obliviousness are no less cruel—they still cause pain for the horses. Because they are presented from the horses' points of view, the reader feels the greater impact of these events. If Sewell, for example, worked through the point of view of a human, she could mention that this human pulled the horse about, or tugged on the reins to get the horse to turn a certain way. A reader would probably think nothing of these actions through the eyes of the human character. But Sewell's detail and knowledge of horsemanship, along with her sympathetic horse characters, give an entirely different slant on the same situation. Thus, ecocriticism becomes the major framework to see the moral justice to the horses and the aspects of the nature as it gives the voice to mistreated horses of the Victorian society.

As an environmental discourse, Sewell's *Black Beauty* has advocated animal rights with the depiction of the harsh treatment of the horses by their owners and pointed to the trauma that has always tortured them evoking sympathy against the abuse of horses. The narrator Black Beauty recalls the memory how two of his acquaintances got killed by the mindless and abusive owners using them to hunt the hares:

As for me, I was so astonished that I did not at first see what was going on by the brook; but when I did look, there was a sad sight; two fine horses were down, one was struggling in the stream, and the other was

groaning on the grass. One of the riders was getting out of the water covered with mud, the other lay quite still. (7)

Two horses, used for hunting the hares, were in critical condition as the little narrator sees them. He becomes sad at the incident. One of the two horses was struggling in the stream and the other was groaning on the grass. The riders did not only abuse the horses but they had injured themselves too. This shows how the animal kingdom of the ecosystem is destroyed using one animal against another and how it has left long-lasting impact on the particular species of animal. Stephen Mosley has also pointed to this problem in his book *The Environment in World History*:

By the late eighteenth century, the adoption of the horse and the rifle had made Plains Indians more effective and selective hunters. They preferred to kill bison cows, because their meat was more succulent and their skins were easier to work. After 1700, almost all Plains Indians had become enmeshed in commercialized hunting, exchanging bison tongues, hides and robes for European trade goods and horses. Native Americans began to slaughter the bison for their tongues and skins alone, leaving the rest of the carcass to rot. (26)

It is clear from Mosley's observation that using horses for hunting other animals has persisted throughout the human history and it is regarded as common practice by the human beings ignorant of the consequences their actions would bring to the ecology. They were just concerned for the material gain through commercialized hunting of bison using the horses. This concern of using horses to hunt other species of animals in the ecosystem is well documented in Sewell's *Black Beauty*. This makes the novel an environmental discourse that advocates for the fair treatment of the animals of the nature for its smooth functioning.

Peter Mühlhäusler and Adrian Peace have examined the various aspects of a narrative that would mark the narrative as an environmental discourse in their essay “Environmental Discourses.” They have pointed to the characteristic of addressers of the environmental narratives as “Addressers are the source of a message, and a number of analysts have shown that speaking on behalf of the Earth . . . is a salient feature of environmental discourses. It entails assigning intelligence "to nonhuman entities such as ecosystems" . . . or a personified goddess such as Gaia (459)” It points clearly that the writer of environmental discourses speak on the behalf of earth or the smooth functioning of the ecosystem or environment. The writer may confer intelligence to the nonhuman entities so that they could pass the message to save the earth or ecology. Sewell has conferred the intelligence to the horse that exposes the human beings’ wrong conduct to the nature and animals. So this novel can be justified as the environmental discourse.

Mühlhäusler and Peace highlight further that the essential characteristic of most of the environmental discourses is to show the human actions detrimental to the nature. This leads them to argue that human actions are detrimental to the survival of humanity itself as, “Much environmental discourse elaborates the theme that human actions are detrimental to the survival of humanity. Each speech act warns that it is in the interest of the individual to desist from such activities” (461). This observation rings true to Sewell’s novel because she points to the hazards created by the mindless human activities abusing the horses and other animals that are detrimental to the nature and humanity. Thus, we can conclude her novel to be one of the important environmental discourses.

III. *Black Beauty* as the Manifesto of Animal Rights

Sewell has raised genuine issues concerning to the human attitude to the ecology and animal kingdom in her novel *Black Beauty*. In the extensive analysis, it is seen that her horse-dependent contextual factors demanding the activism so that the human exploitation of the horses could change. The human beings are too anthropocentric. They treat the horses as the machineries and do not care about their feelings and distress they have to bear because of the human abuse. The narrator, a horse named Black Beauty is the witness that unveils the human mistreatment of the horses from the perspective of the victim itself. The horses are frequently coaxed and tormented as inefficient as they are compared to the steam engines. The mindless children enjoy mistreating the horses that has been the subject of critique for the narrator in the novel. The groom using the shackles and whips are the mindless and their abuse meets with the intense hatred on the part of the narrator.

The narrator's story is the history of the horses that is as long as the human history. Their lifestyle, way of living, their society have been infiltrated by the mindless human beings and they are behaved like the senseless things. Their free lives have been destroyed in the service of the life of human beings. They are instrumentalized to achieve the human goals and fulfil their loaded tasks. Moreover, they have been sold many times in their life which shows that their life is no longer their own because which is captured and enslaved by the cruel human beings. In addition, they are used for hunting other animals, which highlights that human beings are totally against the animals' ethics on the one hand and they are the main culprits to challenge the existing coherent and harmonious chain of of ecosystem or the environment. Human actions, after all, are mindlessly dismantling the natural system in order to feed their stomach forgetting the well being of their future generations.

Sewell's such a strong critique of the barbaric treatment of the horses through this novel stirred the wave of the activism and the consciousness among the human beings and the novel is distributed among the carriage drivers all over the Europe so that they could treat the horses in humane way. This brought about the visible changes and helped the European develop the animal ethics. The carriage drivers stopped using the whips with the rings and balls that could hurt the animals. The novel is thus, the manifesto that grabbed the anthropocentrism at its throat and promoted the animal ethics that made the life of the horses more bearable. The credit of the viable and considerably visible changes in the treatment of the horses goes to large extent to the Sewell's groundbreaking novel *Black Beauty*. The novel has inspired many organizations working for the animal rights and has occupied an unsurpassed position in the literary texts written on the behalf of the animals. It elevates the text to the position of one of the prominent environmentalist narration written in the literary history so far.

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