

Tribhuvan University

Call For Biocentrism in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word For World Is Forest*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Ashmika Rai

Roll No .: 495

Regd. No. : 6-1-214-1-2007

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

2018

Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Ashmika Rai has completed her thesis entitled “Call for Biocentrism in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Word For World Is Forest*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from August 2017 to April 2018. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Prof. Dr. Amma Raj Joshi

Supervisor

Date: _____

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This Thesis entitled “Call For Biocentrism in Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Word For World Is Forest*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Ashmika Rai has been approved by undersigned member of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I am genuinely indebted to my respected supervisor, the head of the department, Prof. Dr. Amma Raj Joshi for his responsible and regular support as a guide and for his generosity along with availability of academic materials. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to him for his valuable time and close observation. His directions throughout the thesis process lead to accomplish my research in this state.

I would like to extend my sincere acknowledgement to the entire group of professors, lecturers and the teaching assistants of the Department for their valued encouragement.

I would like to express my reverent to my family inspiration and constant support for fulfilling my dream to achieve Master's Degree in English. I am thankful to my friends and relatives who helped me directly and indirectly on various occasions.

April 2018

Ashmika Rai

Abstract

This research paper entitled "Call for Biocentrism in Ursula K. Le Guin's The Word For World Is Forest" focuses on the biocentric advocacy over anthropocentric dominance. This research paper examines Le. Guin's The Word For World Is Forest from the perspective of biocentrism. In the novel, the writer projects two different worldviews i.e. anthropocentrism and biocentrism. The Word For World Is Forest is about Athsheans (living beings of Athshe) who have to suffer, struggle and revolt against the Terrans (human beings of Earth) to survive and to save their nature. Le Guin draws a contrast between the natives of Terra and the natives of Athshe. The natives of Terra are guided by the materialistic thirst of nature whereas the natives of Athshe have created a balanced, integrated society by preserving the forest ecology upon which their culture depends. Terrans land on planet Athshe and colonize them and start destroying forest, building camps and enslaving Athsheans. Because of their anthropocentric worldview, the Terrans believe themselves to be superior to all creature exist in the universe. Le Guin's view towards world organism rests on negative aspects of human beings in relation to nature and other living creature. For Le Guin considering human beings as the creature of higher line and other living creature as a lower line is a myopic vision. She tries her best to ignore this human worldview in order to bring a balance relation between nature and culture. She puts forward her view with Athsheans by showing the struggle they have to do for their survival against anthropocentric domination by for their material and luxurious life.

Key terms: Biocentrism, Anthropocentric blindspot, Ecological consciousness, Culture vs Nature, Human superiority

Call For Biocentrism in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word For World Is Forest*

This research paper concentrates on the biocentric worldview over anthropocentric dominance in Le Guin's *The Word For World Is Forest* (1978). The writer advocates for biocentric worldview. The novella is a critique on *orld Is Forest* is a novel about the clash between two worlds. In one, people are guided by materialistic notion of nature whereas in another living beings are in balanced with nature. Terrans have already changed their Earth in a desert; fragmented and unbalanced. In contrast Athsheans are rooted to their nature. To the Athsheans to be mentally healthy is to be equivelant to being in touch with their roots, which are closely linked with their ecosystem. But Terrans indifference to their nature and ecology changes their land in to a desert.

Le Guin in her writing tries to counter the anthropocentric blindspot through the character of Davidson. Davidson is the most extreme representative of anthropocentrism whereas Selver is the character who struggles, revolts and finally advocates for biocentrism in the novel. On the one hand, guided by materialistic greed Davidson enslaves, rapes and kills the innocent natives of Athshe. He even does not care about ecological norms and starts destroying forest without a second thought. For him, forest is just a wood that costs more than gold on earth. On the other hand, there is Selver who fights for the betterment of his people and ecology and finally gives a glimpse of hope for biocentric unity.

Furthermore, Le Guin through the contrast between Terrans and Athsheans aims to illustrates how the anthropocentric blindspost make the survival of other living creatures difficult. Though all living creatures are equal and have equal right to live, human beings advocate their superiority over everything. Therefore, advocates of biocentrism satirically deal with so called human superiority by saying that the

space that human beings cover on the earth is too small. The necessity of all living organisms to run ecosphere is the advocacy of biocentrism.

Le Guin's science fiction has received wide critical acclaim after its publication. The novel is analyzed by different critics in a different framework with different lenses. The novel contains the theme of colonization, anti war, dream and consciousness, ecological consciousness and sensitivity and so on. For the same reason it has been analyzed from a variety of frames. As the novel carries the theme of colonization, the critic Soren Baggesen argues "a peaceful species of alien humanity, enslaved by Terran imperialism had hence motivated to transgress their own deeply integrated cultural norms of non-violence in order to rebel against their oppressors and set themselves free" (35). In these lines, words like enslaved, imperialism, oppressors and free strongly convey the idea of colonization. The Athsheans are colonized by the people of Terra. The idea of colonization is reflected through Davidson. As he says "primitive race always have given way to civilized ones. Or be assimilated. But we sure as hell can't assimilate a lot of green monkey" (25). Athsheans are inferior and uncivilized creature for Davidson as he named them as "creechies" (12).

While Baggesen emphasizes his reading on the theme of colonization, another critic Douglas Barbour focuses on the theme of dream and consciousness. As he argues, "There are two forms of art on Athshe, dreaming and singing, and both specialized cultural activities which serve to nullify aggression against other humans. The Athsheans recognize a necessity for controlling one's dreams, for dreaming properly" (167). Barbour states on the art of Athsheans that is dreaming and singing. Dreaming and singing makes them different from that of Terrans. These above mentioned lines connect the Le Guin's piece of writing with the theme of dream and

consciousness. The Athsheans teach themselves to consciously and actively control their dreams. Their dream can access their subconscious in a way Terrans are not able to do.

Critics like Douglas Barbour and Soren Beggsen analyze the novel under the theme of colonization and dreams phenomenon, whereas critic John Dean analyzes the novel through the lens of ecological consciousness and sensitivity. The idea of ecological consciousness and sensitivity are projected by Le Guin through the comparison of opposites: the natives of Athshe and the people of Terra. On this note John Dean states:

. . . the wilderness and the pastoral vision work together harmoniously. Two psychic environments confront one another: the ravaged, imperialistic, concrete jungle of Earth and the primal forest of a world musically known as "Athshea" to its native population, as "New Tahiti" or "World 41" to its colonial, technocratic exploit. (70)

Ecological consciousness in Athshe provokes the no-aggressive native Athsheans to be rebellious and preserve their world, forest from the hand of the technocratic exploitation. In like manner, John Dean, though previously sheds light on the issue of dream and consciousness also wrote some lines in relation to the lack of ecological consciousness in Terrans. Dean explains:

. . . there is the issue of ecological perception. Earth's frontiersmen can only perceive Athshea as a wilderness. Earthmen are slaves to their technological demands. What is green and growing is grist for their mill. Nature in and of itself has no integrity, deserves no respect or understanding on its own terms, because it is pre-technological. Nature is only good for Earthmen when it is plugged into a machine. (79)

These lines create an image of people of Terra and their technological and materialistic attributes towards nature and ecology. But in contrast, the inhabitants of Athshe are rooted to their ecology. They are the true worshippers of nature.

Many scholars have presented their views regarding Le Guin's *The Word For World Is Forest*. Unlike the above mentioned perspective, this research deals with the theme of biocentric initiatives taken against the blindspots of anthropocentrism.

This research paper tries to examine the novel *The Word For World Is Forest* from the perspective of biocentrism. In order to analyze the novel, the researcher draws the theoretical framework put forwarded by Paul W. Taylor and Aldo Leopold. In the book entitled *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*. Paul W. Taylor put forwards the idea that all living beings are the teleological centre of life. Taylor advocates for bio centric or life center theory. He argues that human, plants and animals are connected to each other and also makes the point that we have to maintain the reciprocal relationship between human, plant and animals. He criticizes anthropocentrism or human centered theory. Taylor opines:

A typical human centered argument goes as follow. Future generations of people have a much right to live a physically secure and healthy life as those of the present generation. Each of us is therefore under an obligation not to allow the natural environment to such an extent that the survival and well-being of later human inhabitants of the earth are jeopardized. (11)

Taylor tries to expand the notion that anthropocentrism sees the world only from the perspective of human and focuses only in the survival and well-being of human.

Taylor argues that human beings have “exploitative perspective” (133) towards nature. This concept is mainly grounded on the needs and interest of human. Taylor says that human should maintain state of equilibrium between nature and human

beings. Human should have the moral commitment to follow the principle of environmental ethics. Tylor says:

The attitude we think it appropriate to take towards living things depend on how we conceive of them. What moral significance the natural world has for us depend on the way we look at the whole system of nature and our role in it. With regard to the attitude of respect for nature, the belief system that renders it intelligible and on which it depends for its justifiability is the bio - centric look. (99)

Bio -centric world view towards nature focuses on the well -being of both human and nature. Bio-centric or life centric world view believes on the idea that wild living things should be protected and promoted just as human is treated with respect. According to Tylor, bio-centric look based on the four assumptions such as human are the member of earth's community, the human species along with all other species, are integral elements in a system of interdependence, all organism are teleological system of life, and the belief that human are not inherently superior to other living things. Tylor argues:

When a life centered view is taken, the obligation and responsibilities we have with respect to the wild animals and plants of the Earth are seen to arise from certain moral relation holding between ourselves and the natural world itself. The natural world is not there simply as an object to be exploited by us, nor are its living creature to be regarded as nothing more than resources for our use and consumption (12).

Through this, he tries to expose the idea that human being are the moral agent and they have to show responsibility towards moral subjects. Human should use the valid moral principles for treating the nature. Tylor says that, "perhaps the most

ethically significant fact about moral subject is that it is always possible for a moral agent to take a moral subject's standpoint and make judgment from its standpoint about how it to be treated" (17). He wants to convey the notion that human should not look nature from the perspective of human and it should be looked from the perspective of nature. Paul W. Tylor states that, "the central tenet of the theory of environmental ethics that I am defending is that actions are right and character traits are morally good in virtue of their expressing or embodying certain ultimate moral attitude, which I call respect for nature" (80). It alludes all the moral considerations which help to maintain the mutual relationship between human and non-human. In another word, it is the systematic study of the moral rules and regulations. He views that all living beings and non-living beings have inherent worth and should be respected as such.

Tylor gives emphasis on bio-centric world view rather than anthropocentric world view in order to see the nature from the standpoint of nature itself. He criticizes the human centric outlook towards nature because it defines everything from the perspective of human benefit. Tylor put forwards the vision that there is a serious confusion in the retention between nature and human beings because human being think that they are morally superior to nature. Tylor further argues that human beings have "exploitative perspective" (133) towards nature. They keep themselves at the center and want to use nature according to their choice. Tylor pinpoints the idea that exploitative view point towards nature is the main reason for the deteriorating relationship between human world and nature.

Aldo Leopold is a philosopher who coined the term "Land Ethics" in his book entitled *A Sand Country Almanac* where he talks about an new ethics that deals with the relationship between human and non-human. His notion of land ethic

also neglect the human centered view point towards nature. His theory is regarded as the economy based land ethics. He defines that, “land ethic is the basis of biotic community which includes soil, water, plant and animal” (39). He tries to give the space to the non-living things by destructing the superiority of the human. He spreads the idea that human being are not serious about the plants, soil, and water and animal to maintain the healthy ecology. He accuses that all human activities are the reason for destruction of nature. He states that, “A land ethic...reflect the ecological conscience, a convention of individual responsibility for the health of the land. Health is the capacity of the land for its self -renewal” (Leopold, 45). He tries to make the point that we need ecological conscience in order to construct the healthy and prosperous ecology. He blames that human moral and intellectual sterility is main reason for the devastation of the healthy ecology.

Leopold tries to establish the idea that we should make the nature free from those who are responsible for the destruction of the nature. We have to avoid the habit of seeing everything from the perspective of economy. We should treat the nature in friendly manner. He argues that, “the land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of community to include soils, waters, plants and animals, or the collectively: the land” (38). He tries to convey the notion that we should take the land as the form of community and human should realize that he is also the member of that community. He attempts to expose the idea that we should not avoid the spiritual site of the nature in the name of scientific and technological advancement. Leopold derives the conclusion that, things is right when it tends to preserve integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community, its wrong when it tends to do otherwise. He tries to establish the notion that the inter-relation and interaction between human and non -human is required for the production of healthy ecology.

By the proper use of ecology conscience, human should preserve integrity, stability and beauty of biotic community.

Nature writing mainly focuses on the biocentric advocacy against the anthropocentric dominance. So nature writings mostly deals with environmental ethics and environmental philosophy that advocates biocentric values and goes against the root cause of problems created by anthropocentric dominance. The balance of nature is the moral norm that is thoroughly carried out by biocentrism. The protection and promotion of nature for their sake is the path of biocentrism. For the advocaters of biocentrism nature is important. According to the Paul W. Tylor's theory of biocentrism, all living and non living things have their own inherent value. In other words, all living and non living things have equal place in nature. Biocentrism stands in contrast to anthropocentrism which centres the value of humans. As oppose to anthropocentrism, it believes human beings as the part of the nature but not as masters. Val plumwood in the book entitled *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*(2002) puts forward her idea that anthropocentric notion is the process of othering accepted by humans for self benefit. She argue:

Reductive and Othering models of conception herald other forms of injustice, such as distributive injustice, preventing the conception of non-human others in ethical terms, distorting our distributive relationships with them, and legitimating insensitive commodity and instrumental approaches. We must take much more seriously concepts of distributive justice for non-humans, as not inferior or lower in priority to human justice issues.(117)

Biocentric ethics argue that there is a need for a rethinking of the relationship between humans and nature. According to Plumwood, blindspots of anthropocentrism is othering the non-human through the concepts of radical exclusion, hegemonizing or

stereotyping, backgrounding, incorporation and instrumentalism. Human beings assume that each and every thing in the world belongs to them. Non-human things are insignificant to them. But in contrast, biocentric notion believes nature does not exist only to be consumed by humans. Therefore, biocentric thought is nature based, not human based.

Biocentric advocacy rests on human thoughts applied on nonhuman members, the interconnectedness in the ecosystem, an individual organism as a center of life, and against the groundless claim that human beings, by their very nature are superior to other species. The human superiority comes by talking about the capacities that nonhuman lacks but biocentrism marks the capacities that humans lack in comparison to non human. This shows the denial of human superiority is the major issue of biocentrism. Amma Raj Jhosi in his work title as “Earth as Organism: An Environmentally Ethical Stand” says “The biocentric values are more earth and living things centered. They grant nature rights and accept the worth of nature apart for the use and wellbeing of human beings” (26). Biocentrism advocates that this universe is not only for the use and exploitation of human beings, but there are millions of beings and plants and species on this universe. So the blindspot of anthropocentrism should be questioned for the better future.

Anthropocentric values believe that nature is determined with the power and money and used instrumentally. Anthropocentrism is self-evident on the way of destroying nature. A life-centered system of nature is opposed by anthropocentrism. Joshi puts “Anthropocentric values are more human centered and utilitarian in nature” (26). Anthropocentrism is the position that human beings are the central or most significant entities on the universe. The value guided by the concept of fulfilling the self by misusing other species of environment is the blindspot of anthropocentrism.

So in order to maintain the balance in the universe for the betterment of the nature and human beings, Le Guin seems advocating biocentrism over anthropocentric dominance. *The Word For World Is Forest* focuses on the disharmonious relations as a result of anthropocentric blindspots. Why the non aggressive Athsheans revolt against the human beings and how at the end they are able to make the humans leave their planet for the betterment of balanced ecosystem is the main issue of the project.

The novel explore nature and anthropocentric dominance associating their contesting and forceful reconciliatory features. The ability of the primitive forces to make the so called civilized forces be in harmony with less civilized world and non-human world, non aggressive living being revolution to save them and their environment by undercutting the anthropocentric disposition and then call for biocentrism are the main focal points of this research paper. So, the arguments and research questions raised in this project explore biocentric connection. The inquiry has been made to explore “ Call for Biocentrism in Ursula K Le. Guin’s *The Word For World Is Forest*”. Likewise, this research paper mainly concentrates on the rules of nature that are disturbed by man. Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and physical environment. Ecocriticism does not only consider human world, but also focuses through bio-centric lens on human relation with physical environment.

Thus, this project deals with natural and cultural issues based on the novel *The Word For World Is Forest* from the ecocritical perspective. Cheryll Glotfelty says that literary ecology refers to the study of biological things and relationship which appears in literary works. It is an attempt to discover what roles have been played by literature in the ecology of human species. Glotfelty shows her concern about conflict between human beings and physical environment in her writing and she says, “Human actions

are damaging the planet's basic life support system" (xx). Humans irresponsible behavior towards nature that is rooted in the form of anthropocentrism are not digested by nature and it can bring disaster to the human beings. So, from her side she is trying to create reciprocal relationship between nature and human beings which will be in favor of both. Similarly, against the anthropocentric blindspot, William Rueckert in his essay, "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" states, "Human beings are the signs of environmental threat as a result of their dominance over the earth, their anthropocentric vision, their desire to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural things" (113). Rueckert argues that, ecocriticism unlike all other forms of literary inquiry encompasses non-human as well as human contexts and considerations. This loss of environment created by the anthropocentric dominance has energized the ecological thinking.

The Word For World Is Forest is the genre of science fiction. It is first published in United States in 1972 as a part of the anthology *Again, Dangerous Visions*, and published as a separate book in 1976 by Berkley books. It is a part of Le Guin's *Hanish Cycle*. The novel strongly criticizes anthropocentric disposition and make a call for biocentric worldview. The character Don Davidson is an extreme representative of anthropocentric blindspot whereas the character Selver revolts against the anthropocentric dominance and calls for biocentric existence.

The novel starts with the colonization of planet Athshe by the human beings of Terra i.e. Earth. Terrans have colonized and enslaved the non aggressive Athsheans. They go on the planet Athshe which is twenty-seven lightyears away from Earth. They are there to establish a new colony of Earth. In the beginning pages of the novel, the anthropocentric dominance is imposed over non-human through the mind of Davidson. As Le Guin writes:

But he still couldn't see why a soybean farm needed to waste a lot of space on trees if the land was managed really scientifically. It wasn't like that in Ohio; if you wanted corn you grew corn, and no space waste on trees and stuff. But then Earth was a tamed planet and new tihati wasn't. That's why he was here for: to tame it. If Dump Island was just rocks and gullies now, then scratch it; start over on an new Island and do better. Can't keep us down, we're Men.

You'll learn what that means pretty soon, you godforshaken damn planet. (10)

Captain Devidson's gaze towards land is materialistic not biocentric. According to him there is no need of trees as they hold no value, and leaving trees uncut is a waste of space. For him, the Island is deserted that values nothing which is extremely against the land ethics. Human beings have no rights to violate land according to their need as Aldo Leopold in his essay "The Land Ethics" has mentioned. The work of Aldo Leopold has been associated with biocentrism. In the essay "The Land Ethic" Leopold points out that although throughout history women and slaves have been considered property, all people have now been granted rights and freedoms. Leopold notes that today land is still considered property as people once were. He asserts that ethics should be extended to the land as "an evolutionary possibility and an ecological necessity (37)". He argues that while people's instincts encourage them to compete with others, their ethics encourages them to co-operate with others. He suggests that land ethics encourage humans to include soil, water, plants and animals to enlarge the boundary of the community. In a sense this attitude would encourage humans to co-operate with the land.

Captain Devidson keeps on dominating the native of Colonized planet.

Athsheans in appearance, are smaller than human beings. They are only one meter tall, green in colour having a green fur on their back. They are non aggressive in their

nature and small in size what makes human beings easier to enslaved them. Captain Davidson has a personal slave named Ben. Ben was a meter tall and his back fur is more white than green; he is old. Though Ashtheans are small and different in appearance in comparison to human but it doesnot mean that they are inferior to human. Biocentrism defines each and every thing that exists in the universe as equal. For Davidson; blind follower of anthropocentrism, Athsheans are inferior and uncivilized creature and he named them as “creechies”(11).

Davidson is an extreme representative of anthropocentrism. He keeps on reflecting his anthropocentric blindsopt as he says:

Get enough human here, build machines and robots, make farms and cities, and nobody would need the creechies any more. And a good things too. For this world New Tihati, was literary made for men. Cleaned up and cleaned out, the dark forests cut down for open fields of grains, the primeval murk and savagery and ignorance wiped out, it would be a paradise a real Eden. (12)

His intention is clear that he wants to erase all the native planet Athshe in order to create new colony for Earth named as “New Tihati”. He wants to replace Athsheans with humans, machines, farm and robots. His desire is to creat a paradise by cutting down trees which are the “world” for native of Ashthe as the title of the book suggest.

Although the term anthropocentrism is related to human but all the men from Terra are not guided by anthropocentrism. Kees Van Sten and Lyubov are the expectional characters who instead of praising anthropocentrism are in contrast to Davidson and example of biocentric viewpoint. Kees Van Sten is more conscious about the ecological protocles. He informs Davidson that loggers from Earth have been hunting red deer in the stripe again and there are eighteen pair of antlers in the room of lounge. He comes to Davidson with hope that he might take action against it,

but instead of taking action he again shows his anthropocentric blindspot. As he states “ I could stop ‘em. But look, it’s the men I’m looking after, that’s my job, like you said. And it’s the main that count. Not the animals. If a little extra-legal hunting helps the men get through this godforshaken life, then I intend to blink” (13). He further says, “Earth needs wood, needs it bad. We find wood in New Tihati. So we’re,loggers. See where we differs is that with you Earth doesn’t come first, actually. With me I does” (14). It shades light upon the extremity of anthropocentrism as Davidson gives cold reaction to animal hunting. He relates animal hunting to the entertainment for human beings. But for Kees Van Sten that is not the case. He wants this bloody actions of human damaging the nature and lives of other species should stop and this is even against the ecological protocles. This anththropocentric notion of human superiority hass been challenge by Paul Taylor. He mentions, “ Humans are members of a community of life along with all other species, and on equal terms” (99). He advocates for the biocentric worldview leveling all living and non-living things in equal line. That has been trying to show by Le Guin also through the character Kees, Selver and Lyubov.

Le Guin after the conversation between Kees and Devidson tries to sketch the image of planet Athshe before the colonizer land on the planet. She writes: “Trees. A dark huddle and jumble and tangle of trees, endless, meaningless, a few creechies-warrens hidden among the trees, some red deer, hairy monkey, birds. And trees. Roots, boles branches, twings, leaves, leaves overhead and underfoot and in your face and in your eyes, endless on endless trees” (15). Athshe is in full life before the intervention of human beings. There were trees every where, all living and non-living things are in balance with their ecology but after humnas arrieved the dark green forest and living beings of the plant came under danger because of human

anthropocentrism. They in three E- months built forty timber huts, Smith Camp, sawmill and tamed a fair patch of wilderness. Their materialistic and instrumentalistic viewpoint is damaging the planet Athshe slowly and gradually. As Le Guin describes:

men were here now to end the darkness, and turn the tree-jumble clean swan planks, more priced on Earth than gold. Literary, because gold could be got from seawater and under the Antarctic ice, but wood could not; wood come from only trees. And it was really necessary luxury on Earth. So the alien land became wood. (16)

Le Guin's lines show how human beings are guided by anthropocentric blindness. They look at forest from materialistic viewpoint as they compare trees with gold. Therefore, the alien land that is planet Athshe became "wood" for them. Whereas for Athshean forest means "world" for them.

The novel further moves ahead introducing Oknanawi Nabo; logging foreman. He is another representative of anthropocentrism. He complains to Davidson that creechies worker are not working. They are not worth using. Oknanawi Nabo says "They're not worth the trouble, captain. Damn suiky little green bastards, they won't fight, won't work, won't nothing except give me the pip" (20). The word little green bastards shows Oknanawi ignorance and dominance over Athsheans. Davidson in addition states " Primitive races always have to give way to civilized ones. Or be assimilated. But we sure as hell can't assimilate a lot of green monkeys [...] we'll get on better without creechies here, just like we get on better without gorillas in Africa" (21). This shows that anthropocentrism is the tendency for human beings to illogically regard themselves as the central and most significant entities in the universe, or the assessment of reality through an exclusively human perspective. Native of Athshe are exploited and used by human for fulfilling the self.

But there comes a turning point in the novel when one night the non aggressive, inferior creature named as creechies by human attack on Smith Camp. All two hundred of logging workers and women dies in that attack. Davidson who was the first target of the attack is but still alive. His luck favour him this time. When he sees his Smith Camp almost destroyed and all logging are dead he can not think of any specific enemy who can do it but his mind recalls the memory of his past as his eyes catches one familiar face that is of Selver. When Davidson and his people were at Centralvillie Selver was a personal assistant of Lybov. Selver and Lybov were like friends. Lyboov was the person who taught Selver human language. Davidson misconception about so called inferior creechies change when the group of creechies attack Smith Camp and killed two hundred loggers. Devidson couldnot believe it but when selver says that they killed people in the forest where they are cutting down trees and then we killed those in the place where the houses were burning. Davidson anthropocentric blindspot of human superiority is challenged by character Selver and his group. As le Guin states “ there was a second gun pointing at his guts. Ben holding the gun. His own creechies, Ben, the little gray mangy bastard” (30). This shows the denial of human superiority. As Paul Tylor States, “An organism may be said to be free if it has the ability and opportunity to promote or protest its good according to the law of nature” (109).

Anthropocentric blindspot causes a massacre of two hundred people in Athshe. This shed light on the negative aspect of anthropocentrism. If all living and non-living things in the universe do not live in harmony with eachother then things will not move in soomth way this is the believe of biocentrism. Because of the anthropocentric dominance of human beings on athshe a massacre takes place. Selver and his group of creechies leave Davidson alive as their goal is to save their nature

and destroy the Camp and loggers which are rapidly destroying their home; forest. They thought that Davidson will leave the planet but that doesnot happens rather Davidson starts planning for something more dangerous. He starts planning to remove all the race of creechies from the planet Athshe.

After attacking on Smith Camp and loggers Selver leave the New Tihati and after five days of walking he reaches to another place named Cadast. He meets an old man named Coro Mena. Selver is tired and Coro Mena takes Selver with him. They are the native of planet Athshe so they are similar in appearance and can talk in dreams. They talk to each other in dreams. Selver shares his story to the Coro mena and other members of the town of Codast. He shares:

I am Selver thele, when I lived in Eshreth in Sornol city was estroyed by the yumens when they cut down the trees in the region. I was one of those who made to serve them, with my wife, Thele. She was raped by one of them and died. I attacked the yuman that killed her. He would have kill me then but another of them saved me and set me free. I left Sornol where no city is safe from the yumens now and came here to the North isle, and lived on the coast of Kelme Deva in red groves. There presentely the yumens come and began to cut down the world. They destroyed a city there, Penle. (40)

This shows in spite of concious civilization, anthropocentric instinct dwelling in human mind takes them towards the ruthless use of nature and natural resources. Human beings use nature means they exploit it unnecessarily. The greed on petty interest has made them blind. Nature is a phenomena of physical world including plants, animal and other forms of Earth, which is underestimated by human beings.

Human beings are considered as one of the most sensible and creative creature in the universe. The expectation of love, sympathy and cooperation is necessary not

only among human beings but also with non-human world is the basic feature of human world. But because of blindspot of anthropocentrism human beings are no more human, they are instead become evil, killing living species and non-living things. As Selver posits “they have killed us by ones now they kill the trees, by hundreds, and hundreds, and hundreds” (44). This illustrates anthropocentrism in extreme level. Criticizing anthropocentric notion Bari Judi in his work "Revolutionary Ecology: Biocentrism & Deep Ecology" says “Biocentric ethics calls for a rethinking of the relationship between humans and nature. It states that nature does not exist simply to be used or consumed by humans, but that humans are simply one species amongst many” (93). Judi emphasizes her idea against the concept that is supported even by religion which says human beings are superior to animals and plants because their creator has given them higher place on the chain which draws God on top, angels on second, humans on third, and non-humans at the bottom.

After listening life story of Selver that starts with happy time with his wife to humans interfere, murder, slavery and finally to revolution Coro Mena who is the foreman of Codast shares his feelings regarding humans. How they are living their life hiding themselves from the bloody humans. As he explains:

we have all been afraid of four years, even we who live far from yumens cities, and had only glimpsed them from hiding, or seen their ships fly over, or looked at them dead places where they cut down the world, or heard mere tale of these things. We all are afraid. Children wake from sleep crying of gaints; women wii not go far on their trading-journeys; men in the loadge can not sing.the fruit of fear is ripening. And I see you gather it. You are the harvester. All that you fear to know, you vave seen, you have known. (59)

Coro Mena further adds though things which he and his people are afraid of selver

face it, bear it and revolt against it. He now praises Selver as a God who can bring the change in their planet. He is the one to harvest new world, he is the savior. As Coro Mena says, "And the world changes wholly, when a man holds in his hand the fruit of the tree, whose roots are deeper than the forest. Men will know it. They will know you, as we did it doesn't take an old man or a Great Dreamer to recognize a God! Where you go, fire burns; only blind cannot see it" (60). The content is very strong through out the novel. In the eyes of Coro Mena, Selver is a savior, a fighter who will make the planet and its living and non living species free from the yumens of Earth. Coro Mena recognizes a God, a savior in Selver. The symbolism Le Guin using through Coro Mena's words is now against the anthropocentric domination Selver through his action will call for a biocentric worldview.

Nature is being exploited from different sector. First of all, internal system of exploiting nature is very common. It can not be checked. For the sake of one element other elements get sacrificed. Which is acceptable in some case. But external factors which are involved in the exploitation are really questionable, especially humans. because of materialistic viewpoint of anthropocentrism trees are being chopped in a rapid ways. For humans trees are only means of wood that values more than gold. They are chopping trees and destroying forest wildlife in order to build camps, buildings, and colonies. Humans are harming nature with out any second thought which indicates ecological hazards resulted by anthropocentrism.

In the text after Smith Camp attack a meeting of representative of Earth take place. Commander yung, Mr. Or, Gosse, Colonel Dongh, Lybov and Captain Davidson are the people to the the part of a meeting. Lybov shows his concern about forest and its native Athsheans in front of the membes. He tries to point out anthropocentrism as the reason behind the Smith Camp attack. As he says:

Well, I wonder if they're not proving their adaptability, now. By adapting their behavior to us. To the Earth colony. For four years they have behaved to us as they do to another. Despite the physical differences, they recognized us as the member of their species as men. However, we have not responded. We have ignored the responses, the rights and obligations of non-violence. We have killed, raped, dispersed, and enslaved the native humans, destroyed their communities, and cut down their forests. It wouldn't be surprising if they'd decided that we are not human. (75)

It is clear that he is pointing his finger towards Davidson specific and towards other member in general. Lybov is a character being a Terran he is not an advocator of anthropocentrism rather he is an admirer of biocentrism. As Paul W. Tylor argues, "Bio-centric outlook is the belief system that human are member of earth's community of life in the same sense and on the same term in which other living things are member of that community" (99). Colonel Dongh in contrast to Lybov convey his human superiority over native of Athshe. "The fact is that these creechies are a meter tall, they're covered with green fur, they don't sleep and they are not human beings in my frame of references"(77) shows Colonel sense of human superiority. Although Lybov tries his best to convince other members to create a harmony and do not break ecological protocols he fails to do so.

Going through the plot, it shows that Ashtheans have to struggle for their survival against the ferocity of the human only because of anthropocentric dominance. The search for wood in an alien land is nothing to do with the native of the Athshe but to fulfill human purpose. Because of human materialistic viewpoint makes the life of other species hard to survive. Human so called superiority is the main thing that resulted attack on Smith Camp and death of two hundred and seven people to be

specific. This convey a message that if you tries to control over nature and its other species it will true back to you and there will be no harmony in the Universe which leads Universe towards its end.

The endless contest between nature and culture suggests that the nature is fighting for self defense or just meaningless exploitation for leadership. Nature stands against culture because culture is trying to rule over it which is impossible. This dump behavior of humans is doing nothing more than disturbing the flow of nature. Culture goes against nature for various purposes, such as just for living, and for greed of weath. Human beings try to use their brute and brain force to control nature as their property. But nature shuns this supremacy as a whole and the conflict beings.

In the text when Davidson is sent New Java under Major Muhammed after the Smith Camo attack to learn some discipline his anthropocentric viewpoint is remaind the same. He starts making plans to kills all the Athshean at once. He involves other human beings working on New Java to make his plan successful. They gather up and make a plan to clean up all the Athshean who attack on Smith Camp. This shows the human cruelty over other species of the Universe which are as equal as human according to the law of the Universe. But because of anthropocentrism humans has forgotten all meaning of equality. For them they are the most superior among other. For the same reason they don't even think once before roasting Athshean as if they are nothing. In the addition Le Guins further states " Hard up as the men were, they did't leave one of the females alive to rape" (101). This is the extremity of evilness, height of anthropocentrism. Lybov on the other hand recall his memories while he for the first time land on the planet Athshe. It was a covered with endless leaves. He never been to such place where your walk is accompany by endless forest. There was peace in Athshe, everything is in balanced form. Unlike Earth where almost

everything was fragmented. As Le Guin writes, “At first on Athshe he had felt oppressed and uneasy in the forest, stifled by its endless crowd and incoherence of trunks, branches, leaves in the perpetual greenish or brownish twilight [. . .] but little by little he had begun to like it” (105). This shows Lybov concern about planet Athshe and Athshean. How the planet was before he along with other hunams landed on it. Now because of anthropocentric dominance the planet is changing in to desert. Deforestation, hunting of animals and native of Athshe is taking place in rapid level. For the same reason in order to save his forest and people Selver revolt against humans and killed almost two hundreds of men.

Selver’s action that took place in Smith Camp was a signal to all human beings who are trying to destroy Athshean’s world that if they do not stop ruining environment and ecological balance the result will be worst for humans. In order to save his world from human domination selver along with Codast native starts spreading message to gang up with him so that they could make humans leave their world. People from Kushil, Rieshwel, Sornel come to Selver to join him in his mission to fight anthropocentric dominance. “they were all surrounded all day by strangers, people come from all over the forests, hundreds of them, thousands, all gather here like kites” (137). This line shows Athsheans determination and support to Selver in his mission to save planet Athshe. Selver is sure that if the Terrans did not consider him and refuse to leave Athshe then the dream of Selver to free his land is going to be full of blood and fire. Athsheans are all ready with weapons with them. They then gather in front of HQ of Terran to make a conversation with Colonel Dongh but instead Gosse came out of the HQ and stand in front of Selver to make a conversation. Selver is true worshiper of nature, for the same reason he is doing all this to protect nature and ecology of his planet. Athshean were non-aggressive in

nature but humans exploitation makes them rebellious in nature and that resulted Smith Camp attack. Therefore, now Selver does not want to continue this bloody game. As he says:

I have to say that the killing is over, if that be made a promise kept by your people and my people. You may all go free, if you will gather in your people from the logging camps in South Sornol, Kushil, Rieshwel, and make them all stay together here. may you live here where forest is dead, where you grow your seed-grasses. There must not be any more cutting of trees. (140)

This shows Selver's consciousness towards nature and its species. Le Guin inject the idea of biocentrism through Selver. He wants the humans to leave his planet along with their people without hurting and there should be no more cutting down of trees. Although there are millions of his people who can clean up humans at once Selver does not want to do so. This proves his consciousness towards biocentric worldview where everything obtain equal rights. Both Terrans representative and Athsheans representative come to an agreement that neither the Athsheans nor the Terrans will make any action that affect each other. Terrans will gather up in one place where the forest is almost cut down and they will plant new seeds of plant there and Athshe will not attack humans.

Despite the agreement that is a call for biocentric worldview the extreme representative of anthropocentrism Captain Davidson shows his disagreement with his action. He disobeys the agreement and make plan along with remaining loggers on New Java. He makes plan to wipe out all the creechies at once with the use of all the machinery and weapons they had had in New Java. Though Juju Sereng tries to stop him because Juju was well known about the power of Athshenas as he questions "do you really think two thousand men can take on three millions intelligent enemies,

Don?" (161) but Davidson did not listen to him. Davidson along with his loggers make a plan to clean out all the Athsheans. Davidson says "now it was time to show the creechies that they might push around those sheep on Central but now on New Java it was men they have to deal with" (163). This line shows Davidson's blindspot of human superiority. To kill Athsheans, Davidson makes a plan but his plan hits him back when Aabi refuses to kill all the Athsheans along with those loggers men inside New Java. When Aabi disobeys his order Davidson in anger points a gun in his back to turn the flight toward New Java but in a discussion trees leaned hugely out of the night and caught the machine and the little machine could not stand in front of the tree. As Le Guin states:

The vanes screamed, hurling leaves and twigs in a cyclone through the bright lanes of the lights, but the boles of the trees were very old and strong. The little winged of the trees were very old and strong. The little wings machine plunged, seemed to lurch and tear itself free, and went down sideways into the trees. The lights went out. The noise stopped. (175)

This gives a glimpse of nature's superiority over human and human inventions. No matter how superior you call yourself you can never be superior to nature. At the end every human must surrender themselves to nature. Le Guin uses words like "old and strong" to indicate trees whereas "little" to indicate human invention or machine that clarifies Le Guin's intention towards the denial of human superiority.

After his plane crashes in the forest he finds himself in the darkness. Nothing is visible in that darkness. There were all roots and bushes and tangles all around. The air was black and full of moisture. He could not find where he really is. He tries to come out of the ship but could not see anything. He searched for his torch but is unable to find. He somehow manages to come out of the ship and he wonders

here and there. He could not find where he really was going. He was lost in the wilderness of the nature. To question human superiority over nature Le Guin writes:

He stood crouching, immobile; then abruptly began to run. He could not see where he was going. Tree-trunks jolted him from side to side as he knocked to them, and roots tripped up his feet. He fell full length, crashing down among bushes. Getting to hands and knees he tried to hide. Bare, wet twigs dragged and scraped over his face. He squirmed farther into the bushes. His brain was entirely occupied by the complex smells of rot and growth, dead leaves, decay, new shoots, fronds, flowers, the smells of night and spring and rain. (177)

Nature's superiority over human beings is a fact. We humans though try a lot to make ourselves superior but we never can overcome it. Above mentioned lines show nature's superiority over humans. Davidson who is so proud of his mind and intelligence at the end is occupied by the nature. His brain is no longer able to work as it is controlled by the smells of nature. Therefore, for a healthy living every species in the universe should live in balance with nature. If not so and humans try to claim themselves superior to everything that will lead the world nowhere but to destruction.

The novel moves forward to shed light on the biocentric vision over anthropocentric dominance. Wondering into the darkness Davidson finally sees Athsheans. To be safe from Athsheans he lies down on his back as if he is dead. All Athsheans look at him making a circle around his lying body. But Davidson could not resist the cold, his clothes clung icy to his shoulders and the back of his legs, and he could not stop shaking. He could not lie there with Selver looking down at him. Davidson who is an extreme anthropocentric character is now no more than a victim. Selver tells him not to worry he will not kill him rather he will send him to a place named Rendlep, where there are no more trees remaining. As Selver says:

All the killing is done now. And the cutting of trees. There aren't trees to cut on Rendlep. That's the place you people call Dump Island. Your people left no trees there, so you can't make a boat and sail from it. Nothing much grows there any more, so we shall have to bring you food and wood to burn. There's nothing to kill on Rendlep. No trees, no people. There were trees and people, but now there are only the dreams of them it seems to me a fitting place for you to live, since you must live. You might learn how to dream there, but more likely you will follow your madness through to its proper end, at last. (181)

This illustrates the idea of denial of human superiority and end of anthropocentric blindspot. Davidson a character who wants to destroy and consume every living and non-living thing exist in nature is now became the victim of his own deeds. Le Guin gives him a perfect end through the character Selver. He is left in Rendlep which is turn into desert by the humans and now Davidson must live there alone. He is now trapped in his own misdeed. Davidson life trapped in an Dump Island symbolizes the failure of anthropocentric dominance.

Towards the end of the novel humans from the Earth surrender in front of the Athsheans. Non-aggressive Athsheans revolution compel Terrans to leave their planet. Commander of Terrans promise Selver that he and his people are leaving Athshe. As he says " You know that we'll be taking all the Terrans away with us. We brought a second ship with us to carry them. Your world will no longer will be used as a colony"(185). He further adds "your world has been under league Ban. What that means in your dreams is this: I can promise you that no one will come here to cut your trees or take your land" (186). What Le Guin is trying to do through the character Commander of Terra is she is making a call for biocentric worldview. As Taylor mentions "biocentrism is an attitude of respect for nature, whereby one attempts to

make an effort to live one's life in a way that respects the welfare and inherent worth of all living creature”(99). For a establishment of biocentric worldview you must have an attitude of respect for nature. A sense of equality should be there. Biocentrism refers the world where each and every living and non-living things stay in the universe maintaining a balance and harmonious relation.

In the novel, at the end we can smell the sense of biocentrism in the line said by commander of Terrans and Lepennon; a human from Earth. As Lepennon says “ We shall go. Within two days we shall be gone. All of us. Forever. Then the forest of Athshe will be as they were before” (189). This line said by Lepennon shed light on the Le Guin’s call for biocentrism. Paul Tylor argues, “As a result of our heightened awareness of reality of another living things existence, we gain the genuine capacity to take its standpoint and make judgment based on its good. Shifting out of the usual boundaries up anthropocentricity, the world horizon of our moral imagination opens up to encompass all living things” (128). The writer shows that, because of Selver, Lepennon reaches to the complete realization cognitively and imaginatively of what is to be particular individual and starts to see the nature by deconstructing the established boundaries of anthropocentrism.

As the main focus of this project is a call for biocentric worldview by criticizing blindspot of anthropocentrism, Le Guin’s nature and culture contest in *The Word For World Is Forest* is presented as a major dominance throughout the narrative. So the main aim of this study along with ecocritics and ecocritical view is to make human beings conscious about biocentric worldview. The fighting of humans among themselves and using other beings living or non-living for self benefit is the means of natural destruction. This shows that Le Guin’s main aim to creat this contest is to construct a road map for better understanding about nature. this contest can have

firm settlement only with the better understanding of ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism is an ecological approach in the study of relationship between literature and environment. It studies the reciprocal relationship between human being and nature, especially with the misuse of natural environment. The home ground of ecocriticism is the human's inseparable attachment with the nature in its existence. So dwelling place to place for the settlement of struggle between nature and culture is the main focus of ecocriticism.

Some provisional definitions of the subject can be analyzed giving emphasis on some of the writers related to ecocriticism. The first from the "Introduction" to *The Ecocriticism Reading* (1996), an important anthology of Ecocriticism. In this book Glotfelty asserts:

what then is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of text, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies. (xix)

As a call for biocentrism is the major point of this research paper, the concept needs to be defined in an easy way. It stands in contrast to anthropocentric notion as Val Plumwood, in simple words defines it as the process of "othering" (98) that is accepted by the humans for self benefit only. The process of othering can be clearly seen in Le Guin's writing. The Terrans are othering the Athsheans in each and every way for their self benefits. Davidson and other humans except Lybov has othered Athsheans as creechies, greenmonkey, uncivilized, primitive and so on.

Ecocriticism is not just means of analyzing nature in literature. It implies

towards a more biocentric worldview, an extension of ethics, a broadening of human's conceptions of global community to include non-human life forms and the physical environment. Ecocritics tend to believe that a considered appreciation of their processes can help restore a harmonious balance between nature and human culture. Ecological reading helps to establish a culture to respect the non-human world. If the interconnectedness between human and non-human members is understood, in many ways it can heal the environmental wound humans have inflicted upon it. Ecocriticism looks upon how literature clarifies its responsibility to respect non-human entities. So, it is a worthy effort to direct our attention to matters about which the modern world must mediate on. The agendas posed by ecocriticism have located ecocriticism beyond the traditional boundaries of literary studies making it assured that such study can help to result in a harmonious balance between nature and human. Which is the main focal point of biocentrism.

To sum up, the novel *The Word For World Is Forest* is a form of nature writing which deals with the theme of biocentrism. Le Guin in the text is criticizing anthropocentrism through the characters like Davidson, Lepennon, Gosse, Major Mohamed, etc. The end of Captain Davidson in the Rendlep which turns into Dump Island because of the blindness of anthropocentrism symbolizes the end of anthropocentric dominance through their own misdeeds. Likewise, the writer makes a call for biocentric worldview at the end of the novel through the main character Selver, who at the beginning was the victim of anthropocentrism. But later Selver became rebellious and his revolution against anthropocentrism along with his people ends with the glimpse of biocentric worldview.

The title of the novel *The Word For World Is Forest* itself has the sense of ecological consciousness. Le Guin's using the word "forest" also proves the ecological

consciousness regarding human- nature relationship. Besides this Le Guin intensifies the wrong concept of anthropocentric vision dwelling in human mind.

Thus, this research in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Word For World Is Forest* advocates the biocentric advocacy over anthropocentric dominance. This study seeks to depict the human-nature relationship with ecological consciousness. The nature should be the first priority of human culture. The reconciliation between human-nature will bring better tomorrow. Human beings should be satisfied with the space nature has provided them. The harmonious relationship between nature and human is overthrown in the presence of fulfilling human needs guided by the blindspots of anthropocentrism which is the cause of disharmonious relation between nature and human. So, by undercutting the anthropocentric disposition the writer calls for biocentric worldview.

Works Cited

- Baggesen, Soren. "Utopian and Dystopian Pessimism: Le Guin's *The Word for World Is Forest* and Tiptree's *We Who Stole the Dream*". *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1987, pp. 34–43.
- Barbour, Douglas. "Wholeness and Balance in the Hainish Novels of Ursula K. Le Guin." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1974, pp. 164–173.
- Dean, John. "The Uses of Wilderness in American Science Fiction (Représentations De La Nature Sauvage Dans La S-F Américaine)." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1982, pp. 68–81.
- Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction:Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, Georgia UP, 1996, pp. xv-xxxvii.
- Joshi, Amma Raj. "Earth as Organism: An Environmentally Ethical Stand." *Reflections on Nature, Culture and Literature*, Molung Printers, 2011, pp. 21-28.
- Judi, Bari. "Revolutionary Ecology: Biocentrism & Deep Ecology". *Alarm: A Journal of Revolutionary Ecology*, Mendocina ECN, 1997, pp. 90-98.
- Leopold, Aldo. "The Land Ethic". *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*, Edited by Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston III, Blackwell, 2002, pp. 38-46.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Word For World Is Forest*. LLC, 1979.
- Plumwood, Val. "The Blindspots of Centrism and Human Self-enclousure". *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*, Routledge, 2002, pp. 97-122.
- Rueckert, William. "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". *Iowa Review*, 1978, pp. 105-121.
- Taylor, Paul W. *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, Princeton University, 1986.