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Environmental Impacts of (Neo)Colonialism as Reflected in Selected Anglophone African Novels: A Postcolonial Ecocriticism

By

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Rabbirra Dhaba Dechasa, entitled "**Environmental Impacts of (Neo)Colonialism as Reflected in Selected Anglophone African Novels: A Postcolonial Ecocriticism**," is submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature, complies with the regulations of the university, and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and that it has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of materials used for the dissertation have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Rabbirra Dhaba Dechasa Signature: _____ Date: 12th June 2024

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Abstract

The study examines the environmental consequences of (neo)colonialism as represented in selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels using a postcolonial ecocritical perspective. To this end, three critically acclaimed novels, authored by different writers from Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Cameroon in the years between 2014 and recent, have been purposefully selected and investigated. The focus of the analysis has been on unveiling the multifaceted representation of environmental impacts stemming from ecological imperialism, environmental racism, and the myths of development. Emphasis has also been placed on articulating the pivotal role of postcolonial eco-activism in these texts. In doing so, postcolonial ecocriticism has been employed as a theoretical framework to analyze these novels. This theory is relevant to unveil the link between colonial legacies and environmental degradation in Anglophone African novels, addressing gaps in the literature and contributing to the fight for environmental justice by amplifying marginalized voices. This interdisciplinary approach uncovers the complex connections between power, environmental challenges, and unsustainable development, underlining the need for systemic change that prioritizes ecosystems and marginalized communities. In this realm of the postcolonial ecocritical framework, the methodology of textual analysis has been employed to explore the intricacies present in the selected novels. Employing this approach, Peter Kimani's Dance of the Jakaranda (2017) reveals the devastating effects of ecological imperialism: colonial plunder of resources (stealing limbs and lands), military violence and fire, biological warfare, deforestation, and practices of colonial conservation. These themes reflect the broader issues of environmental exploitation and social injustices that are pervasive in postcolonial societies. The consequences of this continue to be felt deeply today and have lasting impacts on the environment and the people who inhabit it. Ishmael Beah's Radiance of Tomorrow (2014) depicts environmental racism: the suffering of the indigenous community, the demise of the natural environment, and the erasure of the culture. These themes further highlight the devastating effects of (neo)colonialism and the ongoing struggles faced by postcolonial societies in preserving their environment and culture amidst various forms of oppression. The analysis of Imbolo Mbue's How Beautiful We Were (2021) reveals the environmental impacts of developmental myths: the developmentalist view of land, state vampirism, environmental

degradation, and the government's complicity with developmentalists (capitalists). The novel reveals how the exploitation of resources perpetuates environmental destruction and exacerbates social inequalities, shedding light on the complexities of postcolonial struggles. The characters in the novel fight against powerful forces that prioritize profit over people, exposing the destructive consequences of unchecked capitalism on both the environment and indigenous communities. The study argues that the three novels under scrutiny collectively reveal the role of postcolonial eco-activism in safeguarding the postcolonial environment against the onslaught of corporate greed and government indifference. The study concludes that the fight for environmental justice cannot be divorced from the fight against (neo)colonialism and capitalism. It emphasizes the urgent need for a comprehensive reimagining of economic and political systems that prioritize sustainability, the well-being of natural ecosystems, and all communities, especially those historically marginalized and subjected to (neo)colonial exploitation.

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Definition of Key Terms

Biological Warfare: involves the intentional release of disease-causing organisms or biological toxins to weaken enemy forces, disrupt populations, or achieve political or military objectives. In the context of this study, biological warfare is used by colonial powers as a war tactic to subdue indigenous populations, assert control over territories, and exploit natural resources.

Biopiracy: involves the unauthorized use of indigenous plants, animals, or other biological entities for profit, often by external entities or corporations. In the context of this study, it is discussed in relation to the plundering of natural resources and exploitation of indigenous lands and peoples by colonial powers. The concept of biopiracy is used to highlight how colonialism led to the extraction of resources from African territories without equitable benefits or recognition for the local communities.

Deforestation: involves the cutting down of trees on land. In the context of this research, it pertains to the clearance of trees and the disruption of interconnected biodiversity in African native lands due to human activities, particularly by the British East Africa Colonial Protectorate for railway construction.

Ecocide: refers to the extensive destruction or annihilation of ecosystems, often caused by human activities such as industrial pollution, deforestation, mining, nuclear disasters, or other forms of environmental harm. In this study, ecocide is used as a concept to analyze the environmental consequences of colonial and postcolonial practices in African contexts—how activities such as mining, industrial development, and resource exploitation have led to ecological devastation.

Ecological imperialism: a concept first coined by Alfred Crosby (1986), refers to the facilitation of European colonialism through the ecological damage caused by the introduction of germs, plants, and animals to the New World. This term also encompasses the exploitation and domination of the environment and its inhabitants by colonial powers (Forster & Clark, 2004).

Environment: refers to the surroundings in which living organisms exist, including the air, water, land, and the interactions between them. In the context of this study, the environment encompasses the natural landscapes, ecosystems, and resources of postcolonial African regions.

Environmental racism: involves the intentional siting of polluting industries, waste facilities, or other environmental hazards in areas predominantly inhabited by minority or disadvantaged populations, leading to health disparities and environmental injustices (Curtin, 2005).

Postcolonial eco-activism: involves advocating for the protection of the environment in postcolonial contexts, where historical legacies of colonial exploitation, environmental degradation, and social inequalities continue to impact colonized communities. In this study, postcolonial eco-activism is used as to show how literature can inspire activism, challenge power structures, and contribute to the discourse on environmental sustainability in postcolonial contexts.

(Neo)Colonialism: which is commonly written with parentheses, refers to both colonialism and neocolonialism, emphasizing the continuity and contemporary manifestations of colonial practices in postcolonial contexts. In this study, it is used to incorporate the ecological impacts of historical and contemporary colonial practices in African environments.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The present chapter is the introduction of the paper. Firstly, it discusses the background of the study, pertaining to the environmental impacts of colonialism in the course of African history. Secondly, the chapter expounds on the underlying problems of the study that are worthwhile to be investigated, and the research questions formulated for the analysis and interpretation of the selected texts. Thirdly, the chapter discusses the objectives of the study. Fourthly, the chapter presents the descriptive, analytical, and normative importance of the study in the area. Fifthly, the chapter delimits the scope of the study, which defines the purpose of the study, the sample and the theories applied to the texts. Finally, the chapter discusses the methodology and procedures of the study employed for the analysis and interpretation of the selected texts.

1.1 Background to the Study

History witnesses that Africa was not like the continent European philosophers, historians, and literary scholars illuminated in their scholarly writings. Today, evidence from archeology and anthropology proves that Africa is the fount of human evolution and civilization in a strict sense. On several occasions, it was evidently the pinnacle of civilization in its own way (Rodney, 1973). It is essential to recognize Africa's significant contributions to the development of mathematics, architecture, and agriculture. For instance, the ancient Egyptian civilization thrived along the Nile River and left behind remarkable architectural marvels like the pyramids. Additionally, the Kingdom of Axum in present-day Ethiopia was an advanced civilization that traded with various regions and even minted its own coins (Phillips, 1997).

West Africans also made significant contributions to civilization. The Mali Empire, for example, was renowned for its wealth and cultural achievements, with the city of Timbuktu becoming a center of learning and trade (Ajayi & Espie, 1990). The empire's leaders, such as Mansa Musa, were known for their patronage of the arts and their support of education. Furthermore, West Africans developed sophisticated agricultural techniques,

such as terracing and irrigation, which allowed for the cultivation of crops on a large scale and sustained thriving communities (Ajayi & Espie, 1990).

Southern Africans also made important contributions to civilization. The Great Zimbabwe civilization, for instance, was a powerful empire renowned for its impressive stone structures and advanced trade networks. The people of Great Zimbabwe were skilled in metalwork and pottery, creating intricate and beautiful artifacts. Additionally, Southern Africans had a deep understanding of agriculture and introduced innovative farming techniques, such as crop rotation and the use of fertilizers, which greatly improved crop yields and sustained their communities. These advancements in agriculture and trade made Southern Africa a prosperous and culturally rich region.

Central Africans, on the other hand, developed a unique system of governance known as the Kongo Kingdom. This kingdom was characterized by a centralized political structure and a society that valued education and the arts. The people of the Kongo Kingdom were skilled in ironworking and produced intricate sculptures and jewelry. They also had a deep knowledge of herbal medicine and used various plants for healing purposes. The Kongo Kingdom thrived economically through trade with neighboring regions, particularly in ivory, copper, and textiles. Overall, the advancements in governance, art, and trade made Central Africa a vibrant and prosperous region during this time (MacGaffey, 2005).

In general, the civilization of Africa during this time period was diverse and rich, with each kingdom and civilization contributing its own unique cultural and technological advancements. From the Kingdom of Axum in East Africa, known for its sophisticated architecture and trade networks, to the Mali Empire in West Africa, renowned for its wealth and intellectual pursuits, Africa was a continent teeming with innovation and prosperity. These civilizations flourished in harmony with their natural surroundings, harnessing the resources of the land to build thriving societies. The achievements of these African civilizations continue to inspire and captivate scholars and historians to this day.

1.1.1 Pre-Colonial African Environment

What is more important is that African civilizations was not like modern-day civilization developed by western powers. It was environmentally conscious and sustainable, with a deep respect for the Earth's resources. According to environmentalists and historians, such as Walter Rodney (1973) and Achille Mbembe (1972), the peaceful coexistence of nature and people was a defining feature of pre-colonial Africa. Mountains were not dismantled by dynamite or bulldozer for road construction or other purposes. Forests were not cleared for megaprojects in the name of investment. Nature was used in its normal and natural state.

Though many dynasties were formed at different places, agriculture was by far the most prevalent activity in these centuries prior to contact with Europeans (Beinart, 2000). People in all the established farming areas observed the particularities of their own environment and looked for ways to rationally deal with it. Some regions employed cutting-edge techniques like terracing, mixed cropping, green manuring, mixed farming, and controlled swamp agriculture.

The use of iron tools, particularly the axe and hoe, to replace wooden and stone tools was the single most important technological development underlying agricultural production. Even in cultivation activities, the majority of African communities consider the farming of their own unique staple to be a form of art (Beinart, 2000). Shifting agriculture, with light hand weeding and burning, was not as immature as European colonists thought. Agriculture was conducted based on an accurate assessment of the soil potency, which was not as great as it first appeared from the dense vegetation, and the outcome was devastating when the colonists began disturbing the thin soil surface (Rodney, 1973).

This can demonstrate that a new ecological system is not as effectively functional for the non-natives who are not adapted to the culture, even if they are more skilled, as it is for those who have become accustomed to the environment over centuries. There is a fine art embedded within the culture of cultivation that protects the environment both virtually and contextually. The culture of Africa during precolonial era was thus derived

from this harmonious, intricate relationship between nature and humanity, so that it was not harmful to the environment. Ikeke affirms this aspect of the African worldview which takes into account African cosmological reality as:

> The African understanding of the forest cannot be separated from the African cosmological view of reality. Life is seen as one integrated bond and interrelated web. There is no pure and absolute dualism in the African worldview. All life-spirits, humans, animals, plants, trees, oceans, rocks, etc. come from God. They depend on the creator God for their existence and sustenance. In the African understanding all life is infused by the active and dynamic life force of the creator (Ikeke, 2013, p. 346).

From this excerpt, it can be perceived that in African culture, the self is inextricably linked to the physical world; it exists in complete harmony and amalgamation with the natural and social environment. It is also evident that the African understanding of the nature is deeply rooted in their belief in a connected and interdependent world. This worldview rejects the notion of a strict separation between humans and nature, emphasizing instead the unity and interdependence of all beings. In this cosmological view, the forest is not just a physical entity but a sacred space where the life force of the creator is present and active. This understanding shapes the African approach to the forest, emphasizing the need for stewardship and respect for the natural world.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, for example, depicts the true harmony of humans and nature prior to the arrival of British in Igboland. His novel is assumed to be a representative work demonstrating that in most parts of pre-colonial Africa, people respected, adored, and revered nature as a deity and used to live in complete harmony with nature. It also demonstrates that the arrival of colonialists and missionaries in Africa marked a watershed moment in the continent's history, destroying the sanctity of nature that existed heretofore.

African oral literature, which is distinguished by the prevalence of characters that represent topographies, rivers, and animals and plants, helps us understand the deeper

connections that Africans once had with their natural environment. The African continent is portrayed as a place where all life coexists peacefully with its surroundings, demonstrating the abundance of natural beauty and humanity's harmony in its coexistence. Because human activity rarely disrupted the environment, this epoch distinguished humanity as a product of a synthesis of nature and culture.

1.1.2 Colonial African Environment

However, the calm state of the African ecosystem gave way to the catastrophic destruction of colonialism. Explorations led by Europeans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries exposed Africa to human and resource exploitation. European countries like Portugal, Spain, Britain, and so on were the forerunners to travel around the world and map its natural resources. This opened the way up for scholarly agents, such as philosophers, who facilitated slavery first and colonialism later.

Among them, a father of modern anthropology, Immanuel Kant, divided human races into four: *white (Caucasoid), yellow (Mongoloid), black (Negroid), and red Indians* (Eze, 1995), and prescribed Africans to be enslaved by enlightened Europeans, though he pretended to believe in the total freedom of human beings. In support of this, he designed three levels of consciousness to metaphysically explain the mind level of all races. Accordingly, he categorized the human's consciousness as conscious (aware of one's environment), self-conscious (aware of one's existence in the environment), and reasoning (aware of one's aware of existence in the environment) and stated that Africans lack the third dimension of mind (Eze, 1995).

Frederick Hegel is another European philosopher who claimed that Africa is without history. He portrayed Africa as having no historical contribution to the history of the world, which makes it a dark region of the world without any significant movement or development to show (Kuykendall, 1993). Johnston, one of the leading British empire-builders, also describes African people as a servant of other races mentally and physically as follows:

> He is possessed of great physical strength, docility, cheerfulness of disposition, a short memory for sorrows and cruelties, and an easily aroused gratitude for kindness and just dealing. He does not suffer from home-sickness to the over-bearing extent that afflicts other people's torn from their homes, and, provided he is well fed, he is easily made happy. Above all, he can toil hard under the hot sun and in the unhealthy climates of the torrid zone (Johnston, 1913, pp. 151-152).

Although he was admired as an anticolonial critic, British socialist Leonard Woolf believes that Africans are "savages," members of "non-adult races," and possessing a "psychology... [which] has only been the passive agent in the making of their life and history; the active agent has been the beliefs and desires of Europeans." (Cliffs, 1970, p. 285).

Africa and its people were actually dark for the Europeans for two reasons. Firstly, Africans had unique philosophical expressions that the elites in Europe had no idea about. Even though they coexisted in the same world and time dimension, many things about Africans remained mysterious, particularly the broad strokes of their philosophical outlook. In Africa, humanity was defined by the intricate relationships between culture and nature, two concepts that, in the body of knowledge of the European continent, were seen as being in opposition to one another. Secondly, most of the interior of Africa was completely unknown to the Europeans when they first arrived on the continent.

This lack of knowledge and understanding of the African landscape and its diverse cultures further contributed to the mystification of African philosophy. The Europeans were unable to comprehend the deep connection Africans had with their environment and how it shaped their philosophical beliefs (Carney & Rangan, 2015). Additionally, the vastness and complexity of African societies and their philosophical systems made it challenging for Europeans to grasp the intricacies and nuances of African thought. As a result, the elites in Europe were left ignorant of the rich and diverse philosophical expressions that existed in Africa.

Moreover, European missionaries paved the way for colonial masters to establish colonial administration as well as individual businesspeople to settle in Africa and exploit resources (both human and natural resources), which brings environmental calamity to the continent. Businesspersons from Europe, after observing the abundant natural resources, had a personal interest in owning strategic resources in Africa. For instance, King Leopold II of Belgium was the sole owner of the Congo, a private project undertaken on his own behalf.

At the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, the colonial nations of Europe authorized his claim by committing the Congo Free State (Ewans, 2017). Then, Leopold accumulated a huge personal fortune from the exportation of ivory, the collection of sap from rubber plants, and forced labor from the natives. He also harassed the native population through beatings, killings, and frequent mutilation (the hands of men, women, and children were amputated) when production quotas were not met. Simultaneously, the Europeans sought to take slaves from Africa who would work on their plantations in America and industries in Europe. The "triangle trade" (African Slaves, American Plantations, and European Industry Products Exportation to Africa and the Rest of the World) witnessed that Africans were sold as goods and animals on the market.

Because of their increased familiarity with the people and the land, Europeans saw Africa as a potential target for further exploitation of its natural resources and people (Parker & Rathbone, 2007). They even imagined annexing the entire continent (Boahen, 2020). They had originally intended to ship slaves to various parts of the globe so that they could assist with the hard labor in the fields and factories, but now they needed raw or semifinished materials that would be extracted from aliens' homelands using labor forces from the natives (Woolf, 2018). They had previously explored the African environments, fauna, flora, and minerals, but this time they set out on a larger mission to the continent's interior (Boahen, 2020).

As the expansion of industrialization in Europe demanded more resources (raw materials) and markets to sell their products, they turned to Africa for solutions, which they called "Terra Nullius" (unoccupied), underutilized, uncivilized, and dark, became their

primary prey (Ashcroft et al, 2013, p. 257). The new chapter in the history of empire-building in Africa has officially begun. In order to justify their covert colonial agenda, they pretended that their presence in Africa was required for the task of civilizing, enlightening, and evangelizing the primitive people and lands.

The Europeans colonized Africans and their environments in order to exploit natural resources of the land, despite the fact that they pretended to come to civilize an alien environment which was completely different from that of the Europeans. Africans owned land that was abundant in crops, fertile soil, and minerals. However, the colonizers plundered vast areas of land that belonged to natives. They restricted the use of the land to the production of cash crops. This reduced the quality and variety of soils available, causing the land to evolve and not revert to old farming methods and products. Overall, during colonialism, companies and settlers appropriated natural resources such as wildlife, forests, minerals, land, etc. They cleared densely forested landscape for settlement and carelessly set fire to the forest to prepare the ground for their colonial projects.

1.1.3 Post-Independence African Environment

In the immediate post-independence era, African political leaders embarked on their journey of leadership with an obscured vision for a weary Africa. Most of the African nations became independent of the colonizers in the 1960s, but they were left with myriad socio-political and environmental disillusionments. The named independent nations continued to operate under ideological, political, and financial dependence on the former colonizers and now capitalist western countries. Issues of nationalities, languages, and environments remained at the heart of the challenges they were facing.

Environmental degradation in the name of economic development continued in the same way that the colonial government did. Displacing and pillaging natives for foreign investors' projects or government development agendas became the same topic for the newly independent nations as well. Words like agroindustry, fuel company, mining company, urbanization, and so on were repeatedly flagged by the new politicians who took over the leadership roles of their respective nations.

1.1.4 Postcolonial Ecocriticism

In the post-independence era, artistic consciousness flourished endlessly, and physical clashes with colonizers gradually gave way to fighting through writing, artistic representation, or scholarly illumination of the consequences of the new form of colonialism, employed indirectly by the former colonizing government or the new government. Academicians around the world sought to deal with a greater agenda to counteract the multiple effects of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. To this end, the term "postcolonialism" emerged in the 1970s as a new theoretical paradigm to incorporate the impacts and legacies of slavery, colonialism, and racism. Since then, postcolonial studies have dominated the literary studies of once colonized nations.

Postcolonialism arose from poststructuralism as a powerful and well-organized ideological spur to combat the unrelenting cultural and socio-political disorders that persisted in non-European countries. It was maintained in the profound spirit of decolonizing both humans and cultures, which makes it a human-centered school of criticism (anthropocentrism). The most serious issue in this field is that colonial enterprise has affected not only colonized people, but also other species that have been marginalized by postcolonialism. Nonhumans in the colonized spaces were violently used, but they were not properly brought to the attention of postcolonial critics in the analysis of literary texts (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015; Nixon, 2011). The ecological environment, along with its human and non-human members, has become subject to the abusive treatment of colonizers. Postcolonialism suppressed such thematic aspects, despite the fact that both whites and blacks exploit and denigrate nonhuman natures.

In more recent years, literary critics have started looking beyond colonial and neocolonial impacts on humans to the impact of historical human activities on the environment and extra-human elements. This results in the idea of developing a theoretical school that combines both cultural (postcolonialism) and environmental studies (ecocriticism) in the analysis and interpretation of postcolonial literary texts. Huggan and Tiffin explain this as follows:

> Surely, any field purporting to theorise the global conditions of colonialism and imperialism (let us call it postcolonial studies) cannot but consider the complex interplay of environmental categories such as water, land, energy, habitat, migration with political or cultural categories such as state, society, conflict, literature, theatre, visual arts. Equally, any field purporting to attach interpretative importance to environment (let us call it eco/environmental studies) must be able to trace the social, historical and material co-ordinates of categories such as forests, rivers, bio-regions and species (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010, p. 3)

Because of ideological issues, fundamental differences in methodology and approach, and divisions among the practitioners of the two theories, postcolonialism and ecocriticism are both challenging to define. Each theory was created independently of the others while concentrating on particular issues. While ecocriticism focuses on the analysis of the relationship between literature and the natural environment, postcolonialism is anthropocentric and examines problematized racial and ethnic divisions (Glotfelty, 1996). The long history of environmental exploitation of the former colonies and the ecological concerns that underlie both the colonizers and the colonized are ignored by postcolonialism. On the other hand, ecocriticism is a creation of North American environmentalism and it focuses on "the materialistic civilization" that turns man into the "butcher of Earth" (Guha, 2014, p. 98).

Huggan & Tiffin (2010) state that ecocriticism fails to factor in cultural difference and ignores humanity, colonialism, and racial exploitation and discrimination. As a result, there have been growing interests in literary criticism in finding points of intersection between postcolonialism and ecocriticism (Caminero-Santangelo, 2011). Such work has been termed postcolonial ecocriticism and often emphasizes the similarities between the two fields of scholarship in terms of a sense of political commitment, interdisciplinarity, and the interrogation of capitalist development and progress.

According to Nixon, postcolonialism and ecocriticism are activists by nature, with a strong preference for social change and environmental justice. Nixon argues that postcolonialism seeks to challenge and dismantle the power structures that perpetuate

colonial and imperial domination, advocating for the rights and self-determination of marginalized communities. Similarly, ecocriticism aims to expose the environmental injustices caused by human actions and advocate for sustainable practices and the protection of ecosystems. Both these disciplines emphasize the need for activism and collective action to bring about social and environmental transformation for a more just and equitable world.

The ecological impacts of imperialism, environmental racism, and the myth of development are critical concepts invested in by postcolonial ecocriticism. Postcolonial ecocriticism recognizes that the legacy of imperialism extends beyond political and economic dominance but also includes the exploitation and degradation of the natural world. It delves into the interconnectedness between social and environmental issues, highlighting how marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by environmental racism and the myth of development. By critically examining these concepts, postcolonial ecocriticism aims at challenging dominant narratives and promote a more holistic and sustainable approach to environmental justice.

With the existence of points of intersection, this study made use of postcolonial ecocriticism to analyze the environmental repercussions of imperialism, environmental racism, and the myth of development in selected Anglophone African novels in order to challenge dominant narratives and promote a more holistic and sustainable approach to environmental justice in the contemporary world.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In light of the escalating environmental crisis and the persistent reverberations of colonialism on African ecosystems, this research endeavors to explore the imperative intersection of postcolonial Anglophone African literature and environmental discourse through a postcolonial ecocritical lens. The urgency of this study stems from the critical need to unravel the silenced narratives of environmental exploitation, ecological imperialism, and developmental injustices embedded within the literary representations of selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels. An equally crucial aspect is the insufficiency of research integrating postcolonialism and environmentalism, underscoring

the necessity for this investigation. Furthermore, this study seeks to capitalize on the opportunity to utilize postcolonial ecocriticism as a pertinent environmental theoretical framework in the analysis of postcolonial African literary texts.

Firstly, the current global cultural and environmental crises, as well as the ongoing environmental impacts of colonialism on African environment in particular, highlight the need to examine postcolonial texts through the lens of postcolonial ecocriticism. As has been discussed, in precolonial Africa, Africans lived in an unaltered environment. During colonialism, their harmonious relationship with nature was destroyed because of the colonizers' environmental exploitation tendency and ignorance of the deep meanings that nature and the environment held for the African people (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). During the colonial era, colonizers alienated Africans from nature and sowed the seeds of an ongoing conflict between people and nature. The peaceful relationship was then turned into a battleground, and the conflict has continued even in the post-independence era.

Africa is currently entangled in serious environmental uncertainties, including overfishing, industrial agriculture, deforestation, water pollution, coal mining, nuclear waste, and many others as a result of the new form of colonialism—neocolonialism. This new form of colonialism operates in different strategies… As reported by Globe Afrique, over 180 million people in sub-Saharan Africa alone could die because of climate change by the end of the century. Unpredictable rainfall patterns, lower crop yields, increasing food prices and declining natural resources are already causing increased human migration, tension and conflict. Most parts of Africa are already suffering from increasing land-grabbing tendencies for the expansion of large-scale plantations, industrial logging, agribusiness, oil, mining and infrastructure operations (Globe Afrique, 2016, November 16).

Secondly, several studies have been undertaken that regard colonial occupation solely as an act of political violence or resource exploitation used to subdue the colonized nations. Nonetheless, there was a pressing need to investigate the relationship between colonialization and environmental devastation because the historical systematic annihilation of the subjugated regions is what caused the current environmental problems.

The complicated relationship between colonialism and the environment is subject to critical analysis through postcolonial ecocriticism. It has a connection to the colonizers' physical occupation of the colonized territory and the resulting detrimental impacts on it. The current study sheds light on the damaged ecosystems of the postcolonial region, which is one of the most significant aftereffects of the colonialism era. To colonize nature and land, colonialists utilized economic and technological superiority disguised as the white man's burden. Under this guise, the colonizers' objective for economic development was in fact the economic and ecological plunder of the colonized areas.

Finally, there is a need to apply a postcolonial ecocriticism which has given the entire field of critical thought new life, providing fresh perspectives on concepts like race, land, and the environment, among others on postcolonial African literary texts. As African nations have extensive experience with colonialism, neocolonialism, and the current ecological crisis. Nixon asserts that postcolonial ecocriticism should be the alternative technique of analyzing colonial and postcolonial literatures (2011). African fictional works lend themselves to postcolonial ecocriticism because most African writers are keen on artistically exploring issues related to protest against environmental injustice, racism, corruption, maladjustment, and all other political malice related to imperialism and colonialism, western colonial and postcolonial practices, and western economic exploitation and subjugation.

The necessity for this research is also underscored by the profound significance of amplifying postcolonial marginalized voices and empowering environmental activism within the literary realm. By delving into the agency of postcolonial eco-activists depicted in these narratives, the study challenges dominant narratives, fosters a deeper understanding of environmental justice, and offers a fresh perspective on the enduring impacts of colonialism on African landscapes. This approach not only fills existing gaps in literary scholarship but also paves the way for a more inclusive and sustainable discourse on the complex relationships between literature, environmental issues, and postcolonial contexts.

The methodology employed in this research, which integrates postcolonial ecocriticism with a focus on selected African novels, is essential for navigating unexplored territories of literary analysis. By conducting the study in this manner, the research not only honors the historical and contemporary struggles of colonized communities but also contributes original insights to the scholarly discourse. Through this innovative approach, the study seeks to inspire a reevaluation of power dynamics, challenge conventional interpretations, and advocate for a more environmentally conscious future within African literary landscapes.

The environmental repercussions of imperialism, racism, and developmental inequities are depicted in postcolonial Anglophone African novels; however, scholarly exploration in this realm has been limited. Therefore, by employing a postcolonial ecocritical perspective, this study endeavors to address the aforementioned research gaps by conducting a meticulous analysis of the environmental consequences of African colonialism in specific postcolonial Anglophone African literary works.

1.3 Research Questions

The study aims at answering the following basic research questions:

- ✓ What are the effects of ecological imperialism as represented in Peter Kimani's *Dance of the Jakaranda*?
- ✓ What are the repercussions of environmental racism as depicted in Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*?
- ✓ In what ways does Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were* critique and deconstruct the myth of development?
- ✓ How do these Anglophone African novels collectively foreground postcolonial eco-activism?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The overarching objective of this study is to investigate the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism in postcolonial African environments as represented in selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels using a postcolonial ecocritical framework.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

Specifically, this study is designed:

- ✓ to investigate the disastrous ecological impacts of imperialism as reflected in Peter Kimani's *Dance of the Jakaranda*;
- ✓ to examine the impacts of environmental racism as depicted in Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*;
- ✓ to critically explore the environmental calamity of the myth of development in Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*; and
- ✓ to investigate postcolonial eco-activism as represented in the selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study significantly contributes to contemporary scholarship by offering a fresh and insightful perspective on the intricate relationships between postcolonial African literature, environmental issues, and the enduring impacts of colonialism. Through its descriptive, analytical, and normative components, the research not only sheds light on the ecological impacts of colonialism in postcolonial African environments but also challenges existing narratives and perceptions surrounding environmental justice in the context of neo-colonialism. By providing a nuanced analysis of how contemporary African novels depict environmental challenges and the covert strategies of neo-colonialism disguised as globalization, the study offers a unique lens through which to understand the evolving dynamics of colonialism and its implications on nature and society in Africa.

Moreover, the research delves into the granular details of interpretive literary techniques employed in the selected novels, offering a novel typology that enriches our understanding of the ecological impacts of colonialism in postcolonial African narratives. By uncovering how colonial powers have historically mistreated nature and marginalized communities, the study highlights the root causes of today's global environmental challenges, emphasizing the urgent need to address historical injustices and promote sustainable environmental practices. This critical examination of the separation between Africans and their ecology during the colonial era underscores the lasting repercussions of colonialism on human-environment relationships, providing valuable insights for addressing contemporary environmental crises.

Furthermore, the normative contribution of the study lies in its potential to catalyze positive change and inform environmental policy decisions in the face of current global environmental crises. By raising awareness about the political and environmental dynamics identified in the novels and conceptualizing these concerns, the research paves the way for better environmental treatment and protection, particularly in regions where the legacies of colonialism continue to impact ecosystems and communities. By emphasizing the interdependence of culture and environment, the study advocates for measures that prioritize environmental sustainability and social justice, offering a timely and relevant perspective for addressing the pressing environmental challenges of this generation.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study encompasses a critical examination, analysis, and interpretation of postcolonial Anglophone African novels to elucidate the representation of environmental impacts stemming from (neo)colonialism. Focused on three specific novels—*Dance of the Jakaranda* by Peter Kimani, *Radiance of Tomorrow* by Ishmael Beah, and *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue—the research delves into the environmental themes within these literary works to uncover the ecological consequences of colonialism, imperialism, and racism. The study aims to extract excerpts from the selected novels that reveal various dimensions of environmental impacts, providing a

nuanced understanding of how these texts address environmental exploitation, ecological imperialism, and developmental injustices within the postcolonial African context.

By concentrating on the selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels published after 2014, the study narrows its focus to explore the rich thematic content related to environmental issues within these contemporary literary works. The research involves a detailed analysis of the ecological impacts on both human and non-human entities, shedding light on the irreversible negative consequences of (neo)colonialism and the exploitation of natural resources. Through a postcolonial ecocritical framework, the study seeks to unravel the complex interplay between colonial histories, environmental degradation, and socio-political structures depicted in the novels, offering insights into the enduring legacies of (neo)colonialism on the African environment.

Furthermore, the scope of the study extends to examining the covert strategies of neo-colonialism disguised as globalization and their implications on postcolonial African environments. By analyzing how these novels portray the evolving forms of colonialism and their impact on nature and society, the research aims to contribute to existing scholarship by providing a fresh perspective on the environmental challenges faced by postcolonial nations. The study's scope also encompasses a normative dimension, aiming to raise awareness about the interdependence of culture and environment and advocate for better environmental treatment and protection in the face of global environmental crises.

1.7 Limitations

The study acknowledges several limitations in its scope and approach. Firstly, the study is limited to the analysis of three postcolonial Anglophone African novels, which, while carefully selected, do not represent the entirety of postcolonial African literature. The choice of these specific texts, while justified based on their thematic relevance, may not capture the full spectrum of environmental impacts and ecocritical perspectives present in the broader corpus of postcolonial African literature.

Secondly, the study's focus on Anglophone African novels inherently excludes perspectives and narratives that may be present in Francophone, Lusophone, or other non-

English postcolonial African literary traditions. This linguistic and cultural limitation may overlook important nuances and alternative interpretations of the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism.

Additionally, the study's reliance on textual analysis, while providing in-depth insights, may not fully capture the lived experiences and embodied knowledge of communities directly affected by the environmental consequences of colonial and neocolonial practices. Incorporating ethnographic or community-based approaches could have further enriched the understanding of the issues at hand.

Furthermore, the study's focus on the literary representation of environmental impacts may not account for the complex and often non-linear causal relationships between colonial/neocolonial policies and environmental degradation. Integrating historical, economic, and political analyses could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted dynamics at play.

Finally, the study's situatedness within the postcolonial ecocritical framework, while purposeful, may have limited the exploration of alternative theoretical approaches that could have shed light on the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism from different disciplinary perspectives, such as political ecology, environmental justice, or decolonial studies.

Despite these limitations, the dissertation's in-depth analysis of the selected novels and its theoretical contributions to the field of postcolonial ecocriticism remain valuable and could serve as a foundation for future research that addresses these limitations and expands the scope of understanding in this critical area of inquiry.

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to investigate the intersection of postcolonial Anglophone African literature and environmental discourse through a

postcolonial ecocritical lens. Qualitative methods were chosen for their ability to explore complex themes and nuances within literary texts.

1.8.2 Data Collection

The data collection process encompassed both primary and secondary sources. Primary data comprised three postcolonial Anglophone African novels: *Dance of the Jakaranda* by Peter Kimani, *Radiance of Tomorrow* by Ishmael Beah, and *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue. Close reading and textual analysis were employed to extract pertinent passages and themes from these literary works. Additionally, secondary sources including scholarly articles, critical essays, and theoretical works on postcolonial ecocriticism were consulted to establish a theoretical framework and contextual background for the analysis, enriching the understanding of the environmental themes within the selected novels.

1.8.3 Bases for Text Selection

The novels were selected using a purposive sampling technique, which involved a deliberate and selective approach to choosing texts based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. In this case, the selection criteria emphasized the richness of environmental themes portrayed in the literary works and their alignment with the research focus on postcolonial ecocriticism. The selection process involved careful consideration of the depth and complexity of the environmental discourse within each novel to ensure that it provided substantial material for analysis and interpretation. The selection criteria also considered the publication date of the novels. Only texts published within the last ten years were included in order to ensure that the environmental themes explored were relevant to contemporary issues and debates. Additionally, the selection process took into account the diversity of voices and perspectives represented in the chosen novels, aiming to capture a broad range of environmental experiences and narratives.

Dance of the Jakaranda by Peter Kimani, *Radiance of Tomorrow* by Ishmael Beah, and *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue were chosen for their significant exploration of environmental issues, including ecological imperialism, environmental racism, and the

impacts of colonialism on natural ecosystems and colonized communities. These novels were deemed particularly relevant to the research objectives due to their nuanced portrayals of the interconnectedness between environmental degradation and colonial legacies in the African context. By selecting these specific texts, the study aimed at uncovering the multifaceted dimensions of environmental themes within postcolonial African literature and analyzing how these narratives reflect broader socio-environmental concerns.

1.8.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedures in this study followed a structured and methodical approach to examining the selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels through the lens of postcolonial ecocriticism. The analysis and overall work were conducted through a series of systematic steps. Initially, the novels underwent close reading and interpretation to identify key environmental themes, character interactions with the environment, and narrative representations of ecological issues. This process of close reading allowed for a nuanced exploration of the textual intricacies and the ways in which environmental concerns were portrayed within the literary works. Subsequently, thematic analysis was employed to categorize and analyze recurring themes related to environmental exploitation, ecological imperialism, and developmental injustices depicted in the novels. By discerning and examining these thematic elements, the study aimed to reveal the underlying messages and critiques concerning environmental issues within the postcolonial African context.

Furthermore, the data collected from the close reading and thematic analysis stages were subjected to a postcolonial ecocritical analysis. This analytical framework provided a deeper understanding of the power dynamics, political implications, and environmental ideologies embedded in the selected novels. By applying a postcolonial ecocritical perspective, the researcher delved into the complex interplay between colonial histories, environmental degradation, and socio-political structures portrayed in the literary texts. Through this analytical lens, the study sought to illuminate the intricate connections between literature, environmental discourse, and postcolonial critiques, aiming at uncovering the environmental narratives presented in the postcolonial Anglophone African texts. Overall, the data analysis procedures employed in this research facilitated a

comprehensive exploration of the environmental themes within the novels, offering insights into the multifaceted relationships between literature, environmental issues, and postcolonial contexts.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study is structured to comprehensively investigate the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism in postcolonial African environments as portrayed in selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels through a postcolonial ecocritical lens. Beginning with an introduction that sets the context and outlines the research objectives, the study delves into a literature review to contextualize existing research and then establishes a theoretical framework based on postcolonial ecocriticism. The analysis chapters dissect the environmental impacts of ecological imperialism, environmental racism, and dominant development narratives within the selected novels, emphasizing the role of postcolonial eco-activism in addressing these issues. The study concludes by synthesizing the findings, highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental justice, colonialism, and capitalism, and providing recommendations for future research directions.

CHAPTER TWO
A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The present chapter is devoted to a review of related research and literature conducted by scholars in the fields of postcolonial ecocriticism. It serves as a critical exploration of existing scholarship that delves into the intersection of environmental concerns and postcolonial discourses, particularly within the context of African literature. By synthesizing previous studies on environmental racism, development, and ecological imperialism using postcolonial ecocriticism as a theoretical framework, the chapter sets the stage for a deeper analysis of the ecological impacts of colonialism in African literary texts. Furthermore, the review extends to encompass related research on specific novels, including *Dance of the Jakaranda, Radiance of Tomorrow, and How Beautiful We Were,* aiming at contextualizing the current study within the broader scholarly landscape. Through this review, the chapter not only identifies key research gaps but also lays the groundwork for a comprehensive examination of environmental reverberations of colonialism through a postcolonial ecocritical lens. Finally, it maps the research ahead, as the current study seeks to fill a gap in scholarship by examining environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism in a postcolonial ecocritical reading of three texts.

2.1 Review of Related Researches to Postcolonial Ecocriticism

The research explores the environmental consequences of racism, developmental injustices, and ecological imperialism by employing postcolonial ecocriticism as a theoretical lens. Notably, there is a lack of prior research utilizing postcolonial ecocriticism to analyze the three selected texts in this study. Furthermore, there is a dearth of evidence regarding any research conducted on these texts using alternative theoretical frameworks. Nevertheless, there is an acknowledgment of the potential value in reviewing related research endeavors, encompassing diverse approaches conducted at both local and international levels, to enrich the understanding of the subject matter.

Currently, only Dagnachew Adefris' study in the Addis Ababa University Library catalogs applies postcolonial ecocriticism as a theory of interpretation to Anglophone

African novels. In his research, Dagnachew applied postcolonial ecocriticism as a theoretical framework to explore ecological violence and resistance in literary works such as Helon Habila's *Oil on Water,* Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness,* Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (Dagnachew, 2020). His analysis delved into various forms of ecological violence, the strategies of resistance employed by the authors, and the interactions between humans and nonhumans.

In contrast to Dagnachew's focus, the present study examines the ecological impacts of imperialism, racism, and development in Anglophone African novels. Diverging from Dagnachew's research, this study investigates the environmental ramifications of ecological imperialism, developmental myths, and racism using distinct facets of postcolonial ecocriticism that were not previously explored. While Dagnachew's work emphasizes showcasing the ecological violence present in Africa's postcolonial environment and the efforts of African communities to safeguard their natural surroundings, the current research shifts its attention towards exploring the effects of ecological imperialism, environmental racism, and development to illuminate the environmental consequences of colonialism.

While both studies engage with postcolonial ecocriticism to analyze African literature, they offer distinct perspectives on the environmental challenges faced by African societies in the wake of colonialism. By expanding the scope of inquiry to include discussions on ecological imperialism, environmental racism, and development, the current research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the environmental impacts of colonialism and the ongoing struggles for environmental sustainability in postcolonial African narratives.

Ashenafi Belay is another researcher whose research work is found in the library of Addis Ababa University. Ashenafi conducted research on selected African novels employing ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and postcolonial ecocriticism as a theory of interpretation (Ashenafi, 2015). His study examines representations of human-nature relations in eight (8) novels set in Africa, exploring how nature is conceptualized and the ways human beings place themselves in relation to nature. The novels that were selected

for analysis are *King Solomon's Mine*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Things Fall Apart*, *Petals of Blood*, *The Poisonwood Bible*, *Heart of Redness*, *Get a Life*, and *Wizard of the Craw*. In his study, he compared the works of African and Western writers as well.

Despite the fact that Dagnachew and Ashenafi chose two similar novels, *Wizard of the Craw* and *Heart of Redness*, their studies are distinct in terms of thematic issues and theoretical frameworks. While Dagnachew employs postcolonial ecocriticism to investigate ecological violence and resistance in postcolonial African novels, Ashenafi employs ecocriticism and ecofeminism in addition to postcolonial ecocriticism.

Ashenafi's research not only sheds light on the intricate relationships between humans and nature in African literature but also provides a comparative analysis that juxtaposes the perspectives of African and Western writers. By employing ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and postcolonial ecocriticism as interpretive tools, Ashenafi's study offers a multifaceted exploration of how nature is portrayed and understood in the literary works under scrutiny.

In contrast to Dagnachew's emphasis on ecological violence and resistance in postcolonial African novels, Ashenafi's research extends the discourse by incorporating ecofeminist perspectives, thereby enriching the analysis of human-nature interactions in the selected literary texts. This expansion of theoretical frameworks not only broadens the scope of inquiry but also deepens the understanding of the complex interplay between environmental issues, gender dynamics, and postcolonial contexts in African literature.

Moreover, Ashenafi's research represents a valuable contribution to the field of ecocriticism and postcolonial studies, offering a nuanced exploration of environmental themes and human-nature relationships in African narratives. By integrating diverse theoretical perspectives and conducting comparative analyses across different cultural contexts, Ashenafi's work enriches our understanding of the intricate connections between literature, ecology, and socio-political realities in the African literary landscape.

Apart from the research conducted at Addis Ababa University, there are other scholarly works that have applied postcolonial ecocriticism to analyze African novels in

English. Cajetan N. Iheka conducted study titled "African Literature and the Environment: A Study in Post-colonial Ecocriticism" (Iheka, 2015). His research delves into the ecological challenges in the Niger Delta region, focusing on the works of authors such as Gabriel Okara, Isidore Okpewho, and Tanure Ojaide from West Africa. By examining the interactions between humans and nonhumans within the context of conflict, Iheka also explores the environmental repercussions of the Somalian wars as depicted in the novels of Nuruddin Farah.

Moreover, Iheka's analysis extends to works such as Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*, Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather*, and J.M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*, revealing the complexities of balancing agricultural development and environmental sustainability in South African settings. Despite encompassing literary texts from diverse African regions, Iheka's study does not adopt a comparative approach to document, critique, or present alternative viewpoints on environmental crises.

Cajetan N. Iheka's research stands out from the studies conducted by Dagnachew and Ashenafi in several ways. Firstly, Iheka's research focuses on the long-term effects of colonialism on natural ecologies in novels that have not been previously explored for this purpose. In contrast, Dagnachew's study delves into ecological violence, resistance strategies, and human-nonhuman interactions in postcolonial African novels, while Ashenafi's research examines representations of human-nature relations in selected African novels using ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and post-colonial ecocriticism as interpretive theories.

The current study and Cajetan N. Iheka's research differ in their literary selection, with Iheka's analysis focusing on works by authors such as Gabriel Okara, Isidore Okpewho, Tanure Ojaide, Nuruddin Farah, Doris Lessing, Bessie Head, and J.M. Coetzee, while the current study centers on postcolonial texts by Peter Kimani, Ishmael Beah, and Imbolo Mbue. This difference in literary selection highlights distinct narratives and themes explored in the two studies. Additionally, Iheka's research includes an analysis of environmental crises in specific African regions and conflicts, such as the Niger Delta and Somalia, while the current study focuses on broader themes of imperialism, racism, and

development in Anglophone African novels. This difference in thematic emphasis suggests varying approaches to contextualizing and examining environmental issues within the respective studies.

As identified through the review on the internet, there are also researchers who have attempted to use the ecocritical approach or the combined form of the postcolonial and ecocritical approaches for the interpretation of Anglophone African novels. Research studies that established postcolonial ecocriticism as a theory of interpretation for West African novels in English are substantial. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are the most studied novels for their portrayal of the entanglements of human and nonhuman elements.

Gitanjali Gogoi, for instance, analyzed Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* with the title, "An Ecocritical Approach to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God*" (Gogoi, 2014). In both novels, he uses ecocriticism as a new impetus for critical thought, and he deals with issues such as race, land, environment, wilderness, and so on. He concludes that Achebe shows how the different objects of the environment, such as rivers, hills, trees, and stones, were the storehouses of stories and legends.

Similarly, Stella Okoye-Ugwu analyzes *Things Fall Apart* with the title, "Going Green: An Ecocritical Reading of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart"* (Okoye-Ugwu, 2016). What makes Okoye-Ugwu's study different from that of Gogoi's work is that she applied the pure form of ecocriticism, avoiding the use of postcolonial ecocriticism, ecofeminism, or psychoanalytical ecocriticism. Her analysis shows that Achebe portrays the gradual destruction of a stable agricultural community by the advent of the white missionaries and the decline and break-up of a strong rural tradition that had conserved so much of its cultural tradition and environment. Unlike Okoye-Ugwu, Ifechelobi Jane Nkechi and Asika Ikechukwu Emmanuel are the other researchers who applied an eco-feminist inquiry into Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* with the aim of showcasing the role of women and their interconnection with nature (Nkechi & Emmanuel, 2017). They conclude

that the female characters in *Things Fall Apart* are endowed with strong, submissive, and duty-conscious qualities in the various roles they found themselves in.

Susie O'Brien also analyzed Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* with the title "Superfluous Words: Ecological and Cultural Resilience in *Things Fall Apart"* (O'Brien, 2007). The objective of the study was to analyze the power of language used to depict the ecology and culture of the society in the novels. Things Fall Apart is a very powerful literary text in this regard, representing both the literary ethos and the physical environment.

As has already been stated, the present study uses postcolonial texts. In accordance with this, *Dance of the Jakarand* by Peter Kimani from East Africa, *Radiance of Tomorrow* by Ishmael Beah from West Africa, and *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue from West Africa are selected for this study. There have been no studies that applied postcolonial ecocriticism for the analysis of these texts.

In comparing the current study with related research works by Dagnachew, Ashenafi, and other scholars, several gaps in the literature become apparent. Dagnachew's research focuses on the ecological violence manifested in Africa's postcolonial environment and the resistances taken by African colonies to protect and preserve their natural surroundings. This aligns with the broader theme of environmental concerns in postcolonial contexts. However, the current study diverges by specifically examining the environmental impacts of ecological imperialism, developmental injustices, and environmental racism in postcolonial Anglophone African novels. This shift in focus allows for a more nuanced exploration of the environmental repercussions of colonialism in the selected literary works.

Similarly, Ashenafi's research also employs ecocriticism as a theory of interpretation, exploring representations of human-nature relations in African novels. While there are similarities in the theoretical framework used, such as the intersection of literature and environmental concerns, the current study differs in its exclusive focus on postcolonial Anglophone African literature. Additionally, Ashenafi's emphasis on

ecocriticism and ecofeminism diverges from the postcolonial ecocritical lens utilized in the present study, which specifically delves into the environmental impacts of colonialism in the selected novels.

Moreover, other research works have applied postcolonial ecocriticism to study African novels in English, indicating a growing interest in the intersection of postcolonialism and ecocriticism. However, the current study fills a gap by honing in on the colonial impacts of occupation in a postcolonial ecocritical reading of texts. This focused analysis aims at uncovering the environmental injustices and imbalances resulting from (neo)colonialism in the selected Anglophone African novels, offering a unique contribution to the field of postcolonial ecocriticism.

By juxtaposing the current study with existing research by Dagnachew, Ashenafi, and other scholars, it becomes evident that while prior studies have touched on related themes of ecology and postcolonial literature, there remains a gap in the analysis of the specific environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism in postcolonial Anglophone African contexts. The current research aims at addressing this gap by providing a detailed examination of how colonialism has shaped the environment and impacted communities in the selected literary works, thereby enriching the discourse on postcolonial ecocriticism in African literature.

2.2 Review of Related Studies to the Selected Novels

Many postcolonial writers have devoted particular attention to nature. There are various works by African authors that discuss the relationship between landscape and European colonialism. Imbolo Mbue, Ishmael Beah, and Peter Kimani are among the authors who regard and value indigenous ecologies. This empathy shines through in their works, *How Beautiful We Were*, *Radiance of Tomorrow*, and *Dance of the Jakaranda*, respectively. They all condemn colonizers' damaging, unsafe environmental practices and their damaging effects on both land and people. Previously, a few studies on these literary texts were undertaken to investigate various aspects. A review of these will assist in determining what is missing in this research on postcolonial ecocriticism.

To begin with, *Dance of the Jakaranda* by Peter Kimani, an award-winning Kenyan novelist, was published in 2018. Though the work is well-liked and has captured the interest of many readers worldwide, there has been relatively little research on it in the five years since its publication. However, it is furnished by the number of reviews, including media outlets such as *The New York Times* and *The Guardians*.

It is a novel that is set in the historical era of the former British East Africa Protectorate, which later became the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya before becoming the independent Republic of Kenya. Tomi Adeaga (2017) describes, in his review, Peter Kimani as having succeeded in creating a novel that expands on earlier accounts of the interaction between Africans and their European colonizers, including those written by well-known African writers such as Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Ayi Kwei Armah in *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973), and *The Healers* (2000), in addition to Kenyan writers including Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Weep Not, Child* (1977).

Tomi Adeaga (2021) analyzed, in his article, Kimani's *Dance of the Jakaranda* along with Tayeb Salih's *Season of the Migration to the North* for their depiction of "colonialism and sexuality" under the title *Colonialism and Sexuality in Tayeb Salih's Season of the Migration to the North and Peter Kimani's Dance of the Jakaranda.* He demonstrates the conflicting roles performed by the protagonists in the two novels by Mustafa Sa'eed in *Season of the Migration to the North* and Sally McDonald in *Dance of the Jakaranda*, each of which features two significant facets of colonial discourse.

Sa'eed exemplifies the stereotype of the hyper-sexualized black guy, but Sally's character challenges the idea of the upright white lady who may need to be protected from colonized men. Sally's sexual relationships with black men shake up the stereotype of the black rapist, a frequent theme in colonial stories, but they don't alter the racial inequality that puts colonized men in subordinate roles or defend Babu the Indian, who is blamed for crimes committed by white men. Sally fails completely in her attempts to undo the harm done to Africans by colonialism. Even with the greatest of intentions, Sally's departure to Britain demonstrates that sexual conquest is ineffective for attaining African emancipation in a colonial setting.

Though it makes use of a similar text, *Dance of the Jakaranda*, this study differs from Tomi Adeaga's article in that it investigates the ecological consequences of colonial techniques such as racism, development, and imperialism, whereas Adeaga's essay studies colonialism and sexuality through the lens of postcolonial theoretical conceptions. He concludes that Kimani's indictment of British colonialism plays on the idea of the colonized male lacking sexual control by making Sally McDonald the personification of sexual liberty; nonetheless, he ignores the novel's major ecological topic, which requires further analysis.

Radiance of Tomorrow by Ishmael Beah, former child soldier and now a UNICEF Ambassador and Advocate for Children Affected by War, was published in 2014. Beah's work has been praised for its significance in contemporary African-English literary works. The distinctiveness and audacity of Beah's writing style are valued by Aparna Sanyal (2014). He claims that what sets Beah's novel apart from others is the author's unwavering refusal to condone “voyeurism” while maintaining his calm, collected demeanor in the face of the reactions of well-intentioned Western commenters to the tragedies suffered by individuals residing in the developing world. William Boyd wonders about how "disturbing" African conflicts are in their "unintended and unexpected" and "guileless" nature in his *New York Times* book review of Ishmael Beah's famous 2007 memoir, A Long Way Gone, about growing up as a member of the military as a child soldier in the Sierra Leone civil war.

Beah’s *Radiance of Tomorrow* was examined by Amanda Ruth Waugh Lagji (2017) for its depiction of "strategic waiting and reconciliation" along with the novel *The Cry of Annie Mandela* in chapter four of the dissertation. With the aim of reviving waiting as a modality that can be alternately crippling, strategic, calculating, and meditative, Amanda Ruth Waugh Lagji's dissertation explores the temporalities of waiting in global Anglophone fiction. The dissertation is supposed to refute the widely held belief that the twentieth century was a period of only acceleration and movement by making the case for the relevance of waiting to the experience of postcoloniality.

In her analysis of *Radiance of Tomorrow*, the author makes a connection between waiting and healing and peace after civil war. She ends by reflecting on the importance of waiting in the post-9/11 world, such as in the rhetoric of preventative military strikes that frames national security as a matter of refusing to wait.

Imbolo Mbue's work is viewed as the pinnacle of resistance to environmental degradation brought on by oil companies, which is supported by media, education, revolution, and age, among other things, according to Biama et al. (2022) in their article "A voice of resistance: A critique of Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*." Their study is influenced by the second wave of eco-criticism proposed by Lawrence Buell in 2005, which calls for environmental justice for those who suffer from environmental degradation. They see Mbue's writing as an appeal to African countries to fiercely oppose environmental deterioration.

Even though the critical and creative parts of African English literature have also been influenced by postcolonial and ecocritical viewpoints, contemporary postcolonial Anglophone African fiction has grown in complexity and thematic richness. One should think about the covert Western development goals associated with environmental concerns rather than concentrating exclusively on postcolonial and environmental practices in the contemporary setting. In line with these concepts, the story can also be understood in terms of sustainable development concepts. An essential aspect of the growing forms of narrative is how colonial rulers portrayed their subject races in order to maintain their economic and social dominance over them. The current thesis examines *How Beautiful We Were* from a postcolonial development politics standpoint.

Finally, as has been discussed, there are no abundant studies or articles conducted on the selected novels: *Dance of the Jakaranda* by Peter Kimani, *Radiance of Tomorrow* by Ishmael Beah, and *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue. Therefore, it is challenging to directly compare this study with previous research on these particular novels. However, the current study on postcolonial ecocriticism in African literature stands out as distinct in its focused examination of the environmental impacts of colonialism in postcolonial African environments, as reflected in selected postcolonial Anglophone

African novels. By honing in on themes of imperialism, environmental racism, and developmental myths within the context of postcolonial ecocriticism, the research offers a unique perspective on how these selected texts address and critique the environmental consequences of colonial legacies.

2.3 Review of Related Concepts

2.3.1 Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Environmental Impacts of (Neo)Colonialism

A significant body of scholarly work has explored the profound environmental consequences of colonial and neocolonial practices in the Global South, particularly in the African continent. Postcolonial ecocritical scholars have drawn attention to the phenomenon of ecological imperialism, whereby colonial powers have exploited the natural resources and ecosystems of colonized regions to fuel their economic development and accumulation of wealth (Crosby, 1986; Merchant, 2003).

Researchers have analyzed how colonial land acquisition, resource extraction, and the imposition of monoculture agriculture have led to widespread deforestation, soil degradation, and the displacement of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands (Guha, 1989; Shiva, 1993). Novels such as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977) have been studied for their depictions of the environmental devastation caused by colonial land policies and the disruption of traditional ecological practices (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010; Nayar, 2010).

The environmental impacts of colonialism have also persisted in the postcolonial era, as many former colonies have continued to be subjected to neocolonial economic and political domination. Scholars have examined how the legacies of colonial resource extraction and environmental degradation have been perpetuated through exploitative multinational corporations, structural adjustment policies, and the imposition of the development model (Escobar, 1995; Shiva, 1989). Novels such as Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) and Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Soza boy* (1985) have been

analyzed for their critiques of neocolonial environmental destruction and the complicity of local elites in these processes (Nixon, 2011; Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

Furthermore, postcolonial ecocritical scholars have highlighted how the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism have disproportionately affected marginalized communities, particularly indigenous populations and the rural poor, resulting in a form of environmental racism (Adamson, 2001; Huggan & Tiffin, 2010). Novels such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Matigari* (1986) and Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike* (1981) have been examined for their portrayal of grassroots environmental activism and resistance against colonial and neocolonial environmental exploitation (Nayar, 2010; Caminero-Santangelo, 2014).

In general, the existing literature demonstrates the important role of postcolonial ecocriticism in unveiling the complex interrelationships between colonial and neocolonial practices, environmental degradation, and the experiences of marginalized communities in the Global South. This study aims at building upon and extending this scholarly discourse by analyzing the representations of these issues in selected Anglophone African novels.

2.3.2 Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Environmental Justice

Postcolonial ecocritical scholars have highlighted the need to foreground issues of environmental justice and the disproportionate burden of environmental degradation borne by marginalized communities in the Global South. Researchers have examined how colonial and neocolonial policies have often sacrificed the ecological wellbeing of local populations in favor of economic extraction and resource exploitation (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997; Shiva, 1989).

Novels such as Wole Soyinka's *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (1968) and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) have been analyzed for their depictions of the ways in which environmental destruction and resource depletion adversely impact the lives and livelihoods of marginalized communities, particularly indigenous peoples and the rural poor (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010; Nixon, 2011). These literary works reveal how

colonial and neocolonial development models have perpetuated environmental racism and the uneven distribution of environmental harms.

Postcolonial ecocritical analyses have also drawn attention to the role of grassroots eco-activism and indigenous environmental movements in challenging the ecological impacts of (neo)colonialism. Scholars have explored how Anglophone African writers, such as Ken Saro-Wiwa in his novel *Soza boy* (1985) and Arundhati Roy in her work *The God of Small Things* (1997), have used their literary platforms to amplify the voices and struggles of local communities resisting environmental exploitation and advocating for environmental justice (Nixon, 2011; Caminero-Santangelo, 2014).

The existing literature emphasizes the important contribution of postcolonial ecocriticism in unveiling the complex intersections between colonial and neocolonial legacies, environmental degradation, and issues of environmental justice and activism. This study maintains on this scholarly discourse by analyzing how selected Anglophone African novels engage with and represent these critical issues.

2.3.3 Representations of Environmental Degradation in Anglophone African Literature

Postcolonial Anglophone African literature has emerged as a rich site for exploring the environmental impacts of (neo)colonial practices. Literary scholars have examined how Anglophone African writers have used various literary techniques and narrative strategies to foreground the issue of environmental degradation and its consequences for indigenous communities.

Researchers have studied the ways in which writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Wole Soyinka have used their fiction to portray the deforestation, soil erosion, and disruption of traditional ecological systems resulting from colonial land policies, resource extraction, and the imposition of monoculture agriculture (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010; Nayar, 2010). These representations have been examined for their ability to raise awareness about the environmental impacts of colonial domination and to challenge the dominant narratives of development and progress.

Moreover, researchers have examined how Anglophone African writers have employed their literary works to reveal the disproportionate burden of environmental degradation borne by marginalized communities, particularly indigenous populations (Nixon, 2011; Caminero-Santangelo, 2014). By stressing the destructive exploitation of natural resources and the displacement of indigenous peoples, these writers have highlighted the unequal power dynamics that underpin colonial and capitalist systems. Through their literary activism, they have called attention to the ways in which environmental degradation intersects with issues of social justice and human rights. Ultimately, their works serve as a powerful tool for advocating for environmental sustainability and challenging the status quo of environmental injustice.

The existing literature proves the role of Anglophone African literature in addressing the environmental impacts of colonial and neocolonial practices. This study contributes to this scholarly discourse by investigating how selected Anglophone African novels engage with and represent the complex intersections between (neo)colonialism, environmental degradation, and issues of environmental justice and eco-activism.

2.3.4 Postcolonial Eco-Activism in Anglophone African Novels

In the field of postcolonial ecocriticism, there has been a growing scholarly interest in examining the representations of grassroots environmental activism and resistance against colonial and neocolonial exploitation in Anglophone African literature. Researchers have highlighted how Anglophone African writers have used their literary platforms to amplify the voices and struggles of local communities fighting to protect their land, resources, and traditional ecological practices from the ravages of colonial and neocolonial policies.

Scholars have examined how novels such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Matigari* (1986) and Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Soza boy* (1985) portray the efforts of marginalized communities, particularly indigenous communities, to challenge the environmental destruction caused by colonial land acquisition, resource extraction, and the imposition of monoculture agriculture (Nayar, 2010; Nixon, 2011). These literary pieces have been studied for their

representation of grassroots eco-activism and the ways in which indigenous communities organize and resist the encroachment of (neo)colonial powers on their ancestral lands and natural environments.

Furthermore, researchers have examined how Anglophone African writers have employed various narrative strategies to foreground the interconnections between environmental degradation, social and economic marginalization, and the struggles for environmental justice. Novels such as Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968) and Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars' Strike* (1981) have been analyzed for their depictions of how the environmental impacts of colonial and neocolonial practices disproportionately affect marginalized communities, leading to the emergence of eco-activism and resistance against these exploitative policies (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010; Caminero-Santangelo, 2014).

Postcolonial ecocritical scholars have also emphasized how Anglophone African writers have engaged with the broader global discourse on environmental justice, drawing attention to the ways in which the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism are linked to the legacies of imperial domination and the uneven distribution of environmental burdens (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997; Nixon, 2011). Novels such as Wole Soyinka's *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (1968) and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) have been studied for their ability to connect local environmental struggles to the global fight for environmental justice and the rights of marginalized communities.

This study employs the existing scholarly discourse by providing a comprehensive analysis of the representations of postcolonial eco-activism and resistance against colonial and neocolonial environmental exploitation in selected Anglophone African novels. By examining the literary techniques and narrative strategies employed by these writers, the study seeks to contribute to our understanding of the crucial role of Anglophone African literature in addressing the complex environmental legacies of colonial and neocolonial practices.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The mounting of a rigorous theoretical framework is decisive for this study, as it provides a solid conceptual basis upon which the subsequent analysis and interpretation can be built. The choice of theory or theories used in a research work inherently shapes the researcher's technique, the questions inquired, and the insights ultimately generated. For this dissertation, which aims at investigating the intersections between colonial legacies, environmental degradation, and environmental justice in selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels, a multi-layered theoretical framework picturing on the complementary fields of postcolonial theory and ecocriticism has been carefully crafted and refined.

Postcolonial theory, with its emphasis on interrogating the lingering impacts of colonial power structures and their contemporary manifestations, offers crucial analytical tools for unpacking the complex historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts that have influenced environmental realities in formerly colonized regions. Ecocriticism, on the other hand, provides a valuable lens for exploring the representation and significance of the natural world in literary texts, allowing for a nuanced examination of how environmental issues are portrayed and engaged with in the selected novels.

By synthesizing these two theoretical approaches into a postcolonial ecocritical framework, this study is uniquely positioned to uncover the multifaceted ways in which colonial legacies have profoundly shaped environmental degradation, environmental justice, and sustainable development narratives in postcolonial African contexts. This interdisciplinary theoretical foundation enables a comprehensive analysis that bridges the gap between literary studies, environmental humanities, and postcolonial studies, ultimately contributing to a more holistic understanding of the research problem.

The following sections delves deeper into the key concepts, principles, and rationale underpinning the postcolonial ecocritical framework that guides this dissertation, laying the groundwork for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels.

3.1 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is a multi-layered scholarly approach that critically examines the complex legacies of colonial rule and the ongoing impacts of colonial power structures in formerly colonized regions around the world. As defined by renowned postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha, the core principles of postcolonial theory involve "a profound skepticism towards Eurocentric and imperialist worldviews" and a commitment to "deconstructing binary oppositions" that have emerged from the colonial experience (Bhabha, 1994, p. 171).

Building on the foundational work of scholars such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Frantz Fanon, postcolonial theory emphasizes the importance of amplifying the voices and perspectives of marginalized groups, challenging dominant colonial narratives, and addressing the historical, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of colonial oppression (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988; Fanon, 1963).

Postcolonial theorists like Achille Mbembe have emphasized how colonial power structures have become embedded within the social, political, and economic fabric of formerly colonized nations, persisting in the post-independence era through "new forms of domination" (Mbembe, 2001, p. 24). From this theoretical standpoint, researchers can interrogate how colonial-era policies, discourses, and institutional frameworks have continued to shape the distribution of resources, the organization of political and economic systems, and the representation of cultures and identities in postcolonial contexts (Loomba, 2015).

The application of postcolonial theory to the study of environmental issues in formerly colonized regions is particularly relevant, as colonial expansion was often predicated on the exploitation and extraction of natural resources, leading to profound ecological disruptions (Shiva, 1993). As highlighted by postcolonial ecocritic Rob Nixon, dominant environmental narratives and development discourses have frequently been shaped by Eurocentric worldviews that have failed to address the "slow violence" experienced by marginalized communities in the face of environmental degradation

(Nixon, 2011, p. 2). By centering the perspectives of these communities, postcolonial theory can reveal how colonial legacies continue to shape environmental realities and environmental justice struggles in formerly colonized contexts.

3.2 Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary field that critically examines the representation and representation of the natural environment in literary, artistic, and cultural texts. Emerging in the late 20th century, ecocriticism is rooted in the recognition that the environment and environmental issues are not merely backdrops or settings, but rather active forces that shape human experiences, identities, and social-political realities (Glotfelty, 1996).

Ecocritical scholars, such as Lawrence Buell and Cheryll Glotfelty, have argued that literature and culture play a vital role in shaping societal attitudes and perceptions towards the natural world. By analyzing the ways in which the environment is represented, ecocritics seek to excavate the underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and ethical considerations that govern human-nature relationships (Buell, 1995; Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996).

At the heart of ecocriticism is the belief that the natural environment, in all its complexities and materialities, should be a central focus of literary and cultural analysis. Ecocritics scrutinize how literary works, from canonical texts to marginalized narratives, engage with and represent the natural world, exploring themes such as environmental degradation, resource extraction, climate change, and the lived experiences of communities in relation to their surrounding ecosystems (Buell, 2005).

By foregrounding the role of the environment, ecocriticism challenges the anthropocentric bias that has often dominated traditional literary and cultural studies, which have tended to privilege human-centric perspectives and concerns. Ecocritical analyses seek to illuminate the diverse ways in which the natural world is perceived, valued, and imagined in cultural production, as well as the ways in which these

representations shape and are shaped by broader socio-political and environmental realities (Garrard, 2004).

Ecocriticism and postcolonial theory share a commitment to addressing issues of power, inequality, and the legacies of colonial exploitation, particularly as they pertain to the environment and the experiences of marginalized communities. As scholars such as Rob Nixon and Deborah Carstens have argued, the intersections between these two fields can offer valuable insights into the complex relationships between colonial histories, environmental degradation, and environmental justice struggles in the postcolonial world (Nixon, 2011; Carstens, 2016).

Both ecocriticism and postcolonial theory recognize that dominant environmental narratives and discourses have often been shaped by Eurocentric and imperialist worldviews, which have frequently marginalized the voices and perspectives of indigenous and local communities. By bringing these two frameworks together, researchers can examine how colonial legacies have continued to influence patterns of resource extraction, environmental policymaking, and the distribution of environmental harms and benefits in formerly colonized regions (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

Moreover, the synergies between ecocriticism and postcolonial theory enable a more nuanced understanding of the complex, intertwined issues of environmental degradation, social inequity, and cultural displacement that have emerged in the aftermath of colonial rule. This interdisciplinary approach can inform efforts to address environmental justice concerns and promote more inclusive, decolonial approaches to environmental conservation and sustainability.

3.3 Postcolonial Ecocriticism

Postcolonial ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary approach that examines the intersections between colonial histories, environmental issues, and sociopolitical inequities. Building on the foundations of both postcolonial theory and ecocriticism, this framework seeks to illuminate the complex relationships between the natural environment,

colonial exploitation, and the experiences of marginalized communities (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

According to Huggan and Tiffin (2015), the core tenets of postcolonial ecocriticism include: (1) Centering the perspectives and narratives of indigenous, local, and formerly colonized communities in the analysis of environmental issues. (2) Examining how colonial legacies have influenced patterns of resource extraction, environmental policymaking, and the distribution of environmental harms and benefits. (3) Exploring the ways in which environmental degradation and climate change disproportionately impact marginalized populations, often exacerbating existing social, economic, and political inequities. (4) Promoting decolonial approaches to environmental conservation, sustainability, and justice that challenge dominant, Eurocentric environmental discourses.

Postcolonial ecocriticism has been selected as the guiding theoretical framework for this study due to its ability to offer a nuanced and multidimensional analysis of the complex interconnections between colonial histories, environmental issues, and social inequities. Given the study's focus on examining the representations of the natural environment in postcolonial literary and cultural texts, this approach provides a robust conceptual foundation for exploring the ways in which these texts engage with and challenge dominant environmental narratives that have been shaped by colonial and neocolonial power dynamics.

By centering the perspectives and experiences of marginalized communities, postcolonial ecocriticism enables a critical examination of how colonial legacies have continued to influence patterns of resource extraction, environmental policymaking, and the distribution of environmental harms and benefits in formerly colonized regions. This theoretical framework aligns well with the study's aim of illuminating the complex intersections between environmental degradation, social inequity, and cultural displacement in postcolonial contexts.

Postcolonial ecocriticism offers a valuable lens for analyzing the ways in which colonial histories have shaped and continue to shape the relationship between human

communities and the natural environment. This approach recognizes that dominant environmental discourses and policies have often been informed by Eurocentric worldviews that have marginalized the voices and perspectives of indigenous and local communities (Nixon, 2011).

By foregrounding the experiences of marginalized populations, postcolonial ecocriticism enables a deeper understanding of how environmental degradation, resource extraction, and climate change disproportionately impact the lives and livelihoods of those who have been historically oppressed and disadvantaged. This includes examining how the legacies of colonial exploitation have contributed to the uneven distribution of environmental harms, often exacerbating existing social, economic, and political inequities (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

Moreover, postcolonial ecocriticism encourages a decolonial approach to environmental conservation and sustainability, one that challenges dominant, Western-centric models and instead embraces more inclusive, community-based frameworks that center the traditional ecological knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities. This shift in perspective can inform efforts to address environmental justice concerns and promote more equitable and sustainable solutions to pressing environmental challenges (Carstens, 2016).

The postcolonial ecocritical framework provides a vigorous theoretical foundation for examining the complex interplay between colonial histories, environmental degradation, and social inequities, enabling a nuanced and critically engaged exploration of these multi-layered issues within the context of postcolonial literary and cultural studies.

3.3.1 Defining Postcolonial Ecocriticism

Postcolonial ecocriticism is a synthesis of two theories: postcolonialism and ecocriticism. Postcolonial theory is a widely accepted model that addresses issues such as the quest for identity, the loss of land, homelessness, resistance, the encounter between the colonized and the colonizers, and more. Nonetheless, ecocriticism as a literary theory is relatively new. It has grown rapidly since the 1990s, focusing primarily on the study of the

relationship between literature and the natural environment (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). By connecting the marginalization of nature in postcolonial theory and the centrism of nature in ecocriticism, these two theories are applied. Using the idea of interconnectedness, the two theories are combined to shed light on how land (homelessness), displacement, the exploitation of natural resources, alienation, and other concepts are presented in African novels. According to Yahya et al. (2012), interconnectedness is one of the most fundamental ecocritical principles because it focuses on the connections between people, culture, and nature.

The use of postcolonialism and ecocriticism in tandem is defended by the fact that European enlightenment philosophy, knowledge of nature, sustainability policy, and so on inspired colonial exploitation of nature (DeLoughrey, 2011). Ecocriticism without a postcolonial perspective, on the other hand, would be shallow, while the history of colonialism is hidden inside the problem's genesis. Environmental issues have come to be understood as not only central to European conquest and global dominance projects but also as inherent in the ideologies of imperialism and racism on which those projects have historically and persistently relied (Huggan & Tiifin, 2010).

The individual shortcomings of both theories compelled proponents to combine the two schools of thought to form an environmentally-oriented theory. (1) Postcolonial theory is indifferent to nature but respectful of and concerned with the cultures of the Global South. (2) Ecocriticism, on the other hand, respects nature but pays no attention to the environmental contexts of the global south. (3) Postcolonialism and ecocriticism, when combined, value both the culture and the environment of the Global South.

This environmentally-oriented theory recognizes the interconnectedness of culture and the environment and understands that the well-being of the Global South depends on the preservation of both. By merging the insights of postcolonial theory and ecocriticism, this theory seeks to address the complex issues of environmental justice, cultural preservation, and sustainable development in the Global South. It aims at challenging the dominant narratives and power structures that perpetuate inequality and environmental

degradation and to promote a more holistic and inclusive approach to understanding and addressing these issues.

Postcolonial ecocriticism thus bases its methodology on the idea or precept that the whole is superior to the parts—holism. In order to better analyze culture and nature in postcolonial literary texts from the Global South, both schools of criticism need to be crafted to one another like a bolt and nut. To put it simply, postcolonialism needs to be reined in and refocused, and ecocriticism also needs to be readjusted to include the environment of the global south. Northern ecologists try to hold everyone equally accountable for current environmental issues and climate change by universalizing the causes of environmental crises throughout the world. But the damage is entirely the fault of the imperialists. They caused the disaster by promoting certain cultural ideologies (anthropocentrism, which is the firstborn child of eurocentrism, is a major cause of environmental damage).

According to Slaymaker, many African writers reject ecocritical paradigms because they are cautious of a Western theory that they perceive as another hegemonic discourse from the metropolitan West and because they do not expect any Western theory to provide solutions to African environmental issues (2001). Even though they are not typically referred to as ecocritics, African writers take nature and the environment very seriously. They employ postcolonial ecocriticism as a weapon to combat the anthropocentric ideology's pervasiveness and its impacts on Africa's postcolonial environment.

The operational definition of postcolonial ecocriticism in the context of this study is thus the critical analysis of environmental issues through a postcolonial ecocritical lens, focusing on the interconnectedness of power dynamics, colonial legacies, and environmental degradation in Africa. By incorporating postcolonial ecocriticism into their works, African writers aim at challenging dominant narratives, promote environmental justice, and reclaim agency over their relationship with the land. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of environmental issues that takes into account the complex intersection of cultural, political, and ecological factors shaping Africa's environmental landscape.

The definition further incorporates the environmental impacts of imperialism, racism, and developmental myths and includes the role of postcolonial eco-activists in resisting these oppressive forces and advocating for sustainable, equitable environmental practices. By centering the voices and experiences of colonized communities, African writers using postcolonial ecocriticism are able to challenge the legacy of colonialism and advocate for a more inclusive and holistic approach to environmental conservation.

3.3.2 Postcolonial Ecocriticism in Literary Studies

The development of postcolonial ecocriticism in literary studies has brought attention to the complex and interconnected relationship between colonialism, environmental degradation, and the exploitation of natural resources. This interdisciplinary approach not only examines the representation of nature in postcolonial literature but also seeks to understand how the legacy of colonialism continues to shape environmental policies and practices in postcolonial societies. By highlighting the voices of marginalized communities and their struggles for environmental justice, postcolonial ecocriticism challenges dominant narratives and offers alternative perspectives on the intersection of culture, power, and the environment.

Huggan & Tiffin (2010), who contributed a lion's share in the development of this theory, claim that postcolonial ecocriticism places a strong emphasis on the necessity to combine ecological and postcolonial concerns in order to combat the persistence of imperialist social and political control. The impact of colonialism, postcolonialism, and more recently the environmental dominance of former colonized nations as a result of globalization are all examined and frequently become the focus of postcolonial ecocriticism. All of these phenomena, however, are recognized as being products of western colonial legacies (Guha, 2014; Nixon, 2011; Huggan & Tiffin, 2010). These scholars claim that there is currently a significant issue with the use of postcolonial ecocriticism in the study of African literary works related to counter discourse.

According to Huggan (2009), the birth of postcolonial ecocriticism is also initiated by the realization of the reinforcement between anthropocentrism and Western-centrism.

It is thought that consolidation will allow for the study of both humans and nonhumans simultaneously. The ideas of social ecology and the issue of environmental justice are highlighted by this recently developed literary strategy. Additionally, it emphasizes the sustainability of subaltern people's traditions, particularly in the once colonized nations of Africa, and expresses worry over the fact that they are not allowed access to the resources of the land they live on.

Guha (2014) asserts that colonialism has featured an anthropocentric view of the land as property and the perception of the colonized environment as an unoccupied. Accordingly, these two thoughts serve as an important point of junction between the two literary philosophies since colonial beliefs have erased and transformed places in Africa into space. Both viewpoints benefit from the joint analysis of environmental and postcolonial social challenges related to postcolonialism and/or the era of neo-imperialism. Combining the two theories can help in the fight against political regimes that dominate colonized society and their environment.

According to Nixon (2005), seeing the underprivileged as less than human and justifying westerners' enslavement of the nonhuman world in non-western societies has been made possible by the ideological antithesis between humans and nonhumans. Researchers may become aware of the either/or consequences of socio-cultural and environmental concerns in a literary work by studying the environment with humans as a significant anthropogenic force of nature.

Given that Africa has experienced both human and nonhuman subjugation at various points in its history at the hands of western colonizers and neo-imperialists, post-colonial ecocriticism can aid in evaluating African postcolonial ecosystems. The fact that postcolonial ecocriticism gives proper consideration to both the micro and macro levels of the conquerors' impact on African postcolonial ecologies and environment is one of its positive traits in the evaluation of African postcolonial literary texts. It examines how colonialism and its impacts have affected both human and nature. It reroutes researchers and literary critics to focus on environmental issues within a literary text, as the literary text itself is a product of human and nonhuman species, including the larger ecosphere,

rather than investigating the postcolonial impacts on the former colonized states of Africa with a focus on human parameters.

Subsequently, postcolonial ecocriticism serves as a call to action for environmental crises and both global and local answers. As previously colonized nations have extensive experience with colonialism, neocolonialism, and the current ecological crisis, Nixon (2011) asserts that postcolonial ecocriticism should be the alternative technique of analyzing colonial and postcolonial literatures. Nixon adds that postcolonial studies sought to address the end of the postwar boom, the protracted depression, and new imperialist offensives in the 1970s and occasionally in the present. Contrarily, ecocriticism responds to changes in environmental consciousness brought by environmental movements and international environmental protection agreements. Nixon (2011) comes to the final conclusion that postcolonial ecocriticism provides solutions for both human and nonhuman components while examining a literary text as if it were a full body of human and nonhuman elements.

Postcolonial African literary studies are not well-defined by ecocriticism. Ecocriticism represents the second wave which is deep ecology, etc., and which is not capable to describe African postcolonial literature. Despite the fact that black people were environmentally sensitive in the precolonial setting, Nixon (2005) supports the reasons for the late introduction of environmental studies into postcolonial studies by noting the various concerns of postcolonialism and ecocritical critics. Nixon contrasts deep ecology, the first wave of ecocriticism, and postcolonialism in great detail.

Ecocriticism as an American environmental movement and environmental ideology, emerged from deep ecology and maintains that all living things have intrinsic value that is reliant on the existence of other living things within the ecology. Without using any other ecologies in the former colonies, it was made popular by American environmentalists. According to Naess (1995), the fundamental tenet of deep ecology is to uphold respect for nature and recognize nonhuman animals' right to exist. Naess persuades opponents of deep ecology and environmental protection that nature is a framework of existence where living things depend on one another in order to survive within the natural

ecology. Deep ecology just demands that nature to be preserved only. Nixon (2011) contends that this theory cannot be used to ecocriticism because social factors are taken into account in ecological and environmental studies. As a result of the theory's failure to apply to the environment of former colonies, ecocritics and postcolonial critics reject it.

The first wave of ecocriticism, according to Caminero-Santangelo & Myers (2011), primarily considers Edenic nature and does not take into account the impacts of racism and colonialism on the exploitation, destruction, and displacement of ecosystems. The human and nonhuman situations in Africa are not taken into account by this western-driven notion—ecocriticism. Deep ecology, according to Guha (2014), ignores other ecologies' quirks or cultural differences. Additionally, he thinks that deep ecologies ignore the harm done to Africans by industrial activities carried out by multinational corporations, such as the mining operations, oil drilling and so on that take place in many African nations.

Proponents of postcolonial ecocriticism have attempted to find areas where postcolonialism and ecocriticism interact in literary criticism. According to Caminero-Santangelo (2011), an increasing number of scholarly works in the field have concentrated on the intersecting point between ecocriticism and postcolonial studies (p. 201). Postcolonial ecocritics refers to works that highlight the shared characteristics between the two theories with regard to the notions of political tenacity, multidisciplinary approach, and capitalist development scrutiny. Therefore, the study of African literary works written in postcolonial times is relevant to postcolonial ecocriticism.

Huggan (2004), and Huggan & Tiffin (2010), the two well-known postcolonial ecocriticism scholars, contribute significant explanations for the synthesis and emergence of postcolonial ecocriticism in the study of postcolonial literature that portray the environment under the siege of (neo)colonialism. These critics contend that recent advancements in postcolonial ecocriticism have unavoidably been influenced by the so-called ecological turn in the humanities and social sciences. The birth of this idea enables us to engage in the ecological crises that have affected nearly every region of our globe on a global scale. They vehemently contend that the ecological problem has reached even greater proportions in Africa. This may be because colonial, postcolonial, and

contemporary global commercial connections and ties have all been centered on the African continent.

Huggan & Tiffin (2010) assert in their seminal study that the external environmental interferences of former western colonizers and current global capitalists are primarily responsible for the damages and environmental chaos that the African colonial and postcolonial environments had experienced. Furthermore, they have depicted these places as battlegrounds where environmental crises, resource wars, and unruly struggles have all been encountered. The failure of ecocriticism to confront the impacts of colonialism, postcolonialism, and present global crises in Africa is the other factor that led to the rise of postcolonial ecocriticism.

Nixon (2011) contends that colonialism, postcolonialism and current corporations at global scale are the issues depicted in present African literature, and postcolonialism alone is not able to describe the environmental concerns of Africa, for it simply framed to explain the socio-cultural concerns of postcolonial nations. This awareness leads to the realization that postcolonial ecocriticism, which provides a comprehensive body of valuing of human and nonhuman in a single work, can be used to the study of postcolonial African literary texts. The political, social, and environmental perspective, which sees all types of environmental damage and social disaster as interconnected, can contextually inform this theoretical framework.

Nixon (2011) also provides an additional justification for combining the two distinct ideas into a single theoretical model. He contends that in today's epoch, it is necessary to analyze the environment as a whole of human and nonhuman aspects, including biotic and abiotic elements, and cultural variables. The task of addressing these two distinct domains is taken on by postcolonial ecocriticism, which looks at the environment as a whole system made up of people, land, and animals. Nixon (2011) adds that a literary text should consist of all four of these components in its entirety*: the author, the reader, society, and the ecosphere*. The ecosphere here represents the planetary ecosystem, which is made up of all living things, nonliving objects, and their environment,

whereas the society here represents the human social universe, including personalities, their socio-cultural interactions, attitudes, etc.

Huggan & Tiffin (2010), Huggan (2009), Slaymaker (2001) are three other postcolonial ecocritics who laud the contribution of postcolonial ecocriticism in describing the socio-cultural and environmental difficulties, concerns, and crises of former colonized states. They contend that postcolonial ecocriticism provides an answer to the fundamental queries of African writers, activists, and environmentalists, who persistently inquire as to why the continent's natural environment is constantly in danger.

Huggan & Tiffin assert in the preface to their 2010 book *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* that the solution can be found by looking at the enduring capitalist systems of social and environmental dominance. They claim that since the start of colonialism, western settlers have not had a favorable view of African environment, viewing it as demonic, dark, and uncivilized. Through various types of dominance, such as "ecological imperialism," "biopiracy," and "environmental racism," colonizers have repressed Africa's natural environment (p. 4). Huggan & Tiffin (2010) conclude their study by advising African literary critics, authors, and scholars to understand that urgent practical action is needed to address the current ecological problem rather than just restating theoretical concerns. They also point out that postcolonial ecocriticism is an analytical instrument that looks for connections and interactions between literature, humans, and nonhumans. Huggan & Tiffin (2010) explain the importance of postcolonial ecocriticism to the study of African postcolonial literature and encourage literary authors and researchers to use this theory in their writings and future research.

Guha (2014) argues that postcolonial ecocriticism offers an alternative literary stance for researching the literature of postcolonial nations in places like Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America, among others. He insists that ecology, the state of the physical environment, and the condition of natural resources are constant concerns. Guha also urges everyone in the 21st century, including the authors, to be concerned about the environment and to contribute as much as possible. He contends that authors have a significant impact on educating readers and illuminating ecological and environmental

issues through their writings. Applying a post-colonial ecocriticism to identify the connections, interactions, and representations between and among the human and nonhuman in Africa is one of the methods Guha (2014) suggests for the study of post-colonial literatures.

Postcolonial ecocriticism shifts the focus of critical analysis to the interactions and relationships between native and non-native individuals. It addresses both people and nonhuman animals with a microscopic understanding of their responses and interactions. By identifying the nonhuman victims of colonialism and postcolonialism, postcolonial ecocritical studies adopt an ecocritical approach. In particular, it is used to examine how the former colonizers describe the postcolonial African environment. It is also used to study the power dynamics between Africa, colonizers, and international actors. When applying postcolonial ecocriticism, it is possible to take into account the urgent ecological impacts of colonialism currently occurring in the Global South. Postcolonial ecocriticism has evolved into a weaponized tool for literary analysis that reveals postcolonial ecological realities as well as the restless African colonial resistances to save their natural surroundings and ecologies from both colonial and postcolonial degradation.

In order to substantiate the aforementioned claim, Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) offers evidence for the significance of postcolonial ecocriticism in the study of African colonial and postcolonial literary contexts. Even though Fanon wrote his work in a colonial context, closer examination reveals that it is also relevant in a postcolonial ecocritical one. It addresses the ecological catastrophe and the exploitation of both human and natural resources in former colonies, which is comparable to colonial and racial injustice against Africans. According to Fanon, the term *postcolonialism* now refers to the position of a territory that is no longer being colonized and has achieved political independence. Fanon contends that this gradual but painful process reaches to the land and touches. Fanon contends that this gradual but painful process of oppression, which is altering Africa's natural ecosystems, extends to the land and touches the environment.

As a mode of thought that aims to explain how colonialism, postcolonialism, and current globalization are connected to the spaces in which people live and behave, the

postcolonial ecocritical literary approach to African postcolonial environments can be understood as a form of postcolonial literary theory. This is especially true in Africa, which is a part of the Global south, where land and natural resources are viewed and valued as essential components of the struggle, resistance, survival, and emancipation of people.

Mukherjee (2014) argues that due to the interdependence of human and nonhuman things, postcolonial studies cannot be properly understood without considering environmental factors like water, land, energy, migration, etc. Mukherjee also highlights the African postcolonial contexts that postcolonial ecocriticism addresses because the environment is the root of all human activity. This is demonstrated by the fact that, in contrast to their western occupiers, African cultures and civilizations have long been closely related to and intertwined with their natural environments.

This study has made use of postcolonial ecocriticism for the analysis of the selected postcolonial literary texts. Researchers like Guha & Martinez (1997) and Nixon (2011) demonstrate that postcolonial ecocriticism is appropriate for analyzing environments in postcolonial Africa. The variety of life experiences of postcolonial nations surviving in a constantly deteriorating environment are also examined. The definition of the environment also includes the remote wilderness and the places where people live and work. Along with revised versions of postcolonial ecocriticism put out by Huggan & Tiffin (2010) and DeLoughery & Handley (2011), the framework also draws on the eco-socialist viewpoints of Mukherjee (2010), Wright (2010), Huggan (2009), and Caminero Santangelo and Myers (2011).

3.3.3 Key Concepts in Postcolonial Ecocriticism

3.3.3.1 Ecological Imperialism

Ecological imperialism refers to the ways in which colonial and neocolonial powers have exploited the natural environments of colonized regions, often in service of extractive industries and resource-intensive development projects. This process involves the imposition of Eurocentric models of resource management, land use, and environmental

policymaking that disregard or actively undermine the traditional ecological knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities (Crosby, 1986).

Ecological imperialism, within the theoretical framework of postcolonial ecocriticism, can be operationally defined as the historical and ongoing exploitation and plundering of natural resources by colonial powers in colonized territories (Foster, 1999). This concept highlights how such actions have led to environmental degradation, displacement of indigenous communities, and unequal distribution of environmental hazards and pollutants, disproportionately affecting native populations. Ecological imperialism also challenges the notion that economic progress and modernization automatically result in improved environmental conditions, emphasizing the need to critically examine dominant narratives of progress and development. In essence, within postcolonial ecocriticism, ecological imperialism serves as a lens through which to analyze the complex relationships between power dynamics, historical legacies, environmental injustices, and the impacts of colonialism on ecosystems and communities.

The theory of ecological imperialism, first put forth by Alfred Crosby (1986), holds that the reason why European settlers were successful in colonizing other areas was due to their unintentional or intentional introduction of animals, plants, and diseases that caused significant changes in the ecology of the colonized regions and population collapses among the endemic peoples (Mayor, 1995). Ecological imperialism as a process can be seen as a byproduct of capitalism's globalization. It contends that colonialism was not only a kind of cultural and political oppression, but also a sort of environmental violence.

Ecological imperialism is better understood if it is articulated in terms of the contact between native and non-native nations in the colonial zone. The non-natives who are commonly known as settlers come to the territory of indigenous peoples not as fugitives, or exiles, or guests, but as masters or rulers to occupy large and fertile land. They bring their socio-political and cultural ideologies, technologies, and animals and plants. They also come with microorganisms that are not visible to the naked eye. They used military force to evict the natives from the land. They intentionally or unintentionally destroyed the natural ecology and culture of the native land during the contact process. They settled

among the natives, pushing them to the periphery and enslaving them on the ancestral homestead. They also established a center that serves as a dominant culture among the natives. This center eroded the nation's culture and natural resources.

Besides, they controlled all trade routes and took part in using all possible means to take wealth to their mother country. They imposed self-serving laws to control natives and show the politics of ownership. In this way, they had colonial empires which had the goal to increase their wealth through trade and resource extraction. This was accomplished through the growth of cash crops and the exploitation of natural resources. These were frequently done with grudging concern, or worse, with little regard for the local ecology (Fairhead & Leach, 2000). Due to the strain of global imperialism's absolute geographic expanse on the colonizer's resources, long-term environmental effects, such as the concern for the welfare of the indigenous populations, were frequently neglected in an effort to make a profit from the extremely expensive business of controlling a large colony. Resource exploitation in colonial times was spurred by the industrial revolution. Imperialism and industrialization together established a positive vicious circle whereby the need for one increased the demand for the other. Less focus was paid to environmental issues as the play between industrialization and imperialism got hastened.

It is more plausible to break down the ecological imperialism process into key theoretical notions that include the facts discussed above, which can be applied to the analysis of the ecological repercussions of colonialism and imperialism in the selected texts.

The first notion is the plunder of native resources, which can be inferred in two ways: stealing land and limbs. Ecological imperialism is a means of achieving imperialism's primary objective, which is to use the world as a raw material source for the center—Europe. Ecological imperialism, in Liebig's view, is a blatant "robbery system" (Foster, 1999, p. 318) that legalizes capitalism by promoting the ‘primitive accumulation’ of riches and the enslavement of the people.

Significant ecological consequences result from the forcible eviction of people from their homes and lands and from the imperial control of the resources that come from these territories. This exploitative imperative that capitalism upholds is embedded into the fundamental framework of ecological imperialism. As a result, ecological imperialism is a byproduct of capitalism, serving as both its foundation and its antithesis. Imperialist forces use the apparatus of capitalist development to impose socio-ecological production standards on the world, escalating the hostile polarity between the center and the periphery. Serpil Oppermann articulates this fact in his article, Ecological Imperialism in British Colonial Fiction, published in Journal of *Faculty of Letters*:

> …the world came to be seen as divided into center and periphery, whereby the center's economic growth and material progress became increasingly dependent on a massive exploitation of the people and the ecosystems of the periphery. In this context the European colonial expansion involves an "... imperialist relation to the planet" ... When the European states expanded into the world's remote geographies largely by means of military violence, they pursued a merchantalist policy of conquest and possession (Oppermann, 2007, p. 180).

The imperialists' primary goal was to capitalize on the economy and material resources of the center. To achieve this, they travel beyond their territory to the peripheries for huge exploitation (plunder) of the people and ecosystems. In the process, they use the military violence and other possible means to conquer and possess. Loomba (1998) shows this fact as, "military violence was used almost everywhere ... to secure both occupation and trading 'rights:' the colonial genocide in North America and South Africa was spectacular" (p. 112). The convictions of Cecil Rhodes, the founder of Rhodesia, as cited by Forester, better clarify the underlying nature of British imperialism and the primary goal for it:

> We must find new lands from which we can easily obtain raw materials and at the same time exploit the cheap slave labour that is available from the natives of the colonies. The colonies would also provide an Ecological Imperialism in British Colonial Fiction 180 dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in our factories… I would annex the planets if I could (Foster, 1994, pp. 87-88).

According to Cecil Rhodes, Great Britain was the precursor of ecological imperialism, which is defined as the planned plunder and modification of natural ecosystems in the periphery for the sake of the economic development of the center. It is a specific example of anthropocentric philosophy. Additionally, it is clear that exploitation extends beyond raw materials to encompass low-cost slave labor. The ecosystems on the periphery are also used as a dumping area.

According to Foster & Clark (2004), ecological imperialism involves "robbing the periphery" of its affluence and exploiting environmental resources, which parallel with the "genocide" imposed on the native populations, and in the dominant center (Europe), "undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder" became capital (pp. 188-189). Ecological environments have been thus exposed to merciless expropriation in persistent plunder and enormous pillage. The British prioritized economic gain over environmental protection, so they paid little attention to the effects of their actions on the environment—except, when their economic interests were in danger.

Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* also emphasizes the plunder of nonhuman resources, which were exploited to enrich the colonialists' home countries. He says that during the colonial era, Africa's riches and raw materials were exported for the development of Europe, as well as for burgeoning American and European businesses: "Today Europe's tower of opulence faces these continents for centuries of departure of their shipments of diamonds, oil, silk, cotton, timber, and exotic produce to this very same Europe" (Fanon, 1963, p. 102).

Historian Walter Rodney claims that when colonial administrations conquered African territory, they accomplished two things at the same time. They appeased their own people, who desired "mining concessions or farming land," while simultaneously creating conditions in which Africans whose lands had been plundered were forced to labor not only to pay taxes, but also to survive. In settler regions like Kenya and Rhodesia, he claims that the colonial authority also prohibited Africans from cultivating commercial crops so that their labor would be readily available for the whites. To describe the predicament of the Kikuyus, he quotes Colonel Grogan, one of the European settlers in Kenya: "We have

stolen his land. Now we must steal his limbs. Compulsory labor is the corollary of our occupation of the country" (Rodney, 1972, p. 258).

The need for cheap African labor served as a unifying factor among the various European colonies in Africa. The foundation for the construction of colonial infrastructure was provided by African laborers. Both private business interests and European settlers required labor. Africans had access to land during the early days of colonial rule, though, and they had little desire to perform arduous labor for meager wages. As a result, the various colonial regimes in various parts of Africa created an oppressive system of labor exploitation. Africans would be compelled to work for the government and for individual colonial rulers. Additionally, they would be compelled to work for the state even though it was in their community's best interest.

The second concept as a theme of ecological imperialism is the environmental horrors of colonialism caused in the process of anchoring and fostering imperial control over the natives. The dichotomy of mind and matter gave the Europeans the power to advance science, which unintentionally facilitated the process of colonialism itself. Carolyn Merchant refers to this approach to "mechanistic science" as "egocentric ethics," and she claims that this opens the door to the operation of utmost dominion over nature by a superior human agency (1992, p. 66). She claims that mechanical philosophers and scientists proposed a world of spirit separate from the world of matter. A separate human mind functioning in accordance with reasonable laws might describe, fix, and control nature, the human body, and animals, like individual components of a machine.

Forester further goes into more detail on the roots of the anti-ecological thinking that Europeans hold, attributing it to the theories put out by Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and Isaac Newton, the main figures behind the Scientific Revolution. The main proponent of dualistic thinking, however, was René Descartes, who saw nature as a machine and thought that "the new science would make humans the masters and possessors of nature" (Sessions, 1995, p. 161). Descartes diminished animals to the status of robots to be examined by analyzing their physical and chemical components for the exclusive advantage of mankind, asserting that they had no ‘mental faculties’ which humans possessed and were therefore merely bodies or machines and thus could not feel pain.

In this view, nature is treated as a subordinate, inanimate resource that can be exploited by rational beings for their own material benefit. The assumption is that natural organisms are machines that obey "universal mathematical laws," in contrast. Descartes' mechanistic perspective receives the scientific legitimacy it deserves from the Newtonian mechanical model of the cosmos, which is based on reason and experiment and is articulated by the ostensibly distinct and unambiguous mathematical laws. The basic concepts of classical science are thus represented by the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm. Francis Bacon, nevertheless, was the first to make the connection between scientific knowledge and imperialism, highlighting the necessity of the coexistence of scientific knowledge and imperial power in order for the colonial ideologies that underlie ecological imperialism to be successfully established.

Bacon's work thus served as a framework for applying scientific theories that eventually led to Newtonian mechanics. It had a noticeable impact on the advancement of western anthropocentric ideologies, which viewed humans as imperialist agents and nature as a pure commodity. Ecological imperialism and mechanistic science emptied nature of its intrinsic value and turned it into a wholesale commodity. The impact of enforced land conversion to production value, or for capital resource, regardless of its suitability to the local ecosystems, in the indigenous environments, for instance, resulted in such damage that it included not only the non-human resources but also the indigenous peoples themselves.

The final concept to investigate as a notion of ecological imperialism is ecological transformation. Alfred Crosby was among the pioneering scholars to recognize the significance of ecological change in the conquest and colonialism of the non-West. In his concept of ecological imperialism, the environmental change brought on by colonial settlers is well articulated. Indigenous people’s relationships to their environments were frequently irreparably damaged as a result of the colonialism of so many non-European environments.

These connections, unlike those of their conquerors, were crucial to the indigenous people's understanding of their existence as of the land rather than just on it (Ashcroft et

al., 2013). African indigenous cultures view land as a vital part of communal holism, in contrast to how Europeans view it as a personal possession.

3.3.3.2 Environmental Racism

Environmental racism describes the disproportionate exposure of marginalized racial and ethnic communities to environmental hazards, such as toxic waste facilities, polluting industries, and the impacts of climate change. This concept highlights how colonial legacies and ongoing systemic inequities have resulted in the uneven distribution of environmental burdens, often along racial and socioeconomic lines (Bullard, 1990).

There are captivating definitions of environmental racism put forth by some experts in the field. Bullard defines it as a practice, strategy, or directive pertaining to environment that has an impact on individuals, groups, or communities that are distinguished on the basis of color or race. Environmental racism, in conjunction with industry practices and public policies, benefits white people while putting the burden of cost on powerless poor people (Bullard, 1993, p. 23). The majority of environmental regulations are designed with the goal of violating the rights of underprivileged and communities of color, which has an impact on the environment as well. Such actions favor the white community disproportionately while negatively affecting communities of color.

Benjamin Chavis, a scholar who coined the term "environmental racism," also defines environmental racism as "racial discrimination in environmental policy-making," wherein decision-makers purposefully expose people of color to the "life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants" (Chavis, 1987, p. 54). Policymakers deliberately target people of color. Environmental policies in developed nations disproportionately disadvantage people of color. They are discriminated against by the design of environmental policies and through the enforcement of various laws, while the majority of the victims of such policies and industrial practices are "non-white." Such laws are designed to hurt people of color over time. They are consequently compelled to live in unhealthy environments filled with toxic waste and pollutants. For instance, industrial infrastructures are frequently constructed close to weaker communities because they lack

the means to resist. Contrarily, areas with a large white population are more likely to receive green places and other health-protective infrastructural facilities.

The theory and practice of environmental racism connects race and environment in a way that "the oppression of one is directly connected to or supported by the oppression of the other" (Curtin, 2005, p. 145). Due to its binary oppositional definition of humans and non-humans, the concept of race is either directly or indirectly linked to environmental destruction. This phenomenon is best understood as "discriminatory treatment" of socially or economically disadvantaged individuals. The concept is further enhanced by the exploitation of a "home" source by a foreign outlet where ecological problems are transferred. This exploitation is described by Plumwood as a method of "minimizing non-human claims to (a shared) earth" (Plumwood, 2001, p. 4). Non-humans can be categorized as savage or wild racial groups, animals, plants, or members of nature. Biocentric beliefs underpin the process of minimizing non-human claims to the earth. This biocentric perspective revolves around all types of earthly life.

In deep ecology, this mindset is referred to as othering, the term that was introduced as a systemic theoretical concept by Spivak (1985). One group is viewed as the other in this way through social and psychological lenses. It is a procedure that robs the other of the "same" respect, pride, love, nobility, bravery, and, ultimately, any claim to human rights. It makes no difference whether the other is a nation, a gender group, a racial or religious group, or anything else; its goal is always to exploit and oppress by denying its very existence. Three dimensions of othering were suggested by Spivak in *The Rani of Sirmur*. First, an effort is made to inform all natives of "who they are subject to" (1985, p. 254). People's lack of "the knowledge of refinement" is brought up in the second dimension (1985, pp. 254-255). Making people aware of the third dimension is to help them understand that "the master is the subject of science or knowledge" (Spivak, 1998, p. 256).

Natural environments, like people, are regarded as "other." This othering serves to further human materialistic goals. Deep Ecology tenets developed by G Sessions (American) and Arne Naess (Norwegian) can be combined with the three Spivak aspects mentioned above to incorporate the concepts of othering to ecological subjects.

The first aspect is referred to as the power dimension. It works by making subordinates aware that there is someone in charge. Others are created as subordinates to the powerful. When we consider nature to be subordinate, we assert that its sole purpose is to serve humans, allowing them to exploit it for lust rather than actual needs. This idea is consistent with deep ecologists' contention that humans do not have the right to reduce natural richness and diversity. Humans are not masters of nature; rather, nature serves them to meet their basic needs.

The second aspect is the construction of the "other" as a morally and pathologically inferior subject. The concept has influenced several theories, including ecocriticism, a counter-narrative to anthropocentrism that can be seen as a parallel to the idea of postcolonial Eurocentrism, in which humans are positioned as the absolute while Western culture ignores the ecological world (Garrad, 2012). According to this viewpoint, the imperial enterprise exposed both humans and nature to being viewed as different and pushed to the margins by colonizers. The indigenous people were labeled as savage, uncivilized, and wild by colonizers, who degraded the environments they valued. Plumwood emphasizes that indigenous peoples' closeness to nature is linked to othering as a process. Western epistemology strongly enforces the duality of nature and culture, in which "humans as a group were set apart as rational and mindful agents against mechanistically conceived nature elements, reduced to mere matter" (Plumwood, 2007, p. 251).

The third aspect is referred to as the misapplication of technology and knowledge. Both are portrayed as imperial property that can never be owned by the colonial other. As a result, regardless of the outcome, technology can be used to gain any benefits from nature. Deep ecologists argue that these policies must be changed because they only affect the fundamental ideological, technological, and economic structures.

It's possible to think of environmental racism as a constant process involving various tactics. To envision a reconciled racial relationship in a shared space, these strategies are crucial ideologically. The following points can be discussed in further detail to help with understanding the concept and how it applies to the selected texts.

The first concept to investigate as a notion of environmental racism is landscaping causing ecocide (environmental degradation). Postcolonial theory views landscaping as more of a cultural and political phenomenon than merely a geographical one. It is closely related to the concepts of place, space, and habitation that exist between indigenous communities and colonial society. The colonizers used landscaping to produce the desired effects, which caused the postcolonial lands to experience many environmental problems like soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, global warming, pollution, and climate change.

It is associated to altering natural ecological environment in order to pursue materialistic objectives. Literary representations of postcolonial landscapes are complicated by land disputes between colonists and colonized. There is a constant conflict over negotiating process and re-inscription in this dispute. Sluyter defines this phenomenon as follows: "Land is certainly an appropriate and adequate category to signify the environment that natives and Europeans struggle over: the resources such as soil, vegetation, animals, minerals, and water. However, the struggle is about more than just controlling the environment; it is about controlling space, territories, and landscapes" (2002, p. 10). He draws attention to the crucial fact that land resources are intertwined with intricate power structures, which determine the degree of control. Despite being ideological structures, colonial relations are supported and strengthened by physical landscapes. The colonizer's ideologies of race, progress, reason, and civilization are used to achieve this goal.

The second concept to investigate as a notion of environmental racism is displacement causing ecological chaos. Furthermore, another aspect to demonstrate the impacts of colonialism on African people's familial relations and interaction with nature in their place (environment) is the postcolonial theoretical concept of displacement. Place and displacement are constant themes in postcolonial literature. This feature introduces a broader concept in which the postcolonial crisis of individuality becomes a reality. When a novel contains elements of place and displacement, the theme of alienation is always reflected; this stems from a sense of displacement.

The sense of displacement may have resulted from migration, enslavement, or even alterity, which may be represented by similarities or differences between cultures.

Displacement occurs as a result of imperial invasion and related industrial practices (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 85). As a result, it is now more commonly used in conjunction with dispossession to describe indigenous peoples displaced by the encroachment of colonizing and invading industrial practices. Indigenous pathology is primarily caused by displacement, removal from traditional lands, relocation in reserves or missions, and the resulting familial, social, and cultural fracturing of indigenous peoples.

The locations of new countries and regions were perceived by Western conquerors who invaded distant parts of the world as "empty spaces," or so-called "terra nullius," which had been waiting for them and their civilized ways. The colonizers saw the colonized world as completely illiterate and, in many ways, nonexistent. As a key tool of colonialism, they used cartography to textualize and map "the spatial reality of the other, renaming spaces in a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control" (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 31). They imposed their own spatial perception and hierarchies. The colonized subjects became disoriented in their own countries, unable to adopt a new interpretation of their own, long-established reality. The locations were also renamed; "the entire lands were literally rewritten." As Bill Ashcroft has stated, indigenous peoples feel alienated from their homeland. They also believe that vocabularies, categories, and codes are insufficient or inappropriate for describing their environment's flora and fauna, as well as its physical and geographical conditions.

What Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin say about the "relationship between self and place" is also relevant to the analysis. As previously stated, self and place are inextricably linked in the African worldview. Human subjectivity is shaped by its surroundings and location. When one is displaced, one's subjectivity becomes fragmented. Displacement causes ecological and psychological disruption, which leads to wars, killings, bloodshed, rapes, and insanity.

The final concept to investigate as a notion of environmental racism is the destruction of home through the creation of colonial space (the demise of culture). The method of displacing natives from their land begins with the separation of place from space. Natives have a unique bond with the area in which they reside. Like colonizers, they do

not view their geographic location as a form of marketable property. The dominant colonial paradigm views places and lands as potential sites of economic profit. The colonial spaces that were occupied and exploited during colonialism are therefore reiterated in the postcolonial places, or spaces. This idea emphasizes the ongoing territorial conflicts that have existed since colonialism. Along with educating readers about native traditional and cultural values, it also emphasizes native viewpoints on how people interact with their environments. The Eurocentric dominance of space is challenged by this expression of native-place relationships.

Buell's ecological phrase “the where" corresponds to this concept of "space." A prerequisite for any form of existence is the physical environment. To put it another way, it "comprises the non-living, abiotic components (physical and chemical) and the interrelationships with other living, biotic components" (1995, p. 145). All natural resources, such as the water, air, and land, are also included. The concept of "environmental imagination," as described by Lawrence Buell, is also crucial in this context. The phrase alludes to the way that our physical surroundings influence our imagination.

3.3.3.3 Myths of Development

Unsustainable development narratives refer to dominant, Western-centric models of economic growth and "progress" that prioritize resource extraction, industrialization, and urbanization at the expense of environmental sustainability and the wellbeing of local communities. These narratives have frequently been imposed on colonized and postcolonial regions through international aid, development policies, and neoliberal globalization (Escobar, 1995).

The myth of development has emerged as one of the most central aspects of postcolonial ecocritical theory today. It was coined by De Rivero (2001) to describe the most radical system of development, that is essentially a myth created by the West that, in the name of modernization, sustains social, political, and economic rifts that it claims to cure. Various environmental critics have used the term development in a very ironic sense, as it includes the exploitation of natives' natural resources for the advancement of Western economic and political power. Third-world critics frequently dismiss development as no

more than a masked form of neocolonialism (Huggan & Tiffin 2006, p. 51). It is, in their opinion, a vast technocratic apparatus whose primary purpose is to serve the political and economic interests of the West (Huggan & Tiffin 2006, p. 54). It is described as a covert form of environmental degradation carried out in the name of economic progress.

Due to the colonial powers' exploitation of natural resources, various colonial development strategies have failed to prioritize the environment. It caused disastrous environmental problems in a vast colonized world. In terms of economy, most pre-colonized regions were self-sufficient. Planting staple crops, caring for animals, fishing, and hunting were all ways for people to meet their dietary needs. They were able to build houses and meet clothing requirements by utilizing natural resources and indigenous skills. Their way of life and mode of production were in harmony with nature. New cash crops were introduced during colonial rule, and new industries were established to exploit indigenous resources. The colonized societies' economic structures were completely altered by this new system.

This new framework, along with its technology and consumption patterns, became so ingrained that Western products and technologies were still imported after independence. The colonial capital was not only maintained but expanded. For newly independent countries, world trade and its investment system have become a trap. International corporations were extremely important in this regard. They established manufacturing and trading bases in postcolonial countries, where they sold technologies and products. The goal of these corporations was to "develop" Third World countries or to create conditions in which these countries would be forced to rely on developed nations for "development." These countries were required to export more goods such as minerals and oil in order to pay for the importation of modern technologies. These newly developing countries have been sucked deeper into the vortex of the Western economic system in terms of the economy, finance, and technology. Indigenous resources, products, and skills were all lost as a result of this process.

Understanding development's underlying ideas necessitates viewing it as a systematic process of colonial occupation. For the textual analysis of the selected texts, the

idea of development can be divided into three stages, as taken from Huggan & Tiffin's theoretical notions. These stages include native and developmentalist understandings of natural resources, power creation through sustainable development, and power maintenance through state vampirism.

Firstly, understanding the colonizer's and African's opposing perspectives on land and the ecological environment is critical. Africans regard the land and ecological environment as sacred resources, whereas colonizers regard them as merely a commodity. In a development context, the "nativist" and developmentalist understandings of land are critical because they are founded on or continue the process of othering. While developmentalists see the land as a material resource that can be traded, native people see it as an unchangeable spiritual obligation.

The Enlightenment ideology of progress and the Darwinian survival of the fittest are two concepts that Huggan and Tiffin refer to as the myth of development because they provide false justification for this kind of progress. It calls on the less “advanced” southern nations to follow in the footsteps of their wealthier northern counterparts and, in doing so, to embrace a capitalist growth model that is both blatantly unequal and potentially environmentally disastrous (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010, p. 28).

Secondly, politics of colonial power and sustainability is an issue in a development. There are many different ways to interpret and understand the concept of sustainability. The use of natural resources for the maintenance of existence, in accordance with the environment. It entails protecting natural resources in a way that will be advantageous to both the present generation and future ones. It is a form of development, according to Wright (2010), that improves people's quality of life without sacrificing or exhausting resources or having an adverse environmental impact that will make it harder for future generations to meet their needs.

Sustainable development offers a framework for social and economic development that maximizes current social and economic gains without jeopardizing future needs (Joseph, 2009). It represents "economic development that meets human needs without

threatening the global ecosystem or depleting vital resources" (Harris et al, 2006, p. 44). Thus, these definitions enable us to comprehend sustainable development as a chance to use the flora, fauna, and other elements of our natural environment in a well-planned and responsible manner. These definitions also imply that everything done to the ecosystem at a local level will have global as well as regional impacts. Therefore, sustainable development takes into account both the short and long-term effects of development projects on the environment.

A new level of understanding is added when sustainability is seen through a colonial lens. The term is typically added before development in an effort to create the impression that it is focused on preserving the ecological balance by avoiding the depletion of natural resources while also pursuing economic growth. For the purpose of upholding their dominance over the native people and their lands and completing their development projects, the colonizers adhere to the concept of sustainability. Huggan & Tiffin (2006) define sustainability as an ongoing adherence to the notion of development as an engine of economic growth.

From the side of the First World, it can be seen as an effort to colonize the natives' undeveloped social life. The semantic ambiguity of word development is disrupted when it comes to modern concepts like the market and the individual. They assert that their concerns for environmental management are dependent on various forms of administrative control and technological development. This suggests that "calls for the survival of the planet are frequently, upon closer inspection, nothing [other] than calls for the survival of the industrial system [itself]" (Huggan & Tiffin, 2006, p. 31).

The perspectives on sustainable development put forth by Huggan and Tiffin are based on Escobar's notion of "market sustainability" (p. 197). He considers it to be the main "regulating mechanism" that governs how people live their daily lives. But in both instances, the word "environment" implies "marketability of nature." This offers a covert justification for the control of natural resources by the colonial industrial system and its allies. As a result, it is possible to draw the conclusion that this is sustainable development, which suggests that there is no protection of the environment in the development. There is

only economic growth for the powerful nation at the expense of environmental destruction for the natives. Additionally, it implies that protecting economic growth models is the only purpose of the fight against environmental deterioration.

From ecological point of view, there are serious misuses of the word "sustainability." It turns into a symbol in the postcolonial world, allowing imperialists to fight for purported social and ecological justice much more easily. The colonizers' power discourse can therefore be seen as aligning with sustainable development. It reinstates nature as an "environment" that can be changed to suit materialistic human needs. The "capital" of economic expansion, in its opinion, is Earth. Economic development is more crucial than environmental preservation for the colonizers. Environmental degradation slows down economic growth, so they must protect the environment.

Finally, state vampirism is used as an instrument for sustainable development. State vampirism was first used by Andrew Apter to refer to the neocolonial elites' tactic of maintaining economic hegemony over the Third World by using puppet native leaders. He clarified his point by using the Nigerian oil industry as an example. The Nigerian state, in his opinion, "expanded at its own expense, ostensibly pumping oil money into the nation while secretly sucking it back into private fiefdoms and bank accounts" (2005, p. 143). The colonizers created a polarity of nature and commodity by distorting the natives' understandings of their environment, and they required the natives to maintain their "development missions" in order to continue pillaging the natural resources. As a result, the colonizers changed into what are now known as "state vampires." State vampirism also refers to the way that native states and the allegedly greedy politicians who worked for them encroached on the people they were supposed to represent while channeling enormous amounts of money and resources into the hands of a neocolonial elite (Apter, 2005, p. 145).

This state vampirism has most severely impacted indigenous societies. The phrase describes how the centralized state apparatus continues to expropriate and exploit the resources of the indigenous people and exclude them from society and politics. Roy's remarks were cited by Huggan and Tiffin as supporting evidence for this proposition.

Development, in Roy's words, is an instrument of state authority and a mechanism for misleading supposedly indigenous populations, whom the government has never bothered to consult, about frequently foreign-funded government initiatives. These policies promote poverty, caste prejudice, and illiteracy; they are self-destructive (Huggan & Tiffin, 2006, p. 51).

The state cares for the materialistic interests of the colonizers and tortures its indigenous people when they speak out on matters affecting their environment. State vampirism thus becomes the global trend of government interference in people's lives (Apter, 2005). When it comes to environmental protection, this state intervention relies on administrative control and technological superiority, which cannot help but imply that many pleas for the survival of the planet are actually nothing more than calls for the survival of the industrial system itself.

3.3.3.4 Postcolonial Eco-Activism (Resistance)

Postcolonial eco-activism is a form of environmental activism that specifically addresses the intersections of postcolonialism, environmental justice, and ecological sustainability. It involves advocating for the protection of the environment in postcolonial contexts, where historical legacies of colonial exploitation, environmental degradation, and social inequalities continue to impact marginalized communities. Postcolonial eco-activism seeks to challenge dominant narratives of environmental exploitation, promote sustainable practices, and empower communities to resist ecological injustices rooted in colonial histories. By centering the voices of indigenous peoples, marginalized groups, and environmental activists in postcolonial settings, postcolonial eco-activism aims at fostering a more equitable and sustainable relationship between humans and the natural world, while addressing the legacies of colonialism and promoting environmental resilience in postcolonial societies.

The term is also used by scholars to emphasize the importance of literature in promoting environmental consciousness and activism. By examining the intricate connections between human society and the natural world, eco-activism in literary analysis

seeks to foster a deeper understanding of our role as stewards of the Earth. Through powerful imagery, thought-provoking narratives, and compelling characters, authors ignite a sense of urgency and responsibility in readers, urging them to become active participants in the fight against environmental degradation (Nixon, 2011). Ultimately, eco-activism in literary analysis serves as a catalyst for change, inspiring individuals to embrace sustainable practices and work towards a harmonious coexistence with nature (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

Environmental activism, according to Nixon (2011), is a movement that unites writer-activists in the global struggle for environmental justice. These writer-activists utilize their literary skills to bring attention to the various environmental issues that plague our planet. Through their work, they aim to not only raise awareness but also inspire action and change. By highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental and social justice, they strive to create a more sustainable and equitable world for all.

The theoretical concept of postcolonial eco-activism is examined in the selected postcolonial novels as a means of challenging the dominant narratives of power and exploitation that underlie the legacy of colonialism. These novels explore how activism can be a form of resistance against environmental degradation and social injustices perpetuated by colonial powers. The concept of eco-activism was first coined by environmentalists in the 1970s as a means to mobilize individuals and communities to take action against environmental degradation. The term encompasses a wide range of activities, from grassroots movements and protests to lobbying for policy changes and promoting sustainable practices through different means.

3.3.4 Why Postcolonial Ecocriticism

The theoretical framework of postcolonial ecocriticism, with its focus on concepts such as ecological imperialism, environmental racism, unsustainable development narratives, and postcolonial eco-activism, is well-suited to address the central research question of this study. By examining the selected Anglophone African novels through this lens, the analysis can unpack the ways in which these literary works engage with and

challenge the complex, multifaceted relationships between colonial histories, environmental degradation, and social inequities.

The research question, which centers on exploring how the chosen novels represent and respond to the environmental and social consequences of colonial and neocolonial practices, is directly informed by the key tenets of postcolonial ecocriticism. This theoretical approach provides a robust conceptual framework for investigating the textual depictions of environmental exploitation, the uneven distribution of environmental burdens, and the imposition of Eurocentric models of resource management and development – all of which are central to the research problem at hand.

The postcolonial ecocritical framework employed in this study enables a more nuanced and multidimensional exploration of the research problem, allowing for a deeper understanding of the intricate connections between colonial legacies, environmental issues, and social justice concerns as represented in the selected Anglophone African novels.

By drawing on concepts such as ecological imperialism and environmental racism, the analysis can elucidate the ways in which the novels depict the exploitation and degradation of natural environments, as well as the disproportionate exposure of marginalized communities to environmental harms. This, in turn, sheds light on the complex interplay between colonial histories, resource extraction, and the uneven distribution of environmental burdens.

Furthermore, the critique of unsustainable development narratives inherent in the postcolonial ecocritical approach enables the study to uncover how the selected literary works challenge dominant, Eurocentric models of economic growth and "progress" that have frequently been imposed on postcolonial regions. This provides a more comprehensive understanding of the novels' engagement with alternative, more sustainable and community-centered approaches to environmental management and socioeconomic development.

The application of a postcolonial ecocritical framework in this study contributes to the ongoing scholarly discourse on the intersections between colonial histories,

environmental issues, and social justice concerns. By employing this theoretical approach, the analysis offers a unique and critically engaged perspective on the selected Anglophone African novels, which can enhance our understanding of how literature can serve as a powerful medium for addressing complex environmental and social problems.

Moreover, the postcolonial ecocritical lens adopted in this study aligns with the broader goals of promoting environmental and social justice. By illuminating the ways in which the selected novels represent and challenge the legacies of ecological imperialism, environmental racism, and unsustainable development narratives, the analysis can contribute to raising awareness and fostering meaningful dialogue around these crucial issues. This, in turn, can inform and inspire further scholarly work, as well as broader societal efforts to address the entangled environmental and social injustices that continue to shape postcolonial realities.

CHAPTER FOUR
ECOLOGICAL IMPERIALISM IN PETER KIMANI'S *DANCE OF THE JAKARANDA*

The present chapter attempts to analyze and interpret Peter Kimani's *Dance of the Jakaranda* using a postcolonial ecocritical framework. A synopsis of the novel is given first, followed by an analysis of ecological imperialism's techniques, with the writer's articulation highlighting the novel's depiction of the ecological impacts of imperialism (colonialism). The analysis takes into account the various ecological imperialism strategies that are pertinent to the interpretation of the novel's themes. The main goal of the analysis is to show how the novel depicts the impacts of colonialism on the environment.

Dance of the Jakaranda by Peter Kimani is a rich and complex novel set in Kenya during the colonial era. The story follows the lives of various characters, both African and European, as they navigate the tumultuous period of colonialism. While the novel explores themes of identity, power, and love, it also delves into the ecological impacts of imperialism. Using a postcolonial ecocritical framework, this analysis aims to uncover the ways in which the novel portrays the destructive consequences of colonialism on the environment.

By examining the techniques of ecological imperialism employed by the colonizers, gaining a deeper understanding of the novel's depiction of the ecological devastation caused by imperialism is possible. The novel vividly depicts how the colonizers exploit and extract resources from the land, leaving behind a trail of destruction and devastation. The author skillfully portrays the deforestation, pollution, and loss of biodiversity that result from the colonizers' relentless pursuit of profit. Through the lens of postcolonial ecocriticism, the novel forces readers to confront the harsh reality of the environmental consequences of imperialism, calling to attention the impacts of colonialism extend far beyond human suffering and oppression.

4.1 Synopsis of *Dance of the Jakaranda*

Dance of the Jakaranda by Peter Kimani is a compelling narrative that unfolds in post-independence Kenya, delving into the intricate interplay between characters, setting,

and themes that illuminate the enduring impacts of imperialism on the environment. Set against the backdrop of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the novel follows a diverse cast of characters whose lives intersect in a nation transitioning from colonial rule to independence. Through their individual journeys, the novel explores the complexities of a society grappling with the environmental consequences of imperialism while striving to forge a new national identity in the post-independence era.

The novel's setting in post-independence Kenya serves as a vivid canvas that reflects the historical and cultural landscapes shaped by colonial exploitation. From the bustling cities to the lush countryside, the narrative paints a nuanced picture of a nation scarred by the environmental ravages of imperialism. The characters in "Dance of the Jakaranda" navigate this scarred terrain, confronting the deforestation, pollution, and ecological degradation left in the wake of colonial exploitation. Through evocative descriptions of the Kenyan landscapes, the novel captures the profound impacts of imperialism on the environment and the challenges of reclaiming and restoring the land in the aftermath of colonial rule.

Central to the narrative are the diverse characters whose experiences embody the multifaceted legacies of imperialism on the environment. From indigenous villagers fighting to protect their land to European colonizers reckoning with their roles in environmental degradation, the characters in *Dance of the Jakaranda* represent a spectrum of perspectives on the environmental consequences of imperialism. Their interactions and conflicts illuminate the complex power dynamics and ethical dilemmas inherent in postcolonial environmental struggles, inviting readers to reflect on the enduring legacy of colonial exploitation and the urgent need for environmental justice in a rapidly changing world.

As the story unfolds, *Dance of the Jakaranda* weaves together the threads of individual lives and collective histories, highlighting the interconnectedness between human actions, environmental degradation, and the legacy of imperialism. Through its exploration of the characters' quests for identity, belonging, and justice, the novel offers a profound meditation on the enduring impacts of colonialism on the environment and society. In its portrayal of post-independence Kenya, *Dance of the Jakaranda* captures the

complexities of a nation striving to heal its landscapes, reconcile its past with its present, and forge a sustainable future in the shadow of colonial exploitation.

4.2 Colonial Plunder of the Resources (Biopiracy)

Colonizing new lands has been a strategy used by colonial powers throughout history to achieve a variety of purposes. These objectives were categorized as the expansion of colonial power or territory, the exploitation of indigenous natural resources, the enslavement of colonized people, security, or religious stewardship. There may be multiple primary objectives for colonizing a nation. In his book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Guyanese historian and activist Walter Rodney claims that the West exploited Africa's resources to plunder and loot it (Rodney, 1973). Achille Mbembe, a Cameroonian historian, political theorist, and philosopher who has written and theorized extensively on life in the colony and postcolony, points out to the reader that colonial powers required the use of African bodies in particularly violent ways for the purpose of labor as well as the creation of subservient colonized identities.

Mbembe demonstrates how colonial violence was primarily used against African bodies for labor and submission by contrasting power in the colony and postcolony (Achille, 1992). In order to extract these resources and simultaneously construct the colonial city around these industries, European colonial powers sought out natural resources in African colonies and required the necessary labor force. Because Europeans viewed native bodies as degenerate and in need of taming, violence was required to create a submissive laborer (Achille, 1992). The violence, in the eyes of the colonizers, was both necessary and beneficial because it helped the African become a useful worker (Achille, 1992).

In addition to exploiting the labor, they also wanted to mold the Africans' personalities and identities. Africans were eventually taught to be submissive by colonizers, who used this to shape and enforce how they could move through colonial spaces (Achille, 1992). Then, the African's daily existence was reduced to an act of subservience performed through public works initiatives and military conscription (Achille, 1992).

Biopiracy has long been associated with colonialism, in which the bodies of developing countries and indigenous peoples with abundant natural resources are exploited without permission. It is defined as the pillage or plunder of human or natural resources. European settlers have been on the lookout for lands rich in diamonds, gold, silver, rare spices, and fertile soil to grow plants and crops since the start of their exploration of new lands, which they think are terra nullius (unoccupied land). Colonialism is characterized by an extensive plunder of resources (Adams, 2012).

Nature is roughly to be commodified in order to enrich colonial power (Murphy, 2009). Indigenous places are then viewed as commercial ventures with an apparent abundance of resources. This unquestionably has a negative impact on the environment (Ville, 2015). Kimani's *Dance of the Jakaranda* depicts the exploitative impacts of colonialism pertaining to the bodies of nature and natives, which result in environmental horrors followed by ecological transformation. This is supported by textual evidence and discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.2.1 The Plunder of Natural Resources: *Stealing Lands*

The underlying motive of British imperialists in Africa, characterized by a desire for resource exploitation, is starkly portrayed in *Dance of the Jakaranda* by Peter Kimani. The novel encapsulates this sentiment through the depiction of the railway project termed the *Lunatic Express* by London architects. This derogatory label stems from their perception that the railway's construction through the African wilderness held no intrinsic value or purpose. Kimani strategically employs this characterization to unveil the true agenda behind the railway endeavor. By having the London characters dismiss the land as devoid of worth, the novel underscores the imperialist agenda of exploitation and plunder. The construction of a vast railway network spanning five hundred miles is thus viewed as an act of folly, emblematic of the colonial disregard for the land and its indigenous inhabitants.

The construction of the railway by the colonial government in East Africa was not intended for the benefit of the local population but rather as a means to exploit and extract their natural resources. Infrastructure such as roads and railroads were selectively

developed in areas rich in exportable resources, with limited exceptions made for military purposes to enforce control and dominance. Throughout the colonial era, African communities were deliberately deprived of transportation and communication networks to hinder their unity and potential for self-liberation. This divide-and-rule strategy employed by British imperialists aimed to maintain dependency and prevent collective action among African nations.

The lack of interconnecting roadways between colonies or regions within a single colony underscored the colonial focus on facilitating the export of valuable commodities like cotton, coffee, and minerals to Europe. This strategic infrastructure layout, as elucidated by Walter Rodney, primarily served the economic interests of white settlers and concessionaires involved in agriculture and timber industries. The construction of roads and railways was geared towards maximizing profits for the colonizers, with little consideration given to advancing the welfare or progress of African communities. Natives were predominantly valued for their labor in construction, resource extraction, agricultural activities, and shipping, reinforcing their subjugated role in the colonial economic framework.

In *Dance of the Jakaranda*, Sir Charles Erikson, the colonial governor, claims in a speech for the inauguration of the East African Railways construction that the building of the railway is not insane as London architects denigrated it; instead, he applauds the dreamers of the railway construction: “There are those in our midst who have christened this project the Lunatic Express. It is not the lucidity of its architects that’s in doubt; rather, the term is inspired by the bravery of its dreamers.” (p. 214). The colonial governor precisely shows that the purpose of investing this much capital on railway construction is for material gain from the land. In his speech, he declares that the land is needed by the British government for crop production to be exported beyond the seashores:

> I daresay we shall turn these wild lands into orchards abundant with fruit. And I want to applaud the courage of five hundred farmers who have left the comfort of England to be the harbingers of change in the African wilds. They shall be rewarded with fertile land that locals have little use for, most of which is unoccupied. We are

here to support their enterprise. The railway shall deliver their produce beyond these shores (p. 214).

The colonial government built the railway with the purpose of taking territory owned by natives under the doctrine of *terra nullius* (a Latin word for "unowned land"). Despite the fact that the land belongs to the natives, the imperialists assert that it is not under the control of any state or socially or politically organized group. The words of the colonial governor convey the message that the unoccupied or little occupied land is annexed by the British empire. Ideally, it means that in the process of exploration, they discovered the land that was *terra nullius*. Even if its ownership is known to them, the absence of agriculture means that the owner's relationship with the land is nullius (nothing) because they think: "... a man's property is that which he 'removes out of a state of nature', land that he 'hath mixed his labour with... and thereby makes it his property" (Locke, 1690, pp. 328–329).

Kimani astutely argues that the arrival of British imperialists in Kenya was driven by a desire to exploit the resources of the indigenous population, encompassing both human labor and natural environments. This agenda prompted the colonialists to initiate the construction of a railway line stretching from Nakuru Port to Victoria Port, a name honoring the Queen of England. The strategic connection between Kenya and Uganda formed part of a broader colonial scheme to enhance trade links across African nations. The railway, originating from the shores of the Indian Ocean, traversed the hinterland to reach the shores of Lake Victoria, symbolizing the penetration of colonial influence into the heart of the region.

Kimani's narrative aims to debunk the notion that the railway project was motivated by altruistic intentions such as civilizing or modernizing the indigenous communities. Contrary to claims of abolishing the slave trade in East Africa, as advocated in the Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference of 1889–90, the construction of the railway served as a pretext for land appropriation and resource exploitation under the guise of anti-slavery efforts. This strategic manipulation of the anti-slavery movement facilitated the colonial ambition of

seizing native lands for settlement and economic gain, highlighting the ulterior motives behind the seemingly benevolent initiatives:

> …[T]he elders saw the construction of the railway as a continuation of the slave trade. Not only was the railway cutting through the tracks used by slave traders, its shape also imitated a snake, just as local seer Me Katilili had predicted (p. 118).

In line with this point, Walter Rodney discusses how a series of internal changes in Britain transformed the demand for slaves in the 17th century into the demand for eradicating slavery from Africa in the 19th century in order to organize local labor and land exploitation (1973, p. 215). In other words, Britain simply bent down on eradicating slavery in the 19th century, which had been highly demanded in the 17th century and before for the purpose of the exploitation of African land using labor from the continent itself.

The 19th century was marked as the year when Europeans turned their faces toward Africa. They were coming to the hinterland of Africa, following in the footsteps of exploration, which paved the way for exploitation. Consequently, they did not want slaves to be shipped across seacoasts. There was a solid plan to exploit both the land and labor in the same place.

The British people's coming to Kenya was part of the scramble for Africa conducted at the Berlin conference in 1884/85, which was also known as the Conquest of Africa, or the Partition of Africa**.** The purpose of the conference was to invade, annex, divide and colonize Africa without conflicts among European rivalry nations (Robinson et al., 1965, p. 175). The emergence of social Darwinism and the "white man's burden" was the impetus for the Europeans to scramble for African natural resources. It was assumed the "White Man's Duty" to take over for these nations and lead the Africans on their behalf, according to the social Darwinist theory that only the smartest and strongest can rise to the top of the social ladder.

These European nations' contest to conquer Africa was made possible by technological advancements such as communication and transportation, which experienced enormous development as a result of industrialization, particularly with the development of steamships, railroads, and telegraphs and medicines for tropical diseases.

According to the history of British empires in Africa, the British faced strong competition from the French side. The British were primarily present in Egypt, South Africa, and East Africa during the Kenya-Uganda railway's construction. The French had already occupied West Africa, and from there they were attempting to push into the African interior with the goal of establishing an empire that stretched from west to east. By constructing a railway that connected the port of Mombasa to the east coast of Lake Victoria, the Nile's source, and eventually taking control of the Nile itself, the British, on the other hand, aimed to obstruct the French colonists' advancement into East Africa. They believed that the Nile River, which runs through the middle of the continent from south to north, would effectively stop any rival country from forming an east-west empire. Additionally, they thought that controlling the Nile River would have significant economic benefits.

Thus, in the narration of the construction of the railroad, Kimani shows the British occupation of Kenya and the Kenya-Uganda railway construction was for the purpose of economic pillage. He depicts how imperialists built the railway, four years later after the Berlin Conference conducted, to plunder (exploit) the natives and their natural resources. He demonstrates that the white man's arrival in Africa was not for the sake of civilization and evangelization, but for resource plunder.

Ahead of the commencement of the construction, the natives had already understood the railway as "the giant snake," capable of swallowing anything, resembling the train to the giant snake. The traditional prophet Me Katilili had predicted a long silvery snake would crawl across the region, eating crops, men, and wildlife to fill its big belly. The railway was assumed to be a long snake for two reasons. Firstly, the railway’s shape was like that of a snake. It was stretched out, rounding the landscape of the native land. Second, the train was swallowing everything like a big snake, helping the colonizers carry out what they could pillage from the land to the port of Mombasa, from where they shipped it to England:

> Me Katilili was a direct descendant from the lineage of the great seer, Kajuma wa Kajuma, who long foretold the onset of men with soft hair and long faces who would scour the land with men yoked like cattle, a prophecy

> that many saw fulfilled with the arrival of Arab slave traders. Me Katilili had warned about a long silvery snake that would slither across the land, swallowing crops, man, and beasts to fill its large belly (p. 118).

The snake also metaphorically represents the British empire itself. The empire swallows the villages of east Africa, changing the people, their culture, and physical environment. The people along with their ecosystem are swallowed and carried in the universalist ideology of British. The people, in the process of ecological imperialism, dispossessed of their inherent culture and environment, and they are offloaded of their own ideological train they are traveled by and transferred to the ideological portal foretold by Me Katilili. The natives become property of the empire along with their environment—they are incorporated and integrated to the system of capitalism, which can also be represented by Me Katilili's giant snake, to fuel the commerce of the empire.

The metaphor of the "big snake" holds profound symbolic significance in representing various elements such as the train, capitalism, or empire within the context of colonial exploitation. In Peter Kimani's narrative, this metaphor serves as a powerful allegory for the invasive and transformative forces brought by the train, capitalism, and imperial domination. The imagery of the snake conveys notions of stealth, voracity, and entwining influence, mirroring the insidious nature of colonial expansion and economic exploitation.

Kimani's portrayal suggests that the indigenous communities possessed a deep understanding of the impending changes and challenges even before the arrival of the British colonizers. This insight underscores the resilience and perceptiveness of the native populations in recognizing the looming threats posed by external forces seeking to reshape their land, culture, and way of life. By acknowledging the symbolic significance of the "big snake" as representative of the encroaching empire and its exploitative mechanisms, Kimani highlights the agency and awareness of the indigenous people in interpreting and responding to the impending colonial incursions.

In contrast to what Europeans assumed about Africans as uncivilized and pagan, Peter Kimani portrays the natives' deeper metaphysical and epistemological understanding through the prophetic journey of Me Katilili and his lineage. The traditional prophet

already foretold what weird creature was to come to the land and its ill consequences to the indigenous people and their environment. He precisely prophesized the very purpose of the construction of the railroad in the landscape of Rift Valley was for resource pillage, so that the natives could comprehend that the railway construction symbolizes the power of the colonizers to manipulate and transform their land via the use of technology. As depicted in text, the primary reason for Great Britain's invasion, annexation, and colonialism of Kenya in general and the building of a transportation system linking Mombasa (Nakuru) and Victoria ports in particular can be boiled down to a desire for the country's natural resources.

Firstly, the colonialists were driven to colonize Kenya for the pursuit of fertile land, under the cover of the civilizing mission and Christianity. As Kimani depicts, one of the triggering motives that led Great Britain to colonize Kenya is for plundering land resources. We understand this fact in the letter written by one of the main characters, Reverend Turnbull:

> Reverend Turnbull described the land in 1893 when he wrote his first pastoral letter to the mother church in England. He wrote about the marvels that he had witnessed during his travels—from the gentleness of the sands on the pristine coastal beaches, to the stunning lakes that seemingly appeared out of nowhere in the middle of forests, to the dramatic plunge of what European geographers had named the Rift Valley. (p. 11).

Even though the preacher, Reverend Turnbull, is a missionary, he is engaging in the exploration of East Africa and facilitating things for colonial leaders in order to map land of their interest. He claims that the Rift Valley is stunningly beautiful and justifies the settlement of Europeans in his pastoral letter to the mother church in England. In addition, he claims that the abundance of the natives' land raises the question of how it is conceivable to think that it was created by pagan deities when they are not aware of God (p. 11). The pastoral letter sent by Reverend Turnbull reflects the way that land is viewed by European elites as a commodity and by Christians as a gift from God to rule over.

This reflects anthropocentric and Eurocentric philosophical attitudes as they hold that people can exploit nature to gratify their desires since they are metaphysically

distinctive (Descartes, 1999; Thomas Aquinas, 1964 and 1999; Immanuel Kant, 1930). Humankind is seen as separate from nature and superior to it, and nature is viewed as a resource for humans to use. In Christianity views, humankinds are also indisputably superior to nature, and they are instructed to protect and use nature for their own benefit. Reverend Turnbull symbolizes missionaries who participated in the masquerade of evangelism to make it easier for colonial enterprises to establish themselves in Africa. He started his preaching ministry in Nakuru. He likes to refer to his mission as being "God-ordained" because he wasn't initially intended to be there.

He uses the natives' metaphor of the train as a snake to allude to the story of Jonah in the Bible, a servant of God who disregarded God's summons only to be swallowed by a whale and spit out in the city of Nineveh, where he was originally planned to be in order to proclaim the word of God. Reverend Turnbull recounts this to his congregations and claims that Nakuru, where he emerged from the iron snake's belly, is considered to be his Nineveh. Reverend Turnbull purposefully uses an analogy of the story of Jonah to his own in order to deviate from the claims made by the natives that the railroad is a giant snake that intends to consume them and everything that their environment produces.

His story is quite different from the story of Jonah. Reverend Turnbull is sent to the dark continent (as assumed by Europeans) by the mother church in England, based on the will of the UK government. He happily accepts the mission of enlightening the darkness through the preaching of Gospel and comes to Mombasa's seashore and travels to the hinterland by train. On contrary, Jonah is sent by God to Nineveh, the city located to the northeast of Israel, but indulging in rebellion, he sails to the opposite of Nineveh by crossing the sea and drowns when God sends a storm to stop him. For his rescue, God sends a fish and calls him again as the fish spits him up on the shoreline not far from Nineveh. After he delivers a brief sermon in Nineveh, the entire city turns to God and repents. Following this, Jonah confesses to God that he originally ran away from Nineveh, believing that God would be merciful to the city, though he wanted the city to be destroyed. Actually, Reverend Turnbull, who is originally from Ireland, is also swallowed and brought by capitalist ideology which can be metaphorically represented as the big snake as human’s intrinsic value is degraded to material benefit. He is ordained and carried to east Africa for the success of the empire.

Kimani says, "the Nineveh narrative was a white lie" (p. 11) because the Reverend is with the colonial master to accompany him wherever he goes. In the narrative, he helps him get a parcel of land from a native in the colony. Reverend Turnbull tells the master when they arrived in Nakuru to build Sally, the colonial master's wife, a house, a castle, between the spring and the lake. Sally is in England, but the colonial master's wish for her is to come to Africa and live in the stunning valley with him. She symbolically stands for the mother country, England. The colonial master's efforts are for the benefit of Sally. The pillage of land is meant for the mother country which is described as "Land itself, cast as a female and 'new' to Europeans, was 'ripe' for conquering and taming." (Ashcroft, et al., 2006, p. 91).

Kimani's purpose of using Reverend Turnbull and Colonial Master McDonald together in snatching native's fertile land for Sally is clear. The idea is expressed in the letter sent to Reverend Turnbull from the Leader of Kiama kia Rukungu, the rebel group, which is read as, "You came with the gun and the Bible, the note charged, now you reap what you sowed." (p.207). The colonial history of Africa witnesses the white man's success in capturing African land is possible by the use of the gun, military power, and the Bible, Christianity.

The interplay of the two characters, Master McDonald and Reverend Turnbull, makes the narrative of the story of how the land of Kenya was plundered by Great Britain complete. Kimani says, "McDonald and Reverend Turnbull had never felt further apart." (p.204). McDonald acts as the colonial Master and the representative of the British imperialism in Kenya while Reverend Turnbull plays the representative role of the mother church in England. In other words, McDonald leads the political wings of the colonialism while Reverend Turnbull leads the religious wing. McDonald plays the card of militarization to enforce the colonial policy. Reverend Turnbull, on the other hand, makes the colonial environment conducive through the use of the Christianity.

Kimani also uses the statements of Nobel Peace Prize winner Desmond Tutu to show how Great Britain plundered Kenyan's land in the letter written to Reverend Turnbull by the leader of the rebel group: "You came to our country and told us to close our eyes to pray. When we opened our eyes, our land was gone. The Bible in your hand had been

replaced by a gun." (p. 205). Christianity was one of the justifications used by British power to carry out their colonial rule and exploit African land: Erickson, the colonial governor says, "…commerce comes first, followed by civilization, and then Christianity." Not only United Kingdom, for many European countries, Christianity served as a symbol of Western culture and the foundation of Anglo-Saxon morality (Boahen, 2011, p. 12).

Moreover, Christianity played a pivotal role in destroying the cultural and religious setbacks in the establishment of the settler colonialism by plundering the land. Kimani also shows this fact by interplaying the colonial master and religious leader. In *Dance of the Jakaranda*, Captain John Adams, outgoing commissioner of the British East Africa Protectorate, gives a piece of advice to Ian Edward McDonald, commissioner of the British East Africa Protectorate to meet Reverend Turnbull, who can help him make inroads in turning natives' minds in the direction they want:

> The kaya, the Wanyika believe, is the hallowed seat of their god, and they feed the trees with meat and honey. I suspect it is this healthy nourishment that led the figs in those kayas to grow to such gigantic scales that several men cannot hold the girth of one such tree. The people have mortal fear of those elders, while the fear of someone bewitching another is so commonplace that you will find children wearing protective amulets from birth to keep them out of harm's way. This offers a chance for us to tap into this illogic psychology and make inroads in turning natives' minds in another direction. Reverend Turnbull is doing a good job of it, and he's a man I propose you should meet and get to know. He is with the Church Mission Society and has a native lad he uses for translation. Not particularly good, but something is better than nothing (P. 95).

The narration of Ian Edward McDonald, the colonial master, also shows the complete sketch of the desire of British colonial enterprise in Africa. "He remembered the breathtaking hot water spring and the lake in the Rift Valley, and he decided that would be the land he would claim. Reverend Turnbull offered to accompany him on the trip back to the valley" (p. 12). McDonald expects long to be given the title of knighthood by the Monarchy for successfully completing the construction of the railway in the land of aliens, and providing military service in South Africa, but he is told to choose a parcel of land of

his interest from the colonial territory as a reward instead of the title. Though his primary goal has been to be a knighthood, he accepts the gift considering it as a big advantage because he recalls that the land is fertile and rich in a spectacular hot water spring.

What the colonial master hunts for is the fame (to be a knighthood) to prove his eminence to his wife who departed him long before (p. 38). Even what triggered McDonald to take the role of constructing the railroad in East Africa lies in the fact that his wife who is daughtered to Knighthood disrespects him by having love affair with a black man in South Africa. So, with the hope that he and Sally might get a second chance at their failed marriage, he sees his posting in the new British East African colony as an escape from personal anguish and humiliation (p. 38).

In his letter to Sally, he indicates his desire to be a "lieutenant of the entire province." What is disappointing for McDonald is that she tells him that even if he became governor, she would not come to live with him in the British East African Protectorate. Then, in order to live with her, he thinks that he has to get knighted for the service of the empire and return back to England with the title. For this purpose, he is very eager to be given the title. However, a parcel of land is given to him as a reward. The point lies here. What are the criteria for getting a knighthood title? Why does the colonial government reward him with land from the colony instead of the title he has been aspiring for?

Kimani, here, wants the readers to understand that land is the center of the colonial enterprise that the British colonialists came for. For the government of England, the land, along with its natural habitats, is more valuable than the title. Even McDonald knows that owning the fertile land of East Africa's Rift Valley has a big advantage, but he continues yearning for the title after getting the land as a reward.

McDonald recalls "the breathtaking land of East Africa" and accepts the gift, despite missing his love in England and the title he has been wishing for. He absolutely knows that he can take land of his interest from anywhere in the territory, by displacing the natives. The government of England has unbounded power to give him a land he chooses from anywhere. McDonald is not alone to take fertile land in Kenya, but there are many other British settlers who can own land by evicting the natives: “In the meantime, white farmers occupied all arable lands, which they insisted they were holding in trust for the

Africans. Once they were ready to receive the land, it would be granted unto them." (p. 201). Kenya was given equal status with South Africa, Ireland, Algeria, and Mozambique for the patterns of settlement and cultural and racial legacies that lie within the abstract paradigms of settler colonialism (Ashcroft et al, 2006, p. 237).

Kimani zooms in on McDonald among the first British settlers to arrive in Kenya in order to demonstrate how the British colonists originally came to the country for the pillage of land there. Through the characterization of McDonald, he depicts the nature of colonialism as the British settler colonialists aims to stay in the land. In contrast to other colonial agents like traders, settler collectives seek to inhabit and claim authority over native lands indefinitely. This is evident in the life of McDonald. Though he is supposed to return to England after completing the construction of the railway, he is made to stay by the colonial government on purpose.

The colonial government's colonial policy choice is reflected in the denial of McDonald's knighthood and in the grant of a parcel of land in the colony instead. The purpose of railway construction is also part of the colonial government's plan which is to snatch fertile land from the natives by any means and to settle its own people on. This is clearly stated in the text as: "the wealth of the British East Africa Protectorate could not be accessed without the rail, and the British government expected a return on its investment."

In the text, eventually, McDonald traces a land of his interest in Nakuru between a lake and a spring of hot and warm water and constructs a house that resembles the *Taj Mahal*, one of the most beautiful buildings dedicated to love, for Sally. McDonald displaces many natives to own one thousand acres of land in the Rift Valley (p. 201). Kimani also shows that the colonial invasion of settlers was a structure, not an incident that happened by mistake. The assertion of state sovereignty and legal control over their territories coincides with the deliberate eradication of indigenous communities. Conversely, Kimani depicts that British imperialism has a predetermined goal for the operation of settler colonialism on the land of natives. The imperialists understand that the Kenyan farmland is very fertile to farm crops but assert the natives are primitive to understand the market situation.

McDonald exhibits erratic behavior which exemplifies the fluctuating nature of British settler colonialism in Kenya. He took up military career and served his country for 23 years in South Africa. He became a colonial master and supervised the railway construction. After Sally rejects him by filing for divorce, he transforms *Taj Mahal* into a farmhouse to feed the nation with milk. Even the idea of feeding the nation with milk has failed to progress. Then McDonald devises a farming scheme to grow wheat and feed the nation. This also did not yield any results for him. McDonald shifts his attention to conservation (p. 200). He builds a sanctuary far from populated areas to observe wild animals. He takes notes on their surroundings and observes their habitats. All of the colony's notable visitors would soon turn to him for tours that allowed them to appreciate nature to its fullest. For his conservation vision, McDonald displaces natives destroying their eminent culture and their relation to nature.

Kimani further depicts the British people's desire to settle in the land as it is for hedonistic reasons. "This was the lot that in later years came to be known as the Happy Valley Set. Their debauchery entered the annals of history because that's all they ever produced." (p. 200). Kimani bases this claim on historical information regarding the "Happy Valley Set," a group of hedonistic, primarily British and Anglo-Irish, aristocrats and adventurers who settled in the Wanjohi Valley's "Happy Valley" area, close to the Aberdare Mountain range, in colonial Kenya and Uganda between the 1920s and 1940s. Kimani puts their intention of coming to East Africa's Rift Valley in this extract:

> While many admitted they had fled England to escape its horrible weather, they had no hang-ups about their motherland. They were happy to experiment with life and do what they wouldn't dare back in England. Like sleeping with another man's wife, or swapping wives with other men, or keeping a dozen servants. Yes, slavery had been abolished in Europe, but not in her dominions. And the master could fornicate with the servants and produce yellow babies without raising an eyebrow because the sun would tan them to acceptable social hues. As long as they bore white skin in the black land, the English would always have something to eat. And drink (pp. 200-201).

This excerpt sheds light on the oppressive racial hierarchy and exploitation that were deeply rooted in the society of the time. It demonstrates how the English colonizers, while claiming to have abolished slavery in Europe, continued to perpetuate it in their dominions. The passage also emphasizes the hypocrisy and double standards upheld by the English, as they engaged in immoral activities such as adultery and wife swapping without any social consequences, as long as their offspring possessed white skin in the black land. This serves as a stark reminder of the dehumanization and exploitation faced by the native inhabitants of the colonized regions.

The colonizers' actions not only perpetuated the dehumanization and exploitation of the native inhabitants but also reinforced the racial hierarchies and power dynamics that existed during that time. It is disheartening to see how the English colonizers used their dominance to justify their immoral activities and disregard the lives and rights of the indigenous people. This passage sheds light on the deep-seated inequalities and injustices that were ingrained in the society of the colonial era, leaving a lasting impact on the affected communities for generations to come.

4.2.2 The Pillage of Native's Wage Labor: *Stealing Limbs*

Historian Walter Rodney asserts that colonial administrations, upon conquering African territories, pursued dual objectives. Firstly, they sought to satisfy the desires of their own populace for mining concessions or agricultural land. Simultaneously, these administrations established conditions wherein indigenous Africans, whose lands had been exploited, were compelled to engage in labor not only to meet tax obligations but also to ensure their survival. In regions with settler populations like Kenya and Rhodesia, Rodney contends that colonial authorities enforced restrictions on Africans from cultivating cash crops, thereby ensuring a readily available labor force for the benefit of the white settlers. Illustrating the plight of the Kikuyu people, Rodney cites Colonel Grogan, a European settler in Kenya, who bluntly states, "We have taken his land. Now we must take his labor. Mandatory labor is the consequence of our territorial dominance" (p. 258).

The need for cheap African labor served as a unifying factor among the various European colonies in Africa. The foundation for the construction of colonial infrastructure was provided by African laborers. Both private business interests and European settlers

required labor. Africans had access to land during the early days of colonial rule, though, and they had little desire to perform arduous labor for meager wages. As a result, the various colonial regimes in various parts of Africa created an oppressive system of labor exploitation. Africans would be compelled to work for the government and for individual colonial rulers. Additionally, they would be compelled to work for the state even though it was in their community's best interest.

In *Dance of the Jakaranda*, it is evident that the colonial government's agenda extends beyond the exploitation of natural resources (land) to encompass the exploitation of indigenous labor. The native population is displaced from their ancestral lands and coerced into labor on construction projects overseen by the colonial administration or on plantations owned by colonial masters, often receiving minimal or no compensation for their work. This exploitation of labor serves three primary objectives:

Firstly**,** the British imperial government needs a cheap or free labor force for the construction of the railway. Kimani's novel views the historical facts of railway construction between 1896 and 1903, when the British built the first railway in their East African colonies, connecting two ports, Port Mombasa and Victoria, in the British East Africa Protectorate. Cheap or free African labor was needed to construct this railroad, which was not readily available. As a solution, the British government used coercion, which was, ironically, the other type of slavery. The outgoing Commissioner of the British East Africa Protectorate, Captain John Adams, in his letter to McDonald, states that “finding laborers for paid work is extremely frustrating,” and he reminds him that the natives are “horrible, lazy, thieving,” and “cannot be forced to work, even on the pain of death.” (pp. 91-92).

John Adams, like Sir Charles Erikson, the colonial governor, believes in the strategic importance of railway construction in BEAP. He stresses its significance, saying, "There is something to ship off and use the rail once it is laid, and then there is the European capital injection, which should attract even more investors from England and the rest of Europe, including Americans." (p. 96). Conversely, he displays the natives’ aversion to joining labor as an impeding problem for the imperial vision: "What stands in the way is how to get natives out of their settlements and get them to engage in wage labor. That’s the

only way to get the railway laid. I think you should use this line as your mantra to all the natives: Get off the land, get on rail!" (p. 96).

In order for the natives to take labor work, John Adams suggests imposing a tax on them. Doing this makes the natives conscious of the need for paper money in their lives in order to pay tax. So, it is a system devised by the British government to mobilize the natives in mass with a low wage or no pay. The assumption is that if the natives lack money to pay the tax imposed on them, they are forced to join the labor for free: “Make every household pay, and demand that those who default will be taken off to work on the rail for free.” (P. 96). Then, it is believed that the natives would accept the labor with low pay, which is a little better than slavery.

If this does not work, John Adams suggests banning hunting and killing animals as another mechanism to mobilize labor from natives (p. 96). This is not for the sake of protecting animals from exploitation but in order to dry the income the natives get for their livelihood. The natives “hunt elephants for their tusks to sell to Arabs, or to buy trophies from other tribes for sale on the coast.” (p. 96). In order to avail them for wage labor, drying their means of earning a living is therefore “the safest guarantee.”

Another more severe mechanism devised by British officials to force the natives to join the wage labor is decimating the natives’ domestic animals using rinderpest. Most of the natives are pastoralists and semi-agriculturalists. Destroying their domestic animals makes them dependent on the colonial government and makes them accept the wage labor easily. Another equally dangerous mechanism to mobilize natives to join wage labor is using fleas to attack natives as they “do not wear shoes.” As the last resort, John Adams strongly suggests the deadly violence as a viable option. He says, “There is no better medicine to native obstinacy than a good beating.” These procedures are designed to make natives dependent on colonial policy. The goal of disembarking the natives and their animals is to weaken them physically and economically so that colonial imperialism can carry out its mission in foreign lands.

Kimani demonstrates how the railway project, which is part of the formation of colonialism along with the building of the railway, is tied to large-scale movements of people and labor. This is done specifically to anchor the colonial empire in the fertile region

of East Africa. The colonial powers have the ability to mobilize huge numbers of laborers with the least amount of capital by any means. Because of colonial rules, the fear of intimidation, and the use of force, wages are paid to policemen and administrators, and labor is created as such. In the novel, mistreatment (othering), beating, vulnerability (lack of insurance for life), and alienation of the native laborers are apparently depicted. They work extremely hard in railway construction, being assigned to the most difficult and time-consuming tasks. African history writer Walter Rodney stresses the difficult tasks that the natives are made to handle in the construction as Kenyans constructed the railway under European supervision using only their bare hands, shovels, and stone hammers while working under armed guard on a million-ton excavation project (1973, p. 328).

When workers fail to meet their quotas, the colonial master arranges for overnight working hours, during which they are ambushed by wild animals while toiling (p. 13). René Descartes' perspective on animals, which served as a breeding ground for western anthropocentrism, also applies to African laborers. Descartes reduces animals to the status of robots, which do not experience pain. African laborers are also forced to toil day and night as if they are not in pain in order for the Whiteman's project to succeed. Kimani states this as: "[T]hey [workers] …. toiled hard to cover the assigned distance, sparing little time to catch their breath or break wind." (p. 121). The laborers' suffering is evident in the nature of work they are made to do, which is narrated as:

> … most [workers] walked barefoot, the cracks in their heels deep enough to hide a rupee coin. But the rhythms of men crushing stone went on uninterrupted, as did the swish of the scythe nipping vegetation with every swing. Within no time, one hundred feet would open where thorns and thistles had existed since God had created the world, and other men would follow closely with makarai full of crushed stone, which was spread out over the space where the rail would lie (p. 122).

Kimani describes the severity of the rail work and its effects on workers, stating that when workers sleep with their eyes closed, they listen to dull pains in their limbs and nudges of tightness in their backs, trying to figure out when they may have injured themselves (p. 123).

They are also oppressed on their own land along with other non-human agencies and marginalized from the mainstream, and given the same status with animals, because of their color. “The division of labor was strictly racial: the menial laborers and carriers were African; Indians did the technical work, the British supervised them all.” (P. 120). When McDonald, the colonial master, arrives in Mombasa to run the railway project, he begins the work by bringing superintendents from Europe and technicians and surveyors from India. He also recruits workers from other regions of Africa. Then, he puts division among those railway workers.

Ahead of the start of the construction, he has to temporarily keep the laborers at a phallic building which has three floors (p. 84). So, he gives the top upstairs to the workers who are from Europe (white people). Then, the in-between floor is given to Indians, and the ground floor is given to Africans. The floor which is occupied by whites is the lightest, cleanest and the most polished one. The workers can watch at the stretched Indian Ocean through those windows. The middle floor is darker and less clean by far. The Indian workers are less privileged than the whites but a bit better than the Africans who occupied the darkest floor.

Master McDonald's intentions are evident in his belief that Europeans are enlightened and educated, contrasting with his view of Africans as uneducated savages inhabiting a primitive continent. Indians are afforded a higher status compared to black workers, with McDonald enforcing segregation among the laborers, except for instances where misbehaving Indians may be relocated to the black workers' area.

This mindset aligns with the erroneous notion perpetuated by Europeans that Africans are inherently backward, savage, and incapable of embracing the scientific and technological progress championed by civilized societies. A central tenet of African colonialism is the purported mission of civilizing the indigenous populations, as espoused by the colonizers. This rationale underpins the exclusion of African laborers from technical roles in railway construction within the narrative.

The question arises as to whether Africans, like Indians, possess the capacity for intellectually demanding tasks. European critics simplistically assert that Africans lack mental insight, echoing the sentiments of philosopher Immanuel Kant, who contends that

blacks lack the reasoning faculties inherent in whites. Kant's hierarchy of intellectual abilities places Hindus at the highest echelon of educability, while relegating Negroes to menial education. This prejudiced perspective reflects the imperial elites' portrayal of Africa and elucidates McDonald's labor allocation practices within this framework.

African laborers are made to be servants of all: the whites who are given “all talents and motives” and Indians who are favored to be educated at the highest degree by Europeans. Historically, Africans were denied the opportunity to participate in crafts that required technicality and scientific measurement on purpose (Rodney, 1973). It was the result of the European scholars' overt racism toward Africa's color rather than the mental inability of Africans. In other words, if African laborers were exposed to tasks that required mental activities, they would perform as the Europeans or Indians do.

According to African history writer Walter Rodney, African laborers were purposefully made servants; they were marginalized and treated separately from the other races. Even if they were educated, it would be to become obedient servants to the Whiteman. African workers are paid less though their works are more arduous and dangerous. Despite the fact that capitalism was eager to exploit laborers ubiquitously, the colonizers in Africa had additional racial justifications for treating African workers unfairly. The notion that the black man was inferior to white men led to the conclusion that he should be paid less.

Kimani thus critiques the colonizers' deliberate racism, which the natives are forced to endure. McDonald deliberately places workers of African and Indian descent at a distance equal to the distance between two railroad tracks. The two rail lines are not in contact with one another. Similarly, the colonial governor believes that African and Indian workers should be kept separate for the success of the East African railway construction and colonial enterprise. African workers are the most vulnerable members of the working class. They live in an open field, while Indian workers live in tarpaulin tents. McDonald intentionally shields white workers from lion attacks by providing the most secure housing, while the rest of the workers are left to the elements. Moreover, African laborers are alienated from nature and placed on the new path paved by the colonial power. They are

snatched of their relation to their land and animals, and made to work for the colonial projects.

However, Indians are given preferential treatment over Africans in the novel, they are also subjected to physical and mental anguish. They are othered and mistreated by the colonial powers. Kimani draws his narration of the Indians involvement as the main actors in the construction of railway from the history of Indians in Kenya who were brought to BEAP as indentured laborers, a system devised by European powers after slavery was abolished in the first decades of the 19th century to meet the need for cheap labor in colonial projects. For the 500-mile railway's construction, which begins in the port city of Mombasa and ends in Port Elizabeth, he believes that 30,000 Indians also arrives in BEAP as indentured laborers during this time. Among them, an estimated 5,000 laborers died, eaten by the lions of Tsavo, or became victims of tropical diseases like malaria and tsetse infections (p. 189).

In general, the colonial government mistreats its workers, particularly the African and Indian ones. The majority of the difficult tasks are completed by African laborers for little or no pay. Indians are more favored and assigned to easier and more comfortable tasks. Though they are made to toil a lot, they are not given enough food during the construction of the railroad (p. 140).

Secondly, after pillaging the best land, white settlers attempt to build a new world of pleasure using cheap African labor, or slaves. Individual settlers' demands for cheap African labor are high in areas with significant European settlement, simply to satisfy materialistic interests. However, wages are shockingly low, work is arduous and dangerous, and many Africans are denied access to their primary source of income: the homestead. The people are designed to serve the happiness of individual settlers for free. In the course of the story, Kimani clearly shows how Europeans come to the *Happy Valley Set* to experiment with a new way of life and take large parcels of land and slaves that ordinary folk are not permitted to possess in Europe. “They were happy to experiment with life and do what they wouldn’t dare back in England. Like sleeping with another man’s wife, or swapping wives with other men, or keeping a dozen servants.” (p. 200).

Finally, the colonial masters take advantage of the natives' labor force for their own house construction and transportation services. A good example is that of McDonald, the colonial master. He exploits natives' bodies in addition to plundering their land. He embezzles the native labor force for the construction of the house of love for his wife, which is likened to Taj Maal. He mobilizes the natives in mass for the construction of this house of love, which is named the Jakaranda, with no pay. The house is built in order to attract his wife, who does not love him. He thinks that if he builds the house, which resembles Taj Maal, for her, he can win her love and make her live with him. Kimani shows the illogicity of the mind of the colonial master in the construction of the Jakarand. Jakaranda is actually not like *Taj Maal;* it is rather the reverse of it as there is no love in the marriage of the couple as it was in *Taj Maal*.

Kimani metaphorically shows the empire building resumed by the British government in Kenya. In the naming of the house, the writer replaces the letter ‘c’ in *Jacaranda* with the initial letter of Kenya (k) in order to show that the house’s symbolic representation of the establishment of the colonial government in Kenya. The comparison shows that the Jakaranda is built for Sally, his wife, while the colonial empire is founded and cherished in East Africa for England. England is metaphorically represented by Sally. The African free labor force constructs the Jakaranda during the day and night, and it is completed in ten months (p. 13). Its garden is designed in the same style as the *Taj Mahal* and is surrounded by Jacaranda trees.

McDonald eventually invites Sally to the sparkling compound, which everyone admires. Being faithful to his invitation, Sally appears to the scene, but without giving signal to McDonald she disappears to England and sends a letter to him after a month notifying him that she is filing a divorce. One of the reasons for avoiding seeing McDonald is for his abusive treatment of the black workers (p. 41). On her arrival, she sees scars on the face of one the servants who McDonald strands to welcome and accompany her from the train station to the Jakaranda. Having seen that she ponders on McDonald’s prolonged behavior which is not changing forever, and she returns back to England without seeing him.

> I am distraught to write this letter, the last to you from me. Your cruelty toward me and fellow men, which I have borne and witnessed over the years, is the ground on which I'm filing for divorce. Yours is the Heart of Darkness (p. 41).

Sally is disturbed by McDonald's overall approach to human relationships. She labels the landscapes made ready for her *"the heart of darkness*." Kimani's intention here is to reflect on Joseph Conrad's novel *The Heart of Darkness* as it backfires on the colonizers. *The Heart of Darkness* is not the continent of Africa, but it is what the White Man builds—the White Man's empire in Africa is the heart of darkness, along with its plundering in the name of civilization, commerce, and Christianity.

In the novel, McDonald severely exploits natives for the construction of this house. The native laborers serve as a means of transportation to bring concrete blocks for the construction of Jakaranda from Congo and Nyasaland. He also uses African handymen (p. 40). In the building of Jakaranda, McDonald also applies the same racist approach he uses for the construction of the railroad. He once again maintains the division of labor he employs on the railway construction: "African laborers teamed up with an Indian artisan." "A white architect named Johnson—whom the African workers called Ma-Johnny—provided general oversight." (p. 41).

4.3 Environmental Horrors of Colonialism

Kimani's narrative can be interpreted as a depiction of the environmental atrocities stemming from colonialism. His novel illustrates how imperialist forces exploit the ecological vulnerabilities of the indigenous population to assert control over the land. Through his artistic expression, he vividly captures the profound environmental degradation caused by colonialism. Kimani denounces the use of military aggression to enforce colonial rule, leading to deforestation, forest destruction, and the displacement of native communities. Furthermore, he sheds light on the adverse impacts of colonial conservation efforts on East Africa's wildlife and gaming sectors. The novel serves as a poignant critique of the environmental devastation wrought by colonialism.

Kimani also underscores the erosion of traditional ecological knowledge and practices crucial for harmonious coexistence with nature. He exposes how the imposition of Western values disrupts the delicate ecological equilibrium, resulting in dire

consequences. Additionally, the author emphasizes the significance of honoring and preserving indigenous cultures and their profound connection to the environment. Through his compelling storytelling, Kimani prompts readers to contemplate the enduring repercussions of colonialism on both the natural world and its inhabitants. Overall, he censures the use of military force, disease, deforestation, torture, and colonial conservation practices employed by imperial powers to establish dominance in Kenya.

4.3.1 Ecological Destruction through Military Violence and Fire

Firstly, the British colonial power uses military violence, which is one of the strategies of ecological imperialism, in order to expand into East African land. The effects of military violence are felt not only on human agency but also on nonhuman elements. The colonialism of Kenya was not based on the treaty between the British colonial government and the natives' village councils as it is recorded in the colonial documents of Great Britain. Kimani's novel depicts how the British colonial administrators destroy the environment and natural ecologies altogether, using military power in the process of annexing the country. The use of dynamite and weapons by the British security personnel results in the complete annihilation of both humans and nonhumans in one of the villages, as it is revealed in the novel.

As has been discussed, the very purpose of the British colonialism in Kenya is expressed in the words of the British East Africa Protectorate commissioner on the day of the inauguration of the railway construction as being commerce, civilization, and Christianity. Commerce is understood in the sense of taking part in the competition with European powers for the exploitation of East African natural resources and wage labor. This precious and sacred purpose, as the colonizers think, becomes successful by battling the grassroot resistance from the natives using military technologies that the natives are not capable of using.

As depicted in the text, McDonald, the colonial administrator, faces stiff challenges as a result of the natives' opposition to colonialism in general and the construction of a railway in their territory in particular. Consequently, he instructs his policemen to encircle the *kaya*, the place which is considered sacred and "the hallowed seat of god" (p. 95). Kimani describes *kaya* as that the natives "have mortal fear of the place and the elders."

The people feed the trees with honey and meat, which grows the trees to "gigantic scales that several men cannot hold the girth of one such tree" (p. 95). The colonial authorities understand that *kaya* is the central and unifying place for the natives, where the epicenter of resistance exists. In the absence of the kaya and the mystic power it carries, fathers are powerless to influence their offspring's affairs, and the elders' influence over the spiritual and political well-being of the community is dwindling. Capturing this epicenter is thus given top priority by the colonial rulers, which Captain John Adams stresses on in his letter to McDonald.

With this preoccupation, McDonald travels to *kaya* and orders the head of the clan to provide him with 500 men for the construction of the railway as a pretext for the theft of construction materials and the detention of two engineers, of whom the natives are unaware. When the clan head challenges him, he tries to intimidate him with his policemen. McDonald instructs the clan chief that he requires 500 men to work on the rails in the following week as punishment for their attacks on his caravans and kidnapping of his men. The inhabitants of the nine villages of Griama then drumbeat, mourn, and show hesitation as the code to summon the community to a meeting in the *kaya* the following day.

At the meeting, the nine elders' leader describes the perilous situation that threatens their collective future, eloquently stating that McDonald had imposed a fine on the natives to be paid—"not in terms of money, not in terms of grains, not in terms of animals, but in terms of humans" (p. 112). To incite more rage among the people, the chief elder recalls the prophecy, saying, "This thing that the white man is building on our land is the snake that Me Katilili warned about. And for an appetizer, he is asking for five hundred men to push into the belly of the beast..." (p. 112). The head of the elders is describing the nature of the colonizers as materialists. This is part of the mission of the colonizers as they diminish the value of humans and nonhumans into commodities. The colonizers come to the villages with the intention of integrating both human and nonhuman resources in order to satisfy their materialistic desires through the exploitation of ecosystems, which is expressed in capitalism.

Following the speech, more ferocious eruptions break out. The women dance around cursing the white man, their genitalia on display and their loincloths ripped off. The

boys draw their swords from their sheaths and show how they kill the white man. Elderly men openly cry as a result of an unjust intrusion into their way of life. They end the meeting by taking the oath to defend their hallowed land to the "last man, to the last woman, to the last child," and to their “last breath.”

McDonald sends 40 policemen to swoop into three villages and arrest all the men after hearing about the meeting's reports. However, women and children are found during the search because all of the elderly and young men from the three villages have already left for the forest. Then, among the policemen, as one of them tries to pull at the breast of a young woman, and the woman screams her protest and shakes off his hand, the pan tosses oil on the open flame, and a new blaze leaps into the air and burns down huts. Since there are no men to contain the fire, it spreads quickly, razing an entire village. The colonizers are unethical in their approach towards both the humans and the nonhumans because they have got inverted image of the natives and their environment in their discourse, and this brings a total environmental damage. As Joseph Conrad’s narration depicts, Africa is a dark continent where uncivilized and pagan people live. McDonald and his policemen have similar attitude towards the Africans and their natural environment. Consequently, they do not sympathize with the natives and their overall environment.

It can be seen that the destruction caused by the fire is extremely horrific; not only the huts and possessions within the huts are burned down, but as Kimani puts it, "the entire village is razed by the fire." In rural villages in Africa, huts are not normally interconnected in their structural construction. Since each household in the village has its own plot of land and hut, they are simply scattered in different locations in the form of dots. Therefore, in order for the fire to jump from hut to hut, it must first burn the ground in between them, along with any nearby forest and living things. The number of microbial and tree species that are wiped out in the village is unimaginable. The entire habitat, including their homes, is destroyed by the fire caused by the policeman's uncaring gratification.

The kaya remains the epicenter of the local uprising. McDonald struggles with his next move. He has tried and failed to appoint local elders as chiefs in order for his colonial strategies to succeed. He has also taken rams, as he was ordered to do by the elders to appease the rage of their gods for stepping into kaya without permission. He eventually

becomes irritated and erupts in violence, ordering the kaya to be destroyed with dynamite (p. 119). McDonald, as an experienced colonial soldier, decides to follow cautious and quick steps to avoid an expected backfire during the operation.

Under cover of darkness, he quickly secures the perimeter of the kaya with the help of the British policemen. Kaya is an Edenic place with mangrove forests and palm trees that seem to be connected in series, while the ground is covered in thorn bushes, thistles, and fallen leaves (p. 119). The darkness within the forest is intense, especially at night. McDonald rings the kaya with dynamite and turns the place into ashes within a blink of an eye. Kimani describes the incident as “a flash of lightning that lit the dark forest, followed by a clap of thunder. Those who survived would tell their children and their children’s children that they had never heard a louder blast.” (p.119). McDonald could have used other military tactics to subdue the kaya and its elders, but he wants to demonstrate to the locals his country’s superior military and technology. This is the conquering strategy used by the colonial power, as stated by Alfred Crosby. British imperialism's success was largely a result of their superior organization and technological prowess. McDonald hears the following testimony from the mouths of the natives, which is what he predicted to hear after the blast:

> Others said they had never imagined that humans could possess such power as to cause lightning and thunder and literally uproot trees and hurl them into the air. Nyundo, who witnessed it from a corner in the kaya, was so traumatized by the destruction that he lost his voice, so there was no one to marvel about the enormous power of mzungu [white man], or even debate whether it was the cannon or the dynamite that caused the greater damage or made the louder blast. What was most evident was the deafening silence from the community, its fighting spirit momentarily crushed. (p. 119).

Kimani describes the destruction caused by colonial authorities, giving it a transcendental demeanor, and attributing it to the annulation of nature altogether, including the religious site (kaya), as "it was an episode recorded in local lore as the day the figs walked and birds froze in midair." (p. 136). He also refers to it as "the day of the earthquake, for the powerful blast upturns trees, casting light upon the dark enclave that has preserved

the power and mystery of ancient gods for generations." When the colonial authorities are unable to persuade the native elders through argument, they do not hesitate to demonstrate the power of militarism and technology. The colonial master, McDonald, shows the natives that his power in the technological military can do anything. He threatens that he can wipe out the natives from the face of the earth at once. One of the characters in the text, called Nyndo, first compares the cannon blast to none of the gun in his admiration of the white man's power. "Mark my word: a cannon blast has no equivalent; it is the mother of all blasts." (p. 88). Nyundo describes the horrific blasts and its environmental consequences as:

> Sparrows suspended their fluttering to listen to the blast, for they had never heard such a sound. The roaring sea waves, he said, flattened out to duck the cannon fire so that the sea lay flat like a mirror reflecting the sun above. The palm trees dropped all their fruit—mature, immature, raw, and ripe." Nyundo dropped his voice and said sotto voce, "Like a woman losing a pregnancy." Then, resuming his narration in a well-modulated tone: "The swinging branches were suspended in midair, the leaves arched awkwardly like a dreadlocked head . . . Maajabu! (p. 88).

Nyundo also witnessed the second explosion, which was dynamite. The second blast, which targets the kaya, the cultural and religious center of the nine villages, is the most horrific; it causes a complete obliteration of the environment. He is one of the survivors of the blast, but his voice is damaged. The elders and the people who come to Kaya are massacred, and the earth is left with nothing on it. Nyundo narrates this as "a heart of darkness thrown wide open, like a book." "I have seen it all with these very eyes."

McDonald gains from the destruction of the kaya, which Nyundo views as a transformative moment. This allows the colonial ruler to suppress resistance and advance the railway construction. Nyundo reflects on the motivations behind such actions, questioning why a man would leave his homeland to impose his lifestyle on others and eradicate their culture. Despite posing these questions to McDonald on the eve of Independence Day, he receives no response. Subsequently, Nyundo and other groups encircle the Jakaranda, a structure resembling the Taj Mahal built by McDonald as a

symbol of British imperialism, and dismantle it, choosing to spare McDonald amidst the destruction.

Furthermore, during a rebellion against the colonial government, the colonial authorities will not hesitate to use whatever alternatives are available to them. They kill the natives' animals and raze their village entirely. Fighter jets that prove the power of the white man destroy villages that are perched gently on hills or nestled in forests overnight, leveling them to the ground (p. 204).

In general, the theme of ecological destruction through military violence and fire underscores the interconnectedness between colonial expansion, military aggression, and environmental devastation. By using military force as a tool of ecological imperialism, colonial powers not only sought to assert control over territories but also inflicted severe harm on the natural world. The narrative reveals how the pursuit of imperial dominance led to the destruction of forests, disruption of ecosystems, and overall environmental degradation. This theme highlights the exploitative and destructive nature of colonial endeavors, showcasing the profound impact of military violence on both human and non-human elements of the environment. Ultimately, the interpretation of this theme serves as a poignant reminder of the lasting ecological consequences of historical colonial actions and the urgent need for environmental stewardship and conservation in postcolonial contexts.

4.3.2 Biological Warfare: The Use of Disease

Campbell et al. (2010) elaborate on colonialism's violent engagement by asserting, "[T]he impacts of colonialism were similar, regardless of the specific colonizer: disease; destruction of indigenous social, political, and economic structures; repression; exploitation; land displacement; and land degradation" (p. 37). The colonial powers were harsh toward the natives and their environment. According to Crosby, the success of European imperialism has a "biological and ecological component" in particular. Unintentionally—and less frequently, purposefully—spreading European diseases to other parts of the world led to the annihilation of local populations, which paved the way for European military and technological invasion (Ashcroft, et al, 2013, p. 92).

In order to propagate themselves in the strategic land of Kenya, the colonizers do not flinch from using whatever means necessary to subdue natives along with their homestead. As depicted in the novel, they embark on the use of viruses and kill the herds of one of the tribes of Kenya, the Maasai, to make the people weak and dependent on the colonial enterprise. What makes the situation horrific is that the virus does not kill the herds instantly; instead, it is a gradual act that affects the mouth and feet, prohibiting the herds from going far for grazing. After it lends them suffering from starvation, it kills them at the end.

The colonizers instigate and orchestrate animosity between the two brothers as a means of sustaining the railroad's construction in Maasai territory. Captain John Adams discovers that the Maasai are a nomadic people, he deliberately introduces disease from Europe that kills all their herds in order to play the divide-and-rule card between brothers contending for the title of the council. He uses the divide-and-rule strategy on the two blood brothers after spies reveal that Chief Lonana and his brother Sadaka are at odds. In order to take advantage of the conflict between the two brothers, they are deliberating carefully. The British School of Tropical Medicine is about to open a field station in the colony, the captain discovers as they are scratching their heads over the situation. A good opportunity for the colonizers is seen in the discovery of foot-and-mouth disease in Europe. Pellets containing the virus are provided to the spies to drop them in particular paddocks.

The virus, or nagana as the Maasai called the disease, soon causes the Maasai herds to start dying off like flies. Thousands of herds starve to death because they are unable to move in search of pasture because their gums are too infected to chew anything. Then, the community starts blaming Chief Lonana for not telling their medicine men to create something to counter the white man's medicine after their livelihoods are destroyed. The colonizers take advantage of the circumstance by sending agricultural extension agents, who sprays a foot-and-mouth antidote in Sadaka's paddocks. Resurrected Sadaka overthrew his brother's leadership by staging a palace coup. Then Captain Adams makes him the Maasai's Paramount Chief, elevating him even further.

> As we were cracking our heads on the matter, I learned that our School of Tropical Medicine was about to open a field station in the colony. The recent discovery of

> foot-and-mouth disease in Europe couldn't have come at a better time! Our spies were given pellets containing the virus that they dropped in select paddocks. Before long, the Maasai herds started dropping like flies from the virus, or nagana, as the Maasai called the disease. Unable to move in search of pasture and with gums too diseased to chew any food, herds starved by the thousands (p. 133).

This excerpt highlights how the colonizers used biological warfare to devastate the Maasai herds and further their control over the colony. By intentionally infecting the Maasai livestock with foot-and-mouth disease, they effectively crippled their main source of food and economic stability. The colonizers took advantage of the already fragile state of the Maasai herds to weaken the community and assert their dominance. This act of biological warfare showcases the lengths to which colonizers were willing to go in order to maintain control and exploit the resources of the colony.

The devastation caused by the deliberate infection of foot-and-mouth disease was not limited to the loss of livestock alone. The Maasai people heavily relied on their herds for sustenance and trade, and the sudden collapse of their main source of food and income plunged the community into a state of desperation. This act of biological warfare not only weakened the Maasai physically but also psychologically, as they grappled with the loss of their way of life. It serves as a grim reminder of the brutality and callousness with which colonizers operated in their quest for power and resources.

To conclude, the theme of biological warfare, the use of virus delves into the insidious tactics employed by colonial powers to subjugate native populations and exploit their environments. By intentionally spreading diseases among indigenous communities, colonizers not only inflicted physical harm but also disrupted social structures, economies, and ecosystems. This theme underscores the ruthless and calculated nature of colonial strategies, highlighting the devastating impact of biological warfare on both human livelihoods and the natural world. The narrative exposes how the introduction of diseases served as a tool of domination, weakening indigenous populations and facilitating colonial control over land and resources. Through this theme, the text sheds light on the intersection of health, environment, and power dynamics in the context of colonialism, emphasizing

the need to acknowledge and address the historical injustices and ecological consequences of such practices.

4.3.3 Deforestation

There are obvious effects of railroad construction, which natives are made to endure, on humans and nonhumans, as depicted in *Dance of the Jakarand.* Forests are cleared to get wood for the construction of the railway and houses for the workers, who come from different regions. As has been discussed, the rail work brings huge movements of population and labor that are interconnected with the exploitation and transfer of resources. These huge population movements are dispatched on the colonial environment and yield environmental degradation and cultural erosion. In addition, the colonizers cut down trees to supply the firewood needed to run the steam-powered trains. Additionally, they cut down trees to provide wood for building rail tracks. Large areas of forest are destroyed by all these activities in the colonies, and the results are catastrophic. Since most of the forested land is destroyed as a result of cutting trees, increased soil erosion results, which worsens the drought in the area.

On the day the railway construction is inaugurated, the first thing the colonial authorities do is show their covert project in the treatment of the natives and their environment through the cutting of the mvinje tree, which is revered as sacred among the natives. Charles Erickson, the colonial governor, comes to Mombasa in order to commence the East Africa Railway Construction. After making a brief speech, he is given a pitchfork and shovel, and he scoops up the soil from the ground to show their ultimate power to do whatever they want with land of aliens. McDonald then arranges the cutting down of the mvinje tree to represent "the clearing of virgin lands" to make way for the railroad and to landscape for the forthcoming colonial settlement. He orders the native workers to cut down the tree and remove it forever, but they all shrug and leave the place. (p. 215).

The mvinje tree holds a great position of importance to the natives, and Kimani describes its importance in his novel. He explains that the tree shields the village from the elements, just as a mother hen shields her chicks, and that is why it is named after the word nifiche, which means shelter (p. 213). The mvinje provides more than just safety for the community; when the old men gather beneath the tree to drink, they also build trust among

one another. The tree also gives them the confidence to speak more clearly and improves their memory. The locals also hold the belief that mvinje restores health to the sick. Kimani claims that leprosy sufferers only need to touch the bark in order to recover. Children with hookworm simply need to chew its leaf in order to have the last worm washed out of their stomachs. The locals also hold the view that fire will breed itself if the old men clap their hands together and utter a certain phrase being beneath the tree. In general, the mvinje tree is associated with the natives' daily lives; it is part of their cultural lore for people to meet under this tree.

The destruction of the mvinje tree involves not only clearing the forest, which is understood from the perspective of environmental annihilation, but also obliterating the culture and the existence of the locals. The tree is a metaphor for the natives' metaphysical consciousness of their environment. Unlike that of the colonizers, their culture is interwoven with their environment, and the two define and support one another's existence. The destruction of the environment is reciprocally linked to the destruction of culture. The people know that cutting down mvinje tree is cutting down their culture. It is beyond destroying the tree. We later witness the workers that McDonald orders to cut the tree failing to follow his orders. They are aware of the distinction between adhering to a colonial-energized anthropocentric culture's rules and following the norms of their own pro-environment culture.

The colonizers use ecological imperialism as an insidious method to establish their colonial rule in Kenya. Any environmental calamity is permissible as long as it aids colonialism's nourishment in the land. The railroad is deemed necessary for this purpose, and the railroad affects the natives and their natural environment. Starting from its construction commencement, it greatly impacts the ecosystem. Cutting down the mvinje tree is thought to be necessary in order to debilitate the conscious cultural resistance that could empower natives to organize themselves to oppose the colonial enterprise. It is thus the deliberate act taken by the colonizers to ravage the natural ecologies that the natives consider sacred, with a purpose to enfeeble them and include them in the colonial dominion.

4.3.4 Colonial Conservationist: Its Impact on Human and Nonhuman Environments

The colonial conservationist movement had a significant impact on both human and nonhuman environments. On the one hand, it led to the preservation of certain natural areas and the establishment of national parks, protecting wildlife and their habitats. However, the movement also had negative consequences for indigenous communities, as their traditional ways of life were often disrupted or displaced in the name of conservation. Moreover, the focus on preserving pristine wilderness often neglected the interconnectedness of ecosystems, resulting in unintended consequences such as the loss of biodiversity and the disruption of natural balance.

National parks and conservation areas are the colonial government's attempts to restore pre-colonial ecosystems. These efforts have frequently encountered opposition and have been seen as a version of neocolonialism (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 133). To make room for game parks for affluent tourists, indigenous people are driven off their land. The key conflicting area raised in both postcolonial ecocriticism and postcolonial zoocriticism is whether poor human communities are given less focus than wildlife on land. Human communities are uprooted from their homes to make way for game parks that will serve wealthy tourists (Raglon & Scholtmeijer, 2007), where the indigenous people are subjected to a double burden imposed on them by the colonizers: natives were evicted from their land and lost their ties to the environment during the colonial era's exploitation; their ecological environment was transformed and severely damaged. Conversely, natives are subjected to displacement for the colonial conservation projects run in the name of restoring the tranquil precolonial environment and conserving natural habitats.

As depicted in *Dance of the Jakaranda*, McDonald's conservation project is actually torturing wildlife, destroying the environment, and displacing and exploiting local people. At the end of his unsuccessful series of projects, he makes a tactical change in the use of his deteriorated vast land and turns it into a conservation area (sanctuary). He acquired the land by displacing a large number of natives during the colonialism as explained here: "McDonald's farm, whose acreage was expanded during the 1923 land adjudication to include the lake and the hot water spring, was certified as his with a shiny

red seal; the embossed letters announced that Her Majesty had granted him a hundred-year lease for the thousand-acre piece of land." (p. 200-201). McDonald is unconcerned about the number of families who had to relocate in order for him to construct his project. In 1923, he uses his clout to craft a policy known as the Devonshire White Paper, which prohibits other foreigners, particularly Indians, from owning land in the colony under the guise that African land ownership takes precedence (p. 201). Meanwhile, white farmers have taken over all arable land, claiming to be holding it in trust for Africans. The land is given to them when they are ready for it.

McDonald devotes himself to farming, cultivating wheat to feed the nation until the war broke out in Europe which prevents him from importing pesticides. Kimani writes, "He'd had enough with trying to domesticate the land and its people. He simply walked away, leaving farm equipment and the diseased crops still standing." This demonstrates how colonizers appropriate native land and apply pesticides and fertilizers to produce a single crop repetitively, which in turn completely degrade the land eventually, even until the land is transformed into something to be done for. When large tracts of land are used to grow a single crop, the deterioration of the soil is accelerated (Murray, 2000). Regarding the environmental impact of the use of pesticides, environmentalists suggest that pesticides and herbicides have played a significant role in the extinction of numerous species. It is important to note that "for every extinct species, approximately 30 other dependent species move into the "at-risk" category" (Jones, 1990, pp. 156–157).

McDonald is determined to restore the serene and peaceful environment that existed before the British colonial era, a period he witnessed and played a role in causing its destruction. His focus is on conservation efforts to establish a sanctuary for studying wild animals. He carefully observes their behaviors and documents their habitats. Wealthy tourists from the colony and Europe seek him out as a guide to experience nature at its best. He actively prevents native poachers, who hunt for sustenance, from harming the wildlife. As the chairman of the exclusively white Farmers' Association, he easily enacts laws banning poaching. By criminalizing traditional activities like hunting and wood gathering, he deprives local communities of their rights. In contrast to the indigenous people's harmonious relationship with the environment, he views them as threats to wildlife conservation, labeling them as illegal traders, poachers, hunters, and habitat destroyers.

Kimani criticizes the Western style of conservation through McDonald's conservation system. The Western idea of conservation is not used to create a sustainable environment by adhering to environmental protection principles. It is instead used to marginalize and exploit nonhuman animals and indigenous people. In the text, it is permissible for the white, wealthy tourists to poach and feed on animals, and to fish in the lake, hunt, and kill animals for trophies, while it is legally prohibited for the natives:

> Wealthier tourists arrived on hunting expeditions. They lived in tented camps where they could shoot kudu for dinner, trail impala for lunch, and fell rhinos for trophies to take home. It was the only resort of its kind in the entire colony, where man and wildlife lived in such close contact (p. 202).

McDonald creates a kind of animal sanctuary that serves white settlers so they can easily access and feast on fresh animal meats, fish, and plants. In this conservation area, he kills animals and exploits native servants alongside other colonial settlers. McDonald alone has thousands of male servants under his command (p. 202). Natural ecologies, animals, and indigenous peoples are organized in such a way that they are meaningfully useful for colonizers' materialistic needs rather than receiving safe protection from conservationists. The goal of colonial conservation was to benefit the colonizing power, despite the fact that nature preservation was promoted as a universal good. The colonizing states, whose own lands had already been developed for other economic purposes, initially reaped benefits from the protection and preservation of pristine natural environments (through tourism, trophy hunting, and scientific research) (Laltaika et al., 2018). In addition, these policies were used as a cover for imposing control over the locals and the colonized territory (Murphy, 2009).

In the context of colonial conservationist practices, it is essential to consider their impact on both human and nonhuman environments. Colonial conservation efforts often focused on preserving natural resources and wildlife for the benefit of the colonizers, leading to significant consequences for local communities and ecosystems.

On the human side, colonial conservationist policies frequently marginalized indigenous populations, denying them access to traditional lands and resources. This

displacement disrupted established ways of life and cultural practices, leading to social and economic hardships for these communities. Additionally, the enforcement of conservation laws often criminalized subsistence activities such as hunting and gathering, further exacerbating the challenges faced by local populations.

In terms of the nonhuman environment, colonial conservationist practices prioritized the preservation of certain species or habitats without considering the broader ecological impact. This selective approach to conservation could disrupt natural ecosystems and lead to unintended consequences for biodiversity and ecosystem health. Furthermore, the exploitation of natural resources for colonial interests, under the guise of conservation, could contribute to environmental degradation and habitat loss.

In general, the impact of colonial conservationist practices on human and nonhuman environments underscores the complex dynamics between conservation efforts, colonial agendas, and the well-being of both people and nature as reflected in *Dance of the Jakaranda*. Understanding these historical legacies is crucial for informing contemporary conservation strategies that prioritize environmental sustainability, social justice, and the rights of local communities.

4.4 Ecological Transformation

Alfred Crosby was among the pioneering scholars to recognize the significance of ecological change in the conquest and colonialism of the non-West. In his concept of "ecological imperialism," the environmental change brought on by colonial settlers is well articulated. Indigenous people’s relationships to their environments were frequently irreparably damaged as a result of the colonialism of so many non-European environments. These connections, unlike those of their conquerors, were crucial to the indigenous people's understanding of their existence as of the land rather than just on it (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 94). These are visible in the conflicts over land claims that are portrayed in *Dance of the Jakaranda* between natives and settlers. The natives’ relationships to the land go beyond personal possession of material goods. African indigenous cultures view land as a vital part of communal holism, in contrast to how Europeans view it as a personal possession.

Kimani depicts that, as a result of colonial incursion, the natives are alienated from their land and subjected to suffering.

The natives are not the only ones who are harmed by the loss of their land; the land also suffers as a result of the natives' departure. Both the land and the natives are plundered by the colonizers and subjected to harsh exploitation. The people are made servants of the colonial settlers, and the land, along with its nonhuman habitats, also becomes an economic target to satisfy the burning materialistic desires of the colonizers. Bodies of humans and land are pillaged for the economic development of England. Natives have lived on the land for ages without causing harm to their natural environment. They have adopted submerged cultural practices that function with the will of the ecosystem. They appear to understand that when nature is mistreated, it responds in kind, so the land was completely at peace with society prior to colonialism. As Ikeke states, there is no dualism between African culture and nature. Life is an "integrated bond and interrelated web." "There is no pure and absolute dualism in the African worldview." All life—spirits, humans, animals, plants, trees, oceans, rocks, etc.—comes from God. "In the African understanding, all life is infused by the active and dynamic life force of the creator" (Ikeke, 2013, p. 346).

Like indigenous communities in Africa, the people in the novel live off hunting, farming, and raising animals. People in all the established farming areas observe the particularities of their own environment and look for ways to rationally deal with it. Some regions employ cutting-edge techniques like terracing, mixed cropping, green manuring, mixed farming, and controlled swamp agriculture. The use of iron tools, particularly the axe and hoe, to replace wooden and stone tools is the single most important technological development underlying agricultural production. Even in cultivation activities, the majority of them consider the farming of their own unique staple to be a form of art. Agriculture is conducted based on an accurate assessment of the soil potency, which is not as great as it first appeared from the dense vegetation, and the outcome was devastating when the colonists began disturbing the thin soil surface (Rodney 1973, pp. 63–64).

This demonstrates that a new ecological system is not as effectively functional for the non-natives who are not adopted to the culture, even if they are more skilled, as it is for

those who have become accustomed to the environment over centuries. There is a fine art embedded within the culture of cultivation that protects the environment both virtually and contextually. These people's defining characteristics are harmonious, intricate relationships between nature and humanity, so they are not harmful to the environment.

When the powerful pillage native land, it becomes a commodity for colonial settlers. The colonizers brutally exploit it in order to produce more crops to ship back to the mother country and other European nations (p. 96; 176). The voracious capitalism of colonial enterprise causes ecological transformation. Capitalism consumes people, land, and nature in general. Me Katilili, Kenya's traditional prophet, foretold environmental change in the text. The giant snake, which symbolizes capitalism, requires "communal feeding for an eternity" (p. 176). Me Katilili foreshadows the years of colonialism that will come to indigenous people's land.

The colonizers exploit the natives and their land during the construction of the British East African Protectorate railway, causing irreversible changes to the natural ecosystems and inhabitants. After completing the railway, non-native settlement areas are strategically established along its path, allowing Europeans complete access to Kenya's fertile lands. This transformation turns Kenya into a farming hub, where various crops are cultivated through extensive exploitation of resources. McDonald, depicted as a colonial representative, oversees the appropriation and alteration of landscapes, utilizing oppressive tactics to assert dominance and exploit both humans and nature for personal gain.

He shows his country’s power over the land as well. He constructs a replica of *Taaj Mahal*, which symbolically represents the British Empire in Africa, for his wife in England who divorces him later for his unchanging bad behavior. He converts the place into a farmhouse, where he exploits and tortures domestic animals. When he fails with the farmhouse, he converts the place into a club and a sporting venue for settlers to enjoy the maximum of life in a foreign land. He becomes unsatisfied with it and changes his mind, converting the land into farming, where he repetitively grows wheat using fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Eventually, McDonald is unable to harvest wheat because he cannot import pesticides because of the war in Europe.

The land has already lost its fertility and is incapable of producing any crop. As a result, near the end of his life, McDonald launches a conservation program. As he puts it, his goal is to restore the pristine environment of the pre-colonial era. However, he continues the colonial goal of exploitation of natives and their natural resources. He allows colonialism to continue in the country, exploiting it under the guise of "neo-colonialism," knowing that Kenya's independence is inevitable. He advocates a conservationist policy that excludes natives and Indians as chairman of the Kenyan Farmers Association, and he claims that Europeans own all lands. Kimani describes how the country's colonial exploitation is upgraded to neocolonial exploitation in the independence era.

Following in the footsteps of the colonizers, particularly Ian Edward McDonald, the newly independent Kenya continues to aid conservation efforts. Tourists from Europe are greeted at the train station by tour guides eager to retell an old story. They will point to the imposing Jakaranda Hotel, a replica of which is restored shortly after independence at a huge cost to the independent government. Experts from London are flown in to ensure that the house is an exact replica of the one built by Ian Edward McDonald in 1901. Tour guides will point out various features of the establishment and proudly proclaim, "That's the place that heralded the birth of this town" (p. 259). This demonstrates that even in the post-independence era, all development projects and policies are designed in such a way that they benefit the colonial nations and their innovators at the expense of the colonized countries.

In addition to McDonald, who experiments with the indigenous land, Reverend Turnbull also contributes a lot to the transformation of the ecological environment. In the text, he picks evangelism as his main role to save the heathen from their sins. However, this role becomes only an overt masquerade as he is used by the colonial rulers in order to pave the way for imperialism. He plays a key role in fueling the establishment of British imperialism in East Africa. Besides his preaching, he inseminates the cows of indigenous people with those of Europeans to help the cows give more milk. African farming practices are considered unscientific and unproductive. European anthropocentric practices allow nature to be exploited to the maximum. Reverend Turnbull is preparing the way for the

settlers' coming to Kenya. He modifies the indigenous cows into the cows that Europeans use. His purpose is converting the East African environment into that of Europe.

Moreover, according to Country Profile of Kenya (2007), "deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, water scarcity and poor water quality, flooding, poaching, and domestic and industrial pollution" are among the environmental problems in Kenya, which could be regarded as the environmental legacy of British colonialism. Ashcroft et al. (2013) agree that the European insistence on the repetitive cultivation of crops for export to the metropolitan centers instead of the traditional crop rotation that had kept the desert at bay is directly responsible for the current famines in sub-Saharan Africa (2013, pp. 92–93).

Another example of ecological transformation occurring as a result of ecological imperialism in Peter Kimani's *Dance of the Jakarand* is the introduction of the jacaranda tree to Kenya. As depicted in the novel, the jacaranda tree is brought to Kenya by McDonald a British colonial master for its beautiful purple flowers. However, this tree quickly spread and overtook native vegetation, leading to a loss of biodiversity and a disruption of the local ecosystem.

This serves as a stark reminder of the unintended consequences that can arise from the introduction of non-native species, highlighting the importance of considering the ecological impact before making such decisions. The spread of the jacaranda tree demonstrates the power dynamics of imperialism in Kenya, as British colonizers made decisions that prioritized their aesthetic preferences over the preservation of the local environment. This disregard for the ecological balance further highlights the exploitative nature of imperialism, where the needs and desires of the colonizers were placed above those of the indigenous people and their natural surroundings. The introduction of the jacaranda tree serves as a symbol of the lasting legacy of imperialism and the ongoing struggle for environmental justice in postcolonial societies.

Another instance of ecological transformation occurring as a result of ecological imperialism in Peter Kimani's *Dance of the Jakarand* is the degradation of natural resources and displacement of indigenous communities. One notable example is the deforestation of

vast areas of land, leading to the loss of crucial habitats for countless plant and animal species. This destruction not only disrupts the delicate balance of ecosystems but also threatens the livelihoods of indigenous communities that rely on these resources for sustenance and cultural practices. Additionally, the influx of foreign settlers often leads to encroachment on ancestral lands, forcing indigenous populations to abandon their traditional ways of life and adapt to unfamiliar and often hostile environments.

This displacement not only severs the deep connection indigenous communities have with their land but also diminishes their cultural heritage and identity. Moreover, the introduction of foreign diseases and the imposition of Western values and norms further marginalize and erode the autonomy of indigenous peoples. As a result, these communities face immense challenges in maintaining their traditions, languages, and traditional knowledge, which are vital for the preservation of global biodiversity and sustainable development. Efforts must be made to recognize and respect the rights of indigenous communities, ensuring their active participation in decision-making processes and the protection of their ancestral lands.

One more instance of ecological transformation evidenced as a result of ecological imperialism in Peter Kimani's *Dance of the Jakarand* is the degradation of natural habitats and the loss of biodiversity. In the novel, the construction of the railway line through the Kenyan countryside leads to the destruction of lush forests and the displacement of local communities. This loss of natural resources not only disrupts the delicate balance of the ecosystem but also threatens the cultural identity and way of life of the indigenous peoples, who have lived harmoniously with the land for generations. It serves as a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of ecological imperialism and the urgent need to prioritize the rights and autonomy of indigenous communities in order to achieve true sustainability and preserve our planet's rich biodiversity.

To conclude, in *Dance of the Jakaranda*, the theme of ecological transformation is intricately woven into the narrative, showcasing the profound impact of colonialism on the environment and indigenous communities in East Africa. Through the lens of ecological imperialism, the novel portrays how colonial powers imposed their environmental

practices on native populations, leading to the degradation of natural habitats and the disruption of traditional ecological balances. This transformation highlights the reshaping of the physical landscape and the altered relationships between humans and nature. The novel also delves into the far-reaching consequences of ecological changes on both human societies and the natural world, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental degradation with social, cultural, and economic repercussions. By exploring this theme, *Dance of the Jakaranda* prompts reflection on the enduring legacy of environmental exploitation and the importance of sustainable and equitable environmental management practices that prioritize the well-being of both people and the planet.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM IN ISHMAEL BEAH'S *RADIANCE OF TOMORROW*

The ongoing chapter examines the impacts of environmental racism on the people and their environment in Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*. Environmental racism is the result of a symbiotic relationship between industry practices and public policies that benefit the dominant race while marginalizing the poor. The government, military, and political, economic, and legal institutions all contribute to it. Environmental racism policies include local land use and environmental law enforcement policies, which include industrial facilities and low-income and minority housing. Environmental decisions are made by the powerful group by excluding the poor and the marginalized group from government decision-making policies.

The poor are targeted for potentially dangerous environmental conditions, pollutants, toxic waste, and filthy landfills as part of a specific action plan set by the dominant race. This phenomenon is best understood as "discriminatory treatment" of people who are economically underdeveloped or socially marginalized. It can also be explained by the exploitation of a "home" source by a foreign outlet, which results in the transfer of ecological problems. The same way Plumwood argues for "minimizing non-human claims to the earth" (Plumwood, 2003, p. 4).

The theories of environmental racism have been significantly advanced by Robert Bullard and Sheila R. Foster, focusing on the relationship between countries and their transnational corporations is their primary area of study. The idea of globalization is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world's economy, which is severely damaging the current ecosystem. Poor countries and communities have been severely impacted. Lands inhabited primarily by indigenous people are most affected by globalization (Bullard, 1993, p. 52). The global extraction of natural resources, including the mining industries, is where this concept is particularly strong. The exploitation of indigenous people has taken the form of genocide, chattel slavery, indentured servitude, and racial discrimination—in employment, housing, and practically all aspects of life.

Ismael Beah's text explains the troubling environmental effects of the mining company that the natives are made to suffer from. These issues include toxic wastes, air, soil, and water pollution, toxic chemicals close to human habitations, and unhealthy air. The puppet governments, the military, and mining industry are primarily to blame for this heinous disregard for countless human lives.

5.1 Synopsis of *Radiance of Tomorrow*

The story unfolds. After the devastating civil war, after unsympathetic eradication of lives, and after seven years of exile, life reenacts in a town called Imperi. People gather themselves gradually and reappear in isolation and in cluster to their village to restart their routines despite bitter memories of what happened to their people and land. With no help from the government, the villagers begin rebuilding the once-thriving Imperi. They are hungry and traumatized, but they are determined to make a fresh start for themselves and their children. They lost everything to the civil war, except historical accounts and an empty homestead that they inherited from their ancestors.

The villagers need to collect and bury the skulls and skeletons of their dearest ones, which are spread everywhere, so they bring them together and entomb them in one place. As more people return, village elders gather the young ones to share their wisdom and tell them tales from their history and traditions. Imperi begins to experience a resurgence of life; even refugees help to rebuild the community and eventually assimilate. A group of child soldiers under the command of a man they refer to as the Colonel stay away by setting up camp outside of Imperi.

Not so long after life rejuvenates and heals itself, another monster catastrophe appears in the village. Strange beasts, with loud ear-piercing shouts, appear in the town, and the people get perplexed with what is happening to their land. As massive machinery begins to operate on their homestead, the earth reveals its belly, and the people start experiencing complete distress again. Near the village, a group of greedy white capitalists from the former colonial nation begin mining. The village's only water source, the river, is where they dump their chemicals. People begin to fall ill, and crops are destroyed. The

majority of villagers are compelled to work in the mines in order to support their families. Due to the company's failure to provide them with safety equipment, many villagers perish in the mines. A bag of rice is given to the deceased's families as compensation.

The indigenous people band together to stop the mining company and their own government from degrading their land. They send their elders to lower and higher levels of the country's administration, but the officials abuse and humiliate them. They even let the policemen beat them, considering them contenders and obstacles to the nation's development. The officials also inform them that their country is part of a global economic network and that their government is working to improve the nation's economic situation. Eventually, the natives' efforts become futile as they are unable to achieve anything.

In the hope of bringing about some change, however, the natives continue to resist the company's activities in different ways. The secret group is formed to be the guardian of the people and culture, and it attacks the employers of the company when they act ill against the community's ethos. But this also ends in futility as school teachers and individuals are starving and start seeking jobs in the company. The company hires these jobless natives with low salaries.

The mining company begins to mistreat the people and prolong their pain. There is dust everywhere, there are car accidents everywhere, more personnel die from equipment breakdowns or technical complications, but their families are not compensated for the loss, and there is an unexplained amount of severe environmental degradation. Fish are dying as a result of chemical damp in the water bodies. Dams are built everywhere, and the company moves closer to the residential areas and cemeteries and demolishes them eventually.

The worst comes to the locals in the end: they are uprooted from their ancestral land and transported to a deteriorated environment. No longer will they have a historical, psychological or cultural connection to the place where their umbilical cords were buried, and no longer they hear the song of birds of their land, or go outside to breathe in the fresh air. The company mounts and completely owns the land. Some people migrate to the capital

city in order to seek for job. Others remain in the arid area provided by the government. Things completely fall apart.

5.2 The Demise of the Indigenous Community

In Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*, the people of Imperi are oppressed because of their low socioeconomic and political power, and as a result, they become victims of the combination of the civil war that holocausts most of them, the scourge of diamond mining, which goes by the covert name Rutile Mining Company, and their own government's descent into metabolic capitalism and corruption. The residents of Imperi are trapped in a cycle of poverty and exploitation, with their resources being plundered by foreign companies and their own government turning a blind eye. This systemic oppression leaves the people feeling hopeless and marginalized, as their voices are silenced and their rights disregarded. Beah's novel sheds light on the devastating consequences of unchecked power and greed, painting a haunting picture of a community stripped of its dignity and crushed under the weight of a broken system.

Firstly, an instance of human suffering is depicted in *Operation No Living Thing*, in which the natives are singled out in hatred and targeted for genocidal acts by the militant groups. The people of Imperi are exterminated in the sense that they are not among the combatants. This operation massacres and displaces the people of Imperi and turns the entire village into ashes. The fighters dub themselves *No Living Thing* because they intend to kill everything with life as they are *Other* to the natives. Anyone who escapes such operations is extremely lucky, as the fighters ambush towns and attack, shooting at will, as Beah describes (p. 15). Everybody is subjected to torture and killed as a result of the *No Living Thing* operation.

The story begins with the narrator's description of a burned-out village, showing the horrific atrocities committed against the people and natural environment. One of the central characters, old Mama Kadie, walks out of the forest in search of the house she fled years ago. Beah writes, "There were bones, human bones, everywhere, and she could tell which had been a child or an adult" (p. 10). Mama Kadie finds another elder in the village,

and together they collect and wash the scattered skulls, femurs, and ribs of their people, vowing never to flee again. As they work, their thoughts return to the heinous days of "Operation No Living Thing," when gunmen stormed the compound and began torturing and killing everyone. Beah also recalls the people's horrifying recollections of the war, including how the entire village was raided, people were shot down extrajudicially in mass, hands were cut off, and children were raped. Imperi is in shambles. People, particularly the elderly and children, are stampeded. The majority of invaders are child soldiers, and many are men. They shoot those who do not die instantly. They joke about the fact that the civilians help their operation by causing a stampede.

The main question is, "Where does this much cruelty come from?" How could these invaders slaughter all living things with such zeal? The inhabitants of Imperi are not at odds with the intruders. They have no idea that armed men are on their way to their village. "The inhabitants of Imperi had heard of the war that was hundreds of miles away," Beah says, "but they didn't expect it to enter, let alone severely wound, their lives."

One of the instances in which Beah demonstrates the invaders' hatred and brutality is in the narration of the horrific torturing of Sila and his two children, who each have one of their hands amputated by an unsympathetic group of soldiers. The children were only six and seven years old at the time. Sila is left with only his two children after the destruction of Imperi, and he is hiding them in the forest near the village. However, thinking that the war is already over, he sets out to take his children to get registered at the school in a nearby city. On their way to the city, they come across a squad of soldiers, who halt them and tie them to the tree logs for torture. The soldiers severely beat the children and their father throughout the night.

In the morning, one of the young boys named Cutlass is made to amputate the kids and their father. The children and the father are told to put their hands on the log without hesitation. The commander sternly tells them that he is in a good mood, and so he does not want to kill them. Instead, he wants their hands to be cut off. One of the child soldiers, Sergeant Cutlass, who is an expert trained for this purpose after cutting his family’s hands with deadly force at the age of nine, comes and chops their hands off.

Though the soldiers wished for them to die in the forest, draining their blood, Sila ties his and the children's hands by tearing his cloth, and they walk to the main road, where the driver takes them to the hospital by offloading the passengers. After a week in the hospital, Sila wakes his children at midnight and quietly flees, going to an amputee camp after learning that he must pay the medical bill.

Sila likes the camp at the beginning, but he leaves it after two weeks, observing that people come by to watch the amputees as though they were animals in the zoo. Environmental racism is depicted here through the othering of the people of Imperi and the animals in the zoo. Animals and amputated people are given equal status. They are both objectified and treated as spectacles for the amusement of others. This dehumanization is a clear manifestation of environmental racism, as the people of Imperi are seen as lesser beings who do not deserve the same respect and dignity as others. This parallel between the animals and amputees highlights the systemic discrimination and marginalization faced by certain communities, further perpetuating the cycle of environmental injustice.

This cycle of environmental injustice not only affects the physical well-being of the people of Imperi but also takes a toll on their mental and emotional health. Constantly being objectified and treated as subhuman leads to a deep sense of worthlessness and despair within the community. The dehumanization portrayed in this zoo not only mirrors the larger societal attitudes towards the people of Imperi but also serves as a reminder of the long-standing systemic inequalities that they face. It is imperative that we recognize and challenge these forms of discrimination in order to create a more equitable and just society for all.

Moreover, the people of Imperi who are able to survive the civil war suffer from an internal displacement and a horrific memory of *Operation No Living Thing*, which entails impact on the active and subsequent generations of the indigenous community. This internal displacement allowed the community to exile itself into various safe zones. Exile refers to the state of being physically removed from one's place or one's cultural and ethnic roots (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 108). These internally displaced people (IDPs) are compelled to flee their homes or places to avoid the effects of an armed conflict,

circumstances which involves widespread violence and human rights violations caused by warring factions over natural resources.

The people of Imperi are overcome with nostalgia and abhor living in exile, thinking of the peaceful, concordant, and environmentally safe life they had before the war. They feel alienated from their ancestral home and marginalized as a result of their treatment as an exotic, underprivileged group within the nation. During their seven-year stay in various parts of the country, they suffer from severe psychological trauma. Even though the people of Imperi learn that the soldiers have completely killed their families and demolished their entire village, they decide to return to Imperi. Their sense of home is very strong.

Beah describes Mama Kadie's, who is one of the main characters in the novel, strong attachment to her home as: "She had returned home because she could not find complete happiness anywhere else...refugee camps, homes of kind strangers...something she knew existed only on the land she now stood upon." (P. 10). Mama Kadie arrives at home and finds debris and piles of bones everywhere in Imperi. The village has been completely destroyed, to the point where she despises calling it home; however, she has always considered it to be her home. "… [H]er eyes moved beyond the piles to find strength to leap forward. "This is still my home," she sighed as she pressed her bare feet deeper into the earth. (p. 11).

Everyone, like Mama Kadie, gradually returns from exile to Imperi after the war ends (p. 23-34). This demonstrates how important home is to the indigenous community, despite the fact that there is not a single house on the land to call "home." So, the soil they inherited from their forefathers is what they call home. After their resettlement and restoration of their home, they continue to suffer from the horrific memories of the war. Beah states this as:

> In the silence of that waiting, memories of war were awakened, bringing restlessness and irritability. People didn't spend much time on their verandas anymore. Besides the farming that had started on a very small scale just for people

> to feed their families, everyone just sat around, afraid to find pleasure in most things (p. 38).

Though the people of Imperi are able to regain their empty homes at the end, they cannot find happiness as they are engulfed by apocalyptophobia, an intense fear of war. They avoid words associated with war through the repression mechanism. They even do not want to tell their children any history related to the civil war. The apocalptophobia of the inhabitants of Imperi is depicted when a group of private security guards of the mining company arrived carrying heavy guns and ammunition. The disenchanted people feel fear and rage at the sight of such armed and uniformed men (p. 68–69). They don't want to go back to anything like what happened during *Operation No Living Thing*.

When the women and children spot the armed men in the trucks while on their way to draw water, collect firewood, prepare farms, and go to marketplace, they drop whatever they are carrying and flee either into town to alert their family or into the forest. When the inhabitants of Imperi learn of the military squad's coming, they begin packing their belongings and departing their homes. Women scream for their children to be saved, as crowds clog the streets, causing havoc. After half of the inhabitants already make it to the forest, some of the men learn that the military personnel belong to the newly opened company and try to calm the crowd. It takes them days to return to the village. Kimani says, "The town was tense that night and some days that followed" (P. 68). "Children no longer slept; their eyes became more vigilant, and they spent nights in the bushes at the edges of Imperi" (p. 69).

The text makes it quite evident that inhabitants of the Imperi are marginalized, subjected to racial discrimination in their surroundings, and occasionally made fun of by different people. War ruins and torments them, exploiting them along with their ecological environment and causing them physical and psychological pain. These injustices further exacerbate their already dire living conditions, leaving them trapped in a cycle of poverty and hopelessness. The relentless exploitation of their resources not only deprives them of a sustainable future but also deepens their emotional scars as they witness the destruction of their once thriving homeland.

Secondly, Beah’s text reveals the sufferings of the poor and powerless individuals in the conflict of the needy and greedy. The suffering of the people of Imperi as a result of the expansion of a mining company owned by greedy capitalist white represents the second instance of environmental racism. As a result of foreign mining company’s hunt of rutile and other minerals, such as diamonds, these poor and powerless people are subjected to the resource curse. This curse refers to the negative consequences that arise from the exploitation of natural resources in developing countries. The people of Imperi are forced to endure the destruction of their land and environment, as well as the displacement of their communities, all in the name of profit for the greedy capitalists. This further exacerbates the inequality and power imbalance between the rich and the poor, leaving the marginalized communities to bear the brunt of the exploitation.

These low-income natives are particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards such as toxic chemical facilities and waste dumping, as well as other sources of environmental degradation and toxic gases that reduce the quality of their lives. Their natural resources are exploited, and their environment turns out to be a hell as a result of the company’s unsafe environmental activities, in spite of the fact that they gain neither benefit nor compensation for their miserable lives. Imperi is "a wretched place with beautiful things in the soil," according to the greedy white men who travel from afar. To quickly and cheaply extract this value, rivers are poisoned, workers are burned at the stake, and cemeteries are blown up. When the residents complain, government police detain them for defaming generous job creators.

As depicted in the novel, the company's racist actions toward native inhabitants and workers are extreme. It is a throat-cutting situation for the people of Imperi, while it is a means of aggrandizing capital for the owners of the mine. The survivors of the civil war are destitute and powerless. Besides, they are a marginalized group of people, even by their own government. This systematic oppression is a painful reminder of the ongoing struggle for equality and justice. The government's lack of support further exacerbates the already dire situation, leaving the survivors feeling abandoned and voiceless. It is clear that the company's discriminatory practices not only perpetuate racial inequality but also deepen

the scars of a war-torn society. The novel sheds light on the harsh reality faced by marginalized communities and serves as a call to action for reform and solidarity.

The company's racism is blatant. It denies the natives access to water, despite the fact that the pipes run through their homes and beneath their soil. It also denies them access to electricity, despite the fact that live wires run through their gardens to power the mining company's operations, headquarters, and living quarters. Even the company forbids its native workers from acquiring such infrastructure. Beah criticizes the fact that the same employees who lay the pipes all day send their children miles out of town to find water to clean their dirty bodies. If they have cash, they buy cold water to drink; or else, they drink the same water they wash with, which causes their bodies to itch.

He also criticizes the fact that the electricians are given flashlights to navigate the darkness back to their homes after work, where their children study under dim kerosene lamps, their eyes struggling to see their old notebooks. Beah tells a touching story about a father who gives his son a flashlight so he can use it to write in his notebook instead of a kerosene lamp whose smoke settles inside his nose to demonstrate the company's racism. The father walks home in the dark the next day. He is warned that he will be fired if he uses his flashlight for anything other than walking home after work or going to dark areas where electric cables must be laid out. As a result, the father does not use the flashlight in order to avoid being fired by the company.

Bullard’s explanation of environmental racism is noticeable here. The white people accumulate the benefit, but the people of color or poor communities pay the cost. The company makes Imperi a dilapidated village where existence is totally impossible. The residents of Imperi suffer from polluted air, contaminated water, and a lack of access to basic amenities like healthcare and education. The company's disregard for the well-being of these marginalized communities is a clear example of environmental racism, as they prioritize profit over the lives and livelihoods of poor people. It is a stark reminder of the systemic inequalities that persist in our society, where those in power continue to exploit and oppress the most vulnerable populations.

Another blatant racism of the mining company is depicted in the text as destroying even existing social infrastructure while being expected to support the natives. It exacerbates the sufferings of the already traumatized people of Imperi, who are trying to regenerate from the devastating *Operation No Living Thing*.

One of the infrastructures is the only school that reopened following the bloody civil war restoration. The company encroaches on the school and destroys it eventually. First, as the school is not well built, dust engulfs the pupils while they are inside the classrooms and makes the learning-teaching process awkward. Students also suffer from dust on their way to school, as the entire village is covered by a cloud of dust. Then, older students, mostly boys over eighteen, stopped going to school and sought employment. The possibility of an immediate salary was enticing in a place where it was difficult to find any way to earn income. Soon, some of the teachers followed their students to labor in hazardous conditions for just a few more cash—not a significant difference from what they had earned, but at least it was steady pay.

The number of students in the school dwindles, and the company eventually makes use of the school land as a mining site by uprooting it. As a result, the company becomes an antagonist because it goes against the will of society, its environment, and its culture, causing anger and agony in the hearts of the people. It actually represents what is going on in west Africa, where the soils are rich in mineral resources and oil and where humans are valued below the so-called precious stones and metals, so that such people are denied anything related to social infrastructure and reduced to the status of waste. They are disposed of along with the toxic wastes the companies throw away.

“Racial discrimination was, in the majority of cases, a direct extension of colonial policy and continued to receive both overt and covert support from the ex-colonial powers.” (Ashcroft et al, 2013, p. 58). Racial discrimination is continued to be the heart of neocolonialism as it was for colonialism. Discrimination is the practice of unfairly classifying individuals into groups, racial or ethnic groups, or other categories to which they genuinely or erroneously belong. Among other things, people may experience discrimination due to their race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

The most common form of discrimination is when people or groups are treated unfairly or worse than others based on their actual or perceived membership in one or more groups or social categories. It entails keeping members of one group out of situations or benefits that belong to members of another group. The natives are discriminated by the mining company. The natives are denied access to their ancestral lands and resources, which are being exploited by the mining company for their own profit. This discriminatory practice not only deprives the indigenous communities of their rights and livelihoods but also perpetuates a cycle of poverty and marginalization. Despite international conventions and regulations aimed at protecting indigenous rights, the mining company continues to prioritize their own financial gains, further highlighting the deep-rooted systemic inequalities that persist in society.

The company's employees' deep racism is depicted in the text. Most of them are white and from various parts of the world. They disregard the elders of the village. One of them is called Wonde, the supervisor of the mining company. The elders of the village get him in a very sophisticated vehicle and present their complaints to him regarding the issues related to the suffering of the people and social disorders caused by the mining company's men. However, he appoints them to talk to him at his office. For this purpose, they walk on foot four miles to the company's gate, "hoping a conversation would mend whatever had been broken and prevent further problems" (p. 74), and request to get the supervisor of the company, but the guards do not allow them to enter and tell them that it is impossible without an appointment.

The elders explain the suffering they are facing because of the company's men, and they also tell the guards that Wonde has also told them to talk to them at the office. The elders ask the guard to make a phone call to Wonde for confirmation. The guard, torn between fear of losing his job and respect for the elders, dials Wonde hesitantly and says to them, "He cannot see you." (p. 75). As the elders begin to walk, a car approaches from the direction of Imperi, and one of the guards asked the driver to pick them up to their village on his way, but the driver informed them that the company policy prohibits natives from riding in its vehicles. As a result, the elders walk in the sun to their home, disappointed by the overall situation and the uncertainty of their future. Additionally, the company blatantly displays its discrimination against the natives by depriving them of any benefits

they are entitled to, while also exploiting their land's resources, destroying the ecosystem, and making life miserable for them.

Environmental racism also has an enormous negative impact on natives. While the state and private capital benefit from rutile or covert diamond mining, the communities and landscapes of Imperi bore an unfair share of the environmental costs. Without the people of Imperi's permission, the company begins operations, displacing them and committing numerous human rights offenses like gangrape, arbitrary detention, oppression, killings, house demolition, destruction of graveyards, sacred sites, and property. These mistreatments take place in an atmosphere of impunity because both state and private armed forces that commit the crimes are frequently not held accountable. The text depicts that people are unsafe everywhere (accidents everywhere in the village): car accidents, machine failure, dams falling, explosions of dynamite, etc.

There are a lot of such instances in the text. One of them is depicted when a 16-year-old student steps on a live electric wire left uncovered and dies instantly after having his blood drained from him. Despite the fact that the government's legal wings are expected to prevail in justice through a fair investigation, they sidestep the crime by blaming the boy's carelessness. However, the company is responsible for the death of the boy because it leaves the live electric wire uncovered and does not place the danger signs alerting people to the presence of the live electric wire. The government authorities deny justice to the people over whom they are supposed to prevail in order to protect the company. The company compensates the family only with a bag of rice. What is worse is that when the mourners carry the corpse of the boy to the graveyard, the government and military personnel forbid the people from using the street, thinking that the road that the company uses may get blocked by the large number of people. When the mourners of Imperi protest against the mess, the military easily contains it and silences the community through the use of ammunition. As shown in this instance, the marginalized are always the victims of government policies that exclude them, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Another example is the horrific gangrape of native females. A number of the company's workers intentionally commit gangrape crimes. Yinka is one of the victims. Yinka is returning from the river with a bucket of water when the company thugs take her

to their rooms. She is discovered on the side of the road near the bar the following day with her pelvis broken. She struggles to stand and drags herself toward her house, but she is unable to move very far. The women carry her home, dress her in clothes, and tend to her needs, but she is unable to survive. Even when witnesses go to the station to offer the names of the men who assaulted the girl, the cops do nothing.

Salimatu, another girl, is also raped by the same men and denied justice. There are rapes that go unreported, not only because the victims are ashamed, but also because their families are powerless, and the only respect left is quiet. Many girls are raped by the company's men and then hidden, but the victims are subsequently discovered pregnant. Kimani says, "Sometimes, the growing belly of a young girl shattered that falsehood, and the child she gave birth to had the color of and resembled one of the workers, white or black." Nothing was said about such things. The child became part of Imperi's "forgotten population" (p. 111).

The inhabitants of Imperi are prone to suffer excruciatingly painful bodily trauma: murder, savage beating and imprisonment. These victims include a soil surveyor who works with Bockarie. The man takes out some quite intriguing stones from the soil samples, working with Bockarie, a gifted instructor who joined the company after giving up his teaching job. The managers who are watching them on camera order him over the speakers to bring the stones and samples collected to their office. He never comes back. Nobody will ever see him again or learn what happened to him. After months of fruitless searching, his wife and child leave Imperi. The only thing Bockarie recalls is that a truck with armed security guards comes by immediately after the man is called out of the sample site, something is rapidly loaded in the back, the doors slam shut, and the truck leaves.

Children and women are constantly the victims of the damaging actions of the company's employees. Maada, Sila's disabled kid, is sliced across the forehead by a flying broken bottle. The bottle is thrown by drunken men who are fighting with locals after removing the wrapper from the family's woman (p. 109). The police arrive solely to arrest the victims, not to seek justice. Despite the fact that the company's employees are involved in killing, beating, raping, and other atrocities against indigenous, the government always protects them.

Car accidents are common, and the company is neither held accountable nor criminalized. The people, along with their natural environment, are discriminated against and denigrated altogether. One of such instances is depicted in the story of a little boy who is smashed by a big truck while trying to run across the road to his mother (p. 140). The event is so horrific. The mother sits on the earth holding the body of a little boy, whose bones are ripped off and whose breathing is almost dying, in her arms. A local driver, Rogers, calls for help on the radio, but the voice on the radio instructs him to get in the truck and drive to his destination. Rogers insists on staying with the victim until help arrives. The voice on the radio responds to Rogers' pleading, saying, "Then consider yourself suspended until further notice" (p. 140).

In a matter of minutes, a Toyota with tinted glass arrived, and another employee took the radio from Rogers, got into the truck, and drove it away from the scene of the accident. Kimani writes, "The back tires, soaked with blood and bits of dirt, painted the already disturbed earth with the boy's life" (p. 141). Though the hospital is nearby to help the kid survive, the vehicle that drops off the new driver returns to the mining site unempathetically, leaving the kid and the mother soaked in blood. When Rogers realizes that no help is on the way, he urges the mother to carry the child together to the hospital.

However, this is pointless because the child dies on the woman's hands the moment she stands up. The woman, who has been suffering from psychological trauma after losing all of her children to "Operation: No Living Thing" except this child, goes psychotic and beats Rogers as hard as she can. But Rogers does not fight back; instead, he tries to calm her down by embracing her. She rushes to the mining company's gates, dangling her son's corpse and demanding justice, but her efforts are futile. After the security guards escort her out of the area, she runs with her child in her arms toward one of the electric security fences and electrocutes herself eventually. The woman and her child are removed from the fence at night. There is nothing about them reported anywhere. It is as though the child and the mother never existed.

Natives who are employed in the company also suffer from the overt racism of the company. They are always subjected to physical and psychological abuses. The workers are of different races. Mining job is characterized in the text as blue-collar labor that does

not necessitate much education, as is true generally. As a result, the mining company's jobs are filled by people without a high educational background and from socioeconomically disadvantaged levels, with the exception of school instructors, particularly Bockarie and Benjamin, who are forced to leave the teaching profession in order to escape the school principal's malicious corruption. The black miners experience a variety of labor-related injustices. Labor is frequently exploited in the company, whether it be through wage inequalities between black and white miners or employer manipulation of miners. In any case, blacks are hired for jobs that require a lot of effort but pay very little. Given their difficult tasks, they work in a dangerous environment.

Kimani describes the severity of the tasks assigned to the black workers in the company in the plot of the story. The place is the death chamber, and only one worker survives from the two: "We say around here that it's so dangerous that you should say two or more prayers, hoping that at least one of them will catch God's attention!" One of the saddening stories happens to a black worker while Bockarie's friend Benjamin watches it, which looks like the horror movie featured in Hollywood. The story is that one man emerges with his overalls partly on fire. His flesh is horribly burned on one side, from his armpit to his waist. His hands and cheeks have been sucked dry by fire. Workers near him massage wet sand on the areas of his burned flesh that still have skin. Someone puts out the fire, and all the men, including Benjamin and his former student, congregate to watch what occurs. At the same time, another horrific event takes place. There is blood in the small area, as well as the body of another man. His right hand is still trapped in the zigzag teeth of the machine, which continues to spin his body around and around (p. 133).

Benjamin, a professional teacher who joins the company by quitting teaching like Bockarie, faces so much hardship and eventually death. He is an energetic and conversant young man. He is intolerable to crimes committed by officials everywhere. When the principal smuggled the teachers' salaries, he confronted him while teaching at the school. This impeded corruption is one of the reasons he is forced to leave the job he loves. In the text, the government authorities are described as corrupt individuals, including well-educated people like Mr. Fofana, the school director, which changes the overall setting to hell. Other higher officials are tightly tied to the mining company through corruption, where they get money and material goods that the company presents them with directly

from abroad. They are oblivious to the complaints of the indigenous community just because this group lacks the political and economic power to influence the government and attract the attention of the international community.

The narrative surrounding Benjamin's passing due to the dredge's collapse serves to highlight the mining company's utmost cruelty towards its native workers. Along with five other employees, he is accidentally trapped beneath one of the dredge's huge iron buckets, which falls on them; three of them die instantly, with the other two awaiting a gradual death while in severe pain (p. 150). Being in the trap, Benjamin calls his old friend Bockarie to say goodbye and to plead with him to take care of his wife and children and take them to his village. Despite threats of dismissal from the top supervisors, Bockarie rushes out of the office and back home so Benjamin can at least talk to his wife and children on the phone. After assisting Benjamin in speaking with his wife and children, Bockarie attempts to go to the location where the dredge collapses in the hopes of saving his friend's life, but he is told that no one was harmed and that he is not permitted to go there.

The company does not value the native workers. They are extremely exploited, and they are not considered even human. Except for natural resources, all aspects of the native environment are discriminated against. The company maintains its claim that no one died, and Bockarie and the families of the other workers are unable to even get the bodies of their loved ones. The company posts the printed names of the people who were assumed to be on duty on the day of the accident, with checkmarks next to each person's name to show that they are all still alive. There is no mention of Benjamin or any of the other deceased individuals. Things resumed as usual in the company. The company vigorously shies away from accountability. The natives want to know if the owners of the company act the same way at home as they do abroad, or vice versa.

Finally, the anguish caused by the company's insatiable moves in every direction to maximize its profit from the land is another still-persuasive fact. From the statements of the investors who own companies on native land, two overwhelming conclusions may be drawn: discrimination and the pursuit of material profit at the cost of natives' suffering. The white man who owns the mining company in the village, called Kano, says, "This is a wretched place with beautiful things in the soil." "I have spent hundreds of thousands of

dollars just to set up my operations" (pp. 155–156). He worries that he may fail to attain his materialistic goal in such a “wretched place.” The place was not initially wretched; contrary, it is packed with so many wonderful things. What the white man is doing to satisfy his insatiable wants renders the land worthless.

People are regularly displaced from Kano as a result of the bizarre operations of the diamond industry, which are related to the blasting that takes place every day at various times. The inhabitants must be ready to flee the blasting boundary at any moment because the sirens do not even give them adequate warning as depicted in the extract below:

> People kept running even as they were struck by the rocks, which came with such speed that Bockarie guessed it wasn’t a human being throwing them. A boulder hit two boys and their father, hurling them into a tree, where they were left unconscious. No one was going to stop now to check on them. An explosive sound erupted and the earth trembled. All the buildings wobbled and some began to come apart, shedding corrugated tin, thatch, or bamboo roofing…The explosions went on and stones were seen flying in the distance. (p. 159).

Despite the fact that the people suffer this much, they are not given any benefit from the company. They are dispossessed of their land for the operation of the mine; their houses and properties are destroyed by the activities of the company; and they are made to live in the wretched place, paying a price of life to the greedy owners. Despite the fact that the firm owns a superb hospital for its privileged people, it does not admit local residents who have been injured by stones thrown from the mining site (159). The corporation maintains that if their properties are damaged, or they are injured or killed, it is their or their families' fault.

The people are forced to maintain their damaged houses on their own, despite the fact that they are crushed by the company's mining activity. The maintenance of the tin roofs, windows, and so forth is quite expensive. Yet, the firm does not compensate the indigenous people for any loss incurred by its own mining operations. The inhabitants keep paying for the damages that occur on a regular or daily basis. Beah describes this as follows:

> Some houses had been damaged, their windows shattered by rocks, and the old tin roofs had collapsed. There was debris everywhere. The women and girls took brooms and started sweeping. The men and boys began repairing the damage, and soon people went about their lives as though nothing had happened (P. 160).

Residents in the mining area are suffering terribly as a result of the mining corporation. Women and children are the most vulnerable members of society. Pregnant women, old women, old men and children, in particular, cannot escape the stones flung by the explosion. They are struck by the stone till they are physically harmed or killed instantly. “Children have been killed here in their sleep with rocks. Older people as well. No one hears about it.” The pregnant women always have a miscarriage during the rush to escape the stones. One of such instances is described in the extract below:

> When the family got to the safe area, Bockarie heard crying from a group of women gathered in a circle. Another woman, younger, was lying on the ground, blood trailing on her legs and underneath her. The tremor from the blasting had caused a miscarriage. The woman had been asleep in bed and couldn’t move away fast enough. The young woman’s husband sat away, leaning his head against a tree, his hands folded into fists (p. 161).

From this excerpt, the environmental racism in another village called Kano is evident. The Diamond Company is responsible for the blasting in the area. The company’s operation does not take into account the safety and well-being of the local residents. The fact that the woman's miscarriage was directly caused by the tremor from the blasting highlights the disregard for human life and the devastating consequences of such actions. The husband's posture and clenched fists suggest his frustration, anger, and helplessness in the face of this environmental injustice. It is clear that the company's actions have had a profound impact on the lives of the villagers, further highlighting the need for environmental justice and accountability.

In Beah’s text, the state plays an integral role in bringing and guarding the mining company to Imperi; however, it does not consult with or have at least a proper discussion with the natives when it permits the company to mine rutile from the land. Even the lower government wing administrators have no idea about what is going on in Imperi when it

first begins operations. Beah writes, "Chiefs from the surrounding towns arrived to meet with the chief of Imperi. None of them had been advised of the arrival of the mining company, and they wanted to collectively send a message to the paramount chief, demanding an explanation" (p. 68).

In the text, the mining company violates the dignity and human rights of the local inhabitants by polluting the water bodies, making noise and blowing dust, destroying pasture and crop land, and generally behaving in an uncaring manner. In spite of their efforts, the community of Imperi frequently fail to enlist the assistance of the government in defending their rights against these powerful corporate interests because they are politically powerless, impoverished, and destitute.

Colquette et al. (1991) discusses the factors that lead powerless people to be subjected to environmental racism. Both companies and governments look for inexpensive and easily accessible land. Indigenous communities that are powerless to successfully oppose these companies and government authorities, and those who lack access to political power, are therefore unable to bargain for just prices. Low levels of socioeconomic mobility expose the natives to vulnerability. A community's capacity to respond both physically and politically is also hampered by a lack of financial support.

As Chavis puts, environmental racism is a racial discrimination in the formulation of environmental policies, the discriminatory application of laws and regulations, the intentional targeting of minority communities as sites for the disposal of hazardous waste from mining or whatever, the official approval of dangerous pollutants in minority communities, and the exclusion of powerless community from positions of environmental leadership.

In the text, the people of Imperi and the surrounding villages are the most marginalized, destitute individuals who are suppressed by their own government. They are sidelined deliberately by their own government and are not communicated with or consulted on issues that have a disproportionate impact on their lives and their environment. It can be easily inferred that the people are considered worthless and not

capable of defending themselves. Even the local chiefs are also marginalized along with the people they lead.

This is apparent in the trip they take to meet with the paramount chief. The provincial minister, who lives in the capital, is represented by the paramount chief, who is the leader of all local chiefs in the towns surrounding Imperi. All complaints outside of local issues must therefore go through the paramount chief. To learn why the advent of the mining company was not discussed with or announced to the people, all of the local chiefs make the trip to meet with the paramount chief. The paramount chief advises her visitors to be content for the time being because the mining company's arrival is a good opportunity for the area, and she promises to bring up the issue with whoever is in charge. Although the chiefs do not share her enthusiasm, the paramount chief exclaimed that the miners are bringing jobs. In fact, white people bring jobs to the local communities, but at very low wages for natives while paying exorbitant wages for nonnatives.

Beah's text demonstrates how the Imperi people experience racial discrimination in the formulation of environmental regulations, taking into account Chavis' concept of environmental racism. When the mining firm is granted authorization, there are no specific environmental laws created by the government to control the waste disposal system. As a number of dams designed to wash minerals with the use of chemicals in them overflow onto roadways used by the company's cars, the waters in them are made to flow toward a community-owned river and farms, killing fish and damaging soil (p. 100). When the village elders report the incident to the provincial minister, the minister summons the police officers and threatens them with silence. This demonstrates the lack of defined environmental policy laws as well as inclusive political leadership in the development of environmental policy.

In addition, the people of Imperi are intentionally targeted as sites for the disposal of hazardous waste from mining or whatever. The official endorsement of harmful pollutants is also depicted, as all government wings go against their own people by favoring the corporation to carry on its mining operation at whatever environmental costs. All

government officials, including the president of the country, stand with the company they accept is good for their own benefit. Beah describes this in the following excerpt:

> Another accident occurred at the diamond site that cost the lives of six people. The townspeople accused the company, called KHoldings, and the accident gained national attention in a day. The vice president of the country came to town…But when he arrived, he went to a meeting with the company and then met his people afterward, gathered and awaiting his arrival. All hope died when he began speaking, "Everybody sit down on the ground. Sit so you can see me, only me," he shouted, even as the older chiefs struggled to bend to the ground. The gathering protested a bit with murmurs, and the vice president said, "I will use my law to punish you," he shouted, referring to the law of Lion Mountain as his. "If you all do not sit on the ground and keep quiet, I will show you my power. You'll wish your mother hadn't given birth to you" (pp. 161-162).

The police and media stations are also in support of the mining company for the bribes they get from the company, and as a result, the voice of the natives is unheard anywhere. The natives' frustration grew as they realized that even the law was being used against them. The vice president's threat only fueled their determination to stand up for their rights. However, the mining company's influence extended beyond just the government; it permeated the police force and media stations. This systematic corruption ensured that the voices of the natives remained suppressed, leaving them feeling unheard and powerless in their own land.

It is also noticeable that environmental racism is depicted in this situation, as the mining company's operations were causing significant damage to the surrounding ecosystems and communities. The company's disregard for the environment further aggravated the already dire situation for the natives. This blatant disregard for both the people and the land only intensified their resolve to fight for justice and reclaim their rights.

Finally, the natives are intentionally excluded from any form of governmental leadership. The lack of representation in government exacerbates the natives' feelings of

marginalization and further reinforces their powerlessness. By intentionally excluding them from positions of leadership, the government perpetuates a system of oppression and continues to suppress their voices. This systemic exclusion not only denies the natives the opportunity to advocate for their rights but also perpetuates the cycle of environmental degradation and injustice.

Furthermore, it hinders any progress towards achieving equality and justice for all individuals in society by silencing marginalized communities and perpetuating systemic inequalities. This silencing of marginalized communities not only robs them of their basic human rights, but also prevents society as a whole from benefiting from their unique perspectives and experiences. By excluding indigenous peoples from positions of leadership, the government fails to tap into their valuable knowledge of the land and their sustainable practices, resulting in further environmental degradation. In order to truly achieve equality and justice, it is crucial for governments to actively include and empower marginalized communities, giving them the platform, they need to advocate for their rights and contribute to a more just and sustainable society.

Displacement is depicted in Radiance of Tomorrow for two reasons. The first displacement happens because of Operation No Living Thing, the civil war that devastates every life form in Imperi and the surrounding villages, while the second displacement happens as a result of the encroachment of the mining company that transforms the ecosystem into an apocalyptic world. The former is the outcome of fractured domestic military racism, while the latter is the result of overt racism by a foreign corporate enterprise.

The mining industry's swift development causes total environmental destruction and the relocation of the natives to another place. The people get their umbilical cords cut and alienated from their place forever. They feel and become feeble, like a baby departed from its mother. What worsens this is that it is not based on their consent, but they are forced to do so by their own government, which favors the company that is owned by white men. This implies that both the company and its owners are more favored than the natives (indigenous communities) by even their government, which is supposed to protect their

rights to be on their homestead. Environmental racism plays a role in the lives of indigenous people, as their government flags and subscribes to a false development framework to maximize the economy of the country. In the novel, the people of Imperi plead with their immediate government wing to stop the company's operation as it is causing disaster to their environment, as it spoils water bodies and kills fish, and as they are unable to put up with the air pollution and all forms of environmental degradation. However, they get a negative response from the district government. They are even intruded upon and beaten up by the policemen who are supposed to protect them from any forms of danger. They unrelentingly try to do everything they can to stop the company from encroaching on their land, though they are unable to do so and give up at the end.

> The town was in the midst of a relocation to barren land. The new houses were smaller, with weaker foundations. They were made of mud brick, not cement or clay. As a result, they sometimes collapsed on families, killing everyone inside. Of course, the police reports blamed the inhabitants for not maintaining the houses the mining company had built for them. The new town also had no trees, no proper land to farm on, and no streams for water. Every morning, a truck carrying a tank would come to distribute water to the people. Everyone, even women and children, fought one another just to get a bucket or two, even though the water smelled impure and had rust in it. The schools that had been destroyed hadn't been rebuilt, so everyone had to go to the town where the secondary school was. This meant long walks on roads with big trucks passing frequently. When your child left you for school, you waited anxiously to see if he or she would return alive. Accidents were common. The vehicles didn't stop when they hit someone; the company took no responsibility whatsoever (p. 145).

From this excerpt, it is clear that the natives suffer the bitter consequences of a negligent and uncaring system, which puts their lives at risk and denies any accountability for the harm caused. This is the result of environmental racism that prioritizes profits over the well-being of marginalized communities, perpetuating systemic injustices. The lack of responsibility from the company demonstrates disregard for the lives of the native people. This is a prime example of how corporations exploit vulnerable communities for their own

financial gain without consideration for the harm caused. The systemic injustices faced by marginalized communities are further exacerbated by the environmental racism they endure, preventing them from accessing the same level of protection and resources as more privileged groups. Such environmental racism exposes these marginalized and powerless communities to displacement. They are often forced to live in proximity to toxic waste sites or polluted areas, which significantly impacts their health and well-being. The lack of access to clean air, water, and adequate healthcare perpetuates a cycle of poverty and inequality. Additionally, the displacement caused by environmental racism disrupts the social fabric of these communities, tearing apart families and eroding their cultural heritage.

In the novel, the government people simply allow this to happen to the land and the people for the sake of personal benefit at the expense of letting their people and their environment be exploited harshly. The people of Imperi thus lose their natural environment and land forever. The conflicts are over land that is owned by natives, but they are dispossessed of their land by the mining industry with the intervention of their own government, which at the end uproots them from the land that the meaning of their existence is submerged in. This displacement not only destroys their physical connection to the land but also strips away their sense of identity and belonging. The natives are forced to adapt to a new way of life in crowded cities, disconnected from their traditional customs and practices. As a result, generations of knowledge and cultural traditions are lost, leaving the people of Imperi feeling lost and disconnected from their roots.

The mining industry also brings psychological shock to the people of Imperi. The indigenous people suffer from not only the loss of their source of economy, but they also suffer from the loss of their accumulated cultural knowledge over generation. In Africa, people are psychologically attached to their place, and so there is no dualism in culture and nature as they are attached to one another. Place is where all forms of knowledge get accumulated—culture of the indigenous people and their place exist in singularity; consequently, either they exist together or perish together. Though the people of Imperi already learn this and request their government to decease the company from their land,

they are told not to imagine that; they even would perish if they raise such complaints again.

They eventually get displaced from their ancestral land and relocated to another place. The company takes all lands, expanding and displacing all people. Even schools, which are the source of knowledge, are neglected by the company and the government of the country. Students are absolutely unable to attend class because there is dust everywhere in a school compound, including classrooms, and too much noise of machineries pollutes the environment. This is another implication for the government's dire chase after the so-called development framed in neo-colonialism without even considering education as valuable. The company is valued more important than schools which mold generations who are the future hope of the country. After letting children to ignorance which is part of poverty, what genuine development is attained?

The government of the country, in Radiance of Tomorrow, does not understand what development is brought by discriminating against its citizens. If there are no educated economists, accountants, marketing experts, statisticians, managers, leaders, politicians, and so on, how will the country get along with the foreign currency gained from the mining company? Without educated health practitioners, lawyers, teachers, historians, and so on, what development is imagined? At the end, the company destroys the school with the purpose of extracting abundant minerals. Without a strong education system and a well-rounded set of professionals, a nation cannot truly progress and develop. The government's shortsightedness in prioritizing immediate gains from mining over investing in human capital and infrastructure will ultimately lead to the country's downfall. By destroying the school, the mining company further demonstrates their disregard for the long-term well-being and prosperity of the nation and its people.

When the residents of Imperi are deprived of their land in *Radiance of Tomorrow*, some of them choose to migrate to the metropolitan city. In an uncertain environment, they are left to their own perplexity and disillusionment. The loss of communal lands has serious consequences for their livelihoods and well-being. Mining operations result in land loss, which has a slew of negative repercussions that they are compelled to bear. Bockarie is one

of the victims tempted to migrate to Freetown after losing land to a mining firm (p. 164). He moves his wife and children to the bustling metropolis in the hopes of starting a new life, though he eventually becomes unsuccessful, passing on many miseries as a result of the city's rampant corruption, obnoxious robbery, immorality, and escalating life demands.

5.3 The Demise of the Indigenous Community's Environment

As has been discussed, unlike the natives, the colonizers consider land and its inhabitants as commodities that can be owned for profit. They care less or they do not totally care about the well-being of the indigenous people or the sustainability of the environment as long as they are able to gain benefit from the wealth of the land. The indigenous community regards land as an ancestral lineage, a spiritual foundation, and a source of existence.

Beah's text vividly depicts how the colonizers who own the mining company view and treat the land and its inhabitants. The text further explains how the mining causes serious problems, including a threat to the whole environment and harm to the health of every living thing in the village. Mining operations involve a large and broad land area, causing deforestation and the destruction of organisms. The development of mining areas necessitates building dams, roads, and housing for the mine workers, causing vegetation farms to be destroyed.

The increased human and vehicle mobility harms the environment by releasing gases and causing dust to blow into the air. When natives walk on the street, drivers intentionally blow dust in their faces, exacerbating their plight. Dust covers everywhere in the town, including schools and ritual sites. It hampers the movements of the natives and makes them confine themselves to small areas of land within and around their houses. The text depicts excessive landscaping for the mining operation and the damage to natural ecosystems, which is termed ecocide.

In order to achieve their goals, the colonizers adopted landscaping techniques, which resulted in a variety of environmental issues in the postcolonial areas, including soil erosion, biodiversity loss, global warming, pollution, and climate change. It entails

modifying the natural ecological environment in order to further materialistic goals. The term landscaping refers to the alteration, appropriation, and modification of the native land for the capitalists' material gain (Santra, 2005, p. 12). Landscaping, as an environmental racism process, combines the colonists' conflict over the natives' land and resources, like fauna and flora, oil, minerals, and water. It is associated with the modification of natural environmental elements to achieve materialistic purposes in postcolonial terminology.

Territorial tensions between colonized and colonizers are entwined in literary images of postcolonial settings. ''Land is certainly an appropriate and adequate category to signify the environment that natives and Europeans struggle over: the resources such as soil, vegetation, animals, minerals, and water. Yet more than simply control over environment, the struggle revolves around control over space, over territories over landscapes'' (Sluyter, 2002, p. 10). He underlines the crucial fact that the degree of control over land resources is determined by complicated power geographies. Despite being intellectual constructs, colonial relations are supported and strengthened by physical landscapes. The colonizer's ideals of race, progress, reason, and civilization are used to carry out this process.

In Beah's text, landscaping is observable, changing Imperi irreparably. The modification of elements of the natural environment by white people to achieve materialistic purposes, as in postcolonial terminology, is apparently noticeable. The construction of roads, buildings, and infrastructure has transformed the once-pristine landscape into a concrete jungle. The destruction of forests and the clearing of land for dams have also had a devastating impact on the biodiversity of the region. It is evident that the foreign miners prioritized their own economic interests over the preservation of the environment, leading to irreversible damage.

First, the mining company builds dams and dredges by displacing the natives and clearing the land, which completely changes the landscape. In the process, they not only destroy natural habitats but also disrupt the delicate balance of the ecosystem. The constant extraction of resources further exacerbates the problem, as it leads to soil erosion and pollution of nearby water bodies. Additionally, the noise and air pollution caused by the

mining activities have a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of both humans and wildlife in the area. The irreversible damage caused by these foreign miners serves as a stark reminder of the consequences that can arise when economic interests take precedence over environmental preservation:

> The vehicle didn't go to the mining site. It went past it, weaving its way through endless dams, which got bigger and bigger in size, and the earth got redder, exposing its wounds, and the men got quieter. Their laughter grew forced as they accepted the final banter of the morning. The truck halted at a large clearing in the middle of the dams that could be seen miles and miles in the distance. Once there had been forests here. Now the forests had been pushed back to the green mountains afar. Other vehicles were unloading. The men greeted one another and soon the clearing was filled with chatter. "Which is the dredge and which is the plant?" Benjamin asked a fellow standing next to him. He pointed at the plant that looked like an iron house with several floors floating on the water, and the dredge, a similar structure, but one that also resembled Caterpillar machinery, as it had zigzagged teeth in the front of it for digging (p. 131).

This extract highlights the magnitude of the demise of the marginalized community's environment. The arrival of the plant and dredge signaled a significant change in the landscape for the marginalized community. The once peaceful and untouched green mountains now had to make room for these industrial structures. Benjamin's question to his fellow companion revealed the confusion and unfamiliarity that the community felt towards these new intrusions. The description of the plant and dredge as iron structures floating on the water, resembling Caterpillar machinery, emphasized the stark contrast between the natural environment and the encroaching industrialization. The presence of these structures served as a reminder of the devastating impact that progress and development had on the marginalized community's environment.

The once serene and untouched landscape was now marred by the presence of smokestacks billowing thick black smoke into the sky. The air, once filled with the crisp scent of pine and fresh mountain air, now carried the acrid stench of burning coal and

chemical pollutants. Benjamin couldn't help but feel a pang of sadness as he gazed upon the transformation that had taken place. The green mountains, once a symbol of tranquility and beauty, now seemed suffocated by the encroaching industrialization.

> Three months later, you wouldn’t know that a town had existed where Imperi had been: an artificial dam now occupied much of the land, the top of the water shimmering with the reflections of the minerals underneath. The dredge was in full swing, digging the rutile or, as the older people referred to it, “the colorful and shiny excrement of the earth that shows that it is still healthy.” Most days, though, people wished that the excrements of their land were like all others, undesirable, and that their earth didn’t carry within it beautiful things that brought them misery (p. 149).

From this extract, it can be inferred that the town of Imperi was once a thriving place. However, the construction of an artificial dam had drastically changed the landscape, causing the town to be submerged underwater. Despite this, the dredging activity was still ongoing, as the town's inhabitants saw value in the minerals that were being extracted. However, there was also a sense of resentment towards the beauty of their land, as it brought them sorrow and hardship.

Second, the drilling and excavation of open-pit mines, as well as the alterations brought on by the growth of associated infrastructure, all contribute to the modification of Imperi's landscape during the mining process. The once-pristine forests and rolling hills were now scarred by deep craters and towering machinery. The once-vibrant and diverse ecosystem had been disrupted, leaving behind a barren wasteland.

The construction of miner camps and the roads required to transport the extracted materials degraded the natural environment. The constant noise of machinery and the pollution caused by mining operations led to the displacement of various animal species and the destruction of their habitats.

> Everything was in disarray during the preparations for full-scale mining to commence. Huge trucks, bulldozers, and other monstrous-looking machines came from out of nowhere and in full speed traveled down roads to start digging. They

> provided no proper passage for the travelers who had no other means but to walk, so with the persistence of bare feet finding a way around the roadblocks, people made paths in the bushes by the roads. But the mining vehicles rolled on in groups, leaving a thick fog of dust. It took minutes to be able to see where you were going, whether you were in the bushes or on the road (p. 80).

As stated in the extract, the mining vehicles continued to disrupt the travel routes and create chaos for the travelers. The thick fog of dust created by these machines made it nearly impossible to navigate, causing further frustration and confusion. People face miserable conditions as they struggle to find their way through the dusty haze, constantly questioning whether they were on the correct path or straying deeper into the bushes. The unrelenting noise of the mining vehicles added to the already chaotic scene, making it difficult to communicate and exacerbating the feeling of disorientation.

The infrastructure built by mining operations in isolated, uninhabited environments increases access to these areas, which causes additional disruption to the ecological systems and changes the landscape into an uninhabitable place.

Arthur Galston's ecocide is seriously depicted in the novel. This scholar introduced the term "ecocide" in 1970 at the Conference on War and National Responsibility, though it has recently gained popularity. Galson coined the word to emphasize his concerns about the use of "defoliant Agent Orange" during the Vietnam War to cause environmental destruction. The term is also referred to as "terracide" or "planetocide" (Broswimmer, 2002, p. 91). It is a combination of two words: eco (meaning "home") and cide (meaning "to destroy or kill") to represent the destruction of home, in which purposeful or unintentional manmade activities culminated in the extermination of planet Earth.

Most definitions of the term generally refer to the devastation of substantial areas of the natural environment as a result of actions such as mining, nuclear war, resource misuse, or hazardous material dumping. The Stop Ecocide Foundation announced in November 2020 that they had assembled an expert panel to produce a definition of ecocide, which they defined as enormous destruction and annihilation of ecosystems—damage to

nature that is extensive, severe, or systematic. One of the key aspects they emphasized in their definitional framework was that a definition of ecocide must expressly highlight environmental racism and local-level environmental injustice. Ecocide becomes more serious when it occurs as a result of environmental racism, in which environmental and racial oppression are interconnected or supported by one another in theory and practice (Huggan & Tiffin, 2013, p. 4).

In this context, Beah's novel depicts that the mining industry destroys the environment entirely. The mining activities demolish all living things, including small organisms. The company digs small dams everywhere and expands its mining sites to every end of the land, polluting water bodies, soil, and air. As a result, the once-thriving ecosystem turns into a barren wasteland. The contaminated water bodies no longer support aquatic life, leading to the extinction of several species. The soil, stripped of its nutrients and filled with toxic substances, can no longer sustain plant life, leaving the land devoid of any vegetation. The polluted air, filled with harmful chemicals and dust particles, poses a serious threat to the health of both humans and animals in the surrounding areas. Beah's novel serves as a powerful reminder of the devastating impact that the mining industry can have on the environment.

> When I was a boy, my father told me that there are three important things one's heart must be satisfied with before choosing the location of a village—now a town, but this still applies," Pa Kainesi said, his voice trembling terribly. It had been a while since he had spoken in public. He had been quiet since Wonde had humiliated them. "There must be a good source of water, good land for growing crops, and a suitable place for burying the dead. We are losing the first two, and this is tormenting my old spirit." He ended there (p. 101).

From the extract, ecocide is evident in the village as they are losing access to clean water and fertile land for farming. This indicates that the environment is being degraded, leading to a potential collapse of the village's agricultural and economic systems. The mention of a suitable place for burying the dead also suggests that the village's cultural practices and traditions are being disrupted, further contributing to the distress felt by Pa

Kainesi. This extract highlights the devastating impact of ecocide on both the physical and spiritual well-being of the village community. The loss of clean water and fertile land not only affects the villagers' ability to sustain themselves, but it also robs them of their connection to the land and their ancestors. The disruption of cultural practices and traditions adds to the sense of despair and hopelessness that Pa Kainesi feels.

Water bodies are the most affected element of natural ecosystems, as depicted in the novel. Several phases of mining and mineral processing necessitate the use of water, resulting in large groundwater resource impacts. Water is used for dust prevention, soluble particle removal, screening and separation techniques, and waste disposal drainage dams. They use chemicals in small dams to polish minerals, and these chemicals enter the soil and water bodies. The chemicals kill all forms of organisms that live in the soil. Fish and other living things that occupy the water bodies are also infected by the chemicals. The people of Imperi lack potable water. They also lack food as they depend on fishing for their livelihood.

> Several artificial dams had been created for the mining of rutile, but the dams were overflowing, spilling into and destroying the roads the company needed for its vehicles. So, the company had begun draining excess water directly into the river, thereby contaminating it. “The river was our only source of clean, drinkable water,” said the men. “Why did they not direct the water somewhere else?” (p. 100).

This extract shows the devastating impact of the mining activities on the community of Imperi. Not only are the water bodies contaminated with chemicals, but the people are also suffering from a lack of potable water. This has severely affected their ability to access clean drinking water and has forced them to depend on the polluted river for their needs. The company's decision to drain excess water directly into the river further worsened the situation, leaving the community questioning why the water could not have been directed elsewhere to preserve their only source of clean water.

> When Kula and Miata arrived at the river, things looked strange. The water was completely dirty and murky, and it smelled rusty…. Midday, when Miata went to

> turn the clothes over so the sun would dry them properly, she noticed there was rust on them and they smelled strange. There was none of that fragrance the sun usually left on the fabrics. She couldn't understand it; her mother had done this for years and had never carelessly washed anything. Miata called out to her, "Mother, could you please come out and see this." Tying her waistcloth, Kula came out of the house to inspect. The whites, which were mostly the uniforms, were the worst. Rubbing the fabric, Kula could feel the rust on her fingers, and there was an oily substance that continued to stain each cloth she touched. She brought her nose closer and could smell something that made her wince. She touched it to her tongue and instantly felt an acidic sensation. Saliva filled her mouth, and she spat it out (pp. 98-99).

This extract shows that the water body is severely polluted. The pollution in the water body was evident from the rust and oily substance that stained the uniforms. The smell and taste of the water confirmed its contamination, causing Kula to wince and spit it out. It was clear that the water body was severely polluted and posed a danger to anyone who came into contact with it. This shows how the marginalized community is forced to live in unsanitary conditions, with access to polluted water that can have detrimental effects on their health. The government's neglect and lack of concern for the well-being of marginalized communities are highlighted through this vivid portrayal of the polluted water body. It serves as a reminder of the stark inequalities and injustices faced by those living on the fringes of society.

Soil is also severely devastated as a result of the mining company's use of chemicals in dams to clean minerals that enter them from the overflows of the dams. The contaminated soil makes it nearly impossible for the marginalized community to grow their own food, further exacerbating their already dire living conditions. The chemicals seeped into the ground, poisoning crops and rendering the land infertile for future cultivation. This environmental degradation further perpetuates the cycle of poverty and hardship experienced by the marginalized community, leaving them with limited options and little hope for a better future.

> The farmers among them were livid. Their lands for planting next season had been dug up and flooded without any consultation. “This means that our rice fields have also been contaminated,” one of the farmers added, as he dipped a hand in the water and smelled it (p. 100).

Further, air is harshly affected by the company’s mining operation. Imperi is filled with dusts and car emissions; people cough everywhere, and they spit dust from their mouths. People sometimes get hit by car as they cannot see the car coming from distance because dusts cover their sight. Children, while going to school, and women, while collecting things for household living, suffer a lot. The drivers are also so harsh; they do not care about the safety of the community. They drive fast releasing dust to the air, and they sometimes smash anybody they get in the street. The company takes no responsibility for the car accident, and it is also not forced to compensate the victim’s family by the government.

> The sounds of the machines were followed by thick smoke from the bowels of their engines; the smoke quickly blanketed the clouds and cast a dark glow around town. The smell made even the dogs sneeze, some chewing on plants perhaps to cure themselves (p. 70).

Moreover, there is also sound pollution from the monster machine which operates in the mining site, and during the night, the workers of the company dance by releasing a loud music from g-pass. Imperi and its habitats (all forms of life) get disturbed by the sound of music. As the Eco-community have never experienced such night club before, the environment is felt chaotic. The indigenous people think that such disturbance is immoral to the community. The people’s storytelling trends get interrupted by the noise. The people of Imperi use stories to educate young ones with their culture and history, so they always tell story their children every night.

As a result, they want their environment to be quiet, and they also believe that nature does not want to be disturbed. But the company’s men come and establish a center for night club and a bar, where they can stay a night enjoying different life which is totally

not experienced by natives. Imperi turns out to be a dancing place, and people become restless even in the night. The habit of telling story gets interrupted. Storytelling is discounted means knowledge of the indigenous community get discontinued as storytelling is the means through which knowledge is transferred to the next generation.

Here, the company plays significant role in departing people from their identity—as what Africans tell their children is primarily of their identity. What follow is a change to modernization. When natives get disconnected from their own culture (knowledge of culture and history), the line totally discontinue and let another one to replace it. This new line is another culture which is incorporated with the company.

> Each time the engines started again after a quick interval; it seemed their sounds chased silence farther out of the land. The ugly din interrupted the chanting of the birds so much that they stopped singing and instead listened, bobbing their heads on the treetops as they looked around inquiringly (pp. 69-70).

As depicted in the novel, water habitats, especially fish, are affected by chemicals spilled into water bodies. This shows that the marginalized community's suffering is mounted by the eradication of their food source, making it even more difficult for them to sustain themselves and escape the cycle of poverty. The loss of their primary source of nutrition not only deepens their physical hardships but also takes a toll on their mental and emotional well-being. With the contaminated water bodies, the marginalized community is left with no choice but to rely on scarce and often unhealthy alternatives, further compromising their health and overall quality of life. The consequences of this environmental degradation are far-reaching, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable and responsible practices to protect the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

> As people were dispersing, Benjamin’s wife, Fatu, entered the gathering holding a cooking pot. “Look. I tried frying the fish that my husband brought, the ones that were in good condition. This is what happened.” All that remained in the pot were bones lying in cooking oil. The flesh of the fish had completely dissolved. One by one people lined up to look in Fatu’s pot, their minds and countenances burdened

by what they had seen. Those who had money bought bottled water to drink that night; the rest—the majority—boiled the rusty water and cooled it before drinking it or cooking with it (pp. 102-103).

In conclusion, the harm caused to natural resources in mining regions typically takes many forms, such as soil erosion, diminished fertility of the soil, desertification, depletion of game and fish stocks, widespread extinction of species and their natural habitats, depletion of groundwater, and pollution of rivers and other water sources. Marginalized communities are often the most affected by the damage caused to natural resources in mining regions. They bear the brunt of the environmental and health consequences, as their livelihoods and well-being are deeply intertwined with the land. These communities often lack the resources and political power to challenge the mining activities or demand proper compensation for the harm done. Consequently, they are left to suffer the long-term consequences of resource exploitation, further exacerbating existing inequalities and perpetuating a cycle of poverty and environmental degradation.

5.4 The Cultural Erasure of the Indigenous Community

Another impact of environmental racism, which is demonstrated in the text, is that the company's men purposefully destroy the indigenous people's social fabric—tradition. They target the community's cultural lifeblood in order to create colonial space by destroying the local (traditional) way of life. As depicted in the text, there are several instances of this.

First, the company’s men open a significant number of bars at the square where Mama Kadie and other elders use to educate the younger generation. "More bars opened in town, and at night music blared out and drunken men harassed the young women who walked by." (p. 71) Beah writes. The commotion from the bar and the loud music prevents the peace and quiet required for stories to captivate the young, so the elders no longer share their tales in the public square. The goal is to replace the traditional African way of life, which is viewed as primitive or backward, with that of the West. The company men succeed in achieving their goal as the elders stop using the place to educate the children and as they totally stop telling the story.

The colonial elites know very well how to create generation gaps through ideological injection. Through the creation of interruptions, they cut the young generation from the umbilical cord that connects them to the traditional source of knowledge and wisdom. In doing so, they redirect and instill the anthropocentric Western knowledge corpus in them. This is the royal colonial process of uprooting generations from eco-friendly cultures and transplanting them into anthropocentric Western cultures. Beah says, "With nothing better to do, the younger people went to the bars and stood around observing the white and black workers." They called it "going to watch television." (p. 71). There is a shift in their interest from listening to the history and stories of their ancestors.

The colonialists consider indigenous people savages, and they want to snatch them of their ancestral culture and integrate them into the colonizers' culture (colonial space). This is the subtle impact of neo-colonialism, which is a continuation of colonial enterprise in this era. Regarding what the children watch at the bars, Beah describes them as, "Most nights ended with heated conversations and bottles thrown at walls or heads; or else swearing accompanied by laughs so hurtful to the ears they could come only from wounded souls." (p. 71).

He further reveals the covert racism through the worsening behaviors exhibited by the senior workers of the company, which ruin the young generation as follows: "Sometimes one of the senior workers... would stagger out of the bar and, barely able to stand, urinate in public, shaking his penis at whoever was around." (p. 71). One of the white workers pisses all over the town hall, where the elders gather, one evening. He holds a bottle of beer in one hand and his private thing in the other as he spins around in circles, soaking tables, seats, the ceiling, and the ground while saying, "I am Michelangelo, and I am making my masterpiece." The children look at him in astonishment. The guy throws money at them and demands that they cheer for him as he does so. They rush for the money and applaud him.

Pa Moiwa, one of the honored elders of the town, suddenly appears on the scene and shakes his head in disgust, asking, "Do you behave in such a manner in the land you are from?" (p. 72). After a brief but furious conversation, the man zips his trousers and brushes up against Pa Moiwa as he returns to the bar. "I am going for more paint; my work

isn’t done," he says loudly. "When I am finished, you will always remember John." John has something disguised in his statement, which Pa Moiwa can clearly understand.

There is a strong meaning in the word "painting," which John divulges in intoxication, which is to mean erasing the indigenous culture from the minds of the indigenous young generation and filling them with that of the West. This is not John's project, despite the fact that he reveals it in ecstasy. It is the destructive superstructure in the cultural framework of neo-colonialism. It is covertly carried out within the capitalist market system. Pa Moiwa wants to tell John that he is peeing on sacred ground where wise people have gathered for generations to discuss significant issues pertaining to their land, but he chooses not to because he knows that doing so would bring nothing.

In his statement, "When I am finished, you will always remember John," John wishes to demonstrate to Pa Moiwa that the loss of indigenous people, land, culture, and identity is inevitable, and the dystopia is swiftly coming to Imperi. Mining erodes indigenous communities' strong cultural ties, resulting in the loss of their culture and identity (Baguilat, 2011). Indigenous ways of life, livelihoods, and significant cultural and spiritual sites are in danger due to mining activity and its related social and environmental effects. As known, large-scale mining frequently results not only in the loss of lands for indigenous peoples, who are among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in society, but also this poses a serious threat to their culture and social fabrics. This is what Imperi is facing, and the change is irreversible.

Besides, John is exhibiting an extreme form of racism by pissing on the sacred place and seats, where the highest level of traditional consciousness is displayed. It is intended to show the children that what they value (the elders and the sacred land) is worthless, so he is showing them that they should chase after what is worth having, which is the cash (money) he gives them. In other words, he diverts the minds of the young to the mining company, which is capable of paying salaries to its employees, and shows them that following the traditional leaders is worthless. For the materialists, everything—including land—is a commodity, whereas the indigenous people do not place value in money.

This clash of values between the materialistic mindset and the traditional indigenous beliefs creates a stark contrast in how the two groups perceive and prioritize

their surroundings. The mining company, with its promise of monetary gain and economic development, presents a tempting opportunity for the younger generation, who have grown up in a world increasingly influenced by Western ideals. However, for the indigenous people, the sacredness of the land and the wisdom of their elders hold far greater significance than any amount of money could ever offer. It is a battle between preserving cultural heritage and embracing modernization, where the ultimate outcome remains uncertain.

CHAPTER SIX

MYTH OF DEVELOPMENT IN IMBOLO MBUE'S *HOW BEAUTIFUL WE WERE*

The present chapter is devoted to the analysis of the environmental impact of the myth of development in Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*. Mbue delves deep into the repercussions of the myth of development on the environment. Through vivid descriptions and thought-provoking narratives, she highlights the devastating consequences of industrialization and exploitation on the land, water, and air. The characters in the novel grapple with the harsh realities of pollution, deforestation, and the loss of biodiversity, painting a grim picture of how the pursuit of progress can irreversibly damage our planet. Such environmental repercussions of development can be examined in light of postcolonial ecocriticism. Postcolonial ecocriticism offers a lens through which the environmental consequences of development can be analyzed in relation to colonialism and imperialism.

The development is one of the underlying impacts of colonialism to continue operating and affecting ecosystem in developing countries. It is merely a large technocratic apparatus created primarily to serve the West's economic and political interests (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015). This development can be realized as a continuing process of occupation which involves different steps.

One is pertained to how land is understood by natives and developmentalists, the native and the colonizer's difference of thoughts. For the natives land and environment are sacred, and for the colonizers, it is a simple commodity. As they back the process of othering, nativist and developmentalists' understanding of land and natural ecologies are very important in developmental setting. Natives regard their land as an unchangeable spiritual obligation, whereas developmentalists regard it as a material resource that can be exchanged. Developmentalists also think that land is a mere material resources used to bring economic advancement. Huggan and Tiffin define this kind of advancement as "the myth of development" linking to the ideas of the 'Enlightenment ideology of progress' and the 'Darwinian survival of the fittest.' The less advanced Global South is tied to the advanced Northern nations in order to simply close "the gap on their wealthier Northern

counterparts and in so doing to subscribe to a capitalist growth model that is both demonstrably unequal and carries a potentially devastating environmental cost" (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015, p. 28).

The second one is sustainable development in power politics, which helps the West to sustain their ideological, economic, and political power. Sustainability can be viewed from environmental, colonial, and ecological point of views. The West exploit the environment of the global south in the name of development sustainability, which comes with so many repercussions. This exploitation often involves the extraction of natural resources, deforestation, and pollution, leading to irreversible damage to ecosystems and loss of biodiversity. Additionally, the West's colonial history has further perpetuated the unequal distribution of resources and power, as it continues to benefit economically from the exploitation of the global south. From an ecological perspective, sustainable development in power politics fails to address the underlying systemic issues and power imbalances that perpetuate environmental degradation and social inequality.

The third step is state vampirism, which is used as a tool to sustain development. The state vampirism refers to the government's ability to extract resources and wealth from its citizens in order to fund various developmental projects and initiatives. This can be done through a variety of means such as taxes, tariffs, and licensing fees. By utilizing state vampirism, governments can tap into the economic potential of their citizens and ensure a steady flow of resources to support the ongoing growth and progress of the nation. It is, however, crucial to strike a balance between the extraction of resources and the well-being of the citizens to avoid excessive exploitation and maintain a sustainable development model.

The final step is environmental degradation, which is engraved in the western developmental framework. This degradation is a result of the relentless pursuit of economic growth and profit, often at the expense of the natural environment. The consequences of this degradation are far-reaching and have a significant impact on both human and non-human life. From deforestation and habitat destruction to pollution and climate change, the

environmental degradation caused by the western developmental framework is a pressing concern.

6.1 Synopsis of *How Beautiful We Were*

Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were* is a novel that explores the devastating impact of environmental exploitation on a fictional African village called Kosawa. The story spans multiple generations and follows the community's fight for justice and restoration in the face of environmental degradation caused by foreign corporations, particularly the Pexton Corporation. The novel portrays the impact of environmental exploitation on the land, natural resources, and health of the community. The oil company's activities, including oil drilling and waste dumping, lead to the pollution of the village's rivers, air, and soil. The community's once-thriving agricultural and fishing industries are destroyed, and the people of Kosawa are left with contaminated water, food, and air. The community members suffer from various health problems, including respiratory illnesses, skin rashes, and cancer, as a result of exposure to toxic waste and pollution. The social fabric of the community is also affected, as families are torn apart, and traditional ways of life are disrupted.

The narrative is centered around Thula, a young girl who grows up witnessing the gradual destruction of her village's land and resources due to the activities of the Pexton Corporation. As the pollution and environmental devastation worsen, Thula emerges as a determined and resilient leader within the community, advocating for environmental justice and mobilizing the villagers to resist the exploitation they face. Through Thula's perspective and the experiences of various villagers, the novel explores themes of resilience, environmental activism, and the enduring spirit of a people determined to reclaim their land and way of life.

The novel ends with the community of Kosawa continuing their struggle against the environmental devastation caused by the foreign corporation Pexton. The ending of the novel does not provide a neat resolution to the community's challenges, but rather leaves the reader with a sense of ongoing resistance and the resilience of the people in the face of

adversity. The novel concludes with a call to action, emphasizing the importance of solidarity and collective struggle in the fight for justice and environmental sustainability.

6.2 Nativist and Developmentalist Understanding of Land

Frantz Fanon (1961), who is widely regarded having laid the groundwork for the critical field of postcolonial ecocriticism, stated that land is the most important and concrete value that offers the natives bread and, above all, dignity (DeLoughrey & Handley, 2011, p. 3). According to Fanon, the term land is the most defining element of former colonies, and this, in addition to serving as an identity marker, also serves as a source of subsistence for residents of former colonies (both colonizers and colonized) both before and after physical colonialism ended.

Before delving into the concept of the myth of development concerning environmental degradation in Imbolo Mbue's novel, it is crucial to elucidate certain aspects of the theory within the context of the narrative: how the indigenous people and proponents of development perceive land in the story, how this perception either hinders or supports the postcolonial global environment, and the implications of this perspective on nature. Imbolo Mbue portrays proponents of development as individuals who primarily regard land as a tool for economic progress and advancement, viewing nature as a commodity to exploit for financial gain while often neglecting the long-term environmental impacts of their endeavors. Mbue highlights the characteristics of these development enthusiasts through the following excerpts:

> You do understand that all people from overseas are the same, don't you? The Americans, the Europeans, every single overseas person who has ever set foot on our soil, you know they all want the same thing, don't you?" … "You're young," he says. "Someday, when you're old, you'll see that the ones who came to kill us and the ones who'll run to save us are the same. No matter their pretenses, they all arrive here believing they have the power to take from us or give to us whatever will satisfy their endless wants" (p. 117).

This characterization by Mbue labels the proponents of development as "overseas individuals" characterized by a self-serving and exploitative mentality. She implies that these individuals, irrespective of their professed intentions of either harm or benevolence, perceive the colonial environment solely as a tool to satisfy their personal ambitions. Mbue suggests that these developmentalists lack a genuine comprehension or regard for the necessities and dreams of the indigenous population, highlighting a fundamental disconnect between the external forces driving development and the local community's intrinsic values and priorities.

In doing so, they perpetuate a cycle of dependency and inequality, where the host country is left vulnerable and dependent on the whims of these so-called saviors. Mbue's critique highlights the power dynamics at play in the relationship between the "overseas people" and the local population, emphasizing the need for a more equitable and mutually beneficial approach to development. She challenges the notion that outsiders hold the key to progress and instead advocates for a more inclusive and collaborative approach, where the voices and aspirations of the local people are valued and prioritized. By shedding light on the exploitative mindset of these developmentalists, Mbue urges us to question the true motivations behind their actions and to consider alternative paths towards genuine development and empowerment.

Mbue further contends that the developmentalists are products of a historical continuum marked by slavery, colonialism, and imperialism, which have entrenched systems of subjugation and exploitation. She posits that the enduring legacy of colonialism and imperialism has deeply influenced the perspectives of these proponents of development, shaping their perception of local communities as mere beneficiaries of progress rather than empowered agents in their own advancement. By tracing the origins of the developmentalists back to the era of slavery, Mbue underscores how the historical exploitation and dehumanization of enslaved individuals laid the groundwork for the mindset that persists in contemporary times, perpetuating a dynamic where external actors wield power and agency over marginalized communities without genuine collaboration or consideration for their autonomy and aspirations:

> The snatchers came generations before I was born. My grandmother told me about them—the story had been passed down to her of the time when men and women from distant villages appeared in Kosawa bloodied and in tears, bearing accounts of how young and old alike had been thrown into chains. The sick had been left behind to die alone, babies flung on the ground so their mothers could be dragged away with warm milk flowing down from their breasts (p. 208).

The developmentalists are termed "snatchers" to show their predatory nature and the harm they have inflicted on the natives. This term highlights the brutal and inhumane actions of these colonizers, who not only physically captured the natives but also caused immense emotional and psychological damage. By referring to them as snatchers, it emphasizes the sense of loss and violation experienced by the community, as well as the continued trauma that is passed down through generations.

The author's assertion is to show that the slavery and colonial eras' exploitation and mistreatment of the natives take on a new form—(neo)colonialism. This modern form of colonialism may not involve physical capture, but it still perpetuates the same sense of loss and violation experienced by the community. The snatchers of the past have now evolved into economic and political forces that continue to exploit the resources and labor of the natives, leaving them marginalized and powerless. The term "snatchers" serves as a plain reminder that the harm inflicted by colonizers did not end with the colonial era, but rather continues to haunt and oppress the native population in the present day.

The contrasting perspectives on land and the ecological environment held by the colonizers and the indigenous Africans are pivotal in understanding the dynamics at play in the narrative. African communities view the land and the natural environment as sacred elements intertwined with their cultural and spiritual identities, emphasizing the significance of maintaining ecological harmony and sustainability. In contrast, colonizers perceive these resources primarily as commodities to be exploited for economic gain, lacking the profound spiritual connection that the natives attribute to the land.

This fundamental disparity in viewpoints between the developmentalists and the indigenous people gives rise to a significant tension, as the former prioritize economic progress and material advancement, often at the expense of environmental preservation and cultural heritage. The natives, on the other hand, are deeply committed to upholding their traditional practices and protecting the natural world, viewing their relationship with the land as a spiritual duty that transcends mere economic considerations.

Mbue's exploration of these conflicting perspectives sheds light on the intricate interplay between the developmentalists' pursuit of progress and the natives' reverence for nature. By delving into these opposing ideologies, Mbue underscores the complexities inherent in postcolonial contexts where divergent worldviews clash, shaping the discourse on development and environmental conservation. The juxtaposition of the colonizers' developmentalist mindset with the indigenous Africans' nativist understanding of land underscores the broader themes of power, exploitation, and cultural resilience in the narrative, offering a nuanced portrayal of the intricate dynamics surrounding land, identity, and environmental stewardship in a postcolonial setting.

The enlightenment ideology of progress and the Darwinian survival of the fittest are two concepts that Huggan and Tiffin refer to as "the myth of development" because they provide false justification for this kind of progress. It calls on the less "advanced" southern nations to follow in the footsteps of their wealthier northern counterparts and, in doing so, to embrace a capitalist growth model that is both blatantly unequal and potentially environmentally disastrous (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010, p.28).

The nativist and developmentalist understandings of land and people are reflected in *How Beautiful We Were* through the actions of the foreign corporation and government officials. These two perspectives shape the narrative as they highlight the contrasting ways in which the land and its inhabitants are perceived and treated. The nativist perspective emphasizes the deep connection between the land and the people, viewing them as inseparable entities. This is evident in the locals' unwavering commitment to protect their homeland from the destructive practices of the corporation. On the other hand, the developmentalist perspective prioritizes economic growth and progress, often overlooking

the devastating consequences it may have on the land and its people. This is exemplified through government officials' collaboration with the corporation, prioritizing financial gain over the well-being of the community.

The foreign corporation, Pexton, views the land and the people as resources to be exploited for their own profit. They do not care about the impact of their actions on the environment or the local communities, and they see the people as obstacles to their business interests. This reflects the developmentalist understanding of land and people, where the land is seen as a commodity to be developed and the people are seen as passive recipients of development (p. 123). This perspective ignores the intrinsic value of the land and disregards the rights and well-being of the local communities. Pexton's exploitative approach not only perpetuates inequality and environmental degradation but also hinders sustainable and inclusive development as depicted in the novel.

The government officials also have a developmentalist understanding of land and people, where development is equated with progress and modernization.

> The representatives told them that drilling for oil would bring something called “civilization” to our village. One day, the government representatives said, Kosawa would have a wonderful thing called “prosperity.” Could the men explain “civilization” and “prosperity” in our language? Our grandparents had asked. The government men had said it was impossible for them to explain such terms fully, because it would be hard for our grandparents to understand what they’d never witnessed or considered a possibility (p. 83).

The government official’s version of development is depicted in this excerpt as a promise of progress and improvement for the village of Kosawa. They use terms like "civilization" and "prosperity" to convey the idea that drilling for oil will bring advancements and a better life for the people. However, the officials also acknowledge that these concepts may be difficult for the villagers to comprehend, as they have never experienced or even imagined such possibilities. This suggests that the government's

version of development may be skewed and based on their own understanding and agenda, rather than the true needs and desires of the community:

> This government man had told the Pexton people that they needed to do whatever they could so we would rejoice at their arrival. In our joy, the man had said, we would call upon our Spirit to bless Pexton and prosper them in order that we would, in turn, flourish through them (p. 217).

This lack of understanding and familiarity with the government's vision of development raises concerns about the potential consequences of drilling for oil in Kosawa. The villagers may not fully grasp the environmental impact and long-term effects that oil extraction could have on their land and resources. Additionally, the government's portrayal of progress fails to consider the villagers' cultural and traditional values, which may prioritize harmony with nature over material wealth. Thus, the government's agenda may not align with the true needs and desires of the community, potentially leading to a clash between the villagers and the authorities.

They promised that with the discovery of oil, the village would experience economic growth, improved infrastructure, and access to modern facilities. The government officials painted a picture of a transformed Kosawa, where its residents would no longer struggle with poverty and would instead enjoy a higher standard of living. However, the development they assume is not without consequences. The exploitation of oil resources often leads to environmental degradation, displacement of indigenous communities, and social inequalities. The representatives failed to mention the potential destruction of the natural habitat, the loss of traditional way of life, and the unequal distribution of wealth that often accompanies oil extraction.

Government officials see the displacement of entire villages and the destruction of the environment as necessary sacrifices for the sake of development. They do not consult or compensate the local communities, and they do not take into account the cultural and spiritual significance of the land. This reflects the developmentalist understanding of land and people, where development is seen as a universal goal that overrides local values and

traditions. This approach to development ignores the interconnectedness between humans and nature, disregarding the vital role that the environment plays in sustaining communities. By prioritizing economic growth over sustainability, the people risk losing not only the natural beauty and resources of their land but also the unique cultural heritage that has been passed down through generations.

The people of Kosawa, however, have a nativist understanding of land and people, where the land is seen as a living entity that is interconnected with the people and the spirits. Textual evidence from How Beautiful We Were supports this idea, as we see the characters repeatedly referring to the land as their mother and protector. This deep connection to the land also drives the people of Kosawa to fight against the foreign oil company, as they believe it is not only damaging their livelihoods but also violating the sacred bond between the land and its people. This nativist understanding of land and people serves as a powerful motivator for the characters in their relentless struggle for justice and the preservation of their ancestral home.

The people of Kosawa see themselves as stewards of the land, responsible for its protection and preservation. In the novel, they are depicted as a resilient and united community, unwavering in their determination to defend their way of life and the land that sustains them. The author skillfully portrays their unwavering commitment to their ancestral home as a testament to the strength of their cultural identity and their deep-rooted connection to the land. This connection serves as a reminder of the power and importance of respecting and preserving the natural world and the devastating consequences that can arise when this bond is severed. Through their struggle, the people of Kosawa not only fight for their own survival but also for the protection of the land and the values it represents.

They also see the land as a source of identity and belonging, and they resist the displacement and destruction of their communities. In the novel, the author highlights the resilience and determination of the people of Kosawa, showcasing their unwavering commitment to preserving their way of life. They draw strength from their history and traditions, using them as a foundation to resist the forces that threaten their existence.

Despite the challenges they face, the people of Kosawa stand united, determined to protect their land and pass down their cultural heritage to future generations. Their struggle serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of valuing and preserving our natural resources and the communities that depend on them.

This reflects the nativist understanding of land and people, where the land is seen as a cultural and spiritual entity that is inseparable from the people who inhabit it. This connection to nature is depicted in their folktale in the following excerpt:

> …three brothers once went to check on their traps in the forest and found a leopard caught in one of them. Please, free me, the leopard cried to the brothers; I need to return home to my children, I've been in this trap for days and they have no one to protect them. The brothers debated at length what to do—leopards were rare, and taking one back to their village would have brought them great fortune, but the leopard's pain was evident in her tears. Ultimately, the brothers decided to let her go home to her children. In gratitude, the leopard made a cut on her paw and asked the brothers to use their spears and make cuts on their fingers too. On this day, the leopard said as she forged a blood pact with each brother, I give you my blood: it will flow in your veins and the veins of your descendants until the sun ceases to rise. All who seek to destroy you will fail, for my power in you will cause you to prevail. Go forth now, and live as indomitable men. When the brothers returned to their village, they packed their belongings and left to create a new village, one in which every child would grow up to be as fearsome and dignified as a leopard. They founded Kosawa and anointed the eldest of the brothers to be their woja, for the blood of the leopard was most apparent in the strength that allowed him to tread upon snakes and scorpions (pp. 37-38).

From this excerpt, it is clear that the people of Kosawa have a strong connection to nature. This proves that Africans' cosmological view of life is against duality in existence of human and nature. This folktale represents how the people are connected to the natural world and how they believe in the power and protection provided by their totem animal, the leopard. The statement, "The leopard made a cut on her paw and asked the brothers to

use their spears and make cuts on their fingers too... forged a blood pact with each brother, I give you my blood: it will flow in your veins and the veins of your descendants until the sun ceases to rise," (p. 37) shows the deep bond between humans and animals in African cosmology. It emphasizes the belief that, by sharing their blood with the leopard, the brothers and their descendants are forever connected to the natural world and its forces. This connection is not only physical but also spiritual, as it represents a mutual exchange of power and protection between humans and their totem animal. The leopard is revered as a guardian and guide, symbolizing the intricate relationship and interdependence between humans and nature in African culture.

The story also highlights that nature is not a commodity from the perspective of Africans. This is reflected in the statement, "The brothers debated at length what to do—leopards were rare, and taking one back to their village would have brought them great fortune, but the leopard's pain was evident in her tears" (p. 37). The brothers recognized that the well-being of the leopard was more important than their own personal gain. They understood that taking the leopard back to their village would have disrupted the delicate balance of nature and caused harm to a creature that held significance in their culture. This demonstrates the deep respect and reverence that Africans have for the natural world, viewing it not as something to exploit for personal gain but as a sacred and interconnected entity that deserves protection and care.

This respect for nature is ingrained in African cultures and passed down through generations as a vital part of their identity. It is reflected in Africans' traditional practices, rituals, and beliefs, all aimed at maintaining harmony with the environment. For the brothers, it was not a difficult decision to let go of the opportunity for wealth and instead prioritize the well-being of the leopard. They knew that by doing so, they were upholding a value system that had been instilled in them since childhood.

Further, from the term "in gratitude," (p. 37) they understood the importance of reciprocity and giving back to the natural world that had provided for them. In their eyes, the leopard represented not just a beautiful creature but a symbol of the delicate balance between humans and nature. By protecting the leopard, they were acknowledging their

responsibility as custodians of the land and ensuring the preservation of a species that played a crucial role in the ecosystem. Their decision was a testament to the profound connection between African cultures and the natural world, demonstrating that, in their eyes, nature is an irreplaceable and invaluable asset that must be safeguarded for future generations.

The leopard's statement, "I give you my blood: it will flow in your veins and the veins of your descendants until the sun ceases to rise," (p. 37) stands for the deep understanding and respect that African cultures have for the interconnectedness of all living beings. The leopard's words signify the eternal bond between humans and nature, emphasizing the importance of coexistence and the shared destiny of all species. It serves as a reminder that the actions we take today will shape the world for generations to come, and it is our duty to protect and preserve the natural world for the well-being of both present and future inhabitants of the Earth.

This folktale metaphorically stands for the broader struggle between greed and conservation that exists in today's world. It serves as a reminder that the protection of our natural resources and the preservation of biodiversity should always take precedence over personal gain. The brothers' selfless act demonstrates the power of cultural values and traditions in shaping our actions and decisions and serves as an inspiration for others to prioritize the well-being of our planet over short-term benefits.

Moreover, the folktale underscores the ideological difference between those who prioritize personal gain and those who prioritize the well-being of the planet. The Kosawa people represents the nativist understanding of the physical world and the interconnectedness of all living beings. Their belief in the importance of protecting natural resources and preserving biodiversity is deeply ingrained in their cultural values and traditions. The brothers' selfless act not only showcases their commitment to these ideals but also highlights the potential for cultural beliefs to drive positive change in society. This deep connection to the land is not only rooted in their cultural heritage but also influences their daily lives and decision-making processes. For the people of Kosawa, the land provides sustenance, shelter, and a sense of belonging that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

This understanding of the land as an integral part of their identity motivates their resistance against any threats posed by external forces as they strive to preserve their way of life and protect their ancestral homes. Ultimately, the nativist understanding of land and people in Kosawa serves as a powerful force driving their determination to safeguard their communities and maintain the harmonious relationship between humans, spirits, and the natural world.

The Nativist perspective in the story is reflected in the community's belief that the land is sacred and that they have a responsibility to protect it for future generations. They view themselves as stewards of the land and are deeply connected to its natural rhythms and cycles. This perspective is contrasted with the Developmentalist perspective, which sees the land as a resource to be exploited for economic gain. The oil company, Pexton, and government officials in the story view the land and the people who live there as obstacles to progress, and are willing to use violence and intimidation to achieve their goals.

These show how the nativist and developmentalist understandings of land and people are reflected in *How Beautiful We Were* through the actions of the foreign corporations and the government officials, as well as the resistance and the fight for justice by the people of Kosawa. The conflict between these understandings highlights the importance of recognizing the cultural and spiritual significance of the land and the need for a more holistic and sustainable approach to development.

The conflict between these two perspectives is at the heart of the story, and drives the community's struggle for justice and environmental protection. The community members organize themselves into a resistance movement, using both peaceful protests and acts of sabotage to disrupt the oil companies' operations. They also hold village meetings to discuss their strategy and to share information about the impact of the oil companies' activities on their health and livelihoods.

6.3 Politics of Colonial Power and Sustainable Development

There are many different ways to interpret and understand the concept of sustainability. The use of natural resources for the maintenance of existence, in accordance with the environment. It entails protecting natural resources in a way that will be advantageous to both the present generation and future ones. It suggests that several potential long-term solutions are being developed (Jay and Scott, 2011, p. 19). It is a form of development, according to Wright, that improves people's quality of life without sacrificing or exhausting resources or having an adverse environmental impact that will make it harder for future generations to meet their needs (2008, p. 24).

Sustainable development offers a framework for social and economic development that maximizes current social and economic gains without jeopardizing future needs (Joseph, 2009). It represents "economic development that meets human needs without threatening the global ecosystem or depleting vital resources" (Harris, 2006, p. 44). Thus, these definitions enable us to comprehend sustainable development as a chance to use the flora, fauna, and other elements of our natural environment in a well-planned and responsible manner. These definitions also imply that everything done to the ecosystem at a local level will have global as well as regional impacts. Therefore, sustainable development takes into account both the short and long-term effects of development projects on the environment.

A new level of understanding is added when sustainability is seen through a colonial lens. The term is typically added before development in an effort to create the impression that it is focused on preserving the ecological balance by avoiding the depletion of natural resources while also pursuing economic growth. For the purpose of upholding their dominance over the native people and their lands and completing their development projects, the colonizers adhere to the concept of sustainability.

Huggan and Tiffin define sustainability as an ongoing adherence to the notion of development as an engine of economic growth (2006, p. 31). From the side of the First World, it can be seen as an effort to colonize the natives' undeveloped social life. The

semantic ambiguity of word development is disrupted when it comes to modern concepts like the market and the individual. They assert that "their concerns for environmental management" are dependent on various forms of administrative control and technological development. This suggests that "calls for the survival of the planet are frequently, upon closer inspection, nothing [other] than calls for the survival of the industrial system [itself]" (2006, p. 31).

Huggan and Tiffin's perspectives on sustainable development draw from Escobar's concept of "market sustainability" (197), which he identifies as the primary "regulating mechanism" shaping individuals' daily lives. However, in both cases, the term "environment" carries connotations of the commercialization of nature. This subtle implication serves as a veiled justification for the colonial industrial system and its allies to exert control over natural resources. Consequently, one can infer that this interpretation aligns with the notion of sustainable development, wherein environmental protection takes a back seat to economic growth, particularly benefiting powerful nations at the expense of environmental degradation for indigenous populations. Moreover, it suggests that the preservation of economic growth models takes precedence over addressing environmental decline, underscoring a prioritization of financial interests over ecological conservation efforts.

Viewed through an ecological lens, the term "sustainability" is often misappropriated, becoming a symbolic tool in the postcolonial context that enables imperialists to advocate for supposed social and ecological justice with greater ease. This manipulation of the concept aligns the colonizers' power discourse with the principles of sustainable development, portraying nature as a malleable entity that can be altered to cater to human materialistic desires. In this narrative, Earth is perceived as the capital for economic expansion, prioritizing economic development over environmental preservation in the colonizers' hierarchy of values. While acknowledging that environmental degradation can impede economic growth, the colonizers are driven to protect the environment primarily to ensure the continuity of their economic pursuits, underscoring a utilitarian approach where ecological concerns are subordinated to economic imperatives.

In Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*, the politics of colonial power are reflected through the exploitation and oppression of the fictional African village of Kosawa by an American oil company. The villagers' struggle to protect their land and livelihoods from the destructive actions of the company highlights the unequal power dynamics inherent in colonialism. Additionally, the novel explores the concept of sustainable development as the villagers strive to balance economic progress with the preservation of their environment and cultural heritage. Through their resistance and resilience, Mbue's characters embody the pursuit of sustainable development in the face of colonial power.

The novel provides a deep exploration of the interconnectedness between politics and the environment. Through the characters' struggles against a destructive corporation, the story highlights the detrimental impacts of unchecked industrialization and resource exploitation. It sheds light on the urgent need for sustainable practices and the responsibility of governments and corporations to prioritize environmental protection while ensuring societal progress.

The politics of colonial power are depicted in *How Beautiful We Were* through the actions of the oil company, Pexton, and the complicity of government officials. This oil company exploits the natural resources of the village, causing severe environmental degradation and health issues for the residents. Despite the clear negative consequences, government officials turn a blind eye to the suffering of their own people, prioritizing their personal gain and maintaining their alliance with the colonial powers. This power dynamic highlights the devastating impact of colonialism on the lives of the oppressed and the lengths to which those in power will go to protect their interests.

> The judge who made the final verdict did not deny that Pexton had ruined our land, Thula told us when we gathered in the square to hear the news. The judge said it was likely Pexton and our government had colluded to commit countless crimes (p. 305).

Pexton extracts resources from Kosawa without consulting or compensating the local people, leading to environmental destruction and health problems. The company is

only interested in maximizing its profits, and it does not care about the impact of its actions on people or the environment. This is reminiscent of the colonial powers that exploited the resources of colonized countries without regard for the well-being of the local people.

As depicted in the novel, the government officials are also often bribed by the corporation and use their power to enrich themselves at the expense of the people. They are complicit in the exploitation of the land and the people, and they do not take action to protect the people or the environment. This is similar to the collaboration between colonial powers and local elites in colonized countries, where the elites benefited from the exploitation of their own people (p. 134). The novel highlights the corrupt nature of the government officials, who prioritize their own personal gain over the well-being of the nation. This echoes the historical pattern of power dynamics in colonized countries, where the ruling elites aligned themselves with the colonizers to maintain their own privileged positions. The parallel between these two situations underscores the universal theme of power and corruption, emphasizing that these exploitative practices are not limited to a specific time or place.

As depicted in the novel, the government officials embezzle funds that were meant for public infrastructure projects, leaving the citizens to suffer from inadequate healthcare and crumbling infrastructure. This mirrors real-life instances where corrupt officials in colonized countries would divert resources meant for development into their personal accounts, leaving the majority of the population impoverished and oppressed. The author's depiction sheds light on how power imbalances can perpetuate corruption and exploitation across different contexts.

Moreover, the novel also highlights the legacy of colonialism in the country. For example, it is mentioned that the government gave Pexton power over the people and their land, which reflects the legacy of colonialism where foreign powers often controlled the resources and people of the colonized country. The novel also suggests that the government's actions are motivated by a desire to maintain their power and control over the people, which is a legacy of colonialism where the colonizers often used violence and intimidation to maintain their control over the colonized people.

> When we heard “overseas,” many of us weren’t sure what to think—what good ever came to us from overseas? —but the men from Bézam assured us that the masters and the people from Pexton came from different parts of overseas. They said Pexton was not from Europe, they were from America; they said Pexton had no relationship with our former masters. If we needed to know the truth, they added, American people were far better than Europeans. American people liked to mind their business and only do good—we would soon get a chance to see that for ourselves. The one thing we had to know, they went on, was that if oil was found under our land, Pexton would take over most of the valley—they’d need a lot of land to do their work (p. 215).

These show how the politics of colonial power are depicted in *How Beautiful We Were* through the actions of the multinational oil company and the complicity of the government officials. The exploitation of the land and the people, the collaboration between the corporations and the government officials, and the policies of land dispossession and forced relocation are all reminiscent of the colonial era.

Thula, the central character in *How Beautiful We Were*, represents the younger generation that is affected by the politics of colonial power and the struggle for sustainable development. Thula is a young girl who grows up in a village that is being destroyed by the foreign corporations and the government officials. She witnesses the pollution of the rivers and the air, and the displacement of her own people. She also sees the resistance and the fight for justice by the older generation, such as her father and the other activists (p. 7).

Thula is also part of the younger generation that is concerned about the future of the planet and the need for sustainable development. She and her friends discuss the impact of human activities on the environment, such as the dumping of toxic wastes into the rivers and the ocean. They also talk about the need for renewable energy and the protection of the forests. Thula is aware of the interconnectedness of all living beings and the importance of preserving the balance of nature. Thula represents the hope for the future and the possibility of change. She is part of a generation that is more aware of the environmental issues and more willing to take action. She is also inspired by the older generation's fight

for justice and the power of coming together to make a difference. Thula's story shows that sustainable development is not only about protecting the environment, but also about empowering the people and building a just and equitable society.

Thula's vision for the country is one where the people have control over their own resources and are able to use them for sustainable development. Thula's vision is contrasted with the government's approach, which is shown to be corrupt and focused on maintaining power and control over the people. Overall, the novel suggests that sustainable development is only possible if the country can take control of its resources and use them for the benefit of its own people, and that Thula's vision for the country represents a path towards achieving this goal.

The people of Thula's village, Kosawa, view the land as sacred and believe that they have a responsibility to protect it for future generations. They see themselves as stewards of the land and are deeply connected to its natural rhythms and cycles. They also have a strong sense of community and view themselves as part of a larger collective that includes both the living and the dead. They are willing to come together to fight for their rights and their future, and are willing to use both peaceful protests and acts of sabotage to disrupt the oil companies' operations.

In *How Beautiful We Were*, the interplay between the politics of colonial power and sustainable development is intricately woven into the narrative, offering a nuanced exploration of the complex dynamics at play in postcolonial contexts. Through the lens of the novel, we witness how the colonizers' exploitation of natural resources and disregard for environmental preservation intersect with the indigenous people's deep-rooted connection to the land and their commitment to ecological sustainability. The novel illuminates the stark contrast between the colonizers' prioritization of economic growth at the expense of environmental degradation and the natives' reverence for nature as a sacred resource that must be safeguarded for future generations.

6.4 State Vampirism

As has been discussed, state vampirism was first coined by Andrew Apter to refer to the neo-colonial elites' method of maintaining economic hegemony over the Global South by using puppet native leaders. The colonizers created a polarity of nature and commodity by distorting the natives' understandings of their environment, and they required the natives to maintain their "development missions" in order to continue pillaging the natural resources. As a result, the colonizers changed into what are now known as "state vampires." State vampirism also refers to the way that native states and the allegedly greedy politicians who worked for them encroached on the people they were supposed to represent while channeling enormous amounts of money and resources into the hands of a neocolonial elite (Apter, 1998, p. 145).

This *state vampirism* has most severely impacted indigenous societies. The phrase describes how the centralized state apparatus continues to expropriate and exploit the resources of the indigenous people and exclude them from society and politics. Roy's remarks were cited by Huggan and Tiffin as supporting evidence for this proposition. Development, in Roy's words, is an "instrument of state authority" and a mechanism for misleading supposedly indigenous populations, whom the government has never bothered to consult, about frequently foreign-funded government initiatives. These policies promote poverty, caste prejudice, and illiteracy. They are self-destructive (Huggan & Tiffin 2006, p. 51).

State vampirism is depicted in *How Beautiful We Were* through the ruthless actions of the government and its connection with the oil company, Pexton. In the novel, the state exploits its own people and resources for personal gain in collaboration with multinational corporation. As depicted in the novel, it allows the oil company to exploit Kosawa's resources, leading to ecological devastation. Despite repeated pleas from the villagers, neither Pexton nor the government take action to mitigate this destruction. This shows how the state, represented by the local government, sacrifice its own people and environment for the sake of economic gain from Pexton.

The government in *How Beautiful We Were* expropriates and exploits both its people and the environment by favoring the foreign corporation, which terms this act as state vampirism. This act of state vampirism has led to devastating consequences for the villagers who depend on the land and resources for their livelihoods. The government disregards for the well-being of its own citizens are a clear indication of its corruption and greed. The villagers, once living in harmony with the land, now find themselves stripped of their rights and left to suffer the consequences of environmental degradation. The government's actions not only disregard the livelihoods of its people but also demonstrate a complete lack of empathy and responsibility towards its own citizens. It is a tragic betrayal that highlights the urgent need for justice and accountability.

Firstly, state vampirism is reflected in the complicit act of the government which is supposed to safeguard its people. The government plays the puppet role. It manipulates the laws and regulations to benefit corporations and industries that contribute to the destruction of the environment. This collusion between the government and powerful entities not only disregards the welfare of the community but also perpetuates the cycle of exploitation and devastation. As a result, the community is left powerless and marginalized, unable to break free from the grip of poverty and hardship. The government's failure to address these environmental issues is a clear indication of their indifference towards the well-being of the community and their complicity in the destruction of the ecosystem.

As depicted in the novel, the government grants a foreign corporation, Pexton, the right to extract oil from Kosawa's land without consulting or compensating the local people. This is explicitly stated in the novel as: "Three decades before, in Bézam, on a date we'll never know, at a meeting where none of us was present, our government had given us to Pexton. Handed, on a sheet of paper, our land and waters to them" (p. 15). This blatant disregard for the rights and well-being of the indigenous people of Kosawa highlights the corrupt and exploitative nature of the government. It symbolizes the deep-rooted inequality and power imbalance that exists between the foreign corporations and the local communities. The consequences of this decision are devastating for the people of Kosawa, as they are forcibly displaced from their homes and their traditional way of life is destroyed.

The government officials are careless and indifferent to the hardships faced by the indigenous people. As depicted in the novel, they prioritize the interests of foreign corporations over the well-being and rights of their own citizens.

> Kosawa's case against Pexton was weak, the lawyer had told her; based on his preliminary research, Pexton's agreement with our government was that Pexton would extract the crude and our government would be responsible for all negative externalities (p. 275).

This arrangement clearly shows the government's complicity in prioritizing corporate profits over the needs and rights of marginalized communities. The indigenous people are left to bear the burden of environmental degradation and health issues caused by the extraction activities, while the government turns a blind eye. This illustrates the extent of corporate greed and the lack of accountability that exists within the government, perpetuating the cycle of injustice and marginalization faced by these communities.

The government gives the people of Kosawa a false development promise, which can be expressed as a myth of development. The myth of development is a common tactic used by governments and corporations to justify their exploitative actions and disregard for human rights. In the case of Kosawa, the government presents the extraction activities as a means of economic growth and progress for the community. However, this promise of development is nothing more than a facade, as the true beneficiaries are the corporations reaping enormous profits from the exploitation of natural resources. The people of Kosawa are left with polluted lands, contaminated water sources, and a deteriorating quality of life. The government's complicity in perpetuating this myth only serves to deepen the injustices faced by marginalized communities, further widening the gap between the haves and have-nots. The author highlights this fact in the following excerpts:

> We should have known the end was near. How could we not have known? When the sky began to pour acid and rivers began to turn green, we should have known our land would soon be dead. Then again, how could we have known when they didn't want us to know? When we began to wobble and stagger, tumbling and

> snapping like feeble little branches, they told us it would soon be over, that we would all be well in no time. They asked us to come to village meetings, to talk about it. They told us we had to trust them (p. 6).

In this excerpt, the author shows how the myth of development, which the government subscribes to, is used to deceive the people and cover up the harmful effects of their actions. The government's insistence on attending village meetings and gaining the people's trust only further illustrates their manipulative tactics. This passage suggests that the government's priority is not the well-being of the people but rather maintaining control and perpetuating the illusion of progress and prosperity.

The author's portrayal of the government's manipulation tactics raises important questions about the true intentions behind their actions. Are they truly invested in the well-being of the people, or are they more concerned with their own power and image? The government's promises of progress and prosperity may be nothing more than empty rhetoric. It seems that the government is more interested in maintaining control and perpetuating the illusion of progress than addressing the harmful effects of its actions on people and the environment. This raises concerns about the transparency and accountability of the government, as well as the long-term consequences of their policies.

This myth of development leads to environmental destruction, including oil spills and toxic waste that pollute the air, water, and soil (p. 133, 150, 254, 267). This blatant disregard for the well-being of the community not only devastates their livelihoods but also poses serious health risks. The residents of Kosawa suffer from respiratory illnesses, contaminated water sources, and a significant decline in agricultural productivity. The consequences are dire, as generations of families are forced to endure the consequences of the government's callous actions. Moreover, the local wildlife in Kosawa has also been severely affected by the pollution, with many species on the brink of extinction. The once lush and thriving ecosystem has now been replaced by a desolate landscape, devoid of any biodiversity.

Secondly, in Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*, state vampirism is reflected in the government's actions, which include the use of violence and intimidation to suppress dissent and maintain control. For example, soldiers are sent to villages to intimidate and threaten the people, and those who speak out against the government or Pexton are arrested or killed. The government also uses propaganda to control the narrative and portray itself as a benevolent force while demonizing those who oppose it. In the novel, it spreads false information about dissenters, labeling them as terrorists or enemies of the company and the state. In addition, the government manipulate the media to silence any criticism or independent reporting, ensuring that their version of events is the only one that reaches the public. It uses these tactics which is the insidious nature of vampirism, to drain the life and autonomy from the people, leaving them powerless and voiceless in the face of an oppressive regime.

> Think about it, Pexton isn't acting alone. They only have power over us because our government gave them power over us. The government gave them our land. The government sent the soldiers that afternoon. The government hanged our men. If we were to get Pexton to leave, wouldn't the government return in another form to continue smothering us? Which means that our ultimate enemy is not Pexton, it's our government (pp. 254-255).

The depiction of the government is characterized by a pervasive sense of cruelty and oppression. The narrative vividly illustrates how the authorities resort to brutal tactics, including violence and intimidation, to quash any form of dissent and uphold their grip on power. This is exemplified in a poignant scene (p. 217) where government soldiers brazenly confiscate tax receipts from individuals and proceed to tear them apart in a public setting, a symbolic act of erasing the citizens' rights and subjecting them to arbitrary authority.

Moreover, the government's use of handcuffing and imprisonment as punitive measures against those who dare to voice objections further underscores the regime's authoritarian nature and its willingness to silence opposition through coercive means. This portrayal of state-sanctioned violence and suppression of dissent serves to highlight the

oppressive tactics employed by the government to maintain control and instill fear among the populace.

By showcasing these instances of government brutality and disregard for basic rights, the novel offers a searing critique of authoritarian regimes and their systematic abuse of power. It underscores the harsh realities faced by individuals who dare to challenge the status quo and speaks to the broader themes of resistance, resilience, and the enduring struggle for justice in the face of oppressive governance. This is further depicted in the novel as follows:

> No mention was made of the truth about why our friends were in prison—the interpreter said nothing about the fact that the government's official story was as false as a snake walking on four legs. Our friends weren't in prison because they'd been caught at the big market without their tax receipts. Their tax receipts had been taken out of their pockets by soldiers who proceeded to rip them up in front of the entire market, their eyes declaring: We did it, what can anyone do to us? What could our friends have done as the soldiers handcuffed them and dumped them in cells? Who in Bézam cared for the truth that our friends had been framed because the soldiers suspected we were behind the attacks on Pexton's property? (p. 245).

The government is depicted as complicit in orchestrating the phantom killings, a sinister tactic used to instill fear and suppress dissent among the population. The narrative unveils a chilling portrayal of state-sponsored violence and manipulation, where the authorities falsely accuse individuals of involvement in these phantom killings as a means of silencing opposition and maintaining control.

The act of hanging the accused men serves as a stark manifestation of the government's ruthless tactics and its willingness to resort to extreme measures to quash any form of resistance. By executing these individuals publicly, the government not only seeks to eliminate perceived threats but also sends a chilling message to the community about the consequences of challenging their authority.

This depiction underscores the pervasive atmosphere of fear and intimidation created by the government, where individuals live in constant dread of arbitrary accusations and brutal reprisals. The narrative sheds light on the harrowing impact of state-sanctioned violence on the lives of ordinary citizens and the erosion of basic human rights in the face of unchecked power.

Through this portrayal, the novel offers an emotional commentary on the abuse of authority, the manipulation of justice, and the harrowing consequences of living under a repressive regime that prioritizes control and suppression over the well-being and dignity of its people:

> We wish to inform you that the four accused were hanged to death earlier this week… The judges concluded that the accused did what they did in an attempt to extort money from the Pexton Corporation, a corporation that has done nothing but bring opportunities to the village of the accused and our country. The judges determined that the accused must pay for their crimes, for all those who seek to hurt the republic must be made to pay a price. They were hanged after they'd each made a statement asking Pexton and the people of our country for forgiveness. They asked that their families learn from their mistakes and choose to live wisely. Because of their ignoble deeds and death, they were buried in a shared grave in a location we wish not to disclose. We hope you will learn from their lives and go forth and live-in peace (p. 175).

The government uses fear and threats to silence anyone who speaks out against their actions. For example, when Woja Beki warns the people of Kosawa that soldiers will arrive to punish them if they do not release the government officials, they are holding hostage, he is using fear to maintain control over the situation. This tactic of instilling fear is a common tool used by oppressive regimes to suppress dissent and maintain their grip on power. By threatening severe consequences, such as violence or imprisonment, the government effectively discourages individuals from speaking out against their actions. This not only silences opposition, but also creates an atmosphere of fear and submission, allowing the government to continue with their oppressive practices without scrutiny.

In Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*, the government displays a notable lack of responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the people, with no established mechanisms for holding officials accountable for their actions. This absence of accountability empowers officials to act with impunity, resorting to violence as a means to uphold their authority. Consequently, the inhabitants of Kosawa find themselves in a state of helplessness and silence, ensnared in a relentless cycle of oppression.

Despite their fervent opposition to the environmental degradation and resource exploitation facilitated by multinational corporations, the villagers' protests are met with indifference by those in power. With no avenue to demand transparency or responsibility from either the government or the corporations, the community is forced to witness the gradual deterioration of their land and the livelihoods it sustains. This deepens their sense of powerlessness and intensifies their resolve to pursue justice, even at great personal risk.

The government's continued disregard for the villagers' pleas only serves to fortify their determination, as they refuse to be silenced and persist in their resistance against the oppressive forces seeking to exploit them. This unwavering commitment to fighting for their rights underscores the community's resilience in the face of adversity and their unwavering pursuit of a more just and equitable future.

> Whenever I saw one of his soldiers walking around Lokunja, ready to shoot, I was reminded of his iron fist around our necks. With the power vested upon them by His Excellency, the soldiers needed permission from no one to mete out punishment. Laws were for us to obey, not to question. I have relatives in the sibling-villages who had to give up lands so offices could be built and roads that connected our district to the rest of the country could be widened. One of my cousins, they took his hut and left him with nothing. The soldiers said that if the government wanted someone’s land, the government had the right to the land. My cousin went to the district office and cried, but all he was told was that nothing could be done: the orders came from Bézam, from His Excellency (p. 214).

In line with the concept of state vampirism, this excerpt shows how the state suppresses any resistance from its own people. The tormentors mentioned in the passage represent the oppressive state that thrives on controlling its citizens. The author suggests that no matter how well-behaved and non-violent the people are, the state still fails to recognize their humanity and grant them the basic rights to live their lives freely. This highlights the inherent power imbalance and the state's ability to suppress any form of dissent, perpetuating a system of state vampirism where the state feeds on the lives and rights of its own people.

Thirdly, in Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*, state vampirism is reflected in the government's involvement in corruption, and its unresponsiveness to the needs and concerns of the people. Officials are often bribed by the corporations, and there is no mechanism for holding them accountable for their actions. The government's insatiable greed and lack of empathy, much like a vampire, drains the life out of the community, leaving them impoverished and powerless. The citizens, like helpless prey, are left to suffer the consequences of their leaders' insidious actions. Mbue's powerful portrayal of vampirism serves as a metaphor for the predatory nature of a corrupt government, ultimately highlighting the urgent need for change and justice. Corrupt officials, driven by their greed for personal gain, accept bribes from the oil company to overlook environmental regulations and exploit natural resources without regard for the local communities. As a result, these communities suffer from polluted water sources, displacement from their lands, and a loss of livelihoods. The lack of accountability for these officials perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty and powerlessness for the citizens.

> Then I went into government and realized that no one in my office, from my lowest-ranking colleague to my biggest boss, gave the country a chance. They diverted all the money they could into private accounts, took whatever supplies their children needed for school, sent the office driver to chauffeur their wives around town, came to work as late as they could, left as early as they wished, because they deemed themselves entitled (p. 297).

> What I can attest to is that, the day he ascended to the top in Bézam, this country became his property. From it he harvests whatever pleases him and destroys whoever displeases him. With our sweat and blood paid as taxes, he has built houses in Europe grander than we can fathom. He has hired European men to paint pictures of him dressed like one of their kings. He has bought boats on which he dines with Americans. They say his shoes alone cost more money than a hundred men make in a year (p. 214).

Finally, the novel portrays inequality and power dynamics as being pervasive and systemic issues that affect many aspects of society. As depicted in the novel, the government is shown to be controlled by a small group of elites who use their power to maintain their wealth and privilege. The government is also shown to be responsible for the unequal distribution of resources, as they allow Pexton to take land from the people and exploit their natural resources for their own benefit. This leads to a situation where the people are impoverished and lack access to basic necessities like healthcare and education.

The government and foreign corporation hold all the power and wealth, while the people of Kosawa are poor and marginalized. The corporation extracts oil from the land without consulting or compensating the local people, leading to environmental destruction and health problems. Meanwhile, the government officials are often bribed by the corporations and use their power to enrich themselves at the expense of the people (p. 171). The power dynamics between the government and the people are unequal, with the government using violence and intimidation to maintain control over the people. Soldiers are sent to suppress protests and arrest or kill activists who speak out against the government or the corporations. The people of Kosawa are left with no recourse to hold officials accountable for their actions.

The government uses its power to maintain control over the people, while within the community, there are also power struggles and conflicts. However, despite these challenges, the people of Kosawa continue to fight for their rights and work towards a better future.

> Someday, when you're old, you'll see that the ones who came to kill us and the ones who'll run to save us are the same. No matter their pretenses, they all arrive here believing they have the power to take from us or give to us whatever will satisfy their endless wants (p. 89).

This excerpt reflects the often-unequal power relations between the state and its citizens in situations of state vampirism. The state, with its monopoly on violence and authority, often dominates its citizens, exerting control over their lives and resources. In situations of state vampirism, the state is portrayed as a predatory entity that exploits and drains its citizens for its own benefit. The notion of those who come to kill us and those who will save us being the same highlights the paradoxical nature of power dynamics, as even those who claim to protect and serve can also be complicit in perpetuating oppression and inequality. This excerpt serves as a reminder of the inherent vulnerability citizens face in the face of state power.

The power dynamics between the soldiers and the people are also highlighted. The soldiers are shown to use violence and intimidation to maintain their control over the people, as seen when they take tax receipts from individuals and rip them up in front of the entire market. The soldiers are also shown to be corrupt, as they demand bribes from the people in exchange for their freedom. Moreover, the novel also highlights the power dynamics between men and women. As depicted in the novel, the wives of the Five are shown to suffer the worst in their wondering, but they are not given the right to ask their husbands if they were killers. This reflects the unequal power dynamics between men and women in society, where women are often denied agency and autonomy. Overall, the novel suggests that inequality and power dynamics are pervasive issues that affect many aspects of society, and that change is necessary to address these issues.

The novel also explores how state vampirism can lead to a sense of powerlessness among the exploited. The villagers of Kosawa are largely powerless against the combined forces of Pexton and their own government. Their protests are ignored, and their attempts to seek justice are met with violence. This reflects the often-unequal power relations between the state and its citizens in situations of state vampirism.

In conclusion, *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue offers a profound critique of state vampirism. Through the experiences of the villagers of Kosawa, the novel exposes the exploitative practices of the state in collusion with multinational corporation, leading to environmental devastation, health crises, and cultural erosion. The state's indifference to its people's suffering and its violent suppression of resistance further underscores the concept of state vampirism. The novel also highlights the emotional and psychological impact of state vampirism. The villagers live in constant fear and uncertainty, knowing that their protests could be met with violence from their own government. This creates a climate of fear and oppression, further illustrating the destructive effects of state vampirism.

6.5 Environmental Degradation

Environmental degradation is defined by many scholars as the deterioration of the environment through the depletion of natural resources, the destruction of habitats, and the pollution of air, water, and soil. For example, it is defined by Kutz (2013) as the deterioration of the environment due to activities that release harmful substances into the air, water, or soil, resulting in adverse effects on human health and ecosystems. This can include the release of industrial pollutants, improper disposal of waste, deforestation, and oil spills.

The myth of development, which is ingrained in the global north's capitalist exploitation of the global south, is often a major contributor to environmental degradation in postcolonial environments. This myth perpetuates the idea that economic progress and industrialization are the only paths to prosperity and well-being. As a result, postcolonial countries often adopt unsustainable development practices, such as overexploitation of natural resources and disregard for environmental regulations. This further exacerbates the already fragile ecological balance, leading to deforestation, pollution, and the loss of biodiversity.

Oil extraction plays a significant role in contributing to environmental degradation through activities such as oil spills, which can contaminate water bodies and kill marine life. Additionally, the burning of fossil fuels by the oil company releases harmful

greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, leading to climate change and further environmental deterioration. The oil company's disregard for sustainable practices and their prioritization of profits over the well-being of the environment exacerbate the problem of environmental degradation.

Environmental degradation, which is a direct result of false development, is a central theme in How Beautiful We Were, and it is reflected in various ways throughout the novel. The pollution of the land, water, and air is a major source of environmental degradation in the novel. The multinational corporation Pexton dumps toxic waste into rivers and the ocean, causing the death of fish and other marine life. They also emit harmful gases into the air, leading to respiratory problems and other health issues for the local communities. They further dump industrial waste and chemicals, rendering the land infertile and unfit for agriculture. The government officials are complicit in this pollution, as they allow the corporation to operate without proper regulations or oversight. This pollution is a clear example of environmental degradation, where natural resources are destroyed and the health of the people is compromised for the development of neo-colonizers. Mbue summarizes the environmental degradation caused by the myth of development in the following excerpt:

> We inhaled, waited, exhaled. We remembered those who had died from diseases with neither names nor cures—our siblings and cousins and friends who had perished from the poison in the water and the poison in the air and the poisoned food growing from the land that lost its purity the day Pexton came drilling. We hoped the men would look into our eyes and feel something for us. We were children, like their children, and we wanted them to recognize that (p. 8).

This excerpt reveals the devastating consequences of the perceived notion of development for the environment. Water, air, and land are all poisoned, leading to the deaths of the natives. It also highlights the desperation of the generation, which yearns for recognition and empathy from the developmentalists responsible for this destruction. It underscores the impact of their actions on generations to come, emphasizing the need for accountability and a change in mindset regarding development.

The pollution of the land resulting from development is extremely devastating and deadly. The text describes how the sky pours acid and rivers turn green, and how the gas flares get worse, the smoke gets blacker, and the spills become more frequent. The pollution causes crops to fail, water to become undrinkable, and people and animals to become sick and die. The novel portrays the government and the foreign corporation responsible for the pollution as indifferent to the suffering of the people and the destruction of the land and as willing to use violence to maintain their power and profits.

The pollution of the water is a serious concern in the novel. The text depicts how the oil company, Pexton, spills oil on the land with recklessness, which has led to pollution of the water. The river that runs through the villages is extremely polluted until the villagers are unable to fish in the river, which is their main source of livelihood. Mbue describes the deadly situation as "the state of Kosawa only compounded her indecision—the graveyard had doubled in size in her absence; a few huts that had once been crowded with families now stood empty and derelict; so much oil had spilled into the big river that the little ones no longer called it the big river; they called it the sad water" (p. 247). The pollution of the water not only affects the villagers' ability to fish but also has severe consequences for their health. The contaminated water leads to the outbreak of various diseases among the villagers, causing illness and even death. Additionally, the pollution has a detrimental impact on the ecosystem, as many aquatic species die due to the toxic water. The novel highlights the devastating consequences of corporate negligence and greed, emphasizing the urgent need for environmental protection and corporate accountability.

The pollution of the water has a significant impact on the health of the villagers and aquatic life in general. The text describes how the villagers suffer from serious health problems as a result of the pollution, including skin rashes, respiratory problems, and other illnesses.

> It was then, with the increased wastes dumped into it, that whatever life was left in the big river disappeared. Within a year, fishermen broke down their canoes and found new uses for the wood. Children began to forget the taste of fish (p. 39).

This excerpt highlights the devastating consequences of water pollution on both the ecosystem and the livelihoods of the villagers. This stands for a stark reminder of the interconnectedness between the environment and human health. The once thriving river, which used to sustain the villagers both physically and economically, has now become a toxic wasteland. The disappearance of fish not only affects the villagers' diet but also their income, as fishing was their main source of livelihood. This serves as a poignant example of how pollution can have far-reaching effects, impacting not only the natural world but also the well-being and survival of communities.

Air pollution is also a major theme in the novel *How Beautiful We Were*. The text describes how the oil company causes severe air pollution in the village of Kosawa through its gas flares, which emit toxic fumes and black smoke that cause respiratory problems and other health issues among the community members.

> In the midst of all this, the gas flares got worse, the smoke blacker. For reasons we couldn't understand, the smoke always blew in our direction, never in the direction of Gardens and the hilltop mansion of the American overseer. With every new oil spill or day of gas flares so savage our skin shriveled and we needed to shout to hear each other over the screaming flames (p. 39).

It is evident that the community members in Kosawa are suffering greatly due to the harmful effects of the gas flares. The fact that the smoke always blows in their direction, while sparing the wealthy American overseer, highlights the unequal distribution of the consequences of oil production. The description of their skin shriveling and the need to shout over the flames paints a vivid picture of the extreme conditions they are forced to endure on a daily basis. The detrimental effects of the air pollution are further highlighted as the children of Kosawa suffer from chronic coughs and difficulty breathing. The village natives, who are already struggling with poverty and limited access to healthcare, find themselves helpless in the face of this environmental crisis. The pollution of the air is described in the following excerpt as affecting the overall health of the people:

> That several of us would develop raspy coughs and rashes and fevers that would persist until our deaths? Please stay away from us with that ugly cough of yours, we'd said to Wambi. But it wasn't just an ugly cough, we would later find out. The dirty air had gotten stuck in his lungs. Slowly, the poison spread through his body and turned into something else. Before we knew it, Wambi was dead (p. 11).

This serves as an obvious illustration of the devastating consequences of air pollution on human health resulting from unsafe development. The people's initial dismissive attitude towards Wambi's cough demonstrates their lack of awareness about the dangerous consequences of polluted air. Unfortunately, Wambi's condition worsened as the toxic air took a toll on his body, ultimately leading to his untimely death.

This symbolizes the tragic loss of life that can occur as a result of neglecting environmental concerns and prioritizing economic development, particularly in postcolonial environments. Wambi's death serves as a plain illustration that the pursuit of economic growth at all costs can have dire consequences for human well-being. It exposes the inherent flaw in prioritizing short-term gains over long-term sustainability and the need for balanced development strategies. Moreover, it highlights the urgent need for communities to be educated about the potential dangers of air pollution and to actively advocate for cleaner and healthier environments.

Moreover, *How Beautiful We Were* depicts how pollution from developmentalist's oil company devastates the local ecosystem, destroying trees and other vegetation and making it difficult for people to grow crops and raise livestock. The novel depicts how the activities of the foreign corporation Pexton lead to severe environmental damage, including the pollution of the soil due to oil spills and the dumping of toxic waste. This environmental degradation has devastating consequences for the community of Kosawa, affecting their health, livelihoods, and overall well-being. Mbue's portrayal of the pollution of the soil serves as a powerful commentary on the destructive impact of unchecked industrial development on the natural environment and the communities that depend on it. As demonstrated in the following excerpt, the toxic waste and spills from the oil refinery contaminates the soil, and the natives' farm lands are burnt down as a result:

> At the end of that first dry season, a pipeline burst and oil flooded the farm of the mother of one of my friends—her family barely had any harvest that year; some days, I had to share my food with her during recess. Weeks later, a new spill turned into a fire that ravaged the farms of six families, forcing mothers to go searching for new land deep in the forest, a trek that left many with little strength for toiling (p. 39).

From the excerpt, it is evident that the devastating effects of oil spills have had a profound impact on the local community. Not only do they contaminate the soil, but they also destroy the livelihoods of the natives, who depend on farming for sustenance. The consequences of these spills ripple through the community, leaving a trail of hunger, desperation, and the need for relocation.

The loss of fertile land due to the fire has further exacerbated the already dire situation. Without suitable land for farming, the families are left with no choice but to venture into the unforgiving depths of the forest in search of new territory. This arduous journey takes a toll on their physical and mental well-being, leaving them with little strength to toil and cultivate the land they find. The struggle for survival becomes even more challenging as they face hunger and desperation; their once reliable source of sustenance is now tainted and destroyed by the oil spills. The need for relocation becomes inevitable as the community grapples with the devastating consequences of these environmental disasters.

This is one of the environmental challenges of false development that often goes unnoticed in postcolonial environments. The community's dependence on the land is further shattered as they witness the destruction of their sacred sites and the loss of their cultural heritage. Their connection to the land, which once provided them with a sense of identity and belonging, is now severed. The community is left with no choice but to seek refuge in unfamiliar territories, where they must adapt to new ways of life and struggle to preserve their traditions in the face of adversity. This environmental challenge serves as a stark reminder of the long-lasting impacts of colonialism and the urgent need for

sustainable development that respects and protects indigenous communities and their environments.

The destruction of the forests and the displacement of the local communities are forms of environmental degradation in the novel. The corporation and the government officials clear the forests (p. 261) to make way for development projects, such as oil wells. They also force the local communities to leave their ancestral land and relocate to other areas, disrupting their way of life and their connection to the land. This destruction and displacement are examples of environmental degradation, where the natural habitats and the cultural heritage of the people are eroded.

Finally, noise pollution is a theme explored in Mbue's How Beautiful We Were. The author states this as "the noise from the oil field multiplied; day and night we heard it in our bedrooms, in our classroom, in the forest. Our air turned heavy" (p. 39). The constant presence of noise from the oil field is not only an inconvenience but also a symbol of the destructive impact it has on the community. The author vividly describes how the noise permeates every aspect of their lives, from their bedrooms to the classroom to even the once serene forest. This incessant noise not only disrupts their daily routines but also weighs heavily on the air they breathe, further highlighting the pollution caused by the oil industry.

This is a constant reminder of the disruption and destruction caused by the industry in colonial and postcolonial environments. It becomes impossible for the community to escape the noise, as it follows them everywhere they go. The author's description of the heavy air suggests that the pollution from the oil field is not only auditory but also physical, affecting the overall well-being of the people and the environment. The perpetual noise and polluted air serve as a powerful symbol of the negative impact of the oil industry on the community's quality of life.

As depicted in the novel, the people of the community are constantly reminded of their diminished health and happiness due to the oil industry's presence. They are trapped

in a never-ending cycle of suffering and despair as a result of noise pollution, toxic waste, and the constant fear of accidents and spills.

> We are eating when we hear it, the sound of an engine over the noise of our chewing, something chugging down the narrow road from Gardens... Ours is a small village, too little for noises of certain sorts to find hiding places. Even with the oil field nearby, cars seldom arrive in Kosawa, for there is nothing past us, nothing but trees and grass as far as one can travel, which is why the sound of an approaching vehicle is enough to make us pause and change the direction of conversations, speculating on who's in the car and what they've come for. The food in my mouth turns to garbage (p. 65).

The people of Kosawa, accustomed to the tranquility of their surroundings, are momentarily taken aback by the intrusion of noise and movement. It disrupts their peaceful existence, causing them to momentarily lose their appetite and focus on the unknown presence that has disrupted their quiet village life. Villages in Africa are known for their harmonious relationship with nature where the sounds of birds chirping and leaves rustling create a soothing backdrop to daily life. The sudden intrusion of a vehicle's noise shatters this harmony, reminding the villagers of the outside world and its potential disruptions. It serves as a stark reminder that even in the most peaceful of places, change and uncertainty can always make their presence known. It is a reminder that the tranquility of the village is fragile and can be easily disrupted by developmentalists.

In addition to depicting the devastating impact of pollution resulting from development, the novel also explores the power dynamics that enable and perpetuate this pollution. The text shows how the government and the foreign corporation responsible for the pollution use their economic and political power to silence dissent and maintain their control over the land and its resources.

CHAPTER SEVEN
A POSTCOLONIAL ECO-ACTIVISM IN THE SELECTED NOVELS

Many scholars show a keen interest in exploring the role of activism within the realm of postcolonial ecocriticism. This field of study delves into the intricate connections among literature, the environment, and postcolonialism, examining how colonialism has influenced environmental conditions and how literary works can be harnessed to address environmental adversities. Activism stands as a fundamental pillar of postcolonial ecocriticism, involving proactive measures to tackle environmental challenges. Within this framework, activism takes various forms, including advocating for environmental policies, supporting grassroots movements, and raising awareness about the intersection of environmental issues and postcolonial contexts. By actively engaging in these initiatives, scholars and activists' endeavor to challenge existing power structures that contribute to environmental degradation and social injustices. Through their collective efforts, they aspire to advance environmental justice and promote sustainable practices that benefit both human societies and the natural environment.

Literature is a tool used by environmental activists to advance environmental justice and increase public understanding of environmental issues. Activists strive to alter environmentally detrimental practices and regulations. Certain scholars contend that postcolonial ecocriticism ought to prioritize activism above theory. They think that scholars ought to be more involved with environmental issues and that literature ought to be utilized as a vehicle for social change. Some contend that theory is significant because it offers a framework for comprehending how postcolonialism, the environment, and literature are related. They think theory can aid in our comprehension of the intricate ways colonialism has impacted the environment and that literature can be utilized to address environmental concerns (Huggan & Tiffin, 2015).

A postcolonial eco-activism is a newly emerging movement that aims to protect and preserve the postcolonial environments. With the growing awareness of climate change and its detrimental effects on the environment, individuals and organizations are stepping up to take action. Postcolonial eco-activism involves various forms of advocacy, such as

protests, resistances, and promoting sustainable practices. Through the process of decolonialism, postcolonial eco-activism plays a crucial role in driving positive change and creating a sustainable future for all, particularly for the nations that are with the devastating effect of colonialism.

Writers of literary works also play a significant role in postcolonial eco-activism. Through their storytelling and creative expression, writers have the power to capture the attention and imagination of readers, inspiring them to take action and make a difference. By incorporating themes of environmental conservation and sustainability into their works, these writers can effectively convey the urgency and importance of protecting the environment. Whether through novels, poetry, or non-fiction, their words have the potential to ignite a passion for environmental activism and encourage individuals to make conscious choices in their daily lives. Thus, writers are not only storytellers but also catalysts for change, contributing to the global movement towards a greener and more sustainable future.

In this regard, Peter Kimani, Ishmael Beah, and Imbolo Mbue are notable authors who have used their literary talents to shed light on environmental issues. Peter Kimani, through his novel *Dance of the Jakaranda*, explores the destructive impact of ecological imperialism in Kenya, urging readers to take action to protect their physical environment. Ishmael Beah, in his novel *Radiance of Tomorrow*, paints a vivid picture of the impacts of environmental racism, which impacted both humans and nonhumans, emphasizing the need for equality, peace and sustainable development. Similarly, Imbolo Mbue, in her novel *How Beautiful We Were*, addresses the environmental consequences of development programs run by dictatorial government, urging readers to consider the interconnectedness of social and environmental justice.

Through their powerful storytelling, these authors inspire readers to become active participants in the fight for a more just and sustainable world. By shedding light on the detrimental effects of ecological imperialism, environmental racism, and irresponsible development, they highlight the urgency to address these issues and work towards peace and sustainable environment. Their works serve as a call to action, encouraging readers to

become informed, engaged, and proactive in advocating for environmental justice and the protection of both human and nonhuman lives. As we read their stories, we are reminded that the fight for a better future requires collective action and a commitment to creating a harmonious coexistence between humanity and the environment.

7.1 *Dance of the Jakaranda*

Peter Kimani's novel, *Dance of the Jakaranda*, vividly illustrates postcolonial eco-activism through the resistance against the environmental repercussions of imperialism. Within the narrative, instances suggestive of ecological imperialism, such as the use of biological warfare (infecting humans and animals with viruses), destruction of natural ecologies, and exploitation of resources, are depicted. These occurrences serve as poignant reflections of the colonial powers' exploitation of natural resources and ecosystems, a central theme in ecological imperialism. Through these portrayals, the novel delves into the environmental and societal impacts of such actions on colonial Kenya, offering insights into the intricate power dynamics and the enduring consequences of colonialism on the environment.

The novel underscores the critical role of postcolonial eco-activism in confronting and resisting the detrimental impacts of ecological imperialism. A notable instance of native resistance against colonial exploitation is depicted in their rejection of being used as tools for environmental destruction. Central to this resistance is the kaya, symbolizing the indigenous community's deep-rooted connection to their land and their unwavering commitment to its preservation. Through the kaya, characters in the novel draw strength and solidarity, uniting to protest against injustices and advocate for sustainable practices. By spotlighting the kaya as a focal point of resistance, the narrative highlights the significance of reclaiming and safeguarding indigenous wisdom and customs in the battle against ecological imperialism. The author defines the kaya as follows:

> The kaya's meeting is a gathering of the elders from different villages and communities in the sacred grove known as the kaya. The kaya is a hallowed

> abode of the coastal community of the Mijikenda, and is considered a sacred site for spiritual and political activities (p. 106)

The kaya's meeting is depicted as a significant event in the novel, as it brings together the elders from different villages to discuss important issues and make decisions that affect the community as a whole. The meeting is held to address the new threat to the native and their environment that merited a summon to all to come to the kaya. The characters wonder what the new threat is, and the meeting provides a forum for the elders to discuss and address the issue.

The meeting is also significant in highlighting the cultural and spiritual traditions of the local communities, and the importance of the kaya as a site of communal identity and resistance against colonial masters. The novel portrays the kaya's meeting as a site of power and authority, where the elders hold sway over the community's spiritual and political welfare. The kaya's meeting is depicted as a significant event in the novel, reflecting the cultural, spiritual, and political dynamics of colonial Kenya, and the resistance of the local communities against external threats to their land and way of life.

The elders of kaya boldly speak to the colonial master: “Your people have trespassed upon our land. And you have come to the kaya, the abode of our gods, uninvited. You must pay a fine in goats to cleanse this abomination” (p. 107). The colonial master, taken aback by the elders' boldness, dismisses their demands, refusing to acknowledge the importance of the kaya and the spiritual significance it holds for the community. The tension between the elders and the colonial master intensifies as the kaya becomes a symbol of resistance and defiance against the encroachment of colonial powers. The elders, determined to protect their land and their way of life, rally the community together, organizing protests and demonstrations to assert their rights and fight against the injustices they face.

The characters in the story, driven by their love for the land and their desire to protect it, engage in various acts of postcolonial eco-activism, such as organizing protests against resource exploitation and advocating for sustainable practices. Through their

actions, the novel highlights the potential for individuals and communities to create positive change and restore the balance between humans and nature.

In *Dance of the Jakaranda*, the protest by the natives is depicted as a powerful and multifaceted response to the encroachment of colonial powers and the exploitation of their land and resources. The novel portrays the protest as a manifestation of the resistance and resilience of the local communities in the face of external pressures and injustices. The protest is characterized by various forms of resistance, including cultural, spiritual, and political expressions of dissent. The characters in the novel engage in acts of defiance, such as the refusal of local youths to work on the railway, the mobilization of the community through drumbeats, and the use of the kaya as a force against the colonial authorities and British interests (p. 110).

Moreover, the demonstration mirrors the profound grievances and longstanding injustices endured by the indigenous communities, showcasing their resolve to safeguard their environment, customs, and livelihoods. Consequently, the indigenous protest emerges as a potent and emotive assertion of defiance, endurance, and cultural dignity, shedding light on the intricate social, cultural, and historical complexities of colonial Kenya and the enduring fortitude of the local populace. Ultimately, the book acts as a clarion call, encouraging individuals to engage in combatting ecological imperialism and striving towards a future that is sustainable and in harmony with nature.

Another instance is the refusal to allow the cutting of the mvinje tree in *Dance of the Jakaranda* by Peter Kimani can be interpreted as a form of postcolonial eco-activism. The resistance to the destruction of the mvinje tree reflects a commitment to environmental preservation and the protection of natural resources that hold cultural and ecological significance. By opposing the cutting of the mvinje tree, the natives are advocating for the conservation of a vital component of their local ecosystem. This act of resistance aligns with the principles of postcolonial eco-activism, which prioritize the protection of natural habitats, biodiversity, and the sustainable use of resources.

> McDonald then stepped in. He was supposed to coordinate the cutting down of the mvinje tree to symbolize the clearing of virgin lands to pave way for the rail. He instructed African workmen hired for the day on what he needed done. But they all shook their heads and walked away. Fearing they had misunderstood his instructions; McDonald summoned an interpreter and relayed his message. This elicited a more hostile response. McDonald tensed. If his workmen disregarded his instructions in broad daylight, what would his boss think of him? McDonald called over a British officer and told him what he wanted done. The officer took a machete from one of the African workmen and struck a blow to the trunk. It was avenged instantly: one of the local men who had declined to cut the tree repossessed the machete and struck the British officer in one fell swoop. A red film flashed on the blade. The Briton fell down instantly, bleeding profusely. Pandemonium broke out. Gunshots rent the air. Machetes clanged and produced sparks and bones snapped as humans fled for dear life (p. 115).

In this excerpt, postcolonial eco-activism is highlighted as a means of resistance against British colonial control. The act of refusing to cut down the tree signifies a defiance of the oppressive British rule and a recognition of the importance of nature. The swift retaliation by the local man reflects the deep-rooted anger and frustration towards the British presence, and the violence that ensues symbolizes the chaos and desperation that arises when oppressed people fight for their freedom. This passage demonstrates the complex and tumultuous relationship between colonial powers and the colonized, and the potential for environmental issues to become a catalyst for resistance and revolution.

Peter Kimani's depiction of the mvinje tree as a symbol of resistance highlights the power dynamics at play in postcolonial societies. The tree, which has deep cultural and historical roots, represents the indigenous people's struggle against external forces that seek to exploit their land and resources. This resistance not only challenges the dominant narrative of progress and development but also asserts the rights of marginalized communities to control and manage their own environment. In this way, Kimani's work goes beyond mere environmental activism and becomes a powerful critique of the lingering effects of colonialism and the ongoing struggle for self-determination.

The refusal to allow the destruction of the mvinje tree can be seen as a demonstration of the interconnectedness between cultural heritage and environmental stewardship. It underscores the idea that the preservation of sacred natural sites is essential for maintaining the ecological balance and the spiritual well-being of the community.

Moreover, the act of refusing the cutting of the mvinje tree can be viewed as a form of postcolonial eco-activism that embodies the values of postcolonial environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and the recognition of the intrinsic worth of natural landscapes within the context of the novel. The man's refusal to allow the cutting of the mvinje tree represents a defiance against the prevailing capitalist mindset that prioritizes profit over environmental well-being. By standing up against the destruction of this ancient tree, the protagonist symbolically champions the importance of preserving native indigenous cultures and their deep connection to nature. Furthermore, this act of postcolonial eco-activism highlights the need for society to recognize and appreciate the unique beauty and irreplaceable value of natural landscapes in order to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

When instructed to cut down the tree, the man felt a surge of conflicting emotions. On one hand, he was obligated to follow orders and felt the weight of societal expectations pressing upon him. However, as he stood before the majestic ancient tree, he couldn't ignore the profound sense of reverence and awe he felt towards nature. Deep down, he knew that complying with the instruction would be a betrayal of his own values and principles. In that moment, he found the strength to defy the order and protect the tree, knowing that his actions would send a powerful message about the importance of environmental preservation.

This excerpt also shows an instance of postcolonial eco-activism in a colonial setting. The local men, who were likely oppressed by the British officer's presence and exploitation of their resources, took a stand by defending their land and retaliating against the officer's actions. This act of resistance demonstrates the deep connection between environmental issues and social justice, highlighting the power of grassroots movements in fighting for their rights and the protection of their environment.

Finally, Characters who emerge as leaders within the community, such as elders or spiritual figures, play a significant role in advocating for environmental conservation, sustainable practices, and the protection of sacred sites. Their guidance, wisdom, and influence contribute to the mobilization of eco-activist efforts within the community and the preservation of cultural and ecological heritage in the face of external threats.

> Me Katilili was a direct descendant from the lineage of the great seer, Kajuma wa Kajuma, who long foretold the onset of men with soft hair and long faces who would scour the land with men yoked like cattle, a prophecy that many saw fulfilled with the arrival of Arab slave traders. Me Katilili had warned about a long silvery snake that would slither across the land, swallowing crops, man, and beasts to fill its large belly (p. 118)

This excerpt highlights the role of religious leaders in galvanizing communities to protect their cultural and ecological heritage. Me Katilili, as a descendant of a great seer, held a position of religious authority and influence in the community. Through warnings and prophecies, Me Katilili not only raised awareness about the impending threats but also instilled a sense of urgency and unity among the people. By highlighting the destructive nature of the railway which is represented as "long silvery snake," Me Katilili emphasizes the need for collective action to safeguard land, crops, and the very existence of the community.

The characters in *Dance of the Jakaranda* collectively embody different facets of postcolonial eco-activism, from grassroots resistance to institutional advocacy, highlighting the diverse ways in which individuals and communities engage with environmental issues, cultural preservation, and social justice in a postcolonial context. Their actions and beliefs underscore the interconnectedness of environmental stewardship, cultural resilience, and decolonial struggles in shaping a more sustainable and equitable future. The novel serves as a reminder that the fight for environmental preservation is deeply intertwined with the fight for equality and justice for all. Through the novel, Kimani encourages readers to recognize the interconnectedness of these struggles and to take action in their own communities.

In conclusion, the portrayal of postcolonial eco-activism in *Dance of the Jakaranda* not only underscores the transformative power of resistance against ecological imperialism but also highlights the pivotal role of the kaya and the defiance against the cutting of the sacred mvinje tree. The kaya serves as a sacred space where the indigenous communities gather to assert their cultural identity and resist colonial incursions, symbolizing their unity and ancestral ties to the land. The act of resistance against the cutting of the mvinje tree further exemplifies the deep-rooted connection between the people and their environment, showcasing their unwavering commitment to preserving their heritage and ecological resources. By weaving together themes of resistance, resilience, and cultural pride within the context of colonial Kenya's social and historical complexities, the novel serves as a powerful call to action, urging readers to join the fight against environmental exploitation and strive towards a sustainable future that honors both nature and indigenous traditions.

7.2 *Radiance of Tomorrow*

In Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*, the central characters play the role of environmental activists against environmental racism. In the novel, they are elders of the community who attempt to safeguard the culture and the environment. They fight against the exploitation of their land by multinational corporation, who prioritize profit over the well-being of the local community. The central characters strive to raise awareness about the devastating effects of environmental racism, hoping to inspire others to take action and protect their environment for future generations. Through their determination and resilience, they become a beacon of hope for their community, inspiring unity and empowerment in the face of adversity.

In the narrative, postcolonial eco-activism is depicted through the community's efforts to protect their environment, resist neocolonial exploitation, and preserve their cultural heritage in the face of environmental degradation. The novel explores how the characters come together to reclaim their land and rebuild their lives after a devastating civil war. They establish sustainable farming practices, hold community meetings to discuss environmental issues, and actively resist the encroachment of foreign mining

companies. Through their actions, the community demonstrates the power of collective action and the importance of preserving their way of life for future generations.

First, the community in the novel actively defends their land against the encroachment of the mining company and other external forces seeking to exploit natural resources for profit. This resistance reflects a form of postcolonial eco-activism rooted in the protection of the environment and the assertion of the community's rights to their land. The community in the novel actively resists the exploitation of their land by external actors, such as the mining company. They stand united in protecting their environment from degradation and safeguarding their resources from being exploited for profit. This resistance reflects a deep connection to the land and a commitment to preserving it for future generations.

In the novel, the land holds immense cultural significance for the community, serving as a repository of memories, traditions, and ancestral heritage. By defending their land, the community not only protects their physical surroundings but also safeguards their cultural identity and connection to the past. The defense of land is intertwined with the preservation of cultural heritage and the continuity of traditions.

> This is my land and I must witness whatever happens to it. Someone must stay around to witness this part of our history. It is the only way to pass it on orally; we must experience it to make the telling meaningful and effective. Kadie and I have decided to do that (pp. 162-163).

The excerpt conveys a deep sense of connection to the land and a profound commitment to preserving the community's history and heritage. The speaker expresses a personal responsibility to bear witness to the events unfolding on their land, emphasizing the importance of someone being present to observe and document this significant chapter of their history. By staying to witness these events firsthand, the speaker believes that they can authentically pass down this narrative through oral tradition, ensuring that the storytelling remains impactful and meaningful. The decision made by Kadie and the speaker to undertake this role of witnessing reflects their dedication to upholding the

cultural legacy and ensuring that the community's experiences are accurately and effectively transmitted to future generations.

The act of defending the land brings the community together in unity and solidarity. Through collective action and mutual support, community members stand shoulder to shoulder in the face of threats to their environment. The defense of land becomes a rallying point that strengthens bonds within the community and fosters a sense of shared purpose and resilience (p. 102).

The defense of land in the novel reflects a commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. By resisting exploitation and advocating for responsible land management, the community demonstrates a deep respect for the natural world and a desire to ensure the long-term health and vitality of their environment. The defense of land is linked to a broader ethos of environmental protection and sustainability.

The novel portrays the defense of land as a multifaceted and deeply meaningful endeavor that encompasses cultural, social, and environmental dimensions. The community's efforts to protect their land symbolize their resilience, unity, and unwavering commitment to preserving their heritage and environment in the face of external threats.

Second, the elders in the community play a significant role in promoting cultural preservation and advocating for sustainable practices that respect the land and its resources (p. 73). By passing down traditional knowledge and values, the elders contribute to a form of eco-activism that is deeply connected to cultural heritage and environmental stewardship.

The elders serve as custodians of tradition, passing down cultural knowledge, stories, and practices to younger generations (p. 46). Through oral storytelling and guidance, the elders ensure that the community's cultural heritage is preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next. Their role in preserving traditional customs and values is essential for maintaining the community's identity and connection to the land.

The elders also possess deep environmental wisdom and knowledge of sustainable practices that have been passed down through generations. They understand the interconnectedness of the land, resources, and community well-being, and advocate for practices that respect the natural environment and promote long-term sustainability. By sharing their wisdom with others, the elders contribute to a holistic approach to land stewardship.

The elders provide guidance, leadership, and moral authority in matters concerning the land and its resources. Their wisdom and experience are valued by the community, and their voices carry weight in decision-making processes related to environmental protection and sustainable development. The elders' leadership role reflects their commitment to upholding cultural values and advocating for practices that honor the land. This is depicted as follows:

> The elders—Mama Kadie, Pa Kainesi, and Pa Moiwa—explained to the crowd what the women had experienced at the river and what the men had found. And then they added their own wisdom. “When I was a boy, my father told me that there are three important things one’s heart must be satisfied with before choosing the location of a village—now a town, but this still applies,” Pa Kainesi said, his voice trembling terribly. It had been a while since he had spoken in public. He had been quiet since Wonde had humiliated them. “There must be a good source of water, good land for growing crops, and a suitable place for burying the dead. We are losing the first two, and this is tormenting my old spirit.” He ended there (p. 101)

As depicted in the extract, the elders play the role of postcolonial environmental activism in the village, advocating for the preservation of essential resources and traditions. They understand the importance of sustainable practices and the impact of neocolonialism on their land. Pa Kainesi's concerns reflect a deep connection to the land and a desire to protect it for future generations. Their actions serve as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for environmental justice in postcolonial societies.

Furthermore, the elders' efforts highlight the intersectionality of environmental issues with social and political factors. By standing up against neocolonial forces and advocating for sustainable practices, they are not only protecting the land but also asserting their sovereignty and cultural identity. Their actions serve as a powerful example of resistance and resilience in the face of ongoing challenges. The elders' wisdom and dedication to preserving the environment for future generations inspire others in the village to take action and continue the fight for environmental justice.

The elders advocate for cultural resilience in the face of external pressures and threats to the community's way of life (p.71). They stand firm in defending traditional practices, beliefs, and rituals that are integral to the community's identity. By promoting cultural resilience, the elders ensure that the community's heritage remains vibrant and relevant in a changing world.

The elders facilitate intergenerational dialogue and collaboration, fostering a sense of continuity and connection between different age groups within the community. By engaging with younger members and sharing their knowledge, the elders bridge the gap between past traditions and present challenges, ensuring that cultural preservation and sustainable practices are upheld for future generations.

The elders in in the novel play a vital role in promoting cultural preservation and advocating for sustainable practices that respect the land and its resources. Their leadership, wisdom, and commitment to upholding traditional values contribute to the community's resilience, identity, and environmental stewardship in the face of external pressures and environmental changes.

Third, the novel portrays the importance of community solidarity and collective action in confronting environmental challenges. Through unity and collaboration, the community mobilizes to resist neocolonial exploitation, advocate for sustainable development, and protect their environment for future generations (p. 76). The community in the novel demonstrates a strong sense of unity and solidarity when faced with environmental exploitation by external forces, such as the mining company. Through

collective action and mutual support, community members stand together to resist the degradation of their land and resources. This unity enables them to confront powerful interests and defend their environment.

The novel emphasizes the idea of shared responsibility for the land and its well-being. Community members recognize that environmental challenges affect everyone and that collective action is necessary to address these issues effectively. By coming together as a community, individuals take ownership of the land and work collaboratively to protect and preserve it for future generations.

The novel underscores the interconnectedness and interdependence of community members with each other and with the land. Through collective action, individuals recognize their shared reliance on the environment for sustenance, livelihoods, and cultural identity. This awareness fosters a sense of mutual support and collaboration in safeguarding the land and its resources.

Community solidarity empowers individuals to take action and effect positive change in the face of environmental challenges. By standing together and supporting one another, community members feel empowered to advocate for sustainable practices, challenge harmful activities, and shape the future of their environment. Solidarity becomes a source of strength and resilience in the face of adversity.

The novel portrays community solidarity and collective action as essential components in confronting environmental challenges and promoting sustainable practices. The novel emphasizes the power of unity, shared responsibility, and interconnectedness in fostering resilience, protecting the land, and preserving the community's cultural and environmental heritage.

Fourth, Radiance of Tomorrow critiques neocolonial dynamics that perpetuate environmental degradation and social injustice. By highlighting the exploitative practices of external actors and the unequal power structures at play, the novel emphasizes the need for resistance against neocolonial forces through postcolonial eco-activism. As depicted in the novel, for example, the people of Imperi’s decision to reclaim and cultivate their

ancestral land in the face of multinational mining corporations symbolizes a powerful act of defiance and resilience against ongoing colonial legacies. Through this act, the novel demonstrates the importance of reclaiming agency over one's environment and resources in order to combat the destructive impact of neocolonialism. Ultimately, Radiance of Tomorrow serves as a call to action for readers to engage in collective efforts to protect their communities and natural surroundings from the harmful effects of exploitation and marginalization.

Finally, the novel explores the intersectionality of environmental and social justice issues within a postcolonial context. By addressing how environmental degradation impacts community well-being, cultural practices, and social structures, the novel emphasizes the interconnected nature of eco-activism and the broader struggle for justice and sustainability.

In general, *Radiance of Tomorrow* portrays postcolonial eco-activism as a multifaceted and collective endeavor that encompasses environmental protection, cultural resilience, and resistance to neocolonial exploitation. The novel underscores the importance of community agency, cultural heritage, and sustainable practices in the pursuit of environmental justice and the preservation of the land for future generations.

7.3 *How Beautiful We Were*

"This land is our land." Roars.
"We'll take it back whether they like it or not." Roars.
"We'll no longer be slaughtered, poisoned, or trampled upon." Roars. (p. 272).

This excerpt is taken from Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were* to represent postcolonial eco-activism. The powerful words and defiant roars in this excerpt capture the spirit of a community determined to reclaim their land and assert their rights after years of oppression. Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were* beautifully portrays the struggle of postcolonial eco-activism, highlighting the desire for autonomy and justice in the face of environmental destruction and exploitation. Through their united voices, the characters in

the novel embody the resilience and determination of a people striving to protect their land and secure a better future for themselves and future generations.

African environmental studies by Caminero-Santangelo (2014) emphasize social justice, environmental protection, and the relationship between environmental literature. Caminero-Santangelo's research highlights the importance of addressing the social and economic inequalities that often accompany environmental degradation in Africa. By integrating environmental protection efforts with a focus on social justice, it is possible to create sustainable solutions that benefit both the environment and the local communities.

Postcolonial eco-activism is centered around the belief that environmental issues in Africa cannot be separated from the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism. This approach recognizes that the exploitation of natural resources and the displacement of indigenous communities are interconnected with larger systems of power and oppression. By centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, postcolonial eco-activism seeks to challenge and dismantle these systems in order to create a more just and sustainable future for all.

Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were* extends beyond activism. She focuses on the fight against oil firm that pollutes the water and land and threaten people's livelihoods. The locals confront the oil firm, which is owned by western capitalist, and the government, which works closely with the company. The novel begins by declaring that the end is close, referring to the ecological disaster and mortality that have befallen Kosawa, the unknown village in Africa: “We should have known the end was near when the sky began to pour acid, and rivers began to turn green. We should have known our land would soon be dead” (p. 6).

In this excerpt, Mbue charges the readers with the powerful emotion of regret and a sense of impending doom. The author emphasizes the destructive consequences of the oil firm's actions by highlighting the sky pouring acid and rivers turning green. This vivid imagery evokes a feeling of despair and hopelessness, as the people of Kosawa realize the irreversible damage that has been done to their environment. The use of the phrase "we

should have known" suggests that there were warning signs and missed opportunities to prevent this disaster, adding to the sense of frustration and anger towards the oil firm and government.

In the extract, Mbue identifies herself with the people of Kosawa, as she too feels a deep sense of regret and disappointment. She empathizes with their helplessness and shares their anger towards the oil company and government for their negligence and disregard for the environment. Mbue recognizes the importance of taking responsibility for the actions and the consequences they may have on the planet earth. Through her words, she urges readers to learn from the mistakes made in Kosawa and to take action to protect the planet before it's too late.

She plays the role of postcolonial eco-activism by highlighting the devastating effects of capitalist corporate greed and government corruption. Mbue's identification with the people of Kosawa not only serves as a call to action, but also emphasizes the interconnectedness of all human beings and the responsibility people have towards one another and the environment. By assuming the role of a postcolonial eco-activist, Mbue sparks a sense of urgency and encourages readers to stand up against those who exploit the postcolonial environment for their own gain. Through her powerful message, she reminds us that it is the collective duty to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

In the novel, a postcolonial eco-activism (resistance and protest) is reflected through the actions and sentiments of the characters as they confront the environmental degradation caused by foreign corporations and government neglect. The novel portrays various forms of activism and resistance, highlighting the struggles of the community to protect their land and resources.

Community advocacy is portrayed as a form of postcolonial eco-activism as the characters engage in collective efforts to address the environmental degradation caused by foreign corporation and government neglect. The novel highlights the importance of

community advocacy in raising awareness, demanding accountability, and protecting the land and resources of the community.

First, the characters organize meetings to discuss the environmental issues affecting their community and to strategize ways to address them. They use these meetings as a platform to share information, voice their concerns, and mobilize support for their cause. Despite facing resistance and intimidation from Pexton and government officials, the community members persist in their efforts to organize and advocate for their rights.

> I still attend meetings in the Village every week, and at every meeting we ask ourselves: What do we do now? What do we do after we've done all we can and seen no change? What will our children do after they've done what they can and failed, just as our fathers failed before us? (p. 237).

This excerpt helps understand the perseverance and determination of the community members in the face of adversity. It highlights their commitment to their cause and their willingness to continue fighting for their rights, even in the face of resistance and intimidation. The questions posed at the end of the excerpt demonstrate the community's concern for the future and their determination to find a way forward, even if they have not yet seen the desired change.

In another meeting, the villagers discuss the matters that can radically solve their environmental calamity. They propose and try to implement taking their case to the higher officials to get their attention to their village. They believe that by highlighting the severity of the environmental calamity they are facing, the higher officials will be compelled to take an immediate action. The villagers plan to present evidence of the damage caused to their natural resources and the negative impact on their livelihoods:

> We're not beggars, but we'll travel to Bézam and lie prostrate before these men, kiss their feet no matter how dusty their shoes, because we need their help if we're to grow old on our land. We'll make several trips to Bézam if need be; we'll continue traveling and pleading and gifting until we succeed in bringing at least one big man from the government and one powerful man from Pexton to Kosawa. When

> they arrive, we'll make a feast to welcome them and present them with parcels of land. After that we'll lay our sick children at their feet, beg them to protect these helpless ones. We may be proud, but our pain has abased us, and we will do this and more for the sake of our descendants (p. 77).

In this extract, the people of Kosawa discuss the solution to their ongoing environmental crisis and the children's health dilapidation. They believe that by bringing influential individuals from the government and Pexton to Kosawa, they can gain their support and resources to address their environmental crisis and improve the health of their children. They plan to host a grand feast to welcome these important guests and demonstrate their gratitude by presenting them with parcels of land. They are willing to humble themselves and lay their sick children at the feet of these powerful men, pleading for their protection and assistance. Despite their pride, the people of Kosawa are willing to go to great lengths for the sake of their future generations.

Second, the characters use various means to raise awareness about the environmental degradation caused by Pexton, including sharing their stories through songs and visual demonstrations.

> …. the song from the tale our mothers used to tell us when we were children, the one about the three little fishes who escaped the belly of a monstrous creature by itching the insides of its stomach for so long that the monster got a stomachache and vomited them out. The Restoration Movement people swung their hips alongside us, the American woman red-faced and runny-nosed and crying hard. Somehow the drums appeared. As the men beat them in unison, we sang the fishes' plea: This story must be told, it might not feel good to all ears, it gives our mouths no joy to say it, but our story cannot be left untold (pp. 118-119).

The extract shows the deep meaning of their alarming situation and the urgency they felt to share their story. By using vivid imagery of a monstrous creature and the physical discomfort it caused, the author highlights the pain and suffering endured by the characters. The participation of the Restoration Movement people and the appearance of

the drums further emphasize the collective effort to raise awareness and demand attention for their plight. The powerful statement "this story must be told" reflects the characters' determination to ensure that their experiences are not ignored or forgotten.

The monstrous creature stands for the oil company, Pexton, which has wreaked havoc on the characters' lives and the environment. Its presence symbolizes the destructive power of corporate greed and the devastating consequences it has on communities. The physical discomfort caused by the creature represents the tangible impact of pollution and exploitation, making it impossible for the characters to ignore or downplay their suffering. As the drums join the Restoration Movement people, it becomes clear that this is not just an individual struggle, but a collective fight for justice and change. The characters' urgency to share their story stems from their belief that exposing the truth is the first step towards holding Pexton accountable and preventing further harm.

The three little fishes represent the voiceless victims of environmental degradation. They symbolize the fragility and vulnerability of the natural world, emphasizing the need for immediate action to protect and preserve the ecosystems. By giving these small creatures, a significant role in the story, the author highlights the interconnectedness of all living beings and the importance of considering the wider impact of our actions on the environment. The three little fishes also serve as a powerful reminder that neglecting our responsibilities towards nature can have devastating consequences not only for wildlife but also for the communities that rely on healthy ecosystems for their livelihoods.

Itching the insides of the belly of this monstrous creature stomach for so long making it get a stomachache to vomit the fishes out metaphorically stands for the awakening of our collective consciousness and the realization that we cannot continue to exploit and harm the natural world without facing dire consequences. The author uses this graphic and unsettling image to convey the urgency of addressing environmental issues and the need for a paradigm shift in human relationship with nature.

The people of Kosawa also create an awareness through the demonstration of environmental degradation of their own community. They showcase the devastating effects of the oil company:

> The first time the Restoration Movement came to see what was happening in our village, they were represented by five people—the Sweet One and the Cute One; a man who looked like he could be from our area but was from the neighboring country; and a man and a woman from America…they walked around the village and saw the pipelines and the places where crude oil had spilled over the years. We took them into the forest, and they saw farms that had been rendered useless after fires; they examined the shriveled-up products of our soil. They took pictures of waste floating on the big river. They pointed at leaves with holes and said it was from acid rain; they explained to us that our rain long ago stopped being pure water. We led them to see the graves of the children; we saw their lips moving as they counted the smallest mounds. They looked toward Gardens and saw the gas flares (p. 118).

In this excerpt, it is clear that the author creates an awareness through demonstration of the environmental impacts of oil company led by development program that have devastated the land and water of the fictional community. The fires have not only destroyed the natural resources, but have also led to the contamination of the rain, causing acid rain that further harms the environment. The waste floating on the river serves as a visual representation of the pollution caused by the oil company's activities. Additionally, the author emphasizes the human cost of this development by mentioning the graves of the children, implying that their deaths were a result of the environmental degradation caused by the oil company.

The gas flares in the Gardens further highlight the destructive presence of the oil company in the community. Moreover, the author effectively conveys the negative impacts of the oil company's development program on the environment and the people living in the area. The author's use of vivid imagery, such as the waste floating on the river, evokes a sense of disgust and sadness in the reader. It forces them to confront the harsh reality of

the pollution and its consequences. By mentioning the graves of the children, the author adds a heartbreaking personal element to the story, making it impossible to ignore the devastating effects of the oil company's activities on the community. The gas flares in the Gardens serve as a stark reminder of the company's disregard for the environment and the health of the people living nearby. Through these powerful descriptions, the author effectively condemns the oil company for their destructive actions.

Third, the characters demand accountability from the oil company and government officials responsible for the environmental damage. They call for the implementation of measures to mitigate the pollution and to compensate the affected communities for the harm caused. They also seek legal recourse to hold the corporation accountable for their actions.

> We inhaled, waited, exhaled. We remembered those who had died from diseases with neither names nor cures—our siblings and cousins and friends who had perished from the poison in the water and the poison in the air and the poisoned food growing from the land that lost its purity the day Pexton came drilling…Pexton wanted more of our oil. Our government wanted more of their money. His Excellency wanted more of the world’s finest things. Eight years after the massacre that left Thula unable to speak for eleven days, Pexton is still on our land (pp. 7, 17)

From this excerpt, it is clear that the oil company and the government are responsible for the environmental and health crisis in the community. The drilling activities conducted by Pexton have caused the water, air, and food to become contaminated with toxins, resulting in the death of many people, including the narrator's loved ones. Despite the devastating consequences, Pexton continues to operate on their land, driven by their greed for more oil and money.

The government, represented by His Excellency, also benefits from this arrangement, prioritizing their own desires over the well-being of the community. This reveals the fact that both Pexton and the government are complicit in prioritizing profit over the health and

safety of the community. The narrator's anger and frustration grow as they witness the blatant disregard for human lives and the environment. They are determined to expose the truth and hold both Pexton and the government accountable for their actions, seeking justice for their lost loved ones and the community as a whole.

Finally, the characters build solidarity with other communities affected by environmental degradation, recognizing the interconnectedness of their struggles. They collaborate with other groups and organizations to amplify their voices and to demand systemic change. They also seek international support and attention to their plight, recognizing the need for external assistance in holding the corporations and government officials accountable as stated in the following excerpt:

> I believe we can do it. We may be the only village breathing air poisoned by Pexton, but their pipelines pass through other villages and spill in them too. Soldiers are menacing innocents everywhere. The entire country is suffering under the yoke of His Excellency. Millions want him gone. That's an opportunity right there. We can join forces with people who are as ready for change as we are. Rouse them to get out on the streets and demand a new country. I've studied such movements; they have happened in America and Europe. People have gone out onto streets and changed their countries by marching. It'll likely take us months or even years to get multitudes of people marching, but with proper planning, we can do it (p. 234).

These illustrate that how community advocacy is portrayed as a form of postcolonial eco-activism in *How Beautiful We Were*. The novel emphasizes the importance of collective action and solidarity in confronting environmental degradation and demanding accountability from those responsible. The characters' efforts to organize, raise awareness, and demand justice highlight the power of community advocacy in effecting change.

In *How Beautiful We Were*, appealing to authorities is portrayed as another form of postcolonial eco-activism as the characters make efforts to seek assistance from higher authorities, such as government officials, to intervene and address the environmental

degradation caused by Pexton. The novel highlights the challenges and limitations of appealing to authorities, as the characters often face indifference, corruption, and resistance from those in power.

> Early the previous year, we had watched as a group of six men set out for Bézam, …the group promised the village that they would return with nothing less than a guarantee from the government and Pexton that our land would be restored to what it was before Pexton arrived…all of whom were our neighbors and relatives, three of whom had sick children. When they did not return after ten days, we began fearing that they'd been imprisoned. Or worse. A second group of men traveled to Bézam to search for and bring home the Six, but they came back empty-handed (p. 11).

This excerpt helps understand the desperation and determination of the villagers to reclaim their land. Despite the risks and uncertainties, the group of six men took it upon themselves to negotiate with the government and Pexton for the restoration of their land. The mention of sick children among the group highlights the hardships faced by the villagers and their urgent need for their land to be restored. The failed attempts to locate the missing men only intensify the villagers' fears and uncertainty about their fate.

First, the characters send pleas and requests to government officials, seeking help to stop the pollution and hold the responsible parties accountable. They appeal to the authorities to intervene and to implement measures to mitigate the damage caused by the corporations. However, they often face frustration and disappointment as their appeals go unanswered or are met with indifference.

Second, the characters confront government officials, challenging their inaction and complicity in the environmental degradation when they become unresponsive and indifferent. They demand that the officials take responsibility for protecting the land and resources of the community and to hold Pexton accountable for its actions. However, they often face resistance and intimidation from the officials, who are often in collusion with the oil company.

Third, the characters seek legal recourse to hold the oil company accountable for its actions and to demand compensation for the harm caused. They recognize the limitations of appealing to authorities and seek alternative means to seek justice. However, they face significant challenges in accessing legal remedies, as the legal system is often corrupt and biased in favor of the company (p. 269).

Finally, the characters seek international support and attention to their plight, recognizing the need for external assistance in holding the corporations and government officials accountable. They appeal to international organizations and media outlets to raise awareness about the environmental degradation and to pressure the authorities to take action. However, they face significant challenges in accessing international support, as the oil company often have significant influence and power in the global arena. 42

These illustrate how appealing to authorities is portrayed as a form of ecoactivism in How Beautiful We Were. The novel highlights the challenges and limitations of relying on the authorities to address environmental degradation, as the characters often face indifference, corruption, and resistance from those in power. The characters' efforts to seek legal recourse and to build international pressure highlight the need for alternative means of seeking justice and accountability.

In *How Beautiful We Were,* challenging corporate practices is portrayed as a form of postcolonial eco-activism as the characters confront the harmful actions of multination corporation and demand accountability for the environmental degradation caused by its operations. The novel emphasizes the importance of holding this corporation responsible for its exploitative practices and the devastating impact on the community and the environment.

First, the characters directly confront the corporation, highlighting the devastating impact of their operations on the environment, health, and livelihoods of the community. They demand that it takes responsibility for the pollution and implements measures to mitigate the damage. However, the oil company often dismisses their concerns and continue its exploitative activities, leading to further environmental degradation.

Second, the characters express their dissent and frustration with the corporation's practices through various means, including attending village meetings, sharing their stories, and expressing their anger and disillusionment. They convey their deep sense of betrayal and the urgent need for action to address the environmental crisis caused by the corporation.

Overall, challenging corporate practices is portrayed as a form of environmental activism in *How Beautiful We Were*. The novel emphasizes the importance of confronting the corporation, voicing dissent, seeking legal recourse, and building solidarity to hold the corporations accountable for its exploitative practices and to demand justice for the environmental degradation it has caused. The characters' efforts to challenge the corporations highlight the power of collective action in effecting change and seeking accountability for environmental injustices.

In How Beautiful We Were, seeking international support is reflected as a form of postcolonial eco-activism as the characters recognize the need to garner attention and assistance from the global community in addressing the environmental degradation caused by Pexton. The novel portrays the characters' efforts to raise awareness internationally, appeal to global organizations, and seek solidarity with individuals and groups beyond their immediate community. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

> Thousands of people in America read our story. Hundreds called the Restoration Movement office in Great City to find out how they could help us. That is what we learned, based on the report the American man and woman brought during that first meeting. Mothers called, crying, after they read about our children. Young people marched around Pexton's office, shouting: Shame on you, Pexton; shame on you, murderers. We were no longer alone. Many stopped buying oil from Pexton (p. 157).

First, the characters seek to raise awareness about the environmental crisis in their community on an international scale. They recognize the importance of sharing their stories and struggles with the global community to draw attention to the devastating impact of

corporate exploitation on their land, resources, and livelihoods. By doing so, they aim at garnering support and solidarity from individuals and organizations around the world.

Second, the characters appeal to global organizations and entities for support in their fight against Pexton. They recognize the potential influence of international bodies in holding corporations accountable and in advocating for environmental justice. By reaching out to global organizations, they seek to amplify their voices and to pressure the corporations and governments through international channels.

Thirdly, the characters aim to build solidarity with individuals and groups beyond their immediate community who are also affected by environmental exploitation. They recognize the interconnectedness of their struggles with those of other communities globally and seek to form alliances with like-minded eco-activists and organizations. By doing so, they hope to create a unified front against corporate practices that harm the environment and communities worldwide.

Finally, the characters emphasize the global responsibility to address environmental injustices and the impact of corporate exploitation on local communities. They appeal to the conscience of the global community, urging individuals and organizations to recognize their role in advocating for environmental protection and justice. By highlighting the interconnectedness of environmental issues, they seek to mobilize international support for their cause.

These illustrate how seeking international support is reflected as a form of postcolonial eco-activism in How Beautiful We Were. The novel emphasizes the characters' recognition of the importance of raising global awareness, appealing to international organizations, building solidarity beyond borders, and highlighting global responsibility in addressing environmental degradation. The characters' efforts to seek international support underscore the interconnectedness of environmental struggles and the significance of global solidarity in advocating for environmental justice.

There is also a grassroot movement termed the restoration movement which is a collective effort by the community of Kosawa to restore and protect their environment in

the face of environmental degradation caused by Pexton. The movement emerges organically from the community's shared experiences of living in a polluted environment and their desire to reclaim their land and resources. The characters in the novel work together to clean up polluted areas, plant new trees, and revitalize the ecosystem. They draw on their cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs to guide their restoration efforts, viewing the land as a sacred inheritance that must be protected and nurtured. The Restoration Movement represents a form of community empowerment, bringing people together to work towards a common goal of environmental restoration. It embodies a commitment to long-term environmental sustainability and a defiant stance against environmental injustice and the exploitation of natural resources.

The Restoration Movement is characterized by several key aspects. The first aspect is that the Restoration Movement focuses on reclaiming and restoring the natural environment that has been damaged by the activities of the oil company. The community members actively engage in efforts to clean up polluted areas, rehabilitate the land, and revitalize the ecosystem.

The second aspect is that the Restoration Movement has cultural and spiritual significance for the community. It represents a reaffirmation of their cultural identity and a reclamation of their ancestral lands. The characters draw on their cultural traditions and spiritual beliefs to guide their restoration efforts, viewing the land as a sacred inheritance that must be protected and nurtured.

The third aspect is that the Restoration Movement serves as a catalyst for community empowerment, bringing people together to work towards a common goal of environmental restoration. It fosters a sense of collective agency and solidarity, empowering individuals to take ownership of the restoration process and to actively participate in rebuilding their environment.

The fourth aspect is that the Restoration Movement represents a form of resistance to exploitative corporate practices. By reclaiming and restoring their environment, the community asserts their autonomy and challenges the corporations' disregard for the well-

being of the land and its inhabitants. The movement embodies a defiant stance against environmental injustice and the exploitation of natural resources.

Finally, the Restoration Movement embodies a commitment to long-term environmental sustainability. The community members recognize the importance of implementing sustainable practices that will ensure the health and vitality of the land for future generations. Their efforts reflect a deep sense of stewardship and responsibility towards the environment.

In general, the Restoration *Movement in How Beautiful We Were* represents the community's proactive and determined response to environmental degradation, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental, cultural, and social dimensions in their struggle for justice and restoration.

In conclusion, *Dance of the Jakaranda*, *Radiance of Tomorrow*, and *How Beautiful We Were* offer nuanced portrayals of postcolonial eco-activism. These novels illuminate the complexities of environmental challenges, historical injustices, and community resilience in the context of postcolonial societies. Through their narratives of postcolonial eco-activism, these novels contribute to a broader discourse on the intersection of literature, environmentalism, and social change in postcolonial Africa.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on presenting the study's findings and implications. It unveils the conclusive outcomes derived from the application of analytical techniques and frameworks to the examination of the texts under investigation. Moreover, it offers a concise resolution to the ongoing research, emphasizing the potential implications that warrant particular attention. Additionally, the chapter delivers a thorough summary of the primary themes and patterns that surfaced from the analysis and interpretation of the data. The findings illuminate different facets of the research questions and provide significant insights into the subject matter. Furthermore, the chapter delineates practical and theoretical implications for policymakers and professionals in the relevant field.

8.1 Summary

The study positions itself within the growing field of postcolonial ecocriticism, delving into the intricate interplay between colonial and neocolonial power structures and their environmental effects. Focusing on selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels, the study aims at addressing the gap in existing literature by providing a systematic exploration of the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism. The general objective of the study is to examine these environmental impacts, while the specific objectives include unveiling the various forms of environmental injustice that stem from ecological imperialism, environmental racism, and myths of development, exploring the role of postcolonial eco-activism, and contributing to the discourse on sustainable development in postcolonial contexts.

The study holds descriptive, analytical, and normative contributions, providing a thorough analysis of the environmental impacts of (neo)colonial practices while also encouraging a comprehensive reimagining of economic and political systems that prioritize sustainability and environmental justice in postcolonial African contexts. Employing a postcolonial ecocritical framework, the study analyzes three postcolonial Anglophone African novels published from 2014 onwards: *Dance of the Jakaranda* (2018) by Peter

Kimani, *Radiance of Tomorrow* (2014) by Ishmael Beah, and *How Beautiful We Were* (2021) by Imbolo Mbue. The study adopts textual analysis as a research method to frame the overall project. The study reviews existing literature on postcolonial ecocriticism and the selected novels, identifying gaps in the scholarly discourse and positioning the current study within the broader academic landscape.

The study explores the environmental impacts of ecological imperialism in *Dance of the Jakaranda*, highlighting the colonial plunder of resources, exploitation of East Africa's indigenous peoples, and coercion of indigenous labor. These practices contribute to environmental degradation, social inequity, and economic stagnation. The novel also depicts atrocities of colonialism, such as military violence, biological warfare, deforestation, and colonial conservation strategies. Military force and fire harm natural ecosystems, diseases disrupt traditional ecological balances, and the deliberate use of rinderpest undermines indigenous communities' economic and social standing. Colonial conservation practices often disregard indigenous ecological knowledge, displacing communities and degrading their surroundings. The study concludes that colonialism can lead to neo-colonialism, directly or indirectly affecting the new nation and its environment.

Radiance of Tomorrow by Ishmael Beah, as analyzed in chapter five, highlights the profound impacts of environmental racism on human communities and natural ecosystems. The novel portrays the demise of the indigenous community due to mining curse, governance failures, and displacement, highlighting the profound suffering endured by the indigenous people. The loss of ancestral land, degradation of their natural surroundings, and rupture of cultural and historical bonds evoke a profound sense of displacement and hopelessness. The text reveals the physical and psychological trauma inflicted on the community, showcasing instances of environmental racism, human rights violations, and the denial of justice. The environmental degradation of the indigenous community is highlighted through landscaping and ecocide, which result from mining company's landscaping practices, aiming to exploit the natural environment for profit. This alteration of the ecological balance for economic gain leads to the destruction of native land and resources, encompassing fauna, flora, minerals, and water sources. The novel emphasizes

ecocide, depicting the destruction of significant natural areas due to mining activities, resource mismanagement, and hazardous waste disposal.

The novel also highlights the intricate connection between environmental racism, the establishment of colonial space, and the erosion of native culture. The targeted destruction of traditional practices contributes to environmental racism by displacing the indigenous population from their ancestral lands and severing their cultural and historical ties to the environment. The narrative emphasizes the adverse effects of environmental racism on indigenous groups, emphasizing the interplay between cultural disintegration, displacement, and environmental degradation within colonial and postcolonial landscapes.

The analysis and interpretation of *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue, as presented in chapter six of this study, reveal the environmental repercussions of the myth of development. The novel explores the contrasting perspectives of nativist and developmentalist characters, highlighting the importance of respecting the land and its cultural significance. The nativist characters, like the indigenous community of Kosawa, view the land as sacred and integral to their identity, while the developmentalist characters, like Pexton and government officials, prioritize profit and progress over environmental conservation. This clash of perspectives highlights the detrimental impact of the myth of development, driven by profit motives, on the environment, leading to degradation, pollution, and resource exploitation.

The study also highlights the dynamics of power and sustainable development, highlighting the unequal allocation of power and resources, the disproportionate effects of pollution and environmental devastation on local inhabitants. State vampirism, the government's collaboration with multinational corporations like Pexton, is also highlighted, highlighting the government's betrayal of its people and environment for economic benefits. Lastly, the novel highlights the severe repercussions of industrialization and exploitation on the land, water, and air in the fictional African village of Kosawa. The narrative highlights the depletion of natural resources, water sources, and disruption of traditional lifestyles, emphasizing the need for sustainable development approaches that prioritize environmental conservation and community welfare over profit-driven agendas.

Postcolonial eco-activism is a key theme in Anglophone African novels *Dance of the Jakaranda, Radiance of Tomorrow,* and *How Beautiful We Were*. These novels mutually explore the role of environmental activism in addressing environmental challenges in Africa, highlighting the impact of colonialism and industrialization on natural resources. The authors emphasize the struggles and triumphs of environmental activists, showcasing the power of individual and collective action in combating exploitation and promoting environmental justice. Dance of the Jakaranda depicts resistance against British colonizers' railway construction, Radiance of Tomorrow emphasizes community engagement in preserving the environment, and How Beautiful We Were delves into postcolonial eco-activism against multinational corporations and complicit governments, emphasizing grassroots organizing and international solidarity.

8.2 Conclusion

As has been stated, the main objective of this study was to investigate the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism in postcolonial African settings as reflected in selected postcolonial Anglophone African novels using a postcolonial ecocritical perspective. The analysis and interpretation demonstrated the urgent need to confront the devastating environmental impacts stemming from the legacies of (neo)colonialism in postcolonial African contexts. The study makes a compelling case that these literary works serve as vital standards for understanding the inextricable link between (neo)colonial exploitation and environmental devastation. The novels are found to be the artistic crafts used to fight the reality related to environmental impacts of (neo) colonialism revealed in them.

In his artistic literary work, Peter Kimani reveals the environmental consequences of colonial exploitation and the lasting impact on both the land and its people in East Africa. His novel *Dance of the Jakaranda* skillfully reveals a searing indictment of the phenomenon of ecological imperialism, where the colonial project coordinated the deliberate plunder of both human and natural resources, the dispossession of indigenous lands, the deployment of military violence, and the implementation of exploitative conservation practices. These actions decimated local ecosystems and communities,

shattering the delicate balance that had sustained them for generations. In doing so, the novel lays bare the deeply rooted mechanisms of colonial domination that continue to reverberate even in postcolonial environments.

Similarly, Ishmail Beah, in his venerable literary work, brings to attention the harsh realities of the environmental consequences of (neo)colonialism in Sierra Leone, West Africa. His novel Radiance of Tomorrow lays bare the realities of environmental racism as the indigenous community faces the erasure of their lands, culture, and way of life in the wake of extractive industries and the false promises of development. This novel powerfully demonstrates how the legacies of colonial subjugation have been perpetuated through the neocolonial structures of resource extraction and the imposition of foreign, unsustainable models of progress. The novel unveils the tangible realities of exploitation and injustice faced by marginalized communities in Africa today and beyond, shedding light on the urgent need for systemic change.

Moreover, in her revered masterpiece, Imbolo Mbue captures the harsh environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism in one of the African villages called Kosawa, which represents the microcosm of a continent grappling with the consequences of exploitation and inequality. In her novel, *How Beautiful We Were*, she critiques the pernicious myths of development, which are propagated as a strategy by a multinational corporation in collusion with complicit state actors and which lead to egregious environmental degradation, state vampirism, and the marginalization of local populations. Through vivid descriptions of Kosawa's environmental calamity and the suffering of the people as a result, Mbue paints a bigger picture of the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism in Africa. The novel underscores the ways in which the rhetoric of progress and modernization has been weaponized to legitimize the continued exploitation of natural resources and the subjugation of indigenous communities. It challenges the reader to confront the realities of neocolonial power structures and the devastating consequences they have wrought on the environment and local livelihoods.

Collectively, these novels serve as powerful testaments to the urgent need to confront the environmental impacts of (neo)colonialism. They illuminate the ways in

which the colonial project and its contemporary manifestations have irreversibly damaged the African landscape, disrupting the delicate balance of ecosystems and community-based stewardship of natural resources. The study argues that these literary works are not merely poignant artistic expressions, but rather, they are crucial windows into the complex interplay between power, environmental justice, and decolonial struggle.

Furthermore, the study contends that the protagonists in these novels emerge as embodiments of postcolonial eco-activism, resisting the onslaught of corporate greed, state indifference, and the lingering effects of (neo)colonial domination. Their struggles, as depicted in these works, serve as a clarion call for a comprehensive reimagining of economic, political, and social systems that prioritize ecological sustainability, community-based stewardship of natural resources, and the empowerment of marginalized populations. Only through such a radical reconfiguration can postcolonial African nations chart a path towards environmental and social justice, healing the wounds inflicted by the legacies of (neo)colonialism.

In general, this study highlights the vital importance of postcolonial ecocriticism as a theoretical framework for unpacking the multifaceted intersections between colonial histories, environmental degradation, and the ongoing struggles for decolonial transformation. By centering these literary works, the study has sought to amplify the voices of those who have borne the brunt of environmental injustices, and to illuminate the urgency of reclaiming environmental sovereignty as an integral component of the broader decolonial project. The insights gleaned from this study carry profound implications for the future of environmental and social justice in postcolonial African contexts, and beyond.

8.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the analysis and interpretation of selected Anglophone African novels through the postcolonial ecocritical perspective, this study suggests the key recommendations for advancing this vigorous interdisciplinary field of study. These recommendations include further expanding the literary canon to include a diverse range of African voices, deepening the theoretical and methodological engagement with

postcolonial environmental justice, and forging stronger partnerships between academic researchers, grassroots activists, and policymakers to enact meaningful change. By addressing the complex interplay between colonial legacies, environmental degradation, and the perpetuation of unsustainable development narratives, the dissertation ultimately aims at contributing to the broader movement for environmental and social justice in postcolonial African contexts and beyond.

Firstly, the study brings to the attention of scholars and researchers to further expand the corpus of postcolonial ecocritical analysis by centering a broader range of African literary pieces. By investigating a more diverse array of literary works, the field can deepen its understanding of the multifaceted ways in which (neo)colonial legacies have shaped environmental realities across the African continent. This endeavor will yield invaluable insights for the formulation of holistic, context-specific approaches to environmental restoration and community-led environmental stewardship.

Secondly, the study calls for the improved integration of postcolonial ecocriticism into academic curricula, predominantly within the realms of African literature, environmental studies, and African studies. By creating greater consciousness and engagement with these critical frameworks, the study aims empowering students and future scholars to question the complex entanglements of power, ecology, and social justice with nuance and analytical rigor. This pedagogical paradigm will be instrumental in fostering the upcoming generation of ecocritical thinkers, researchers, activists, and policymakers.

Thirdly, the study encourages interdisciplinary collaborations among researchers, scholars, activists, and community to advance context-specific, grassroot community-led methods to environmental restoration and sustainable resource management. By centering the voices and lived experiences of those most impacted by environmental degradation, the study asserts that equitable, culturally-responsive solutions can be designed and implemented, respecting the autonomy and environmental stewardship of indigenous community.

Finally, the study urges governments, policymakers, and international development organizations to notice the lessons imparted by the literary works examined within its scope. The urgent need to dismantle the engrained structures of (neo)colonial exploitation, to prioritize environmental justice, and to empower indigenous communities must be at the forefront of policy agendas. Only through comprehensive restructuring of economic, political, and social systems can postcolonial African nations chart a sustainable path towards environmental regeneration and social transformation.

By heeding these recommendations, the study asserts that the collective efforts of scholars, researchers, activists, and policymakers can work towards a future where the legacies of colonial and neocolonial domination no longer cast their shadow over the African landscape, and where the voices of grassroots postcolonial eco-activists and community stewards are centered in the ongoing struggle for environmental and social justice. The insights gleaned from this study offer a vital foundation for this crucial endeavor.

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