

Tribhuvan University

2017

Critique of Anthropocentrism in Cameron's *Avatar*

Hari Krishna Lamichhane

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T. U.
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Philosophy in English**

By

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Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Central Department of English
M.Phil Program

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Hari Krishna Lamichhane has completed his dissertation, entitled “Critique of Anthropocentrism in Cameron’s *Avatar*” under my supervision. He carried out this research from March, 2016 to August, 2017. I hereby recommend this dissertation be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

The dissertation, entitled “Critique of Anthropocentrism in Cameron’s *Avatar*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Hari Krishna Lamichhane has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Acknowledgements

So far many people have contributed in various ways for the development and completion of this dissertation; I would like to express my deep gratitude to my respected supervisor Prof. Dr. Ram Chandra Paudel for his scholarly guidance, inspiration and suggestions from the very beginning till the completion of this project. Without his constant supervision and intellectual guidance, the research work would never have been into the present form. I am highly indebted to Prof. Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, the Head of Central Department of English, for his constant inspiration, encouragement and insightful suggestions, and favorable environment in conducting this research work.

Likewise, I express my gratitude to University Grants Commission (Nepal), for providing me M. Phil. Thesis Support Grants for writing this thesis. I highly appreciate UGC for such type of supports for the researchers.

Similarly, I would like to express my sincere acknowledgement to Prof. Dr. Abhi Narayan Subedi, Prof. Dr. Beerendra Pandey, Prof. Dr. Anirudra Thapa, Dr. Hari Adhikari, Dr. Shiva Ram Rijal, Dr. Dhurba Karki, Badri Acharya and Shankar Subedi including all teaching faculties at Central Department of English for their scholarly guidance, inspirations and suggestions for the completion of this thesis. I am also thankful to non-teaching staff at Central Department of English for their direct and indirect support.

My gratitude goes to my parents Durga Datta Lamichhane and Indra Kumari Lamichhane whose warm love, affection and support enabled me to accomplish this work. I would like to express my special thanks to all my family members, colleagues and well-wishers for their cooperation while writing this thesis.

August, 2017

Hari Krishna Lamichhane

Abstract

This dissertation is an ecocritical reading on James Cameron's movie, *Avatar*. The research argues that Cameron is worried about the future of the world due to human encroachment upon nature and critiques the exploitation of nature throughout the movie. In the movie, he presents a critical situation of future world when the natural resources from the earth will vastly be exploited. The scientists, however, go to the Pandora and start exploiting natural resources mercilessly destroying the hometree of the indigenous creatures who are all living together. The dissertation applies the theory of eco-criticism to study the devastating results of human encroachment upon nature in the movie. As the focus of the research is an eco-critical analysis, it mainly borrows ideas from Val Plumwood's "The Blindspots of Centricism and Human Self-enclosure", and Cheryll Glotfelty's "Introduction: Literary studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis" among others whose theory on eco-criticism will be the base for this study. The significance of this approach is to show Cameron's critique of nature exploitation and his call for reconciliation with nature that Cameron appeals through his choice of the protagonist Jack Sully, who loves nature and all the wildlife in the Pandora and even marries a Na'vi girl, Niyetiri. Finally, the dissertation asserts that *Avatar* is a great epic literary work because it warns human beings of the possible future situation due to energy crisis and calls for nature conservation by reconciling with it as a solution.

Key Terms: *Eco-criticism, anthropocentrism, apocalypse, environment, exploitation of nature, energy crisis, human-nature reconciliation*

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I. *Avatar* and Nature-Culture Relationship

This dissertation studies James Cameron's movie, *Avatar* (2009) from the perspectives of eco-criticism. Set in the middle of the Twenty Second century, the movie presents the massive destruction of natural resources in the world. Due to extreme energy crisis in the earth, scientists from America reach the moon in order to take whatever resources they can find there too. *Avatar* is the epic piece of environmental advocacy ever captured on celluloid. The movie hits many of the chief environmental talking-points: i. virgin rain forests threatened by malicious exploitation, ii. native individuals who have much to teach the developed world, iii. a planet which functions as a collective, iv. inter-connected Gaya organism, and v. evil corporate interests that are trying to destroy it all. *Avatar*, a live action movie with a new generation of special effects, takes the audience to a spectacular world beyond imagination, where a reluctant hero, Jack Sully boards on a journey of redemption and discovery as he leads an epic battle to save an endangered civilization.

In particular, this research focuses on the activities of the protagonist of the movie, Jake Sully, a former marine confined to a wheelchair. Bitter and disillusioned, he is still a warrior at heart. All Jake ever wanted was something worth fighting for, and he finds it in the place he least expected, on a distant world. Jake has been recruited to join an expedition to the moon Pandora, which corporate interests are strip-mining for a mineral worth \$20 billion per kilogram on the earth. To facilitate their work, humans use a link system that projects a person's consciousness into a hybrid of humans and Pandora's indigenous humanoids, the Na'vi. This human-Na'vi crossbreed resembles the Na'vi but holds human thoughts, feelings and personality. This crossbreed is known as an "avatar." In his new avatar form, Jake can once again walk. His mission is to interact with and insinuate the Na'vi with the hope of enlisting

their help – or at least their acquiescence – in mining the ore. When he is attacked by the humanoids, an attractive Na'vi female, Neytiri, protects his life, although reluctantly, because even in his avatar body, Jake represents to her the human encroachment on the Na'vi's unspoiled world. As his relationship with her deepens, along with his respect for the Na'vi, he faces the ultimate test as he leads an epic conflict that will decide nothing less than the fate of an entire world.

Avata (the winner of Oscar awards in 2010 for 'Best Achievement in Cinematography', 'Best Achievement in Visual Effects' and 'Best Achievement in Art Direction') is a science fiction film that retells the story of the human mission to the space called Pandora, an imaginary space, occupied by the ten foot tall, blue skinned, tree dwelling Na'vi. The film is produced in its 3-D version with the computer-created high tech animated quality, starring Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Stephen Lang, Sigourney Weaver and others.

The basic target of this project is to pit the anthropocentric concept of human beings. The negative impact of the massive exploitation of nature for the selfishness of human beings will be brought under study. The project aims to analyze why Cameron critiques human beings' concept of taking the whole universe as their own property. The project also aims at critiquing the characters' impracticality to adjust with the rural environment.

Cameron's *Avatar* mainly concentrates on the people and place relationship. The characters with the rootedness to place have the easier survival, fixed geographical and cultural identity and the others who have not rootedness with the geographical location neither get fixed social/cultural identity nor assimilate with the place properly. Being grown up in the metropolitan world from the earth, human beings cannot adjust themselves into the world of the moon, the Pandora, though there

is abundant natural resources. On the other hand, being grown up in the environment of that moon, the humanoids, the Navi, easily assimilate with the place. Moreover, they are even helped and supported by the creatures there in their every activity. Jake can only do all this by connecting and adapting into that world. In this sense, the adjustment and detachment of creatures with their geographical location is the major factor which is the major concern of this research. If such devastating situation befalls upon human beings due to the exploitation of natural resources, why they exploit nature in massive amount is the major question the research concerns about.

The movie *Avatar* is a highly discussed movie in the intellectual discourse. Since its release, it has earned widespread success, becoming the highest - grossing film of all time. Besides, the blockbuster has provoked vigorous discussion of a wide variety of cultural, social, political, and religious themes identified by critics and commentators. Some critics find the film as a message of support for the struggle of native people today. For example, Evo Morales the first indigenous president of Bolivia in *Huffington Post* praised *Avatar* for its "profound show of resistance to capitalism and the struggle for the defense of nature" (23). In Morales' view *Avatar* is the story of the rejection of the capitalism which contains the message of conservation and the protection of the nature. Similarly, in a review in the *New York Press* Armond White mentions *Avatar* as "the single minded anti-Industrial critique" (26). This interpretation of the film focuses on the film as the critique upon the villainous American characters who disregard the other being as inferior and mediocre.

In his next article "Avatar: A Prophetic Representation of Planetary Zoophilia?", Richard Kahn talks about the religious and Vedantic meaning of the term avatar. Kahn says:

The word "avatar" has Vedantic origins meaning something akin to the "de scent" or "manifestation" of a divinity in bodily form. It is the embodiment of the Holy Spirit (or in a non-monotheistic culture, spirits). In light of the cyberpunk generation, an avatar can now also be one's own digital representation—whether a representative icon for one's tweets and other social networking posts or an entire virtual person one can live through in cyborg media environments like Second Life or Rock Band. (59)

Kahn attempts to say that 'avatar' refers to the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Vedic sense. But if it is taken in modern sense, or in the world of cyborg, it refers to one's own digital representation. Virtual people like Jake Sully do have positive manifestation, whereas evil people do have their negative manifestation. About the movie *Avatar*, he further says:

In its blending of ambivalent meanings connoted by the concept of avatar, the movie self-consciously attempts to pitch for a monstrous pedagogical engagement of each with each in order to mediate and ultimately sublate the tension between the organic and the machinic traditions. (59)

By this, Kahn intends to say that the movie presents the tension between the organic and machinist tradition. Kahn focuses on the movie's critique over the modern industrial society. Ecology is at risk. He highlights the ambivalent attitude of the movie over art imitating art or art imitating life.

In "The Sadness of *Avatar*", Jonathan Mulrooney comments that the movie brings into sadness to the world. People will be disappointed and worried by watching this movie. He says:

James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) makes people sad—so sad that the film has prompted the introduction of new terms into the vernacular. "Post-*Avatar* Depression," "Avatar Blues," "The Pandora Effect" each of these phrases points to a condition that causes "one to feel a strange mix of emotions (which may include awe, disappointment, giddiness, emptiness, warmth, and most of all depression) after watching James Cameron's *Avatar* movie" ("Pandora Effect").

By this, Mulrooney means to say that the movie presents the pessimism into people. He calls the movie as "The Pandora Effect". This will lead to the tension in people.

Considering *Avatar* as a 'very much political film' in an interview with Lassin Arlene in *Zee News*, James Cameron states:

The movie reflects that we are living through war. There are boots on the ground; troops who I personally believe were sent there under false pretenses, so I hope this will be part of opening our eyes, exposing the absurdities and sufferings. The Iraq stuff and the Vietnam stuff are there by design but I did not think that the film was anti-military. (15)

Cameron's opinion towards the film is that it is about the ongoing war on terrorism and Cameron's sympathies and the movies clearly are with the Na'vi, and against the military and corporate men in surface level. It gives the audience a chance to make a moral choice between good and evil and, by emotionally siding with Jake's treason, as to relive collective guilt for the cruel and unjust world that the westerners have created.

While making mythological and religious interpretation of the film, *Avatar* is equated to the Hinduism and ancient Hindu epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

Commenting on the Na'vi's similarity with Rama and Krishna reincarnations, as the

title of the film itself is derived from the Hindu mythological belief of incarnation that is “Avatar”, Rajsekher Priya, in *Irish Times*, locates the term within “ten incarnations of Vishnu” (25). Similarly, Sheila Shayon reveals, “An undeniably Hindu connection between the film's story and the Vedic teaching of reverence for the whole universe, as well as the yogic practice of inhabiting a distant body by one’s consciousness and the film's love scene is equal to the tantric practices”(9). So, this can be taken as an interpretation or link made between the Na’vi earth goddess Eywa to the concept of Hindu Gods as the ground of being described in *Vedanta* and *Upanishad*. Avatar’s adaptation of the Hindu teaching of incarnation is parallel to the God Vishnu’s various avatars flying on the bird Garuda with Tilak on the forehead.

Although these critics have analyzed the movie from multiple perspectives, there lacks an analysis of the movie from the critique of nature exploitation. The anthropocentric attitude of human beings needs to be excavated that Cameron critiques through the movie. This dissertation is a library-based research; it will use a close, discursive analytical style which will draw on concepts and vocabularies related to environmental science. As the focus of the research is an ecocritical analysis, it mainly borrows theoretical insights from Val Plumwood’s “The Blindspots of Centricism and Human Self-enclosure”, and Cheryll Glotfelty’s “Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis” among others whose theory on Ecocriticism will be the base for this study.

Cheryll Glotfelty defines Ecocriticism as “the study of relationship between literature and the physical environment, taking an earth-centered approach to literary studies” (xvii). Similarly, Rueckert also defines Ecocriticism as “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature” (qtd. in Glotfelty xx). Ecocriticism studies the relationship between human and non-human life as

represented in the literary texts. It is an ecological approach to the study of relationship between literature and environment. It studies the reciprocal relationship between human beings and land. Ecocritics view that, Ecocriticism is fundamentally an ethical criticism that investigates and helps to make possible connection among self, nature and text. Hence, it is a response to the need of humanistic understanding of our relationship with the natural world.

Val Plumwood shows us how the distortions of reason and culture have resulted in life-threatening forms of ecological denial. In a compelling and multi-dimensional account of the crisis of reason, she reveals how our culture's life-destroying practices and ethical and spiritual bankruptcy are closely linked to our failure to situate ourselves as ecological beings. Informed by feminist thought, post-colonial theory, indigenous philosophy, and a rich tapestry of research, Plumwood provides a provocative diagnosis of the cultural illusions that fuel the contemporary environmental crisis. She argues:

We can now spell out a parallel concept of 'human-centrism', and characterize as anthropocentric those patterns of belief and treatment of the human/nature relationship which exhibit this same kind of hegemonic structure. By extension we can categorise as anthropocentric certain cultures and formations of identity which typically host such patterns. In anthropocentric culture, nature and animals are constructed according to the same logic of the One and the Other, with nature as Other in relation to human in much the same way that women are constructed as Other in relation to men, and those regarded as 'coloured' are constructed as Other in relation to those considered 'without colour', as 'white'. (106)

Plumwood perceives the similarities among nature, women and the 'coloured' people who have been marginalized throughout the history of human civilizations. Although men are also living in nature and they have no existence without nature, they consider her as Other. Plumwood critiques this othering tendency of men to nature.

Ecocriticism deals with the interconnectedness among the living and non-living things on the environment. Since ecocriticism has interdisciplinary nature, it invites all perspective into its tent in order to understand the co-existence of living and non-living entities. So, it is not just a means of analyzing nature in literature, it implies a move towards a bio-centric world view, and extension of ethics, a broadening human conception, global community to include non-human life form and the physical environment. Ecocriticism rests on the principle of "earth-centeredness". It rejects the anthropocentric view along with its establishment of bio-centric vision of the world. In contrast to anthropocentric world view bio-centric world view shows its focus on horizontal relation of all the entities of the world. Bio-centric view focuses on nature having its own right to be protected and create harmonious relation among its all components. In biocentrism all organism are interdependent to each other. It considers humans as members of the earth's community where, there is complex web of interconnected elements in the universe. It views the need of human beings to exist in harmony with nature. Earth is source of all lives and it is the essence of our existence. So we need to concentrate on the environmental issues. We have to pay due respect to the natural world in which we exist. This view develops the idea of environmental ethics. Environmental ethics talk about the appropriate human moral attitudes towards nature and natural ecosystems. In this respect, in *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*, Paul W. Taylor explains the meaning of the inherent worth of all living organism. So, environmental ethics goes against

anthropocentrism in favour of biocentrism. Biocentrism rests on the belief that the natural world has intrinsic value and the idea of intrinsic value promotes human respect and moral obligation towards nature.

Similarly, Ecocriticism develops the concept of “Land Ethic” that also attempts to extend a moral concern towards the natural world. Land ethics is based on the belief that all living creatures have a common origin and history on the earth, and they are ecologically connected and interdependent. The land ethic takes the earth as a biotic community. Aldo Leopold in “The Land Ethic” opines; “the land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals or collectively: the land” (39). The land is community for both the living and non-living components and it includes soils, waters, plants and animals along with human beings. These all are the interdependent components of the community.

Man's location or dislocation with the place of his surroundings is major issues of this research since it aims to trace the human's position in his place or nature or environment. About the man's knowledge, existence as well as his adjustment connected with his locality. In this connection, John A. Hannigan in *Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist Perspective* mentions John Berryman's view, "The ordinary knowledge is accumulated within local grassroots networks by breathing air, drinking water, tilling soil, harvesting forest produce and fishing rivers, lakes and oceans" (43). Berryman regards his view that the practical knowledge comes through the assimilation of natural environment. In *Avatar*, the humanoids have the similar assimilation with nature, who are brought up in the abundant of natural resources and they can assimilate with nature easily. But on the other hand, the human beings from the earth are not connected with the nature of the moon. These

characters cannot even develop the ordinary knowledge about the place and they are not interested to be rooted to the bucolic origin.

The concept of rootedness to the land has always been of central interest to literature-environment studies. Part of the reason for this is interdisciplinary to redress the historic neglect of setting relative to plot, character, image, and symbol in literary works. Eco-criticism's attention to place reflects its recognition of the relation between human life/history and physical environments to which works of imagination bear witness, hence the claim by one of eco-criticism's earliest spokespersons that its distinctive addition to the commonly studied triad of race, class, and gender was place as a critical category. Cameron's *Avatar* asserts the similar relationship or interconnectedness between people and the land. In this sense, it is relevant to take reference from ecocriticism. It is because the literature and environment are interrelated as mentioned by Lawrence Buell, Ursula K. Heise, and Karen Thornber:

Literature and environment studies—commonly called 'ecocriticism' or 'environmental criticism' in analogy to the more general term literary criticism—comprise an eclectic, pluriform, and cross-disciplinary initiative that aims to explore the environmental dimensions of literature and other creative media in a spirit of environmental concern not limited to any one method or commitment. (418)

Literature-environment studies obviously have no monopoly on place theory, an interest shared across the humanities as well as social and applied sciences.

Ecocritical thinking broadly accords with humanistic geographers who conceive place-sense as a fusion of personal allegiance, social construction, and physiographic matrix, while often differing in practice as to the relative emphasis on the attachment

to the land at the level of imagined individual experience versus at the level of the social collective.

To be a real human, there must be the unity between individual's 'self' and nature's 'self.' With regard to real 'self' Timothy W. Luke in *Ecocritique* posits:

Real selfhood, it is claimed, derives from human unity with nature, realizing our mature personhood and uniqueness with all other human and nonhuman forms of being. Humanity must be "naturalized"; that is, the "human self" is not an atomistic ego, but a species-being and a Nature-being as a self-in-self, "where Self stands for organic wholeness. Here, the essence of Nature, to a large extent, would appear to be a projection of an idealized humanity onto the natural world. Nature is "humanized" . . . rocks, bacteria, trees, clouds river systems, animals - and permits the realization of their inner essence. (15)

According to Luke, the real self emerges only after the co-participation of human and nature. For it, these two should be merged as one. Culture begins to take its shape as a culture when people realize their surrounding/nature. To be cultured means to be "naturalized".

Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in their book *The Grammar of Visual Design* talk about relation between the real object and the image that is represented in the visual world of cinema. They write, "there is no necessity to set up a relay, that is to say a code, between the object and its image. Certainly the image is not the reality but at least it is its perfect analogue and it is exactly this analogical perfection which, to common sense, defines the photograph" (21). In terms of the narrator in a text, they further argue, "Unlike the narrator, the implied author can tell us nothing. He, or better, it has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently,

through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn" (118).

The interrelated and interdependent living organisms and non-living psychochemical surroundings maintain the earth's ecosystem. As long as the ecosystem remains balanced, creation continues unhindered and the moment of imbalance is seen in one life form or physical component of earth, effects can be clearly seen on the other forms or physical components. All human activity is ultimately based on resources found in nature, whether it is consumption, production, or exchange the commodities which are involved can always be traced to constituents provided by nature. Arthur Schopenhauer in his essay "The Will in Nature" depicts, "Everything is entirely in Nature and Nature is entire in everything. She has centered in every brute. It has surely found its way to existence, and it will surely find its way out of it" (397). This assertion embraces the notion that nothing in the world can be outside of the nature and furthermore, nature does not have its isolated existence. The connectivity among dynamic and constant things is very strongly associated to support each other. To highlight this relationship Barry Commoner writes, "Everything is Connected to Everything Else" (33) on this earth. He explains, "It reflects the existence of the elaborate network of interconnection in the ecosphere: among different living organisms and between populations, species and individual organisms and their psycho-chemical surrounding" (33). This interconnected ecological conception takes the entire earth as an organism, where one thing, either livings or non- livings, is closely connected with the other in some overt and covert way. Space and earth, wind and water, vegetation and animals, sunshine and shower, growth and desertion along with human beings and man-made artifacts as well as animal sings and natural movements are strongly tied in ecological cord.

Anthropologists and naturalists have long been interested in the connection between nature and culture. Environmental ethics, deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology have emerged in an effort to provide an ethical and conceptual foundation for right relation with nature. Environment ethics is branch of philosophical ethics. It basically describes the values carried by non-human natural world and suggests appropriate ethical response to ensure preservation and restoration of the values. Deep ecology is dealing with “soft” conservationist- one who raises money and sends to charities; or a “hard” conservationist who lives on tree stop logging and road building ; or of the “shallow/surface ecology” merely dealing with man and his surrounding ; or of ecocritical literary writing- ecopoetic –helping to create poems, music, sculpture and other art works; or of “ecophilosophy decoding ways of thinking, feeling and acting” (Morton 696); or of ecofeminism trying to relate nature’s exploitation with women’s exploitation in a patriarchal society, and trying to address the cause and effects, the strengths and the dangers of the traditional personification and stereotyping of nature as women. For the support of this concept, Cheryll Glotfelty shows the connection of nature which affects culture and is also affected by it in some extent:

All ecological criticism shares the foundational premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the inter-connection between nature and culture . . . as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between human and nonhuman. (xix)

Nature’s affecting and affected movements show the interconnection between nature and culture. Human culture cannot survive without getting proper shelter of physical world. The relational reciprocity between nature and culture is strengthened by one

another's shelter and support. We cannot think about human existence in the absence of nature. It is obvious that nature is the source of our physical and mental needs. The hindrances in oxygen supply even for a short moment invites human death in no time. In the same way nature cannot get its proper recognition, protection and validity in the absence of human support. The destiny of human beings is very strongly and intimately related to destiny of nature. No human activities are sustainable in the absence of natural setting. Soil fertility for agricultural production, availability of raw materials for industrial output and spiritual peace and creating thinking for meditation are dependent on the nature. The prosperity of nature is the prosperity of human being. Nature as well as the human beings is the consumer of that prosperity. The happier and more harmonious human survival is possible only on the happier natural surroundings. In such human and nature relationship, Lawrence Buell adds his experience of Native American study in the context of nature. "In Native American culture, the sense of the individual as inseparable from tribe and bonded to place in relationship in which nature is not "other" but part of continuum with the human" (19). In nature, especially land is taken as an identity marker and the foremost condition of survival for human beings.

The two communities, the human and the nature, can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere. They are interrelated communities whose successful existence depends upon each other. From outside they look a part but inwardly their ecological tissues are integrated with biological and spiritual thread. In biological and spiritual periphery, nature is perceived as a builder or a constructor of thoughts.

Describing nature and social perception Terry Gifford writes:

Nature is the way of thinking. Notions of nature are, of course, socially constructed and determine our perception of our direct experiences,

which, in turn, determine our communication about them. I see and hear the rain through my window, but already its meaning for me will be framed by my socialized perception of it. It may signify the source of life, or the pollution of life. (174)

In this context, Gifford's remarks justify the fact that Nature and human mind are the integral part of the construction of biosphere. Human perception and experiences are determined and directed by nature. And nature gets its completeness being associated with human culture and mind. Nature shapes culture and culture determines the meaning of nature. Furthermore, he shows that African American and Indian American cultures look at the earth with the sense of interconnection. They view that human beings are the part of the earth and vice versa:

How can you buy and sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every singing pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. We are the part of the earth and it is the part of us. The perfumed flowers are our sisters; the deer, the house, the great eagle, these are our brothers. The rocky crests, the juices in meadows, the body heat of the pony, and man all belong to the same family. (170)

Gifford means that the earth and the earthly things are site of human physical, spiritual, social and emotional interaction. Science and religion, and modernism and primitivism all philosophies have acknowledged this human connection with nature. Nature's importance for proper human development, growth and progress is

universally accepted notion and nature directly or indirectly shapes human activity and productivity. There is the nature as a principle of order of which the ordering mind is part, and which rearrange and control human activities. In the same way, nature is the principle of creation, of which creating mind is part, from which we may learn the truth of our own sympathetic nature.

Nature and culture relationship does not always follow in the same positive harmonious direction. Sometimes nature and culture confront and such confrontation leads to apocalyptic fear. In *Nature Culture Imperialism* David Arnold and Ramchandra Guha depict the reciprocity between nature and culture as follows:

But the relationship is reciprocal one, for man more than any other living organism also alters the landscape, fells trees; erode soils, dams, streams, kills off welcome plants and predatory animals, installing favoured species in their stead. The awareness of man's dependence upon nature has a long ancestry; but a sense of man as the marker and unmarker of nature has only more recently dawned upon us, and with an awesome sense of our own capacity for mischief and mayhem. (3)

Nature does indeed need protecting from man, but man, too, needs protection from his own acts, because he is the part of living world. His war against nature is inevitably a war against himself. His needless and destructive activities enter into the vast cycles of the earth, and in time return to him. Man gains nothing from his destructive activities. If such activities are continued, man has to bear a fearful blow from the side of nature. Landslide, soil erosion, siltation, acid rain, desertification and flood are the consequences of human destructive activities.

Nature culture relationship is two-dimensional. Neither of them can get complete autonomy without taking other's ecological support. In present context, the

interdependency between nature and culture is stronger. Dependency is another affiliation between nature and culture. Mostly culture depends upon nature in process of civilization. Independency is only found in the side of nature. To exhibit primitive laws and power, nature does not need human civilization. In this sector nature seems to be autonomous.

The relationship between nature and culture contest and reconcile. Sometimes, they are hostile and such hostilities leads to apocalypse. They present themselves as one another's enemy. But ultimately, they realize the destructive consequences created from their activities and stretch their arms for reconciliation giving up.

Human culture has collided with nature and such a collision has resulted into both human and natural destruction. Ecocritical inquiry has made an attempt to understand cultural development within the present global ecological crisis. Due to worldwide environmental degradation many educators, ecocritics, and researchers have been consciously trying to evoke the sense of naturalism and reconciliation so that the issue of global environmental hazards could be addressed. I am also inwardly touched by ecological issues. My present study of ecocriticism on James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009) analyzes relationship between nature and culture. The idea of struggle for survival among the hostile or unknown forces is one of the dominant concepts found in the movie. The force of environment, hereditary and biological instincts combine to control the life of the human beings and the humanoids. The disability of the human beings to adapt to new and different surrounding, the Pandora constitutes the essential plot of the movie.

As this project explores into the exploitation of nature in *Avatar*, the theoretical framework will draw on ecocritical ideas of Val Plumwood's "The Blindspots of Centricism and Human Self-enclosure", and Cheryll Glotfelty's

“Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis” among others. By means of the theoretical basis, the negative consequences of the exploitation of nature will be explored. The project assumes that the universe is the home for human and non-human beings. The universe as a home of human beings determines their physical development, psychic growth, economic prosperity and overall cultural upbringing of humanity.

This project examines human being's exploitation of nature in *Avatar*. It does not offer all the theories in ecocriticism. It incorporates the concepts developed by Val Plumwood's "The Blindspots of Centricism and Human Self-enclosure", and Cheryll Glotfelty's "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis" among others whose theory on eco-criticism will be the base for this study. It only studies the negative consequences of the exploitation of nature and tries to reveal the reasons behind how nature exploitation leads to the critical situation to the life of living beings, especially human beings. The major concern of this project is how nature determines the existence of living beings, especially human beings. By depicting the relationship of the humanoids with the nature, Cameron in *Avatar* means to say that if all the natural resources from the earth get finished, human beings will have a critical situation to live. Though science will progress a lot and explore into the space, human existence will never be easier. Human beings have to save the resources here and live rationally.

II. Critique of Exploitation of Nature in *Avatar*

This dissertation examines how James Cameron critiques the human tendency towards nature exploitation in his movie *Avatar*. It is a cinematic science-fictional discourse that covers the multiple issues like racism, sexism, colonialism and most seriously environmental degradation. Its story presents the anthropocentric picture of the futuristic setting, of the year 2154, when scientists and soldiers are involved in a mission from Earth to the fictional Earth-like moon, Pandora. Pandora is a space, a lush moon of a giant Alpha Century star system which holds and deposits the bountiful amount of unobtainium under its ancestral Home-tree but it is inhabited by the indigenous Na'vi, ten foot tall blue-skinned species of sapient humanoids.

The conflict appears in the movie when the US aid RDA Corporations feel their mission of obtaining the supplies hindered by the local natives. Determined to get hold of the property of the Pandora, the corporate mission with the help of scientists grow Na'vi human hybrid bodies called avatars which operates via mental link by the complex genetic engineering. These bodies are created in the hope of facilitating the relationship with natives and to understand Pandora biosphere. As the mission proceeds, the avatar of the paraplegic ex-marine, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) falls in love with the Neytiri (Zoe Saldana), a female Na'vi. Impatient and restless due to the incident, Parker Selfridge (Giovanni Ribisi), the administrator of the program decides to attack on Pandora in assistance of the head of the mining operation's security detail, colonel Quaritch (Stephen Lang) causing death of the hundreds of Na'vi and the degradation of the sacred Hometrees. In the crucial battle, Jake Sully fights on the side of the Na'vi, protecting and rescuing them from the threat. Finally he becomes one of the Na'vi and the leader of Pandora and considers himself as the king.

Though the film is largely hailed as a momentous achievement with regard to the technological advancement involved in its production, the creation of the animated techno craft, as well as its 3-D version but, it is ironic that *Avatar* contains the theme of human beings' blindness to their own condition that they cannot realize that they are also the part of nature and continue exploiting it.

Cameron is worried as the writers of natural world and the environmentalists are worried about the destruction of natural world in the name of civilization. Do we really hate the world? Are we really contemptuous of it? Have we really ignored its nature and its needs and the problems of its health? The evidence against us is everywhere. It is in our wanton and thoughtless misuse of the land and the other natural resources, in our wholesale pollution of the water and air, in strip mining, in our massive use and misuse of residual poisons in agriculture and elsewhere, in our willingness to destroy whole landscapes in the course of what we call "construction" and "progress" in the earth destroying and population destroying weapons we use in our wars, in the planet-destroying weapons now ready for use, in the arsenals of the most powerful and violent nations of the world.

Our hatred of the world is most insidiously and dangerously present in the constantly widening discrepancy between our power and our needs, our means and our ends. This is because of machinery and what we call efficiency. In order to build a road we destroy several thousand acres of farmland forever, all in perfect optimism, without regret, believing that we have gained much and lost nothing. In order to build a dam, which lie all human things will be temporary we destroy virgin stream forever, believing that we have conquered nature and added significantly to our stature. In order to burn cheap coal we destroy a mountain forever, believing, in the way of lovers of progress, that what is of immediate advantage of us must be permanent

benefit to the universe. In the movie, human beings go to the world of Pandora to exploit nature after their long exploitation of nature in the earth and all the natural resources of the earth are finished.

The relationship between nature and culture, nature and human beings is consciously and artistically highlighted by different literary writers and eco-critics. In “Is Nature Necessary?” Dana Phillips tries to strengthen nature culture relationship by illustrating Hemingway’s evocation towards life and nature:

This erasure of the distinction between life and death, nature and culture, is equally clear in the promotion of a new form of fishing practice called CPR, which stands not for “cardiopulmonary resuscitation”, although the associated images of revivification are apt, but for “Catch, Photograph, and Release.” Under the guise of responsible conservation, and faced with decreasing fish population of increasing levels of toxicity, bass fishermen are being urged- quite sensibly- to set free a majority of the fish they bought. (209)

Here, Phillips proposes the new way to behave with the fish. The regular trend of catching and killing fish will be sure to lose the connectivity between nature and human beings. So fish can be caught for various purposes. Photographs or their glimpse can be taken to tighten the connectivity between nature and culture. And then, they should be released in their own domains. Amma Raj Joshi, in his Ph.D. dissertation, depicts nature and culture connection in organic and inorganic sector. He writes, “The awareness of economy of nature . . . total relationship of animals with organic and inorganic environment between men, beasts, plants and soil . . . can be seen in various cultures and literature” (vi-vii). In “The Ethics of Respect for Nature” Taylor views, “We have prima facie moral obligations that are owed to wild plants

and animals themselves as members of earth's biotic community; we are morally bound (other things being equal) to protect or promote their good for their sake" (74). The need of reconciliation is strong in natural and cultural setting. None of the elements can exist without being connected with others. The way of contesting may break the biotic communal relationship of the earth. So the path of reconciliation is very safe for human civilization in a healthy existence in a natural state.



Figure I: The home-tree of the Na'vi in the Pandora (0:23:54)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

In this close shot the beautiful scenario in the Pandora is illustrated where there is no human encroachment. This is the "home-tree" of the Na'vi. Scientists have discovered an energy called unobtainium under the tree. So, they are in the mission of destroying this tree which results into the homelessness to the creatures in the Pandora.

Glotfelty in this regard shows her concern about such conflict between human beings and physical environment in her writing and she states, "Human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support system" (xx). Irresponsible behaviour of human beings towards nature such as deforestation, environmental pollution, cultivation, mining jobs and loss of wild animals are not digested by the nature. So, she shows reciprocal relationship between human and land. She says that nature also

inflicts human being and she bears a long-run damage from human activities. Green-house effect, landslides, droughts, weather extremes, acid rain, flood, tropical diseases, airborne pollution and ozone layer depletion are the consequences of nature culture contesting. “Human beings and natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources” (Moti Nissani 29). As Glotfelty, Nissani also points out the nature’s irreversible damage created by human beings which affects the life supporting system of this planet. Environmental decline caused by human actions and ultraviolet rays from the sun as the cause of skin cancer, cataract and epidemics are the reciprocity of human and nature conflicts. “Human being are the signs of environmental threat as a result of their dominance over the earth, their anthropocentric vision, their desire to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural things” (Rueckert 113).

Since the emerge of ecological thinking, literary writers and critics have started realizing the importance of body, earth or other material realities as the site of literary imagination. In the essay “Observing Earth’s Environment from Space” Gordon Wells writes, “Tropical forest, the nature of the African drought environment, the factors of changing global climate, geological hazards posed by particular volcanoes and the dynamics and biology of the world’s oceans are the major ecological hazards” (148). Similarly George Perkins Marsh shows the initial causes of environmental destruction initiated by human beings without any ecological awareness:

The destruction of the woods, then, was man’s first physical conquest, his first violation of the harmonious inanimate of nature. Primitive man had little occasion to fell trees for fuel, or the construction of

dwellings, boards, and the implements of his rude agriculture and handicraft. Windfalls would furnish or thin population with a sufficient supply of such materials. (qtd. in Andrew Goudie 3)

This initiation of environmental destruction is for basic human need, but it is shifted into luxury. People have started to destroy the nature more than they need. Contest results into very dreadful consequences on cultural periphery. Norman Myers remarks the consequence of deforestation in human surrounding. “As the forest are eliminated by burning, they serve as an anthropogenic source of carbon dioxide, thus contributing to the green-house effect, a phenomenon that may transform our planet to a profound degree within just another few decades” (24). Human conscious and subconscious activities have singled to the great disaster like loss of wild life, ozone layer depletion, and green-house effect. In the same way, Paul K. Conkin provides a comprehensive analysis of the many environmental hazards that humans must face in this still-young century in *The State of the Earth*. He explains that our activities have threatened the survival of many plants and animals, created scarcities in cultivable soils and water needed for irrigation, used up a large share of fossil fuels, polluted air and water, and most likely created conditions that will lead to major climate changes. If human beings and nature continue their conflict without giving the feelings of realization, they will not able to avoid their possible doom. Humans’ present irrational acts are the major causes of future consequences.

In the context of the movie, the land and natural resources are all destroyed by human activities. The following figure shows how happy and harmonious nature was before it is attacked by human beings:



Figure II: Wilderness in the Pandora (0:23:46)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

This close shot demonstrates the wilderness in the Pandora. Before the human encroachment to that land, the creatures are enjoying the beauty of nature there. These birds are large beastly birds but whenever there is danger, they arrive to assist the Na'vi. In this sense, these creatures are the life supporting forces in the Pandora. But in course of the movie, we see their destruction by the human beings from the earth.

Edward Gonzalez, while talking about film in *New York Times*, argues:

“*Avatar* is the continuation of Hollywood racializing film, which disregards the other race, culture and nature (17)”. By this, Gonzalez implies to say that *Avatar* presents the theme of anthropocentrism rather than projecting and uplifting the voice of the nature, and indigenous race, and disregards them. They never realize that this will invite into apocalypse in the world.

The different kinds of the “Oppressive conceptual frameworks”, which Karren Warren defines is the one “that explains, justifies, and maintains relationships of domination and subordination” (“The Power” 20). The same kind of domination can be observed in the movie as it presents human supremacy upon nature. The desire of the destruction and the extermination over the Pandora by the modern science and its

agent like Colonel Quaritch and Parker Selfridge is an act of experimenting the science and technology of modern world to taste its worthiness and the excellence. As the experimental science is possible when nature is destroyed and mechanized for the investigation, it is almost impossible for the modern science for carrying out the further experimentation over it until and unless it is dead.

The Corporate Mission tries to overpower nature for the successive exploitation of it because only the death of the nature helps them to get control of it. So the creation of the hybrid Na'vi avatar, use of military forces, robots, grand dozers, fighter plane in the film is the act of deteriorating the nature where the impulse of the destruction of it works at the fore front. About the death of the nature, Lisa Stenmark, in her essay "Ecology of Knowledge" claims:

As long as the earth was alive or sacred, it was wrong to violate or otherwise exploit it. The death of the nature made science possible, a death linked to her female status. Further, as a female, Nature not only could be dominated, she wanted to be dominated, wanted her secrets penetrated. The rhetoric on this is graphic. Because she was dead, nature and those associated with her-women, people of colour etc.- could be, and should be, exploited. (485)

Thus the logic of the domination of the nature is approved only at the killing and the destruction of it. The destruction of the nature is done treating her as a female which helps for the further penetration and exploitation of nature itself.

Anthropocentric Attitude, Apocalypse and its Impacts in *Avatar*

The main concern of Cameron in the movie, *Avatar* is to arouse ecological consciousness in human beings. But the question arises— How does Cameron disseminate ecological consciousness in *Avatar*? It becomes clear when we analyze

the setting and plot of the movie. The first thing he does is he sets the movie in the most devastative and unimagined setting and presents a journey of human beings to the Pandora. Through the journey of these characters, Cameron depicts the human encroachment into nature. With the images, Cameron is unraveling the consequences of human's anthropocentric attitude that is apocalypse and its impacts.

There are different views circulating among people about the motives behind the preservation of nature; whether to save nature for human sake or to save the nature for nature's sake. Some people argue that the nature should be preserved by disregarding the existence of human beings while others are of the opinion that nature should be preserved to ensure the life of human beings on the earth. Cameron presents Jack Sully as the protector and conservator of nature while Quaritch and other characters are the destroyers of nature. Within this contrary arguments when a conscious reader analyses Cameron's *Avatar*, he comes to a conclusion that he is raising his voice to preserve nature to save human race in this earth. Similarly, he opines that if we do not pay due attention to the nature and keep on to our anthropocentric beliefs the day is not so far when the apocalypse is at hand. And this research work argues on this line as the movie's whole plot revolves around the destruction of nature and its impacts on the human beings.

Cameron opines that human activities are damaging the planet's basic life support systems. For him, human activities especially overuse of natural resources in the name of human luxury responsible for the decline of harmonious world. Therefore, Cameron implies to say that we should respect nature and natural resources and we should protect it. *Avatar* has revealed the consequences of human anthropocentric attitude. It views that the whole biosphere is a universal whole which is in one way or other connected to each other. Similar ideas are shared by the eco-

critics. Barry Commoner, for instance, in his first law of ecology has asserted that “everything is connected to everything else” (xix). Likewise, Cheryll Glotfelty in an introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* has asserted that “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 support systems” (xx). She further clarifies the bitter fact and views on human actions. And urges human beings to take immediate actions upon the problems created by their domineering attitude: that is to change their ways of life or face “global catastrophe, destroying much beauty and exterminating countless fellow species in our headlong race to apocalypse” (xx).

This statement is totally applicable in Cameron’s *Avatar*. For instance, Cameron in the opening scene of the movie has exposed us to the similar situation, where the protagonist of the movie, Jack Sully has negative attitude towards scientists with his conversation to the agents in the spaceship:

Are you Jake Sully?

You’re ruinin’ my good mood.

It’s about your brother.

Your brother represented a significant investment. We’d like to talk to you about taking over his contract.

The egghead and the jarhead Tommy was the scientist, not me. He was the one who wanted to get shot light years out into space to find the answers. (0:0:56- 03:04)

Jack is against science and technological advancement as he opines that it is against nature and human existence ultimately. He knows it will invite apocalypse in the world. His brother was a scientist who was killed. But Jack does not have any love

towards his brother only because he was a scientist. By showing Jack's hatred towards science, Cameron is critiquing scientific advancements through the movie.

There is not any disruption in the nature. If you do not understand it, you may suffer a lot. The nature is the source of knowledge. Nowadays, the liberal science and art is emphasizing on the study of environment for its better understanding. We have created the boundaries in our education, which is not good. Everyone must know the power of nature and should know that it is only the environment where knowledge is in totality. Then we can understand the sense of responsibility and commitment to build a better tomorrow. We should involve ourselves within an active, problem solving process of specific realities.

According to Michael Vincent McGinnis, "Human beings learn from the animals and places. But the society must be open to the secrets, sign, and signals of others and of noble places" (62). We humans are living in the mechanical life so we fail to recognize the senses and memories of other creatures of the planet. The community we share together is rapidly fading up because of immoral human activities. That is why economic and ecological development should go together hand in hand. In a mechanistic society, human life has become problematic and more vulnerable than before. Cameron throughout the entire movie depicts a beautiful landscape with very harmonious relation to the natives of that land called the Na'vi. These people are the devotees of the nature and they all have very healthy relation even to the wildlife and very dangerous creatures living there. They learn many things in their life from nature. Whenever they face a problem, the creatures help them. But it is human beings who cannot live with harmonious relation to the wild animals in the earth.



Figure III: Jack allies the Na'vi to fight against human army in the Pandora
(1:14:17)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

This high angle shot illustrates how the Na'vi people are connected with nature and the wildlife living there in the Pandora. Whenever there is crisis for them, the creatures arrive without any invitation to help them. They, then connect their tail with the antenna of these creatures that helps them to be connected as ONE soul. This clearly implies to argue that one is connected to directly to nature. Just like Glotfelty's idea of everything as connected to everything in the universe.

The environmental education makes a powerful contribution for understanding the nature and its species including human and nonhuman. Our life is touched at every point by the influence of nature and its natural cycle. We have to understand that we all live on this planet and it is an atmosphere we all share together. Environmental education is very important because such education provides materials for reflection on human beings and their behavior. Andrew Brennan, in his article *Environmental Awareness and Liberal Education*, talks about the value of environment education in liberal arts.

Bernnan states, "A philosophy of education clearly has to relate the aims of education on the other hand it targets aim of education for the respectable tradition for

the learner to a number of different areas of intellectual inquiry” (521). Exposing idea of environment in the forms of knowledge is needed for the good liberal education. Every subject is incomplete without the knowledge of environment. Therefore, Bernnan emphasizes on the idea of environment in liberal education for the better understanding of nature and its species.

Creation of the nature is for every species of the planet so to preserve the wildlife and human life is very important for the sustainable development for coming up generation. To understand the value of environment we should walk through the woods with its wilderness. So that passing through the woods is like walking with wilderness. Then one can only understand the worth of the wilderness and tend into the preservation of the wilderness. The preservation of wilderness is very important for the existence of the world and its species. Henry David Thoreau has expressed a famous statement in his essay “Walking in wildness is the preservation of the world” (346).

In the conversation with Dr. Augustine Grace about the scientific mission to the Pandora, Parker Selfridge reveals his motive of running the RDA mission. Showing the piece of Unobatanium, he says:

Look, you're supposed to be winning the hearts and minds of the natives. Isn't that the whole point of your little puppet show? If you look like them, if you talk like them, they'll trust you?

Selfridge crosses to his office, behind a glass wall nearby.

But after -- how many years? -- relations with the indigenous are only getting worse.

That tends to happen when you use machine guns on them.

“This is why we’re here. Unobatanium, because this little gray rock sells for 20 million a kilo. That’s the only reason. It’s what pays for the whole party. It’s what pays for your science”. Those savages are threatening our whole operation. We’re on the brink of war and you’re supposed to be finding a diplomatic solution. So use what you’ve got and get me some results. (0:14:40-52)

It shows the real implication of the modern science as being used to violate the rights of the people to hold their natural resources and the property .As well as how it is being used to destroy the nature by killing and destroying it.

The anthropocentric values are constantly on the play throughout the film. Anthropocentrism is the conceptual framing which legitimizes and rationalizes the exploitation of both land and wild life by centering human being in locus and nature on the periphery. Val Plumwood, in her essay “The Blindness of Centrism and Human Self –enclosure”, argues anthropocentrism as:

The centric structure that provides a form of rationality, a framework for beliefs, which naturalizes and justifies a certain sort of self-centeredness, self-imposition and dispossession, which is what Eurocentric and ethnocentric colonization frameworks as well as andocentric framework involve. The centric structure accomplishes this by promoting insensitivity to the others needs, agency and prior claims as well as belief in the colonizer’s apartness, superiority and right to conquer and master the other. (118)

The centric structures are drawn to naturalize the process of the domination and exploitation. It shows the insensitivity to the needs and the desires of the other

creatures. It is the thinking that puts the emphasis merely on the human beings and the fulfillment of their vested interests.

Like Plmwood's argument, it can be said that the constant emphasis and focus on the mission of RDA Corporation of mining Unobatanium for the fulfillment of the greedy profiteers like Parker and Quaritch in the film is unjustifiable. This leads the anthropocentric values to be dominant in the film. By this it has underlined the voice of the marginalized people and the eco-tone itself. The distinction of man and nature are made in the film as two different ontological zones: being former as master and later as slave. It emphasizes on the vertical relation of all the forms of the world and formulates a hierarchy. Human beings, being on the top of the scale or hierarchy, have been exploiting the earth using and their undeniable right of exploiting the natural resources.

Nature versus culture, like private versus public, is dichotomy; where man is seen as representing culture, and needed to be unconstrained by the natural phenomenon and always have domination over natural processes. Collen Mack-Canty, in her essay "Nature/Culture Duality" quotes, Rachel Carson, who argues that in nature/culture duality "men are identified with disembodied characteristics such as order, freedom, light and reason, which were seen as better than, and in opposition to, woman's allegedly more "natural" and/or embodied characteristics such as disorder, physical necessity, darkness and passion" (155-56). In the construction of the nature/culture the human culture is emphasized over the non- human nature, usually associating it with the traits like darkness and passion. Nature in this respect is associated with negative images where as the human culture is with positive images.

In the film, from the very beginning, even before we meet the Na'vi and Pandora, the characters' view about nature align stereotypically with their ethnic

identity. Colonel Quaritch, as the representative of human beings is very restless in possessing the natural resources of Pandora views that Pandora is the land of horror and terror and the people who occupy it are the ‘savages’. While briefing about the mission to the Pandora to his troops he says:

... You are on Pandora, ladies and gentlemen. Respect that fact every second of every day. Out there beyond that fence, every living thing that crawls, flies or squats in the mud wants to kill you and eat your eyes for jujubes. We have an indigenous population of the Na’vi. They are fond of arrows dipped in a neurotoxin that will stop your heart in one minute, and they have bones reinforced with naturally occurring carbon fiber. They are very hard to kill If you want to survive you need to cultivate a strong mental attitude. (0:07:55-08:40)

This shows the prejudice and pre-occupation of human beings towards nature. Usually human beings treat the land and the people who are beyond the boundary of their geopolitical and cultural system are the ‘others’ and the creatures that inhabit that land are hostile and threatening to the human beings. This othering tendency of the human beings ultimately brings apocalypse into the world. In this context, Val Plumwood argues, “Rationalist culture has fostered a version of human-self enclosure and human-centeredness: to the extent that rationality is taken to be the exclusive, identifying feature of the human, and that the rational is identified with what is worthwhile, reason-centeredness implies human-centeredness and its correlate, human self-enclosure” (98). So, human ‘rationality’ is self-centered. Plumwood further argues:

Centrism is often represented as if its distortions affected only the weaker party to the relationship, ‘the victim’, but this idea is widely

rejected by oppression theorists as illusory and as an example of ‘studying down’. Both dominating and subordinated parties are deformed by centric constructions, not only the obvious sufferer, the one exploited in the relationship. (98)

For Plumwood, centrism results into something very dangerous. In the movie, Colonel Quaritch emphasizes on cultivating the strong mental attitude and urges his troop to use reason against the hostile people and land of Pandora. The emphasis on the human reason thus is the self-assessed supremacy of the human being that considers human as rational and the non-human as irrational, barbaric and ignorant. It is the socially and culturally constructed version of nature. The same kind of anthropocentric, instrumental and arrogant nature of human being can be seen at the treatment of nature and the Na’vi in the film. Parker Selfridge, another callous male agent of anthropocentric human society, thinks that the Home tree, the sacred ancestral tree of local natives of Pandora, is simply the reservoir the greater amount of unobatanium. He is not ready to accept these trees as having some kinds of cultural and ritualistic significance.



Figure IV: The Pandora set in fire due to explosion (2:15:52)

Source: The researcher’s screen shot

This close shot of the fire illustrates horrific scene of the Pandora due to the explosion caused by human beings in course of obtaining the natural resources there. Without any kind pity and sympathy towards the indigenous people, human beings encroach into their world and exploit them and their home land destroying their home-tee. This is anthropocentric attitude of human beings that will result into devastating and very bad consequences in the world.

In *The Wilderness and the American Mind*, Rodrick Nush clarifies that the American civilization is based on the wilderness. The civilization of America was begun from the clash between the native Red Indians and European settlers. It is their mastery over the wild nature that opens the door of civilization. He further says: “Wilderness was the basic ingredients of American civilization. From the raw materials of the physical wilderness Americans built a civilization with the idea or symbol of wilderness they sought to give that civilization identity and meaning” (qtd. in *Ecoman* ii) similarly, Fredrick Jackson Turner says wilderness “as a way to claim uniqueness for the United States” (*Ecoman* iii). As the basis of the American civilization is wilderness and anthropocentrism, similarly the mental journey of the “protagonist” Jake Sully in the form of the Na’vi avatar is nothing but the projection of the same capitalist white anthropocentric impulse in the film.

In this sense, *Avatar* has presented the domesticated version of nature which is depicted as the unexplored and unpenetrated region; that should be tamed and domesticated for the fulfillment of the necessity of the male agents. Anthropocentrism thus in the film is highlighted, devaluating the nature as inferior who is a weak and subordinate being. Parker Selfridge and colonel Quaritch believe that Pandora which entices them; is the generative source that should be conquered for the utilization of

unobtainium. They believe that it is a place that can be wooed and won. Thus, the mission over Pandora is the rape that is done upon the nature by human culture.

While talking about the film, Charles Marowitz, in *Swans Magazine*, argues “Considering war and warfare as an appropriate means to get over nature *Avatar* in order to show the supremacy of American militarism the film has shown the low grading of the nature” (32). Thus, from his criticism about the film it is clear that *Avatar* is about the human arrogance in general and American militarism in particular and their mission to the nature where the nature has been placed in the low grading positioning thereby emphasizing and celebrating the militarism of America. The world of Pandora is shown in the film as the place where the American militarism can be experimented, tasted and the progress and achievement is measured and figured out.

Similarly, Colonel Quaritch also thinks that the only means to get control over Na’vi and the resource of Pandora is to exterminate them. He believes that after the obtaining of necessary knowledge, he’ll easily fight against them. The anthropocentric motive is seen when he says in a conversation with Jake: “killing the indigenous looks bad, but there is one thing that shareholders hate more than bad press. Just find me the carrot that’ll get them to move” (0:18:48-58). This is the true anthropocentric motive of the colonel which implies that more than the life of the native people what matters him is the concern of the shareholders. As he is determined to fight against the Na’vi, he only needs the way of it.

This study, thus, by revisiting and analyzing the over exploitation of nature, in the film *Avatar* thereby seeking the relationship between human beings and nature, comes to the conclusion that it has the anthropocentric allocation of nature, domesticated and naturalized image of the native humanoids or the Na’vi race. Thus,

through an ecocritical reading of *Avatar*, it can be said that the film is based on the critique of nature exploitation that is taking place rapidly today and if not controlled, will invite apocalypse in near future.

III. *Avatar* and Human Embeddedness with Nature

This project analyzes James Cameron's *Avatar* from ecocritical perspective. As the movie highlights the scenario of nature exploitation in massive amount, it is indeed critiquing human beings' act of nature exploitation. The protagonist of the movie, Jack Sully is sent to Pandora because the Earthlings need a rare mineral found there in order to solve the humans' energy crisis. Pandora is a hostile environment for humans. The air is toxic, and the wilderness is filled with prehistoric-like savage beasts. Scientists have taken the DNA from the indigenous Pandorans, humanoids called the Na'vi, and combined it with human DNA to create avatars. These avatars can then be controlled by the humans in the quest for the rare mineral. Jake is seduced by the evil Colonel Quaritch to infiltrate the Na'vi in exchange for an operation on his legs. Jake agrees, but he soon finds himself indebted to a beautiful member of the Na'vi tribe, Neytiri, who saves his life. After Jake falls in love with Neytiri and is indoctrinated into the tribe, his outlook changes. He wants to remain in his avatar persona and protect the people from the annihilation the colonel has planned. The climax of the plot is the traditional epic battle of good versus evil. The Na'vi fight against almost insurmountable odds in an effort to protect their homeland and their culture.

This project conceptualizes nature as an organism. Ecocriticism connects natural organism with human activities. Ecocritics look into both deep and shallow ecological question. Ecocriticism not simply considers human sociology, but focuses on bio-centric lens on human relation with physical environment, life species, plant species and physio-chemical surroundings where human beings affect and get affected from.

Lawrence Buell in *The Environmental Imagination* gives a far reading account of environmental perception, the place of nature in the history of western thought. Jonathan Bate in *Romantic Ecology* makes a great contribution in the field of ecocriticism. *The Green Study Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism* edited by Laurence Coupe provides a comprehensive selection of critical texts which address the connection between ecology, culture and literature. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* writes “Human societies have constructed themselves in the hierarchical relation to other societies, both human and non-human, and without imaginary new way in which these societies understood as being ecologically connected, can be creatively transformed” (22). In *Practical Criticism* Glen Love shows human attitude towards nature. “Human behavior is not an empty vessel whose only input will be that provided by nature, but is strongly influenced by genetic orientations that underline and modified, or are modified by, cultural influences” (06). Schopenhauer considers both organic and inorganic nature as the manifestation of the Will and the Will to be reality behind all phenomenological objects of which we have ideas.

Similarly, *Beyond Nature Writing: Expending the Boundries of Ecocriticism* edited by Armbruster and Wallace is an erudite collection of essay on ecocriticism. It is a stimulating and challenging informative book. Betty and Theodore Rosjak highlight nature in greater range. They quote Paul Klee to advice art teachers, “Lead your students to nature, into nature; let them learn by experience, how a bud is formed, how trees grow and how butterfly opens its wings” (255). As Wordsworth, Paul Klee views that nature is the greatest master. Learning comes automatically and spontaneously from the natural setting. The events of approaching nature are the better sources of conscious learning. In the same way, Raymond William writes.

“There is a nature as principle of order, of which ordering mind is part” (50). Mind psychologically functions in the framework of consciousness to culture and civilization. In the *Psychological Explanation of Civilization* Sigmund Freud affirms the importance of civilization in natural setting. “Civilization overcomes the dangerous aggressivity of individual by weakening him and setting of an internal authority to watch over him, like a garrison in the conquered town” (43). Here, Freud connects the psychological connectivity of civilization with body or nature.

Human beings have become unaware of ecological embeddedness with environment. Therefore, the continuity of life of the nonhuman collectivity is threatened because of human activities. And human beings are so isolated from the beauty of natural environment that they are fully encased from the natural world by layers of materialistic perishable mind and social inhibitions. In the movie, human beings are inhuman towards the life of the humanoids in the Pandora. They are encroaching into their world for fulfilling their selfish purpose. But ultimately those who bear loss are the human beings themselves as they can get no benefit from the nature.

However, human can create nothing without the nature and without natural world the existence of every species cannot be imagined. So this dissertation further explores the issues of how misunderstanding of the environment makes the human so isolated and fails to understand other nonhumans in environment. How the protagonists are encased and isolated from the natural world and lack the understanding of the natural environment and other species of nature is the focus of this study. The natural world is always in totality but human beings are the beings who fragment it for their selfish purpose.



Figure V: Jack Sully's first experience of nature in the Pandora (0:18:45)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

This medium shot demonstrates how happy human beings become in the company of nature. Human beings are also a part of nature. They cannot be separated from nature. Nature is always very dear to human beings. Jack Sully runs away from the laboratory to the outside world where he can experience the touch of nature. He does not like the technological-human world.

Nature as the Great Chain of Connection

In *The Closing Circle* Barry Commoner writes, "Everything is connected to everything else" (33). This concept takes the entire earth as an organism where one thing- where living or non-living is connected with other. Darwin depicts that all living creatures are engaged in an endless struggle with their physical environment. The economy of nature determines the outcome of their battle to survive. Cheryll Glottfelty maps the history and the emergence of the ecological study. She opines that Ecocritics address environmental consideration which "includes ecological theory, environmentalism, conception of nature, and their depictions, human /nature dichotomy and related connection" (xvii).



Figure VI: Jack Sully among the Na'vi people as a member of their group (1:22:46)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

In this high angle shot Jack Sully is shown in the middle of the Na'vi people when everybody is in a spiritual procession of being united to each other. As everything is connected to everything, these people are connected to everyone.

Nature is all one village for every species, which lives into its including humans and nonhumans. Every creature exists in a web-like relation to other species as a great chain of being. People have become so anthropocentric in the name of civilization, urbanization and emancipation of humans. In this course of time they are being so isolated from the nature and understanding of its significant for the sustainable development of every species of the nature. Thus, they are all within a great chain of being, which are correlated with biologically and ecologically together. People's mind must be human based but it does not necessarily have to be human centered. In the movie the humanoid in the Pandora are living in a harmonious relationship with other creatures there. Whenever a humanoid faces a trouble, a bird or an animal comes to help the troubled humanoid.

Human isolation from the nature always seems so vulnerable, but yet it is difficult to understand in a more grown-up way. Human beings have set them apart from the nature in the name of civilization and urbanization. They are mesmerized

within the charm of perishable materialistic happiness. They are not capable enough to understand the concept of self-expression and its importance in understanding human life. This is very important to understand the concept of self-expression and its importance in understanding human life. The idea should be understood that the human being is to be seen as part of, not apart from the whole that is nature at large.

Human beings must understand the intrinsic worth of other non-humans and must have the essence of moral obligation as well. It is only found in the understanding of deep ecology where we get to know and value the other species as well. We humans are in trouble so we are putting our earth in problem as in the name of urbanization. We are destroying the aesthetic part of nature. Just knowing these facts are not enough to correct our mistake but we should start understanding the fact that we are a part of nature and not separate from it. Human can create nothing without the nature because human beings are not apart from it but the part of greater whole nature. As in the book *Environment and Philosophy*, the authors have argued on the philosophy “We are all one life”. This philosophy of human life should be understood properly as, “Human beings are part of nature. If we understand that we would understand that destroying the prairie or exterminating the wolf or polluting the sea are all forms of self-mutilation” (19). That is why the sustainable development can be possible for the welfare of every species on the earth. That can be acknowledged through the deep ecology movement, which is found on the concept of self-expression. This is a kind of self-realization or understanding the significance of human life and its relation with other human life and with other nonhuman creatures of the nature. The following excerpt from the script of the movie shows human-nature relation.

CUT TO: EXT. RAINFOREST – DAY WIDE VISTA

-- mist blowing through the treetops as the morning sun burns it away.

A spectacular panorama of a vast, primeval land.

UP ANGLE TRACKING among the trees, the sunlight shafting down like light in a cathedral.

JAKE (V.O.)

It's hard to put in words the deep connection the People have to the forest.

HIGH IN THE BRANCHES of a tree, Jake watches as Neytiri gently bends a large pitcher-like flower toward her, sipping nectar which is sweet and thick as honey. An incredibly sensuous image.

JAKE (V.O.)

They see a network of energy that flows through all living things. They know that all energy is only borrowed--

MACRO SHOT of a purple flower, beaded with raindrops. A blue hand picks the flower. (79)

The above excerpt from the script of the movie shows how deep is the relation of a creature to the nature. As Jack says it is really very difficult to express human relation with nature in words. This excerpt also has some cinematographic elements used. For example, it talks about camera angle, shot etc.

All organisms are interdependent to each other. They are organically unified and they make a whole ecosystem. In it if any part is taken then whole system could be distracted. In "The Environmental Ethics", Edward O. Wilson says:

Humanity is part of nature, a species that evolved among other species. The more closely we identify ourselves with the rest of life, the more quickly we will be able to discover the sources of human sensibility

and acquire the knowledge on which an enduring ethic, a sense of preferred direction, can be built. (157)

It shows that human beings are part of nature and we must respect and protect nature for its value to us and we should live in harmony with nature. In the context of the movie, Jack Sully is the only character who is in the mission of protecting nature. All other characters are in the mission of destroying and exploiting nature. Instead of protecting nature, they are all in the master plan of destroying the home-tree of the Na'vi and take the unobtainium from there. The following figure shows how challenging and risky job Jack handles to protect nature.



Figure VII: Jack Sully in his avatar form and Niyetri getting ready for battle to protect the home-tree of the Na'vi from human attack (2:02:03)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

This low angle medium shot presents Jack Sully as a lover of nature who puts himself into a challenging position to protect nature. Being embedded with nature, he is involved in the mission of nature conservation. The nature is as a greater whole for all humans and nonhumans who live into it. The idea that the human being is to be seen as a part of, and not apart from, the wider whole that is nature is nature at large for every species. People live in the society they are more conscious on these matters

which belongs to their society. Therefore, people have developed the interest in the study of sociology that consists of the content only about society and the human kind who live into this. As we are studying the value of relationship between human and nonhumans of the nature, we should have equal knowledge about environment and its species. Jack is presented as embedded with nature and as a part of it in the movie. Since Jack is the protagonist in the movie, Cameron is appealing his audience to protect nature and at the same time, he is critiquing nature exploitation.

The lives on earth are connected with each other and wholly dependent with such basic natural elements for their survival; sunlight, water and air. All these components are interconnected with each other. Aldo Leopold in “The Land Ethics” argues:

Land is not merely soil; it is a foundation of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants and animals A land ethic then, reflects the existence of an ecological conscience, and this in turn reflects a conviction of individual responsibility for the health of land. Health is the capacity of land for self- renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity. (43-45)

As Leopold opines, land is source of energy that helps the existence of the creatures. For sound existence human has to remain in mutual manner with nature helping the integrity of both. Land becomes a base for all sorts of activities human and non-human. So, it is responsibility of human to conserve the diversity and health of the nature.

People’s daily activities show their situatedness in the nature. Their developmental and industrial activities and all the other matters in their lives are continually in reciprocity with the nature and its rule. They are in common dependent on it. These multiple activities bind human with nature. There lies the mutual

dependency and reciprocity between humans, land and nature in common.

Understanding of this only can create sound existence of all creatures. Paul W. Taylor on “The Ethics of Respect for Nature” says:

When we take this view we come to understand other living things, their environmental conditions, and their ecological relationships in such a way as to wake in us a deep sense of our kinship with them as fellow members of the Earth’s community of life. Humans and nonhumans alike are viewed together as integral part of one unified whole in which all living things are functionally interrelated. (83)

So, understanding of intricate relationship between the creatures of the biosphere develops the affinity in relation and helps to maintain balance among them. But quite contrary to this opinion, human beings in the modern world are destroying nature. Human beings in the modern world have anthropocentric vision that makes humans beings not to respect nature at all. The following figure illustrates how human beings are destroying nature:



Figure VIII: Human encroachment in the Pandora (1:41:36)

Source: The researcher’s screen shot

This high angle medium shot illustrates how human beings are destroying nature and natural resources with the help of the weapons and the technology they have invented. Human beings, forgetting the fact that nature is the common property of each and

every creature, exploiting nature without the consent to any other creature. This figure shows the anthropocentric vision of human beings. In this context, Val Plumwood argues:

A weakened sense of the reality of our embeddedness in nature is seen in the cultural phenomenon of ecological denial which refuses to admit the reality and seriousness of the ecological crisis. This Illusion of Disembeddedness is an index of how far we have come in what Jennifer Price calls ‘losing track of nature’ – and in the process, losing track of ourselves as ecologically constrained beings. (97)

Plumwood, here, argues that it is human being who cannot realise that they are embedded with nature. This refers to the journey of human being out of track. It invites into ecological crisis, she argues.

In *Environment and Social Theory* John Barry argues, “the particular importance is the central concern of green theory and practice to overcome both the separation of ‘Humans’ from ‘Nature’ and also the misperception of humans as above or superior to nature” (295). So, the greening social theory is very important for the rejection of the separation of humanity and environment. However, the focus is not only the green theory but to the relation between green and social theory that comes with greening social theory to understand the value of nature and its other species in human life.

Barry further says that, “the science of ecology plays an important part in arguing the human as a species of animal. It does not mean that we are like animal but we are animals, so we are ecologically embedded in nature, and exist in a web-like relation to other species. We are all into the great chain of being (297)”. In this way the theory has become so important for the sustainable development of human life and

nature. The theory should be understood thoroughly and studied properly in the modern materialistic society. That is why the social theory is intimately connected with the theory and practice of the development or modernization of modern society. We can drag the matters of environment into the study of sociology to have the proper idea of nature and its species and their interrelation into one another. To understand the ecological gratitude, intrinsic worth and moral obligation with every species of nature, we should have the idea of green theory. The only principle of green theory is the rejection of the separation of 'Humanity' and 'Environment'. Humans are ecologically embedded and biologically embodied with other species of nature. So, the greening social theory helps to understand the value of each other's relation and its moral obligation. These are the matters of moral concern between humans and nature.

When Jake Sully steps on the land of Pandora, he is typically shown in the film on the posture of the colonial hero, as if he were going to the foreign unknown land to know it. He is shown having the gun in his hand, walking very curiously, like the postcolonial hero walking in an unknown territory for the first time to explore the new land.



Figure IX: Jack Sully in his avatar form unafraid of the robot (0:18:34)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

This close shot illustrates Jack as a curious and brave character who is going to explore the planet without any fear and without any tiresome in him.

But it is ironic that the same Jake at last in the film is shown as the rescuer of the Na'vi which in fact is an irony. It is the continuity of the anthropocentric ideology which regards other species, and nature as inappropriate and inadequate even to protect them. In course of time, he starts loving the indigenous people there. By depicting the protagonist as the lover of nature and the Na'vi girl, Cameron is justifying the theme of reconciliation with nature in the movie. In this respect, Annalee Newitz in the article "Avatar: Racial Fantasy" in *The New York Times* opines *Avatar* as:

The story of a white man marrying the aboriginal princess and becoming king makes it ideologically a rather conservative, old-fashioned film. It shows that an honest white guy siding up ecologically sound aborigines against the 'military-industrial complex' of the imperialist invaders. The film teaches us that the only choice the aborigines have is to be saved by the human beings or to be destroyed by them. In other words, they can choose either to be the victim of imperialist reality, or to play their allotted role in the white man's fantasy. (26)

This makes clear that *Avatar* shows the native aborigines are powerless people who have only two choices: either to be victim of imperialist reality or to allot their fate through white man's hand. Native people do not have any option they either should be victimized by imperial power or to accept human supremacy thereby rescuing from him and considering him their leader. In such critical situation of the natives, Jack

Sully helps and protects them from human attack. His marriage to Niyetiri can be regarded as human-nature reconciliation in the movie.

In the course of his living in the Pandora, Jack and Niyetiri get closer, become good friends and ultimately fall deep in each other's love. The following figure further illustrates their activities of spending even the nights together.



Figure X: Jack and Niyetiri in the Pandora (1:26:09)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

This medium shot demonstrates that love between human beings and non-human is possible. They cannot only become good friends but also good partners. Jack learns many skills to live in the Pandora with the guidelines of his beloved. Since he has good company with nature, his life becomes easier there. In the same manner he helps the Na'vi in each and every crisis and difficulty they face.

At the end of the film, when Jake Sully changes his alliance with the Colonel and Selfridge thereby fighting from the side of Na'vi, Colonel Quaritch asks him: "Hey Sully, how's it feel to betray your own race? You think you are one of them?" (02:20:16-20) This means that the war which has taken place between the Na'vi and the human beings from the earth is the racial war, weighed between the humans and the non-humans. Quaritch reminds Jake not to betray his own race. This implies that it is the racial war and what concerns and matters most here is the issue of race.

Quaritch thinks that the only way to change Jake's mind is the reminder to him the colour of his race and the ancestry where he belongs. It is thus the film can be said as the fable of the anthropocentric culture. But our protagonist's love for nature and his disgust to the selfish human world can be taken as human-nature reconciliation. The following figure illustrates his extreme hatred towards human encroachment to nature:



Figure XI: Jack's combat against the human force to protect the life of the Na'vi (2:20:02)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

This high angle medium shot demonstrates that Jack Sully risks his own life for the sake of the natives in the Pandora. He fights against his own race only because they overexploit nature and natural resources mercilessly. If the home-tree is destroyed, the Na'vi and the other creatures will not have their home to live. To his commander and other warriors, he says, "They're not going to give up their home --they're not gonna make a deal. For what? Lite beer and shopping channel? There's nothing we have that they want. We're a horror to them. We're the monsters from space . . . They're never going to leave Home-tree" (1:34:20-50). Since he loves the non-human creatures there, he is a nature loving character.

In *Literature and Science*, Aldus Huxley explains that the concern of ecology and the study of the interconnection between man and nature are the most proper

fields of study and they are matters of great importance. In his view, “In the light of what we know about the relationship of living things to one another and to their inorganic environment” (108). In the manner of different religions and cultures along with various evolutionary theorists, social and cultural critics, literary writers and philosophers focus on the preeminence of awareness of nature. Arthur Schopenhauer in “The Will in Nature” highlights that “Everything is entirely in nature, and nature is entire in everything, she has her centre in every brute. It has surely found its way into existence, and will surely find its way out of it” (397). This assertion embraces the importance of nature and culture reconciliation and the notion that nothing in the world can be outside of the nation.

Laurence Coupe highlights the reconciliatory aspect of nature and culture, nature and human beings by explaining the importance of green studies. He writes:

Green studies being concerned with permanence as much as with change, it allows us to reflect upon the literary or cultural text in the context of slow evolution of the biosphere. Thus, it would be absurd were it to applaud novelty for its own sake in the field of theory, given that is that very way of thinking which threatens us with catastrophe.

(6)

Human beings should realize that they are also the part of nature. The concern of green studies is with the living connection between nature and culture including past and future. Class, race, and gender are important dimensions of both literary and cultural studies; but survival of biosphere most surely rank as even more important, since without it there is no issues worth addressing.

In *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and Environmental Tradition*, Jonathan Bate discusses post-Althusserian Marxist critique of Romanticism. The first of these

readings assumed that “the human mind is superior to the nature; the second assumed that economy of human society is more important than the economy of nature” (9).

The concept of reconciliation is strengthened due to the environmental hazards:

A green reading of Wordsworth is prime example; it has strong historical force, for if one historicizes the idea of an ecological point- a respect for the earth and a skepticism as to the orthodoxy that economic growth and materials production are the be –all and end- all of human society-one finds oneself squarely in the romantic tradition; and it has strong contemporary force in that it brings romanticism to bear on what are likely to be some of the most pressing political issues of the coming decade :the green-house effect and the deletion of the ozone layer, the destruction of the tropical rain forest, acid rain, the pollution of the sea, and , more locally, the concreting of England’s green and pleasant land. (9)

In the contestation between nature and reconciliation is required to avoid environmental hazards such as depletion of ozone layer, the destruction of tropical forest, acid rain and pollution of the sea, which obstruct the network of ecosystem. Reconciliation leads nature and culture towards the similar direction with full understanding of each other’s limitations and challenges. Reconciliation is consciously designed strategy to enhance nature and culture both. It weakens the characteristic of ferocity, which emerges in relationship between nature and culture.

In the movie, Jack’s avatar body loves all the creatures in the Pandora because he wants to bring reconciliation between human being and nature. He loves them all because he is a lover of nature and in return gets the same kind of behavior from them too. The following figure shows his love for non-human creatures there:



Figure XII: Jack's love for a beastly bird in the Pandora (1:55:38)

Source: The researcher's screen shot

This extreme close shot shows Jack's love for a bird in the Pandora. Whenever there is danger, these birds arrive to assist the Na'vi there. This figure justifies Jack as a character who loves other species of animals. His love for these creatures refers to his love for nature and wildlife that are all the part of nature.

Every wilderness of the nature embraces the mankind along with its nature. The most alive is the wildest because life consists with wilderness. The continuation of life cannot be found in the cities and towns but can be found in the preservation of wilderness where the true existence of world lies. There one cannot see any difference between human and nonhuman in the nature. The nature has given the equal interest and equal consideration in every species of earth.

In this way, it is clear from the setting and plot of the movie that Cameron has depicted the consequences of the devastation of nature and its solution in *Avatar*. It is true as the movie has depicted the apocalyptic world that is possible. Due to the scarcity of energy, people will have to go to other planets to bring the energy. Human beings will continue to exploit nature and natural resources till eternity. Furthermore, Cameron's work offers a threatening and bleak account of a devastated world. The use of landscape and nature in *Avatar* can be understood as a critique of

anthropocentric concept towards the nature. In the movie , Cameron sets forth his thesis that human activity directly or indirectly effects on the ecosystem; which at last deteriorate the harmony and the world would be lost forever despite our insistence that everything will be okay. His philosophy is that we should consider on this fact before the terrifying and horrifying situation emerged. As a solution, Cameron presents Jack as a zoophilic character symbolically by which he is calling for the urgency of loving nature and every part of nature.

IV. Cameron's Call for Human-Nature Reconciliation in *Avatar*

This project has analyzed James Cameron's *Avatar* from ecocritical perspective. By revisiting and analyzing the issue of overexploitation of nature in the film *Avatar*, this dissertation has shown the relationship between human beings and nature, and has come to the conclusion that the anthropocentric vision of human beings has exploited and marginalized the native humanoids or the Na'vi race in their own homeland. They are made homeless and outsiders in their own homeland due to human encroachment into their beautiful world. Thus, through an ecocritical reading of *Avatar*, the dissertation concludes that the film has critiqued nature exploitation that is taking place rapidly today that will invite apocalypse in near future if it is not controlled in time.

This project, by considering nature as everything, argues that human beings are the part of nature and they cannot be separated from nature. Every human activity is connected to nature that will directly and indirectly affect nature. As Ecocritics look into both deep and shallow ecological question, this project advocates for nature conservation. The project comes to the conclusion that there is no way than reconciling with nature. Through the activities of Jack Sully, the protagonist of the movie, this project comes to the conclusion that one who reconciles with nature has easier survival. At the same time, through the activities of other human characters in the movie, the researcher comes to the conclusion that one having hostile relation with nature has to face difficulty in life. Technological and artificial world cannot give one happiness and satisfaction. Instead one needs to be familiar with nature.

Nature is always in totality, human beings are the one who always try to destroy it. Human beings are destroying nature to satisfy their materialistic desire forgetting the fact that they are also being isolated from the beauty of nature. The

Na'vi people live harmoniously with nature as they have better understood the meaning of nature over them. But the human beings from the earth are trying to destroy nature and bring fragments into nature in the movie. As a result, their life is full of trouble and hardships. Nature is a big village for every creature of the earth including all humans. Nature in its natural form is very benevolent, just like a mother. The nature is like nurturing mother because it provides every needs of mankind in an ordered way. This project has highlighted how Cameron critiques the tendency of human beings to exploit nature.

Human beings are indifferent towards the suffering of other species of nature. Human characters in the movie show their mercilessness towards the suffering of the Na'vi people in the Pandora. People today think that human suffering has more moral significance than nonhuman suffering. They have become more and more aloof from the nature and also lack the reverence for other species. But this is the anthropocentric vision of human beings.

Cameron through this movie appeals that people should have a moral obligation not to inflict pain and suffering on any individual, including non-human animals. The moral consideration to both human and non-human should be given but that does not mean treating them like or holding their lives to be of equal value. Human beings are also chained within the great chain of being of a greater whole, which is nature in totality. Within the nature the non-humans are suffering from environmental degradation and have become the sufferers because of human activities. So people should understand the fact as human beings they are parts not only of the community of humanity but of the natural environment, which makes up nature as a whole. "We are all one life" in the words of Coleridge, therefore, a bell

tolls for us not only when a fellow human being dies but at the destruction of any member of that vastly wider community which is nature itself.

It is so clear that, when people are isolated from the nature and they confine them within the materialistic pleasure of earth, they harm both themselves and nonhuman animals. The duties of human beings are with respect to the world of human civilization. People could no longer stay aloof from the nature and take the human point of view and consider the effects of our actions exclusively from the perspective of their own good. So, all given evidences are taken to justify the respect of nature and the result of environmental isolation of individual which figures out the fundamental moral attitude that underlines and makes intelligible the commitment to live by such a system along with moral gratitude.

Human duties are to respect the integrity of natural ecosystem, to pressure endangered species to avoid environmental degradation and for the sustainable development of nature. Because human beings and nonhuman beings are all in the 'Great chain of being', where all exist in a web-like relation to other species, every species is valuable as what it is and should understand its value. The togetherness of human and nonhuman can make the sustainable world for the upcoming generation. In the movie, Jack Sully involves in the love to every creature of the nature and respects it. He even gets married with a Na'vi girl, Niyetiri. By presenting Jack's love for nature and other non-human beings in the movie, Cameron appeals for reconciliation with nature needed to be in each and every human being to sustain the world and human existence because anthropocentrism is self-destructive.

In this way, this dissertation has come to the conclusion that James Cameron critiques the exploitation of nature in his movie *Avatar*. He depicts the consequences of the destruction of nature and at the same time he strongly suggests a solution for

the problem that is the urgency of human-nature reconciliation. It is true as the movie depicts the apocalyptic world that is possible. Due to the scarcity of energy, people will have to go to other planets to bring the energy. They will continue to exploit nature and natural resources till eternity. Furthermore, Cameron's work offers a threatening and bleak account of a devastated world. In the movie, Cameron sets forth his thesis that human activity directly or indirectly effects on the ecosystem; which at last deteriorates the harmony and the world would be lost forever despite human insistence that everything will be "Okay". His argument is that people should consider this fact before the horrifying situation emerges. As a solution, Cameron presents Jack as a nature-loving character. In this way, James Cameron through his movie *Avatar* critiques the anthropocentric attitude of human beings that considers nature as 'other' concerning only on human interest. This attitude of human beings, as Cameron implies, results into apocalypse. So, as a solution, he calls for the urgency of human-nature reconciliation.

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