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Affinity and complexity of biophilia in Cormac McCarthy's Suttree

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Abstract---Every writer has some intention to reflect themselves in their writings which may be conscious or sometimes it may be happening in the unconscious state of mind. Even the critics and scholars have tried to decode the Author's writing, seeking the image of the writer. Though decoding the other's personal life is not a good sense of morality, it has some interesting factors like the feel of detective in detective fiction. Sometimes the decoder failed to decode the author's image in their writings. Here in this research article, the researcher is not going to decode the author's personal life but it is mentioned the protagonist of the novel Suttree by Cormac McCarthy has three love affairs that are completely relevant to Cormac McCarthy's Personal Life because Cormac McCarthy has three wives. Even in Cormac McCarthy's official website, mentioned that in Suttree, "He is referring to himself" (Todd). Therefore, it is clearly understood, this particular novel is not like other novels of Cormac McCarthy, instead, it is a semi-autobiographical novel. So, decoding this novel and proving this is semi-autobiographical is not necessary, since it already proved one. "Suttree, which McCarthy was said to have been toiling at on and off for two decades. It was also considered to be a tangentially autobiographical work, making it a rarity in the McCarthy canon" (HAGE 10). Here the researcher applies the biophilia and explores the affinity and complexity in it. Implementing Biophilia in Cormac McCarthy's Suttree has a sense because the very definition of literature that is taught in schools and colleges is that it is a mirror of life, therefore apply a genetic theory in a semi-autobiographical novel is more pertinent to prove that Biophilia the genetic-based hypothesis is the identical root cause of many philic and phobic

elements in the real world and also this research leads further scope of research in the area of literature towards the Genetic Theory.

Keywords---Biophilia, Cormac McCarthy, Suttree, Biophilia Affinity, Biophilia Complexity, Nature, Eco-System, Philia, Phobia.

Introduction

Every writer has some intention to reflect themselves in their writings which may be conscious or sometimes it may be happening in an unconscious state of mind. Even the critics and scholars have tried to decode the Author's writing seeking the image of the writer. Though decoding the other's personal life is not a good sense of morality, it has some interesting factors like the feel of detective in detective fiction. Sometimes the decoder failed to decode the author's image in their writings. Here in this research article, the researcher is not going to decode the author's personal life but it is mentioned the protagonist of the novel *Suttree* by Cormac McCarthy has three love affairs that are completely relevant to Cormac McCarthy's Personal Life because Cormac McCarthy has three wives. Even In Cormac McCarthy's official website, mentioned that in *Suttree*, "He is referring to himself..."(Todd). Therefore, it is clearly understood, this particular novel is not like other novels of Cormac McCarthy, instead, it is a semi-autobiographical novel. So, decoding this novel and proving this is semi-autobiographical is not necessary, since it already proved one.

"...Suttree, which McCarthy was said to have been toiling at on and off for two decades. It was also considered to be a tangentially autobiographical work, making it a rarity in the McCarthy canon"(HAGE 10). Here the researcher applies biophilia and explores the affinity and complexity in it. Applying a genetic theory in literature is not pure biological-based research, instead, it is behavioral response-based research. Based on the behavioral changes, genetics are classified, and also based on their modifications, responses also change. Applying this particular concept in this particular novel has a sense because the very definition of literature that is taught in schools and colleges is that it is a mirror of life, therefore apply a genetic theory in a semi-autobiographical novel is more pertinent to prove that Biophilia the genetic-based hypothesis is the identical root cause of many philic and phobic elements in the real world. From this, the researcher explores the affinity and complexity of Biophilia in Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*.

Biophilia refers to a Human's inborn inclination towards nature, eco-system, with fellow humans, animals, birds., etc. Nature or Eco-system contains all the elements within the universe. There is none to remove from this boundary. The very truth about the ecosystem is that nature is always superior, but it stays calm and sometimes it ruined the whole world. Nature may seem silent and calm but it is more dangerous when it causes destruction like storms, Tsunamis, Earth Quakes., etc. In the same way, every human has two such behaviors of both calm and furious, and sometimes Humans have multiple psychic tendencies. Likewise, Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree* has multiple affinized and complexed positions. One reader's feelings may vary from another one. For some, this novel may be the

experience of Cormac McCarthy. For some this novel pertains to the spiritual sense.

There are so many coherent as well as contradictory readings in it. This is only because of the "...incredible textual density of *Suttree* make it possible, or inevitable, that readers will pick out a story for themselves out of many possible stories being told in the novel..."(Beavers 96). Coming to the affinity of Biophilia in Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*, the protagonist Suttree left his luxurious life and was living alone in a houseboat. Here the affinity of biophilia combines with. One of the main tendencies of Biophilia is the innate tendency or inclination to seek connection with nature. After Suttree's son's death, he kept himself isolated and avoid touch with others. He started to live near the river and spend most of the time in fishing and earning money via fishing. Though it seems like normal human behavior, Biophilic tendency is the core element that makes himself isolate with nature, in a sense, the direct contact with nature.

Which way do you go? said Joe.
 Right here. I've got my boat.
 Are you still fishin?
 Yeah.
 What made you take that up?
 I dont know, Suttree said.(McCarthy 5)

From the about cited statement, it is clear that after Suttree abandon his family, he decided to live along with nature, especially with boathouse and catfishing. This is the foremost affinity of biophilia. The Biophilia's "...naturalistic tendency involves an intense curiosity and urge for exploration of the natural world"(Kellert and Wilson 48). When a man was locked in a technologized room for a couple of months, later he got released, at very instant his innermost biophilia made his search for the natural elements like plants, trees, animals and birds. Suttree's son has died in the novel beginning so he couldn't bear it which leads him to drink alcohol but it couldn't relieve him from the pain. "When all the words were done a few stepped forth and placed a flower and the straps began to lower, the casket and child sinking into the grave. A group of strangers commending Suttree's son to earth"(McCarthy 105).

As evidence, he prayed unto God, "Oh God I caint take no more. Please lift this burden from me for I caint bear it"(McCarthy 251). Whatever the problem may come, Humans must have some contact with nature, so that their depression will reduce to a certain level. "The adaptational value of the aesthetic experience of nature could further be associated with derivative feelings of tranquillity, peaces of mind, and a related sense of psychological wellbeing and self-confidence"(Kellert and Wilson53). The Aesthetic Experience of nature comes only when seeing or inhaling their fragrance or admiring their beauty. Here Suttree enjoyed in cat fishing but on another side, intaking alcohol didn't provide him peace. "The cottonwoods went by like rows of bones. Come sunrise he was drifting through peaceful farmland upon a river high and muddy"(McCarthy 251). Exploring the affinity of biophilia in humans with nature is simpler if when moving the biophilia in literature with the advantages and disadvantages that outcomes with some results when humans have contact with nature.

From this manner, it is clear that when Human have connection with nature, he/she will get mental and physical relives. For further investigation, the mental growth is the stimuli of physical growth. Intake of natural food is far better than the artificial food as evidently proof that, consuming natural food far better than consuming alcohol the sources in Suttree's life. "He ate two of the sandwiches he'd packed and drank a grape drink,..."(McCarthy 218). "They ate almost in silence, a light smacking of chops, eyes furtive in the light of the lantern. The meal consisted of the whitebeans and cornbread and the boiled chicory coffee"(McCarthy 241). "He ate at Comer's hot plates of roast beef or pork with vegetables and gravy and rounds of fried cornbread, Stud jotting down each day the new account and never asking for a dime"(McCarthy 253). Though Suttree's friends asked him for a drink, he refused. After his son's death, he stopped drinking.

"Clayton called to him from the door: You sure you couldnt use a drink? Suttree shook his head."(McCarthy 91). Than question may arise, what kind of drink he could drink after the loss of his beloved infant son. "Suttree took a long drink of iced tea. It had mint in it. He liked the rough leaves against his lip and their rich smell."(McCarthy 91). Suttree relaxes himself in fishing the affinity with nature. He got job offerings but he denied "You want a job? Nope."(McCarthy 91). Therefore he was enough satisfied with the earnings that he received from the catfishing. From the beginning to the end of the novel, Suttree seeking for nature and simultaneous death occurs like his son's death, his friend's death and seeking for peace. Even he stopped drinking and turning to normal life rejecting the past luxurious one. This what Stacey Peebles tells "Suttree shuttles between the silent world of the dead and noisy, boisterous world of the living as he wrestles with his sense of the past and his sense of himself"(Peebles 168). In the mid of the novel he had romance with a dream girl and a prostitute but this romance also became incomplete. Even the friends he met were died "Hey Hatmaker. Tell Hoghead and Donald and Byrd and Bobby and Hugh and Conrad and all of em that they aint barred. They're dead. Whoops of laughter among the watchers at the door"(McCarthy 313).

"Among vendors and beggars and wild street preachers," Suttree discovers "a vigor unknown to the sane" who are more articulate, mannered, and cautious. As a Romantic he hopes to discover something ultimate and authentic, to hear "some stray scrap of news from beyond the pale"(66),but the atmosphere in the novel quickly grows as dark as the medieval and apocalyptic images of the opening pages promised. (Rothfork 388-389)

Being it is a semi-autobiographical novel, the friends that he mentioned in this novel have existed in the real world with another names. Cormac McCarthy slightly altered what things happened in the real world like Jimmy Ray is mentioned as Hoghead in the novel, Hugh Lawson Winkler as Hugh in the novel who was Cormac McCarthy's childhood friend. Remaining real-world comparisons are mentioned by Wesley G. Morgan in an article entitled *Suttree's Dead Acquaintances and McCarthy's Dead Friends*. The Complexity of Biophilia is none other than barring of losing our loved one that may be rejection, death,

humiliation or betray. Whatever it can be called but the complexity of biophilia is phobia.

Speaking about phobia in biophilia "The survey of empirical evidence for a genetic role in biophobia provides a springboard for next advancing theoretical notions concerning biophilia"(Kellert and Wilson 76). Even the negative tendencies like fear, sadness also relate to biophilic tendencies. Fear is like stimuli that drive humans out of nature, and at the same time, fear is the stimuli that drive humans close to nature. Fear of Apocalypse drives humans close to nature which makes humans think of the prevention steps. Fear of snakes drives humans out of the snakes' shelters. In the same way, the complexity of biophilia in Suttree's life is the loss of his own identity the sad parts which comprise his family, friends, dream and wealth that drives him close to Nature.

In Jamie Uys's *The Gods Must Be Crazy* the protagonist Xi was such an innocent and helping-minded tribe. He belongs to San tribe. He and his tribal people are far away from modernized and civilized society. In Part I and Part II of *The Gods Must Be Crazy* he and his tribal people are portrayed as well-known people about the Desert and its Nature. They know how to stop the forest fire caught in the mid. They know the directions in which way animals gone via their footprints. They acquired this knowledge inherently. "*The Gods Must Be Crazy* pokes fun at the tyranny of the clock over 'civilized man', recalling Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*"(Gugler 71). The reasoning for mentioning this novel in the mid of this research article is to bring out one particular thing that is related to Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*. In *The Gods Must Be Crazy* some civilized selfish people killed elephants for their thrones but the protagonist Xi was innocently rising the question that someone left the meat of the elephant and took the unwanted portion called thrones. In the same way, Suttree had friend like that civilized devil people.

That's none other than Harrogate who stole the watermelon from Howdy Farms and kill the bats with poisoned meat and slingshots. Howdy shot Harrogate for stealing Watermelon "What kind of son of a bitch would shoot somebody for stealing a few watermelons?"(McCarthy 28). Suttree helped him to get out of the prison and Harrogate did another thing, He killed around forty-two bats with poisoned meat for bounty "How did you do it? Poison forty-two bats. They only feed on the wing. I dont know nothin about it. They was dead"(McCarthy 151). One day in order to steal the treasury, he used dynamite and caught for attempting to make tunned under the city "After a while he raised his head. Dynamite, he said"(McCarthy 181). The civilized devil people in *The Gods Must Be Crazy* are selfish to kill animals and also brave enough to kill Human beings.

Suttree's friend Harrogate is also like them. He stealth others' watermelon, killed a bulk number of bats for bounty, attempted to use dynamite under the city tunnel. The only unity in this novel and the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* is Xi and Suttree. Here Suttree seeking some person or place to throw away his grief and Xi seeking for a perfect place to throw that man-made glass bottle which makes quarrel among his San Tribes. Xi and his Tribes know how to life in wildered desert. Suttree learned to live alone in isolated world where nature is the one source element to communicate. Affinity and Complexity are two different

meaning term but here in biophilia, the complexity of Suttree's life drives him towards the affinity with the natural world.

Biophilia, like other patterns of complex behavior, is likely to be mediated by rules of prepared and counterprepared learning—the tendency to learn or to resist learning certain responses as opposed to others. From the scant evidence concerning its nature, biophilia is not a single instinct but a complex of learning rules that can be teased apart and analyzed individually. The feelings molded by the learning rules fall along several emotional spectra: from attraction to aversion, from awe to indifference, from peacefulness to fear-driven anxiety. (Kellert and Wilson 35)

Biophilia's complex patterns are framed by rules of learning, certain may attract, certain may oppose. This Complex part of Biophilia can be analyzed individually. These biophilic feelings are cast by the rules of learning from the emotions that may be from love to hatredness, from Happy to Sad, from peace to fear. This individual learning behavioral changes from the natural perspective are more complex to identify because as previously mentioned, on one side nature gives peace to Suttree but on another side, the question is raised. Humans are also in the part of eco-system than how fellow humans are able to drive Suttree in negativitic tendency? In a sense, this biophilia gives oxymoronic feel to readers. Sometimes certain literary texts have self contrary concepts inside the text itself but here in biophilia, phobia drives Suttree towards Nature but this concept is named Biophilia.

Shall this can be called as biophobia? When it comes to Biophobia, it will be considered as a psychological problem. When Biophobia crosses a certain level, it leads to a huge serious problem in Human Psychic. Earth is not completely destructed. Certain natural elements are still exist. Although Biophobia drives humans towards to safer zone, in case, this Biophobic tendency increases to some dangerous level, it affects behavioral changes that lead to fear and suspicion to each and every element that he/she interacts with. In many homes, there will be some wooden made things which is a human altered thing from the nature is to be mentioned here. Though it is man-made, it is derived from nature. When Biophobia exceeds a certain level, the affected human will suffer from fear and suspicion. That particular phobia may cause by any element.

Even bacteria and Viruses are complex in the study of biophilia. Certain micro-organisms are used in plant's growth, at the same time certain micro-organisms destroy it. This Complex structure of nature needs more research to find out the true evil micro-organisms. "...each of the species is immensely old by human standards and has been wonderfully molded to its environment; life around us exceeds in complexity and beauty anything else humanity is ever likely to encounter"(Kellert and Wilson 43).

Plant growth-promoting bacteria (PGPB) refer to free living bacteria in the soil and rhizobacteria that colonize root rhizosphere. The use of naturally occurring PGPB in sustainable agriculture has gained importance in the past decade due to their beneficial effects on soil and crop productivity. In addition to enhancing plant growth, PGPB help plants to cope with biotic and abiotic stresses.(Ramakrishna et al.10)

Consider, if the above-mentioned statement applies on Human Anatomy, is it works? Not only do Plants receive benefits from micro-organisms, but even Humans also have the same concepts. The human body consists of so many microcells which help in the prevention and growth of a healthy body. White Blood Cells plays a vital role in protecting Human Boday against infections. Coming back to Biophilia, there are certain biological microelements available in the Human body that drives the Human to a particular thing. Recent research in Human anatomy found that an increase in Blood Pressure results in unwanted anger same as biophilia is also a cause of inner microelements in Human Anatomy. Edward O. Wilson already provided the right definition behind this Biophilia Human Anatomy. "How could biophilia have evolved?

The likely answer is biocultural evolution, during which culture was elaborated under the influence of hereditary learning propensities while the genes prescribing the propensities were spread by natural selection in a cultural context"(Kellert and Wilson 36). From this statement of Edward O. Wilson, it is clear that Genes prescribe the inclination toward the eco-system. Going deeper in Genetic on this particular inclination leads towards Genetic Predisposition which is none other than the behavior that is exhibited on Creatures. Under certain environmental conditions, many creatures are born. Even Human beings are born under several environmental conditions, though their characteristics differ according to their environment, their capability to learn certain things are inherited genetically (within the species) which makes them to choose the right thing. In certain cases, an environment with full of negativity may block this Genetic predisposition. From the Era of Human beings, they are born in an Eco-centric world that is slowly altered by humans and slowly destroyed.

"The biophilia hypothesis proposes that humans have an innate tendency to affiliate toward life and life-like processes as a consequence of evolution, where survival and reproduction were dependent on interactions with the natural environment"(Hand et al. 1). While born and growing along with nature, the positive environment around the biotic organism takes them to a level of positivity or the ability to learn things. This predisposition is inherited genetically in every creature. Most of them prevent that positivity. Even in Cormac McCarthy's *Suttree*, Suttree never wants to live an anthropocentric life, instead, he lives a life of mutually beneficial which means he never wants to destroy nature instead he wants shelter and food, he never wants to hurt others instead he wants only the love. One who is in complete dejected mode needs relief from the dejections. Suttree' Genetic Predisposition chooses Nature as a Pain Relief.

"Humans may have evolved a need to connect with nature, and nature provides substantial cultural and social values to humans"(Chang et al. 1). From this

research article it is clear that, though various Affinity and Complexity of Biophilia existed, Biophilic tendency never lets Humans to live without nature. For all biotic survivals, the higher necessary need is Nature. The important thing to note in the current era is that so many biotic and abiotic components in the ecosystem are in extinction.

Extreme heat waves are expected to increase in frequency and intensity over the next 100 years, resulting in increased deaths due to extreme heat illness. And low-income families and people of color tend to be more likely to have living conditions that increase the health risks of extreme heat, such as living in urban areas without adequate green space.(Ecological Devastation 20)

Whatever may happen in the world or the universe, human beings are highly responsible creature in the universe to prevent the universe from anthropocentrism. That anthropocentrism may vary from one's point of view. That anthropocentric element may be the Human beings or maybe the man-made things, or maybe some other human-based things but the notable thing here is, most of the anthropocentric elements are deriving from the Human beings who are the very most dominating creatures in the world and rising voices for the biocentric world through various art forms. Concluding this research article, Human beings are not a single creature to live in the whole Universe. Human beings are one among the eco-system. Eco-system is not only for Human beings.

The formation of Eco-system is itself an art of forming the symbiotic framework. This Symbiotic framework is not just in the eco-system, even the manmade things possess this symbiosis. Considering the car engine, it won't work without the help of Clutch, Fuel, Body, Tires, Steering. etc. Whole components need to depend on one another in order to form a certain framework called 'Car' then only the engineer who made the car can justify it 'moving from one place to another place by land with sophistication and less time'. If anyone part of the car neglect itself from this symbiotic framework, it won't work and sometimes it works but not smoothly. "...the human future depends on achieving a symbiotic relationship with our supporting environment"(Peacock 35). This simple framework not only works in the Eco-system and is also required in many places. Human beings are the center core to prevent the ecosystem from mass devastation. Though time moves on, Biophilia inside them won't let them to depart from nature because the way human beings' anatomy is framed is likely to be symbiotic with the natural elements, thus Eco-system framed along with Human beings and also with all other biotic and abiotic components in the Universe.

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