

Chapter- 1

Introduction: Dualism between Human Beings and Nature

This research work explores the issue of self- evasive anthropocentricity in Terry Tempest Williams' *Refuge* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. Human beings give importance to them and ignore nature whereas it is self- evasive, self- deceptive and thereby self- destructive for them. *Refuge* depicts cancer beyond control and the Great Salt Lake locale under control while cancer originates from the lake site, Utah; and *The Road* depicts its protagonists' struggle for survival in the woods whereas its locale seems to be ensuing from war. Therefore, this research work mainly bases on an overview of ecological crisis of reason propounded by Val Plumwood who views that human tendency of giving importance to themselves leads to self- evasive, self- deceptive and self- destructive attitude endangering human existence. As an ecocritical theory, it motivates us to analyze the self- evasive anthropocentric attitude and suggests for harmony between nature and human as its solution. Both of the texts depict that human beings ignore nature and even find their suffering incorrigible while there is no human existence in the void of nature.

Nature responds the way human beings behave with it. As Robert D. Bullard relating with human health and environmental problem in his essay, "Environmentalism and Social Justice" views, "Things are changing as environmental problems become more "potent political issues [and] become increasingly viewed as threatening public health" (324- 25). Bullard mentions the degradation of environment and human health, both of the issues, have been the matter of discussion since human health cannot be free from environmental change and this change is because of human beings' domination on their kind and other parts of nature alike. Similarly, Aldo Leopold's "The Land Ethic" views, "Waters, like soil, are part

of energy circuit. Industry, by polluting waters or obstructing them with dams, may exclude the plants and animals necessary to keep energy in circulation” (43). Nature has its own process of nurturing the world but the forceful control by human beings dismantles the process as they affect biotic and abiotic world. Explaining the relationship of human and nonhuman world in support of Jennifer Price, Val Plumwood opines in her writing *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason* that human beings are “‘losing track of nature’ – and in the process, losing track of ourselves as ecologically constrained beings” (97). Plumwood’s argument views that human weakness of understanding their relation with nature has endangered human existence itself. Though she emphasizes on harmony between human beings and nature, human existence is under crisis because of human failure to internalize the worth of nature.

The self- evasive notion of human supremacy against nature acts as if human beings are free from the ecological system of nature. It ignores the sense of interdependence between human and nonhuman world of nature that endangers human existence. L. White, Jr. views, “Formerly man had been part of nature; now he was the exploiter of nature” (147). White’s comment on Middle Ages man seems to be the generalization of human beings of all ages. They have lost their sense of dependence on nature while it has separated them from nature and invited their crisis on the earth. Regarding human nature, Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report “Our Common Future (1997)” mentions, “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (qtd. in Palmer 18). The anthropocentric spirit of WCED report gives space for present needs only. It neither respects nature nor can maintain human needs from nature. This

concept of maximum utilization of nature having no care of future leads the world to its disaster but not to the development because nature cannot exceed its boundary.

Exploitation of nature having no care for its sustainability is against human beings. Human beings consume nature and have no option but their self-centered view has lost nature- human harmony. This concept has endangered nature and human beings have faced unseen hazards in their life as Bedford views, “The drying climate has left the present- day Great Salt Lake as essentially a giant puddle occupying a depression in the Salt Lake Valley just to the west of the Wasatch Mountains” (73). It shows climate change and the Great Salt Lake as an interrelated issue and human beings and their activities are the determining factors that affect the environmental issues. A.S. Packard, Jr. has even clarified, “The ancient volume was no less than three hundred times greater than that of the Great Salt Lake (when surveyed by Captain Stansbury), and the brine of the litter, so greatly diluted, would give only one thirteenth of one percent of salt” (680). It proves that the change in the lake is an outcome of human activities since atmosphere of the site and human activities are interrelated as the word, “litter” indicates. N. Evernden’s comment on human nature also presents how human beings are against themselves, “Human beings have socially constructed a moral hierarchy . . . as if humans have captured nature in a “word cage,” . . . (qtd. in Purser 1057). Human beings’ treatment with nature as object has forcefully separated them from nature. They think that nature is under their control but it sounds as self- deception because forceful control of nature and its use is detrimental to human beings like the Great Salt Lake environment suggests. Human beings channelize its water and think that they have success while there is flooding and even cancer has prevailed over its surroundings due to pollution from nuclear tests.

Similarly, Lydia Cooper's comment on the suffering of the man and the boy in *The Road*, focuses on human suffering in nature as self- projected, "The Road, then, is a narrative in which a man and boy battle against an encroaching darkness that, the novel suggests, has been created by the humans it destroys" (221). The man complains nature as unfavorable for them whereas the gloomy environment is because of human beings themselves. Supporting Michael Chabon's review of *The Road* in the February 15, 2007 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, Tim Edwards explains the disastrous world portrayed in the novel as created by human beings:

The only true account of the world after a disaster as nearly complete as searing as the one McCarthy proposes, drawing heavily on the "nuclear winter" scenario first proposed by Carl Sagan and others, would be a book of blank pages, as ash. But to annihilate the world in prose one must simultaneously write it in to being. (59)

Chabon's remark focuses on the issue as historical record of disaster created by human beings. As the phrase "nuclear winter" reflects the warlike scene, human beings' self- destructive nature destroys natural environment and consequently they suffer from nature as well. He argues that there is no destruction without creation. Human weakness for realizing nature as their source of life destroys it and destroys human beings as well.

Furthermore, Matthew Mullins argues hunger problem and natural crisis as two sides of the same coin in *The Road*, "Hunger is what moves the novel's main characters, . . . as they travel across the southeastern US in the aftermath of an unknown catastrophe that has destroyed a vast majority of the world's population, and nearly all of its natural resources" (78). Mullins' narrative refers to the war like scene that has destroyed the existence of both nature and human beings. When there is

devastation in nature, human beings suffer from hunger. The man and the boy, protagonists of this novel, represent all the people who undergo through hunger and insecurity because of human negligence upon nature. Human beings pollute nature but cannot escape from it. Being indifferent to nature is finally to be away from human existence. Casey Jergenson views, “The Road’s landscape is littered with the skeletal remains of this old material order” (121). The site in the woods is grey having no life and energy. Human ambition for material progress has destroyed everything in nature. Jergenson compares the scene of *The Road* with T.S. Eliot’s “The Waste Land” (124). It reflects that the land has lacked its charm because of human encroachment while there is still human survival if human beings realize their dependence on nature.

Human beings themselves create problem in nature as historian Valerie Kuletz, daughter of a weapon scientist, vividly describes the kind of landscape created by fifty years of military experimentation:

Whenever I travel the back roads of the Southwest, I am keenly aware of the “signs” of power in the landscape. Such signs include high- wire fences, radar antennae, massive satellite communications dishes tilted up toward the stars, sonic booms, stealth aircraft, well maintained roads in the middle of “nowhere” leading to various “installations,” earth- shaking explosions . . . (qtd. in Beck 68)

Kuletz’s experience of the Southwest road portrays the heart- rending scene like of nuclear testing and its storage. It pinpoints that human beings themselves are inviting their mass destruction and nature is not the patient receiver of such hazards. Human technology like nuclear weapons cannot be aloof from the destruction of nature and human beings alike. Though human beings think them to have victory over nature,

they have victimized them like ‘earth- shaking explosions’ indicate their self-projected misery.

The literary work of environmental studies should not see nature and human beings separately. Human beings’ understanding of nature as other dismantles the bond between human and nonhuman world of nature. Double standards of human beings among their own kind and between living and nonliving existence of nature endangers human existence itself on the earth. Some dominant theorists as Val Plumwood and Lawrence Buell focus on nature- human connection. Self- evasive anthropocentric understanding of nature as other by human beings has created crisis in human and nonhuman world of nature alike. A writer of nature study should establish a sense of harmony between human and nature in the mind of readers undoubtedly. This will be possible only when an environmentalist avoids incongruity within nature. In this connection, Buell views in *Writing Endangered World*, “reorientation of human attention and values according to a stronger ethic of care for the nonhuman environment would make the world a better place, for human as well as for nonhumans” (6). It clarifies that biased nature of human beings to other things and beings is the rift between human and nonhuman world; and there is no solution unless we think from the part of other things and beings.

Terry Tempest Williams’ *Refuge* and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* narrate how human beings exploit nature and see their problem incorrigible and torturous. Both of the texts depict nature as unfavorable for human beings but they hardly focus on human beings as the creator of the dismal environment and their suffering.

Williams’ *Refuge* is a blending of her family history, bird refuge and the Great Salt Lake. *Refuge*, divided in to 37 chapters, is titled with different bird species. Water level of the Great Salt Lake, birds’ suffering in the refuge and the cancer

problem of Williams' family have been illustrated as single event in the beginning of the text. It even tries to illustrate the rising level of the lake and cancer problem in parallel condition but the latter parts of the text depicts the lake in control and cancer beyond the control of human beings. In fact, cancer is an output of Utah surrounding where the lake is situated. Flood in the lake affects colony- nesting species. Tim Proven, the waterfowl biologist for the Division of Wildlife Resources in Salt Lake City, reports that the marshes do not produce young as the seven to eight hundred thousand ducks they produced have dropped 85 percent since the flood (113). This report shocks Williams and she even comments that there is no solution for the problem. Nevertheless, the forceful control of the lake, on the latter part of the text, delights her.

Furthermore, Diane, mother of Williams, replies that without depleting the source, human beings cannot give anything to other. She views that in America, time is money, in Kenya, time is relationship. They look investments differently (137). Supporting Dian's view, Williams' father adds that everything is evaluated from monetary point of view. His argument on monetary view clarifies how human beings are inviting their problems.

Like her father, Williams imagines the refuge back to its normal condition. She imagines the place free from toxic waste dump and only a simple natural phenomenon: the rise of the Great Salt Lake. This concept illustrates how human beings interpret nature according to their interest. Her view against cancer and the lake is different. She views, "most studies report that cancer is genetic, hereditary, with rising percentages attached to fatty diets, childlessness, or becoming pregnant after thirty. But they do not blame on living in Utah" (281). It simply reflects that cancer is because of her environment but the lake as "natural" (140) whereas both of

the issues are the outcome of human encroachment upon nature and the lake cannot be aloof from the atmosphere created by human beings in its surroundings.

Similarly, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* (2006) deals with the life- death struggle for the survival of an unnamed man and a boy who suffer from hunger and insecurity caused by human beings in the arid woods. The man ignores the barrenness of the woods and strives for his and his son's life only. He even seems to be unknown to human encroachment on nature when there is no human existence in the void of nature.

McCarthy's *The Road* begins with the awakening of the man from his dreadful dream in the woods. His dream and the environment of the woods seem to reflect the same environment. He observes to the road, studies the country to the south. He finds barren, silent and godless. He even finds the segmented road down among the dead trees. This scene makes the man worry about his duty to take care of the boy but "grayness" (7) of the woods does not affect him that he hardly questions about the effect of human encroachment upon nature.

On their move ahead, they meet a man struck by lightning. The boy suggests his father to show humanity for the man. Meanwhile some road agents come in a truck; one of them grabs the boy. His father retaliates with the man though the boy reminds his father that they are good guys. They again move ahead having nothing to eat and find a house. It only frightens the boy. They return from the house when the road agents move away from there. While returning to their destination, the man finds an apple orchard with some dried fruits but that is not enough for them. The man and the boy keep on moving ahead, they find a bunker filled with foods and clothes which provide them with momentary relief though not permanently as nature can.

On their way, the boy asks his father about the sea if it is blue. The man replies that it used to be blue. As nature is barren and unable to provide life- source, the man and the boy suffer from illness. The boy worries about the health of his father. The man consoles the boy that he will not die. They further decide to be away from their camp but other people steal their belongings. They search for water but find the lead colored sea shifting in the distance; the earth itself is contracting with cold (279). Instead of helping them, other people shot the man by an arrow (281). The man also takes revenge but this incidence weakens the man and he dies. Before dying, the man asks his son to leave him open under the sky so that he could see the boy even after his death but in vain.

After the death of the man, another old man approaches to the boy and asks him to go away with him to his home or to stay out of the road (303). The boy leaves his father after paying due respect to his father's dead body; and, comes back out to the road (306). The story ends with the boy's meeting with a woman. She adores the boy and talks about spirituality that breath of the God was the breath of the boy's father and it passes from man to man. The story concludes with the woman's consolation to the boy that the older things cannot be put back (307). The ending part of the story implies that past serenity of nature is like a mystery and the present suffering of human beings is an outcome of their response to nature.

Both of these texts *Refuge* and *The Road* illustrate that human existence on the earth is in the verge of collapse with the need of human awareness of restoration of nature. Human beings give importance to them and ignore nature. In fact, nature cannot be aloof from human activities that results as human plight. With the degradation of nature, human existence also collapses. Healthy environment provides healthy life and order while human encroachment upon nature has ignored human

existence itself. Human beings think nature as an instrument to fulfill human needs but it needs the sense of assimilation with nature.

As the issue of environmental degradation and its impact on the earth, several critiques have been written on Williams' *Refuge* and McCarthy's *The Road*. The Great Salt Lake in *Refuge*, should be in its original condition, has been unstable with its ebb and flow. People, living nearby the surroundings, have suffered from cancer; birds are forced to be away from the lake. Lynn Ross- Bryant in her article "The Self in Nature: Four American Autobiographies" mentions:

The self, Williams finds is not stable, fixed, isolated, individual. It is not impervious to its environment nor in control of it. The self is shaped by all it is connected to – family, friends, birds, wetlands, and its own imagination. One must acknowledge this connectedness. The pelicans help her to understand this. Brigham Young began a cooperative community he called the United Order. (100)

Ross- Bryant's remark focuses that individuality of human beings is shaped by the direct contact with the environment where they live in. She views that human beings' perception has a close connection with their place whereas we cannot disregard individual role for improving our surrounding. As a dweller of the place, one has to reconsider upon one's role for restoring and saving the world.

Tyler Nickel's comment on Nathan Straight's view of Williams' writing mentions her as a natural biographer, "Williams writes as a natural biographer in *Refuge* (1991) when she allows the Great Salt Lake and its migratory birds their own agency and personality in her book, noting the flux that similarly marks the lake's life and her own" (465). Nickel remarks that Williams' writing shares her feeling with the place and birds that her writing empathizes with nature. It seems to encapsulate the

Native American ethos of situating human beings in place of nature but her depiction of the lake environment does not prove it.

Williams' interview with David Peters clarifies her relation with the land and human beings:

How does our intimacy with each other, or lack of intimacy, affect our intimacy with the land? Like death, I think our sensuality is something we're afraid of and so we have avoided confronting it. I am interested in taboos, because I believe that's where the power of our culture lies. I love taking off their masks so we can begin to face the world openly. I believe that will be our healing. (qtd. in Austin 2)

Williams finds openness in sharing her passion as the root of Mormon culture. She means that the true representation of world is the healing process of the devastated world. She finds relief in facing the bitter truth of human encroachment on the earth as her part of life but intimacy does not mean to accept the loss of nature, nor can her ambiguous vision mask off encroachment on nature.

Similarly, McCarthy's *The Road* has been studied from different perspectives. Andy DuMont views McCarthy's landscape in *The Road* as an aesthetic expression, "Though *The Road* does carry a melancholic air, its decadence is marked not by a lament for the expressive self in the face of postmodern banality, but by the relinquishment of the self to the possibility of . . . existence" (71). DuMont finds the novel as an optimistic message for the post-modern people. She means that the man in the novel dies for the betterment of future generation. In contrary, Linda Woodson views, "Many have placed *The Road* into the genre of apocalyptic literature, and it certainly fits there, in both its vision of the artist" (87). She remarks that the message and the scene of the novel as an apocalyptic whereas the novel is a depiction of

human weakness to maintain their relation with nature. Similarly, Hannah Stark in her article “All These Things He Saw and Did Not See”, views:

The Road offers an anthropocentric vision of the end of the world in which humans are the final witnesses, and also in which the end of the human is also the end of the world. This is made explicit when the boy is sick by the beach and the man prepared to kill himself so that the boy does not have to enter death alone. 'You have to stay near', the man says to himself, 'You have to be quick. So you can be with him. Last day of the earth' (. . .). Here the end of the lives of the two central characters is transposed onto the earth itself. (80)

Stark's remark on *The Road* depicts Cormac McCarthy's protagonists, the man and the boy, as the last representative witness of the disastrous world. It depicts the protagonists as the last human while the last scene of the novel focuses on nature-human harmony and the revival of the world as the woman talks about the mystery of nature. It reminds that human suffering is because of them and there is still life if human beings realize nature- human relation in time.

None of the aforementioned critics have explored the cause of human suffering is because of their negligence to nature in Terry Tempest Williams' *Refuge* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. Williams' *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* depicts the flood in the Great Salt Lake and cancer disease as human product. Nuclear testing, making dam nearby the lake, road expansion in the surroundings, uncontrolled flow of water to downhill and throwing pollutants to the lake; and, expectation of healthy environment as well as the recovery of bird refuge and the like activities are contradictory to each other. All these activities reflect

nothing but self- evasion of human beings. They make nature a tool for achieving their goal while it endangers nature and humans alike.

Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* depicts the fact that human survival in the absence of natural environment is torturous. As Jordan J. Dominy views "The real challenge left facing the son at the novel's end is whether or not he will be able to retrieve nature, . . . (144)", the novel raises the problem of retrieval of lost humanity for nature and human beings themselves. The boy's journey from the woods to a woman's house indicates human survival; the description of brook trout in the streams in the mountain (306) indicates the existence of nature that there is no human survival without nature. Human beings ignore nature and their own kind whereas it is opposite to their expectation of survival on the earth.

This project analyzes how Terry Tempest Williams' *Refuge* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* depict human beings' suffering when they ignore the voice of nature. I argue that human beings give importance to them and ignore nature whereas it endangers human existence. This research conceptualizes the co- existence between nature and human beings since there is no human existence without other parts of nature. This framework builds on the ecological crisis of the reason that nature as other mainly developed by Val Plumwood. It argues that readers' relation with nature as a unit among all things and beings is necessary to understand the cause of natural disaster in *Refuge* and *The Road*.

As environment denotes to surroundings, it consists of living and nonliving entities in its orbit. Human existence is not free from the existence of nature as Plumwood in her text *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason*, focuses on maintaining balance between human and nonhuman parts of nature and its limits. Plumwood views that "problem lies in the exclusion of non- humans" (129). Self-

centric notion of human being gives importance to own existence while it excludes human beings from themselves as she further views:

Reductive and Othering modes 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)

Plumwood views that human and non- human world should have equal existence. The sense of differentiating nature or other things and beings from human ethos endangers the human existence. As the world is the combination of human and non- human world, there must not be biasness between self and other.

Disaster in nature comes at the cost of exclusion of non- human world. It excludes humans finally. Human beings are blind to their understanding of environmental ethos as Buell argues in terms of toxic discourse:

There seem to be at least two reasons why the discourse of toxicity has not been treated with the same attention as its chemical, medical, social, and legal aspects. One is surely the pragmatism that plays a major part in shaping all agendas of discussion. Discourse may seem a low priority when health or even property is jeopardized . . . as social construct and thus as a symptomatic register of political or economic power, or as a site of cultural contestation. (640- 41)

Buell argues that toxic discourse should be treated as other discourses since it has been rooted to the chemical, medical, social and legal aspects. He means society and culture cannot be free from environmental discourse.

Encroachment upon nature has forcibly deteriorated nature and human beings alike. L. White, Jr. explaining “man- induced changes” in nature compares environment of London before 1285 and of present time:

. . . our present combustion of fossil fuels threatens to change the chemistry of the globe’s atmosphere as a whole, with consequences which we are only beginning to guess. With the population explosion, the carcinoma of planless urbanism, the now geological deposits of sewage and garbage, surely no creature other than man has ever managed to foul its nest in such short order. (144)

White illustrates London city as an example of how encroachment upon nature has endangered human existence. His remark on Aldous Huxley’s topic “Man’s unnatural treatment and its sad results (143)” reflects that human beings themselves are responsible for environmental degradation. They try to empower them with their control on nature but its effect is beyond their control.

Human beings treat nature as if they can manipulate it on their own way but they suffer from disease and disaster. Harold Fromm’s remark on nature- human relation in *The Nature of Human from Environmentalism to Consciousness* views:

To make connections between weather and one’s physical state one needs to live outside of the city, where the visibility is excellent. How much more difficult it must be to be able to connect one’s mental state with the effect of the weather on one’s body in urban areas hardly needs to be pressed. But if one is feeling physically out of sorts, if one

is unable to focus, feels lazy and vaguely wrong, one's frame of mind is altered, and one's interest in things . . . otherwise be. (34)

Fromm's remark on self-centric human nature portrays that human beings need serenity of nature but they pollute their surroundings and also move away to find serenity of nature though the option remains hardly possible. This self-evasive concept of human beings destroys nature and them alike.

Lawrence Buell's *The Future of Environmental Criticism* also remarks on how human beings determine their relation with place as he argues supporting the concept of Thomas Berry and Wendell Berry:

. . . without a complex knowledge of one's place, and without the faithfulness to one's place on which such knowledge depends, it is inevitable that the place will be used carelessly, and eventually destroyed (. . .). . . . "the people of rural America . . . are living in a colony," sucked dry by a national economy sufficiency not only in the local economy but also in the local culture. (qtd. in Buell, 78)

Buell clarifies that the sense of belongingness with living place protects nature. While cultural and economic domination on other parts of nature has endangered human existence. It argues that environmental crisis is because of human beings' insensitivity to their own dependence on nature.

Nature is a complex unit of its all things beings but human beings think them secure even when they destroy their neighboring locale. They believe in their power to control nature where there is no human progress unless modern technology accepts nature as the origin of all progress. David Pepper in his book *Modern Environmentalism An Introduction*, explains how technocentrism centers upon environmental issues from anthropocentric view:

Technocentrism recognises environmental problems but believes either unreservedly that our current form of society will always solve them and achieve unlimited growth (the interventionist ‘cornucopian’ view) or, more cautiously, that by careful economic and environmental management they can be negotiated (the ‘accommodators’). . . ., technology, conventional economic reasoning (e.g. cost-benefit analysis), and the ability of their practitioners. There is little desire for genuine public participation in decision. (38)

David Pepper views that technocentrism focuses on environmental problem but it believes that no matter how human beings can solve it. Human supremacy- ridden belief over environment problem finally endangers human existence itself when there is destruction in nature.

Human beings produce chemicals and conduct nuclear war to impose their power over other while this affects overall atmosphere as Clare Palmer mentions:

Most international discussion of central environmental issues—depletion of stratospheric ozone, global warming, marine and atmospheric pollution, treatment of toxic waste, destruction of rainforests— focuses ethically on their effects on human beings. At the level of popular political debate, resource management concerns compose virtually the entire ethical agenda. (18)

Palmer remarks that all of the environmental issues focus on the effects of environmental degradation. Even so, it is less effective because there is no environmental restoration unless humans think the issues as their own product but not natural.

Human beings exploit nature to empower them where it weakens them. They think as if everything is under their grasp whereas they are a part of nature. As nature is the holistic existence of living and non- living world, humans are not secure from the challenges in nature. As Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* mentions the challenges:

In dealing with environmental reports or policies or regulations we must always keep in mind that what was zero today will no longer be zero tomorrow. We have already moved from measuring micrograms in the 1950s to measuring picograms in the 1980s and 1990s. . . . At the same time, we must keep in mind that there is no relationship between toxic effects and our ability to detect a chemical. Small amounts only matter if they do effect living organisms. (qtd. in Garrard 11)

Garrard views that humans can pollute environment but they have no capacity to assume its loss and recovery. Toxic effect is beyond human understanding though it comes out of chemicals made by humans. They produce chemical but cannot compensate its loss.

Though human beings boast on their power to control nature, they victimize themselves as Bill Mckibben's *The End of Nature* exemplifies Coronon's myth of wilderness purity, "We have changed the atmosphere, and thus we are changing the weather. By changing the weather, we make every spot on earth manmade and artificial. We have deprived nature of its independence, . . . is nothing but us" (54). Mckibben's remark mentions human beings' role as the major cause of environmental change. He views that the forceful exploitation of nature has endangered human existence. Anthropocentric notion is fatal to nature and human alike. Though it seems to have governed nature, it is finally a self- evasion. Human supremacy is not possible

from their domination on nature. They think nuclear testing can empower them but it goes against their own life and security.

I have cited the aforementioned theoretical concepts and remarks so that these ideas justify the objectives of my studies that I have selected for my research. These theories help study the self-centered notion of human beings against human and nonhuman world by maintaining the harmony between human and non-human existence of nature since the encroachment upon nature endangers human existence itself disconnecting it from the life-force on the earth.

As an introductory part, in the first chapter, “Dualism between Human Beings and Nature”, I have argued that human tendency of giving importance to them has ignored nature where it has endangered human existence itself. Human beings think nature as a tool for maintaining their supremacy over other things and beings while there is no human existence without other parts of nature. If nature is free from nuclear tests, toxicity and forceful encroachment, nature will have its purity; and, human longevity will automatically be its reward. These arguments are substantiated by incorporating the critical analyses of two narratives— Terry Tempest Williams’ *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* and Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* with the concept of how they focus on self-evasive anthropocentric notion. The major theoretical insight is Val Plumwood’s *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason, Feminism and Mastery of Nature*; and, Lawrence Buell’s “Toxic Discourse”, L White Jr.’s “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”, Clare Palmer’s “An Overview of Environmental Ethics” and other supportive notions of these approaches are there to justify my claim.

In the Second Chapter, Self Evasive Anthropocentric Attitudes in *Refuge*”, I study Terry Tempest Williams’ self-evasive notion in *Refuge*. Human beings think

them to be connected with nature but their double standard view among other things and beings and even among human beings has invited their problem. I argue that nature has its own system and encroachment upon nature for human interest is against human beings themselves.

The third chapter, "Self- Projected Suffering of Human Beings in *The Road*, I study how human beings, an unnamed man and a boy, suffer from hunger and insecurity when their own kind snatch the stamina of the woods to empower them.

The last chapter, Self Evasive Tendency of Othering Nature from Human Beings, I come to conclusion that human survival without the sense of human beings as a part of nature in practice is a dreamland which never comes to the actual world. Pleasure and pain from nature is the result of what human beings respond to nature. Human beings try to empower them making nature a tool for their ambition whereas it endangers their existence on the earth. Nuclear tests, war, forceful control of water and pollutants in the surroundings of Utah and the woods are not human prowess but self- imposed destruction of human beings. Human beings ignore nature and exploit it to empower them whereas it endangers human existence.

Chapter II

Self Evasive Anthropocentric Attitudes in *Refuge*

Terry Tempest Williams compares her experience between the Great Salt Lake environment and cancer disease in women of her family. Bird Migratory Refuge, the Great Salt Lake, and cancer of her mother all seem to be connected with Williams' life. She depicts the lake and bird migratory problems in improved condition whereas cancer as an incurable disease of her family. Human beings give importance to them and ignore nature while this tendency endangers their existence. *Refuge* depicts cancer beyond control and the lake under control when the encroachment on the locale of the lake Utah, nuclear testing and health issue all are interrelated. Williams argues the lake under control when cancer is an outcome of the lake surrounding, Utah. The ecological theories, mainly Val Plumwood's *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason, Feminism and Mastery of Nature*; and, Lawrence Buell's "Toxic Discourse", L White Jr.'s "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis", Clare Palmer's "An Overview of Environmental Ethics" and other supportive notions help the reader analyze how human life is endangered by them in nature.

Lawrence Buell argues in his article "Toxic Discourse", "The fear of a poisoned world is being increasingly pressed, debated, debunked, and reiterated from many disciplinary vantage points: medicine, political science, history, sociology, economics, and ethics" (639). Like Buell's remark on human nature, Williams views, "The fear and inability to question authority that ultimately killed rural communities in Utah during atmospheric testing of atomic weapons is the same fear I saw in my mother's body. Sheep. Dead sheep. The evidence is buried" (286). Buell's comment on poisoned world reflects Williams' experience with her mother. She remarks that public weakness to protest against nuclear testing has ultimately been the cause of

cancer. Human beings ignore nature to empower them while it endangers them. The U. S. government of the 1950s conducts nuclear testing for the security of its nation but it radiates cancer to Utah people (283). Williams' further remark on her cancer-ridden family history and Utah relationship shows her self- deceptive comment as she says, "I cannot prove that mother, Diane Dixon Temper, . . . , along with my aunts developed cancer from nuclear fallout in Utah. But I can't prove they didn't" (286). Williams' ambiguous remark on nuclear testing proves how human beings have created disaster upon nature and been victimized by themselves.

Nature provides life for human beings but they suffer from their self- created disaster in nature. Williams imagines human society surrounded by nature as she mentions her family history connected with the Great Salt Lake in Utah yet there seems no initiation from the government and citizens to improve public health and environment except the forceful control of the lake. Williams says, "To our court system it does not matter whether the United States government was irresponsible, whether it lied to its citizens, or even that citizens died from the fallout of nuclear testing. . . . can do no wrong" (285). Her ironical remark shows her dissention with all human beings who see human beings safe from their encroachment on nature but the silent consent for nuclear testing is ambiguous. Val Plumwood's remark in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* clarifies human nature better as she says, "The question of what is human is itself now problematised, and one of the areas in which it is most problematic is in the relation of humans to nature, especially to the non- human world" (22). Plumwood remarks that human response to nonhuman world is so serious that it lacks the root of human existence itself. Like Plumwood, Williams mentions "Many men have forgotten what they are connected to," . . . within themselves" (10). She points out the disaster in Utah environment is because of one

part of human beings i.e. men while all human beings have dismantled the natural bond and it needs joint venture to revive the lost stamina of nature.

Disparity between human and nature; and, even among human beings has expanded the present environmental problems instead of solving it. Human beings treat nature as if they are apart from nature as Plumwood describes in *The Environmental Culture*, “Where the sense of apartness from and power over the Other is accurate, oppression may be maintained for a time, . . . continuing dependencies on Others that are denied or ‘forgotten’, and some of these will eventually be fatal” (119). She views that human beings ignore nature- human relation and they even forcefully control others naming it a social system but it results as dangerous. Like Plumwood’s remark on forceful control over other, Williams’ *Refuge* seems to contradict nature:

The creation of the Bear River Bird Migratory Refuge helped to preserve the freshwater character of the marsh. Dikes were built to hold the water from the Bear River to stabilize, manage, and control water levels within the marsh. This helped to control botulism and at the same time keep out the brine. . . . the birds flourished. (19-20)

Williams remarks the forceful control of water as successful event for the revival of natural surroundings. She remarks this control as permanent solution whereas nature has its own mechanism to control its things and beings. The forceful control over nature is not the permanent solution for the sensitivity of the lake and the Bear River Migratory Refuge rather it is self- deception because artificial management is just a temporary solution and it turns into serious problem like flooding over the land at any time.

Anthropocentric management and control over nature focuses on human needs. Human beings mobilize nature according to their interest and remain silent for the early changes in nature whereas they lack their power as Peter Singer's, *A Darwinian Left: Politics, Evolution and Cooperation* views, "the individual pursuit of self-interest can be collectively self-defeating" (48). Singer views that self-centered notion of human beings is opposite to their society and their surroundings since they ignore the voice of other. Like Singer, Williams views, "I could never have anticipated its rise" (22). Water level of the lake and the pain of her mother's abdomen go opposite to her expectation. It implies how human beings are opposite to their own kind and nature alike. She is delighted with temporary healing of her mother's body but the sufferer seems to be aware of her suffering that the pain of her body continues. Williams' imaginary control of the lake and of her mother's cancer cannot persist. Her thought of the Grand Canyon, "What I was going to say is that Grand Canyon is a perfect place to heal— I've found a tumor (23)" imagines the place as healer but such expectation from the polluted place itself is self-evasion.

Nature is the panacea for all evils in the world but the polluted environment hardly protects its things and beings as Lawrence Buell argues in *Future of Environment Criticism*:

Place is an indispensable concept for environmental humanists not so much because they have precisely defined and stabilized it as because of what it opens up. It is a term of value that even advocates perceive stands in need of redefinition as well as advocacy. One cannot theorize scrupulously about place without confronting its fragility, the question of whether "place" as traditionally means anything anymore at a time when fewer and fewer of the world's population live out their lives in

locations that are not shaped to a great extent by translocal– ultimately global– forces. (62- 63)

Buell argues that, as time passes by, place occupies different changes that human beings force to nature. With the changing number and concept of people, form and identity of place is determined. Therefore, historical as well as current facts determine the environment of any place.

Like Buell’s argument, Williams presents how the changing climate affects the water level of Boneville and the Great Salt Lake is born:

As the climate warmed drawing moisture from the inland sea, the lake began to shrink, until, eleven thousand years ago, it had fallen to present – day levels of about 4200'. This trend toward warmer and drier conditions signified the end of the Ice Age.

A millennium later, the lake rose slightly to an elevation of about 4250', forming the Gilbert Shoreline, but soon receded. This marked the end of Lake Bonneville and the birth of its successor, Great Salt Lake. (31-32)

Williams presents the gradual change of the water level into the Gilbert Shoreline and the birth of the Great Salt Lake. She mentions ‘warmer and drier conditions’ as ‘the end of Ice Age’. Though she does not mention it is because of environment pollution and she still defines it as natural process, changing atmosphere reflects the impact of radiation on the earth; and, the radiation has a close connection with the changes in the level and quality of water in the lake.

Williams depicts the Great Salt Lake as natural phenomenon where the toxicity of chemical weapons and other pollutants worsen natural environment day by day. Moreover, anthropocentric concept has been a threat for nature and human

beings equally since the earth/nature has its own limitations as Paul W. Taylor remarks, “If we were to accept a life- centered theory of environmental ethics, a profound reordering of our moral universe would take place. We would begin to look at the Earth’s biosphere in a new light” (75). Taylor views that environmental awareness can help readjust environmental balance. Like Taylor, Williams presents Utah environment, “One had the sense of water being in this country now, as the quality of light was different leading a high gloss to the foothills” (34). The lake ambience demands reform in human attitude where there is gradual loss of natural environment because of human carelessness.

Nature is an informant of human encroachment upon it but human beings avoid its warning and suffer more from their own activities. Though human beings seem to be unknown to the effect of their behavior against the rest of the world, nature cannot remain unaffected as L. White, JR. views, “Quite unintentionally, changes in human ways often affect nonhuman nature” (143). White views that human beings give focus on them and take nature as usual yet their self- centered concept causes natural calamities. Like White, Williams’ remark, “Devastation respects no boundaries. The landscape of my childhood and the landscape of my family, the two things I had always regarded as bedrock, were now subject to change. Quicksand. (40)” indicates human beings’ unawareness of nature despite its suppression by them. Human beings take nature as constant object while it has its own system of ruling its things and beings; and, even an element of nature can affect the holistic environment.

Despite being a part of nature, human beings cannot think how they are being away from nature. While fulfilling instant needs, human beings exploit nature to the extent of its loss. This notion breaks the natural order of the world as Val Plumwood’s *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* remarks “There is a total break or discontinuity

between humans and nature, such that humans are completely different from everything else in nature” (70). Self- evasive anthropocentric notion finds humans free from the effect of natural disaster where it separates human beings from their own kind and other parts of nature. Like the concept Williams views, “It is however, our own creation. The creation we fear” (44). It indicates how human beings go against themselves since nuclear test is the creation of human being and is against human and nonhuman entities as well.

Self- centered notion of human beings exploits nature for human interest while it results against human existence. Aldo Leopold says, “Waters, like soil, are part of the energy circuit. Industry, by polluting waters or obstructing them with dams, may exclude the plants and animals necessary to keep energy in circulation” (43). Though it seems necessary to channelize natural sources for human purpose, forceful control over nature by human beings obstructs the circulation of nature. It protects neither humans nor nonhumans in nature. Like Leopold, Williams’ *Refuge* presents how human beings suffer from nature when they think to empower them, “The water had had no place to go and, consequently, it was backing up onto city streets. Mountain Bell Communications Systems and the LDS Church Office Building were in immediate danger of flooding” (45). The lake itself is on deeper level than the surface of the earth; and, physical infrastructures made by human beings have blocked the water level. The obstruction in the natural flow of the water endangers Utah.

Human life in the surrounding of nature is good for humans but no human existence is possible unless they maintain nature- human balance. When the human constructions attempt to control water with dams and the roads, it floods over the area since everywhere there is blockage in the lake. Harold Fromm’s remark on techno- centered nature of human beings, “An open-ended negotiation between . . .

technology's creative and destructive forces may be the only resolution of what . . . constitutes creation and destruction is hardly self-evident or clear. (121)" shows the need of reconsideration of nature- human relationships. Fromm comments on techno-centered human perspective. Though human beings hardly confess their technological invention as destructive, it has been not only useful but also harmful mostly. Like Fromm's argument, Williams depicts how human beings force the State River to its flowing:

A car bridge between the city blocks of 500 and 600 South was erected for the price of seventy thousand dollars--- no small risk financially, for a mayor who saw his town being truncated, cut in half by flooding and not having a clue how long it might last. But his hunch paid off. The city kept moving in spite of the floods. And the State River kept flowing. (46)

Though nature alarms human beings against the anthropocentric governing of nature, they cannot correct them and continue their anti- environmental activities which forces nature to its deterioration. Mayor of City Creek presents the data of how the flood in the Great Salt Lake has affected the non- natural construction but not the cause of natural calamity that is because of human beings.

Self- centered notion of human beings focuses more on human problems than on natural one. It lacks respect for other as Val Plumwood views in, *Feminism and Mastery of Nature*, "We need to recognize not only our human continuity with the natural world but also its distinctness and independence from us and the distinctness of the needs of things in nature from ours" (178). She means human beings should understand the intention of other or nature to establish nature- human relationship. Plumwood argues for human nature that cannot realize individuality of others as

Williams views, “The umbilical cord is cut— not at our request. . . . A mother reclaims her body, for her own life. NOT OURS. Minutes old, our first death is our own birth. (50)” refers to the desire of an infant but not of mother and the earth alike. Her further statement “Suffering shows us what we are attached to . . . (53)” connotes that human suffering is the result of their origin while it is a reaction of nature against human encroachment on it. She remarks that struggle for existence is troublesome. Silent consent for natural destruction seems to be cordiality with nature and bringing change in anthropocentric concept is also difficult for human beings yet it is necessary for maintaining order in nature- human relationship.

Human health depends on natural surroundings and it has close connection with how they treat for nature. Amy M. Patrick’s essay, “Apocalyptic or Precautionary? Revisioning Texts in Environmental Literature” remarks, “By engaging human health issues alongside environmental concerns, writers in a precautionary tradition address not only the “land ethic” promoted by Aldo Leopold and others but also more traditionally defined human ethics” (145). Patrick remarks that the environmental studies focus more on human issues than on environmental issues. Like Patrick, Williams connects her family issue as human issue with Utah, the Great Salt Lake. She says, “I am absorbed into the present. My garden asks nothing more of me than I am able to give” (52). She seems to personify nature as a silent receiver. Though human beings receive their needs from nature, they place them above nature. In fact, it is fatal for humans since depletion of nature at present is because of encroachment on nature. Her comment on urban land, “Our urban wastelands are becoming wildlife’s last stand. The great frontier. We’ve moved them out of town like all other “low- income tenants. (54)” depicts how human beings are snatching off the prairie land and converting it into desert. For human beings all

things and beings are necessary but their self- imposition on other parts of nature deceives them.

Human beings dominate nature and its other things and beings to empower them. They only think for dominating other when it is self- deceptive as Val Plumwood argues in *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason*, “Hyper- separation is a form of differentiation that is used to justify domination and conquest” (102). She remarks that the sense of separation comes from the sense of domination and control over other but that endangers human beings finally. Like Plumwood, Williams remarks, “What makes our relationship to starlings even more curious is what we loathe them, yet we do everything within our power to encourage them as we systematically erase the specialized habitats of specialized birds” (56). Hierarchy between human and nonhuman beings and things always effaces one element of nature from another. Human beings hate starlings accusing them as exterminators but do not confess their crime of encroaching natural habitats. They never think that each species has ontological values in nature. Williams’ view on the lake, “This lake attracts flies like a magnet attracts iron shavings. Best to go home, it’s so hot and miserable. (63)” clarifies the opportunistic view of human beings. The lake temperature rises up and falls down on the scale of climate change caused by humans whereas human beings assume it as natural phenomenon. They even neglect nature if it cannot serve human interest.

Great Salt Lake’s effect on its surroundings has been elaborated but why the lake is flooding has remained unnoticed as Lynn Ross- Bryant remarks:

Nature is often opposed to history, being seen as static, an endless repetition of the same, whereas history is seen as change, progress toward a goal. Paradoxically, temporality is often affirmed only when

it is controlled, i.e., when it is made atemporal. The unified self of traditional Western theory leaves the temporal behind as it discerns an eternal pattern for the self. Thus, change is denied even as history appeared to be affirmed. (86)

Ross- Bryant remarks that human beings see their issue destined to their goal and nature as static phenomenon. Though encroachment on nature has degraded human life standard, they deny change in nature- human relation and its effect on human life.

Human beings boast upon their knowledge while every part of nature has its own existence. Supporting Rolston, Clare Palmer remarks, “Every organism has a good of its own, and is thus a holder of value, even if not a beholder of it” (26).

Palmer remarks that nature has given value to all things and beings on its creation though they are unable to rule other as human beings can while the misuse of human rationality has endangered their own value on the earth. The intrinsic value of nature is unavoidable though human beings cannot understand it. Williams comments on the lake as the voice of the lake, “Great Salt Lake strips me of contrivances and conditioning, saying, “I am not what you see. Question me. Stand by your own impressions” (92). Her comment on the lake remarks the gap between appearance and reality of nature. It has its own cycle but the anthropocentric view defines nature in terms of human perception on it; the reality of suffering of nature differs from the perception of human beings. Robert M. Benton’s review on *Refuge* also implies how human beings have deceived their own kind:

Refuge is a personal account of destruction and hope, recording natural ecological changes in special places. *Refuge* also is a personal reaction to another kind of destruction, one of ultimate consequences which has too often been unquestionably accepted by those it will destroy. Its

message is that Tolerating blind obedience in the name of patriotism or religion ultimately takes our lives. (70)

Benton's remark on Williams' *Refuge* as her personal account consisting of destruction and hope, finds the text as a challenge against human hubris that they can be safe even when nature is endangered with atomic explosions and chemicals. It asks for human involvement for strengthening nature and human beings alike but not to be just a witness of natural calamity.

Environmental adjustment can be restored but it needs human beings' conscience for analyzing the causes of natural disaster. As Benton argues for the causes of natural disaster, Williams says, "There is no one to blame, nothing to fight. No developer with a dream of condominiums. No toxic waste dump that would threaten the birds. Not even a single dam on the Bear River to oppose. Only a simple natural phenomenon: the rise of Great Salt Lake" (140). Whether Williams is ironic to her remark in this scene or not, it shows that human beings have now to rethink for their evaluation on nature- human relationship. Like Benton, to ignore such changes as natural phenomenon is to invite further calamity upon human life. The lake is down to hill and collects water from every corner of the site but has no outlet. Moreover, the flooding of water depends on how the atmosphere changes. Human activities like nuclear testing; throwing garbage in and around the lake has decided the temperature of the lake, quality and the level of water. In a word, human beings are mainly responsible for endangering and deteriorating the lake environment that has endangered human beings with its surroundings.

Williams mirrors the rise and fall of water level in the Great Salt Lake as natural phenomenon and cancer as the product of nuclear test. It all has the impact of human product as Robert D. Bullard views, "Government and private industry in

general have followed the “path of least resistance” in addressing externalities as pollution discharges, waste disposal, and nonresidential activities that may pose a health- threatening toxins and industrial pollution . . .” (327). Bullard’s comment on the government or the people focuses that toxicity in natural environment prevails because of human beings’ discrimination between human and nonhuman world. Human beings manage and control nature to facilitate their lives yet it proves to be suicidal attempt. Like Bullard, Williams remarks, “Each of us must face our own Siberia,” . . . “We must come to peace within our own isolation. No one can rescue us. My cancer is my Siberia” (93). It depicts that the health of people is connected with the place whether they confess or not; separation of people from that place is not a source of peace but the environmental awareness of human beings can restore their lost peace in nature. Her projection of Siberia as the root of cancer is completely self- evasive since it is not nature but human beings are the producers of pollution in Utah. It shows how human beings are ignoring the voice of nature and giving rise to disaster. Williams’ emphasis on isolation seems to accuse nature whereas it is because of anthropocentric domination over nature as she further mentions, “Hundreds of white pelicans stand shoulder to shoulder on an asphalt spit that eventually disappears into Great Salt Lake” (98). Nature has varieties in its creation but human beings have endangered it while constructing modern infrastructures for them.

Human beings invade natural surroundings to favor them while it cannot maintain their desire rather they suffer from its effect. When this tendency detaches them from others as Val Plumwood argues in *Environmental Culture*, “Mechanistic world- views especially deny nature any form of agency of its own” (109). Plumwood remarks on the self- deceptive instrumental attitude of human beings. Mechanistic view ignores the independent value of other entities of nature while

human life depends on them. Like Plumwood's comment, Williams depicts the condition of colony birds, "No colony nesters down there," says Paul. "No native grasses. No nothing. . . . That island has been beaten to death. It's privately owned now" (104). Human beings do not concern for prairie and they suffer from environmental hazards when there is imbalance in their surroundings. Though population control is impossible in proportion to wild lives, humans can maintain natural harmony having changed their attitude to the rest of the biotic and abiotic world.

Human beings have no safe landing unless they have other communities of nature. They have deprived the right of other entities and invited self-disaster as Edward Wilson views in "Apocalypses Now", "The second reason for the mass extinction was that the island birds were unafraid of the two- legged colonists, having never been exposed to comparable predators during their evolution" (39). Wilson remarks that the island birds feel no threat from human beings but human beings kill them as well as encroach upon the birds' land. It is contradictory to nature and detrimental to humans. Williams' remarks on the birds' nature, "Birds are opportunistic by nature, but resourcefulness fails in the presence of high- speed traffic and asphalt" (112) also comments on the birds as opportunistic and at the same time says that their peace has been plundered by human constructions. The double standard understanding of bird- human relation itself is a paradox as her mother suggests, "You can't be constantly giving without depleting the source. Somehow, somewhere, we must replenish ourselves" (117). She means that to fulfill human desires, human beings have to exploit either nature or other things and beings in their surroundings but the fact is that nature cannot surpass its own limitations. There is no human survival out of nature but it should have co- existence. Human beings' continuous

effort to exploit nature without being concerned with its revival has been the cause of natural disaster and crisis for human and nonhuman world alike.

Self- centric notion of human being has propelled nature to its decline. Air, water, soil and the space nowhere have they left unpolluted but they expect the serenity of nature. Nevertheless, nature is the source of human existence and their health depends on their surroundings as Paul W. Taylor mentions:

The ecological relationships between any community of living things and their environment form an organic whole of functionally interdependent parts. Each ecosystem is a small universe itself in which the interactions of its various species populations comprise an intricately woven network of cause- effect relations. (78)

Taylor views that nature has its own way of adaptation and connectivity in its system but it needs human understanding of how nature plays its role since with the breach of nature's law, every things and beings suffer from it.

Taylor focuses on nature- human relationship. He implies that environment is an outcome of interactions of nonhuman and human world. As Taylor remarks on ecosystem as a network, Williams remarks on how human beings are losing their connection with other parts of nature because of self- centered notion, "If grasslands continue to shrink, the long- billed curlew could follow the same path as its relative. Its plaintive cry resounds like a warning" (145). It depicts how encroachment on the grasslands has endangered birds and the mournful sound of the birds is like a warning against human encroachment on other parts of nature. Human beings give importance to them and have no option of food and shelter except on the earth but they have no life without other parts of nature. She further says, "I think I have denied having cancer for years. It's a survival skill" (200). Her ambiguous remark on cancer proves

how human beings have invited their disaster with natural disaster. Taylor's cause-effect relationship between community and environment seems to have applied in the environment of the Great Salt Lake as an official from the Atomic Energy Commission says, "It's a good place to throw used razor blades" (241- 42). This remark points out that the lake contains salt only and is suitable for throwing useless things into it. While the lake cannot maintain its temperature and water level in accordance with the changing temperature and pollutants prevailed in its surroundings; consequently, its atmosphere forces to lose natural balance.

Nowhere in nature is useless place as human beings think. The forceful encroachment upon nature by human beings imbalances natural order as the lake rises and recedes with its toxicity. Nature has its own order but human beings are intent on controlling and changing the system of nature; it has been treated as an instrument as Val Plumwood says in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, "the instrumentalization of nature takes a totalizing form: all planetary life is brought within the sphere of agency of the master (Self)" (192-93). Human beings try to control nature and its role whereas it is self-destructive for them. Like Plumwood, Williams' *Refuge* mentions, "We've harnessed the lake!" exclaims the Governor Norm Bangerter. "We are finally in control" (247). Transitory control in nature delights human beings. They understand nature as according to their own situation having no care for oncoming results. Human beings see nature as manipulative but it cannot go beyond its ethics. Williams' description of the lake refers to the solution of present crisis but does not pave way for the permanent recovery of the lost nature.

Williams' depiction of the lake seems to be controlled yet it depends on how human beings control over anthropocentric behavior that they realize them as one of the parts of nature. Buell's *Future of Environmental Criticism* clarifies it better:

At each stage, how environmentality gets encoded and expressed is always both partial and greater than one notices at first look– the paradox at the heart of what I have called “environmental unconscious” (. . .). Insofar as the where of existence precedes the what of social practice, a text’s environmental unconscious is more deeply embedded even than its “political unconscious.” Regardless of how one comes down on this issue of priority, . . . (qtd. in Buell 44).

Buell argues that without diving deep into the particular context, we cannot ensure the meaning of the text. He says that how the text contextualizes its message to the reader is more practical than its surface understanding since environmental awareness in practice is the best way for coming out of the present crisis of natural degradation.

Lawrence Buell’s argument of ontological value of meaning in the text focuses that the autobiographical narrative of *Refuge* seems to have created the forceful recovery of the Great Salt Lake as Williams depicts how the lake is recovered:

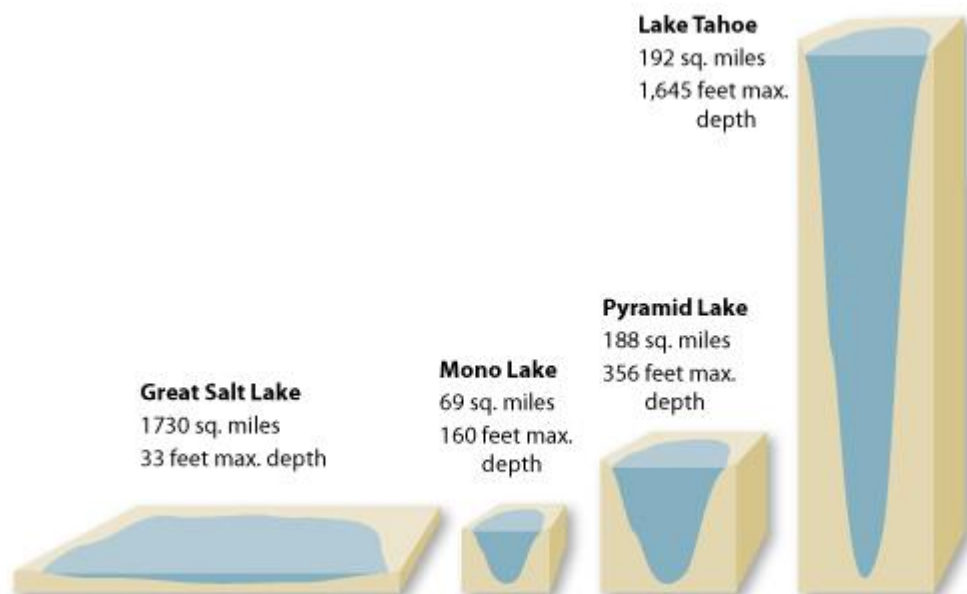
The day the pumps were turned on, the lake did an about- face on its own. Great Salt Lake is receding, having dropped more than two feet from last year’s lake level high of 4211.85'. Where the water has pulled back, the land looks as though it is recovering from a long illness. Sheets of algae and rotting vegetation hang like handmade paper and bobs of tangled hair. (255)

Artificial force of human beings seems to retreat the lake but it is like her mother’s cancer problem. Forceful management of the lake is to control nature while it finally evades human beings since controlling of human encroachment upon nature can only retreat the lake.

Though human beings boast upon their power to control nature, it is not a passive recipient of human activities. It reacts in accordance with its overall surroundings. According to the Genetic Science Learning Center of Utah, the Great Salt Lake has no outlet from it but water from other sources flows into downhill and affects the lake's quality of water, depth and weather:

Changes in elevation are accompanied by changes in salinity. During wet years, incoming fresh water dilutes the salt water, and salinity decreases. During dry years, continued evaporation removes fresh water, and salinity increases.

Great Salt Lake has a much greater surface-area-to-volume ratio than other lakes in the region. As a result, a tremendous amount of water-- an average of 2.6 billion gallons-- evaporates from the lake each day. This affects not only the lake's depth, but also the weather.



The above figure and the description of the Great Salt Lake portray that the temperature of the place determines the quality and quantity of water in the lake; and monsoon seems to be the determinant of the future of the lake. It is therefore, the environmental crisis depends on human activities as the water level of the lake and quality is unstable.

Human activities play a prime role for maintaining the environment of a particular area though there are other things and beings on the earth. Like the Genetic Science Learning Center of Utah report, Williams views, “Wetlands have a long history of being dredged, drained, and filled, or regarded as wastelands on the periphery of our towns” (265). She remarks that wetlands have no fix environment as it keeps on changing. It shows the wetlands and climate of those areas have interrelationship since the change in environment affects the wetlands and this environment is formed of all living and nonliving entities.

Unstable environment of the Great Salt Lake indicates the change in human behavior since climate change and human activities are interrelated with each other. Human beings’ understanding of nature decides the environment of their surroundings as G. Morgan states in *Images of Organizations*:

Egocentric organizations draw boundaries around a narrow definition of themselves, and attempt to advance the self interest of this narrow domain. In the process, they truncate and distort their understanding of the wider context in which they operate, and surrender their future to the way the context evolves. (243)

Pointing to the egocentric organizations, Morgan remarks that they interpret meaning on the basis of their interest that with the distortion of context.

Like Morgan's remark on the self-created meaning of the context, Williams mentions, "The Division of Water Resources has officially turned off the pumps. Great Salt Lake is on its own. The flood is over. The Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge is able to breathe once at lake level: 4206.00' " (273). Williams' depiction of the lake's retreat is possible because of the forceful encroachment of human beings upon nature. It cannot predict its improvement forever as she has previously mentioned, "I could never have anticipated its rise" (22). She further remarks, "The officials thought it was a cruel joke to leave us stranded in the desert with no way to get home. What they didn't realize was that we were home, soul- centered and strong, women who recognized the sweet smell of sage as fuel for our spirits" (290). The last narrative of *Refuge* by Williams mentions that the ego of male dominated society cannot understand the interdependence between nature and human beings as of male – female biasness; and, the women have been the victim of cancer. It reflects that males have commodified and destroyed the potency of nature yet as a human we cannot undervalue the role of women to protect nature. She seems to raise her voice through *Refuge* but her ambiguous stand cannot ascertain her strength as she claims here.

Though self- evasive emotional attachment of Williams depicts her sense of belongingness with the lake, Utah, her condition is similar to the birds and the lake since there is no life without changing human perspective of nature as other. Focusing on human- nonhuman relationship, supporting Rolston, Plumwood views in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, "Wilderness is not a place where there is no interaction between self and other, but one where self does not impose itself. It is a place to be visited on its own terms and not on ours" (164). She remarks that living beyond nature is impossible but while living with it, human beings must maintain the order of natural milieu to find its support. Similarly, Williams says, "Under the cover of

darkness, ten women slipped under a barbed- wire fence and entered the contaminated country” (288). Human beings have no escape from nature yet they cannot understand its spirit and contaminate it. They exploit nature to maintain human supremacy over other things and beings whereas they lose their connection with nature and endanger human existence.

Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place begins with the locale of the Great Salt Lake in North America and continues with the rise and fall of the Great Salt Lake. It consists of flooding in the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, birds’ migration and death; and, cancer problem in Williams’ maternal clan, especially of her mother’s death of cancer, and the effect of nuclear tests. It concludes with the forceful control of water in the lake and Williams’ spiritual connection with the degraded environment of the Great Salt Lake in Utah. The nuclear test in Utah and its radiation, flooding in the lake, constructions of the roads, dams, direct accumulation of environment pollutants endanger the lake and its surrounding, Utah. The brine-shrimp industry, transportation, causeways across various parts of the lake and global economic changes mainly affect the ecological properties of the lake as argued by Daniel Bedford (80). Williams finds spiritual bond as her stamina against cancer and the degraded environment of the lake while there is no human survival without changing anthropocentric attitude to nature as she views, "we are no more and no less than the life that surrounds us (29)” (qtd. in Ross- Bryant 101). She views as if nature has shaped human life but encroachment on nature has endangered human existence. Human beings give importance to them and ignore nature while it endangers human existence itself.

The self- evasive anthropocentric concept of seeing nature as a tool for human beings is the main cause of disaster in *Refuge*. Human beings control nature to

empower them when there is no human existence having no harmony with nature.

Williams' depiction of the lake, nuclear testing to empower human beings and cancer prove that there is no human survival unless they realize their presence in the presence of other things and beings since endangered nature can serve neither itself nor its dependants.

Chapter III

Self- Projected Sufferings of Human Beings in *The Road*

Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road* (2006) depicts human struggle for existence in the dismal environment of nature, the woods. The story begins with the protagonist an unnamed man's awakening of a dreadful dream of suffering in the woods. The man and a boy, protagonists of the novel, wander from place to place in search of food, water and security whereas they worry when rain falls on the arid woods. Human beings have turned the woods into barrenness while imposing their superiority on their fellow beings. They endeavor to empower them making nature a tool for their purpose but they suffer when nature cannot support them as Val Plumwood argues in her theory of ecological crisis of reason. Plumwood not only points out the cause of human suffering but also finds its solution in human awareness of independent value of nature and interdependence of its things and beings including human beings. The protagonists of *The Road* suffer from hunger and insecurity and go for the stored houses and bunkers whereas they have no survival unless human beings give equal importance to all things and beings of nature.

The protagonists continue their search of food having no concern for the natural disaster. It reflects the self- evasive anthropocentric view as the ancient Greek playwright Aeschylus's play *Prometheus Bound* mentions, "At first, they saw but seeing was no use; they heard but didn't hear. Like shapes in dreams, they passed long lives in purposeless confusion. They knew no homes . . ." (462- 67). Aeschylus' comment on the earthly people, narrated by Prometheus, portrays that nature has

provided everything for human beings but their conscience cannot comprehend the mystery of creation that all things and beings should equally survive on the earth. It remarks that the Creator of human beings has given the power of understanding the mystery of nature though human beings have not utilized it. This kind of self- evasive anthropocentric vision observes nature as a commodity for human purpose and finally disconnects human beings from nature. Anthropocentric perception cannot understand the mystery of nature i.e. human beings are under the cycle of nature. As Prometheus remarks on human beings, the man experiences the world in *The Road*:

When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he'd reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him. Nights dark beyond darkness and the days more gray each one than what had gone before. Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world. His hand rose and fell softly with each precious breath. He pushed away the plastic tarpaulin and raised himself in the stinking robes and blankets and looked toward the east for any light but there was none.

(1)

Like Aeschylus' *Prometheus*, Cormac McCarthy depicts the ongoing disaster in nature and the negligence of human beings for the revival of nature. The man observes suffering of nature and of his own son but he is shocked more by his son's life than by nature's existence. His concern for his son is natural yet human existence in the void of nature is self- deception. The man worries about his son's precious breath while its source is nature and human beings have continuously polluted nature as the man's remark "the days more gray each one than what had gone before" suggests.

Human beings treat nature having no care of their attachment with nature but this attitude creates a chaos in their life. Prometheus' further remark on human beings, "They had no way of telling when winter would arrive, or flowery spring, or summer with its fruits; in everything they acted without thought, . . . (467-70)" highlights that unawareness of human beings has lacked their connection with nature and they have suffered from natural disaster. Like this comment on human nature, McCarthy views:

With the first gray light he rose and walked out to the road and squatted and studied the country to the south. Barren, silent, godless. He thought the month was October but he wasn't sure. He hadn't kept a calendar for years. They were moving south. There'd be no surviving another winter here. (2)

Human beings run their life with the help of nature but they create confusion and crisis when they destroy nature for their interest. Human beings cause war and devastation on the earth to be superior as the barren, silent, godless situation indicates while it affects human and nonhuman world alike. Nothing in nature seems to be in order. Human beings themselves create chaos in nature and get troubled with it as the man's pessimist reading of nature implies.

Nature itself has self-regulating power and system though it cannot cross its limitations and revive with the speed of human encroachment upon it. Self-centric notion of human beings has been the cause of natural disaster as Val Plumwood views in *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason*, "our insensitivity and injustice towards nature is a prudential hazard to us and should be rejected on that ground alone" (115). She views that human beings' wrong attitude to nature has endangered human beings themselves; and, unless we see our presence in the presence of nature, we will be the victim of our own evaluation of nature because

nature provides our power. Like Plumwood, McCarthy's description of nature by the man, "He studied what he could see. The segments of road down there among the dead trees (2- 3)" shows that human beings' self- centered notion destroys their own creation and nature alike. They consume nature randomly and suffer from its destruction. Plumwood's description of "human insensitivity and injustice to nature" seems to be applied throughout the novel as the man narrates a story to his son, "Everything as it once had been save faded and weathered". The man's story depicts that there is nothing to survive humans yet his concern with the boy's health and his reply "I'm all right" refers to the self- evasive nature of human beings (6). Though it is an innocent voice of a child to find secure even when nature is unable to support human beings, there is no human survival when nature cannot nurture them.

All things and beings are the parts of the same nature while the self- evasive anthropocentric assumption of human beings does not care for the holistic existence in proportion to their needs. The man observes nature so that they may have better survival but he does not express any word for the regeneration of nature devastated by humans as Buell views in his *Writing for an Endangered World*:

At the turn of the twenty-first century, likewise, perceived environmental crisis will doubtless prompt many affluent individuals, communities, and societies to seek safe havens from which they can blame— or trash— the victims. But the problem may be more inescapable this time around, as the prospect of finding sanctuary anywhere becomes fainter" (35).

Buell's remarks on the twenty- first century human beings' opportunistic nature and their environmental problem depicts that nature has been declined day by day but there is no attempt of improving it. Instead of giving importance to nature as to

humans, human beings are intent on finding safer place whereas it adds problem than solution for humans.

Like Buell, McCarthy's description of the apocalyptic environment, ". . . the shape of city stood in the grayness like a charred drawing sketched across the waste. Nothing to see. No smoke. (7)" portrays human beings' penitence for the loss of created environment and the further need of it while it shows less concern for the origin of nature. In fact, natural environment supplies raw materials for further development of human needs. Human beings cannot be away from nature but still they seem careless before its complete destruction. It is futile and self- evasive attempt since there is no human supremacy in the absence of other things and beings.

Human beings' weakness for realizing the connection with nature endangers the existence of nature and human beings alike. As supporting A. L. Jennings, Val Plumwood views in *Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason*, "The Otherisation of nature bears on a key question of justice – the concern with obstacles to justice, especially forms of partiality and self imposition that prevent us from giving others their due" (11). She remarks that otherisation of nature is a barrier between nature and human relationship as it thinks nature is subjugated to human beings. The otherised notion interprets the same condition for self and other incongruously but it is against human beings themselves finally. As the man and the boy talk about their relationship:

What would you do if I died?

If you died I would want to die too.

So you could be with me?

Yes. So I could be with you.

Okay. (9)

McCarthy presents the father-son interrelationship as never-ending process that the man and the boy think for sacrificing their life even at the cost of death whereas they seem indifferent to nature. The woods reflects that there is no human interest for reviving nature even when everything and being seem to extinct from the world. Furthermore, the man's dream conversation with his wife, "We're survivors" also remarks human weakness of confessing truth as his wife refutes, "We're the walking dead in a horror film" (57). Though the latter speech seems to suggest that still there is a sense of belongingness with nature, the man's claim on life-force in the absence of natural harmony and his attachment with the boy clarifies double standard of human beings. It shows how human beings cannot acknowledge the truth of nature and human relationship. Moreover, "The hundreds of nights they'd sat up arguing the pros and cons of self destruction . . ." indicates self-evasive anthropocentric attitude of human beings (60). Undoubtedly, the grey scene in *The Road* depicts self-destruction of human beings. They still cannot confess that they have endangered them like nature.

Otherising concept not only differentiates nature from human beings but also leads them to their complete disaster as Hannah Stark explores McCarthy's inspiration for his writing of *The Road* based on his first television interview, an exclusive with Oprah Winfrey:

My son John, about four years ago, he and I went to El Paso . . . and we checked into the old hotel there and one night (John was asleep) . . . and I just stood and looked out of the window at this town . . . I just had an image of what this town might look like in fifty or a hundred years. I just had this image of these fires up on the hills and everything

being laid waste and I thought a lot about my little boy. (qtd. in Stark
72)

McCarthy views that the inspiration of such apocalyptic narrative is the outcome of human beings' unlimited exploitation of nature on the earth. His observation of the town out of the window at his hotel shocks his heart that the concretization of the earth by human beings will leave no space for their own generation. His concern for his son implies that human beings' encroachment upon the earth is an obstruction for human existence itself as he imagines the "image of . . . fires up on the hills and everything being laid waste".

McCarthy's reading of the town implicates that human beings are invading nature beyond its recovery. It is self- evasive for them since the concretization of the earth is self- suicidal attempt of human beings as he portrays the scene of the city in *The Road*:

The city was mostly burned. No sign of life. Cars in the street caked with ash, everything covered with ash and dust. Fossil tracks in the dried sludge. A corpse in a doorway dried to leather. Grimacing at the day. He pulled the boy closer. . . .

You forget what you want to remember and you remember what you want to forget. (10- 11)

Like his imageries of the ruined world, McCarthy presents the apocalyptic scene of the city. It portrays that things and beings have lost their connection with nature. The phrase "the dried sludge" refers to the ruined nature as if the earth has been changed into desert. Nevertheless, the last line "You forget what you want . . ." expresses the human psychology that they only know the value of the lost nature but not of what they have. The man remembers his bygone days of having pleasant nature "a lake a

mile from his uncle's farm" but the present crisis on their surroundings depicts that human beings seem to be completely unaware of their encroachment upon nature (11). The last line ". . . you want to forget" also suggests how human beings destroy nature to empower them and suffer when they lack it.

The comparative study of the past and the present conditions of nature and its surroundings in *The Road* shows that human beings deplete nature to fulfill their present needs and suffer in future. Although nature protects human and nonhuman world alike, human beings disturb nature thereby they endanger their existence. As Edward Wilson's *The environmental ethic* views, "An undisturbed forest rarely discloses its internal anatomy with such clarity. Its edge is shielded by thick secondary growth or else, along the river bank, the canopy spills down to ground level" (153). Wilson remarks that the greenery of nature protects almost area of the earth unless human beings encroach upon the area.

Wilson's views regarding to natural balance mentions the internal mechanism of nature to protect its parts and lives but human activities themselves forcefully destroy it as McCarthy's description of the shore depicts:

The shore was lined with birchtrees that stood bone pale against the dark of the evergreens beyond. The edge of the lake a riprap of twisted stumps, gray and weathered, the windfall trees of a hurricane years past. The trees themselves had long been sawed for firewood and carried away. . . . A dead perch lolling belly up in the clear water. Yellow leaves. (11-12)

The shore has natural entities but they all seem to have lost their charm due to encroachment on it. Like Wilson, McCarthy's depiction of the shore reflects that encroachment on the shore has disturbed its environment. The undisturbed

surrounding protects shore and humans alike whereas the disturbed environment is detrimental to human and nonhuman alike.

Human beings' self- assertive domination over nature has been the cause of natural disaster as Val Plumwood argues in *The Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis*, "The subject/object framework associated with anthropocentrism and mastery is another anticomunicative framework" (190). While describing nature/human dualism, Plumwood argues that polarizing concept between human and non- human species has given the rise of ecological crisis; reduction and exclusion of non- human world paves the way for environmental disaster. Plumwood's concept of nature- human hierarchy seems to have applied in the case of McCarthy's protagonists as well:

He woke to the sound of distant thunder and sat up. The faint light all about, quivering and sourceless, refracted in the rain of drifting soot.

He pulled the tarp about them and he lay awake a long time listening.

If they got wet there'd be no fires to dry by. If they got wet they would probably die. (13- 14)

As Plumwood describes human beings' biased behavior against nature, the man finds the woods as arid land that in the need of water for its revival but he is worried about rainfall. Though nature revives with rainfall, the man intends for rain stop. He is afraid of getting wet in the rain when the rain helps the barren woods flourish and human life is secure. Moreover, the man's journey out of home on such wretched condition is the self- projected issue of humans as "the rain of drifting soot" implies polluted environment.

The future of human beings depends on independent value of nature but their undying passion for present needs focuses on human beings only. As Lawrence Buell

argues in *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, “That the concept of place also gestures in at least three directions at once-- toward environmental materiality, toward social perception or construction, and toward individual affect . . . for environmental criticism” (63). Buell views that human beings define nature in relation to their attachment with place, society and their own perception to environment. Moreover, human beings define nature from their existing environmental perception as Cormac McCarthy mentions, “Mostly he worried about their shoes. That and food. Always food” (16). The man concerns for what they have and how they can manage their concerns having no concern for the woods. He always follows for the previously stored things from nature as McCarthy further narrates, “He pushed open the door half expecting to find his childhood things. Raw cold daylight fell through from the roof. Gray as his heart” (26- 27). Like Buell’s argument of human perception on nature, the man conditions him to find worn out things in his deserted house where he hardly gets solution.

The man intends for surviving on the previously stored foods and things whereas nothing is safe in the endangered world. Though the man ignores the woods and searches for previously stored foods, he dies of suffering. As describing the impact of domination over nature, A. N. Whitehead writes:

The key to the mechanism of evolution is the necessity for the evolution of a favorable environment, conjointly with the evolution of any specific type of enduring organisms of great permanence. Any physical object which by its influence deteriorates its environment, commits suicide. (109)

Describing the evolutionary process and environmental effect, Whitehead remarks that the subjugation of nature against its existing balance is to deteriorate

environment; and, the environmental degradation is detrimental to the inhabitants of that surrounding. Like Whitehead, McCarthy mentions:

Creedless shells of men tottering down the causeways like migrants in a feverland. The frailty of everything revealed at last. Old and troubling issues resolved into nothingness and night. The last instance of a thing takes the class with it. Turns out the light and is gone. Look around you. Ever is a long time. But the boy knew what he knew. That ever is no time at all. (28)

As Whitehead's claim, McCarthy's depiction of human suffering in *The Road* is a suicidal attempt due to encroachment on nature. It implies that the "trembling" in nature is because of ongoing encroachment of human beings upon nature (27). The man and the boy continue their journey in search of life and security in the woods when self-centric notion of humans has destroyed it as "creedless shells . . ." implies. The man wanders for finding safer place even in the insecure world whereas his own son cannot believe that they are secure in the disastrous world.

McCarthy's projection of apocalyptic world and human suffering depicts that human beings ignore the voice of nature and sometimes they even ignore their own voice that the origin of human suffering is their weakness for assimilating the way of nature. As Lawrence Buell argues supporting for Chuang Tzu's "Rifling Trunks" in *Writing for Endangered World*:

Everyone knows enough to condemn what he takes to be no good, but no one knows enough to condemn what he has already taken to be good. This is how the great confusion comes about, blotting out the brightness of sun and moon above, searing the vigor of hills and

streams below, overturning the round of the four seasons in between.

(1)

Buell argues for human instinct that human beings lack their self- analytical thinking on their perception. He remarks this characteristic as human weakness that forces them to dismantle environmental balance in nature. The overall natural degradation is because of human beings' self-centered notion since human beings lack their sensitivity upon nature. The uncontrolled exploitation of nature creates anarchy in the overall system of nature and its surroundings yet human beings forget their dependence on nature and give importance to them.

Survival of human beings is possible when they accept the spirit of nature but human beings think them apart from nature. Like Buell's remarks on Tzu, the man and the boy have undergone the problem of the created environment:

He leaned on the cart to get his breath while the boy waited. There was a sharp crack from somewhere on the mountain. Then another. It's just a tree falling, he said. It's okay. The boy was looking at the dead roadside trees. It's okay, the man said. All the trees in the world are going to fall sooner or later. But not on us. (35)

Everywhere there is tremor in nature. Destruction in nature paves the way for further destruction of human beings also while the anthropocentric concept ignores the uproar of nature and feels human life secure even in disastrous nature. The man with his son lives in the woods and searches for life- force but remains disinterested with the crack in the mountain. His comment on falling trees shows as if human beings have no connection with nature on the earth.

Unless and until human beings correlate their existence with nature, there is no life and security for them. Human beings see human and nonhuman issues separately

as L. White argues, “The history of ecologic change is still so rudimentary that we know little about what really happened, or what results were (143- 44). White argues on human weakness for understanding ecologic change that anthropocentric view is unable to realize human dependence on nature. Like his argument, the man reacts against the burned tire:

Down the bridge a hundred feet or so were the blackened remains of tires that had been burned there. He stood looking at the trailer. What do you think is in there? he said.

I don’t know.

We’re not the first ones here. So probably nothing. (47)

It remarks the carelessness of human beings against ongoing encroachment and its effect upon nature. The man and the boy move further from the mountain to riverside. They come across a bridge with burnt tires but remain unnoticed with the pollution. Due to the self- evasive anthropocentric concept of human beings, they have suffered from disaster. They evade nature when anti-environmental activities like the disposal of “blackened remains of tires” in the river add pollution in the surroundings. Whether human beings ignore the voice of nature or not, there is no escape like the man and the boy feel insecure in the barren woods.

Human beings try to escape away from environmental pollution and natural disaster while as environment refers to the surroundings of nature, human activities play vital role for maintaining and deteriorating its condition. Global warming, depletion of ozone layer, unsteady monsoon and the like natural calamities all are because of human activities. As Val Plumwood proposes environmental solution in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, “An ecological identity which aims to resolve the legacy of alienation from the earth must seek a ground of continuity not in

separation from nature but in *connection* with it” (102). Plumwood argues that environmental studies should propose to unite human and nonhuman existence while the man follows his path ahead having no care for nature:

Come on. We have to move.

What is it?

It's the trees. They are falling down

The boy sat up and looked about wildly.

It's all right, the man said. Come on. We need to hurry. (102)

The man takes natural calamity and human security indifferently. While human insensitivity to nature is the cause of natural disaster and their suffering. Though for the man his son is more important than nature, they have no security when nature loses its balance.

Human beings think them apart from nature when security and longevity of human beings is possible if they cease to seize nature anthropocentrically. Though the man seems to try to deny the fact that life in dismal environment is beyond expectation, he cannot hide the ongoing blind spot created by human beings in nature. As Eric Hage's *Cormac McCarthy: A Literary Companion* mentions the interview with McCarthy referring to Kushner:

Though the novel is not explicit about the cause of the world's destruction, McCarthy did tell *Rolling Stone* magazine in 2007 that he didn't believe that climate change or environmental disaster would be the end for humanity; it would be the violent nature of the human race itself: "We're going to do ourselves in first," he claimed. (141)

McCarthy's interview argues that aggressive nature of human beings is detrimental to their existence. He implies that human beings themselves destroy human existence but

not nature. Though human beings go against other humans, it destroys nature and there remains nothing to empower humans.

McCarthy projects that human beings are their own enemies as the boy is afraid of other human beings, “Are they going to kill us? Papa?” (118). It remarks on human beings themselves as threat against them. Nevertheless, anti- environmental behavior leaves neither human nor nature at peace as the man’s reading of the country below to the south depicts “carbon fog”, “ruins of an old apple orchard”, “the pieced land dead and gray” . . . (124- 25). The earth is the survivor of all things and beings yet human hypocrisy to control them destroys it as “carbon fog . . .” depicts nuclear war and its impact on human and nonhuman parts of nature. The man tries to find conducive environment to be free from their life and death struggle but he finds everywhere equally endangered environment. His further remark on his situation, “Borrowed time and borrowed world and borrowed eyes with which to sorrow it” depicts helpless situation of human beings.

This helpless situation of the man and the boy is a voice for human existence yet human beings’ self- centric notion is the cause of their problem. As Lawrence Buell, in his *Writing for an Endangered World*, supporting to Ulrich Bech argues, “The world of the visible must be investigated, relativized and evaluated with respect to a second reality, only existent in thought and concealed in the world” (30). Buell argues that human beings concern for what they see and what they face when, in fact, there is gap between appearance and reality. Like the argument, the man in *The Road* is almost ready to raise his pistol against their images in a mirror and the boy has to remind him “It’s us, Papa” (139). The man goes against himself while it is because of human insensitivity to other parts of nature. Furthermore, he remarks, “. . . something was gone that could not be put right again” (143- 44). The man’s concern for his son’s

life is unquestionably reasonable but his reliance on the stored things cannot secure the boy's life. As Buell focuses on second reality, there is no human survival unless human beings give equal importance to nature and them alike.

Though anthropocentricity has endangered human existence, there is no effort in favor of nature- human harmony. While this anthropocentric attitude is the cause of ecological crisis as Val Plumwood argues in *The Environmental Culture: The ecological crisis of reason*, "Dualism is an emphatic and distancing form of separation (. . .) which creates a sharp, ontological break or radical discontinuity between the group identified as the privileged 'centre' and those subordinated" (101). Her view implies that the present environmental crisis is self- imposed disaster by human beings since there seems no attempt of protecting nature from its oncoming disaster. Human beings treat nature as a limitless entity made for them. It not only disconnects them from nature but also endangers their life- force. Like Plumwood's assertion, *The Road* presents dualistic nature of human beings and its effect, "They'd not eaten in two days. . . . It was no country that he knew. The names of the towns or the rivers. Come on, he said. We have to go" (215- 16). The very land once helpful has been helpless because of war and destruction but the man seems to be unknown when there is complete destruction.

Nature has its prosperity but anthropocentric attitude destroys nature for human interest and pretends to be unknown to the disaster when human beings suffer. Nevertheless, there is no safe landing for human beings unless they correlate their need with the need of nature as Val Plumwood further suggests, "We must aim to establish better communicative relationship with nature in all its aspects, as a preliminary to balance human needs with nature's needs and limits" (142). Plumwood argues for proper balance of needs and limitation between nature and human. Like her

argument, “They ate well but they were still a long way from the coast. He knew that he was placing hopes where he’d no reason to” (228). The man endeavors to satisfy them searching the stored foods when that is illusion since the restoration of nature can only restore human lives.

Having no restoration of flora and fauna from nature, human beings have no certainty of life but there is no effort from human beings. This scene depicts that human beings are heading towards their self- invited suffering on the earth as the woods scene has lost its life due to human beings. Life and progression of human beings is in collapse unless they rethink of natural harmony. Furthermore, it needs human awareness of nature as Edward O. Wilson’s *The environmental ethic* argues “There can be no purpose more enspiriting than to begin the age of restoration, reweaving the wonderous diversity of life that still surrounds us” (159). It makes us clear that still we can put the world in the right order if we realize the sense of harmony with nature. Like Wilson’s view, the protagonist seems to have realized human infirmities at the end as the narrative says, “Every day is a lie, he said. But you are dying. That is not a lie” (254). It portrays that human beings create hierarchy between them and nature and even among human beings though they have no escape from nature as the bitter truth of death suggests. It also asks for holding hope even at the cost of death as the man suggests for his son, “Keep going south. Do everything we did it” (297). He focuses on struggle for existence as he further says, “Old dreams encroached upon the waking world” (299). It also remarks that human beings themselves create their trouble when they cannot accept their dependence on other parts of nature. Nevertheless, like Wilson’s view, McCarthy’s sudden introduction of another old man for the boy seems to rescue him from his previous dark world as the man puts options for the boy:

You got two choices here. There was some discussion about whether to even come after you at all. You can stay here with your papa and die or you can go with me. If you stay you need to keep out of the road. I don't know how you made it this far. But you should go with me. You'll be all right. (303)

The stranger's options regarding the boy's survival in such grey and deserted world as permanent solution is a sudden twist on the novel. Moreover, the man's suggestion for the boy to be "out of the road" indicates the road as the border of dark world and his sympathy for the boy.

Though the boy cannot forget his father, he has no option without joining with other people who can feel his sense. It sounds as McCarthy's craft of writing to provide hope in the hopeless world of nature as Lawrence Buell remarks in his *Future of Environmental Criticism*, "Environmental writing and criticism offer the promise of correcting against this by refocusing attention on place at the level of either the region or the transnation" (82). He argues that environmental writing cannot be aloof from regional support that one cannot be isolated with origin. Like Buell's argument for environment writing, McCarthy has concluded *The Road* with the woman's remark, ". . . In the deep glens where they lived all things were older than man and they hummed of mystery" (306-7). This concluding description of nature- human relation in *The Road* depicts that human beings are not the first comer on the earth and will not be alive in the void of other parts of nature. While self- centered attitude of human beings ignores nature and even other humans that tendency is detrimental to nature and human beings alike.

The Road depicts human struggle for existence in dismal environment that an unnamed man and a boy suffer from hunger and insecurity in the woods. Human

beings exploit nature to empower them making nature a tool for their interest but that endangers human and nonhuman world alike. The man and the boy in *The Road* try to deny the fact of having harmony in nature but have no escape from it. The man tries to evade his suffering in the arid woods as he focuses more on him and his son's life than on nature but he faces unexpected suffering and death. The boy also has to go against his desire when his father dies. Another old man rescues him and a woman is there to console and support him. Like the memory of serene nature in the final scene, human beings have no escape from nature but they suffer from nature and their own kind due to their nature of giving importance more on them than on nature and its other parts.

Chapter – IV

Conclusion: Self Evasive Tendency of Othering Nature from Human Beings

This dissertation examines *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* and *The Road*. The former depicts that the disposal of environmental pollutants like nuclear testing have affected human being and natural surroundings, the Great Salt Lake and Bird Migratory Refuge alike while the latter one also depicts that human beings have victimized them and nature alike as grey environment, bunker and its protagonists' continuous struggle for survival suggest the woods a battle field. After the meticulous study on both the texts in the light of various ecocritics especially of Val Plumwood's perception on the dualism between human and nonhuman world of nature, it is manifest that the root of human suffering is mostly because of human beings themselves. Human beings' suffering is connected with their prejudiced perspective upon nature and their fellow beings themselves. The more human beings dismantle the order of nature, the more sufferings they invite to themselves and for nature as well.

Harmony with nature and its things and beings can only strengthen human stamina against disease and disaster alike while human beings are inclined to their needs alone having no care for other parts of nature. Seeing nature as an instrument to use and throw is to endanger human existence itself. Human beings make nature a tool for being supreme power on the earth as they conduct nuclear testing but they suffer from its consequences like cancer, hunger and insecurity from their own kind

and nature alike. This research concludes that to go against nature and its things and beings is to endanger human existence itself.

Refuge: An Unnatural History of Place and Family and *The Road* illustrate the fact that human activities centered on human purpose are detrimental to themselves and nature. Separation and dualism between human and nature or other things and beings is the root of ecological crisis and human misery. The concept of nature and its surroundings just as a tool for fulfilling human purpose has depleted nature and endangered human and nonhuman world unexpectedly. Though human beings have no escape away from nature, their self-evasive notion has been a hurdle against their life and security on the earth. Protection and restoration of natural environment can only rescue human beings from their endangered surroundings; whereas, human perceptions of nature as the source of their misery like Williams' mother, Diane's comment, "No one can rescue us. My cancer is my Siberia" (93) is not the solution for human beings and nature alike.

Diane's biased remark on nature has been approved by Williams' evaluation of the lake and the Bird Migratory Refuge also. She views the forceful control of water level of the lake as a solution for the flooding. In fact, it is self-deception and self-destruction like cancer has resulted from nuclear tests. Though Williams remarks that the lake environment is natural and cancer as the product of human beings, both the issues cannot be separated. Her own remark on the lake environment, "It's so hot and miserable (63)" contradicts with her judgment on the control of the lake since atmosphere of the place and human activities like nuclear testing, throwing dirt and drainage into the lake cannot be isolated from its overall environment. It has lacked human-nature harmony as Val Plumwood has argued in *Feminism and the Mystery of Nature*, "There is a total break or discontinuity between humans and nature . . ." (70).

Williams' comment on cancer has clarified it better that human activities are responsible for spreading pollution in the environment as she satirizes on the then American government policy, ". . . King can do no wrong" (285). Her remarks on the lake, "simple natural phenomenon . . . rise of the lake (140)", "We've harnessed the lake!" . . . "We are finally in control (247)" and "I was not prepared for the loneliness that followed (41)" are self-contradictory and self-evasive as well. Her further remark on nature-human relation depicts how human beings think them superior to nature and suffer finally, ". . . my garden asks no more than I am able to give" (52).

Similarly, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* depicts that human beings have no survival on the earth unless they harmonize with nature. Their problem of food, shelter and security has no solution from making nature a tool for their intention of ruling its other parts. The protagonists an unnamed man and a boy suffer from hunger and insecurity in the woods. They try to deny nature-human harmony but the final scene in the novel implies that no human being can go against the serenity of nature. The man thinks that he has power to serve and rescue the boy from the endangered world but has to die leaving his son alone. Human beings make nature a tool for their purpose but they suffer when nature cannot support them as Val Plumwood views, "our insensitivity and injustice towards nature is a prudential hazard to us and should be rejected on that ground alone" (115). Suffering of the man and the boy implies the self-evasive nature of human beings that they are insecure even when human beings are intent on having supremacy over nature and its other parts.

Moreover, the man's observation of the south depicts the violated environment and its direct impact on human being, "Barren, silent, godless. He thought the month was October but he wasn't sure" (2). Anarchism in nature propelled by human beings has obstructed human existence itself. Human beings exploit nature to have their

betterment while it invites crisis as the man finds, “Everything as it once had been save faded and weathered” (6). They think themselves independent of nature as the man says, “We’re survivors” while it is self- evasive as his wife reacts, “We’re the walking dead in a horror film” (57). The narrative within the scene contradicts that there is no life- security when nature itself is in crisis. McCarthy’s conflicting idea pinpoints human nature that they have undergone different ups and downs in nature due to human beings but still they cannot confess it as he says, “The hundreds of nights they’d sat up arguing the pros and cons of self destruction . . .” (60).

Furthermore, “The last instance of a thing takes the class with it (28)” Are they going to kill us? Papa? (118)” “Borrowed time and borrowed world and borrowed eyes with which to sorrow it (138)” describe self- deceptive suffering of the man and the boy in the helpless environment of the woods created by human beings. They go for the stored luxuries in the bunkers but they have no escape from nature as “Rich lands at one time. No sign of life anywhere (215- 16)” clarifies the insensitivity and injustice upon nature and its impact on human beings. Though there is no human survival being apart from the rest of nature, human being undermine other parts and suffer.

McCarthy’s concluding reference from *The Road*, “. . . In the deep glens where they lived all things were older than man and they hummed of mystery” (306- 7) finely reflects that human beings’ arrival on the earth is not accidental and unique to other parts of nature but they suffer when they ignore other parts of nature.

Therefore, there is no human survival on the earth unless we practically accept the holistic existence of nature.

Moreover, this dissertation attempts to analyze both texts *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* and *The Road* on the view of anthropocentric domination on nature as the root cause of environmental disaster and human

suffering. It may have other perspectives that my study may not have included. As *Refuge* may be analyzed from feminist issues which may focus on domination of the earth and female on the same scale. It may also have socio-cultural affinities and deep ecological perception. Similarly, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* also may have various perspectives on its analysis like existential view, feminist view, and nihilistic view; and even deep ecological perspective on it. Even so, as this research work studies nature and its environment, the impact of human- nonhuman world relation hierarchies cannot be isolated from one another; and, as a human not as a male or female all have equal responsibility to maintain natural serenity for their own sake if not for others'. Human beings impose their superiority on nature, but it endangers them and nature alike and that there is no human survival unless they acknowledge them as the part of nature.

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