
The Outlook: Journal of English Studies

[A Peer-Reviewed, Open Access Journal; Indexed in NepJOL]
ISSN: 2565-4748 (Print); ISSN: 2773-8124 (Online); JPPS Star-Ranked Journal
Published by Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus
Tribhuvan University, Pokhara, Nepal
<http://ejournals.pncampus.edu.np/ejournals/outlook/>

Blurring the Human-Animal Dichotomy: A Deep Ecological Reading of Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*

Kamal Sharma

Department of English, Dhawalagiri M. Campus, Tribhuvan University, Baglung, Nepal

Article History: Submitted 1 Oct. 2021; Reviewed 25 Oct. 2021; Revised 5 Dec. 2021

Corresponding Author: Kamal Sharma, Email: kamalsharmabaglung@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/ojes.v13i1.46697>

Abstract

The paper analyzes human-animal relation in Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007) from the deep ecological perspective. The narrator of the story, a teenager, who prefers to be called 'Animal,' recounts his experiences of physical deformity and friendship with his friend Lara – a dog. By praising animal (dog) and criticizing human world, the character Animal blurs the dichotomy between human and non-human world by realizing the intrinsic value of each life form. Animal's act of calling himself 'Animal' rather than human shows his disgust to humanity as he has been a victim of industrial disaster – Bhopal gas tragedy as an outcome of modern development of humanity. His infatuation to animals, open sky and forests shows his love to non-human world as he sees intrinsic values of each thing. It supports what the deep ecologists call it as having intrinsic values of biotic and abiotic things in themselves irrespective of what humans define it for utilitarian purpose. The study is qualitative in nature and analyzes the text from the deep ecological perspective. The paper concludes that by blurring the human-animal dichotomy, the narrator enjoys his emotional relation with animal (dog) and nature.

Keywords: Animal-human relation, deep ecology, intrinsic worth, nature

Introduction

The present paper explores the relation between human and non-human world, using the deep ecological perspective, which asserts that everything in the world has intrinsic values themselves and for everyone living in this world. Natural things and their values sometimes exceed more than humans. All the things having inherent values contribute to the realization of the diversity and richness of different life forms and non-life forms. Humans have no right to reduce their values. Earth is not our home alone; it is for the millions of other creatures. As shown in the novel, *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha, the central character Animal's ecological consciousness and mindfulness boosts his friendship with a dog in opposition to the dominant worldview of technocratic-industrial society, which separates humanity from nature. Techno based industrial

Copyright 2022 © the Author(s) and the Publisher. This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International \(CC BY-NC 4.0\) License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).



society gives a focus to anthropocentrism, which is mentioned in this way: “The complex interdependence of living things” (Clark 23), “biological egalitarianism among all living species” (Salleh 26), “Humans are animals, after all” (Rahman 165) and “Humans as co-evolving with other life forms” (Nayer 256). All these quotes talk about human-animal nexus. Keeping this in mind, the present paper aims at showing how a human (narrator) wishes to live a lonely life, i.e. the life of dog, or animal. Thus, the study assumes that the novel blurs the line of humanity and animals, breaking the value dualism which paves the way to value hierarchies. Paying attention to egalitarian society where harmony between nature and rest of the world is respected, the novel supports the Buddhist line of respect to all life forms. Nature as a mother goddess, non-humans as equal to the human world and non-violence as a leading principle of life are the emerging themes in South Asian countries where Buddhism has its role. The novel written in the Indian context follows the themes of equality, disruption of value dualism and nature-human relation prevailing mostly in South Asian countries. Daniel H. Henning, in this regard, states, “The teaching of Buddha also has oneness, egocentric and spiritual orientations with loving and compassionate concerns for all living beings. These teachings are also correlated and compatible with deep ecology, and its orientation” (8). Thus, Henning clarifies that spiritual orientations of loving all the living beings is associated with the theme of Buddhism and deep ecology. Thus, respect to each life form of nature by narrator and his assimilation into animal life form support the claim that the novel breaks the differences between human and animals.

Literature Review

After its publication in 2007, Sinha's *Animal People* has been criticized by different critics, using different perspectives. The novel as an outcome of Bhopal gas tragedy in India showcases the adverse effects of the industrial disaster, which occurred in 1984. Sangita Patil has mentioned the horrible scene of the tragedy in her book *Ecofeminism and the Indian Novel* as she comments:

Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007) is an attempt to gauge the worst effects of Bhopal gas tragedy on human beings and nature through a dystopia, Khaufpur. Sinha narrates the novel in a unique way. Animal is a name of the teenager boy in the novel. The impact of the disaster bends him at the bottom of his spine, which forces him to walk on all fours just like an animal. This identity is the gift of the industrial disaster. (112)

The horrible tragic event that occurred in Bhopal causing deaths and deformities that polluted the world. The narrator who is known as 'Animal' creeps on the body and bends him at the bottom of the spine. It is confused if he walks or creeps. The disaster has bad impacts on ecology as well when she elaborates, “Sinha exhibits the impact of the industrial disaster on people and nature at various levels” (115). Patil talks about physical deformities and mental torture that are mentioned in the novel in this way: “First, we map the protagonist Animal's physical deformity and mental trauma” (115). She further talks about how the families and societies were affected as she elaborates, “Second, a few families and their agonies are projected” (115). Nothing was safe due to the disaster; plant life, human life, insects and birds were either damaged or destroyed, which is described in the book: “Subsequently, we espouse the impact on birds, animals, water and the natural phenomena. Residues of the disaster are long lasting. They contaminate water and pollute air and land to such an extent that it is high time to come out of the deadly disaster” (115). Water and land pollution were common. The narrator of the story prefers himself to be called 'animal': “I used to be human once. So I'm told. I don't remember it myself, but people who knew me when I was small say I walked on

two feet just like a human being” (9). Animal is a name of a boy who is the narrator of the story. Disaster brought up by the Bhopal gas tragedy has a tremendous impact on nature including the narrator. He walks creeping on four feet like an animal.

Animal finds homely environment in natural setting. The human-animal nexus is discussed by Shazia Rahman. Rahman in his work *Place and Postcolonial Ecofeminism: Pakistani Women's Literary and Cinematic Fictions*, which remarks, “Humans are animals, after all. We are not separate from the environment. And our shared environment includes the forces of global capitalism, which we cannot escape” (169). Human-animal nexus is realized in the quote above extending the same principle to other things in the world. Humans run their activities in terms of greed as seen in capitalism. Taking advantages of nature, humans go on exploiting nature not in terms of need but in terms of greed.

According to Sangita Patil, the boy is deemed to be an animal which he celebrates. “He bends forward and the upper part of his body is strong, but the lower part is deformed. Therefore, he has to walk on hands” (115). The novel concentrates on the Bhopal gas tragedy of 1984 as told by Patel, “In the year 1984, the pesticide factory of Bhopal, owned by the multinational company Union Carbide, accidentally released deadly toxic gas that took a heavy toll on the lives of the people” (113). The result of the gas leakage in Bhopal was disastrous to whole nature, “In this incident, many were injured with no hope of recovery. There was a massive damage to plant and animal life” (113). The flora and fauna was destroyed with no possibility of life. The bad consequences as shown in the novel are visible to humans and non-humans. Patil further writes:

The survivors are still facing manifold consequences through their physical and mental disabilities. We can have a glimpse of a few – Animal, the protagonist and the narrator of the novel, walks on all fours; Aliya, the young girl, coughs throughout the day and meets her end; Ma Franci, the nun, has lost her ability to recognise languages and in her later days talks deliriously; in every house of Khaufpuri, more than one victim struggles hard for survival. (114)

The survivors after the incident of Bhopal gas tragedy are dealing with consequences through their physical and mental disabilities. The narrator namely Animal, the protagonist and the narrator of the novel, walks on all fours; he creeps to move, however, his body does not support his wishes.

Ursula K. Heise in her work “Developing a Sense of Planet” focuses on the world as a common home for all living and non-living things. Talking about Sinha's novel, Heise gives an example of how everything collapses if the ecological ethics is not followed:

Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007) poses questions of cultural difference and global ethics more aggressively by narrating events from the viewpoint of a narrator so different from the average reader that he does not even consider himself human. Janvaar – ‘Animal’ – has been physically deformed by poison gases during an industrial accident in the Indian city of Khaufpur, a fictional version of Bhopal, where an explosion at the Union Carbide plant in 1984 killed over 2000 people immediately and tens of thousands more slowly. (100-01)

The narrator is different to the average individual who questions the superiority of humanity over animals. He calls himself animal, not human. He is happy to be called animal due to human atrocities over non-humans. He defies the deformity and his state of animal, which is described in the novel: “Animal, one of the worst deformed victims and among the poorest of the poor, defies stereotypes of the victim through his self-confident, raunchy, humorous and penetrating narrative of the arrival of an American doctor, Elli

Barber, who opens a free clinic that the Khaufpuris badly need” (101). Though he is in a pitiable situation, he defies his victimhood and acts as if he is confident.

Pablo Mukherje in his work “Tomorrow There Will Be More of Us” talks about how humans lived the life of prisoner as he argues, “Animal’s proclamation of his nonhuman identity gives voice to a scandal that lurks behind the tragedy of Bhopal” (221). Centered in the disastrous event of Bhopal gas tragedy, the novel ironically highlights the gift the gas leakage brought to humanity. In this case, Mukherje further comments, “The historical Bhopal is reincarnated as the city of Khaufpur in Sinha’s novel. The gift that the poisoned air brings to Animal, a teenager orphaned by the tragedy, is not merely a deformed back that forces him to crawl on his hands, but also his new identity as a nonhuman being” (224). The poisoned air inside the house and outside the house made all living beings feel suffocated; the tragedy is not limited humans alone. The narrator who calls himself animal enjoys his friendship with dog. Having the qualities of both humanity and animality (Welling and Kapel 112), the novel shows the fluctuation of the narrator between human and animal: “Animal then, embodies exaggerated human and nonhuman qualities. We might say that he is the location where these meet, and, as such, his very existence is an argument for their continuity and their ontological equality. This enables him to mediate between not merely humans of various kinds, but also between nonhumans with humans” (227).

From the movement between the animal and human world, the narrator succeeds in blurring the value dualisms associated with humans and animals as subject, rational and object, irrational respectively. The narrator, despite belonging to human world which anthropocentric perspective defines in term of rationality and objectivity, fluctuates between the lines of human and animal realms. By birth, he belongs to what we call human, yet his assimilation into nature and his friendship with dog justify his belonging to both realms. His resentful attitude to humanity further supports his infatuation to animal.

From the above-mentioned reviews, it is found that Sinha's novel shows the disastrous effects of Bhopal gas tragedy. Through the narration of Animal, the story reflects the bad consequence of industrial development. Showing the adverse effects of gas leakage on environment, which cannot be justified on any ground, the present paper moves forward showing similarities between animals and humans. Thus, the paper claims that the line between humans and non-human is blurred.

Deep Ecology and Animism: A Critique

Deep ecology gives an emphasis to equal sharing of all living and non-living things. All the creatures possess intrinsic values. Anthropocentric behavior and shallow ecology are human centered which deep ecology denies. As Timothy Luke in *Ecocritique* puts on anthropocentrism, “This view separates humanity from Nature and deadens it. By seeing nature as inanimate matter, humans gain the power to dominate it” (4-5). Luke opposes anthropocentrism or shallow ecologies, which keeps humans at the center, and separates it from nature. To be ruled by the idea of disconnection and separation, nature is separated from humanity and, therefore, humans go on conquering nature. However, conquering nature is to be a loser. Luke asserts that the self-realization is achieved through the act of merging the self to other selves,

Self-realization is defined as spiritual growth, or the unfolding of inner essence, which begins when we cease to understand or see ourselves as isolated and narrow competing egos and begin to identify with other humans from our family and friends to, eventually, our species. But the deep ecology sense of self

requires a further maturity and growth, an identification which goes beyond humanity to include the nonhuman world. (6)

From the deep ecological perspective, the world is a holistic one where all the things including humans and non-humans, and flora and fauna survive in harmony by eliminating self or personal ego. Deep ecology, after all, gives an emphasis to the well-being of every live having intrinsic values, diversities and richness on earth.

The self-realization is understood in a larger sense where it involves a larger community or a self within an ecological community. Here, Luke argues, “Deep ecological self-realization, then, is the antithesis of corporate consumerism in which isolated egos strive for more pleasures through their purchasing behaviors” (9). The culture of consumerism is outcome of industrialization. This stands in opposition to the organic wholeness which talks about unfolding of self within a larger self-realization. Humanity's trend to consider humans as superior to the rest of the world is problematized as Luke argues that the sense of superiority results in isolated ego giving no space to non-human world. Luke critiques this individualist and self-centered concept and proposes the concept of self-realization which focuses on self in connection of larger community of nature. For Luke, people are soil, nature and tree as Luke notes, “People are Nature, and Nature is, at least in part, people. To harm Nature, then, is to commit slow suicide or engage in self-mutilation. When humans technologically intervene in Nature, it means that we assault, abuse, or murder other significant selves from river systems to animals to rain forests” (9). The connection between nature and rest of the world including humans is ignored as people intervene nature with technology. They consider nature as having no intrinsic values. Nature for them, according to Luke, is dead thing waiting humans to give life to it. However, Luke critiques this idea and puts his ideas forward that nature has senses, and it survives forever.

Humanity is part of nature where it coexists with other life-forms and non-life forms. The problems arose as humans interfered nature with the technologically equipped culture. This culture is antithetical to what the deep ecologist calls self-realization. In this case, Luke further states, “Deep ecology's ultimate value of self-realization claims to go beyond the modern Western self which is defined as an isolated ego striving primarily for hedonistic gratification or for a narrow sense of individual salvation in this life or the next” (15). The quote implies that western understanding of the self is individual one guided by egoist feeling. Deep ecological ‘self’ comprises of individual as part of the larger whole where mutual cooperation dwells on. This self goes beyond the isolated ego, which the West takes a matter of pride. People are involved in pursuing pleasures, profits and sensory self-indulgent. They do not care if they are harming nature. According to Luke, this view stands in opposition with what deep ecology call the intrinsic worth of every life form. He proposes that humans should consider themselves as equals with all other entities and act accordingly. Thus, deep ecology by challenging anthropocentric views goes on promoting and valuing each living being as a whole regardless of their use and misuse in the world.

Adopting the ideas of Arne Naess, Luke comments on him, who argues, “He stresses a post anthropocentric bio-spherical egalitarianism to create an awareness of the equal right (of all things) to live and blossom” (5). The awareness to live and let other live is a key to the bio-spherical egalitarianism which deep ecologists call for. All the things either biotic or abiotic deserve to have equal rights to live and flourish. It is through the self-realization and bio-centric equality, one can practice non-dominating ecological consciousness to sustain each living and non-living being.

Like Naess and Luke, Ariel Salleh's deep ecological view of self as incorporation of multiple layers of living and non-living is also used in the paper. She

views that the self which incorporates multiple other selves share enhance the intrinsic values of everything. In “Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection,” she discusses the linkage between the two philosophies of nature: eco-feminism and deep ecology. According to her, deep ecology argues for new ethics. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman Life as well as the rest of the things on Earth have value in themselves which one should respect. Salleh highlights on the ethics-based principle as she further elaborates on this idea, “It argues for a new metaphysics and an ethic based on the recognition of the intrinsic worth of the nonhuman world. It abandons the hardheaded scientific approach to reality in favor of a more spiritual consciousness” (25). The spiritual connection and consciousness is realized the moment we abandon scientific approach to life. The scientific approach to life rejects the intrinsic worth of everything. Salleh highlights the intrinsic worth of everything, which should be respected. Her take on new ethics of deep ecology is about the recognition of inherent worth. She further comments on the concept of deep ecology as she notes, “... biological egalitarianism among all living species” (26). The biological egalitarianism among the all species promotes diversities in nature. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of the value self-realization and intrinsic worth. Realization of the principle of egalitarianism and self in relation to larger whole, where diversities dwell, prepare a ground for the harmonious relation which deep ecology seeks for by breaking the dichotomy between animal and human.

The biological egalitarianism proposes the living conditions of every creature. It calls for natural and mutual coexistence where the hierarchy of superiority and inferiority disappears. The change and progress, according to the deep ecologists, should be gradual and piecemeal. Here, she states, “Deep ecology and feminism see change as gradual and piecemeal; the violence of revolution imposed by those who claim ‘to know’ upon those who ‘do not know’ is an anathema to both” (28). Here, she means to say that the rapid progress or changes deemed to be important from scientific perspective is detrimental to both human world and natural world. The blooming and flourishing of human life is possible in relation to other life. Thus, respecting all life forms paves the ways to the egalitarianism which blurs the uneven relation between nature, animal and human.

Greta Gaard’s concept of animal sensibilities developed in *Critical Ecofeminism* is useful in the paper. She sees no fundamental difference between animal and human. She regards animals as, “They don’t want to be eaten... They feel pain. Animals suffer and feel pain, and thus deserve not to... They have consciousness” (36). The animals are, according to Gaard, not devoid of senses, feelings and emotions. They think like human beings, but they are not able to express. They have skills and knowledge to sustain their life in nature. She argues that the animals’ act of running away from hunters, their love and care for babies and emotions prove that they are equal to humans. Gaard again discusses instrumentalism in which the other is constructed as having no purpose other than to serve the Master, so animal is perceived to be an object to serve the human subject, which creates hierarchy. These hierarchies need to be broken down so as to practice ecological harmonious society.

The hierarchies are the sources of ecological disaster as such principle treat animal, jungles as resources and encourages humanity to exploit them for their benefits. Deep ecology neglects the hierarchies including instrumentalism, backgrounding, denial of nature, and value dualism. These concepts are raised by Val Plumwood. For instance, Plumwood points out, “These value dualisms create value hierarchies that construct an artificially distinct and superior Master identity by justifying the inferiority, subordination, and colonization of indigenous people, people of color, animals, and the natural world, as well as women, emotions, and the body” (xxiv). Though Plumwood

stands for ecofeminism, her concept of dual oppression of nature and women can be assimilated to the oppression of animal, minority people and nature as a whole. Value dualisms, according to Plumwood, create value hierarchies that construct an artificially distinct and superior Master identity to justify the inferiority, subordination, and colonization of animal which the novel under scrutiny, i.e. *Animal People* intends to break. Animal convinces himself that he is not —and cannot be—human who is the source of all ecological disaster. He cannot be human, and prefers to be called animal. Deep ecology holds a belief of ecological thought having wisdom of living in harmony with nature.

The animal identity is rejected, denied and controlled. It is compared with an object to say that it has no intrinsic worth. The animals are used as instruments or tools to fulfil the human greed and needs. The use, misuse and sometimes overuse of animals and other natural resources are the results of mundane avarice that humans possess since the immemorial. They live with the principle of conquering mentality. For them as Plumwood discusses control over nature is great victory. They put nature at the background to fulfil the materials needs. By the same token, they also use animals for the utilitarian purpose. They deny the agency of animal and nature. According to Plumwood, such divisions between nature and culture, male and female, human and animals as well as mainstream culture and indigenous cultures should be broken. The boundary between nature and human exists no more if we practice the principle of bio-spherical egalitarianism principle that go on respecting each life forms and non- life forms.

This instrumentalism stands against the philosophy of self-realization. In *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Plumwood discusses the problems associated with instrumentalism, ". . . instrumentalism is viewed as a problem in ethics, and its solution seen as setting up a theory of intrinsic value" (173). According to Plumwood, the principle of instrumentalism does not enhance the intrinsic values of each thing. It rejects interconnectedness which deep ecology focus on as it is mentioned here: "Major forms of deep ecology have tended to focus exclusively on identification, interconnectedness, sameness and the overcoming of separation, treating nature as a dimension of self, for example, in the concept of self-realization and in the extension of ego psychology to nature" (174). Deep ecology worries about the lack of identification, interconnectedness, sameness among all life forms. It advocates for the overcoming of separation, treating nature as a dimension of self. It goes for denying the difference between human and animals.

Plumwood raises the exploitation, marginalization, and oppression of animal and natural phenomenon by humanity as it keeps humans at the center and behaves accordingly. The humanity based on science and technology mechanizes the objects, animals and inferior groups in the society. For this, humanity uses the logic of value dualism to lower the other groups like animal and forests. However, deep ecologists deny such hierarchies resulting from value dualism. The principles of deep ecology state that everybody as well as every non- human objects possess the inherent worth. The intrinsic value of animal equals to the value of human. This basic tenet of deep ecology is helpful in analysis section of the paper.

Freya Mathews in "Relating to Nature: Deep Ecology or Ecofeminism?" focuses on environmental ethics of deep ecology, which tends to understand nature from the holistic perspective. This idea is helpful in giving a shape to the paper as Mathews, in this approach, argues that humans are identifiable with nature as a whole,

Deep ecology tends to take a basically holistic view of nature—its image of the natural world is that of a field-like whole of which we and other 'individuals' are

parts. It encourages us to seek our true identity by identifying with wider and wider circles of nature, presenting the natural world as an extension of ourselves, the Self-writ-large. (35)

The holistic view of nature deems each thing as a part of the larger community or whole universe. It asserts that humanity is a part of nature, it is not a part of nature. Our identity in connection with nature is the true identity. The ego identity of separation is to be avoided as it is argued here, “We should accordingly shed our confining ego identity, and gradually open up to nature at large. The process of achieving the widest possible identification with nature is equated, in deep ecology, with Self-realization: Self-realization is a matter of enlarging one’s sphere of identification” (37). The self-realization is a vision of uniting oneself as a member of nature where one finds the widest possible selfhood with nature. It involves searching the human identity by identifying with wider and wider circles of nature; animal, trees, and space.

In this way, these theoretical insights of self-realization, identification of human to flora and fauna, intrinsic values, and inherent worth are key ideas, which fall in the theory of deep ecology. In this study, these insights have been used for textual analysis of Sinha's novel.

Sinha's *Animal's People* as Blurring the Boundaries

The narrator of the novel *Animal's People*, namely, Animal enjoys what humanity calls animal life. The experience he shares with dog, and the nights he spends in open sky prove he has been intentionally detached from human world. The novel revolves around the horrific industrial accident that occurred in 1984 in Bhopal, India killing thousands of sleeping people in a single night. The narrator is very critical of that disaster and he critiques the negative influences of the incident on nature. At the same time, he develops his relation with dog whom he calls Jara.

The narrator is one of the victims of the disastrous event. He was disfigured and crippled. He does not walk; he creeps on body. Despite his broken body, he develops infatuation with Nisha which is again problematic. Nisha, the woman he loves, never sees him as anything other than his libido. Animal expresses his love to her, and asks her to marry him. However, she rejects him, Animal is panic and ruined.

An American doctor named Elli Barber comes into contact with narrator. Animal is invited by Elli that he can go to America for surgery to treat his whole body. He decides not to have the surgery, instead he wants to live the way he is living. His final decision not to go to USA for treatment proves that he wants to live the way he is living in nature. He understands like humans but behaves like animals. He is betrayed due to human atrocities, he is injured, and almost nothing works except his libido which attracts him to Nisha. By bringing the issues of friendship between narrator and dog, and narrator’s decision to stay at jungle, Sinha blurs the boundaries between human and non-human characters like Animal's friend Jara, a dog.

The deep ecological sensibility is perceived when Animal shares his life with a dog—Jara, “Jara’s my friend. She wasn’t always. We used to be enemies. In the days of living on the street we were rivals for food. We used to work the same territory, the alleys behind the eating houses in the old city” (34). The dog and narrator are friends and enemies at the same time. They have same feeling and emotions though they belong to human world and animal world. They struggle in the same area, play together, and eat as if they are siblings, “She licked her lips, wagged her tails so hard her whole body backside shook. Man, what a dog. A yellow dog of no fixed abode and no traceable parents, just like me. After this we always shared. I named her Banjara, gypsy, free spirit, because she belongs nowhere and everywhere is her kingdom” (35). He compares

himself with the dog in terms of home, parents which both of them lack. They shared not only food but also they shared experiences. The boundary between human and dog is erased, or vanished which deep ecology celebrates. The novel is at its best when it blurs the boundaries between his human and non-human characters like narrator— Animal and his friend Jara, a dog.

The boundary between animal and humans is erased when we think of what Alan Drengson in *Ecology of Wisdom: writing by Arne Naess* talks in terms of inherent values which is intrinsic worth of every creature. He supports the inherent values and diversity. He sheds light on deep ecology, “Deep ecology supporters appreciate the inherent value of all beings and of diversity” (3). Deep ecology activists praise the intrinsic value of all beings and the diverse natures prevailing in the ecology. Thus, as shown in the novel, the narrator respects the intrinsic values of dog and forest, and he befriends both of them— dog and nature. The narrator prefers living with animal with a realization of caring others by hanging on the principle of live and let live. As seen in the novel, the narrator becomes more animalistic in behavior and attitude. He respects diverse culture prevailing in the nature.

As a victim of Bhopal gas tragedy, the narrator is more sympathetic to the animals deprived of home and facilities. The world around which has now become a poison house due to the Bhopal gas tragedy is not a safe place to live. Bill Devall and George Sessions in “Deep Ecology Differentiates Deep Ecology Consciousness and Scientific Awareness” talks about the techno-led industrial society consider humans as isolated and separate human beings:

Ecological consciousness and deep ecology are in sharp contrast with the dominant worldview of technocratic-industrial societies which regards humans as isolated and fundamentally separate from the rest of Nature, as superior to, and in charge of, the rest of creation. But the view of humans as separate and superior to the rest of Nature is only part of larger cultural patterns. (65)

As the quote discusses about the bad influence of scientific development which stands in sharp contrast to ecological world views, the scientific development in the novel— the chemical gas production ‘American-owned Union Carbide pesticide plant’ is owned by American company largely emerges from the Western model of development. The Bhopal gas leakage causes loss of human and non-human worlds. By separating humanity from nature, dominant worldview of technocratic-industrial societies tries to prove self-imposed sense of superiority over other creatures in the world. By breaking the value dualism of man as master and animal as servant, Animal, in the novel, gives importance to equal status of every creature in the world irrespective of which category they fall into. The narrator says, “I’m an animal, I don’t have to do like the rest of you” (168). He admits that he is not human by saying that he is an animal.

Animal, as a victim of gas leakage disaster due to Bhopal gas tragedy, suffers dehumanization human atrocities and he creeps. It is an example of West’s dehumanization of the other based on capitalism of western culture. Deep ecology critiques western culture which is obsessed with the idea of dominating other. Western culture is obsessed with the idea of dominance: with dominance of humans over nonhuman world particularly animals. Western societies dominate nature and feminine principles. It does not agree with the idea of nature as organic whole. The deep ecologists argue we are part of the organic whole, “For deep ecology, the study of our place in the Earth household includes the study of ourselves as part of the organic whole” (66). Being a part of organic whole means it is to have ecological awareness. The ecological consciousness through the norms of self-realization and bio-centric equality, one can live in harmony with nature. By critiquing industrialization through her condemn to the

industrial disaster, Sinha shows her concern to egalitarian eco communities where the hierarchy of man at the top and animal at the bottom is erased. And she blurs the boundaries between his human and non-human characters by developing the friendship between Animal and his friend Jara, a dog.

The self that one gets through self-realization is understood within the larger community of human and non-human world. The sense of self requires an expansion which goes beyond humanity to include the nonhuman world. The identification of one own self goes beyond the realm of humanity, crosses the cultural assumptions and values, and is achieved through deep concentration where one sees the equality among other beings. Self-realization is felt when one sees himself in connection with larger whole. The concept 'if we harm the rest of Nature then we harm ourselves' is to be practiced in real life. There are no boundaries between human and non-humans, and everything is interrelated. The realization of all-inclusive principle lets one know that if one harms other in the name of science and progress, is harmed itself. The diversity and richness of several life forms and non-life-forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves. It is not rational for humans to reduce this richness and diversity for selfish purpose. Biological egalitarianism looks for an outlook that denies privilege, value dualism, and favors equality and intrinsic value of each thing. The narrator of the story— Animal equates himself with an animal as he behaves as if he is similar to animals and acts in similar manner with other characters in the story. His friendship with Nisha does not make him different human, rather he enjoys the behaviors that people call animal life.

Animal meets Nisha—the daughter of Somraj, and shares his life with her. She teases him which he does not mind. They have developed friendship not as strong as the friendship between dog and Animal. She called him Jaanvar and promised to find a job for him, "When she called me Jaanvar, Animal, it was a name, nothing more. She never seemed to notice that I was crippled, nor pretend I wasn't. She was the only person I knew who treated me as completely normal. Nisha said she would find me some work; I'd even get paid. I said I did not know what work I could do" (40). However, Animal was surprised if he could do any work. For the first time in his life, he is being treated as normal. He is getting sympathy and love from people around him. The activist Zafar shows his positive concern to him:

We just have to find out what you're good at. Plus you should not allow yourself to be called Animal. You are a human being, entitled to dignity and respect. If you haven't a name then this is a great opportunity for you. You can choose your own. Jatta for example or Jamil, go ahead pick one, whatever you like, we'll call you that henceforth. (42)

People convinced him to be called with a human name that he can chose, however, he is reluctant to be called with a human name. He is satisfied with the name Animal. Zafar highlights human dignity and respect in Animal as human not animal as four-footed animal. It is Animal who sees the same dignity and respect in dog and fetus as Devall and Sessions talk about self-realization and dignity of all creatures as well as intrinsic values. Thus, Animal is a man with deep ecological sensibilities who could go on seeing and realizing the intrinsic values in other creatures irrespective of human race. His worries in the following quotes indicate how he is deeply concerned with ecological issues:

Eyes, I wish you could come with me into the factory. Step through one of these holes, you're into another world. Gone are city noises, horns of trucks and autos, voices of women in the Nutcracker, kids shouting, all erased by the high wall. Listen, how quiet it's. No bird song. No hoppers in the grass. No bee hum.

Insects can't survive here. Wonderful poisons the Kampani made, so good it's impossible to get rid of them, after all these years they're still doing their work. (50)

The narrator is worried due to the bad consequences of factory gases. It is not only the human eyes that are affected; equally all the creatures were badly influenced. Cities are covered with dust, gases and noises. No song of birds, insects can be heard nor they are visible there. Humming of bees is not heard. The system of nature is lost, the connection is lost, and the separation rules with humans.

The feeling of anger and frustration of Animal towards humans is satiric, "I'm an animal, always you're bleating, I'm an animal, I don't have to do like the rest of you, laws of society don't apply to me because I'm such a fucking animal" (98). It shows his anger towards humanity and development at the cost of environment. What the narrator agrees is that he has been victim due to the human atrocities towards animal and nature. Thus, he says he is different to rest of the humanity. He ignores the laws of society that demolish nature. The inhuman picture is visible in the nature and in the humanity as people and nature are suffering due to the gas released through Bhopal gas tragedy. Towards the ending of the novel, majority of the characters leave for America but Animal and Ma still stay there, "Animal, Ma did not leave the basti. She was in there till the end; helping other people get out, cover up their eyes. She did not protect herself against the gas, plus people who saw her said she was singing, she took the gas deep in her lungs" (504). She helped other creatures keeping her life at risk but did not leave the place. The lines talk about the panic faced by people around that night when the disaster took place. It was a hard time to survive the situation. The harmful smoke entered into the lungs of people causing people to die soon. The work of humanity cannot be justified at any ground; thus the narrator inclines towards animal life.

The narrator is dissatisfied with human policy of gas plantation in India by American company as it resulted in devastating of nature. The narrator is convinced that he will not be alone as a victim. There will be more people like him in the future. He says, "Eyes, I'm done. Khudahafez. Go well. Remember me. All things pass, but the poor remain. We are the people of the Apokalis. Tomorrow there will be more of us" (508). Animal says that he is a man of Apokalis, and more people will be there like animal, it means the future is not safe. Though Elli promises for the treatment of Animal in America, he refuses it:

See, Eyes, I reckon that if I have this operation, I will be upright, true, but to walk I will need the help of sticks. I might have a wheelchair, but how far will that get me in the gullis of Khaufpur? Right now I can run and hop and carry kids on my back, I can climb hard trees, I've gone up mountains, roamed in jungles. Is life so bad? If I'm an upright human, I would be one of millions, not even a healthy one at that. Stay four-foot, I'm the one and only Animal. What reply would you give, Elli? I am Animal fierce and free in all the world is none like me. (508)

Being a handicapped, Animal is happy as he has already climbed the trees, walked up mountains and is happy to stay like a four-footed animal. He enjoys roaming in the jungle. He lives in the forest as an animal, away from all people with nature as said by Freya Mathews. Mathews in "Relating to Nature: Deep Ecology or Ecofeminism?" talks about nature from holistic perspective. This idea is helpful in giving a shape to the paper as Mathews, in this approach, says that humans are identifiable with nature as a whole, "Its image of the natural world is that of a field-like whole of which we and other 'individuals' are parts" (35). The holistic view of nature

deems each thing as a part of larger community or whole universe where animals, insects, humans survive in harmony with nature.

The people who survived the devastation are facing physical deformity and mental trauma. As seen in the quote, the narrator – Animal, of the novel is in between humans and animal. Animal does not call himself human, “I said, I am a small person not even human, what difference my story will make?” (11). His reluctance to be called human shows his disgust and resentful attitude to humanity. By doing this, he blurs the dichotomy between animals and humans. There is no fundamental difference between animal, trees or human as Buddha after getting enlightenment sees no difference between his son and rest of the life.

The industrial expansion which caused damage to whole nature including the life forms and non-life forms is beyond human control if its consequence is thought.

Humans, birds, water, natural resources, lands were badly affected as talked by Patel:

Sinha exhibits the impact of the industrial disaster on people and nature at various levels. First, we map the protagonist Animal’s physical deformity and mental trauma. Second, a few families and their agonies are projected.

Subsequently, we espouse the impact on birds, animals, water and the natural phenomena. Residues of the disaster are long lasting. They contaminate water and pollute air and land to such an extent that it is high time to come out of the deadly disaster. (115)

The effects of the disaster are long lasting. The mental torture of the survivors is seen in the character of Animal. He sees the river being polluted, and the natural phenomenon being disturbed. He suffers physical deformity and mental disturbance. He shows his resentful attitude to humanity as, “With what greed you looked about this place. I could feel your hunger. You’d devour everything. I watched you taking it in, the floor of earth, rough stone walls, dry dung cakes stacked near the hearth, smoke coiling in the air like a Sardarji doing his hair” (18). The industries are run not on the basis of need but on the basis of greed. The narrator said he could feel the hunger of these cruel people who could devour flora and fauna including human beings like monsters devour other creatures. The narrator in the novel observes, “I could hear people’s thoughts even when their lips were shut, plus I’d get en passant comments from all types of things animals, birds, trees, rocks, giving the time of day” (23-24). The lines indicate those animals, birds, trees, rocks or all types of things; either biotic or abiotic things are affected due to the disaster of Bhopal.

Due to the horrible disaster, people including Animal are panic. Their thoughts are full of pain; and their lips were shut as they underwent a massive transformation in environment from tranquil nature to dusty and airy nature. The dusty air and the situation of Animal where no one has come to claim him are the clues to show similarity between animal and human. The difference between them is erased. It is visible in the lines, “Mother, father, neighbours, all must have died for no living soul came to claim me, who was coughing, frothing etc. plus nearly blind, where my eyes had screwed themselves against the burning fog were white slits bleached on the eyeballs” (31). The burning fog was harmful to eyes and its connection was everywhere; soil, flora and fauna. They are living in harrowing conditions in which Animal lives under the shadows of the chemical plant, which still leaks its poisons into the soil and water. The egalitarian view assumed by deep ecologist is neglected, “Deep ecology is an egalitarian vision of organisms as knots in the bio-spherical net or field of intrinsic relations, often extended to refer to relations between the human self and the biosphere” (Buell, Heise and Thorner 419). The nature has been made poisonous, the knots of the world are disturbed, and the relation between humans and world has been guided by selfish human motive. Daniel H.

Henning again writes, “By abusing environment, people abuse themselves and their descendants as well as future generations of all life” (11). By disturbing the nature, human beings are disturbing the flow of natural activities and they are going to harm themselves.

Poisoning due to Bhopal gas tragedy and its aftermath has made the world horrific which nobody can escape. The narrator named Animal is a victim of Bhopal gas disaster. He starts his story declaring he is not human, and exposes the bad consequences of industrial incident, Bhopal gas tragedy. Animal’s journey toward the act of merging himself with animal is possible at the cost of his power to realize the intrinsic values inherent to every creature through self-realization.

Conclusion

To sum up, Animal’s hatred to humans and his attachment with animals result from the attitude and behavior of other humans to him. They call him ‘Jaanvar’ as he behaves like animals. However, if we analyze his situation deeply, it is due to his own interest to be called animal because he says, “My name is Animal, I am not f* human, I have no wish to be one” (Sinha 42). His hatred to humanity is the result of anti-environmental modern development, i.e., Bhopal gas tragedy causing damage to flora, fauna, humans, rivers, etc. His intimate relation to dog (Jara), his act of biting a child, his reluctance to go to the USA for treatment and his desire to be the way he is reflect the idea that he is just a life form among many others including animals or insects. He blurs the dichotomy between animals and humans by critiquing industrial development and developing an intimate friendship with the dog. Thus, disruption of value dualism, tribute to nature, non-violence and human-animal relation are some of the central issues of the paper common to the theme of Buddhism growing through the South Asian countries to the rest of the world. Animal slinks into the forest to live as an animal, befriends with animal and is far away from all other people. Animal’s blurring of human-animal dichotomy is possible at the cost of his power to realize the intrinsic values every creature.

Works Cited

- Buell, Lawrence, Ursula K. Heise and Karen Thornber. “Literature and Environment.” *The Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, vol. 36, pp. 417-440. doi:10.1146/annurev-environ-111109-144855.
- Clark, Timothy. *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*. Cambridge, 2011.
- Devall, Bill and George Sessions. *Deep Ecology*. Peregrine Smith Books, 1985.
- Drengson, Alan and Bill Devall. *Ecology of Wisdom: Writings by Arne Naess*. Berkeley, 2008.
- Greeta, Gaard. *Critical Ecofeminism*. Lexington Books, 2017.
- Heise, Ursula, K. “Developing a Sense of Planet.” *Teaching Ecocriticism and Green Cultural Studies*, edited by Greg Garrard. Palgrave, 2012, pp. 99-103.
- Henning, Daniel H. *A Manual for Buddhism and Deep Ecology*. The World Buddhist U, 2002.
- Luke, Timothy W. *Ecocritique*. U of Minnesota P., 1999.
- Mathews, Freya, “Relating to Nature: Deep Ecology or Ecofeminism.” *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environment in The Anthropocene*, edited by Lara Stevens et al. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 35-55.

- Pablo Mukherje in "Tomorrow There Will Be More of Us." *Postcolonial Ecologies Literatures of the Environment*, edited by Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley. Oxford UP, 2011, pp. 216-231.
- Patil, Sangita, *Ecofeminism and the Indian Novel*. Routledge, 2020.
- Plumwood, Val. "Ecofeminist Analysis and the Culture of Ecological Denial." *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environment in The Anthropocene*, edited by Lara Stevens et al. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 97-112.
- - -. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. Routledge, 2003.
- Rahman, Shazia. *Place and Postcolonial Ecofeminism: Pakistani Women's Literary and Cinematic Fictions*. U of Nebraska P, 2019.
- Sinha, Indra. *Animal's People*. Routledge, 2007.
- Shalleh, Ariel, "Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection." *Feminist Ecologies: Changing Environment in The Anthropocene*, edited by Lara Stevens et al. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp.25-33.
- Welling, Bart H. and Scottie Kapel. "The Return of the Animal: Presenting and Representing Non-Human Beings Response-ably in the (Post)Humanities Classroom." *Teaching Ecocriticism and Green Cultural Studies*, edited by Greg Garrard. Palgrave, 2012, pp. 104-116.