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Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18803340>**Interdependence of Life in *No Space for Further Burials*: A Biocentric Reading****Muhammad Atif Naeem**

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ABSTRACT

The current research explores the novel No Space further Burials by Feryal Ali Gauhar in the light of biocentrism that dwells on the aspect of interdependence of life. This research examines the novel in terms of its portrayal of the interconnectedness between humans, animals and the natural world which highlights that survival, suffering and care are common to humans and animals. The present research examines displacement, war and survival as a combination. It illustrates how Gauhar challenges the fact that humans are the most significant. The work introduces the world where every living thing is valued. In the work, human suffering and tragedy are depicted. It also emphasizes the moral significance of viewing the entire life as interrelated. Animals, nature and human beings are interdependent. The acknowledgment of this interdependence promotes the broader view of moral accountability. This research has a contribution to both literary studies and environmental studies. It describes the way in which fictional works might describe and discuss biocentric concepts. It is prompting the readers to contemplate humanity, animals and nature.

Keywords: *No Space for Further Burials, Environmental Ethics, Interdependence of Life*

Introduction

Feryal Ali Gauhar is a Pakistani writer, journalist and human-rights activist. She writes about war, loss, suffering and displacement. Her works focus on people who are affected by violence and conflict. She shows how bodies, emotions and human values are affected by war. She describes the pain faced by ordinary people during war in her novel *No Space for Further Burials*. She draws attention to the suffering of animals and damage to nature. A point is also noted in critical review studies that highlight the novel's portrayal of collective suffering and survival across human and non-human life (Zubair 2). This connects with the biocentric idea of the interdependence of life, which means that humans, animals and nature depend on one another to survive. The novel shows that all forms of life are linked and affected together by violence and hardship. This work was published in 2007, which shows the painful reality of life during war. The novel mixes real events with dream-like scenes to show how war affects the mind of the narrator and the people around him. Gauhar describes injured civilians, homeless families, suffering animals and damaged land. She does not talk only about human pain but also shows how both animals and the environment suffer. We see from the story that all living beings are hurt by war. This is the main reason that *No Space for Further Burials* fits well with the theory of biocentrism. It shows that humans, animals and nature are closely connected. Their suffering is shared and no life exists alone (Ansar, Shah and Ali 282).

The present research uses the theory of biocentrism to study *No Space for Further Burials*. Biocentrism refers to a mode of thought that considers all living things as valuable. It does not

place humans above animals, plants or nature. Instead, it says that every form of life matters equally (DesJardins 2013). Life is important just because it exists rather than for its usefulness to humans. No living being is created only to serve people. This theory questions human-centered thinking, which often leads to harming animals and destroying nature. The idea of biocentrism helps us to recognize that we should not merely respect human life but all life in cases such as war and conflict.

A key idea of biocentrism in Gauhar's novel is the interdependence of life. This means all living things are connected and they depend on each other (Rolston 106-109). Humans need animals, plants, land, water and weather to survive. At the same time, human actions affect other living beings. Damaging an aspect of nature may damage all other aspects. Environmental damage can cause human suffering, just as wars and conflicts can destroy animal homes and natural habitats. Interdependence shows that life is interrelated. It also teaches us that we should love and respect every living thing. In *No Space for Further Burials*, Feryal Ali Gauhar shows that all living things like humans, animals and nature are connected and depend on each other during hard times like war and displacement. The narrator sees scenes where injured people, animals and displaced creatures all share the same space. All of them look for water, food and shelter. These situations show that humans cannot survive alone. They depend on animals, plants and land. At the same time, animals and nature also suffer from the same violence and hardship. Feryal Ali Gauhar shows that suffering is not just a human problem. It affects all life and all living beings are part of a shared world where their lives and well-being are linked (Buell 21).

Research Objectives

- To explore how *No Space for Further Burials* displays the interrelationship between humans, animals, and nature.
- To examine the moral and environmental importance of collective helplessness in the novel.

Research Questions

1. In what ways the novel portrays the interrelationship between life across species and the environment?
2. How does this oppose anthropocentric perceptions and promote biocentric perceptions?

Literature Review

Ecocriticism has become a significant literary method, which analyses the connection between literature and natural environment and challenges anthropocentric perspectives, which put human interests above other forms of life. Ecocriticism, as coined by Cheryle Glotfelty, examines the role of literature in relation to the physical world and in ways in which it challenges anthropocentric assumptions in literature (Cheryll xviii). Lawrence Buell goes on to emphasize that literature is a key contributor to environmental consciousness as it portrays nature not a passive backdrop, but a vital agent (Buell 430). This critical model is quite similar to biocentrism, a philosophical approach that acknowledges the value of all living things. The interdependence of life is one of the essential beliefs of biocentrism that states that human well-being is closely related to the well-being of animals, plants, and ecosystems (Hongsuwan 1470-1476). Ecocriticism is therefore the ethical and theoretical perspective with which the literature could be approached as an ecological fact and appeal to environmental accountability (Wajid 70).

The *No Space or Further Burials* by Feryal Ali Gauhar (2007) is also a work of academic interest due to its presentation of war and uprootedness as well as environmental destruction in the Pakistani scenario. Nouman Shafi, Ali Usman Saleem, and Kainat Asghar (2025) discuss the novel based on the idea of toxic discourse proposed by Lawrence Buell with the emphasis on the way war ruins the environment as well as human life. Their work points out the problems of

deforestation, contaminated soil, impure water and ruining the flora and fauna. They claim that Gauhar introduces environmental devastation and human victimization as mutually exclusive and that survival of displaced populations relies on the well-being of the environments. The natural resources used in the novel (soil, trees, water) are not just the location but the force that shapes the lives of humans. This description is very much related to the principle of mutual dependence of all forms of life, which is biocentric in nature (Shafi 1687-1695).

Qhudsia Wajid (2025) can follow the history of the emergence of ecocriticism as a literary approach, citing the classic texts of *The Ecocriticism Reader* by Glotfelty as well as *The Environmental Imagination* by Buell. She states that ecocriticism criticises anthropocentric ways of thinking and advocates moral and accountable contact with nature. Wajid suggests that literature tends to give nature as an active and fundamental part of the life of humans, which strengthens the fact that life is a part of an interrelated ecological system. She also defines biocentrism as one of the focal notions of ecocriticism and states that people are to be regarded not as supreme or superior creatures but as a bigger ecological system (Wajid 5057).

In a similar manner, Rishma and Gill (2024) suggest that ecocriticism assists the reader in gaining knowledge of environmental problems in literary works of various genres and historical eras. Their work illustrates how human, animal, and natural landscape have been described in a literature because of the integration of humans, animals, and natural landscapes, and the ethical duties towards non-human beings. They provide the indications that ecocritical readings help towards empathy of environmental destruction and promote sustainable and harmonious relations with nature. This ecology sense enhances the expression that the ethical responsibility goes further than just human society to include the natural world (Rishma 563-568).

Historically, the environmental literature has developed since the early nature writing to the present works concerning ecological crisis. Bharati N. Adkoli (2024) argues about the approach adopted by writers like Wordsworth, Emerson, Thoreau, and the writers of the present time, Arundhati Roy, and Ruskin Bond, in which nature is depicted not as a passive part of human life but as an active companion. The biocentric values are reflected in these literary representations because they depict that human survival and moral responsibility are directly related to the well-being of the environment. Adkoli also stresses that ecocritical readings are characterized by the interdependence of life and foster an ethical relationship with nature (Adkoli 32-36).

This point of view is also reinforced by Hongsuwan and Srithares (2021) as they associate ecocriticism with environmental science, ethics, and cultural studies. According to them, literary texts demonstrate the dependence of humans, animals, and ecosystems on each other in order to survive. In their view, biocentrism is one of the fundamental components of ecocriticism since it recognizes the inherent worth of all forms of life and stresses that humanity has a moral obligation to keep the ecological balance (Hongsuwan 1470-1476).

To summarize, it can be stated that the studied literature evidence indicates that ecocriticism can offer a solid conceptual framework to the study of *No Space for Further Burials*. Existing scholarship demonstrates that human life, moral accountability, and ecological health cannot exist without each other through its emphasis on biocentrism and the interdependence of life. All of these studies provide a base to the future research on the relevance of literature in fostering ecological consciousness and supporting the inter-relatedness of all life.

Research Methodology

The current research will use a qualitative approach to study the novel *No Space for Further Burials* by Feryal Ali Gauhar through the lens of biocentrism which is a sub field of Ecocriticism. The present research focuses on the idea that all forms of life are connected and depend on each other. This approach allows a careful reading of the text to understand its messages and values

about life and ethics, without relying on numbers or statistics. It helps to explore the environmental and philosophical themes in the novel in more detail.

The current research carefully analyzes the novel's story, characters and events. It seeks elements that reveal the inter-dependency of humans, animals and nature. Particular emphasis is placed on the scenes in which such relations demonstrate mutual challenges, survival tactics and collaboration of all life. These examples are analyzed in the light of bio-centric ethics which focus on respecting and caring of animals, plants and nature as well as humans.

The present research also uses biocentric ideas to show how the story challenges human-centered thinking. It describes the way of how characters, animals and other elements of nature rely on one another to survive and sustaining life. It also analyzes the symbolic and ecological depiction of nature as a necessity of life. Overall, the novel promotes the idea that all living beings should be treated with equal respect rather than just humans.

Theoretical Framework

The current study seeks to examine the novel *No Space for Further Burials* by Feryal Ali Gauhar through the biocentrism theory. Biocentrism is an environmental ethical sub-field of ecocriticism theory that is of the opinion that all living beings such as humans, animals and plants have moral value since they are alive (Taylor 44). This theory does not elevate human beings over the other forms of life. It promotes respect and moral duty toward the entire natural environment (Callicott 17).

Another major concept of biocentrism is the interdependence of life. The concept means that everything that lives is interrelated and in order to survive they require each other. When the one component of the nature is destroyed then it will impact the other living things in the same place. This relationship demonstrates that animals, humans and nature have a common misery and survival. It also imposes the moral obligation on all life (Naess 28).

The present study will discuss that in what way such a concept of interdependence is demonstrated in *No Space for Further Burials*. This piece of work introduces the coexistence of the humans, animals and nature in harsh conditions which are brought about by war and displacement. In order to survive, people relocate with their animals. They are reliant on common resources like land and water. This brings out the fact that the life of humans is closely related to animals and the surrounding.

Through this idea of interdependence of life, the current study will examine how the novel by Gauhar criticizes human-centeredness and offers a more accommodative perspective of ethics. It tries to demonstrate that in this work shared moral responsibility among the human beings, the animals and nature is encouraged. In this way, the study will make a contribution to the discourse in environmental literary studies by demonstrating how fiction may convey the idea of bio-centricity and environmental sustainability.

Data Collection

The main source in this study is the novel *No Space for Further Burials* by Feryal Ali Gauhar, which is a valuable resource to examine the environmental issues through the prism of biocentrism as a branch of ecocriticism. The analysis will be specifically based on the biocentric idea of the interdependence of life which involves the inherent worth of all living organisms and the interrelationship between human and non-human entities. The information was gathered through the text reading of the novel and the identification of passages where the natural environment, human activities, and other living creatures interact or influence one another. These passages were further divided according to the examples that depict the interdependence and the moral value of non-human life. The secondary sources like academic articles and reviews on the topics of biocentrism and ecocriticism were also used to present a conceptual framework

and assist in interpreting the primary data. This approach will make sure that the research captures a textual representation of ecological interdependence and it will be possible to analyze the portrayal of human and non-human lives as mutually dependent in the narrative.

Thesis Statement

The present research examines the novel *No Space for Further Burials* by Feryal Ali Gauhar through the concept of biocentrism that states that living things are valuable and interrelated. The research explores the life dependence on one another, where individuals, animals, and nature survive, evolve, and require each other in case of war, loss, and destruction. In the story written by Gauhar, the individual does not live alone but collaborates with a team, but must take care of the other, and respect every living thing. The novel identifies how life can only go on when all living beings live in harmony by presenting human-animal contact, utilization of natural resources and emotional connection of man and his surroundings. This study proposes that *No Space for Further Burials* is a biocentric perspective that asks readers to appreciate the equal value of all life and the responsibility of human beings towards nature.

Significance of Study

The current research is significant because it will look at *No Space for Further Burials* by Feryal Ali Gauhar in a new way by using idea of biocentrism which is interdependence of life. It will focus on the connection and value of all life. While other researches focus on human suffering, war and social problems but this research will show that how the work also cares about nature, animals and interdependence of all lives on each other. It will point out how hardships in the narrative not only apply to human beings but to every creature that exists in the same environment. By analyzing the work in this way, we will see that humans have a moral responsibility towards animals, nature and survival depends on caring for each other. The present research will show that how literature can teach lessons about ethics, the environment and the importance of respecting all life.

Delimitations

The present research looks at Feryal Ali Gauhar's novel *No Space for Further Burials*. It uses the idea of biocentrism and its belief that all forms of life depend on each other. This research focuses on parts of the work where humans, animals and the environment interact. By studying these scenes, the current research tries to understand how the novel shows the ethical and ecological connection between all living things. The current research does not explain other ideas in biocentrism except interdependence of life. It doesn't discuss the political, historical or economic causes of war except when they affect humans, animals or the environment. Other environmental theories like deep ecology or ecofeminism are also not included. It is intentionally limited in the research. This allows a deeper look at how the novel portrays shared suffering, survival and dependence among all living beings and how this idea is related to biocentric ethics.

Text Analysis

The novel *No Space for Further Burials* by Feryal Ali Gauhar explores that how life continues during war, loss and devastation. It shows that humans, animals and the environment are deeply connected to each other. The story by Guhar emphasizes that being alive cannot be a single human experience. Instead, it depends on the shared existence of both humans and non-humans. The text shows that humans and non-human life are constantly interacting, responding to danger together and relying on one another for physical and emotional survival. The idea of biocentrism which says all life is valuable and depends on each other is very important in this novel. Biocentrism argues that no being is superior to others and that human existence is inseparable from the world around it (Buell 8). In *No Space for Further Burials*, humans are part of the environment. They are united by life struggle with animals and nature.

The story begins in a war-ravaged place where fear and threat are constant. The narrator reflects, "They are going to as acutely as animals before disaster strikes" (Gauhar 13). This comparison presents the inmates' sensitivity to danger as similar to the instinctive reactions of animals. Through this scene, it is revealed that there are similarities in the survival strategies of both animals and people. They feel threatened, evolve and survive. This interconnected awareness echoes ecocritical theory which states that humans and non-humans inhabit the same ecological fabric and cannot be understood apart from one another (Cheryll xviii).

Gauhar further demonstrates that life goes on as part of the mutual contact with the aspects of nature in the state of disorder. In the courtyard, a small piece of chicken meat is wrapped and preserved during extreme hunger: "Even in the frenzy... recently slaughtered chicken" (Gauhar 15). This gesture demonstrates that no life is wasted. Handling food with care in times of hunger highlights that how individuals rely on whatever life remains. It stresses that life is not an individual enterprise. Instead, it is shared and linked.

Nature itself is portrayed as a life-giving presence. Well and trees become vital to the survival. "The well stands in the resonance of their own voices" (Gauhar 21-22). People do not only come around it to drink water but to have news, comfort and strength. Trees provide shades and privacy to rest. This scene suggests that humans do not survive through their own strength alone. They are dependent on nature's elements to live and communicate. They survive and express themselves through the elements of nature. Background information is not present in water, shade and open ground but these are the key players in human experience.

Ecocritics explain the use of natural elements as agents in narratives and not merely settings (Clark 47). In this novel, the well and trees work like characters. They shape behavior and well-being. They influence choices and moods. Gauhar depicts them as essential to life not just scenery.

The novel also highlights that humans rely on care from others. This indicates emotional dependency and physical dependence. This mutual dependence is seen through the treatment of Noor Jehan towards a child who is ill. "Noor Jehan rocks him ... tears cascading down her face" (Gauhar 29). The child's fragile survival depends on the love and attention of others. This scene is an indication of the reliance of ecosystems on various life forms in order to prosper. Life is maintained in human grief and turmoil by a network of connections that do not stand alone.

Action speaks of interdependency during times of common struggle. Sabir steps forward despite his weakness on the time of burying a child. "We have to dig another, I am going on journey, a cocoon" (Gauhar 30). This performance demonstrates that life and survival is a collective endeavor. When there is a shortage of resources and the conditions are unfavorable, people collaborate. They combine man and nature such as soil and water to celebrate life and facilitate continuity. This is indicative of a biocentric morality in which care of life is not limited to self but spread to community and environment. Ecocritical scholar Stacy Alaimo explains that humans are always already entwined with the environment, and survival depends on a "trans-corporeal" exchange between bodies and elements such as soil and water (Alaimo 92).

Similarly, they rebuild wall to protect their space. "We have begun digging the ... mixed earth with water" (Gauhar 32). The characters use soil and water which shows that physical reconstruction depends on both human strength and natural materials. Blending water and earth is a representation of man collaborating. Survival is achieved through collective work and the natural world (soil, water, branches) which contributes to this effort.

There are also subtle moments where life is reliant on each other. The relationship between Bulbul and Anarguli depicts emotional dependence. "He signaled me ... one word to her Tashakur" (Gauhar 35). Conversation and assistance are used to cross both physical and social

borders in this brief interaction. Relationships are not solely human. The acts of care unite people during difficult moments and when sharing their life.

When birds and other wildlife coexist within a single location, it is easier to realize that humans and nature rely on each other. "But this morning I was ... no good reason at all" (Gauhar 41) shows birds co existing with people in the courtyard. Their appearance is something to remind us of the struggles of refugees. Every life passes through the difficult circumstances. The narrator observes birds, demonstrating that even other animals have the same survival, endurance and vulnerability. This aligns with biocentric thought that all species respond to their environment and affect one another's survival (Morton 45).

Through the manner in which it describes the rain and natural cycles, the novel also indicates how people rely on one another. "The sky has darkened... littering the landscape" (Gauhar 44). The rain transforms soil, flora and fauna as well as individuals. Water is a common resource that is significant to the farms, animals and people. The explanation indicates that life is determined by the responsiveness of the land to weather and it appears that the natural relationship is what determines life at all levels.

Even during bad times, we are all united. In a passage where the narrator bathes in rain, Gauhar writes, "It was wonderful... run off his skin into the earth" (Gauhar 51). This scene demonstrates the encounter of rituals by people with nature. The rain purifies the body and then returns to the earth. It demonstrates the mutual existence of living things and nature. This scene demonstrates the give and take cycle which is central to life in the setting. Human beings who share water are interdependent. "Bulbul says the well... in the women's quarter" (Gauhar 51). The well provides drinking, cleaning and survival water. Children, women, and older individuals unite and take care of one another with their own resources. This is to demonstrate that life continues to exist as people and nature are all in a system.

Animals play active roles in survival. When men work together to free a trapped friend with the help of a dog, "I went with Bulbul to the shattered... that had found Noor" (Gauhar 78-82). This scene makes clear that animals are not passive. The behavior of the dog determines what occurs. Non human life contributes meaningfully to the survival of others. Gauhar connects life across species and space when she writes, "The asylum where most... human centered judgments" (Gauhar 202). Chickens, lambs and other animals share the asylum space with humans. All the living things are nourished by trees and water. This commonplace demonstrates that life is not divided into different worlds. It exists in a web in which all species belong to the same ecosystem. The struggle of the fundamental needs demonstrates that individuals live well only when they co-operate. "Bulbul tells me... turning away" (Gauhar 124). Where there is a lack of food and water, there is fair and kind treatment of the characters, who share in order that no one is left behind. This reveals that it is not only an individual who can live in nature but a collective effort. In one of the final scenes, the story tells that despite a difficult situation, life goes on by means of collaboration. "We are sustaining ourselves... stillness of his mouth" (Gauhar 135-136) shows people and animals drawing strength from one another. They distribute little resources like tea and molasses. The mule that formerly was nothing but a laborer turns out to be essential to survival because life goes on as long as humans realize that everything is worth living, not only by its ability to work.

The birth of a baby in the midst of hardship demonstrates the deepest form of interdependence: "Anarguli has had... our dreams will live on" (Gauhar 172-173). The society unites to assist the mother, contributing whatever they can give and their emotional backup. The baby demonstrates hope, continuity and the future in a life where everyone supports one another.

This scene reveals that children like other living things perform well when they are given collective care and support.

Lastly, the manner in which life relies on one another has been most evident in the manner in which the narrator relates to the environment and the other survivors. "It is morning... have ever spoken" (Gauhar 177). Gathering snow to drink water and taking silent moments with other people teaches those human beings cannot survive without being in contact with nature and with one another on a daily basis. The silence, the similar sufferings, and the similar nurturing demonstrate that it is emotional and ecological bonds that make our well-being (Buell 15).

Conclusion

No Space for Further Burials by Feryal Ali Gauhar is not just a war and displacement novel but it is a strong assertion of biocentric ethics. In the novel, the relationship between human beings, animals and nature is expressed. The setting of the story, such as the crowded courtyard, water that is taken communally using the well and protection under the trees also demonstrate the fact that they rely on each other to survive. These relationships remain even in times of war, hunger and displacement. The novel confronts anthropocentric thinking by showing human beings in the context of a broader ecological system where morality is owed to all life. It encourages the readers to embrace respect, care and ethical concern towards all living beings which adds much to the ecological thinking and writing.

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