

**EXPLORING THE ECOCENTRIC WORLD - AN ANALYSE OF JULES
VERNE'S *JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH***

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Abstract:

The rule of nature implies that one should never know the truth of nature until one starts exploring and makes it for himself \herself. This is what Jules Verne has tried to explore in his novel, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. It was published in 1864. The original title of the book was *Voyage au Centre de la Terre* (in French). Jules Gabriel Verne is a 19th century French writer. He is the pioneer of the science fiction genre. Most of the time he is referred to as the father of science fiction as he has written numerous articles about the ecosystem well before its discovery. His other works deal with new inventions and around the ecocentric world. Jules Verne wrote it in French and later it was translated by Joyce Gard into English. He is a British fantasy writer. In this novel Verne has written about nature and he has revealed that it is not a mere thing for human research but it's beyond human intellect. It is the story about a professor Lidenbrock and his nephew Axel, who are all travels to the Centre of the earth. And they experiencing various adventures while travel down through the geological layers of past. And the novel end up with a volcanic eruption, which throws them out on the slopes of Stromboli. Verne discusses it with the background of ecology and he tries to bring out the environmental aspects. This paper analyses the ecosystem in an eco-critical perspective.

Keywords: Nature, anthropocentrism, techno centrism, ecocentrism, ecology.

“We may be brave human laws, but we cannot resist natural ones” (web). Nature is a great wonder which is filled with unbelievable things. But how human treats it and whether they regret their mistake is a question mark. In this digital world people become egocentric and reckless. They don't have time to think about the wipe out wonders of nature which are once exists in the pre historic period. And the eco system was completely damaged because of the irresponsible activities of humans and it leads to the ecological crisis. He does not see nature as his companion but he sees it as a commodity.

All the living beings' lives depend upon nature. Every genre comes under nature, without nature there is no experiment. In this part literature is no exception. Many literary works talk about nature. S.T Coleridge went one step more and accepts nature as his God. In his poem *To Nature* he says, “Thee only God! and thou shalt not despise”. Other writers especially many romantic writers present the beauty of nature in their works. They not only describe the beauty of nature but they use nature to confess their feelings. John Donne says, “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent.” While presenting the beauty of nature and uses nature to confess their emotions they don't forget to speak about the ecological crises which are made by man. Rachel Carson talks about the senseless activities of human beings in her work *Silent Spring*.

. . . the most alarming of all man's assault upon environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable. The chain of evils it initiates not only

in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible. (web)

Human being is not separate from nature but they are one part of nature. In this great wonder they are just a small part and if they do something harm to nature then it will affect them too because they are not other but a part of nature. Nature and human being is interlinked. The term eco criticism was coined by William Rueckert in the year 1978 in his essay "Literature and ecology: an experiment in ecocriticism. Eco criticism depicts the relation between human beings and the natural world in literature.

Cheryll Glotfelty the founder of eco criticism in USA has said "simply defined, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (beginning theory) (248). In 1992, she established the Association for the study of literature and environment (ASLE). In the late 1970s the concept of eco criticism was raised in the meeting of the western literature association (WLA).

In the study of nature in philosophical view it has some ethics. Some of them are anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and techno centrism. According to oxford dictionary anthropocentrism means "the belief that humans are more important than anything else". It is described in other terminology is 'Shallow ecology'.

The point repeatedly made by ecocritics is that for the first time in human history, no true wilderness any longer exists on the planet, for every region is affected by global warming, and other 'anthropocentric' problems, such as toxic waste and nuclear fall-out. Our sense of this problem will vary, but we surely need to concede, . . . (257 b.t)

Ecocentrism also known as nature centre and it is opposed to anthropocentrism. Aldo Leopold conceived this ethic. This term considers all the species including humans as one with nature and they are interlinked. Their aim is to protect and improve nature from the harmful actions of human and other beings. And it develops a harmony between nature and human. Another terminology for this is 'Deep ecology'.

In 1973, Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss coined the phrase 'deep ecology'. And he has given a theoretical foundation for this. Deep ecology's main principle is "like humanity, the living environment as a whole has the same right to live and flourish". (Web) *The Journey to the Centre of the Earth* comes under this philosophy. Næss's has discovered that anthropocentrism is the root cause for the natural crisis and it also leads to the extinctions of many non human species.

In this work, *The Journey to the Centre of the Earth* Jules Verne discusses the importance of ecocentricism and issues of anthropocentrism and techno centrism. Techno centrism is having faith on modern technology. They do not believe that reducing factories will change the environmental problems but they try to reduce the problem by using the modern technology. This ethic believes that human has control over nature. The four environmental areas of ecocriticism talks about four different parts. The wilderness deals with deserts and oceans, the scenic sublime about forest, lakes and waterfalls. The third one is country side it deals with hills and fields then the domestic picturesque with parks, gardens and lanes. Jules Verne's *The Journey to the Centre of the Earth* includes all the four except the domestic picturesque. Because those three are created by Mother Nature but the fourth one domestic picturesque is created by human.

Jules Verne discusses the wilderness in his novel. He says “The sea is everything. It covers seven tenths of the terrestrial globe. Its breath is pure and healthy. It is an immense desert, where man is never lonely, for he feels life stirring on all sides”(iv). In this novel he also talks about the extinctions of non human species. He presents the ecocentric world through the subterranean world. The way he describe the subterranean world explains how an ecocentric world should be.

A huge sheet of water stretched out into the distance.... covered with fine golden shore... It was a real ocean, like the oceans of the earth, but terribly wild and lonely.

A strange light shone over this subterranean sea. Not the hot brilliance of the sun, nor the cool pale radiance of the moon; but a clear cold white light, brighter than moonlight, but not to steady. It was evidently caused by natural electricity.
(119-120)

In *The Journey to the Centre of the Earth* he pictures the various environmental areas. The trio team crosses the wilderness, scenic sublime and country side. They discover the subterranean world and get a chance to see the extinct non human species. But they do not disturb anything and they are very clear about the ecocentric idea. They find the living traces of prehistoric animals like mastodon, megatherium, and dinosaur. While sailing on the sea they have seen the fishes which are extinct for centuries. They find extinct fishes like dipterides, genus pterychits and prehistoric whales. “So the sea was full of extinct fish, as the land of extinct plants!”(130). At last they have a chance to see the battle of antediluvian sea monsters. A hundred feet long Ichthyosaurus and the thirty feet neck Plesiosaurus.

The trio team sees the antediluvian plants. Axel says “a sort of green house of specimens we’ve only known till now from fossils.”(121). The subterranean world creates the atmosphere of a ecocentric world. “...on the left were the piled-up rocks of the mighty cliffs, with innumerable waterfalls cascading down their sides.”(120). These are all come under the scenic sublime. When they are under the earth they see various types of rocks. “The further I go the more confident I become: the primordial nature of the rock leads me to believe that there is no central furnace.”(72). They have travelled through the tunnel which was formed during the eruption of 1219. The rocks are dazzling in the lamp light because it contains marble in various shades.

The next type is country side. When they are in the Iceland the elegant of country side is discusses by the writer. The environment of snakefalls is fully covered with thick rocks which are made out of the lava from the volcano. The villages are all covered with hills and valley.

I saw deep valleys running into each other on every side, precipices diminished to the size of wells, lakes looking like ponds, rivers like brooks . . . and mountains ran away into the distance, some of the peaks crested with light plumes of smoke . . . snowfields looked like a foaming sea. (63)

When the trio team crosses all these things they do not disturb the nature and the pre historic animals. When they spot an ape they move away from that place. Even they don’t want to disturb the antediluvian fishes and other mystic animals. They know the value of nature and they make use of it without disturbing. Jules Verne compares the life of anthropocentric and ecocentric. He explains it through the sleep of Axel.

. . . we had hard beds and poor shelter in that awkward camping-ground, five thousand feet above sea level. And yet I sank almost at once into a deep and

peaceful sleep; it was the best night I had had for a very long time. I did not even dream. (63).

When his life is techno centric he doesn't get a good sleep but when it shifted to ecocentric he gets a very good sleep. When Axel tastes the Hansbrooke water he says it taste like iron, for that Otto replies "excellent for the stomach," said my uncle. 'People pay a lot of money at health resorts to drink water like this.'"(94). In the anthropocentric world human life is an irony. He starts to destroy everything and its affects their body to cure that he pays lots of money. For his reckless nature he destroys.

For their reckless activity human converts forest and fertile land into urban uses. And technocentric lead various pollution. These things are all lead the earth to climate change. The climate change affects the human as well as all the living and non living creatures. The irresponsible activity of human leads every one's life to a danger. To avoid all these things eco-centrism will be the only solution. Human should regret their mistakes and tries to make the earth green again. "Nature's creative power is far beyond man's instinct of destruction." (iv)

This paper gives a detailed note on eco-criticism and it types. It shows how anthropocentric life will be and how ecocentric life will be. Also list out why human should follow the ecocentric life style. Human beings consider other living beings as inferior and he believes he has more power than nature. Many lines are quoted from other writers and critics work to show how much eco centric life is needed to egocentric human. Extinctions of non human spices, different types of environmental areas and humans reckless activities to nature are discussed. Advise people to follow the ecocentric life style. Many lines are quoted from the

related texts written by many writers like S.T Coleridge, John Donne and Rachel Carson. They are concern for nature and its wealth. And their concern expressed in their works.

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