

## I. Theme of Ecological Web in Randall Jarrell's Writing

Randall Jarrell was a passionate advocate of poetry that met his high standards. His essays and reviews during the 1940s and 1950s greatly influenced readers' views of numerous writers, such as Walt Whitman and Robert Frost. Jarrell first became interested in poetry as a student at Vanderbilt University. He was born in 1914 at Nashville, Tennessee. He studied under writers John Crowe Ransom and Robert Penn Warren, who nurtured Jarrell's skills as both poet and a critic. After earning a graduate degree at Vanderbilt, Jarrell began a satisfying career as a professor of English literature at Kenyon College, a career interrupted only by the outbreak of World War II.

The war had a profound effect on Jarrell. As a member of United States Air Force, he witnessed human carnage firsthand, which inspired him to write with great rancor, pity, and drama about the evils of war. Jarrell also displayed great compassion in the portraits he wrote of people trapped in meaningless lives, exhibiting particular sensitivity to the victimization of women and children.

From 1956-1958, Jarrell worked as a consultant in poetry for the library of Congress. He had begun a new career as a children's book writer when a car struck and killed him on a dark road in October of 1965. He left behind nine books of poetry, four books of literary criticism, four children's books, five anthologies, a best selling academic novel, a translation of Goethe's *Faust*, part I and a translation of Chekov's *The Three Sisters*, produced on Broadway by The Actors' Studio.

Among many novels of Jarrell, *The Animal Family* has psychological dimensions. These dimensions make it superior to Jarrell's other three children's

books: *The Gingerbread Rabbit* (1964), *The Bat-Poet* (1964), and the posthumous *Fly by Night* (1976). Change and metamorphosis operate throughout the story. From the beginning, the Hunter is identified both with animals and with the mythical hunter Orion.

*The Animal Family* belongs to the second golden age of children's literature in the 1960's when editors encouraged successful adult writers to write books for children. In 1961, Michael di Capua, then a young junior editor at Macmillan, invited Jarrell to translate a few fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm and to write his own children's books. Published after two translations of fairy tales and two original books, *The Animal Family* received rave reviews from such writers P.L. Travers and John Updike. It was a Newbery Honor Book in 1966 and received the Lewis Carroll Shelf Award in 1970. The visual images conjured by the words were so compelling that Maurice Sendak restricted his work to decorations for the book, landscape settings with no figures present. The result is an exceptionally harmonious blend of text and illustrations.

A few critics mistakenly connect Jarrell's story to Hans Christian Andersen's lachrymose mermaid tale. For most readers and critics, however, *The Animal Family* is not only Jarrell's best children's book but also a modern classic still read in both hard-cover and paperback editions. It is often compared to Antoine de Saint-Expéry's *Le Petit Prince* (1943), another book for both children and adults. Jarrell's transformation of a stern folktale into a psychological fairy tale realizes the promise of the book's prefatory quotation from Rainer Maria Rilke. She says: "Say what you like, but such things do happen – not often, but they do happen"(2). Jarrell made such things possible.

Jarrell's *The Animal Family* deeply focuses on the question of web which itself means the issue of connection. The environment makes up a huge, enormously complex living machine that forms a thin dynamic layer on the earth's surface, and every human activity depends on the integrity and the proper functioning of this machine. Without the photosynthetic activity of green plants, there would be no oxygen for our engines, smelters, and furnaces, let alone support for human and animal life. Without the action of the plants, animals, and microorganisms that live in them, we could have no pure water in our lakes and rivers. Without the biological processes that have gone on in the soil for thousands of years, we would have neither food crops, oil nor coal. This machine is our biological capital, the basic apparatus on which our total productivity depends. If we destroy it, our most advanced technology will become useless and any economic and political system that depends on it will founder. The environmental crisis is a signal of this approaching catastrophe.

The global ecosystem is the product of several billion years of evolutionary change in the composition of the planet's skin. The earth is about 5.0 billion years old. How it was formed from the cloud of cosmic dust that produced the solar system is not yet clear. But we do know that the earth was at first a lifeless, rocky mass, bathed in an atmosphere consisting largely of water vapor, hydrogen gas, ammonia, and methane.

The basic events that, from this simple beginning, generated the complex skin of the earth, including its living inhabitants, are now fairly well known. A fundamental question concerns the origin of life. Living things are made up nearly exclusively of the same four elements – hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen – that comprised the earth's early atmosphere. But in living things these elements take on enormously complex molecular forms, constituting the class of organic compounds.

The basic feature of an organic compound is a connected array of carbon atoms, arranged in a straight or branched chain, or in rings. Built into this basic structure are the other major atoms – hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen (and, less frequently, additional ones such as sulfur, phosphorus, and various metals) in proportions and spatial arrangements that are characteristic of each specific organic compound. The resulting variety and complexity is staggering.

What process could convert the few simple molecules in the earth's early atmosphere into the monumentally complex, yet highly selected, assemblage of organic compounds that we now find in living things? For a long time it was believed that this accomplishment was the unique capability of living things. This would mean that life, in its full chemical competence, somehow appeared in a single, spontaneous event on the earth or came to the earth through space from some other source. According to this view, the origin of life must have preceded the appearance of organic chemicals on the earth.

We now know that the reverse is true and that organic compounds were derived from the simple ingredients of the earth's early atmosphere by non-living, geochemical processes – and themselves later gave rise to life. The geochemical origin of organic compounds has been imitated in the laboratory; a mixture of water, ammonia, and methane, exposed to ultraviolet light, an electric spark, or just heat, produces detectable amounts of such organic compounds as amino acids – which linked together become proteins. Ultraviolet light was readily available from solar radiation on the primitive earth's surface. There is now good reason to believe that under this influence the simple compounds of the earth's early atmosphere were gradually converted into a mixture of organic compounds. Thus, to use an image

favored by originator of this theory, Professor A.I. Oparin, there appeared on the earth a kind of organic soup.

It was within this soup that the first living things developed, two to three billion years ago. How that happened is a fascinating but poorly understood problem; fortunately we do know enough about the characteristics of the first forms of life to establish their dependence – and their effects – on the environment.

It now seems quite clear that the first forms of life were nourished by the ancient earth's organic soup. All living things require organic substances as food, which is the source of both the energy that drives them and their own substance. Oxygen was lacking in the early earth's atmosphere, so that the first living things must have derived energy from organic foods without combusting them with oxygen. This type of metabolism – fermentation – is the most primitive energy - yielding process in living things; it always produces carbon dioxide.

Being the product of several billion years of slow geochemical processes, the first living things became, in turn, powerful agents of geochemical change. To begin with, they rapidly depleted the earth's previously accumulated store of the organic products of geochemical evolution, for this was their food. Later the first photosynthetic organisms reconverted carbon dioxide into organic substances. Then, the rapid proliferation of green plants in the tropical temperature of the early earth deposited a huge mass of organic carbon, which became in time coal, oil and natural gas. And with the photosynthetic cleavage of the oxygen-containing water molecule, the earth acquired free oxygen in its atmosphere. Some of the oxygen was converted to ozone, an avid absorber of ultraviolet radiation. Now, for the first time, the earth's surface was shielded from solar ultraviolet radiation, a serious hazard to life. This event enabled life to emerge from the protection of its original underwater habitat.

With free oxygen now available, more efficient forms of living metabolism became possible and the great evolutionary outburst of plants and animals began to populate the planet. Meanwhile terrestrial plants and microorganisms helped to convert the earth's early rocks into soil and developed within it a remarkably complex system of interdependent living things. A similar system developed in surface waters. These systems control the composition of the soil, of surface waters, and the air, and consequently regulate the weather.

Survival – a property now so deeply associated with life – became possible because of timely evolutionary development: the emergence of the first photosynthetic organisms. These new organisms used sunlight to convert carbon dioxide and inorganic materials to fresh organic matter. This crucial event reconverted the first life-form's waste, carbon dioxide, into its food, organic compounds. It closed the loop and transformed what was a fatally linear process into a circular, self-perpetuating one. Since then the perpetuation of life on the earth has been linked to an essentially perpetual source of energy – the sun.

Here in its primitive form we see the grand scheme which has since been the basis of the remarkable continuity of life: the reciprocal interdependence of one life process on another; the mutual, interconnected development of the earth's life system and the non living constituents of the environment; the repeated transformation of the materials of life in great cycles, driven by the energy of the sun.

The result of this evolutionary history can be summarized in a series of propositions about the nature of life and its relation of the environment:

Living things, as a whole, emerged from the nonliving skin of the earth. Life is a very powerful form of chemistry, which, once on the earth, rapidly changed its surface. Every living thing is intimately dependent on its physical and chemical

surroundings, so that as these changed, new forms of life suited to new surroundings could emerge. Life begets life, so that once new forms appeared in a favorable environment, they could proliferate and spread until they occupied every suitable environmental niche within physical reach. Every living thing is dependent on many others, either indirectly through the physical and chemical features of the environment or directly for food or a sheltering place. Within every living thing on the earth, indeed within each of its individual cells, is contained another network – on its own scale, as complex as the environmental system made up of numerous, intricate molecules, elaborately interconnected by chemical reactions, on which the life-properties of the whole organism depend.

Jarrell, in *The Animal Family*, has sketched typical characters including human beings and animals responding to their difficult activities of life. In dealing with their activities of life, Jarrell has an implicit motive. By using the elements of ecological theory, he shows the human-animal relationship depicting the interconnection between his characters: The Hunter, The Mermaid, The Bear, The Lynx, and The Boy. The interconnection has its relationship regarding food web, different activities of life, interconnection between terrestrial ecosystem and ocean ecosystem, human's domination over animals, and pollution.

Concerning the novel's interpretation, various critics have interpreted it from different angles – interpretation on the narrative part of the novel, the thematic quality, and psychological study of the novel accepting it as a children's book. Jarrell's children books are psychological for many critics because of the presence of autobiographical elements. In this regard, Hugh T. Keenan writes:

*The Animal Family* is an autobiographical fantasy, a twist on a familiar folktale, and a sensitive, subtle psychological story of human

maturation based on Jarrell's study of psychology. Many of the story's details are drawn from Jarrell's own life. The setting is California coast of his wife, Mary, whom he called his mermaid. According to a letter to her in 1951, the story began as ideas for a poem to be called "The Poet-Cook." The furnishings of the log cabin are from the couple's North Carolina home. The astute descriptions of the bear and the lynx are a result of the couple's frequent visits to the Washington Zoo while Jarrell was a poetry consultant at the Library of Congress. The story also reflects deep psychological details of the author's life, such as the trauma of his parents' early divorce. (15)

Jarrell's autobiographical novel *The Animal Family* basically provides the details of his childhood experiences in which he relates his parents as well as many other details related to his life.

Despite the fact that the novel is a psychological one, many literary critics accumulate their attention on the novel's quality as a fairy tale. In the course of describing this novel as a fairy tale, P.L. Travers posits that as a fairy tale, the story gives a positive, comic twist to the familiar tragic Scottish love story of the selkie and the fisherman (12). He further says:

Unlike that tricked but dutiful mermaid, the seal wife in Jarrell's fairy tale retains her shape and freedom while choosing to remain on land. The story never spoils the fantasy by having the mermaid give birth or even describing how she is able to move about on land given her seal shape. In moments of crisis, the hunter picks her up and carries her. Like a true sea creature, she proves an inept cook and housewife on land, but the hunter cheerfully takes over most of these chores. (15)



Travers's view of the novel as a fairy tale can be joined with the ecological theory of interconnection between human and animal because of the fact that the relation between the Hunter and the Mermaid is stated relying on the concept of land ecosystem and ocean ecosystem which are connected to each other.

The description of the environment itself signifies the importance of interconnection. Human beings along with animals need companion of their own kind, but in such condition in which there is the absence of companion of one's own kind, then it becomes an obligation to choose a companion of different kind – the finding of the Mermaid as a wife by the Hunter. In this regard, we can see the following extract from *The Animal Family*:

In spring the meadow that ran down from the cliff to the beach was all foam-white and sea-blue with flowers; the hunter looked at it and it was beautiful. But when he came home there was no one to tell what he had seen – and if he picked the flowers and brought them home in his hands, there was no one to give them to. And when at evening, past the dark blue shape of a far-off island, the sun sank under the edge of the sea like a red world vanishing, the hunter saw it all, but there was no one to tell what he had seen. (8)

Nature alone cannot satisfy the need of human beings; they need love and response from a living being whether it may be human or animal. Thus, Jarrell's novel *The Animal Family* is concerned with the concept of web or connection in which he has presented the ecological consciousness regarding human-animal relationship depicting the typical characters: the Hunter, the Mermaid, the Bear, the Lynx and the Boy.

In this context, Jarrell's *The Animal Family* has been widely studied from different perspectives. The present study, however, will attempt to study the novel from ecological perspectives to show the ecological consciousness in his novel. In order to facilitate the textual analysis, the present study will adopt ecocriticism as its methodology. This study will seek to prove that the depiction of human-animal relationship throughout the novel has been carried out implicitly with an ecological consciousness.

## II. Ecocriticism: The Study of Human and Nature Interconnection in Literature

Ecocriticism was a term coined in the late 1970s by combining criticism with a shortened form of ecology – the science that investigates the interrelations of all forms of plant and animal life with each other and with their physical habitats. Ecocriticism (or by an alternative name, environmental criticism) designates the critical writings which explore the relations between literature and the biological and physical environment, conducted with an acute awareness of the devastation being wrought on that environment by human activities.

Representations of the natural environment are as old as recorded literature, and were prominent in the account of the Garden of Eden in the Hebrew Bible, as well as in the pastoral form inaugurated by the Greek Theocritus in the third century B.C. and later imitated by the Roman poet Virgil – an idealized depiction of rural life, viewed as a survival of the simplicity, peace, and harmony that has been lost by a complex and urban society. The nostalgic view of a return to unspoiled nature in order to restore a lost simplicity and concord remained evident in James Thomson's long poem in blank-verse *The Seasons* (1726-30), and in the widely practiced genre called nature writing: the intimate, realistic, and detailed description in prose of the natural environment, rendered as it appears to the distinctive sensibility of the author. This literary form was largely initiated in England by Gilbert White's enormously popular *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* (1789) – his close and affectionate observations of wildlife and the natural setting in a particular area of rural England. In America, an early instance of nature writing William Bertram's *Travels through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida* (1791); among its successors was the classic of this genre, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854). By the mid-nineteenth century Thoreau and other writers in America and England were already drawing attention to the

threats in the environment by urbanization and industrialization. Later in the century, in creation of nature led to what came to be called the environmental movement to preserve what remained of the American wilderness; the most noted advocates were the American writers John Burroughs (1837-1921) and John Muir (1837-1914).

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

What then is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a genderconscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies.

(xix)

Glotfelty goes on to specify some of the questions ecocritics ask, ranging from "How is nature represented in this sonnet?" through "How has the concept of wilderness changed over time?" to "How is science itself open to literary analysis?" and finally "What cross-fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics?"

Ecocriticism is, then, an avowedly political mode of analysis, as the comparison with feminism and Marxism suggests. Ecocritics generally tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a green moral and political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in

philosophy and political theory. Developing the insights of earlier critical movements, ecofeminists, social ecologists, and environmental justice advocates seek a synthesis of environmental and social concerns.

It is worth noting also that the questions posed by ecocriticism in Glotfelty's account follow a clear trajectory; the first question, for example, is very narrow and literary, tending to favor the student of Romantic verse. Thus, two of the most important works of ecocriticism in the 1990s were studies of Wordsworth and Shelley (Bate 1991 and Kroeber 1994). The questions grow in scope as the list continues, with several of the later ones suggesting gargantuan interdisciplinary studies such as Simon Schama's *Landscape and Memory* (1995).

Richard Kerridge's definition in the mainly British *Writing the Environment* (1998), like Glotfelty's, a broad cultural ecocriticism, suggests:

The ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces.

Most of all, ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis. (5)

We will have reason to question the monolithic conception of environmental crisis implied here, and perhaps to resist the evaluation of texts and ideas against a seemingly secure ecological yardstick: both as a science and as a socio-political movement, ecology itself is shifting and contested. However, the emphasis on the moral and political orientation of the ecocritic and the broad specification of the field of study are essential.

From the point of view of academics, ecocriticism is dominated by the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE), a professional

association that started in America but now has significant branches in the UK and Japan. It organizes regular conferences and publishes a journal that includes literary analysis, creative writing and articles on environmental education and activism. Many early works of ecocriticism were characterized by an exclusive interest in Romantic poetry, wilderness narrative, and nature writing, but in the last few years ASLE has turned towards a more general cultural ecocriticism, with studies of popular scientific writing, film, TV, art, architecture, and other cultural artifacts such as theme parks, zoos, and shopping malls.

As ecocritics seek to offer a truly transformative discourse, enabling us to analyze and criticize the world in which we live, attention is increasingly given to the broad range of cultural processes and products in which, and through which, the complex negotiations of nature and culture take place. Indeed, the widest definition of the subject of ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of human and the non-human throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term human itself.

Ecocriticism is unique amongst contemporary literary and cultural theories because of its close relationship with the science of ecology. Ecocritics may not be qualified to contribute to debates about problems in ecology, but they must nevertheless transgress disciplinary boundaries and develop their own ecological literacy as far as possible.

It may seem obvious that ecological problems are scientific problems rather than objects of cultural analysis. Indeed, when *Silent Spring* was published the agro-chemical industry reacted by criticizing the book for its literary qualities, which, they implied, could not coexist with the appropriate scientific rigor. Would we not be recapitulating the propaganda published by the pesticide producers if we read

Carson's book using literary-critical tools? John Passmore has proposed a distinction that may help to negotiate the problem. Problems in ecology, he maintains, are properly scientific issues, to be resolved by the formulation and testing of hypotheses in ecological experiments, while "ecological problems" are "features of our society, arising out of our dealings with nature, from which we should like to free ourselves, and which we do not regard as inevitable consequences of what is good in that society" (1974:44). To describe something as an ecological problem is to make a normative claim about how we would wish things to be, and while this arises out of the claims of ecological scientists, it is not defined by them. A weed is not a kind of plant, only the wrong kind in the wrong place.

Eliminating weeds is obviously a problem in gardening, but defining weeds in the first place requires a cultural, not horticultural, analysis. Likewise pollution is an ecological problem because it does not name a substance or class of substances, but rather represents an implicit normative claim that too much of something is present in the environment, usually in the wrong place. Carson had to investigate a problem in ecology, with the help of wildlife biologists and environmental toxicologists, in order to show that DDT was present in the environment in amounts toxic to wildlife, but *Silent Spring* undertook cultural not scientific work when it strove to argue the moral case that it ought not to be. The great achievement of the book was to turn a (scientific) problem in ecology into a widely perceived ecological problem that was then contested politically, legally, and in the media and popular culture. Thus ecocriticism cannot contribute much to debates about problems in ecology, but it can help to define, explore and even resolve ecological problems in this wider sense.

One ecocritical way of reading is to see contributions to environmental debates as examples of rhetoric. It is already suggested that Carson deploys both

pastoral imagery and apocalyptic rhetoric, and will return to these subjects, but there are many other applications of formal rhetorical analysis. For example, Ralph Lutts has attempted to account for the impact of *Silent Spring* by drawing attention to the underlying analogy Carson uses between pesticide pollution and another kind of pollution that was strong in popular consciousness in 1962. In this regard, he writes:

She was sounding an alarm about a kind of pollution that was invisible to the senses; could be transported great distances, perhaps globally; could accumulate over time in body tissues; could produce chronic, as well as acute, poisoning; and could result in cancer, birth defects, and genetic mutations that may not become evident until years or decades after exposure. Government officials, she also argued, were not taking the steps necessary to control this pollution and protect the public.

Chemical pesticides were not the only form of the pollution fitting this description. Another form, far better known to the public at the time, was radioactive fallout. Pesticides could be understood as another form of fallout. (19)

So Carson combined ancient ways of imagining a threat derived from fallout hysteria, with a view to establishing particular normative claims about pollution. Detailed rhetorical analysis shows how *Silent Spring* is constructed in order to achieve certain political results: not only the concrete measures described in the final chapter, but also a subtle revision of the concept of pollution itself.

Environmentalism is relatively young as a social, political, and philosophical movement, but already a number of distinct eco-philosophies have emerged that seem as likely to compete with each other as to combine in any revolutionary synthesis. Each approach understands environmental crisis in its own way, emphasizing aspects



that are either amenable to solution in terms that it supplies or threatening to values it holds most dear, thus suggesting a range of political possibilities. Each one, moreover, might provide the basis for a distinct ecocritical approach with specific literary or cultural affinities and aversions.

Since the Romantic movement's poetic responses to the Industrial Revolution, pastoral has decisively shaped our constructions of nature. Even the science of ecology may have been shaped by pastoral in its early stages of development and we have seen that the founding text of ecocriticism, *Silent Spring*, drew on the pastoral tradition. No other trope is so deeply entrenched in western culture, or so deeply problematic for environmentalism. With its roots in the classical period, pastoral has shown itself to be infinitely malleable for differing political ends, and potentially harmful in its tensions and evasions. However, its long history and cultural ubiquity mean that the pastoral trope must and will remain a key concern for ecocritics.

What then is this pastoral tradition, and what is its significance for environmentalism? Terry Gifford distinguishes three kinds of pastoral: the specifically literary tradition, involving a retreat from the city to the countryside, that originates in ancient Alexandria and becomes a key poetic form in Europe during the Renaissance; more generally, "any literature that describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban" (1992:2); and the pejorative sense in which pastoral implies an idealization of rural life that obscures the realities of labor and hardship.

The first of Gifford's kinds can be called classical pastoral, which can be taken to include all pastoral literature up until the eighteenth century. Classical pastoral precedes the perception of general crisis in human ecology by thousands of years, but it provides the pre-existing set of literary conventions and cultural assumptions that

have been crucially transformed to provide a way for Europeans and Euro-Americans to construct their landscapes. Gifford's contrast of country and city comes to the fore in Romantic pastoral, at a time when mass urbanization made these contrasts relevant to many more people than ever before. The later popularization of Romantic poetry has provided the language, imagery, and even locations for the subsequent generalization of pastoral in such diverse cultural forms as the novel, TV or promotional materials for conservation organizations. Modern advertisements for wholewheat bread featuring idyllic, rolling fields of grain in the sunshine, populated by ruddy farmers and backed by classical music, would offer one example. Gifford's third pejorative sense of the world emerges especially in Marxist critiques of Romanticism, which provide a useful ground for contrast of this tradition in cultural criticism with ecocriticism. Some ecocritics claim, for instance, that the emergent environmental sensibility of Romantic pastoral suggests a kind of radicalism not recognized by anthropocentric political critics. Derivations from the Romantic model of course depend on the contexts in which they have developed, and American pastoral has followed its own distinct trajectory as a response to an environmental and social history very different from that of Britain.

The idea of wilderness, signifying nature in a state uncontaminated by civilization, is the most potent construction of nature available to New World environmentalism. It is a construction mobilized to protect particular habitats and species, and is seen as a place for the reinvigoration of those tired of the moral and material pollution of the city. Wilderness has an almost sacramental value: it holds out the promise of a renewed, authentic relation of humanity and the earth, a post-Christian covenant, found in a space of purity, founded in an attitude of reverence and humility. The wilderness question is also central to ecocriticism's challenge to the

status quo of literary and cultural studies, in that it does not share the predominantly social concerns of the traditional humanities. Unlike postoral, the concept of wilderness only came to cultural prominence in the eighteenth century, and the wilderness texts discussed by ecocritics are mainly non-fictional nature writing, almost entirely neglected by other critics. Much work in this area might easily count as intellectual history or philosophy, thus stretching the bounds of traditional literary criticism.

Wilderness narratives share the motif of scape and return with the typical pastoral narratives, but the construction of nature they propose and reinforce is fundamentally different. If pastoral is the distinctive Old World construction of nature, suited to long-settled and domesticated landscapes, wilderness fits the settler experience in the New Worlds – particularly the United States, Canada, and Australia – with their apparently untamed landscapes and the sharp distinction between the forces of culture and nature. Yet settler cultures crossed the oceans with their preconceptions intact, so the nature they encountered was inevitably shaped by the histories they often sought to leave behind. To understand current conceptions of wilderness, then, we must explore the Old World history of wilderness. Nor can we take for granted the politics of the wild: for many critics, after all, the wildness we should seek is epitomized in the American West, which was assumed to be an untrammelled realm to which the Euro-American has a manifest right.

William Cronon has identified otherness as part of the trouble with wilderness. Promoting a more skeptical, less pious ecocritical perspective, Cronon argues that wilderness "quietly expresses and reproduces the very values its devotees seek to reject" (1996:80). This construction of alienated urbanites, who buy the works of

Muir and followers but seldom attempt to emulate him, sets up a sacred ideal. He further asserts:

Wilderness is the natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization that has lost its soul. It is a place of freedom in which we can recover our true selves we have lost to the corrupting influences of our artificial lives. Most of all, it is the ultimate landscape of authenticity. (81)

This vision has pernicious consequences for our conceptions of nature and ourselves since it suggests that nature is only authentic if we are entirely absent from it. Such purity is often achieved at the cost of an elimination of human history every bit as thorough as that undertaken by pastoral literature. In the case of Yosemite, this myth of an uninhabited wilderness meant that both the Ahwahneeche Indians and the white miners who had lived and worked there were expelled.

The tropes that have been examined so far contribute to the ways in which we understand nature, but from an ecocritical perspective they are all faulty in one respect: none suggests a mode of practical existence as an immediate reality. Pastoral and wilderness tropes typically imply the perspective of the aesthetic tourist, while the apocalypse encodes the vision of a prophetic imagination. However, other literatures explore the possibility of coming to dwell on the earth in a relation of duty and responsibility. Dwelling is not a transient state; rather, it implies the long-term imbrication of humans in a landscape of memory, ancestry and death, of ritual, life, and work.

Wendell Berry's locus of literal and figural value is land, and more specifically soil. In *The Work of Local Culture*, Berry recalls the story of a bucket left hanging from a tree by his father's black laborers. Over a span of some fifty years, it has

accumulated falling leaves, insects, and bird droppings, beginning gradually to make soil. Its literal significance for Berry is that production and maintenance of soil fertility is the most basic duty of a human community. Metaphorically "It collects stories, too, as they fall through time" (1980: 154). These two fields of meaning do not just coincide in the bucket accidentally, however. He also says:

A human community, too, must collect leaves and stories, and turn them to account. I must build soil, and build that memory of itself [. . .] that will be its culture. These two kinds of accumulation, of local soil and local culture, are intimately related. So, there is a story relation in between these two things. (154)

To be fully human, then, is to be a part of such a community. More ominously, the reverse is logically true too: not to belong to such a community is to be less than human, although one might say so either as a lament or an indictment. While it is not impossible to imagine an urban equivalent of Berry's neo-Jeffersonian Utopia, it is somewhat easier to imagine escapees from oppressive rural communities, be they female, black, gay, Jewish, short on piety or keen on anonymity, wanting none of it.

The study of the relations between animals and humans in the Humanities is split between philosophical consideration of animal rights and cultural analysis of the representation of animals. A remarkably recent phenomenon, it derived impetus primarily from Peter Singer's revolutionary *Animal Liberation* (1975), which examined an issue until then discussed in passing by moral philosophers but seldom fully explored.

Singer drew upon arguments first put forward by Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), who suggested that cruelty to animals was analogous to slavery and claimed that the capacity to feel pain, not the power of reason, entitled

a being to moral consideration. Singer gives the label speciesism to the irrational prejudice that Bentham identifies as the basis of our different treatment of animals and humans. Just as, say, women or Africans have been mistreated on the grounds of morally irrelevant physiological differences, so animals suffer because they fall on the wrong side of a supposedly insuperable line (cited in Singer 1983:8) dividing beings that count from those that do not. Yet it turns out to be impossible to draw that line in such a way that all animals are excluded and all humans are included, even if we turn, as many have done, to the faculties of reason or discourse: for Bentham "a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or week or even a month old" (1983:8). The boundary between human and animal is arbitrary and, moreover, irrelevant, since we share with animals a capacity for suffering that only the hand of tyranny could ignore.

Mary Midgley, whose book *Animals and Why They Matter* (1983) remains an excellent introduction to animal welfarism. She qualifies the principle of equality, arguing that we are sometimes right to prefer the interests of our human kin, and criticizes Singer's analogy of racism and speciesism.

Overlooking somebody's race is entirely sensible. Overlooking their species is a supercilious insult. It is no privilege, but a misfortune, for a gorilla or a chimpanzee to be removed from its forest and its relatives and brought up alone among humans to be given what those humans regard as an education. (99)

At the same time, she explores the concept of anthropomorphism. It is worth noting here that the few who oppose the liberationist stance on factory farming on philosophical, not economic, grounds (e.g. Leahy 1994) have criticized anthropomorphism, arguing that we mistakenly ascribe human attributes, such as our

own desire for freedom, to the animals involved. Midgley looks back to the origins of the term, which was first applied to the false attribution of human shape and qualities to God.

In broad outline, these are the environmental cycles which govern the behavior of the three great global systems: the air, the water, and the soil. Within each of them live many thousands of different species of living things. Each species is suited to its particular environmental niche, and each through its life processes, affects the physical and chemical properties of its immediate environment.

Each living species is also linked to many others. These links are bewildering in their variety and marvelous in their intricate detail. An animal, such as a deer, may depend on plants for food; the plants depend on the action of soil bacteria for their nutrients; the bacteria in turn live on the organic wastes dropped by the animals on the soil. At the same time, the deer is food for the mountain lion. Insects may live on the juices of plants or gather pollen from their flowers. Other insects suck blood from animals. Bacteria may live on the internal tissues of animals and plants. Fungi degrade the bodies of dead plants and animals. All this, many times multiplied and organized species by species in intricate, precise relationships, makes up the vast network of life on the earth.

The science that studies these relationships and the processes linking each living thing to the physical and chemical environment is ecology. It is the science of planetary housekeeping. For the environment is, so to speak, the house created on the earth by living things for living things. It is a young science and much of what it teaches has been learned from only small segments of the whole network of life on the earth. Ecology has not yet explicitly developed the kind of cohesive, simplifying generalizations exemplified by, say, the laws of physics. Nevertheless there are a

number of generalizations that are already evident in what we now know about the ecosphere and that can be organized into a kind of informal set of laws of ecology. Barry Commoner in his famous book *The Closing Circle* formulates four laws of ecology. He says: "Everything is connected to everything else; everything must go somewhere; nature knows best; and there is no such thing as a free lunch" (33). Thus, interconnection between human and animal also comes under these four laws of ecology.

Finally, ecocriticism, the recent literary theory sees literary creation and its engagement or interconnection to the relationship between the physical world and human world. The theory as in disciplinary modality seeks its approximation not only to the nature writing but also to the different genres of literature, philosophy, language, culture, etc. Its emphasis goes on to the landscape and entire natural ingredients surrounding the human world. In a very fascinating way, it defines the concept of web – a network of interconnection.

The research focuses on the novel *The Animal Family* by Randall Jarrell which reinforces the organic vision and connectedness of human and animal that can be considered as ecological consciousness. The essential tropes regarding ecocriticism such as pollution, pastoral, wilderness, dwelling, and animals have been briefly analyzed so as to facilitate in the definition of ecocriticism from different perspectives.



### III. Jarrell's Views Towards World's Organism in *The Animal Family*

Since time immemorial when the human beings started acquiring knowledge, they thought that they were supreme in comparison to the animals. However, the theory of organism considers each and every organism as the essential part of nature. Human beings, now-a-days, are in the term to disturb the chain of world's organism. Jarrell, in the novel *The Animal Family*, deliberately focuses on this fact reflecting his ecological consciousness. Concentrating on his views on human beings he creates a family comprised of both humans and animals in which he depicts the positive as well as the negative aspects of human beings. Nevertheless, he seems to accept some of the hegemonic sides of human beings regarding their supremacy over animals; yet, these can be justified or neutralized by his eagerness to keep on with his positive and sympathetic views on animals throughout the novel. Thus, Jarrell stands on double grounds balancing his judgment on animals' side. His views on human beings can be seen as negative relying on the fact that man is the disturber of the chain of world's organism, which implies a critique of human's behavior:

The hunter, a big brown-faced man with fair hair and a fair beard, wore trousers and a shirt and shoes of creamy deerskin; his silvery gray cloak was made of the hide of a mountain lion; and the cap he wore when it rained or snowed was the skin of a sea-otter. Over the fireplace hung a big brass hunting horn he had found in a wreck the waves washed ashore. He had carved some of the logs of the walls and some of the planks of the chairs into foxes and seals, a lynx and a mountain lion. (6)

Jarrell goes on to specify some of the positive and negative sides of the hunter: describing the hunter as a big brown-faced man with fair hair and a fair beard as

positive side; and the narration that the hunter wore trousers and a shirt and shoes of creamy deerskin, his cloak made of the hide of a mountain lion, and his cap made of the skin of a sea-otter as negative sides. Moreover, the mentioning of a big brass hunting horn hanging over the fireplace indicates the hunter's power over the helpless animals. Animals are objectified by the hunter so that he can make any kind of instrument or tool he likes. This fact itself proves the supremacy of the hunter over the animals. Jarrell's purpose in putting forward this type of narration is to show the relationship between the human and animal as a relation of imbalance. Despite the fact that the hunter imposes his human power over the animals he is also unable to live a happy life without the presence of the animals; so, the hunter has carved some of the logs of the walls and some of the planks of the chairs into foxes and seals, a lynx, and a mountain lion.

Barry Commoner grounds a kind of interconnection or web in which "Everything is connected to everything else" (33). This ecological truth has to do with Jarrell's views on human and animal. Although there is prevailing an imbalanced relation between human and animal, no one can deny that there is a kind of web in between them. Realization of this fact from Jarrell's side has become an obvious fact throughout the novel. The hunter cannot live happily unless and until he gets supports from the mermaid, the heroine of the novel. Not only this, he also seeks supports from rest of the characters of the novel: the bear, the lynx, and the boy. The loneliness of the hunter has been narrated as:

[. . .] when he came home there was no one to tell what he had seen – and if he picked the flowers and brought them home in his hands, there was no one to give them to. And when at evening, past the dark blue shape of a far-off island, the sun sank under the edge of the sea like a

red world vanishing, the hunter saw it all, but there was no one to tell what he had seen. (8)

In the ensuing paragraphs, the need of companion is emphasized from the hunter's side. His loneliness has been linked to the importance of interconnection – whether this may be of same species or of one species to another. There is a connection between one living thing to another living thing and also between living thing and non living thing. This chain of cycle of interconnection has direct influence between one living thing and another living thing, whereas there is an indirect influence between one non living thing and another living thing. This fact can be seen in the loneliness of the hunter; although he can see flowers, the sea, the far-off island, and the sun, he is feeling a kind of lacking within himself. The main lacking within himself is friendliness. Thus, there is a mutual relationship between interconnectedness, and friendliness. Jarrell's narration of the hunter's loneliness also emphasizes on the realization of ecological consciousness regarding interconnection – the relationship between human and animal – from the author's side.

The prevailing loneliness due to the lacking of supports and companionship has the hope of getting support and company as soon as the hunter hears someone singing – the singer is the mermaid, the female protagonist of the novel. Although she is not of mankind, the rope of interconnection or web binds her with the hunter. She lives under the sea, whereas the hunter is a terrestrial creature; yet, there is a sense of interconnection. The mermaid sings for him, in turn, the hunter sings for her. Thus, there is the blending of interconnection. Focusing on the relationship between human and animal, Jarrell narrates as:

The hunter had lived so long with animals that he himself was a patient as an animal [. . .] He Kept remembering how the laugh and the last

notes of the song had sounded. When he was so nearly asleep that he could hardly tell whether he was remembering them or hearing them, he was still certain that she would be back – after he was fast asleep, neither thinking nor dreaming, he still smiled. (14-15)

In discussing the relationship between human and animal, Greg Garrard notes, "Humans can both be and be compared to animals. There is, therefore, an extensive rhetoric of animality" (140). The hunter's long living with the animals makes himself as an animal. He is so connected with animals that sometimes he even forgets that he is a human. The song of the mermaid brings him closer to the animal's world of which he himself becomes one of the members. Becoming one of the members of the animal's world, the hunter becomes so happy that he cannot remain without smiling. This smiling has the sense of animality.

One of Jarrell's major contributions to ecological consciousness is his elaboration of the mermaid's ability of making human language; on the other side, the hunter is shown less efficient than the mermaid. Here, Jarrell deliberately makes the hunter unable to produce the mermaid's language efficiently just only to show us that animals are no less efficient than we the human beings. He wants to stress on the liberation of animals so that animals, too, are accepted as the essential part of world's organism by the human beings of the world. Jarrell's effort on the efficiency of animals in doing anything that is considered to be able of human beings' intelligence only can be seen as:

But she could say his sounds so much better than he could remember hers, that before long the learning was all one way. The hunter said her worlds awkwardly and ruefully, like something learned too late; but she said his like an old magician learning a new trick, a trick almost

too easy for her to need to learn. The hunter said to her, bewildered:

"You never make mistakes." (16-17)

In the ensuing paragraphs, emphasis has been laid on the mermaid's efficiency of producing human language or the language of the hunter. Psychologically, Jarrell puts his attention on human beings' nature of making mistake despite of their so-called intelligence. When the hunter accepts that the mermaid never makes mistakes, it means that Jarrell is focusing on human beings' pretension of marking mistake to be of animals' quality. The truth is that mistakes are deliberately done by human beings. Animals never pretend themselves of what they are unable to do. They do have a static nature of their own. Their mistakes are not to be considered as mistakes because of the fact that they are guided by the law of world's organism.

Jarrell also pours his ecological consciousness in showing the difference between land and sea creatures. In this regard, the mermaid says:

The sea-people, like me, are afraid of land. Not me, Oh, not me! They think I – " here she hesitated, and then said triumphantly – "make mistakes. Make bad mistakes. They say, all good comes from the sea."

She struck the water with a cheerful, scornful hand. She also said, "The land is new. You have legs, I have not legs. The moon is white, the sky is black." (18-19)

In discussing the distinctions between humans and animals, Greg Garrard notes, "Liberationist criticism typically attempts to undermine the moral and legal distinctions between humans and animals." Similarly, concentrating on the concept of ecology, Jarrell shows the distinctions between land ecosystem and ocean ecosystem by considering the hunter as the creature of land and the mermaid as the typical creature of sea. Although the mermaid is a fabulous creature, an attempt has been

made to represent the sea ecosystem through it. Ecologically, terrestrial ecosystem and ocean ecosystem are distinguished on the basis of food chain or food web.

Fantastically, Jarrell tries to indicate his ecological consciousness considering the mermaid as an animal of sea which has different features in comparison to the land creature, the hunter. Thus, the mermaid finds the land as new and different.

The hunter is shown as a killer. Killing any creature is the pleasure of his life. Now, what we can see is that the hunter represents all the humans of the world. We are trespassing from one ecosystem to another forgetting that it brings a massive devastation and problem in every ecosystem, as in this narration a killing attitude takes place:

But usually whatever the hunter did or said had for the mermaid the glamor of land. She loved it when he shot for her, and would run her hand along the dark bow and white feathery arrow, as she tugged at an arrow shot into driftwood from across the beach, she said admiringly. "I think you could kill anything." One day the hunter was sitting fishing; she swam up and said in a pleased, puzzled voice – she loved learning about things – "what are you doing?" The hunter replied, "Fishing." (24-25)

The mermaid has its own way of fishing; this is an acceptable activity of a sea creature. On the other hand, the hunter, although he is fishing for the mermaid to make her happy, is an unacceptable activity. Making happy to the mermaid as a husband may indicate the good relationship between them, but killing one creature for the pleasure of another cannot be acceptable. Ecologically, the same consciousness has been depicted by Jarrell while delivering his view on the attitude of human – a

killer by instinct. Killing of one animal by another for food is the law of nature; this is done for good. Humans must not trespass animals' boundary.

Jarrell's purpose of creating the animal family in this novel is to bring peace and harmony in between human and animal. This also means enlarging a balanced relation in between them so that each and every individual of each kind maintains its own function for the swift-running of the world's organism. Reinforcing the concept of interconnection, Jarrell links togetherness with interconnection. He narrates:

By now the mermaid and the hunter were spending most of their time together. His house got to have a random half-lived-in-look, and he hunted mechanically, for the next meal or two. The mermaid was used to the meadow, now; he and she would sit on the tan fall grass, looking out over the seal rocks to the island, and she would say triumphantly: "I am a hundred and fifty steps from the ocean. A hundred and fifty of your steps from the ocean!" (27)

So far as the living together of the hunter and the mermaid is concerned, it is togetherness in between them that adds bricks on the foundation of interconnection. Because of interconnection there is attraction than repulsion among/between humans and animals; although, there is a vast difference. Thus, Jarrell emphasizes on peace and harmony which can be brought by a balanced relation between human and animal.

The key to understanding such a network is to find the ways in which each part depends on the rest. For example, in the case of the aquatic ecosystem we know that fish depend on algae for food, the production of organic waste depends on fish, the production of inorganic nutrients depends on the organic wastes, and algae depend for their growth on inorganic nutrients. Such a cycle of dependencies is a useful way

to think about the behavior of the whole. In the same way, we can seek relationships which link a series of human activities to the ecosystem on which they depend and which they in turn affect.

To elucidate the interaction of man and his habitat, we must seek out, then, among all these human activities, those which form a sequence that enables us to return to our starting point, the ecosphere. Such a singular choice is, of course, arbitrary. For nearly everything that people imagine or do can influence their attitude toward the world in which they live, and their action on it. The hunter, the mermaid, the bear, the lynx, and the boy in the novel have an interaction of dependencies. While narrating the novel, although in a fantastic way, Jarrell seeks to combine the relationship of dependency. At the beginning, the hunter depends on the mermaid, and, in turn, the mermaid depends on the hunter. Jarrell does not say directly whether the coming out of the mermaid from her habitat, the sea, is a mistake or not. In reinforcing this, he narrates: "Mistake or not, the mermaid had made it: that fall she went into the house with the table and the bed, and from then on the sea people saw her only as a visitor from the land that was 'so – so – ' whatever it was" (28).

It now seems, however, that Jarrell's view on the foodweb regarding the terrestrial ecosystem and ocean ecosystem does not directly coincide with the ecosystem prescribed by ecology. Yet, some resemblances are carried on so that the characters of the novel can be sketched along with their own forms of food webs. Some of the foods of one character may overlap with the other character, despite of the fact that there are varieties of characters including human and animal. This can be clarified by the following narration:

She loved the look of the fire, but she hated anything cooked over it – she ate nothing but raw fish, fish she herself had swum after and



caught. (When one was particularly appetizing she couldn't resist offering the hunter a bite. "It's so good when you don't burn it in fire, " she would say.) She helped the hunter with the cooking as a husband helps his wife: when he had gone out to hunt and had left something to stew, she would take the pot off the fire. (36-37)

It is a known fact that we human beings like to eat cooked food, whereas the animals which belong to the aquatic habitat do not eat cooked food. Bigger fish eat smaller fish; likewise, the mermaid eats raw fish which she has caught herself. It is, now, clear from this that each and every individual of any ecosystem searches its own kind of food to sustain its life. Nevertheless, fish is the common food for both of the animals and humans. How to eat it is a matter of the system of ecosystem. Jarrell's mentioning of the fire can be related to the concept of pollution. It is from the man-made fire that smoke in the form of carbon monoxide spreads on the surface of the ecosphere which brings pollution that is detrimental to the health of the living things including both plants and animals. Human being, too, comes under animals; thus, there is an acute connection and interaction between human and animal.

Regarding food web, Jarrell emphasizes on the concept of dependency and interaction among animals. Everything depends on everything else, ecologically. This also brings check and balance in the ecosystem so that it adds an energy to the world's organism. Jarrell, devotedly, relies on this concept to focus his views on world's organism. Emphasizing on the mermaids relation among other strong killers, Jarrell narrates:

The only things the mermaid was afraid of were big sharks and killer whales, "They kill us if they catch us," she told him. But she was afraid of them in a matter-of-fact, indifferent way, and said that none of her

people really thought about them or hated them. "Why should we?" she said. "They eat us the way we eat fish. The fish don't hate us. They swim next to us when they know we're not hungry, and when we're hungry they get away from us if they can. Everything lives on everything." (52-53)

There is a hierarchical relationships of dependency among the animals. Every bigger and larger has the right to kill every smaller one. This is a natural law. The mermaid has the right and positive view of the larger animals than itself as well as the same view of the smaller animals in comparison to it. What is clear from here is that the mermaid has no any enmity with the larger animals that can kill it and the smaller animals that it can kill for its survival. Survival of the fittest, a biological theory propounded by Darwin, has the same notion about the relation of bigger animals with the smaller ones – capable or incapable animals.

The contrasts between the hunter and the mermaid are numerous; yet, both of them feel exactly alike. It is possible because of a kind of force of attraction between two members of world's organism. Both of them are so connected to each other that it is impossible for them to depart from each other; the bond between them is too much stronger. Stressing on this fact, Jarrell narrates: "The hunter and the mermaid were so different from each other that it seemed to them, finally, that they were exactly alike; and they lived together and were happy" (54).

After the finding of a new member of the family, that is, the bear as a son of both of the hunter and the mermaid, they become happy. However, the hunter's way of bringing the bear cub forcefully from its mother shows humans' way of dealing with the animals revealing human chauvinism. This is a universal thing that is to be

reminded regarding human and animal relation. Jarrell's narration of the encounter between the hunter and the bear's mother is shown as:

I shot her from so close the arrow went half through her. She was so near I couldn't run, I couldn't dodge, even; her claws came here – " he touched the side of his face – "she hugged me to her so hard I thought my back would break, and then I drove my knife in her from behind . . . . She shook me the way a grown-up shakes a child, I thought, 'I'm done for,' and then she went limp all over and fell on top of me and never moved again . . . ." (64-65)

The bear's mother tries her best to overcome the attack of the hunter, but it is in vain; at last, the hunter kills the mother bear remorselessly. The first attempt of intervention has been imposed by the hunter. To say the truth, actually, he has no any right to kill the animals he likes to kill. Yet, the intention of the hunter to tame the bear cub in a friendly manner can be accepted to some extent. If the hunter had acted out of selfishness, it would be acceptable, however, the killing attitude cannot be justified.

The ignorance of animal has been utilized frequently by humans. We, in our daily life, do not use human skin to make clothes. In the novel, the bear cub has been given a bearskin to sleep on. It is from this that we can identify humans' attitude towards the animals – how human treats animals. The last narrative of the third chapter of the novel indicates the same thing:

That night they put deerskins and sealskins on the bed and let the cub sleep on the bearskin, in the corner. Sometimes he would wake and cry for a while, and then huddle in the corner with his face pushed into the bearskin, and go back to sleep. And in two days he was sitting on the

floor by the table when they ate, eating with them; in a week it was as if he had lived with them always. (67)

Animals are all the time suffering of manipulation laid on them by humans. This manipulation is done on the ground that animals are ignorant and they do not have mind. In the ensuing paragraphs, there are several instances of humans' attitude towards animals. The cub's way of coping with the hunter's ways of life indicates a serious problem in the ecosystem. Killing one animal in the name of taming the other cannot be a beneficial job of human being in the coming future. Humans are facing towards their own destruction by killing animals to fulfill their immediate selfishness. A so-called supreme mind is heading towards its own destruction. Jarrell has the same motive – an ecological consciousness.

There are many, varied ways of tracing the insuperable line, from the possession of an immortal soul through existential freedom, neurological differentiation, and symbolic language use to the anatomy of the human hand that enables sophisticated tool-making. Fudge shares with a number of other liberationist critics such as Aldo Leopold, J. Baird Callicott, etc. the assumption that this plethora of claims and arguments does not prove the unassailable security of our position as top species. On the contrary, it betrays an anxious, self-defeating need to construct and continually reinforce a difference that nature has not supplied, so that our dominionist beliefs and practices may continue unmolested. Singer's notion of a moral overlap of higher mammals and lower humans translates in liberationist criticism into attacks on the paranoid frontier mentality of successive generations of self-deluding humanists. These derive much of their force from their subversion of the boundaries of the human. The bear eats what it has to eat, whereas humans cross the boundary of their food web showing their power over the animals. This can be shown as:

[. . .] everything they gave him, everything that he came across in the meadow or in the forest or on the beach, he ate. The mermaid said, "Why, if you put his chair in his bowl, he'd eat it." Wood-rats and meadow-mice, meadow-grass, buttercups, roots and nuts and seeds and buds, grubs, worms, insects, blackberries and blueberries and raspberries and wild grapes, clams and mussels and crabs, honey and honeybees, any sort of fish they fed him, any sort of meat they fed him – he gulped it all down. (73-74)

All of the above mentioned things are the foods of the bear that are provided by nature. Beyond this, Jarrell consciously mentions meadow. Meadow can be related to the trope wilderness, which means nature in a state uncontaminated by civilization. The hunter, although a human being himself, is unable to live with humans; so, he lives in a place of wilderness – forest, sea-coast, meadow – where we do not find human beings and their civilization.

Despite the hunter's dominion over the animals, there are many evidences that connect the humans with animals. The hunter is obliged to maintain his responsibility such as feeding the bear by giving several types of food. Reinforcing this fact, Jarrell narrates: "But really all of them ate as they pleased; the hunter would cut off big pieces of meat with his knife, chew away them and gulp them down, all the while talking eagerly – he had long ago forgotten how his father and mother ate and made him eat" (75).

For Richard Routley and Val Routley, the notion against human chauvinism depends on the fact that "it is obvious that many non human animals will qualify for rationality, perhaps more easily than many humans" (109). Jarrell also foregrounds the same belief by making the hunter as a human chauvinist, while feeding even, he

exposes his dominion over the mermaid, the bear, and the lynx. We need not to undermine the animals as irrational because of the fact that we thrive on this ecosphere due to the presence of the animals around us. However, the relationship between the hunter and the mermaid and the mermaid and the bear becomes so strong that one cannot live without the other. This can be realized through the mermaid's words: "To think that we used to live without a bear!"

As in the case of the bear, the hunter does the similar mistake by stealing a baby lynx from its mother. Considering the animals as irrational, the hunter steals the very lynx. This can be realized from his words: "I stole him. The mother has four more, and she'll never miss him – I don't think she can count up to five, anyway" (104). Among present theories of justice, Harvard philosopher John Rawls asserts, "The destruction of a whole species can be a great evil," but also admits that in his theory "no account is given of right conduct in regard to animals and the rest of nature" (60). Killing an individual animal adds the destruction of a whole species; this is because all humans have this attribute of killing animals.

Love, domination, friendliness, togetherness, community feeling, and manipulation run in an equal way throughout the novel. All these themes have relationships of their own, and this can be viewed from an ecological perspective. Each and every theme that is mentioned above has the sense of connectedness which is an essential part of the world's organism. While dealing with these themes, Jarrell focuses on the relationship between two animals – the lynx and the bear – in this way:

From the first the lynx loved being with the bear, he had started out with one big furry thing, his mother, and the bear was bigger and furrer. When he stretched himself against that great brown mound, so awkward and oblivious, the lynx looked very quick and smooth and

small. Away from the bear, he looked quick and smooth and big. How deftly he sat at the table, delicately eating and drinking from his dish and bowl, purringly taking a bit of fish from the mermaid's finger!

(They had given him the bear's chair). (111-112)

To show the relationship between them Jarrell emphasizes on their differentiation suggesting that the lynx looks very quick and smooth, whereas the bear as bigger and furrer. The lynx has many qualities that can be considered similar to human beings such as the way of sitting on the table and eating and drinking from dish and bowl. From here what we can infer is that the animals which can be easily domesticated are completely different from those animals which are difficult to tame. In the ensuing paragraphs, the relationship between the bear and the lynx, the lynx and the mermaid, the mermaid and the bear, and finally, the mermaid and the hunter by referring them as they is shown as interrelated members of a family. This is a bond of interconnection.

Jarrell is conscious of the fact that all the world's organisms are hunters in one way or the other – for survival hunting is a best way. This can also be linked to live and let live. The protagonist of the novel, the hunter, obey the same rule. He himself is a hunter and makes other animals hunters. Hunting is a cyclic process. At the beginning of the novel, the hunter has been depicted as a hunter. Likewise, the mermaid is depicted as a different kind of hunter; and, later on, the bear and the lynx are also depicted as hunters of their own kind. Thus hunting is living one's own life and also it is the bond of interconnection of the world's organisms. To reveal this fact, Jarrell narrates:

The lynx not only hunted for himself, he hunted for the family; it was his idea not the family's. He brought them, mostly, rabbits. At first the

hunter and the mermaid were full of encouragement: after all, it was wonderful that so young a lynx could catch so many rabbits. But the morning the mermaid woke at dawn and found three rabbits [. . .] in a pile at the bottom of the bed [. . .] she said to the hunter: "We're getting to be a perfect rabbit-warren. Three already, and it's still not light out!" (114-115)

While referring that hunting is itself the idea of the lynx and not the family's Jarrell means to say that the main task of the lynx is to hunt for himself and also it becomes his duty to hunt for the family because he is one of the members of the family.

Nevertheless, Jarrell does not favor hunting animals from the side of the hunter.

Jarrell seeks two viewpoints of the animals regarding their relationship with the hunter and the mermaid: the bear is fond of them, but the lynx adores them. Jarrell tries to indicate the proximity between the lynx and the hunter and the mermaid. On the other hand, the relation of proximity between the bear and the hunter and the mermaid is somehow less than that of the relation between the lynx and the hunter and the mermaid. This may be, because of the fact, that it is easy to tame a lynx than to tame a bear. A bear is usually wild by nature. This can be clarified from the following narration:

The bear was fond of the hunter and the mermaid, but the lynx adored them; as they said, "All you have to do is start to touch him and he purrs." Mostly he had a bass purr, like distant thunder, but when he felt particularly ecstatic his purr got a queer high throaty sound, like a basso singing falsetto. He sat by the two of them, and rubbed against them, and followed them around, and stared at them with an absorbed satisfied stare . . . . (119-120)



Each and every activities of the lynx corresponds to the adoration of the hunter in a soft and smooth manner. At the same time, the bear seems a bit far away in relation with the hunter and the mermaid. Here, at this point it is contextual to talk about reappraising domestication. Among the last philosophical remarks penned by Aldo Leopold before his untimely death in 1948 is the following: "Perhaps such a shift of values [as implied by the attempt to weld together the concepts of ethics and ecology] can be achieved by reappraising things unnatural, tame, and confined in terms of things natural, wild, and free" (49).

John Muir, in a similar spirit of reappraisal, had noted earlier the difference between the wild mountain sheep of the Sierra and the ubiquitous domestic variety. The latter, which Muir described as hooved locusts, were only, in his estimation, half alive in comparison with their natural and autonomous counterparts. One of the more distressing aspects of the animal liberation movement is the failure of almost all its exponents to draw sharp distinction between the very different plights of wild and domestic animals. But this distinction lies at the very centre of the land ethic. Domestic animals are creations of man. They are living artefacts, but artefacts nevertheless, and they constitute yet another mode of extension of the works of man into the ecosystem. From the perspective of the land ethic a herd of cattle, sheep, or pigs is as much or more a ruinous blight on the landscape as fleet of four-wheel-drive off-road vehicles. There is thus something profoundly incoherent in the complaint of some animal liberationists that the natural behavior of chickens and male calves is cruelly frustrated on factory farms. It would make almost as much sense to speak of the natural behavior of tables and chairs.

As Jarrell brings positive as well as negative aspects of human beings, he tries to assemble the relation of connectedness in many places of the novel, for example, focusing on the mermaid's admiration of the lynx he narrates:

What tickled the mermaid even more was the lynx to finish washing himself and to start out on the two of them. He would go to work on the hunter's hair or beard and give it long, sober, absorbed licking, till it looked all wet and shining; meanwhile the hunter lay back on the bed in drowsy acquiescence and the mermaid made little speeches of admiration: "If I hadn't lived with you so long I don't know whether I'd recognize you. He's got you so you just gleam!" (120-121)

The admiration of the lynx by the mermaid relies on the principle of connectedness; which is itself a product of unity in diversity. Here, unity in diversity does not indicate political dimension rather focuses on the commonality between and among animals as well as humans despite of the fact that there are numerous differences among the world's organisms. Because of this all the organisms of the world are interrelated. For example, from trapping records in Canada it is known that the populations of rabbits and lynx follow ten-year fluctuations. When there are many rabbits the lynx prosper; the rising population of lynx increasingly ravages the rabbit population, reducing it; as the latter become scarce, there is insufficient food to support the now numerous lynx; as the lynx begin to die off, the rabbits are less fiercely hunted and increase in number. And so on. These oscillations are built into the operation of the simple cycle, in which the lynx population is positively related to the number of rabbits and the rabbit population is negatively related to the number of lynx. Thus, *The Animal Family* focuses on the harmonious relation of the world's organisms.

All the world's organisms help one another consciously or unconsciously; in a way, by being food of others or making others as food. All of them are interrelated for the purpose of survival. Jarrell depicts the finding of three animals – the mermaid, the bear, and the lynx – from chapter one to chapter five. However, at the last of chapter six he depicts the finding of a human baby whose mother is dead. Psychologically, Jarrell wants to unite all the animals with the human beings; so he starts with human, the hunter, and ends with human, the boy. From here, what becomes clear is that Jarrell is conscious of goodness of humans. For the goodness of humans, animals are the essential units. To support the world's organism, all the units of ecosystem have to perform their own functions so that there remains a harmonious relation of balance among the essential units of the ecosystem. Depicting the finding of a little boy, Jarrell narrates a scene of helping:

The little boy was huddled against the woman, fast asleep. The lynx jumped into the boat, went up to the boy, and rubbed his face against boy's face; in a little the boy's eyes opened and he reached out to the lynx. Then he saw the bear, on all fours now. He looked uneasy, and said to the lynx: "Kitty?" The bear walked to the boy's end of the boat and stuck his tremendous head over the edge. The boy drew back. But the bear looked too good-natured for the boy to keep on being afraid of him – in a minute he was petting the bear just as he had petted the lynx. (135-136)

An acute sense of help from animal's side may make us surprise, but Jarrell's intention behind creating this scene has an ecological consciousness. He wants to make us conscious of the fact that all the organisms of the ecosphere are members of a same family; so, consciously or unconsciously, we are bound to help one another. In a very

turn about manner Jarrell criticizes the nature of human beings suggesting us that humans as well as animals are the organized whole of the world's organism.

Suggesting this, he warns us not to kill animals. Loving animals brings a long-term happiness, whereas killing them for immediate benefit may bring a vast disaster.

Jarrell's dream of a green world where creatures of different kinds live together involving in different activities of life is profound from an ecological perspective. He seeks green and green everywhere. The happiness of the mermaid is also the happiness of the hunter; and the mermaid gets happiness in the green world although she may be a sea-creature. For Jarrell, the green meadow signifies a green ecosphere where life becomes easy for each and every creature. Suggesting this, he narrates:

[. . .] it ran out green to the sunny beach, green to the shadowy forest, and the hunter and the mermaid sat there in it. Below them the white-on-green of the waves was lined along the white shore—out beyond, the green sea got bluer and bluer till at last it came to the far-off blue of the island. There were small seals on the seal rocks, and the little gray spot out above the waves was a big black-and-white osprey waiting for a fish. (171-172)

The description of the greenery itself brings an ecological consciousness. Jarrell does not describe only the meadow, the sea, and the creatures, he has an ecological purpose behind the description showing the interrelation between nature and creatures; and creatures and creatures. Ecologically, human also comes under animals; so, as there is an acute relationship between a seal and a fish, there is also a similar kind of relationship among the human and animal characters of the novel.

A present-day counter-movement, sometimes named deep ecology, maintains that all attempts to reform particular instances of the spoliation of the natural world deal with symptoms rather than the root cause, and that the only real hope is to replace anthropocentrism by ecocentrism: the view that all living things and their earthly environment, no less than the human species, possess importance, value, and even moral and political rights. There is a growing interest in the animistic religions of so-called primitive cultures, as well as in Hindu, Buddhist, and other religions and civilizations that lack the Western opposition between humanity and nature, and do not assign to human beings dominion over the non-human world. Ecocritics in the United States concern themselves especially with the oral traditions of Native Americans and with the exposition of these cultures by contemporary American writers such as N. Scott Momaday and Leslie Marmon Silko.

The common view, it is pointed out, envisions the natural world as a living, sacred thing, in which each individual feels intimately bonded to a particular physical place, and where human beings live in interdependence and reciprocity with other living things, plants, and animals. Almost all of the evidences that are mentioned above to clarify Jarrell's views towards world's organism, thrive on the principle that human beings live in interdependence and reciprocity with other living things – the interdependence between and among the hunter, the mermaid, the bear, the lynx, and the boy. Besides this, Jarrell also reveals an ecological consciousness regarding food web, ecosystem, pollution, and wilderness which also become an additional energy to pour his views towards world's organism. Thus, it is easy to clarify that Jarrell has an implicit motive behind the creation of this novel, which is an outcome of ecological consciousness. Reinforcing the importance of interdependence and connection, Jarrell

assembles all of the characters of the novel—the hunter, the mermaid, the bear, the lynx and the boy together in his narration as:

The hunter heard the mermaid finish her story, and the boy thanked her for it. "That was a good one," he said warmly. "That sea ones are always the best. The sea's so – so – "

"You can get up now," the mermaid said. "Dress so you'll be good and warm, and we can sit outside with your father."

When they came [. . .] the boy was wearing the cap with the bluejay feathers, so that his head matched the sky. He went over [. . .] and said to the hunter: "Where's the lynx?" (178-179)

Just as the whole organisms of the world live together in the ecosphere depending on the other organisms, so as the hunter, the mermaid, the bear, the lynx, and the boy live together happily. Thus, Jarrell hopes to bring a balanced relation between human and animal for the long survival of the ecosphere.

#### IV. Conclusion

Randall Jarrell, although a poet, writes children's books of various kinds among which *The Animal Family* can be viewed from an ecological perspective, having a deep ecological consciousness. The creation of a happy family comprised of both humans and animals depicting their different activities of life can be viewed from an ecological point of view in which all of the members of the family are interdependent. Jarrell chooses animals of various kinds: the mermaid, the lynx, and the bear. To some extent Jarrell focuses on fantasy while choosing the mermaid, a fabulous creature, as the female protagonist of the novel. The lynx can be domesticated easily, whereas it is too difficult to domesticate a wild animal, the bear. Although there are many differences in animals from one species to another, Jarrell unites them into a single family to show their interconnection.

Concentrating on the question of web, Jarrell gives emphasis on the issue of connection. The interconnection among the animals and humans has been shown in such a way that no humans can live without the animals and vice versa. Moreover, the description of the places such as the meadow, the sea coast, the forest, the flora and fauna, the cave, and the hut of the hunter has the sense of deep ecological consciousness. The hunter has hut in the place of wilderness, signifying nature in a state uncontaminated by civilization. It is a construction mobilized to protect particular habitats and species, and is seen as a place for the reinvigoration of those tired of the moral and material pollution of the city.

The role of the hunter is dominant, however, the role of other animal characters: the mermaid, the lynx, and the bear cannot be undermined. Jarrell is conscious of the fact that human beings have created a relation of imbalance in which animals are considered as creatures of insuperable line. The story begins from the

finding of the mermaid; in the middle section, the finding of the lynx and the bear is depicted in a horrific manner. Horrific in the sense that while bringing home the bear, the hunter kills the bear's mother; likewise, in the case of the lynx, the hunter carries away the lynx from his mother thinking that the mother cannot count her babies as humans. Here, Jarrell gives a good blow in the face of the humans speaking from the side of the animals as a whole.

Since ecology focuses upon the relationships between and among things, it inclines its students toward a more holistic vision of the world. Before the rather recent emergence of ecology as a science the landscape appeared to be, one might say, a collection of objects, some of them alive, some conscious, but all the same, an aggregate, a plurality of separate individuals. With this atomistic representation of things it is no wonder that moral issues might be understood as competing and mutually contradictory clashes of the rights of separate individuals, each separately pursuing its interests. Ecology has made it possible to apprehend the same landscape as an articulate unity (without the least hint of mysticism or ineffability). Ordinary organic bodies have articulated and discernible parts (limbs, various organs, myriad cells); yet, because of the character of the network of relations among those parts, they form in a perfectly familiar sense a second-order whole. Ecology makes it possible to see land, sea and ocean, similarly as a unified system of integrally related parts, as, so to speak, a third-order organic whole. Jarrell is fully conscious of this fact while depicting the landscape: the meadow, the forest, the sea coast, and the cave where the bear sleeps the whole winter.

In some places Jarrell favors the attitude of humans, for example, as the members of the family the bear, the lynx, and the boy have been regularly fed by the hunter in response of his guardianship. Making the hunter as the protagonist of the



novel Jarrell indicates that it is from humans' side the ruined relation between and among humans and animals to be recovered by transforming it into a balanced relation. It is only the humans' effort that can bring peace and harmony in the family of world's organism. All of the organisms of the world have their own role to play resting on the network of interdependence.

Finally, the title of the novel – *The Animal Family* – itself has the sense of ecological consciousness. Jarrell's effort of naming the family from animal's point of view also proves that the ecological consciousness regarding human-animal relationship is an implicit motive of the novelist. Besides this, he invigorates the notion of connectedness, interdependence, and togetherness. His views towards world's organism can be linked to the notion of interconnection which believes that everything in the environment is connected to everything else – humans and animals are connected to themselves. Thus, Jarrell focuses upon the relationship between the hunter, the mermaid, the lynx, the bear, and the boy, which is an ecological consciousness of the novelist.

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