

Tribhuvan University

Reciprocity between Land and Human Beings: Eco-poetic Reading of John

Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Willa Cather's *O Pioneers!*

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

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Jiblal Sapkota has completed his dissertation entitled “Reciprocity between Land and Human Beings: Ecopoetic Reading of John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* and Willa Cather’s *O Pioneers!*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from November 2011 to July 2012 and completed it successfully. I hereby recommend his dissertation be submitted for the final *Viva voce*.

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Letter of Approval

This dissertation entitled “Reciprocity between Land and Human Beings: Ecopoetic Reading of John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* and Willa Cather’s *O Pioneers!*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Jiblal Sapkota has been approved by the undersigned members of Research Committee.

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Abstract

The present dissertation examines *The Grapes of Wrath* and *O Pioneers!*, two American novels of which the former exemplifies that agrarianism maintains spatial conjunction of human beings to the land whereas corporate agribusiness imposes spatial disjunction of human beings to the land which dispossesses, alienates, dehumanizes and disenfranchises the poor migrant workers as mobile vagrants, while the latter one illustrates homesteading role in transforming the prairie land into an agricultural landscape maintaining its organicity through co-participation of land and human beings, in terms of reciprocity between land and human beings. After a meticulous study on both the novels in the light of various ecocritics on the reciprocity between land and human beings, it becomes clear that the destiny of human beings is intimately related to the destiny of land. The healthier the land community, the happier and more harmonious human survival is. The deterioration of land endangers the existence of human beings along with other species which inhabit the land. Association with the land makes human beings feel sense of protection, security and safety for surety. Working with the land, realizing its bio-rhythms energizes human beings. Seeing being in all biota of land community, internalizing unique intrinsic value of all beings and things, and respecting equal existence of all is the only way to assist in maintaining the ecological unified whole which helps to inter-animate the land and human beings and strengthens the bonding between them as one of respect and love. This research concludes that the dignity and identity of human beings is directly proportional to the dignity and identity of land community.

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