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Theoretical/Critical Essay Article

Ecology and Making Sense of Place in Barbara Kingsolver's The Poisonwood Bible





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Abstract

The paper analyses bioregional aspects of place in the novel *The Poisonwood Bible* written by Barbara Kingsolver. The characters having a sense of bioregionalism and ecocosmopolitanism live in harmony with the ecology of given space. The inseparability of human beings with the place's life supports the idea of bioregionalism and ecocosmopolitanism. Both enhance the concept of ecological links that span a region, a continent, or the world. The main character Orleanna Price, as portrayed in the novel, urges her husband (Nathan Price) and daughters to see themselves in a wider context of beings — animals, vegetables and minerals. She is an embodiment of ecocosmopolitanism. Nathan is an evangelical Baptist preacher who takes his family into the Belgian Congo to do missionary work. He never thinks of his family's survival despite the fact that the things they carried from Georgia to Congo did not work well due to the different climatic and atmospheric situation in Congo. His wife – Orleanna Price managed everything for the family in the difficult situation due to the humidity, poisonous insects, animals, and potential diseases in the Congo's unfamiliar climate. For her, the forest is alive; the trees vibrate with animals and vegetation. She suggests her husband to leave Congo but he does not listen to her, rather he exploits her, the native people, and Congo. Nathan's hatred to African people is vehemently foregrounded in the novel as he denigrates Congolese people, his wife- Orleanna, and Congo itself and stands in sharp contrast with the concepts of bioregionalism and ecological connection. Since the paper is qualitative in nature, it is carried out through textual analysis in the light of the concepts related to eco-cosmopolitanism and bioregionalism. The paper concludes that Orleanna Price having eco-cosmopolitan sensibilities adapts in the new ecological region of Congo so that she feels the same whether she is in Georgia or Congo. **Keywords:** Biophilia, bioregionalism, eco-cosmopolitanism, stewardship

Introduction

This paper analyses how characters with bioregional sensibilities could cross the regional boundary, and stay in harmony with nature irrespective of where they are from. Moreover, it deals with bioregional aspects of ecology in the novel *The Poisonwood Bible* written by Barbara Kingsolver as characters having a sense of bioregionalism and eco-cosmopolitanism live in bioregional harmony with the ecology of given space. In the novel, Orleanna Price represents bioregionalism whereas her husband – Nathan Price represents regionalism with colonial mindset. Nathan Price goes to Congo from Georgia to convert Congolese into Christianity but he fails as a missionary agent. However, Orleanna Price succeeds to accommodate in new environment due to her eco-cosmopolitan attitude. Condemnation of American missionary's policies and practices in Kilangan village of Congo by Orleanna Price supports Barbara Kingsolver's anti-missionary views as the novel depicts failure of missionary agent— Nathan Price who fails as a husband, as a father, and as an environmentalist. Orleanna Price's eco-cosmopolitanism sensibilities are reflected at the beginning of the novel which is further supported by her daughter—Ruth may towards the ending of the novel.

Then, the question regarding Orleanna's forceful entry to Congo comes if she succeeds to accommodate herself to the new environment in Congo by challenging her husband's practices. Is survival so simple in a new place? What makes them survive in the given space? In order to answer these questions, I will first discuss on the ideas related to bioregionalism and eco-cosmopolitanism developed by Aleena Manoharan, Ursula Heise, Bruce Robbins, Peter Berg and Raymond Dashman etc. In the paper, I conclude that Orleanna Price moves from one territory (Georgia) to other (Congo) as bioregional and eco-cosmopolitan character. She understands that that every place is bestowed with its climatic condition in which she adjusts. Unlike her husband who views ecology as inert, she never challenges the ecology of the given area and respects nature's volition. This study is based on the qualitative analysis of the novel *The Poisonwood Bible*. The study also engages with the theoretical insights related to eco-cosmopolitanism and bioregionalism.

This paper has been divided into the five sections. The first part deals with introduction of the subject matter. It also touches how the study has been carried out in brief. The second part highlights on how the novel under scrutiny has been analyzed by other critics and it also sheds light on key issues related to bioregionalism and ecology under the title 'literature review'. This has been done to figure out the research gap. The third part discusses on the approach of the paper. It is related to the methodology section which has been discussed under the rubric 'Bioregionalism and Eco-Cosmopolitanism: Ecological Agenda'. The fourth part consists of the analysis of the novel in the light of the ideas developed in the third part. It is further followed in the succeeding part i.e., fifth part. Finally, the finding is discussed in the final part of the paper.

Literature Review

The concept of bioregion was formed in order to address issues of nature-culture dichotomy and to re-establish man's distorted relationship with the other entities in the ecological web. In "Creating a Sense of Place through Literature: A Bioregional Reading of Barungin (Smell the Wind)," Aleena Manoharan discusses about the man's neglected relation to land and highlights man-nature bond. In this regards, he observes, "People as integral part of place's life have adaptive culture of those who harmonize their relation with place in sustainable way. It reaffirms people's bond with the land" (165). According to him, bio-regionalism tries to reestablish the idea that human beings are an inseparable part of place's life. Their adaptive culture of new places according to given ecology

makes much sense of their survival. He means to say that humans are inseparable part of nature. The attachment to land is significant as it plays a role in shaping person's context.

A land, bio-regionally, consists of a particular climate, atmosphere, seasons, landforms, watersheds, rivers, streams, soils, native plants and animals. By harmonizing their life in a sustainable way with the place where they live, one can practise bioregionalism. One should live in harmony with place's life. This process is termed by Berg and Dasmann as "living-in-place" (217). The ability to sense environment having an intimate relation with earth's life supports the concept of intrinsic human-land relation. Manoharan's concept of 'people as integral part of place's life' is applicable to Orleanna Price who sees life in place, trees, and rest of the things, "The forest eats itself and lives forever" (5). Her connection to nature is inherent and biophilic. Humans have biophilic relation with nature. She sees no hierarchy between human and rest of the things in the world. There is no fundamental difference between humans, non-humans. They have co-evolved with other species. They are a part of nature. The sense of superiority over nature destroys the harmonious relation among the species whereas the sense of assimilation with nature sustains human life. As humans are co-evolved with other species, they need to accommodate according to the features of given space not according to their desires. They largely affected by specific location, and need to adjust accordingly.

The harmonious relation between nature and human as bioregionalism intends to have is problematized due to neo-colonial mentality of westernization which has been represented by Nathan Price in the novel. He tries to keep nature, women, and Congolese in the same basket to inferiorize them. His activities stand in sharp contrast to bioregionalism which emerged as a reaction to global power and politics. In this regards, Mitchell Thomashow states, "Bioregionalism emerges as a response to the formidable power relations of global political economy and the ensuing fragmentation of place" (121). By critiquing global power politics that subverts the ecology, bioregionalism aims at protecting the given place as naturally it is. People need to understand different places as their home and apply the place-based knowledge. Regarding bioregional sensibility, Thomashow claims, "At the heart of a bioregional sensibility is the concept of place based reinhabitation" (125). Thomashow asserts that bioregional sensibility is all about forming and reforming the living styles to suit the nature. He ends his essay talking about cosmopolitan bioregionalism that includes study the language of the birds, animals, and places. He states, "Make the study of flora, fauna, landscape and weather a daily practice" (130). Viewing nature and its phenomenon and behaving accordingly is what Thomashow calls bioregionalism. He suggests people to understand the world through wild creatures and urges humans to honor diversity. As seen in the novel, Orleanna Price's attempts to sense environment is crucial to understand what theorists call bioregionalism. Orleanna goes on reflecting on flora and fauna as well as landscape so that she understands language of animals and atmospheric situation in the given space.

The Poisonwood Bible has been studied by critics from different perspectives. Katherine R. Chandler sheds light on the importance of humor in environmental literature, "There is no question that the four functions of humor evident in The Poisonwood Bible create empathy and work as political acts for Kingsolver's environmentalist agenda" (330). The humor is used as a political act or tool to support Kingsolver's environmental justice. The dualism in characterization between Nathan Price and Orleanna Price shows the tension between natural world and human world. Chandler further justifies his claim by showing the characterization of father as missionary agent to exploit Africa, and mother standing against such practice. Chandler observes, "While the father's patriarchal beliefs govern the family and their mission to

Africa, the mother's and daughters' voices establish the novel's mission to convey a negative view of such attitudes, particularly in regard to American involvement with the Congo, including its relation to the land and the inseparable human abuses" (330). Nathan price, as a father of four daughters stands as the father figure of all Congolese people in the civilizing mission, whereas mother and daughters stand against such policies of American involvement in Africa.

The narration of four daughters contains humor which support Kingsolver's idea of environment, "In a tale abounding in tragic situations, then, Kingsolver's use of humor in The Poisonwood Bible supports environmentalist condemnations of American practices and policy" (Chandler 331). The quote clearly states that the humor in the novel acts as defensive to protect nature or environment. Kingsolver's critique of dominating authority of Nathan is taken as Platonic authority by Anne T. Salvatore. Salvatore critiques Nathan Price's assumption of absolute truth as he does not listen to his wife and Congolese people. Salvatore asserts, "Thus, purporting to be in possession of the only right way of worshipping and living, the narcissistic Reverend Price claims Ideal Truth for himself alone" (160). According to quote, Nathan Price is alone in his belief, yet he continues with his ideas of conversing Congolese people, planting beans that hardly survive in Kilanga. Thus, he is a failure due to his arrogance. Salvatore further claims, "Though he plants and re-plants his Kentucky Wonder beans, carefully tends his tomato plants, and gives constant attention to his garden, the plants either die or merely grow leaves that do not bear edible fruits" (161). His act of planting and replanting the trees does not work as the plants he planted either die or do not bear any fruit as the soil of that area does not suit the crops that Nathan intends to plant. As a failed environmentalist, he is not aware of soil-crop connection.

It is ironic that Nathan tries to be environmentalist by planting the trees without knowing soil and seed combination. Elaine R. Ognibene highlights how Nathan Price is attacked by the nature. After he is healed, he plants garden without success, "While Nathan heals, Mama Tataba reconstructs the garden shifting the design from flat to hills and valleys so that the seeds will grow, and later Leah watches as an angry Nathan levels it again. When Nathan does follow Mama Tataba's design, plants do grow but bear no fruit, because, they lack pollinators" (25). As a failed environmentalist, Nathan Price does not agree with Mama Tataba's suggestion to shift the design of garden from plain area to hills so that the seeds will be pollinated. His hypocrisy as environmentalist is supported by his act of religious conversion of Congolese people and missionary's attitude as colonial practice, "In *The Poisonwood Bible*, Barbara Kingsolver illustrates the hypocrisy of religious rhetoric and practice that sacrifices the many for the good of the few in power..." (20). A sacrifice of innocent people for the good of few in power is a religious hypocrisy.

From the body of literature discussed above, it is clear that Nathan Price is hypocritical in terms of his religious mission and environmental agendas. For example, Anne T. Salvatore's idea of absolute power and supreme authority used by Nathan Price to control Congolese and his wife is a religious hypocrisy. In the same way, another critic— Katherine R. Chandler views humor as tool to critique Nathan's fake environmental agendas. The hypocrisy of missionary practice of Nathan Price is further highlighted by Elaine R. Ognibene. By representing Nathan Price as an epitome of religious hypocrisy and imperial mentality, these critics succeeded how Nathan price is failed in his religious mission. Now, while moving forward to clarify my research questions, I argue that Orleanna Price, on the other hand, critiques belief and institutions carried by her husband. The motive behind such critique is Barbara Kingsolver's dissatisfaction with materialism and greed which lead her character through eco-

cosmopolitan behavior. Orleanna's critique of her husband's actions and her association to nature are guided, as this paper assumes, by her eco-cosmopolitan feelings.

Bioregionalism and Eco-Cosmopolitanism: Ecological Agenda

Eco-cosmopolitanism is a concept related to environmental philosophy developed by Ursula K. Heise in her book *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*. It basically talks about how ecology existing in one place functions in the same way on the global context. Heise highlights on the feeling of connectedness all over the world. The idea of connectedness belongs to Heise's concept of ecological living where the boundary among the creatures is erased. It goes on crossing the boundary which is often political in nature without hampering indigenous traditions, local knowledge. It is an ecological agenda as it respects the ecology of given space as envisioned in the theory of bioregionalism. Berg and Dasmann define bioregionalism as "living-in-place". They wish for an ecological practice which keeps a balance with the region people inhabit. It supports the concept of living-in-place which develops a link between humans, non-humans, the processes of planets, seasons, climate, and water cycles that a place involves.

In the similar way, Linda Vance asserts that bioregionalism is a commitment to live harmoniously with the ecology of a given area. According to him, when importance to different life forms in the ecology is given, it promotes bioregionalism. Vance's concept of bioregionalism helps people feel as global citizens and it is further explained by Bruce Robbin. Robbin presents the idea of global citizen as one who belongs to worldwide community. Robbin observes, "According to this ideal, there could be only one cosmopolitanism, for there is only one worldwide community of human beings" (2). The artificial division, boundary makes people feel detached when they move from one place to another. Thus, developing a sense of cosmopolitanism means the reality of reattachment or multiple attachment at distance that one gets being in a region at distance, "Another way to put the contrast is to say that instead of an ideal of detachment, actually existing cosmopolitanism is a reality of (re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance" (3). Such a feeling of belonging to local and global or even blurring the boundary of local to global is a key to cosmopolitanism, "Linking the global and the grassroots is on everyone's agenda" (10). When one practices the principle of place based aesthetics of bioregion, discriminatory issues of regionalism are also erased.

When people practice such principle of belonging to local and global at the same time, the issue of caste, state, and ethnicity is less significant, "By foregrounding natural factors as a way to envision place, bioregionalism proposes that human identity may be constituted by our residence in a larger community of natural beings—our local bioregion—rather than, or at least supplementary to, national, state, ethnic, or other more common bases of identity" (4). According to the quote, bioregionalism proposes that human identity is formed in relation to other members of the planet. The act of moving from one place to another, either deliberate or forceful involves different acquaintance with spaces. The places share same components and life formed through the same regional attachments is almost same whether one lives in Georgia or Congo as seen in the life of Orleanna Price. Her arrival to Congo, though designed by her husband Nathan Price, helps her to be assimilated with the available natural scene. Though she is with her husband but she feels lonely, it is the nature that is accompanying her, "She is inhumanly alone. And then, all at once, she isn't. A beautiful animal stands on the other side of the water. They look up from their lives, woman and animal, amazed to find themselves in

the same place" (6). Her existence and animal's existence co-exist in the same place having no fundamental differences.

Landlis Barnhill David highlights bioregionalism as holistic integration of individuals with bioregion. He observes, "A holistic integration of the individual person with that bioregion; and the interconnectedness of physical world, human psychology, and spirituality" (212). The connection between individuals and bioregion crosses physical relation of survival purpose of humans; it is more psychological and spiritual. Bioregionalism appeared as a response to degrading environmental concern. It seeks to recover a sense of place and community by revitalizing ecologically sustainable and culturally diverse societies in the context of their local geographical areas of bioregions. David asserts, "It is highly inclusive. It assumes an interweaving of humans and nature, emphasizing the value of nature while also emphasizing human life within nature, making use of nature as one of its parts rather than merely contemplating it from the outside" (212). The inclusive nature of bioregionalism emphasizes the human life within nature. Penetrating nature from outside is not encouraged from bioregional perspective. Humans can collaboratively work with nature. David further claims, "The interconnection of humans and the more-than-human world is repeatedly emphasized" (221). Interconnection between human and the more than human world is rigorously highlighted in bioregional and eco-cosmopolitan perspective.

Serenella Iovino also talks about place in global context having homeliness in ethical and aesthetic terms, "A place is a space where one can imagine living, a home to which values, in ethical and aesthetic terms, are attached" (102). Sense of place is no more cultural, it is nature gifted, and can be sensed through imagination that leads to the bioregional narrative. Bioregionalism, in literary implication, functions as tools for the harmonious relation of place, life and ecology. In the same way, Robert L. Thayer talks about bio-region as a place designed naturally and topographically, "A bioregion is literally and etymologically a 'life-place'—a unique region definable by natural (rather than political) boundaries with a geographic, climatic, hydrological, and ecological character capable of supporting unique human and nonhuman living communities" (3). The bioregion supports each life form either human or non-human equally where these creatures adjust according to climatic condition. It advocates for biophilic relation with other life forms, "The bioregional or life-place concept suggests the efflorescence and emplacement of biophilia, our innate affection for the totality of life in all its forms" (4). The connection among all is innate, and natural. As a member of earth planet, one seeks the relation with rest of life, "Biophilia- the connections that human beings subconsciously seek with the rest of life" (Wilson 331). Wilson highlights the biophilic relation among human, nature, animals etc. Biophillic relation among the creatures as well as things in the nature has been practiced by Orleanna Price in the novel as she disagrees with her husband's proposal of conversion of African people into Christianity.

Therefore, the ecological insights developed under the rubric of ecocosmopolitanism and bioregionalism give a focus to harmonious relation of each life form in association with nature.

The Poisonwood Bible, Ecology and Place

The novel begins as Orleanna Price comes through a jungle along with her family members guided by her husband—Nathan Price. She is disillusioned with her husband's way of treating her as the appendage. Though she is with her husband, she feels lonely, and it is the nature that is accompanying her, "She is inhumanly alone. And then, all at once, she isn't. A beautiful animal stands on the other side of the water. They look up from their lives, woman and animal, amazed to find themselves in the same

place" (Kingsolver 7). The juxtaposition of an animal standing alone on the river bank to the lonely Orleanna indicates the human-animal nexus. Due to blind persistence and failure of Nathan to see Congolese baptized, he identifies himself as colonizer, and his wife and daughters identify themselves colonized like Congo itself. Their daughter — Leah adapts to live in Congo. She asserts, "I live in a tiny house piled with boys, potatoes, fetishes and books of science" (506). She learns African norms and values as well as things in nature. Her acclimatization, i.e., being accustomed to new climates is easily done. Her experience in Congo empowers her to sustain in given time and place. She incorporates domestic techniques and travelling strategies practiced by Congolese.

Eco-cosmopolitanism includes Orleanna Price's connectedness with woods, rivers, landscape in Africa which stands in opposition to Nathan Price's attempt to change Congolese and their practices according to his desire. Orleanna Price represents ecological consciousness whereas Nathan stands for global capitalism and euro-centrism. Characters' attachment to land and their love to landscapes support their ecological sensibility. Orleanna Price is bioregional and eco-cosmopolitan because she stays in the African village assimilating with woods, nature, and ecosystems. She stays there as a member of planet. She co-exists with other beings, trees, worms. She states, "I catch the scent of Africa. It makes me want to keen, sing, clap up thunder, lie down at the foot of a tree and let the worms take whatever of me they can still use" (99). The extract implies Orleanna's connection to other beings. She is familiar with the scent of Africa, trees and worms. On the contrary, the forceful entrance of Nathan Price to Africa is guided by colonial mentality as he claimed that the he could cultivate the mind of Kilangan and kilanga as a place itself. For him, the people in Kilanga are uncivilized as he sees naked part when they offer dancing and singing to him. Orleanna Price's observation to Nathan proves it. She asserts, "But Nathan wouldn't hear my worries. For him, our life was as simple as paying in cash and sticking the receipt in your breast pocket: we had the Lord's protection, he said, because we came to Africa in His service" (109). These lines imply that her husband—Nathan Price treats his family members, and Congolese as his subjects.

Nathan Price moves into the deeper level of problems as he takes whole Africa as a resource. His relationship to nature in Africa is guided by Eurocentric superiority. He is not simply a dweller in Africa. He tries his best to loot it. Unlike Orleanna Price, he is not a bioregional character. Karren Warran observes that bioregional characters are simply dwellers, "One goal of bioregionalism is that humans become simply dwellers in the land" (84). The quote implies that humans are just dwellers in the nature like other creatures. Thus, they should have harmonious relation with non-human things and creature as well, "Humans have stewardship relationships to non-human animals and nature" (80). It means humans should live without harming non-human world. Living in harmony with nature involves what Linda Vance calls bioregionalism. Linda Vance clarifies scope and importance of bioregionalism. When importance to different life forms is given, it promotes diversity and bioregionalism. Vance asserts that "it is a commitment to living harmoniously with the ecology of a given area" (136). It is a devotion to the process of living in harmony with the ecology of the area.

Nathan's dualistic principle of civilizing and exploiting of Congolese stands against the bioregional sensibility as shown by Orleanna Price. Nathan continues to dominate Congolese despite the fact that Congo was no more in the control of Belgium and America. Yet he continues to civilize Africans in the name of missionary project. In this context, Pramod K. Nayar argues, "This form of control has been called neocolonialism, used especially to describe the American control over the rest of the world" (5). Though direct political control by west from India has been moved but

economical as well as neo-colonial control has still been pervasive. Nayar, in this context, further explores, "Neocolonialism is the continuing economic exploitation of Asian and African nations- states by European and American powers" (5). As the quote implies, the American hegemonic power exploits the powerless African countries. Nathan's exploitation of his wife and Africa is guided by colonial mentality. Nathan dominates African land by ordering Congolese to follow what he says. He treats Africa, indigenous people and his wife as if they are sources to fulfill his goals. Orleanna expresses her anxiety over Nathan in this way, "But Nathan wouldn't hear my worries. For him, our life was as simple as paying in cash and sticking the receipt in your breast pocket: we had the Lord's protection, he said, because we came to Africa in His service" (109). Thus, Nathan behaves with his wife as if she is a product to sell in cash. He has reached to Africa from Georgia to exploit Africa and African. The people with colonial mentality see the place with power. Nathan's arrival to Kilangan village of Africa is an attempt to exercise his power. Orleanna Price claims, "I was his instrument, his animal. Nothing more. How we wives and mothers do perish at the hands of our own righteousness" (101). She says she was his tool, instrument and resources. Her daughter also claims, "Mother, You had no life of your own" (9). Even the daughter judges her as having no life on her own. However, Orleanna survives as a strong character due to her eco-cosmopolitan sensibilities. Her respect to nature and care for the children is rewarding one. She finds her harmonious relation with Africa and did not like when her husband, comes to civilize Africa, and Congolese people. Her husband is abusive one who commands his wife to follow his order. With him, she does not find her life, "I had no life of my own" (9) because she involves in the actions designed by Nathan Price, her husband.

Highlighting natural stuffs like rivers, animals, forests which for her 'inspire and expand', Orleanna talks about territory which cannot be possessed by human beings for a long time. She asserts, "A territory is only possessed for a moment in time" (437). A territory is natural and belongs to everyone. Man-made boundary of place does not last longer. She shows her connection to Africa in these lines, "Try to imagine what never happened: our family without Africa, or the Africa that would have been without us" (437-438). This line exposes her emotional relation with the place. Orleanna's instinct and inner feelings tell her to live and struggle for survival despite her hardship in new locale. The complexity that follows her springs not from the unfamiliar place like Congo but it stems from her husband. In fact, the nature supports her. Thus, she ponders, "By instinct rather than will, I stayed alive. I tried to flee from the grief" (434). Her present situation at Congo was so unbearable that she wanted to give up everything. However, she continued her struggles and she was successful as well because she was accompanied by nature. She claims, "The trees roared and danced as if they were on fire in the pouring rain, telling me to go on" (434). The trees, water, birds seen in the location of Africa help her to move ahead constantly.

The connection between geographical location and Orleanna is a key for her to be a part of nature so that she can go on catching the 'scene of Africa'. She enjoys its scenic beauty of the place where she has been forcefully taken. Orleanna observes, "Once every few years, even now, I catch the scene of Africa. It makes me want to keen, sing, clap up thunder, lie down at the foot of a tree and let the worms take whatever of me they can still use" (99). Her assimilation into nature is reflected as she is inspired to be in harmonious relation nature. She lies down at the foot of a tree. She enjoys her relation with non-human world equally as if she is eco-cosmopolitan. Ursula Heise coined the term eco-cosmopolitanism to show the significance of a sense of place and planet. Eco-cosmopolitanism for Heise "reaches toward what some environmental

writers and philosophers have called the more-than-human world—the realm of nonhuman species, but also that of connectedness with both animate and inanimate networks of influence and exchange" (60-61). Heise means to say that ecocosmopolitanism is all about feeling of connectedness all over the world. The idea of connectedness belongs to Heise's concept of ecological living where the boundary among the creatures is erased. This is seen in the novel when Orleanna says that Hippos, elephants, lions all enjoy their life, "Mr. Axelroot told us what all we could see from up there looking down: Hippos in the river. Elephants running around in the jungle, a whole bunch of them. A lion down by the water, eating. Its head moved up and down like our kitty in Atlanta" (Kingsolver 135). The world is a common home for the creatures existing in the world. The narrator says that she was just like a tree, "I lay so still against the tree branch I was just the same everything as the tree. I was like a green mamba snake. Poison. I could be right next to you and you wouldn't ever know it" (141). She compares herself with the snake. This shows eco-cosmopolitan sensibilities in the novel.

Though Orleanna has never been to Africa before, she shows her familiarity to the things in Africa. She states, "Ripe fruits, acrid sweat, urine, flowers, dark species, and other things I have never seen— I can't say what goes into the composition" (99). She has not observed these things before, and she is not aware of the composition of things. Yet, she enjoys with the given space as she has bioregional and eco-cosmopolitan sensibility. Heise's eco-cosmopolitanism is "an attempt to envision individuals and groups as part of planetary 'imagined communities' of both human and nonhuman kinds" (61). The planet, according to her, is a common home for human and nonhumans kind where humans with eco-cosmopolitanism sensibilities live through ecological links, "All of these inquiries open the local out into a network of ecological links that span a region, a continent, or the world" (56). The ecological links does not stay in a single region but passes through nation, state to cosmos, and "Congo sprawls on the middle of the world. Sun rises, sun sets, six o'clock exactly. Everything that comes of morning undoes itself before nightfall: rooster walks back into forest, fires die down, birds coocoo-coo, sun sinks away, sky bleeds, passes out, goes dark, nothing exists. Ashes to ashes" (Kingsolver 35). This is a proof that the natural surrounding goes same irrespective of man-made geographies. Orleanna Price shares these eco-cosmopolitan beliefs. She lives in collaboration with rest of life, let it be biotic or abiotic. The space formed through the systematic sense of planet that crosses the limitation of territory is where the global sense of eco-cosmopolitanism is found. Thus, the narrator in the story writes, "First, picture the forest. I want you to be its conscience, the eyes in the trees" (5). Being trees' consciousness means to have eco-cosmopolitanism.

The novel ends with the remarks of Ruth May who has been buried in African jungle due to snake biting. From the grave, she supports her mother's viewpoints remembering what mother has said in the beginning of novel. Ruth May observes, "The glide of belly on branch. The mouth thrown open wide, sky blue. I am all that is here. The eyes in trees never blink" (607). These lines imply the bioregional implications by highlighting her close relation to the given space where she has been buried. The trees that never blink remind the bioregional and eco-cosmopolitan sensibilities of Orleanna Price. Towards the ending of the novel, same feeling shared by Orleanna in the beginning part of novel is foregrounded by Ruth May who has been buried in the jungle. Ruth May narrates, "Here is what I see: First, the forest. Trees like muscular animals overgrown beyond all reason. Vines strangling their kin in the wrestle for sunlight. The glide of snake belly on branch. A choir of seedlings arching their necks out of rotted tree stumps, sucking life out of death. I am the forest's conscience, but remember the forest eats itself and lives forever. (607-608). The extract tells that Ruth May becomes forest's

conscience, forests are regenerative forces that live forever themselves. She sees forests, animals, vines, snakes, seedlings all co-exist in harmony.

Thus, Orleanna Price survives in the new place as she goes on being assimilated with the given region. Such feeling leads her towards eco-cosmopolitanism as it welcomes every one or everything from local to global level.

Common Home and Eco-Cosmopolitanism

Feeling of attachment to natural landscape develops the concept of world as a common home where different life forms dwell on. The realization of such feeling makes one successful to survive assimilating with the natural phenomenon and situations. It helps to maintain the ecological balance where no harm to ecology is done as everyone realizes the sense of responsibility as a member of planet. The concept of world citizenship is the idea that all the planet's life forms are linked in such a way that they come to form one world. It advocates holistic approaches to the natural environment that emphasized balances, interdependencies that erases the human made border. Orleanna Price's idea of world as common home is reflected from the very beginning of the novel where Orleanna observes, "Every space is filled with life...the forest eats itself and lives forever" (5). For her Georgia and Congo share similarities as both the places are same naturally filled with flora and fauna along with biotic and abiotic things. She compares herself with Africa, "Let me claim that Africa and I kept company for a while" (9). The immortality of forests as it survives forever as a source to life forms in the world.

She compared her present plight with Methuselah— a bird and reflects upon her pathetic situation as she has no wings to fly. She claims, "By then, I was lodged in the heart of darkness, so thoroughly bent to shape of marriage I could hardly see any other way to stand. Like Methuselah I cowered beside my cage, and though my soul hankered after the mountain. I found like Methuselah I had no wings" (228). These lines talk about the helplessness situation of Orleanna. Yet, she managed to survive comparing herself to bird. Being assimilated with nature, she is able to come out of the heart of darkness. Thus, she feels strong psychologically as she is in harmony with the bioregion. Her acclimatization in Kilanga undergoes a discernible ecological sensibility that shapes her eco-cosmopolitan character.

Her attachment to Africa is as same as her attachment to America. She ponders on natural space and her relation to it. She reflects, "The eyes in the trees open onto my dreams" (102). As the quote says she feels as if she is the conscience of trees. She treats Congo as space where as her husband treats Congo as place. The place and space are two things as discussed by Lawrence Buell. He sheds light on the concept of space, and how it became place with attachments and non-attachments. A place containing spatial location is seen, named, heard and given meaning by humans, "Up to a point, world history is a history of space becoming place. In the beginning, earth was space without form" (Buell 63). Buell clarifies how places are made through space. Places are named and politically designed. The shared love to the place or place attachment is both a sentimental issue and a material one based on greed. As seen in the novel, Nathan Price's touch to Africa is based on lust, greed, and power. Because of him, Orleanna was suffering from mental torture. Despite the difficult time in Africa due to her husband's domineering nature and the motherly responsibility as she has to take care of her four daughters, she keeps on moving forward. She regains her strength due to kind nature of given place. She observes, "As long as I kept moving, my grief streamed out behind me like a swimmer's long hair in water. I knew the weight was there but it did not touch me" (433). She does not stop or give up, and she does not only survive, but also she is a source of the survival for her daughters as well.

Orleanna's views are shared by her daughter 'Leah' who agrees with her mother. Leah supports the bioregional aspects of her mother. Leah claims, "Myself, I am just happy to be living among fruits trees and cooking with wind again" (567). The line talks about leah's attachment to land of given location. Paul Taylor in "Land Ethics" highlights land ethics which crosses the boundary of a region, it enlarges the community concept and includes soils, waters, plants, and animals which construct what we call land, "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively; the land" (239). The boundary of land is beyond the limitation and control. Since land is the place where rules are applicable in universal level; plants, animals as well as humans survive in the same way. The plants function and survive in universal level, "Plants absorb energy from the sun. This energy flows through a circuit called the biota, which may be represented by a pyramid consisting of layers. The bottom layer is the soil" (243). The soil or base is the space where everything relies. The boundary of region in terms of nation or state does not exist so far as land ethic is concerned. The energy of the world moves from one place to another. It equally applies to human world. Orleanna Price's respect to land, woods, and rivers in Africa shows her eco-cosmopolitan sensibilities as she acknowledges what Taylor calls 'land ethics'.

The transformation of her family from Georgia to African Congo is an exposition of her ability to think beyond the regional boundary as land, woods, and rivers know no line of division. Her attachment to woods, animals, river and her critique of Nathan Price's domineering nature of land, blacks, and women support her ecocosmopolitanism. In fact, her perspective of bioregionalism, biophhia and ecocosmopolitanism stands in sharp contrast to her husband's model of civilization and development. By erasing man-made boundary of regions, either consciously or unconsciously, she succeeds in developing relation with the landscapes of Congo, people and nature. Thus, it is not the nature that divides people; rather it is the nature of humanity that divides human beings. The division of land, detachment of humans from soil and man-made boundary disturb the concept of world as common home.

Conclusion

Price family faces a number of challenges while staying in Congo as they were unfamiliar to it. Their attempts to adjust in new environment basically depend on Orleanna's eco-cosmopolitanism. Though they were not prepared well for the trip to Congo from Georgia, they were compelled to make a journey due to Nathan Price's missionary project. Orleanna understands the surroundings of the new place well, and participates fully in the lives of the place she inhabits. She respects the ecology, follows the rhythm of nature, and assimilates with the mystic forests that live forever. She succeeds in developing harmonious relation with nature and Congolese people. Even in the harsh situation of Africa, she survives and sustains her family due to her bioregional awareness. She is aware of natural surroundings and activities in Kilanga. Her ability to adjust in new space according to the environmental situation defends the environmental agendas that humanity cannot change nature; rather they should move ahead following the earth systems.

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