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Subversion of Anthropocentric Worldview in Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's *The Revenant*

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Letter of Approval

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Abstract

*This research paper analyses Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's movie The Revenant in the light of environmental consciousness and how it subverts anthropocentric world view by bio-centric world view. It further explores portrayal of anthropogenic activities and how nature takes revenge upon human beings. When human crosses their boundary by exploiting nature to optimum level, then anger of nature comes as revenge which brings the life threatening consequences that no human can surpass. It carries the message regarding importance of natural world that every living thing is the part of the nature who needs to value the Mother Nature and cope up with it. The downfall of protagonist Hugh Glass and other characters, for instance; Hawk, Captain Henry and Fitzgerald are the result of their self-centered action. These reel life characters represent the real life reality that how every single day human tries to win over nature by destroying it. This whole tussles and clash between human and nature has been depicted through the use of different visual effects and cinematic techniques.*

**Keywords:** Revenge of nature, nature-human relationship, anthropocentrism and biocentrism.

## Introduction

This dissertation problematizes humans' action and activities regarding negligence of nature and critiques over anthropocentric world view and glorifies biocentric world view. It claims that an inhuman activity towards nature turns the loving Mother Nature into source of disaster, which brings out the worst ultimate revenge of nature and destroys everything around. Anger of nature comes in the form of natural disasters and sometimes as different diseases or plague which threatens the existence of whole humanity. It further investigates use of different visual effects and cinematic techniques by the moviemaker for the achievement of desired result. In the movie *The Revenant* the journey of Hugh Glass from hunter to the revenge seeking person reflects the constant battle of humans with nature by highlighting power of nature. It shows that the power of nature is stronger than that of human beings. This paper basically focuses on the framing, angle, and camera movement of shots and visual effects of cinematic techniques to lay out the representation of powerful nature.

Hollywood movies have often portrayed nature as means of adventure, refreshment and recreation. This reveals Hollywood's presentation of anthropocentric view in the movies. Carole Cadwalladr heavily criticizes the movie *The Revenant* and claims that apart from cinematography, the story is misleading and useless. She argues, “. . . the landscape is chilling and the violence is pointless and the whole thing is meaningless. A vacuous revenge tale that is simply pain as spectacle. *The Revenant* is pain porn” (Cadwalladr). The beauty of nature and the pointless violence of human have been presented in a comparable way. The normalization of killing animals, destroying and exploiting natural phenomena depicts the anthropocentric view of human. However, in the movie we find powerless protagonist who battles with nature for the survival. This movie departs from traditional Hollywood movies that portray

humans as the victor over nature. Rather, it glorifies nature, shows human injustice towards nature and emphasizes the power of raw nature and puts nature at the center.

Hubris of human is an efficient cause for bringing own downfall. In *The Revenant*, Hugh Glass and other characters; Hawk, Captain Henry, Fitzgerald shows the hubrisness that they can win over the wilderness. By holding artificial things like guns and gunpowder, they think that they can demolish naturalness of nature. It eventually leads to their tragic downfall. The anthropocentric attitude of humans ground the massive destruction of natural resources. William Grey critiques the highly dominated anthropocentric idea. In “Environmental Value and Anthropocentrism”, Grey defining the term claims, “Anthropocentrism is widely identified as a fundamental source of the alienating and destructive attitudes towards the nonhuman world” (97). The ignorance of humans with natural world and showing insignificance attitudes towards nonhuman world has been presented in the movie. In the process of subverting the anthropocentrism, the close relationship between them is reflected from the battle between Glass and wild environment.

Nonetheless, when nature counterattacks, then natural resources become the natural disasters and all the scientific developments goes in vain. Even human cannot fight back for their mere life. Humans often forget that nature they are destroying is actually their home and future. Furthermore, Union of Concerned Scientists worries about the increasing human activities which destroy natural environment and create artificial one USC claims, “Human activists inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources” (473). The war between the group of Hugh Glass and Native Americans creates chaos in the nature. Many trees are burned down and the river gets polluted from human blood. Likewise, those hunters kill many animals for the pelts. Native Americans too think that those forests

belong to them. It shows humans are guided by the concept of anthropocentrism. This kind of arrogant behavior of the characters towards nature can be seen in the movie. Which ultimately leads them to their end. So, it is considerable and now high time that humans should change their action and behavior towards nature. Otherwise human extinction is near like dinosaurs that extinct from the nature because they cannot become successful to cope up with nature.

The interference of the human being creates decay and destruction of the nature. Similarly, the struggle of characters for survival in the wilderness, especially of Glass, presents that nature can create obstacle and can be harsh as taking ultimate revenge of nature towards the unfair activity of humans. Because nature has been burned, shattered and chopped throughout the movie is perfect example of real life that how human takes natural phenomena for granted and exploits it without any consideration. Whilst, the conflict between American trappers and Arikara tribe in the name of pelts represents the reality of anthropocentric world view where those two groups lie at the centre and the destruction of nature by them gets neglected. Captain Henry to other trappers tells, "No! We go now! Fire the cannon!" (11:35-11-37). This conflict of two groups destructs nature. In reality also whenever there is clash between people it is nature that pays debt of self-centered humans.

However, nature has been presented as more powerful than the self-centered human, because most of the characters, for instance; Glass's son Hawk, Captain Henry and Fitzgerald could not bear the harshness of nature. The wilderness and naturalness of nature is more powerful than the manmade things like guns, gunpowder and other materialistic things. The storm of nature cannot cease from moving. Glass tries to stand and fights with the nature. He exploits nature as much as he can. Unless, he is not apart from nature rather he is a part of nature. This film uses different

cinematic techniques in order to show human's activities destroying the world and nature's power. In *The Revenant*, the power of nature over human is presented with clear focus of camera angle and the close shot, which portrays the beautiful scenario and wilderness of nature. Glass explains the wilderness to others, "We have to set the boat loose. If the Ree are tracking us, they'll find it downriver. Best course is to hike inland to the Grand and follow it to Fort Kiowa" (14:54-15:03). Through the cinematic techniques the director became successful to capture the beauty of nature. This research paper tries to show how the movie challenges the anthropocentric world view and advocates for the wilderness. It also explores how movie problematizes nature human relationship and shows the power of nature over human.

The journey of Hugh Glass and his struggle for survival centre represents the problem about anthropocentric world view and clash between human and nature. The interference of human always leaves the nature with destruction and chaos. Only concerning about own self and destroying Mother Nature is the new motto of human. Nature is neither God nor evil. Every positive or negative outcome depends upon human actions. The movie tries to show that the glory of nature is unceasing and nature is one who is in power and creator of all the living beings. Besides, humans pretend to be like most powerful creature because of manmade things. Many scholars have said that the conflict between human and nature has begun from the very beginning of the human civilization. This proposed research paper will elucidate the tussle and conflict between nature and humans. As Rob Boddice in "Anthropocentrism" states,

It overlooks that along with human arrogance, and deeply bound up with that, there have always been intense feelings of extreme human vulnerability, even inferiority, with respect to other creatures. Failure to recognize this frequently



leads to an undertone of misanthropy which often runs through writing about animals or the environment. If we are to overcome this arrogance, we should first understand its nature and its source. (44-46)

This statement clarifies that human arrogance is deeply rooted in human psyche which often leads them to misinterpreting about the nature. Nature is neutral, it never categorizes among any species nor does it discriminate. The idea of superior and inferior comes from the humans' mind which creates such discrimination between living species and creates imbalance in whole biodiversity. The unbalanced relationship with nature and human's destructive behavior towards nature is endangering earth and humans' own health. Nature is the foundation. And human should model the values of nature.

While, there are several emergence and the growth of the environmental justice movement which are still going on from the decade, making aware about the importance of environment and its effect in the whole planet. John Hannigan in his book "Environmental Sociology" sheds light upon the environmental movements which is devoted to make environment clean and safe. He states so many agendas and their goals regarding environmental consciousness. Hannigan adds,

One mainstream environmental group that has signed on to the environmental justice agenda in a significant way is the Sierra Club. In 1993, the Sierra Club adopted its first environmental justice policy, stating that 'to achieve our mission of environmental protection and a sustainable future for the planet, we must attain social justice and human rights at home and around the globe' . . . environmental damage caused by factory farms in the South; helping block or shut down polluting mines, incinerators and sewage treatment plants; and collaborating with Amnesty international to defend activists under threat from

the state for speaking out on environmental issues. (51)

Also global agreements and efforts to make sustainable future for the planet are the main weapon to end damaging and destroying factors. Whereas, with the world moving towards the modernization the more challenging environmental movement is getting, challenging in a sense that people are forgetting about the importance of ecology and attracting towards the scientific inventions without preserving nature.

Anthropocentric value gives the idea of superiority. It believes that among other living things, human being is the supreme one. Devastation of forest in the name of development, mass slaughtering animals in the name of religion, growing population and pollution, scientific experiments and nuclear weapons, these are the result of anthropocentric world view, because they are not concerning about life of other species humans are affecting. Similarly, Dave Foreman advocates for giving priority to earth through earth first movement. He argues, “Human beings are not dominant, Earth is not for *Homo sapiens* alone, human life is but one life on the planet and has no right to take exclusive possession” (446). The anthropocentric world view has been problematized. *The Revenant* constantly challenges humans' actions and perception regarding the nature. Such activities are becoming the extinction of many species, which should be topic of consideration. Different pandemics happening in different decades are the result of human action. Humans' indifference towards nature and self centered activities are leaving massive impact on nature and in the reaction humans' are facing danger which sometimes questions about the extinction of every living thing including human (where human believes they are apart from other).

To reliance this research, the researcher basically focuses on how nature takes revenge upon human because of anthropogenic activity and draws the significance of bio-centric insights which produces analysis of the text. The travelling through the

wilderness shows the two sides of nature. One is nurturing and another one is revenge. As the story revolves around the revenge of Hugh Glass against John Fitzgerald, it turns out to that nature takes revenge against Hugh Glass and other characters (humans). To support this aspect, C. Fred Alford asserts that, "It is important to note a preliminary distinction between two forms of the "revenge of nature," a concept that will be referred to frequently. One might call the environmental crisis the revenge of nature-i.e., the consequence of careless intervention in the ecosphere" (7). Alford's idea regarding "revenge of nature" simply explains the fact that it is the consequence of careless behavior of human which brings the revenge of nature. Hugh Glass, the protagonist, and other characters also takes nature for utilitarian value and exploits it to optimum level. As Alford states both nurturing and harsh side of nature depends upon human's treatment to nature.

Human impact on the environment is causing ecological collapse. As well as humans' action decides the future of earth. Human have not inherited the earth from their forefather, human merely hold it in trust for the future generation. However, they act as if earth only belongs to them. Disturbance of human in nature has crossed its limits and that is why Mother Nature is showing its cruel side. Likewise, in the movie *The Revenant* the protagonist Glass and his son enter in the peace, calm and sublime nature with holding guns, which can be the perfect example that how human interferes in the nature and destroys it. An ecosystem is a community of plants, animals and other living organisms, just like the community of human. Each organism has its own role and purposes. In order to keep balance in the nature each and every organism including human must need to act and perform their role and need to respect every living and non living things from the nature. Whereas in contrast, humans are behaving as if everything belongs to them and using it to its optimum level, which is

creating unbalance in the entire ecological system. Every year million hectares of forest are cut down and every second on the planet disappears forest area and because of this so many animals and plants dies. The following snap is the opening scene of the movie which describes about the condition of nature before the disturbance of human.



Fig.1. Glass entering in the wilderness with holding gun. (03:53)

The given snap describes the two sides; one is the pure raw nature which is full of wilderness and the another one is human with manmade thing heading to destruct the nature, the visual changes after the gunshot of Glass into the destructed form. The beautiful surrounding changes into the gloomy and dark place, this can be taken as an example that every time human tries to interfere with nature it brings out the worse kind of result. These kinds of activities of humans bring out the worst side of nature.

Hunting animals creates an imbalance in environment. It has created extinction of many species which directly and indirectly affects whole ecology including humans. But humans are pretending as if they are above nature and neglecting an imbalance in bio-diversity. In the following snap also Glass and his son

Hawk hunts down the animals for their personal benefit. The self-centered and greedy nature of human has been vividly depicted in the movie.



Fig.2. Glass and his son Hawk killing an animal. (06:19)

Revenge of nature towards human is the result of all these activities. A drastic rise in the extinction of species has become one of the major threats to wildlife from human. As well as hunting animals increases extinction risk in tropical trees and changes the structure and ecological dynamics of tropical forests. The profound ecological changes initiated by hunting slowly and gradually becoming another reason for climate change. The biological impacts of hunting pressure changes the ecological balance. However, humans are not paying enough attention towards the current situation of ecological crisis initiated by greedy and foolish humans. Same case can be seen in the movie where throughout the movie characters exploit the nature as much as they can in every possible way. An uncountable and unnecessarily butchering of innocent animals by the characters represents the hunting down animals going on in day to day life.

Mother Nature who nurtures human and gives shelter, always become the victim of narcissist human who only believes in the materialistic thing. In the movie

also Hugh Glass and his friends only cares about the pelts and the money. They butcher animal as much as they can and leaves the calm and sublime nature into the bloodshed ground. The impact of human in the nature is frightening and quite unfair because whenever human interferes in the nature, they make the nature hideous. Manohla Dargis explores the brutality of both human and nature. He illustrates evil action of human beings upon nature and other creatures. He writes, “. . .*The Revenant*, with its butchered animals, muddled ideas, heart skippingly natural landscape and moment after moment of visual and narrative sizzle fully engages the audiences” (Dargis). He criticizes the system which prioritizes the anthropocentric ideas. Even, Hugh Glass, who is a part of human centered system, ultimately becomes the victim of that system. Dargis further elucidates the human system as the “. . . the system that turns the people and animals into commodities” (Dargis). Similarly, Cheryll Glotfelty critiques over the human actions for damaging planet’s basic life system. Because of humans’ ignorance towards natural world, she argues,

Regardless of what name it goes by, most ecocritical work shares a common motivation: the troubling awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet’s basic life systems. We are there. Either we change our ways or we face global catastrophe, destroying much beauty and exterminating countless fellow species in our headlong race to apocalypse.

(89)

Glotfelty clarifies that environmental problems are because of humans’ making and human being should change their way otherwise it will lead to apocalypse.

Hugh Glass and John Fitzgerald lead the expeditions which carry out the task of exploiting the nature for their benefit. In this process, they destroy nature and kill

many animals. Similar kind of situation can be seen in the movie. Where people are chopping the animals and only concerning about how much money they can get from it. This scene from the movie explicit the condition of nature made by humans after their interference. The following visual snap clarifies it.



Fig.3. Trappers buttering animals for their pelts. (04:58)

Humans are insane as they destruct their own home. Polluting, destroying and using natural resources to the optimum level are the basic features of humans. This home (nature) they are living is the home to many species. But humans act as this earth only belongs to them and alienates other creatures. And forgetting about crucial part that destruction of nature not only affects other species rather it brings the worst impact on human also. Paul W. Taylor in “Respect For Nature” defines ethics and moral relation between human and the natural world as:

Environmental ethics is concerned with the moral relations that hold between humans and the natural world. The ethical principles governing those relations determine our duties, obligations, and the responsibilities with regard to the Earth’s natural environment and all the animals and plants that inhabit it. I shall use the term “the natural world” to refer to the entire set of natural

ecosystems on our planet, along with the populations of animals and plants that make up the biotic communities of those ecosystems. (3)

This demonstrates that human has the certain ethics, duty and responsibility towards nature. And to keep this value, human should maintain healthy relationship with nature at first place. Taylor simplifies the statement by referring natural world as the entire ecosystem of our planet where animals and plants play the vital role, but it is a shame that humans are not fulfilling their duty and responsibility as a living being towards nature. Only acting out towards present and leading towards dark future without being conscious. By neglecting natural laws and value humans are losing naturalness of nature and making nature as the concrete plastic world. In the movie, in spite of being most thoughtful and having high level of brain power, humans act as the stupid and lack of consciousness.

With the breath taking view of sublime and peaceful nature, all of a sudden it turns into the shattering, like crying and helpless nature. That place literally becomes the battleground for Arikara people and American people. They fight like mindless creature kills each other with the high level of cruelty and destroys surrounding at the same time. Burning trees, blood full stream, chopped bodies of innocent animals shows the heartfelt condition of nature. This all struggle, killing each other, turning nature into bloodshed ground is only in the name of pelts. This makes sense that humans are the most foolish and cruel creature among all that they can do anything for their personal benefit. The following extract is exemplative of this scenario which provides the level of stupidity and proves humans are heartless:

Trapper: They want the pelts. We got to get on that boat right now or we'll lose it all.

Glass: Get to the boat! To the boat, son! Move! Move, move! Leave the furs!



Leave. Leave the furs! To the boat! Hawk! Hawk! Hawk!

Fitzgerald: Grab some pelts! Come on, grab the pelts! (07:54-09:36)

Human takes everything from nature without being conscious about the consequences. Because these are the reason of nature causing troubles in front of humans sometimes as natural disaster and sometimes as a different disease which leaves the development and scientific achievement in to the vain as natures' revenge towards humans. The way humans are snatching everything from nature leading them to the future of Apocalypse. As well as in the movie also all the character represents the psyche of modern human, who only cares about the money and becomes happy with the materialistic things. The given extract also clarifies the fact that, humans can go to the extreme level of cruelty. Two individual parties (Arikara Tribe and American people) who are ironically superior creature among all fighting for pelts, and killing each other mercilessly and gets nothing at the end.

Other species knows about rules and regulation of the nature. Here, Glass goes to interfere to the wilderness of nature by holding guns. Where, he gets to encounter Mother bear with her baby bears, mother bear seems no harm until she finds out about human pointing gun towards her babies. She immediately attacks the Glass as defend to save her children it eventually leads to the death of mother bear and venerable condition of Glass. This situation defines the right and obligation of self defense by whatever ways are necessary. Edward Abbey an environmentalist clarifies the fact about self defense in his essay by writing,

. . . by law and in common morality-as a crime. In such situation . . . both the right and the obligation to defend . . . by whatever means are necessary. This right and this obligation is universally recognized, justified, and praised by all civilized human communities. Self-defense against attack is one of the basic

laws not only of human society but of life itself, not only of human life but of all life. (164)

So, as Edward Abbey argues about not just human but all life forms have right and obligation to defend from any kind of life threatening attack which is necessary and universally justified as well. Mother bear defending her children refers to the Mother Nature defending herself from anthropocentric activity of human. From the given snapshot it makes the point apparent:



Fig.4. Dead mother bear with wounded Glass and baby bear watching form side.  
(28:46)

Human actions are damaging planet's basic life support systems and causing the extinction of many animals and plants. Due to lack of knowledge and sick mentality of humans like not considering about the values of plants and animals, causes the trouble in the whole eco-system. Slowly and gradually human habits are destroying habitats. A growing whole in the ozone layer, acid rain, loss of topsoil, growing dumping sites, global warming and other problems that humans are facing now is only because of their own practices. Humans are putting earth in endanger which means they are even in grave danger. So, acting out by nature in a cruel way as

revenge towards human is obvious and necessary. Peter Bradshaw highlights the clash between bear and the protagonist, Hugh Glass, as the conflict between man and nature. He claims, “Birdman director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu’s new movie pitches Leonardo Dicaprio against nature, bears . . .” ( Bradshaw).

No matter from which group of people the reason of survival and conflict over money or anything human being shows their self centeredness in everything, where the one who becomes the victim is nature. Because they breaks and puts price tag in natural resources and exploits as much as they can. Fitzgerald and Bridger (American people) unfold about the situation of the place where recently two individual groups clashed with each other. Whole place seems stain with blood and burning hut shows the total destruction of the place. Where they talks about the pigs and horses they should take, which makes the sense that innocent animals becomes the subject of oppression no matter what condition it is. Bridger asks Fitzgerald about the situation, they react as it is nothing happening around. They don’t really care about how many dead bodies are lying around them. They rather steps ahead search for anything which will be beneficial for them. And the very time they become happy when they find out about horses and pigs. Bridger asks Fitzgerald:

Bridger: Who did this?

Fitzgerald: I don’t know. . . Could be Captain Leavenworth’s boys. Mmm.

Yeah. Put some eyes on the back of your head. (sniffles) These injuns ain’t never as dead as you think they are. Look at ‘em, huh? They’re always stealing our shit.

Bridger: (Gasps)

Fitzgerald: We got horses over here! Hey Bridger. We got horses.

Bridger: What you want to do about these pigs?

Fitzgerald: The Lord's on our side, kid. (1:14:27-1:16:05)

This explicitly shows the human psychology towards other creatures. Other living things are the only means of wealth and food. Chopping and slaughtering them is one thing that humans can do. This conversation gives an example of people with anthropocentric psyche where human puts them at the center and nothing else. Not even people's bodies seem to bother them, rather they keep on going in the search for horses and pigs by stepping into bodies as like in corpses.

Killing animals recklessly as per their interest has been clearly presented in the movie. While having conversation between Fitzgerald and Bridger about leaving Glass behind. Fitzgerald stimulates the idea of anthropocentric notion that it is okay to kill inferior animals in order to survive. It is presented in a way that it is a natural process that one must kill other in the name of survival game. Fitzgerald states,

. . . my pop, he weren't a religious man, you know? If you couldn't grow it, kill it, or eat it, he just plain old didn't believe in it. And this one time he head on up the old Saba hills. San Saba hills? He joined a couple Texas Ranger buddies of his to hunt . . . somehow that night he lost his buddies . . . so he was starving and delirious . . . and he crawls up into this Mott, this . . . group of trees out in the middle of nowhere just sticking up in this ocean of scrub . . . and he found religion . . . he found God. Uh- huh. And it turns out that God . . . he's a squirrel. Yeah. A big, old meaty one. . . (1:16:38-1:17:48).

Fitzgerald's statement from the movie represents the whole anthropocentric belief system of real human world. Humans' psychology is guided in a way that it is natural and obvious to kill inferior ones in the survival instinct. He talks about his father found religion and God. And the moment he finds out he kills and eat that. It has became the human practice that in the name of religion so many culture from the

society practices and believes in mass killing of innocent animals. For the welfare of human being, human believes in killing other innocent animals. This has occurred extinction of many animals globally. Ecological unbalance creates the problem in whole environment. Consuming more than its production creates unbalance. Because of the normalization of killing animals has created chaos in world. Human animal are the part of nature. They have different features according to their species. But all the living things of the nature are equal.

However, with some advance features human have, human started to differentiate and discriminate and created hierarchy between human and animal. Human treats animal as if they are non living thing, disvalues their life and as they don't have any emotion. As Rob Boddice further evokes about the idea regarding human animal relationship, Boddice states:

While the boundary between animals and human beings may be blurred by some recent developments such as interspecies transplants of organs or genetic material, the distinction is becoming sharper in other ways. Human beings now spend much of their lives in digital forums where no animals can participate. While academic writings may pay increasing attention to animals, they are vanishing from the planet and from our daily lives. The distinction between animals and human beings, in summary, is losing none of its relevance yet needs to be reconceived" (31).

Boddice's idea of human animal relationship specifies that humans are more attracted towards materialistic things than the real living thing. Because of that animals are vanishing from the planet slowly and gradually.

From coming to life after being near to death, Glass struggles in the wilderness after being abandoned by his crew mates, where he encounters with one Pawnee. Both

of them happens to share the same goal; revenge. Glass wants to take revenge of his son with Fitzgerald and Pawnee wants to take revenge of his family with other group of hunter known as Sioux. The wilderness of nature presented in the movie gets wilder with the development of plot. The more characters of the movie neglect the nature, the more they get the obstacle from the nature. Glass wants to rule over nature, which unfortunately turns out his own downfall. His friends abandon him and his struggle with nature begins. Nature which makes his condition unpleasant and stressful, also gives him shed and shelter. This can be taken for instance that his own crew mate abandons him and kills his son in contrast; nature which he wants to harm and conquer gives him new life. So, this is the nature of nature. An outcome of nature depends upon how human treats it. If human cares and love nature then it will obviously give more warmth and affection to humans. The conversation between Glass and Pawnee specifies about the situation.

Glass: I'm injured.

Pawnee: What happened to you?

Glass: A bear. A bear. Grizzly . . . Grizzly.

Glass: My men... left me for dead. Killed my son.

Pawnee: I lost my family too. Sioux killed my people. I'm going south to find more.

Pawnee: My heart bleeds... But revenge is in the creator's hands. You will ride with me... (1:27:06–1:28:26)

Humans have no humanity at all. Glass's own friend abandons him and kills his son. They put him into this situation. Whereas, Mother Nature nurtures him in spite of Glass's mistreatment with nature. In the movie, the wilderness of the nature is presented in a terrific way. Piercing cold, life threatening wilderness and obstacles are

the wild side of nature in the movie.



Fig.5. Glass and Pawnee riding horse on snowy ground. (1:29:07)

Struggling with the wilderness Glass keeps on moving with Pawnee to take revenge with Fitzgerald, where at one point he become unconscious because of his wounds from the bear. No matter how powerful one human can be, no matter how many times human challenges nature and try to destroy it, one cannot surpass the almighty power of nature. Though the protagonist of the movie Glass, seeks for the revenge with Fitzgerald, the obstacles created by the raw nature makes his journey miserable.

The director Inarritu has uses different cinematic techniques to show the greatness of nature. While framing he uses long shot to show the entire objects, this type of framing would appear to be seen from some distance from which audiences can see the surroundings. Maximum shot has been taken from long shot to capture entire scenario to present the beauty of wilderness. John Golden while clarifying about cinematic techniques, he clarifies about long shot of camera he states, “a shot from some distance” (16). In the given picture from taking shot from some distance an entire scenario of piercing cold environment has been depicted vividly.



Fig.6. Wilderness of nature captured from long shot. (1:29:49)

Whereas, while framing the characters the use of close-up shot can be seen in the movie. With this technique the audience can see the character's head from about the neck up. Golden adds, "the most common shot. The camera seems to be a medium distance from the object being filmed. A medium shot shows the person from the waist up. The effect is to ground the story" (16). Close-ups reveal the amounts of detail, such as it reveals the characters' emotions. While showing Glass and Fitzgerald, with the use of close-up shot, audience can see their emotions vividly, Glass's sorrow, pain, anger and seeking for revenge and at the same time and Fitzgerald's selfishness and lust for money.

After abandoning Glass in the woods Fitzgerald makes up the story about Glass to the other crew mates about his death. The following conversation between Fitzgerald and Captain Henry has been framed in close-up shot. This shows the tension going on between both characters.

Fitzgerald: May I join you?

Henry: Yes.

Fitzgerald: I was wondering when we might be getting paid for that haul.



‘Cause them pelts we collected are still out there you know... under a couple foot of dirt and snow. But that ain't my fault.

Henry: I'm waiting for Captain Leavenworth to arrive with his army. Then we'll have enough men... to shoot some civilization . . . Arikara and get back our pelts.

Fitzgerald: All right. All right. When's that supposed to happen?

Henry: I don't know. But until then, nobody gets paid.

Fitzgerald: Listen here, all right? I was hired to trap 'em. I wasn't hired to guard 'em. . . . It's probably full of money . . . (1:46:8–1:46:58).

A man became destroyer of the nature and now he only worships for the money. The money and pelts they are discussing about, explicitly shows the true nature of human greed. They value money over everything. The conflict and tension going on between American trappers, hunters and Arikara people are only in the name of pelts, but there is even more tension going on between their own group. They are not trustworthy even with their own kind which specifies about how human beings are becoming more materialistic and living their life without ethics and morality.

On other hand, Glass keeps on moving towards his revenge, struggling with nature and fighting with other hunters and Arikara people. Whereas, Nature who makes his life miserable puts his life into deathbed while encountering with bear, at the same time nature is making him strong and giving him hope of life.



Fig.7. Glass riding horse and heading towards sunshine from snowy ground. (1:48:14)

Given scene from the movie is framed in a long shot using one of the features of cinematic technique shows the two side of the nature. Glass riding horse heading towards the sunshine from snowy ground presents the nature can be both deadly and nurturing. The scene represents the ray of hope and sign of life. When human tries to win over nature, destroys it and takes everything to the optimum level. Nature also fight backs and snatches everything back. It depends on human how to treat it and what to gain from nature. If human starts to take nature for granted then nature shows the wild side.

Animals have sense and emotions where humans are lacking them. In the movie killing each other is presented in way that it has become habit for them. Own friend deceives them and kills them. As well as when another group of people shows up then again they start to kill each other. This shows the total chaotic and heartfelt condition of what human have become. When Glass gets caught by Arikara people they start to attack each other eventually. Glass who only started to recover from his wound again became the victim of cruel nature of human. In order to live in the world one must need to behave like a human otherwise with killing and snatching

everything from each other will only makes the life miserable.



Fig.8. Glass shooting Arikara people. (1:50:00)

The disturbing scene from the movie is the overall storyline where humans are killing humans and destroying nature at the same time. Arikara people starts to attack Glass right after seeing him. This also proves the fact that humans are the enemy of human themselves; it shows they are lacking humanity. Earth is the home of every species. Earth produces natural resources equally to species in order to live. Each and every species need to cooperate with each other and have the certain duty and responsibility towards earth. However, human with being an advanced creature among other species, takes natural resources for granted and ruling over other species life and treating them as the means of fulfilling desires. In short, human psychology has been engineering in such a way that other creatures are the inferior and only humans are the superior that is why humans can do anything.

However, when nature starts to take action against the behavior of human then no one can resist the almighty power of nature, it is like flow of hurricane which can destroy everything around that human won't be able to do anything. Human always does the nasty things for their personal benefit. They think they can win over nature.



Fig.9. Glass struggling to survive in the wilderness. (1:51:08)

Given snap clarifies the fact that when nature starts the brutal forces against human then human cannot surpass it. At the starting point of the movie Glass with the other hunters enters into the forest by killing and destroying everything around. And now the situation has turned opposite and hunters around the forest are struggling to live in the wilderness. American hunters, trappers and Arikara tribe wanted to win over nature, so they uses all the forces they can do to destroy nature and to get benefit from. The recent condition of Glass is because of how he treated nature at first. This is an example of how a mere human life is in front of almighty nature.

Likewise, Edward Abbey further argues about the universal right of fighting back towards the unfair activity of human being. He places himself with the wilderness and advocates about the eco-defense he claims, “And if the wilderness is our true home, and if it is threatened with invasion, pillage, and destruction-as it certainly is-then we have the right to defend that home, as we would our private quarters, by whatever means are necessary” (165). Abbey’s argumentation gives proof about brutal forces against human being is valid and fair.



Fig.10. Glass inside of the horse's stomach. (1:52:43)

Lately, Mother Nature has been suffering and falling apart from the inhuman, disgusting and shameful activities of the human. The horrible condition from the given scene of the movie shows the level of cruelty human can do for their survival. Brian Tallerico states that *The Revenant* haunts the audience for a long time. It provokes the question like how much a man can struggle with nature when the question is related with his existence and how nature reacts to the behavior of human when it reaches its limit of toleration. He claims, "It hangs in the back of your mind like the best classic parables of man vs nature" (Tallerico). The question of direct and brutal conflict between natural world and humans occupy the theme of the film. The anthropocentric worldview has caused a lot of trouble in recent time. Humans think themselves as apart from nature rather than a part of nature.

After being chased by the Arikara people Glass jumps off from cliff with riding horse. Already wounded Glass kills the horse brutally and takes out everything from horse's body and goes inside the stomach of the horse. This shows the survival instinct human have had, where they can do anything to everything in the name of survival. The terrible condition of horse made by Glass signifies the condition of

nature made by human. This is a metaphor that how human snatches everything from nature recklessly. Horse did nothing but only helps him to escape from all the obstacles however, Glass treats horse as a poor and worthless animal with whom he can do anything. Glass represents the behavior of all the human beings towards nature. In the given snap the director Inarritu has uses high-angle on framing the situation. It is when the director places the camera above an object looking down on it. As John Golden further clarifies about different role of camera angle he states, “the camera is above the subject. This usually has the effect of making the subject look smaller than normal, giving him or her the appearance of being weak, powerless, and trapped” (16). It symbolizes the weakness and powerlessness of the object.



Fig.11. Terrible condition of horse shot from the high angle. (1:53:05)

Human need to care more about animals and the environment because, the more human cares about the nature the more it will be suitable for living. Our attitude towards nature decides the future of all the living things. And the shameful mentality of human is making earth nothing but the sick. The catastrophe facing by the today’s generation is the result of yesterday’s activities. As well as in the movie *The Revenant* all the characters destroy the nature in every possible way from the start. And as a

result they face all the kind of obstacles created by the nature. They try to win over nature by exploiting everything around which in contrary nature starts to fight back with those exploiters.

Captain Henry: Where are your men?

French Hunter: All dead.

Captain Henry: Who was he?

French Hunter: I don't know. Something to eat, please?

Captain Henry: Food comes at a price.

French Hunter: I have no money.

Captain Henry: Then you don't eat. Give back some of them stolen pelts you buy from the Injuns. . .

French Hunter: Silver. How is this? Silver. . . We was nine. My friend, he die in the snow. And the other was... kill by wolf. I see it. By wolf, yeah, kill.

(1:56:55–1:57:31)

This above conversation gives more proof about the condition of all the hunters and trappers now are in. They came in to the forest to snatch everything and to gain profit however, by the time they became so helpless that one thing they want is now to survive. This is the fate of every human who tries to destroy nature. French hunters, American Hunters and Arikara people try to claim everything around from the forest belongs to them. Individually they enter but with the exact aim they were holding and which are to win over the forest. French hunters who were trapping horses and hunting down animals for pelts becomes helpless after an incident as well as American hunters and Arikara people faces difficult consequences after their encounter with each other. They were trying to destroy the Mother Nature but in contrast they were destroying their own fate.

Mother Nature is the one creator of all. Without its presence one cannot imagine about their existence. Nature gives equal rights to live and facilities to each and every creature. So, every creature needs to respect value and maintain the rules and regulation of the nature. Nature is home, home for every creature from the planet. So, in order to survive every creature must need to protect their home. Otherwise, with such a foolish act human who destroys their own home meets the fate of characters like; Captain Henry, Fitzgerald, Glass's son Hawk and many other characters from the movie who tries to destroy the nature and surpass it. Unlike other characters Glass became successful to survive in the wilderness in spite of nearly being killed. Glass realizes the power of raw nature that holds the both nurturing and life-threatening sides. That is why he became successful to cop up with nature and survives in the wilderness. Other character only neglects the nurturing nature and only takes advantages from it.

Glass: I need a horse and gun.

Captain Henry: No, you need to rest and eat. I'm going after him . . .

Glass: when they get afraid, they run deep into the woods. I got him trapped.

He just doesn't know it yet . . . I ain't afraid to die anymore. I done it already.

(2:04:17- 2:05:19)

Glass assuring Captain Henry about no one else knows the forest the way Glass knows. He has been through all the hardships, he once nearly got killed and now he knows how to maintain with wilderness. Nature can give everything to every creature in need as well as nature can snatch everything if anyone tries to take over the nature. This conversation describes about the Glass's desperate feeling to take revenge with Fitzgerald.

Correspondingly, Wendell Berry states about the idea regarding coping up



with nature he adds, “It is not only possible but altogether probable that by diminishing nature we diminish ourselves, and vice versa” (380). Fitzgerald tries to diminish natural world which leads him to his end. Berry’s statement promotes to maintain healthy relationship with wilderness. No can escape the fate after diminishing nature.



Fig.12. Dead body of Fitzgerald floating in the river. (2:36:21)

The above snap carries the deepest meaning of the movie which describes the reality of a human life. This shows the result of anthropocentric value which puts the human at the center and neglects the value of ecology. If human does the same reckless things like Fitzgerald did in the movie then the result of every single human being carries the exact same consequences like Fitzgerald. Dead body of Fitzgerald floating in the river can be taken as the metaphor as the human is a part of nature. Fitzgerald does everything to win over nature. He destroys kills and burns the wilderness to the optimum level. He always acts as if he is the powerful among all. He shows his cruelty, power throughout the movie. However, he dies in the lap of the nature. Humans are birth by the nature live in the nature and dies in the nature. That is why humans are the part of a nature. Indeed, every living thing from the earth is

mortal. Just like other living thing human carries the same mortality fact that birth and death is the universal rule of the nature.

So, including human every living thing needs to value the rules and regulation of the nature and fulfill their duty towards nature. The future of earth is in the hand of every living thing. To be more specific C. Fred Alford further argues, “. . . such an oriental leads to a revenge of external nature. As scientific and technological progress lead to environmental disruption, man seeks new scientific and technological solutions, which end up making the matter worse” (141). Unlike human, other creature lives in their boundary and fulfills their duty towards nature. Humans too need to celebrate and value the nature and live within the boundary. Hugh glass became successful in taking revenge with Fitzgerald, but in the deeper level of the movie it turns out that nature takes revenge upon all the characters from the movie where only Glass became successful in the battle with nature.



Fig.13. Human blood and the wilderness of nature. (2:36:21)

Inarritu captured the given snap in a contradictory way. There are two things symbolized in a different way. The camera has been placed below the nature and placed above the blood of a human. By placing camera above the nature director Inarritu shows the greatness of nature, nature which has been standing tall against all

the odds and struggled with human whereas, humans who enters to destroy nature holding manmade things ironically ends and dies in the nature. This scene depicts the plot moving towards its resolution by characters getting along in the nature. Red blood in the white snow can be taken as the symbol of human being's end of life in the nature and the nature's victory over human and the rising again as the phoenix. Though this is the ending scene of the movie but the beginning and returning back at the center of the nature.

Concisely, *The Revenant* satirizes the anthropocentric value, gives ecological awareness and shows the greatness of nature with the use of different cinematic techniques. This research paper clarifies the fact that Mother Nature takes revenge upon human being because of inhuman action and activities shown towards natural phenomena. Human being must need to think before exploiting natural resources in the name of being prosperous. Otherwise, the end of every human being is approaching as the characters from the movie Hawk, Captain Henry and Fitzgerald face apocalyptic plight. The world 'revenant' not only signifies the return of Hugh Glass from the death but it also symbolizes the return of nature at the centre which has been largely occupied by human beings. It subverts the anthropocentric worldview and advocates for bio-centric worldview. This dissertation is fundamentally to understand tension going on between nature-human relationships, which can contribute in changing anthropocentric views, and also makes aware about natural world and its importance. However, until and unless human beings create new belief system for having harmony among every species and plants, not positioning man at top, the solution for this environmental crisis is not possible. For the sustainable eco-friendly world, bio-centric essential is essential through literary pieces, academic discourses and various sorts of movements.

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