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A POSTCOLONIAL ECOCRITICAL APPROACH TO
***ANIMAL'S PEOPLE* BY INDRA SINHA**

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**INDRA SINHA’NIN *ANIMAL’S PEOPLE* ADLI ROMANINA
POSTKOLONYAL EKOELEŞTİREL BİR YAKLAŞIM**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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ÖZET**Yüksek Lisans Tezi****Indra Sinha'nın *Animal's People* Adlı Romanına
Postkolonyal Ekoeleştirel Bir Yaklaşım****Yeşim İPEKÇİ****Fırat Üniversitesi****Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü****Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Anabilim Dalı****İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bilim Dalı****Elazığ – 2017; Sayfa: VI+118**

Bu çalışma, Indra Sinha'nın *Animal's People* (2007) adlı eserinde geçen insan ve insan dışı ikili karşıtlığının yapı bozumuna uğratarak postkolonyal ekoeleştirme bağlamında incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır. Bu ikili karşıtlık, eskiden beri süregelen toplumsal ve ekolojik felaketlerin altında yatan temel neden olarak kabul edilmektedir. 1984'te Hindistan'da meydana gelen Bhopal felaketini kurgu yoluyla yeniden işleyen Sinha'nın bu romanı, insan/insan dışı ayrımının tarihsel nedenlerini ve ekolojik sonuçlarını irdelemek amacıyla postkolonyal ve ekoeleştirel yaklaşımların bir araya getirilmesine zemin hazırlamaktadır. Bu yakınlaşmadan doğan postkolonyal ekoeleştirme, edebiyatın söz konusu çevrelerde insanmerkezci bakış açılarından kaynaklanan ekolojik felaketleri nasıl yansıttığını çözümlemeye yarayan teorik bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Bu bakış açılarına yönelik bir eleştiri niteliği taşıyan bu roman, ekosistem içerisinde yer alan tüm insan ve insan dışı varlıkların birbiriyle bağlantılı olduğunu ve tabiatı gereği değerli olduğunu savunan ekomerkezçiliğin önemi üzerinde durmaktadır. *Animal's People* adlı eserin resmettiği postkolonyal bir çevreyi, postkolonyal ekoeleştirme bağlamında inceleyen bu çalışma, bölgesel ve küresel anlamda ekolojik farkındalık uyandırılmasında edebiyatın ve edebiyat eleştirisinin büyük rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Indra Sinha, *Animal's People*, Postkolonyal Ekoeleştirme, İnsan, İnsan Dışı Varlıklar

ABSTRACT**Master's Thesis****A Postcolonial Ecocritical Approach to *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha****Yeřim İPEKÇİ****Fırat University****Institute of Social Sciences****Department of Western Languages and Literatures****English Language and Literature****Elazığ – 2017; Page: VI+118**

This study seeks to present a postcolonial ecocritical analysis of Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007) by examining how the novel deconstructs the binary opposition between human and nonhuman beings. This binary opposition is regarded as the main cause lying behind long-standing social and ecological calamities. As a fictional re-working of the Bhopal Disaster (1984) in India, Sinha's novel paves the way for merging the postcolonial and ecocritical approaches to study the historical causes and ecological consequences of the human/nonhuman divide. The postcolonial ecocriticism rising from this convergence offers a theoretical framework for analysing how literature reflects the ecological problems in postcolonial environments that result from anthropocentric perspectives. Presenting a critique of these perspectives, the novel emphasizes the significance of ecocentrism claiming that all human and nonhuman beings in the ecosystem are interconnected and intrinsically valuable. Examining *Animal's People's* portrayal of a postcolonial environment through postcolonial ecocritical approach, this study reveals the great role of literature and literary criticism in raising ecological awareness at the regional and global level.

Keywords: Indra Sinha, *Animal's People*, Postcolonial Ecocriticism, Human, Nonhuman Beings

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INTRODUCTION

Mankind's domination over nature dates back to the Neolithic era when they started to engage in the domestication of plants and animals. Agriculture, domestication and land settlement have become significant factors for the progress of the world. The prehistoric shift from nomadic hunter-gatherer communities to the settled ones thus creates "the foundation for the later process of industrialization" (Weisdorf 2005: 561). However, "the imperative to manage the global village in order to save it is leading not to the discovery of a new place for humans in wild nature, but to a radically different understanding of the character of Nature in a domesticated world" (Warner, Feinstein, Coppinger and Clemence 1996: 300). The scientific, technological and industrial developments since the prehistory have all been influential in changing the relationship between human and nature by gradually enabling the dominance of the former over the latter. Depending on such developments, there has been an excessive growth in population and demand for production, which has led to mass urbanization and overexploitation of natural resources. The increase of carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere has given rise to large scale environmental problems such as global warming and declining biodiversity. During World War II and the Cold War, the super powers' nuclear arms race augmented environmental concerns on the ground that the use of any nuclear weapon could be irreparably destructive over the entire ecosystem.

These practices contributed to the emergence of ecocriticism in the 1990s. Focusing on the relationship between literature and the environment, ecocriticism seeks to examine and respond to, in both literary and non-literary texts, the deliberate and undeliberate exploitation of nature. It reflects on the literary representation of the damage to nature by those who assume the capacity of nature as limitless and their destructive domination over it as justified. This imaginary construction of nature is "based on an Aristotelian system of binary thinking that differentiates humans from and privileges them above the so-called natural world" (Wright 2010: 5). Following the human-centred ideology of Aristotle, humanism has done its part in confining human beings in a fatal delusion that mind/reason is superior to body/matter. For Descartes and Bacon, "[r]eason became the means to achieving total mastery over nature" (Garrard 2004: 62). While Bacon tries to achieve this mastery through science, Descartes supports him by creating a philosophical basis for such mastery with Cartesianism. This

anthropocentric mentality paves the way for considering nonhuman animals¹ and nonhuman beings as merely machines or objects. The ecocriticism argues that this anthropocentrism, with the support of Eurocentrism and Christianity, has played a great role in placing human beings in the centre within the ecosystem, encouraging them to massively use their capability to alter it and thus to alienate themselves from nature.

The ecocritical studies suggest that ecological problems emerge out of such alienation of the human from nature. The basis of this alienation is to ignore the fact that a human being is not just a part of the species of *homo sapiens* but of the entire ecosystem. Contrarily, ecocentric approaches suggest that there is an inherent unity between human and nature. Unfortunately, “[n]ature is only valued in terms of its usefulness to us”, writes Garrard; therefore, there is a “need to develop a value system which takes the intrinsic or inherent value of nature as its starting point” (Garrard 2004: 18). Marx has also been deeply interested in man’s alienation from nature, because for him “Nature is man’s *inorganic body*” (1992: 325) and thus inseparable. Defining the mutual relationship between the human and nonhuman beings based on the concept of labour, Marx puts it:

Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces ... By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. (Marx 1991: 177)

Marx argues that capitalism has been the contemporary version of this relationship between human and nonhuman and is responsible for ecological crises as well as economic ones. Criticizing the attempts to build artificial parks based on his idea that human unity with nature under capitalist conditions is merely an illusion, Adorno claims, “[t]he more purely nature is preserved and transplanted by civilization, the more implacably it is dominated” (2005: 115).

¹ In this study, ‘nonhuman animal’ is used to define animals except *homo sapiens*, and ‘human animal’ refers to the species of *homo sapiens* in the evolutionary process. See Rob Nixon. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (United States of America: Harvard UP), 57 and Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin. 2010. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (New York and London: Routledge), 17

In this context, the study focuses on the point that the main motivation behind any kind of domination over nature is the desire to achieve power rather than to survive. This desire is one of the prevailing reasons for the antagonism between the human and the nonhuman, leading to ecological catastrophes. Murray Bookchin argued that the human desire to dominate nature is the driving force of these crimes and he draws parallels between human efforts to subjugate both human beings and nature (1980: 60). To reveal one of the foundations of Bookchin's argument, Diane Kelsey McColley states, "Francis Bacon distinguished three 'grades of ambition in mankind': to extend personal power, national power, and 'the power and dominion of the human race itself over the universe'" (2001: 70). The differences among various groups of people in terms of their level of possessing these three types of power function is the underlying force for discrimination towards certain groups and their environments. Taking into consideration the historical power relations, the Western empires constructed a gender and race-based hierarchy that excluded the non-European, the indigenous, the poor and the woman by identifying them with nature. In the light of these arguments, a postcolonial approach to environmental studies involves rethinking human being along with its relationship with the nonhuman in order to offer a deeper understanding of contemporary environmental racism.

In relation to the causes of environmental racism, Rob Nixon uses the term 'superpower parochialism' which describes indifference of U.S.-based ecocriticism to long-lasting environmental damages inflicted in transnational regions (2011: 34). He criticizes the U.S. educational system and media for covering up the transnational slow violence in foreign areas. While setting out its foreign policies, the U.S. makes use of its global power and knowledge in a way to cover up these policies that foster discrimination against non-American environments. As Nixon puts it:

What's at stake is not just disciplinary parochialism but, more broadly, what one might call superpower parochialism, that is, a combination of American insularity and America's power as the preeminent empire of the neoliberal age to rupture the lives and ecosystems of non-Americans, especially the poor, who may live at a geographical remove but who remain intimately vulnerable to the force fields of U.S. foreign policy. (2011: 34)

The legacies of Western colonialism appear as ‘eco-parochialist’ tendencies (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 12) with negative consequences for the environments of the global south. In this sense, not only non-fictional but also fictional works, such as *Animal’s People*, reveal that the European and U.S. governments use their power for self-centred political and economic purposes and promote the set-up of transnational companies in previously colonized lands no matter whether the social and physical infrastructures of these regions are suitable for the functioning of such companies. Guha and Martinez-Alier point out the gap between the environmentalisms of the poor and the rich and call for a different understanding of environmentalism that deals with a more comprehensive scope of environmental problems. They propose that changing the definition of environmentalism with the help of postcolonial literature may create a space for postcolonial environmental activism (1997: xxi).

While “[e]cocriticism expands the concept of ‘the world’ to include the entire ecosystem” (Glottfelty 1996: xix), some Western-based ecocriticism excludes the human and nonhuman beings living in postcolonial environments from ecocentric practices. The transition from an anthropocentric to an ecocentric perspective fails to benefit those “distinguished from the ‘civilised’ precisely by its proximity to the natural world” (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 187). In line with the definition and purpose of ecocriticism specified by Glottfelty, postcolonial ecocriticism seeks to analyse texts that deal with ecological crises that occur in the lands of these postcolonial subjects due to the discrimination against their selves and environments. For Val Plumwood, the Western world uses reason as a powerful instrument to oppress both human and nonhuman. Under the influence of this reason-based mentality, postcolonial environments are subjected to “eco-catastrophe” (Garrard 2004: 3) as observed in the case of Bhopal Disaster that occurred in 1984 in India.

By foregrounding postcolonial ecocriticism in recent decades, literary scholars like Alfred Crosby have expanded the context of ecocriticism both spatially and historically. Crosby argues that European imperialism did not only have an ideological or anthropocentric base but also an environmental purpose. Europe moved its “portmanteau biota” including weeds, animals and micro-organisms to colonial areas sharing the same climate with Europe (Crosby 1986: 89). This is called ‘ecological imperialism’ by Crosby, pointing out that the colonization of indigenous people by the European settlers was not only cultural but also environmental (Crosby 1986). Local

ecosystems were changed by unequal power relations, often leading to a decrease in biodiversity and natural resources, and an increase in the number of environmental disasters. Underlining how the ecological transformation and destruction of today is connected with the colonization of mind during early colonial expansion, Plumwood states, “colonialist interpretation necessarily resulted in the destruction or erosion of alternative apprehensions of animals and environment, blocking understanding of those crucial interactions between the human and the ‘extra-human’” (2001: 17).

The main purpose of postcolonial ecocriticism is to make visible the ecological consequences of this broken relationship between human and ‘extra-human’ in postcolonial environments. Embracing the idea that “the righting of imperialist wrongs necessarily involves our writing of the wrongs that have been” (Nixon 2011: 22), postcolonial ecocritical approaches require a thorough analysis of discourses about nature and race to uncover the links between colonial practices and the practices of transnational capitalism. By highlighting the ecological dimension of colonial damage, this literary criticism partly explores a “materialist understanding of the changing relationships between people, animals and environment” (Nixon 2010: 12). For Huggan and Tiffin, studying the literary and non-literary works on environmental issues in postcolonial lands entails a cooperation between postcolonialism and ecocriticism to challenge contemporary modes of social and environmental imperialism (2010: 2).

Indra Sinha’s *Animal’s People* (2007) was placed, by the postcolonial ecocritics, among the most influential transnational environmental writings. This novel, shortlisted for the 2007 Man Booker Prize and the winner of the 2008 Commonwealth Writers’ Prize, deals with the substantially different meanings of the human and the environment in the “‘global north’ of Euro-north America and the ‘global south’ of the postcolonial communities” (Mukherjee 2010: 134). It offers a critical insight into a Western ideology that accepts only the powerful and privileged ones as human beings and only cares about their environment. Depicting contemporary neoliberal practices, the novel focuses on the widening gap between the poor and the rich; the ecological degradation to the postcolonial environment, and the political, legal and economic privileges granted to transnational companies to freely operate in these lands. This study aims to provide a postcolonial ecocritical reading of *Animal’s People* with the intention of analysing how a literary work makes visible the social and environmental destruction of a postcolonial community and land.

The first chapter of this study aims to provide the theoretical framework of postcolonial ecocriticism with a special focus on its gradual development, as it is a quite recent approach in literary criticism. Firstly, it deals with the rise of postcolonial ecocriticism based on new directions in postcolonialism and ecocriticism. It argues that the legacies of the colonial period persist in the twenty-first century in the form of neocolonial practices which lead to large-scale ecological disasters in postcolonial lands. This requires a postcolonial ecocritical approach to literary works to uncover the resonances of such disasters. In addition, this chapter points out the reasons behind the belated collaboration between the two fields and the various challenges to their integration. The Western-based early ecocriticism and human-centered early postcolonialism leave their place to postcolonial ecocriticism that focuses on the literary works' representation of the political, economic and environmental domination of the global north over the global south. The transition from the local to the global has led to a transnational turn in environmental studies and drawn attention to the works of writer-activists such as Indra Sinha. Towards the end, this chapter provides information about major writers and critics working within the framework of postcolonial ecocriticism in order to indicate the efforts in literature that potentially shed light upon the ecological condition of the human and nonhuman beings in postcolonial lands.

The second chapter introduces Indra Sinha as a writer-activist involved in literary and non-literary efforts to create awareness of social and environmental injustices in the non-western world. It provides a brief overview of his works, including *Tantra: The Cult of Ecstasy* (1993), *The Cybergypsies* (1999) and *The Death of Mr. Love* (2002) to establish a broader context to the political and aesthetical concerns in his works. Then a more detailed introduction to his critically acclaimed novel *Animal's People* is provided. It points out how the narrative has been constructed out of a fictional reworking of the Bhopal disaster, and how it plays with the concept of reality by blurring the lines between fact and fiction. Sinha insists on the recognition of *Animal's People* as a work of art to maximize its power to produce change by increasing transnational visibility of ecological tragedies in postcolonial lands. From this perspective, the final section, 'Multiplicity in Genre' discusses the variety of genres and sub-genres in the novel such as crime fiction, the picaresque, postcolonial laughter, *testimonio*, documentary novel, and historiographic metafiction. Finally, the chapter discusses the relatively new genre of 'documentary metafiction' to reveal postcolonial

ecocritical works' attempt to preserve their aesthetic function while documenting the social, political and environmental concerns.

In the third chapter, the binary opposition of human/nonhuman is explained in detail as it is widely accepted as a key cause of the oppression of 'othered' human beings and of both animate and inanimate nonhuman beings. The humanist, speciesist and anthropocentric perspectives, which are embraced and disseminated by the philosophers such as Aristotle, Bacon, Descartes and Kant, have been deconstructed to underline the historical and cultural construction of the human by the Western world through underestimation of the dehumanized and nonhuman beings. Based on the protagonist named Animal, this chapter specifically questions what it means to be a human with a close analysis of the physical and mental attributes assigned to humans to distinguish them from the nonhuman world. Animal's rejection of his identity as a human animal is a critique of 'hegemonic centrism' as Val Plumwood calls it and, discloses an opposition to the Western ideal of humanity that has been constructed by separating itself from nature and natural beings. Finally, this chapter argues that a postcolonial ecocritical reading of the novel invites the interrogation of the human/nonhuman dichotomy and calls for an embracing of an ecocentric perspective to uncover the prioritization of the interests of the powerful over the weak and to accommodate all kinds of beings to prevent the large-scale ecological disasters.

The fourth chapter focuses on *Animal's People's* portrayal of the concept 'ecological otherness'. This concept is employed to reflect the consequences of ecological crises on the human level by taking into account the interplay between body and environment in a postcolonial environment. It examines the ecological otherness of the Khaufpuris caused by their transformation into toxic and disabled bodies after the high level of chemical leakage in Khaufpur, the name of Sinha's fictionalized Bhopal. With a particular emphasis upon Sarah Ray and Stacy Alaimo's idea that the body cannot be evaluated without its complex relationship with the environment, this chapter seeks to shed light upon the corporeal experience after the disaster by looking at the representation of various characters in the novel such as Animal, Ma Franci, Pandit Somraj, Aliya and Kha-in-the-Jar. Direct and indirect penetration of a variety of chemicals into the bodies through air, water and soil pollution exposes the transnational companies' irreparable damage to the bodies. The representation of the existing and potential disabilities in the novel offers a critique of the neo-colonial practices disabling

the postcolonial subject and environment. At the end of the chapter, the concept of intergenerational justice is discussed in relation to Kha-in-the-Jar and other foetuses, to highlight the fact that not only present generations but also future generations in postcolonial environments are under threat due to the eco-crimes committed against their bodies and environments.

The final chapter focuses on the environment as a nonhuman victim of industrial catastrophe. To highlight the reasons behind the broken relationship between environment and human beings, it presents the contrasting views of Francis Bacon and Christopher Manes of the human and nonhuman existence on earth. Just as 'the human' does not mean the same thing for Western and non-Western communities, the understanding and practice of environmentalism as well face a discrimination. This chapter discusses the implementation of economic policies, with fatal ecological consequences, in Khaufpur/Bhopal without taking into account its physical and social well-being, which ends up with much more damage to the environment. The novel portrays the irreversible impacts of human-based disasters upon air, water, soil, flora, fauna and many other nonhuman beings that struggle to survive in toxic environments. The toxic gases disseminated from the pesticide factory during the explosion start a chain of evil that overtakes the natural environment which requires re-establishing the connection between human and nature. The final section of this chapter thus reflects on *Animal's* imaginary return to nature, written in a post-pastoral or postcolonial pastoral mode, to emphasize the necessity of forming an eco-friendly relationship with the earth in order to possess and hand down a promising future.

Offering a postcolonial ecocritical reading of *Animal's People*, this study aims to examine how literary works represent the injustices against human and nonhuman beings in postcolonial environments. Sinha's novel deals with the complex relationship between human and nature from postcolonial ecological aspects, particularly reflecting on the dynamic interplay between the body and environment, both of which are extensively manipulated by the global politics at the micro and macro level. This study examines how the novel portrays the human/nonhuman divide based on a large-scale ecological disaster in a postcolonial land and contributes to the call for the citizens of the mother-earth to be ecologically and environmentally literate to maintain the sustainability of the earth and the survival of present and future generations.

CHAPTER ONE

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Rethinking Postcolonialism

The postcolonial critics Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin define postcolonialism's concerns as "the processes and effects of, and reactions to, European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day" (2007: 169). Building upon and reconstructing the social and political concerns of the 1950s and 1960s, postcolonial approaches have mostly been shaped by the processes of decolonization after the World War II. As a theoretical framework, it goes back to the early 1970s with Edward Said's ground-breaking critical work *Orientalism* (1978). Becoming a highly critical and meticulous work in postcolonial studies, it makes criticism of the Western perspective to non-Western cultures and most notably invokes the necessity to work on representation and imagination in various discourses with the purpose of reclaiming the lost history of the colonized subjects.

Specifically, "otherness, racism and miscegenation, language, translation, the trope of cannibalism, voice and the problems of speaking of and for others" are among major theoretical issues of postcolonialism (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 135). In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said notes, "the power to narrate or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them" (1993: xiii). Highlighting the significance of narrative power in uniting and dividing the opposite worlds, *Culture and Imperialism* proves itself as another significant work that contributes to the field of postcolonial studies and offers significant insights for the relationship between culture, literature and politics. Apart from Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Chinua Achebe, Frantz Fanon, Robert Young, and the triumvirate Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin are, to name a few, among the prominent postcolonial critics.

To start rethinking postcolonialism in relation to its recent engagement with ecological issues, it might be helpful to focus on the post prefix, which, as generally does, may signify the end of the colonial era and the beginning of the postcolonial period. If colonialist practices are the ones that include exploitation of a geographical territory together with its human and nonhuman resources, and political, economic and

cultural dominance of one group over the other, then would it not be hypothetical to assume colonialism has ended? With this question in mind, today's world calls for imagining the differences between the global north and south to narrate on-going resonances of the colonial age in their disguised forms. The African, Asian and Latin American countries might have achieved a degree of political power in the international arena through their independence, but they are being more widely exploited by the global north according to postcolonial ecocritics. Sharing this very idea with other theorists such as Arif Dirlik, Aijaz Ahmad, Neil Lazarus and Robert Young, the critic Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee claims:

I take 'postcolonial' not as the sign of a clean historical break between the era of modern Euronorth American colonial domination and that of Asian, African, Latin American and Oceanic national self-determination; but rather as a historical condition of intensified and sustained exploitation of the majority of humans and non-humans of the former colonies by a cartel composed of their own and 'core' metropolitan European/North American elites. (2010: 5)

Today's neocolonial practices such as the indirect control of the economies and political policies of postcolonial communities through transnational corporations and transnational policies in favour of the West frequently result in environmental calamities that threaten ecologies with devastation as traumatic and costly as that inflicted under earlier colonial regimes. Evolved in the 1990s, ecocriticism initially embraced a west-oriented approach to the environmental issues and excluded the environmental degradation in the global south. For Laura Wright, "the rhetoric of postcolonialism is, therefore, evoked to critique a literary tradition in the United States as a colonizing and orientalisng agent" (2010: 7). Such a perspective opens the way for questioning why the greening of postcolonial studies emerged belatedly, given the postcolonial endeavour to voice all the injustices caused by colonial ideologies. To Mukherjee, it is obvious that "they could not have missed the importance placed on the issues of land, water, forests, crops, rivers, the sea – in other words, on the centrality of the environment to the continuing struggle of decolonization" (2010: 46).

Mukherjee suggests that the triumvirate of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak ignored the significance of the environment for anti-colonial struggles across the global south in their critical writings that "formed the academic field of

postcolonial studies in the mid-1970s and 1980s” (2010: 48). It is not deniable that postcolonial studies began by focusing on human beings as the main protagonists in their works, leaving nature to ecocritics. However, citing Spivak’s statement that “the local in the South directly engages global greed”, Rob Nixon argues that Spivak engaged in postcolonial environmentalism two decades after Said’s *Orientalism* (quoted in Nixon 2011: 253). The reason behind Edward Said’s apparent neglect of the ecological is that in the 1970s and 1980s the ecological perspective particularly focused on the preservation of wilderness and the idea of pure nature rather than environmental injustices triggered by previous colonial practices. Obviously it was not the case for the prominent postcolonial critics to engage in such a non-holistic ecocentric approach excluding human beings while postcolonial subjects have been struggling all over the world to reclaim their identity.

In contrast to Graham Huggan, Helen Tiffin, Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, and Rob Nixon, the postcolonial ecocritics Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley argue that Edward Said did touch upon postcolonial environmentalism within the framework of land ethics. For Said, the narrative power may function through the imagination to liberate the land and start a period of restoration in colonial territories and subjects (2011: 3). In Said’s words:

Now if there is anything that radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism, it is the primacy of the geographical in it. Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by the loss of locality to the outsider; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. (1993: 77)

Considering the sentimental value and utmost significance of the land for the colonized in the history of empire and for the poor in the neocolonial period, the statement above reframes a “spatial imagination” that might point out the early efforts to mention postcolonial ecology (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 3). There has been a strong need for ‘greening postcolonialism’ and embracing “a new kind of concern for the environment emerging in the post-colonial era, one attuned to histories of unequal development and varieties of discrimination” (Vital 2008: 90). Picturing the environmental condition in the last two decades and articulating the necessity of

reframing postcolonialism, Nixon says, “any lingering postcolonial dismissal of environmentalism as marginal to ‘real’ politics is belied by the proliferation of indigenous environmental movements across the global South” (2011: 255). In this sense, Nixon calls for an immediate embrace of a social ecological perspective, which did not sufficiently concern earlier postcolonial theorists or the environmental literary studies, in order to make the practices of new forms of imperialism and colonialism more visible.

1.2. New Directions in Ecocriticism

The term ‘ecocriticism’ has been in use since William Rueckert used it for the first time in his article ‘Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism’ (1978). With the introduction of *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm in 1996, ecocriticism has found its place within a theoretical framework. As “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical World”, it has been a branch of literary theory in the early 1990s with “an earth-centered approach to literary studies” (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: xviii). A relatively recent form of literary and cultural theory, ecocriticism acts upon the principle regarding the interconnectedness of everything within the cosmos. It studies the mutual interplay between human beings and the natural environment to give meaning to their interactions for a better understanding of how this relationship directs the ecological system.

Not limiting its scope with literary texts and including a wide range of fictional and nonfictional genres, Greg Garrard says, “ecocriticism explores the ways in which we imagine and portray the relationship between humans and environment in all areas of cultural production, from Wordsworth to Thoreau to Disney and BBC nature documentaries” (2004, front matter). Through application of ecological concepts to such works, ecocritics contribute to the development of discourses in favour of the natural world. It is possible to list, among many other significant theoretical movements under ecocriticism, nature writing, deep ecology, social ecology, ecofeminism, ecomarxism, postcolonial ecocriticism, queer ecology and animal studies. While these movements are somehow the parts of the lineage of ecocriticism, they can also claim their position as a distinct theoretical framework.

It is intriguing that the relationship between human and nature has been of such a recent vintage while we have been residents of the world for thousands of years. To name a few events that have played a significant role in delaying the correspondence between them, the rise of human-centred perspective during the Renaissance period along with the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter, the scientific developments blowing up in the eighteenth century and the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century have all been very influential in positioning human above nature and undermining their relationship. Therefore, ecocriticism has been from the outset formulated around pastoral imagination, Romanticism, lyric poetry, in a nutshell, nature writing. Fundamentally known to be a West-oriented movement, it initially gives products on the works of “Emerson, Wordsworth, Ruskin, Morris, and Carpenter”, referring to the studies in early ecocriticism (Wright 2010: 4). *Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson, *Wilderness and American Mind* (1967) by Roderic Nash, *The Comedy of Survival* (1972) by Joseph Meeker, *The Country and the City* (1973) by Raymond Williams and *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991) by Jonathan Bate are among the works that have motivated the rise of ecocriticism.

The establishment of ecocriticism as a new form of literary criticism has been during the 1990s, the period when it was not possible to ignore the extensive damage given to ecosystem with the development of technology. Drawing attention to the necessity of embracing an ecocentric worldview by leaving behind the anthropocentric concerns, Serpil Oppermann’s edited volume, published in Turkish, *Ekoeleştiri: Çevre ve Edebiyat (Ecocriticism: Environment and Literature)* (2012) brings forward the idea that everything within ecosystem is interconnected, and any harm to anything in nature might influence the entire system, therefore discourses that deeply invoke this harm should be rethought to prevent irreparable damages to the ecosystem. Due to the alarming rate of this destruction, the focus on the idealization of nature, preservation of wilderness and a pure human bond to nature has gradually left its place to environmental concerns. Lawrence Buell analyses this evolution of ecocriticism in two waves as the first wave and second wave:

No definitive map of environmental criticism in literary studies can [...] be drawn. Still, one can identify several trend-lines marking an evolution from a “first wave” of ecocriticism to a “second” or newer revisionist wave or waves increasingly evident today. This first-second wave

distinction should not, however, be taken as implying a tidy, distinct succession. Most currents set in motion by early ecocriticism continue to run strong, and most forms of second-wave revisionism involve building on as well as quarrelling with precursors. (2005: 17)

First-wave movement in ecocriticism with its roots in the 1960s and 1970s mostly deals with literary representations of nature in different literary forms such as poetry, fiction, and nonfiction by excluding social and economic dynamics in relation to environmental issues. While in the early movement the prioritization of landscapes was essential for human attachment to nature, later this idea left its place to the shift from local to global, in other words, from rural to metropolis, which give rise to new paths with interdisciplinary purposes between environmental studies and postcolonial studies (Buell, Heise and Thornber 2011: 421).

The critic Scott Slovic's statements "there is no single, dominant view guiding the ecocritical practice" and "there is not a single literary work anywhere that utterly defies ecocritical interpretation, that is 'off limits' to green reading" refers to the developmental nature of ecocriticism that makes it open for new directions (2000: 160). While the second-wave in ecocriticism does not necessarily mean the end of first-wave, it encourages critics to make use of the encompassing nature of ecocriticism and direct their attention to interdisciplinary studies. In *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (2005), Lawrence Buell affirmed that ecocriticism "has not yet achieved the standing accorded (say) to gender studies or postcolonial or critical race studies" (1). Similarly, preferring the prefix eco- over enviro- as the former "implies interdependent communities, integrated systems and strong connections among component parts", Glotfelty argues that "in the future we can expect to see ecocritical scholarship becoming even more interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and international" (1996: xx-xxv). Taking this argument further in order to move from ecocriticism to postcolonial ecocriticism, Rob Nixon claims that:

[F]irst wave ecocriticism was skewed toward matters of genre and philosophy at the expense of environmental justice concerns, and showed scant interest in either the environmental social sciences or international environmental history. Only belatedly has environmental literary scholarship begun to broaden—and reconfigure conceptually—the

parameters of the field in ways more accommodating of Sauer and Guha's forceful critiques. (2011: 254-255)

Eventually, these arguments pave the way for ecocritics to turn their attention to the 'third-world' countries and since then there have been a plethora of interdisciplinary works published. According to Susie O'Brien, in order to establish itself as an effective form of critique, ecocriticism needs to follow the path of postcolonial ecocriticism. It should not just analyse texts to find the framework behind but to understand how the components within such frameworks operate "through the categories of culture and environment" (2007: 196). Thus postcolonial ecocriticism enables ecocriticism to make up for its shortcomings in addressing race and class issues to illuminate the postcolonial environments that have been left in dark for a long time.

1.3. A Belated Move from Ecocriticism to Postcolonial Ecocriticism

In their influential article 'Literature and Environment', Lawrence Buell, Ursula K. Heise, and Karen Thornber define ecocriticism as "an eclectic, pluriform, and cross disciplinary initiative that aims to explore the environmental dimensions of literature and other creative media in a spirit of environmental concern not limited to any one method or commitment" (2011: 418). By this statement, they focus on the encompassing nature of this relatively new literary criticism and explain the motivation behind the increasing attention to literary texts from non-Western geographies such as Africa, Latin America, and Asia, which has rapidly started an exchange of interest between ecocriticism and postcolonialism. To have a better picture of this belated move from ecocriticism to postcolonial ecocriticism, this process of transition should be discussed elaborately.

First of all, not only ecocriticism but also postcolonialism have been quite critical and dismissive of humanism for its great role in foregrounding the bases of imperial domination through a discriminating attitude towards specific race, class, and gender groups. No matter whether it has been deliberate or undeliberate, humanist encouragement of human-non human divide has not done a favour for humanity, but instead led human beings to deteriorate the ecosystem they live in. As Neil Badminton suggests, humanism has to "rewrite itself as posthumanism" (2000: 9) in order to leave behind the Western approach to the species and reframe another form of

humanism in which the nonhuman can find a comfortable place for itself within a sustainable environment.

Buell argues that European colonialism has been an outstanding consequence of human/nonhuman dualism, because the motivation behind colonization was from the outset to exploit all kinds of resources and species in colonial regions. The Western dominance over nature for interests of a particular group of human species has been reinforced with colonialism. However, today's ecology still suffers from this Western ideology as the neocolonial period of the present day follows the colonial tradition and increasingly provokes environmental degradation through human/nonhuman divide. Eventually, this point signals "crosspollinations of environmental criticism and imperial discourse studies" (Buell, Heise and Thornber 2011: 426).

This cross-pollination between the two fields takes place following the transition from the theoretical movement of deep ecology to social ecology within ecocriticism. 'Deep ecology', as a term, was coined in 1973 by the Norwegian Philosopher Arne Naess, in his study 'The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary', with the purpose of changing traditional perspectives to nature and creating new paradigms. According to Mukherjee, "Naess's 'deep ecology' is a philosophy programmed systematically to change the reflexive anthropocentric position held by human beings in regard to the environment in particular, and to existence in general" (2010: 24). In contrast to shallow ecology which basically elevates the human to the master and nature to the servant position, deep ecology emphasizes the significance of identification with nonhuman beings such as animals, plants, and places in order to establish an ecocentric relationship. The deep ecological movements of the 1960s and 1970s have been challenged by the concept of 'social ecology' put forward by Murray Bookchin based on the argument that all ecological problems result from firmly established social conflicts (2010: 268). Criticizing deep ecology for causing ignorance towards the environmental and cultural concerns in the third-world countries, the Indian historian and writer Ramachandra Guha has been quite influential on critics "to bring postcolonial and ecological modes of thought into dialogue" (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 22). In reference to the relationship between social ecology and the postcolonial turn in ecocriticism, Mukherjee says:

Yet their steadfast insistence on historical analysis and on continuity between the human and the non-human enabled other scholars to extend the social ecological analysis beyond Europe/North America, and offer an incisive examination of the relationship between these western blocs and the rest of the world. (2010: 29)

From this very point, it is possible to deduce the idea that former colonies in the global south have become a significant part of social ecological movement in a way to combine “social ecological and second wave postcolonial positions” (Mukherjee 2010: 58). Undeniably, such alliance between the two movements has been very influential in promoting the critics to expand the field for a better understanding of the existent issues across the world. This postcolonial turn in ecocriticism is also one of the main components of third wave ecocriticism that has been developing after 2000 and came to be named as ‘the third wave’ not until 2009. Referring to multidisciplinary aspect of this new wave, Slovic (2010) puts it, “global concepts of place are being explored in fruitful tension with neo-bioregionalist attachments to specific locales, producing such neologisms as “eco-cosmopolitanism,” “rooted cosmopolitanism,” “the global soul,” and “translocality” (7). Özdağ also lists some of these components of the third wave ecocriticism as material ecofeminism, animal studies, posthumanism, postcolonial ecocriticism, and environmental justice movement (2014: 40). It can be inferred that the third wave explicitly leads ecocriticism to embrace an interdisciplinary and transcultural perspective to ecocritical studies to encompass different national literatures.

In their influential work *Postcolonial Green: Environmental Politics and World Narratives* (2010), Bonnie Roos and Alex Hunt bring forward the idea that ‘justice’ is a vital term in foregrounding the theoretical framework of postcolonial ecocriticism by taking into account the environmental degradation particularly in the global south to prevent future non-recoverable damages to the earth as done during the colonial period. Arguing that “environmental justice has moved ecocriticism to consider how disenfranchised or impoverished populations over the world face particular environmental problems”, Roos and Hunt imply the consequences of the broken relationship between human beings and the environment or the animate and inanimate (2010: 1).

The historian Alfred Crosby’s ground-breaking work *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (1986) has inspired many other writers

and critics to dwell upon the colonial framework of new era, namely contemporary neocolonialism. As the relations between human beings and environment in postcolonial communities “were fractured, sometimes beyond repair” (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 1), the ideal approach is to evaluate this condition to have a much more responsible attitude to the contemporary environmental crisis. In the colonial history, the Europeans brought humans, animals, and plants to the colonies to replace the wilderness over these lands. Inevitably, such practices have changed the landscapes to be fertile for farming and thus irretrievably damaged indigenous ecologies. Crosby’s work “considers these unbalanced environmental ‘exchanges’ within the context of British imperial power and colonial rule” (Tiffin 2007: xvi-xvii), which illuminates the way for postcolonial ecocriticism.

Graham Huggan, in his influential article ‘Greening Postcolonialism’ (2004), bases the improving dialogue between ecocritical and postcolonial literary studies upon “the scholars’ admission that it was impossible to analyse modern imperialism and colonialism without engaging with the massive scale of environmental devastation that they entail” (702). Accordingly, it is quite plausible to underline the impacts of the environmental, economic, and political dominance of the global north through various agencies over postcolonial ecological concerns. To exemplify, the biologist Wangari Maathai and some others believe that “national debt to ‘first-world’ agencies such as the IMF and World Bank is one of the biggest obstacles to environmental sustainability in postcolonial nations today” (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 18). Mukherjee also informs that 2 % of Taiwanese farmlands, by 1989, were deteriorated due to the industrial waste. It has also been found out that one-third of the rice produced in Taiwan includes an alarming amount of mercury and heavy metals, which signifies the rise of new forms of colonialism through “material environmental subjugation” (2010: 51).

In a nutshell, convergences between ecocriticism and postcolonialism have started to be visible and workable from the outset of the 2000s, playing a great role in combining various approaches to the local and global. Postcolonial ecocriticism contributes to ecocriticism by incorporating international debates on social and environmental issues, which expands the boundaries of ecocritical studies.

1.4. Challenges to Merge the Two Fields

DeLoughrey and Handley (2011) are asking “why are environmental concerns often understood as separate from postcolonial ones? Why are they perceived to have emerged as parallel rather than as interrelated disciplines?” (14). First of all, it is not very likely to define these fields with a clear-cut explanation partly because their fundamental ideologies are different from each other which is to be explained in detail. Besides, there has been “reciprocal indifference or mistrust” between these fields (Nixon 2011: 233). From postcolonial perspective, due to the fact that colonial expansion and subjugation of others have been justified based upon “the hierarchical notion of nature”, postcolonial critics have preferred to remain silent to the “calls to return to nature” (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 21). It mostly results from the possibility that the non-recoverable human equalities, induced by the colonial process, might vanish within the environmental concerns. From ecocritical perspective, the majority of studies on ecocriticism and environmentalism have been developed by Europe and the United States. Positioning itself as the primary centre in ecological and environmental issues, the Western world has been influential in keeping the rest of the world in dark for economic and politic reasons. This attitude has brought about an immense distinction between the environmentalism of the rich (global north) and “environmentalism of the poor” (global south) as phrased by Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997).

Huggan affirms, by making a move towards South Asian and African texts, that “ecocriticism, at present, is a predominantly white movement, arguably lacking the institutional support-base to engage fully with multicultural and cross-cultural concerns” (2004: 703). To postcolonial ecocritics, it is challenging to bring the two fields together as ecocriticism is generally accepted as a “Western literary approach not fully engaged with multicultural concerns” (Wright 2010: 12–13). Nixon also notes that postcolonial critics stayed away from dealing with environmental issues as those issues seemed “irrelevant and elitist” to them, and they put their energies into representations of the marginalized and otherized group’s problems (2011: 236). On the other hand, environmentalists mostly address the ethical concerns about place and its preservation rather than the displacement that colonized people sorrowfully experienced, which indicates the differences in their attitude to environmental issues.

Another challenge in merging the two fields has to do with the inherently human-centred nature of the postcolonial studies that have been disregarding the ecological and environmental concerns in the colonial and postcolonial history until recently. On the other hand, the first wave ecocriticism has initially privileged “a white male western subject” and failed in making ethnic, race, class and gender-based issues a part of universal environmental concerns (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 3). However, non-anthropocentric, posthumanist, and ecocentric tendencies within ecocriticism evaluate human beings as part of nature not a dominating entity above it. Suggesting that a view opposite to that of ecocentrism has been applied in postcolonial environments, Wright puts it, “in essence, the very idea of what constitutes ‘nature’ is an imaginary Western construction based on an Aristotelian system of binary thinking that differentiates humans from and privileges them above the so-called natural world” (2010: 5). Yet, it is still an ongoing debate that both fields have been experiencing conflicts when the interests of the ecosystem and human beings coincide with each other.

Rob Nixon, making an overall evaluation of the differences between the two fields, offers a brief and concise list regarding the potential challenges to intersect postcolonialism and ecocriticism for establishing a “postcolonial environmental literary theory” (Wright 2010: 17). Nixon mainly identifies four schisms in his work *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011): Firstly, postcolonial theorists, to make a comparison between methodologies, focused on hybridity and cross-culturation as a vital element in literary discourse. On the other hand, ecocritics were traditionally engaged in the ideal of purity, wilderness and favoured “a retreat from the social and environmental pollution of modernity” (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 23). Secondly, the main area of interest in postcolonial writing and criticism was displacement that occurred because of colonial practices, whereas “environmental literary studies tended to give priority to the literature of place” particularly the ethics of place (Nixon 2011: 236). Thirdly, while postcolonial frameworks were explicitly interested in cosmopolitanism and transnational productions of literature, ecocriticism and environmental literature mostly favoured national narratives. Fourth, postcolonialism, as mentioned earlier, aspired to dig out the embedded precolonial history to reveal the historical subjugation of various groups, whereas in ecocriticism “something different happened to history. It was often repressed or subordinated to the pursuit of timeless, solitary moments of communion with nature” (Nixon 2011: 236). In this respect, an

intersection between postcolonial and ecocritical studies has long been postponed due to the assumption that their methodologies and foci are not related and compatible.

In line with the second schism that Nixon constructs, O'Brien comments, "ecocritical conceptions of the world tend, not surprisingly, to privilege non-urban settings, in which those other life forms predominate. Postcolonial criticism tends, by contrast with ecocriticism, to envision the world through urban eyes" (2001: 142). Thus, she refers to the attempt, of the two fields, to place the text in the world no matter how different is their perspective to the texts that they are working on. Moreover, O'Brien, based on David Carter's identification of postcolonialism, brings forward a significant aesthetic difference between postcolonial and ecocritical approaches to realist fiction.

Postcolonial critics, as David Carter has incisively argued, tend to avoid realist texts in favour of those which, either through their naive conformity to colonial ideology or their postmodernist self-reflexiveness, allow the critic to perform satisfying deconstructive maneuvers, triumphantly in the case of the former and vicariously in the case of the latter. (O'Brien 2001: 144)

On the other hand, ecocritics prefer to imagine the concrete, physical environment in realistic terms. Given Buell's question "why must literature always lead away from the physical world, never back to it" (1995: 11), it is obvious that ecocriticism favours realist texts which can make it possible to establish a connection between literature and the world. However, from postcolonial ecocritical perspective, just as contemporary literary critics do, it is not necessary to have this connection in order to have a saying about the physical world.

1.5. Bridging the Gap

The belated convergence between postcolonialism and ecocriticism has not come to fruition easily, but through a wide range of exchanges between the two fields. The transition from local to the global brings about a transnational turn to the west-oriented environmental studies. This in return gives rise to "an intellectual climate in which questions of empire, globalization, and transnational structures of power and resistance are moving front and centre" (Nixon 2011: 261). As well as certain common grounds such as political commitment and representation of landscapes in literary and non-literary works, environmental justice movements across the world have boosted the

pace of this convergence between the two fields. While postcolonial criticism has been conventionally characterized as anthropocentric, the inevitable impacts of recent neocolonial practices (such as the shipping of the northern garbage to the postcolonial environments and ill-practices of transnational companies established in postcolonial lands) over the ecosystem of third-world nations have entailed the necessity of postcolonial lenses to the environment.

Thus, explaining one of the main motivations behind the convergence, Huggan and Tiffin put forward that “the proper subject of postcolonialism is colonialism, and to look accordingly for the colonial/imperial underpinnings of environmental practices in both ‘colonising’ and ‘colonised’ societies of the present and the past” is vitally significant (2010: 3). In the light of this connection, colonial and postcolonial understanding of ecological and environmental practices encourages a new correspondence between the two fields. Underlining the complex relationship between postcolonial and ecocritical studies, Mukherjee states:

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. (2006: 144)

Notably, the mutual relationship between nature and empire over centuries lays ground for mentioning a postcolonial ecology and emphasizing the vitality of environmental autonomy of nations. It is noted that separation of imperial history from ecocritical thinking “dehistoricizes nature and often contributes to a discourse of green orientalism” (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 32). Such an approach would break the dialogue between the past and present in terms of ecological aspects and prevent the contributions this connection would make for a better care of the ecosystem. In ‘Toward an African Ecocriticism’, Antony Vital suggests that one needs to look at “the complex interplay of social history with the natural world, and how language both

shapes and reveals such interactions” in order to understand how postcolonial and ecocritical methodologies are actually interrelated (2008: 90).

In relation to the argument stated above, one also could come to the conclusion that the historical exploitation of the colonized people means the subjugation of colonized nature. This exploitation has been justified by privileging certain groups or species over the otherized ones claiming not to have completed their development. Thus, the exploitation process constructs human-non human binary and thereby treats the non-humanized groups and non-human agencies such as nature in the same way to foreground the dominance of the reasonable, ideal human being. In Val Plumwood’s words “the concept of colonization can be applied directly to non-human nature itself, and that the relationship between humans, or certain groups of them, and the more-than-human world might be aptly characterized as one of colonization” (2003: 52). Highlighting a similar parallel between race and nature, the environmental philosopher Deane Curtin states that imperial practices have taken form based on “the connection, in theory and practice, of race and the environments so that the oppression of one is connected to, and supported by, the oppression of the other” (2005: 145). As a matter of fact, this point becomes a significant component in bridging the divide between the two fields. Postcolonial and ecocritical studies have from the beginning been engaged in representation of the nonspeaking, otherized and non-human beings as well as the subject matter of agency through narration.

With the purpose of bridging the divide, in comparison to Nixon’s four area of schisms between the two theoretical frameworks, DeLoughrey and Handley (2011) present four areas of convergence between postcolonialism and ecocriticism. Firstly, it is noted that an ecological framework is needed to have a better understanding of how geography has changed throughout colonial process. Postcolonial studies are useful resources to explore the transformations starting from the precolonial period. Secondly, the binaries of culture/nature, man/woman, and white/black are the products of the colonial period and have long been deconstructed by postcolonialists and ecofeminists (24). Accordingly, turning to nature can be characterized as part of the historical analysis of social hierarchies. Thirdly, “the ecocritical interrogation of anthropocentrism offers the persistent reminder that human political and social inequities cannot be successfully and sustainably resolved without some engagement with the more-than-human world and with deep time”, which explicitly suggests that both fields agree on

the idea that social human-being and the physical world need to be considered together if sustainability is the mutual goal (24). Finally, just as postcolonial studies give voice to the subaltern, ecocritical studies aim to give voice to the nonhuman agencies in literary and non-literary texts in order to upside down the human/nonhuman dualism. DeLoughrey and Handley (2011) put it, “postcolonial ecocriticism importantly theorizes the question of who can ‘speak for nature’ or speak for the subaltern subject in a narrative mode that does not privilege dualist thought or naturalize the hierarchies between the human and nonhuman” (25).

After all, all these arguments point out that “there is no inherent incompatibility between postcolonial and environmental literary studies, despite their discrete institutional histories” (Nixon 2011: 260). Postcolonial concerns such as colonization, race, imposition of cultural exchanges between the colonizer and colonized, the subject matters of indigeneity and diaspora are also acknowledged as the main concerns of animal and environmental studies (Tiffin 2007: xvi). To Mukherjee, with more attention to the dynamic relations between plants, animals, humans, soil, water, and other ecologic entities, postcolonialism becomes more materialized, and ecocritical thinking starts to embrace a more historicized framework (2010: 18). Eventually, postcolonial ecocriticism offers a platform where socio-environmental relations and problems with diverse historical and geographical backgrounds can be effectively discussed at the transnational level.

1.6. Postcolonial Ecocriticism as a New Theoretical Framework

“It was unfortunate that a writer like Saro-Wiwa, who had long protested what he termed ‘ecological genocide’, could find no place in the environmental canon” says Rob Nixon (2011: 235). This is a straightforward expression of what postcolonial ecocriticism achieves at the human/social and nonhuman/environmental level. It is noted that the life story and texts of Ken Saro-Wiwa come to the forefront as an ill-fated example of postcolonial ecocriticism. It may not be a proper subject matter for postcolonial criticism or ecocriticism separately, but obviously his story has the right to be evaluated under the combined theoretical framework, as it dramatizes just a small part of neocolonial practices in today’s globalized world.

Nigerian writer-activist Ken Saro-Wiwa together with his Ogoni kinsmen was fighting against the collaborative ill-doings of the Shell Petroleum Development

Company (SPDC) and the dictatorial Nigerian state. These national and multinational actors have been causing irremediable harms to Ogoni farmlands and fishing waters through crude oil extraction and petroleum waste dumping practices since the 1950s, which also meant the political and economic oppression and exploitation of the indigenous people. Given the colonial history of Nigeria, it is not surprising to understand why Ogoniland near the Niger Delta has been chosen for executing such investment plans that jeopardize both human and nonhuman beings. On 10 November 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed together with his eight kinsmen by the Abacha regime, which made him to be declared as Africa's first environmental martyr. This unfortunate event demonstrated that postcolonial crises are intertwined with ecological crises, and social and ecological injustices are parallel with each other in this case.

The Narmada Valley Development Project appears as another unfortunate case that occurred in a postcolonial environment which is subject to ecological degradation. Although the project offers a variety of advantages such as electricity, clean water for drinking and irrigation of infertile farming lands in central India, it does not take into account the damages that the local people Adivasis, a heterogeneous ethnic and tribal group, suffer, as they were forced out of their lands. They started to put up with economic and social difficulties. The Indian writer-activist Arundhati Roy fights against the project that not only violates environmental justice but also human rights. In Huggan and Tiffin's terms:

Roy calibrates this 'privatization of power' to the disempowerment of the people, suggesting that the selling-off of energy stock to private companies in a country where seventy percent of the population still lives in rural areas, amounts to a 'barbaric dispossession on a scale that has no parallel in history. (Roy 2002: 136, Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 47)

In her works such as *The Greater Common Good* (1999), Roy uses her pen to voice the non-speaking environment and the exploited postcolonial people.

Within this scope, Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007) fictionalizes another ecological disaster in Bhopal, India. Generally known as the Bhopal disaster, this tragedy occurred on 2-3 of December, 1984 at the pesticide factory called Union Carbide India Limited. Thousands of people lost their lives and more than a half million of people were exposed to methyl isocyanate gas as well as other dangerous chemicals, which gave rise to many disabled people and a disabled environment. The emphasis is

upon the interplay between postcolonial and ecological dimensions. As a matter of fact, the socially and economically disadvantaged people in postcolonial environments still share the same destiny with their territories and constitute the group vulnerable to such neocolonial practices. Apparently, the colonial power has left its place to multinational companies to exploit the global south.

As a final and explicit example, among many others, of neocolonial and late-capitalist intentions, one should carefully look at Lawrence Summers' statement, the former president of the World Bank, made on 12 December 1991, which was leaked to the media afterwards. In Mukherjee's words, Summers mentions three points in this memo:

– first, that ‘the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that’; second, that underpopulated countries, especially in Africa, had an under-polluted environment and could ‘carry’ large amounts of pollution and waste produced in the USA and Europe – all that was needed was to work out a cheap way to transport this waste; finally, that the demand for a clean environment for aesthetic and health reasons can only arise in an affluent society. (‘Lawrence Summers Memo’ 1991, quoted in Mukherjee 2010: 34)

For postcolonial ecocritics, this is a well-summarized demonstration of the hypocrisy embedded in the west-oriented ecocriticism, which does not, even for a second, hesitate to sacrifice the global south for well-being of the global north no matter how degradation this attitude brings to the ecosystem. Such events constitute the examples of the rebirth of imperial practices in today's world, promoting “slow violence”, termed by Rob Nixon (2011), in postcolonial environments.

Most notably, “what all of this suggests is that postcolonial ecocriticism – like several other modes of ecocriticism – performs an advocacy function both in relation to the real world(s) it inhabits and to the imaginary spaces it opens up for contemplation of how the real world might be transformed” (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 13). Based upon the events listed above, Huggan and Tiffin (2010) also use the term “eco-socialist” for postcolonial ecocriticism (15) to characterize the advocacy function of this relatively new theoretical framework. Postcolonial ecocritical studies, ranging from non-fictional interviews and political statements to literary forms such as novels, poetry or drama,

have all contributed to raise global awareness towards social and environmental conditions in the formerly colonized lands.

The writer-activists like Saro-Wiwa, Roy, Sinha, Coetzee and many others “can help us apprehend threats imaginatively that remain imperceptible to the senses, either because they are geographically remote, too vast or too minute in scale, or are played out across a time span that exceeds the instance of observation or even the physiological life of the human observer” (Nixon 2011: 15). While it also ends up with unfortunate cases like Saro-Wiwa’s, who was executed two weeks after an article about his protests against environmental degradation was published in *New York Times*, postcolonial ecocritical studies lead the way for converging issues such as women’s rights, tribal rights, land ethic, and economic development under the theme of environmental justice. Furthermore, imaginative literature, as in postcolonialism, may continue to be a major element not only for social but also environmental action.

At this point, it is also necessary to voice some aesthetical concerns among critics regarding the advocacy function of postcolonial ecocritical literary works. According to the author Roman Bartosch’s definition, postcolonial ecocriticism is “a theoretical field that engages with texts that offer an insight into a variety of irresolvable tensions” (2012: 11), which implies the fact that the works of this theoretical frameworks include a wide range of political aspects. Thus, it is a challenge and necessity for postcolonial ecocriticism to incorporate a proper mixture of aesthetics and politics. While continuing their “usefulness in mobilising individual and collective support” for fighting against the environmental justice in the global south (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 33), such literary works as Arundhati Roy’s *The Greater Common Good* (1999), Indra Sinha’s *Animal’s People* (2007), J. M. Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals* (1999) and Barbara Gowdy’s *The White Bone* (1998) are expected to incorporate aesthetic complexities. To Huggan and Tiffin, postcolonial ecocritical works manage to preserve ‘the aesthetic function’ of the literary text while focusing on its social and political implications (2010: 14).

Towards the end of this chapter, it might be useful to provide a chronological list of some major works in postcolonial ecocriticism to have a quick overview of its background, though most of them have already been mentioned. The ground-breaking work of the American historian Alfred W. Crosby’s *Ecological Imperialism* (1986) and the British environmental historian Richard H. Grove’s *Green Imperialism* (1995) offer

an excellent scholarship in converging the two fields. Crosby's work mentions early European expansion between the years of 900-1900 with an emphasis upon global dispersion of Eurasian plants, diseases and animals that displace the indigenous environments. Likewise, Grove's work provides an insight into the colonial expansion between the years of 1600-1860 to explore how environment has been manipulated for implementing economic policies.

In 2004 Graham Huggan's 'Greening' Postcolonialism: Ecocritical Perspectives' and in 2005 Rob Nixon's 'Environmentalism and Postcolonialism' explore many diverse aspects that bring the two fields together. In Huggan's work, the focal point is the postcolonial turn in environmental issues and the idea that literary criticism with postcolonial and ecological concerns might offer a combined framework to deal with global environmental problems. With similar arguments, Nixon's article calls for enabling a correspondence between environmentalism and postcolonialism through a discussion over place and displacement. Within the same year, another influential work called *Environmental Ethics for a Postcolonial World* (2005) by Deane Curtin was published, the main concerns of which, with a special focus on ethics, are colonization, globalization, industrialization and the gap between the global north and south. In 2007, Robert P. Marzec's *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature from Daniel Defoe to Salman Rushdie* places itself among the leading postcolonial ecocritical studies. It argues that the ecosystem is at risk and the underlining reason is the corrupted historical relationship between human beings and land, which also explains today's geographical settlement. The year 2007 also witnesses the publication of Helen Tiffin's *Five Emus to the King of Siam: Environment and Empire*, which draws attention to the imperial exchanges between colonial practices and the natural world with their continuities.

The year 2010 is a quite productive year for its welcoming major works that play a significant role in establishing the theoretical framework of postcolonial ecocriticism. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (2010) edited by Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin presents a comprehensive overview of the debates regarding the dialogue between the two fields, including their differences and common grounds. Developmentalism, non-human agency, genre, and the relationship between activism and aesthetics have been general tenets of this work. This work also refers to the potential for foregrounding the field of postcolonial zoocriticism. Although

it is still in its infancy, postcolonial zoocriticism is claimed to have common grounds with postcolonialism and ecocriticism apart from animal studies. Moreover, it “shares with postcolonial ecocriticism the exploration of conflicted areas and problems: wildlife protection and conservation on land needed for poor human communities” (2010: 18).

Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee’s *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel in English* (2010) focuses on contemporary English-language Indian fiction that discusses the environmental crises in the former colonies. It gives place to the writings by Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh, Ruchir Joshi, and Indra Sinha. Another ground-breaking work *Wilderness into Civilized Shapes: Reading the Postcolonial Environment* (2010) was written by Laura Wright, who examines how fiction writers represent postcolonial landscapes together with their environmental concerns by employing the imaginative power within narration. The work offers an insight into various cultures in India, South Africa, Kenya and some others.

In 2011, another influential work *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment* edited by Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley was published. Its main purpose is to provide a comprehensive overview of postcolonial ecocriticism for rethinking ecological future. Within the same year, Rob Nixon’s *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011) was published, which focuses on environmental politics, new forms of imperialism, and socially and economically destructive disasters to explore the slow violence in postcolonial environments (through climate change, deforestation, oil spills, toxic waste among many others) that gradually destroys ecosystem.

Given the ample scholarship above, it is obvious that the field of postcolonial ecocriticism has been mostly shaped by English speaking nations. However, it has also been contributed through some works in Turkey that generally focus on new directions in ecocriticism. Serpil Oppermann’s article ‘Theorizing Ecocriticism: Toward a Postmodern Ecocritical Practice’ (2006) suggests rethinking ecocriticism in the light of postmodern theory and under more comprehensive perspectives. In relation to postcolonial ecocriticism, it is noted that postcolonial and ecocritical movements together provide an extensive space for effective usage of language within the context of environmental issues. In *The Future of Ecocriticism: New Horizons* (2011) edited by Serpil Oppermann, Ufuk Özdağ, Nevin Özkan and Scott Slovic, the third section ‘Cultural Ecology and Postcolonial Ecocritical Reflections’ includes seven essays that

both explore and formulate new approaches in ecocriticism and acknowledge the contribution of postcolonial debates to ecocriticism. In her article 'Ecocriticism's Theoretical Discontents' (2011), Oppermann mentions the inclusion of postcolonial perspectives into ecocritical studies that would handle postcolonial and environmental justice in collaboration with other fields such as globalism, transnationalism, and environmental ethics. Finally, the book *New International Voices in Ecocriticism* (2014) edited by Serpil Oppermann is among the influential works that acknowledge postcolonial ecocriticism as a new theoretical movement, which does not only imply its significance for ecocriticism's continuous development but also the new insights it brings to lead such development. Oppermann also refers to the new branches of ecocriticism that can be listed as gothic ecocriticism, affective ecocriticism and postlocal ecocriticism (9). Furthermore, the book gives information about postcolonial and posthuman approaches, new materialisms and other critical views of human-nonhuman relations.

Speaking of posthuman approaches, it might be useful to briefly mention posthuman ecocriticism as a very recent trend to which Oppermann contributes immensely. In her article 'From Material to Posthuman Ecocriticism: Hybridity, Stories, Natures' (2016), Oppermann discusses how ecocritical field has started to be more post-human and post-natural with an emphasis upon the human/nonhuman divide within posthuman ecologies. Another article of her 'From Posthumanism to Posthuman Ecocriticism' (2016), which is the re-written and retitled version of the previous one, also explores the reflections of posthuman turn in ecocriticism. The convergence of the two fields gives rise to new frameworks in which ecocriticism can be more productive through connections between posthuman and ecocritical perspectives.

While closing this chapter, it is necessary to add that this study aims to contribute, as much as possible, to the field of postcolonial ecocriticism by providing a general overview of its development and contributions. Analysing simultaneous existence of culture and nature in literary works, postcolonial ecocriticism works with cultural, environmental, and animal studies while getting deeper into postcolonial environments. It becomes a voice particularly for the human and nonhuman beings living over these geographical locations, as they are more vulnerable to the destructive impacts of neo-colonial, late-capitalist, and transnational practices. With this motivation behind, postcolonial ecocritical studies lead us to "set up a comparative framework

where different texts produced across a diverse range of zones and times may reveal their stylistic and formal homologies as clues to understanding their historical and material conditions” (Mukherjee 2010: 80), and this study, with a special focus on a literary work, aims to be a part of this process in order to explore how human and non-human beings, every one of which plays a critical role in the ecosystem, bleed across the global south calling for help at national/international and literary/non-literary level.



CHAPTER TWO

2. INDRA SINHA AND *ANIMAL'S PEOPLE*

2.1. Indra Sinha: A Writer-Activist

The son of an English writer and an Indian naval officer, Indra Sinha was born in 1950 in Bombay, India. As a writer of English and Indian descent, Sinha was educated at various schools including Maya College in India and Oakham School in Rutland. He received his bachelor's degree in English Literature at Pembroke College Cambridge. Starting his career as a successful copywriter/adman, Sinha has been voted one of the top ten British copywriters of all time (Pereira 2007). He worked for Ogilvy & Mather and after that, for the British advertising agency Collett Dickenson Pearce & Partners. Describing Sinha's hard-hitting advertising for charities, Liam O'Loughlin says, "as an advertisement writer for Amnesty International, Sinha was involved in several international campaigns, the most prominent of which were devoted to the 1988 Kurdish gas victims of the Iran-Iraq war and the survivors of the 1984 Bhopal gas leak" (2014: 103). This statement points out Sinha's efforts, as an activist, to draw attention to social and environmental injustices across the world.

In an interview with Indra Sinha, published in *The Guardian*, Stephen Moss draws a parallel between Sinha and Salman Rushdie in terms of their educational and professional backgrounds: "[b]oth were born in Bombay, went to the Cathedral School for Boys, came to Britain, went to Cambridge, wrote ads about cream cakes [...] and abandoned advertising to write fiction" (2007). In response to such a comparison, Sinha has noted:

We differ in that Mr Rushdie claims to have written the slogan 'Naughty but Nice' and I do not. Also, I have not won a Booker Prize, did not suffer a fatwa, have no friends among the jet-set and society hostesses don't seem to have my number. I admire Salman Rushdie's work immensely. *Midnight's Children* is an utterly brilliant book, but I don't want to write like him. People must find their own voices. (Thakraney 2007)

Nevertheless, it is possible to say that due to their close engagement with both Eastern and Western civilizations, Rushdie and Sinha may have developed a broader sense of understanding for the conflicts and injustices around the world, particularly the

postcolonial communities. After having engaged in advertising to create awareness for social and environmental crises, Sinha, like Rushdie, felt the urge to go beyond advertising campaigns and resigned from the agency in 1995 on his 45th birthday to work on fiction. Describing the motivations behind his transition from advertising to literature, Sinha says:

I was getting restless, [...] I felt as though I'd climbed to the top of the advertising mountain, but when I got to the top I saw a different peak higher and further away. That's the damn thing I should have tried to climb from the beginning, and of course you have to go down and start at the bottom again. (Moss 2007)

Sinha's career, as a writer, begins in 1980 with his acclaimed translation of the ancient Hindu text *Kama Sutra* composed by Vatsyayana, and continues with his work *Tantra: The Cult of Ecstasy* in 1993. Sinha defines *Kama Sutra* as the yoga of two and "as a guide to how to fall in love with the person to whom you are already married" (2008: 303). Inspired by this translation, his work *Tantra* explores Tantric sex, which in the Hindu tradition assumes sexual energy as a precondition for access to spiritual wisdom. Referring to various works of Indian authors regarding erotic literature and art, Sinha, in *Tantra*, brings together a collection of Tantric literature from the classical, medieval and modern periods. In relation to the perception of Tantra, Sinha claims:

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Tantra had achieved the allure that it retains to this day: dark and terrible, shot through with flashes of power and mystery. For Victorians, as for modern readers, it was irresistible. Tantra had something for everyone: exotic sexual rites, forbidden liaisons, intoxication whether by drug, wine or beauty, a profound mystery, silence and dark terror. (2000: 12)

A wide range of illustrations and paintings accompany the texts, which regard sexual practice as a form of worship. In *Tantra: The Cult of Ecstasy*, "together, text and art comprise a two thousand-year-old guide to the spiritual and erotic mysteries of Tantra" (Sinha 2000).

Another work of Indra Sinha's is *The Cybergypsies* (1999), a non-fiction memoir that recounts the early years of the internet, narrating Sinha's travels within cyberspace in the 80s and early 90s, where game fanatics, virus writers, hackers, porno sellers and many internet users create a platform or virtual world. The book, which

achieved critical acclaim, refers to Sinha's obsession with such virtual life that started when he was asked to prepare ads for a modem manufacturer. In Sinha's words, "*The Cybergypsies* was a fragmented, somewhat hallucinatory memoir of the pre-web net that flattened the perspective between fact and fantasy and treated both as equally real" (Thakraney 2007). Underlining how it becomes difficult for the 'cybergypsies' to make a distinction between real and unreal, Sinha draws attention to their double identities:

Some may be known to you as scientists, housewives, musicians, policemen, yet in other guises you have probably fought them on multi-user games or flirted with them in that haven of deep roleplayers, the Vortex. These people are the cybergypsies, the explorers of cyberspace. Theirs were the first camps in cyberspace. They mapped it and made its links. They named the constellations of its night sky. They share your secret life, and guilt. (2008: 8)

Spending all his free time in cyberspace with other cybergypsies, Sinha almost destroys his marriage, as he frequently fails to perceive reality and enters into different worlds of consciousness. In his article about *The Cybergypsies*, Arnab Kumar Sinha writes, "as the story progresses, Bear [referring to Sinha] is seen to be failing to grasp the distinction between the real and the virtual. The online (virtual) and offline (real) lives intersect in Bear's mind to create a new cultural matrix lacking a proper definition" (2014: 21). The imaginative power of getting lost between the real and unreal might imply the underlying reason behind Sinha's engagement with blurring the fact and fiction in *Animal's People* that will be elaborately discussed in the next sections.

While narrating his experiences in the cyber world, Sinha tells the readers of his persistent efforts to make the Halabja massacre visible to everyone through his Amnesty ads and campaigns. He expresses his sympathies with the victims there and blames the holders of power for the deaths: "I compose Amnesty's ad about the cyanide attack on Halabja in a White flame of anger: 'You Margaret Thatcher, You George Bush and you reading this-yes, you- you did nothing to help'" (1999: 165). Sinha builds his advertising strategy on invoking the sense of guilt and shame to activate the leaders and readers to take on the responsibility for what is going on in the other parts of the worlds. In his article 'Chemicals for War and Chemicals for Peace: Poison Gas in Bhopal, India, and Halabja, Kurdistan, Iraq' (2015), Sinha, after so many years, still struggles to make

the injustices in the eastern part of the globe visible in order to prevent further injustices.

As a literary work to expose crimes and injustices, Sinha's first novel, *The Death of Mr. Love* (2002), is based on a true story, the Nanavati murder. It offers an impressive insight into the relationships, marital infidelities, corrupted officers and justice system, and political situations in India as a whole. This work, described in *The Times* as "an exceptional debut", places the notorious Nanavati murder of the 1950s at the centre of the plot. This murder had serious repercussions in Indian society. When the affair between the Commander K. M. Nanavati's English-born wife and an Indian playboy named Prem Ahuja comes out, it ends up with the death of the playboy, and the Indian justice system initially embraces an ambivalent attitude towards the case and finally releases the murderer.

However, the novel reveals a second crime connected to the Nanavati case, which deeply affects the lives of two women and their children until they all become exiled from their country. Mixing fact and fiction in this work as well, Sinha bases his fiction on "S", a second woman known to be related to Nanavati murder, the story of whom is revealed through the protagonist Bhalu's mother, Maya's fictionalized stories. As a writer herself, Maya "used to say that writers have a special responsibility to the world because they have the power to change it. They must be careful how they tell their stories, and to whom, for storytelling is an act whose effects are incalculable and endless" (Sinha 2003: 17). This statement might be an explanation for Sinha's endeavour for fictionalizing the real and realizing the fiction while uncovering the truth to claim for justice.

While continuing to engage in the injustices towards vulnerable groups around the world, Sinha embraces his new status as a writer rather than an activist. However, considering the themes and content of his novels, especially the most recent *Animal's People* (2007), it is logical to place him among the writer-activists within the framework of postcolonial ecological studies in which "writer-activists may play a critically enabling role" for "transnational visibility and audibility" of the injustices (Nixon 2011: 37).

2.2. *Animal's People*

As the second fictional work of Indra Sinha, *Animal's People* was shortlisted for the 2007 Man Booker Prize and was the winner of the 2008 Commonwealth Writers' Prize: Best Book from Europe & South Asia. It offers a fictional re-working of the aftermath of the Bhopal disaster of 1984, described as the "Hiroshima of the chemical industry" by Gary Cohen (2003). Taking place at the Union Carbide India Limited (UCIL) pesticide plant in Bhopal, India, the Bhopal Gas tragedy was arguably the biggest chemical disaster worldwide with massive effects upon both human and non-human beings. On the night of 3 December, 1984, the city was sieged by the flooding of Methyl Isocyanate (MIC) gas and some other toxins, which woke up more than half a million residents with a painful burning in their eyes and lungs, and immediately killed thousands of them. It brought death even to the unborn and left many people in a situation worse than death.

Hearing about and witnessing these sufferings, the British-Indian writer Sinha has dedicated himself to the cause of Bhopal disaster in the pursuit of making the sufferings visible and demanding justice for the victims, including human and non-human. Turning to the novel, it is particularly the protagonist Animal through whom Sinha narrates the stories of the inhabitants of Khaufpur, the fictional counterpart of Bhopal, and offers "a moving and insightful account of the 1984 Bhopal disaster in India and its juridical and social aftermath" (Bartosch 2012: 1-2). When Sinha was asked about how he came up with such characters as Animal and Ma Franci, he answered:

Two unrelated events changed everything. Some friends back from India mentioned having met a young man whose twisted spine obliged him to go on all fours. 'A good-looking chap,' they said, 'with an air about him. He took no shit from anyone.' A few days later my daughter Tara told me about an old Parisienne she had met in a nursing home. She was suffering from dementia and had lost the ability to recognise any language except her childhood French. When other people spoke she thought they were gibbering. She told Tara, 'Thank goodness you speak properly, like a human being.' Thus Animal and Ma Franci came into my story and into my life. (Sinha 2014)

Animal's People is presented in a series of tape recordings in which Animal upon the request of the Australian journalist who visited Khaufpur, recorded his and other Khaufpuris' experiences during the aftermath of the disaster. The embodiment of the gas tragedy in Khaufpur, Animal, a nineteen year old boy, was born a few days before the disaster as an able human being. However, when he turned six, his spine started to twist in a way that left him incapable to walk. Since then, we learn he has walked on all fours and started to be called Animal, 'Jaanvar' in Hindi, stripping off his humanity once and for all. This explains why he starts his recording with the sentence "I used to be human once" (AP, 1)². We come to know Animal as a coarse-mouthed pickpocket and scammer with intense sexual desires and a vicious sense of humour. In Stephen Moss' words, Animal "is the anarchic centre of an angry, yet warm-hearted, book. It is a remarkable piece of ventriloquism by the cultivated, Cambridge-educated Sinha, a large, shambling, shaggy-haired bear of a man who speaks in disconcertingly perfect sentences and still frets about the amount of swearing in the book" (2007). The narrative introduces more characters affected by or involved in the consequences of the Bhopal tragedy. After the trauma, Ma Franci, a French nun coming to Khaufpur around twenty years before the disaster, lost her ability to recognize any language other than French. The famous singer Somraj lost his voice because of the gas. At one point Zafar, the local activist, is about to lose his life in a hunger strike against the company. Sinha also brings an American doctor Elli Barber into the narrative who wants to open a clinic in Bhopal to help the victims, but comes to a point where she shouts, "HEY, ANIMAL'S PEOPLE! I DON'T FUCKING UNDERSTAND YOU!" (AP, 183). All these characters with many other people of Khaufpur come together to stand against the 'Kampani' (the fictionalised version of Union Carbide) for not appearing in the courts, not offering any solution to their sufferings, and not paying compensation to the victims of the tragedy.

While Sinha has insisted on the fictiveness of his work, a majority of the elements in *Animal's People* partly have counterparts in real life. Dedicating his work to Sunil Kumar, one of the victims of the Bhopal tragedy, Sinha writes, "some of the stories Sunil told me about his life found their way into the novel, however the character of Animal is entirely fictional, as were his antics" (Sinha 2014). Sunil Kumar, Sinha tells us,

² Indra Sinha. 2007. *Animal's People* (London: Simon & Schuster). Subsequent references to *Animal's People* will be to this edition and will be included in the text.

was a Bhopali who lost most of his large and loving family in the gas disaster. The two siblings who survived were much younger than Sunil. Aged 12 he became the family breadwinner and right up to his death his first thoughts were always for his sister and brother. He was kind to other children, helped for an organisation of orphans and threw himself into the survivors' struggle for justice, becoming one of its best-known characters. (Sinha 2014)

Sunil Kumar was diagnosed with schizophrenia and committed suicide as he could not endure the consequences of the disaster anymore. He died before he saw the book published, but his voice is present within the novel, mediated through Sinha's narrative.

Bhopal's fictional counterpart in the novel, Khaufpur means a place of terror: *khauf* means 'terror' in Urdu, and *pur* is a suffix which means 'place' or 'city'. This word has been deliberately chosen by Sinha to be able to use his imaginative power. In an interview with Mark Thwaite, he affirmed, "I knew Bhopal too well. To write freely, I had to imagine another city. In this fictional place, which I called Khaufpur ('khauf' is an Urdu word that means 'terror') the characters could come to life" (2009). As in *The Cybergypsies* and *The Death of Mr. Love*, Sinha deliberately plays with the readers' perception of what is real and unreal by merging fact and fiction into one another. One can easily assume Khaufpur as a real city, given that it has its own website (www.khaufpur.com) where it is possible to find information about history of Khaufpur which actually belongs to Bhopal and encounter some sections that belong to the characters from the novel. Sinha introduces himself, on the website, as Indira Sinha, a female journalist, which not only signifies the attempts to make the story convincing but also metafictional through paratexts that will be elaborately discussed in the following section. In Kamila Shamsie's words, Sinha "has a sharp political purpose in telling the story of Bhopal's victims and drawing attention to the fact that it is a story which should, in a world of any conscience, remain within the realm of fiction" (2007). In the interview with Anil Thakraney, Sinha explains another reason for his choice of Khaufpur:

I was very keen that *Animal's People* [...] should be read as a novel in its own right, and not as a vehicle for Bhopal campaigning. This is one reason why the city in the novel is called Khaufpur, not Bhopal. A city like

Khaufpur should naturally have its own website, which would be a place where people could find out more about the novel. (2007)

Jennifer Rickel's statement that *Animal's People* "is modeled after Bhopal where the effects of a massive industrial disaster are still being felt and where Sinha's efforts as an activist are focused" (2012: 91) may imply her classification of the work as an activist effort. However, Sinha determinedly claims that "it has to be a work of art - if you will excuse me using that expression - first [...] and if it can't succeed as that, it could have no power to change things either. Whatever anger I feel is expressed through some of the characters, though not all of them, and Animal himself is very scornful of the activism" (Moss 2007). It can be interpreted that for transnational visibility of such tragedy in a postcolonial land, the novel needs to be influential as a literary work rather than as a long text that engaged in direct campaigning for the Bhopal disaster. This might explain Animal's initial refusal to tell his story to the journalists who could not achieve anything other than filling up their pages. Addressing the foreign journalists, Animal says:

Like vultures are you jarnaliss. Somewhere a bad thing happens, tears like rain in the wind, and look, here you come, drawn by the smell of blood. You have turned us Khaufpuris into storytellers, but always of the same story. Ous raat, cette nuit, that night, always that fucking night. (AP, 5)

Animal's reproach and anger point to the inefficacy of journalism and other forms of activism in exposing the sufferings that people experience in another part of the world. However, it is necessary to encourage the entire world for taking a step in this cause. As the voice of millions, Animal laments that instead of getting involved in radical activist movements to help the victims in need, journalists are just capable of turning these victims into objects to be consumed at transnational level. When Sinha claims, during an interview with Lindsay Pereira, that "corporations and governments use advertising to create fantasy worlds which bear little relation to reality" (2007), he, by incorporating activism into literature, might have justified *Animal's People's* literary position as an alternative to change the way 'eyes [the reader]', as referred to in the novel, look at the stories of the Bhopal victims in the newspapers or TV channels. To take it further, in his review of the book Andrew Mahlstedt says, "it is a complex novel, theoretically rich and important for expanding environmental criticism, while simultaneously engaging and thought provoking for a casual reader" (2009: 661). While

doing this, *Animal's People*, through many different genres, introduces the readers to postcolonial environments where one can clearly observe the impacts of such neo-liberal practices at the human and nonhuman level.

2.3. Multiplicity in Genre

The “environmental polemic, like other forms of protest writing, often blurs the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, cutting across a number of accepted literary forms” (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 41). Deliberately and effectively fictionalizing the Bhopal disaster, *Animal's People* creates new possibilities of meaning by removing the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction. This attempt results in association of a wide range of genres with the work, which eventually points out “the aesthetical potential of fiction” for discussing ecological disasters in postcolonial environments (Bartosch 2012: 11). Considering Sinha's insistence that readers read *Animal's People* as a fictional work rather than an activist work for Bhopal Disaster, such diversification in genre might be intentionally constructed to keep the work in the realm of literature. The Editor's Note written at the beginning of the novel claims:

This story was recorded in Hindi on a series of tapes by a nineteen year-old boy-in the Indian city of Khaufpur. True to the agreement between the boy and the journalist who befriended him, the story is told entirely in the boy's words as recorded on the tapes. Apart from translating to English, nothing has been changed” (*AP*, Preface).

This is a response to the protagonist Animal's demand that “the book must contain only his story and nothing else. Plus it must be his words only” (*AP*, 9). This insistence on Animal's side may imply a new way of English using in line with Salman Rushdie's claim that “we can't simply use the language in the way the British did; [...] it needs remaking for our own purposes” (Rushdie 1995: 432). As an endeavour to establish the Indian variety of English, Sinha's bilingualism and focus on orality in the novel opens the way for a story narrated in an Indianized English with grammatically distorted sentences and words such as “Need a hotel? Best in Khaufpur. See the city? Want a guide? Need translate? Jarnalis?”, ‘kampani’, ‘jamisponding’, and so on. Such manipulation on language may contribute to the claim upon the fictionality of the work sustained through the inclusion of the Editor's Note part.

While attempting to disguise the fictional nature of the work and claim its authenticity, the Editor's Note actually foregrounds the fictionality of the fiction. Heather Snell writes, "[i]n its humorous attempt to disguise its engagement with the Bhopal Disaster and its own status as fiction, the novel manifests a desire to control readings of the text" (2008: 4). Even the act of translation and the existence of a pseudo-editor suggest possible changes in the narration. To Brigitte Rath, the novel "presents, within its fictional frame as pseudo-translation, the English version of the life story of a very poor, mentally unstable and physically deformed young Indian as told and recorded by himself in Hindi" (2013: 161). Pseudo-translation refers to the texts of which the translated versions do not have "any corresponding source in other languages ever having existed" (Toury 1995: 40). Hence taking into account *Animal's* distinctive oral tale in English style and the text's engagement with paratexts such as the website of Khaufpur and of Indra Sinha, the Editor's Note establishes its function as a framing device for fictionalizing the fiction.

This attempt to remove the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction can be assumed as the main factor for critics to situate the text within multiple genres. The multiplicity in genre serves as an efficient way for simultaneously addressing postcolonial and ecological issues in line with the former's close engagement with fiction and the latter's with non-fiction. Daniel Chandler states that genres are not merely components of texts but more like contracts between the authors, works and readers to enable better understanding of the content (1997: 8). Another aspect of genre is defined by John Hartley who says, "the same text can belong to different genres in different countries or times" (quoted in O'Sullivan *et al.* 1994: 129). To start with the novel, as the most obvious genre to which *Animal's People* belongs, Mikhail M. Bakhtin's idea that "the novel is the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted" offers a plausible argument considering the multiplicity of genre in the novel (Bakhtin 1981: 3). Highlighting its progressive nature, Bakhtin also draws attention to the novel's capability to offer an effective representation of contemporary reality. To Bakhtin, "it best of all reflects the tendencies of a new World still in the making; it is, after all, the only genre born of this new World and in total affinity with it" (1981: 324). Accordingly, the novel may develop, potentially into more sub-genres, in line with changing textual and social contexts. Sinha does not directly include journalistic materials about the Bhopal disaster but tells of the aftermath of this

ecological calamity in the postcolonial India through the lenses of Animal who is claimed to have used tape recordings, which enable the text to exhibit the conventions of different sub-genres within the novel.

The conceit of tape recordings narrating the story raises the question of how an oral or spoken text gives rise to a plethora of genres that might offer a better understanding of the work. The spoken language becomes a powerful way for Animal to represent the subaltern voice of other victims against the Western world and the corrupted Indian officials. Satirically, Animal tells his readers, “I’m not clever like you. I can’t make fancy rissoles of each word. Blue kingfishers won’t suddenly fly out of my mouth. If you want my story, you’ll have to put up with how I tell it” (AP, 2). Animal insists on talking straight and uses bawdy language to tell his story in order not to let his words be written down for nothing, as other journalists did before. In this respect, Antony Carrigan draws attention to the relationship between Animal’s oral tale and the private eye novel, which as a genre became popular in the 1930s. Carrigan states that “[t]his investment in everyday orality is reinforced by a number of ‘toughtalking’, ‘streetwise’ remarks, reflecting the private eye’s ambivalent relationship with legal authorities and organised justice campaigns as he explains how he is a ‘hard bastard’” (2012: 162). The genre of the private eye novel, a sub-genre of crime fiction, revolves around the hunt of justice against those who deserve punishment signifying the Khaufpuris’ search for justice against the ‘Kampani’. In this respect, this genre has been brought into discussion mainly for its contribution to environmental and social justice issues dominating the novel.

Drawing our attention to crime fiction, Carrigan claims, “the novel’s playfully postmodern flirtation with *crime fiction* refracts its social and environmental justice concerns” mostly through the private eye, noir, and spy genres (2012: 161). After being involved in many minor spying missions upon Zafar’s request, Animal takes on a huge responsibility and spies on the Kampani representatives who seek to make another secret agreement with the corrupted government officers, which manifests “the link between crime fiction, environmental violence, and tragedy” (Carrigan 2012: 161). The novel’s engagement with crime fiction aims to provide a better understanding of the disaster’s criminal effects and “to provide something closer to an ‘autopsy’ of the political conditions that exacerbate them” (Carrigan 2012: 167), encouraging the reader

to engage in a moral and legal questioning of the consequences of the existent legal, social and environmental corruption.

Some other critics like Rob Nixon and Roman Bartosch suggest that *Animal's People* exhibits conventions of picaresque fiction, in which a lowborn hero or adventurer exposes the “crimes that society’s overlords commit and from which they are structurally exonerated” (Nixon 2011: 55). Employing a first-person narrative, the picaresque narrative in the novel accompanies the environmental justice movement in Khaufpur. Bartosch claims that:

Animal's People juxtaposes apocalyptic tropes and picaresque, postcolonial laughter. First, it endorses the narrative with a sense of alterity that benefits the reading experience. Second, it creates an aesthetic tension between the writing of catastrophe and the genre of the picaresque. And thirdly, it finally deconstructs the dichotomy underlying this tension. (2012: 1)

Due to the text’s insistence on its authenticity that essentially exposes its exaggerated fictionality, Bartosch frames the work as “picaresque parody” (Bartosch 2012: 17). This seems plausible considering the profane language, improper behaviour and non-heroic attitudes that Animal embraces. However, the disordered social background of the novel and the personal background of Animal as a low-born and orphaned child allows for the rise of a true picaro who struggles to survive in a disintegrated society through his wits. As a characteristic of the picaresque novel in parallel with the bildungsroman, it is possible to witness Animal’s partial transition from innocence to experience based on his acceptance of himself as a physically disabled but strong person rather than a non-human animal who needs an operation to claim his humanity back.

On the other hand, Snell claims that the Editor’s Note is an instrument to evoke laughter together with the paratexts published in Khaufpur and Sinha’s websites. That is to say, “Animal’s refusal to remain contained by the physical parameters of the book, in effect an act of ventriloquism for Sinha, is part of what makes the text as a whole humorous” (Snell 2008: 3). This study puts forward that Animal’s wittiness and sense of humour is reflected especially in his poetry such as “I may be just a twisted runt/But I can sniff your mother’s cunt” (Sinha 2007: 5). Snell argues that postcolonial laughter is another narrative mode within the novel. Laughter, as a significant result of humour, is of a particular importance to postcolonial literature, for it can enable “a subordinate’s

sense of superiority over an authority figure” as a form of rebellion against colonialism and its legacies (Holoch 2012: 2). In *Cheeky Fictions* (2005), Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein claims:

Whether we read laughter or humour in a particular text as subversive or not, in fact, whether we identify it as laughter or humour in the first place, is largely a consequence of the way we read, the way we understand postcolonial literatures, and the way in which we know and view the world. (12)

Animal’s sense of humour that has been shaped around the personal and social consequences of the disaster evokes laughter by resisting the victimized position of his own, the other human beings and their environment. This enables, in one sense, to create awareness in readers of neo-liberal practices largely based in postcolonial environments. In this sense, *Animal’s People* might open the way for postcolonial laughter, as one of the new postcolonial genres or narrative modes, to be embraced in postcolonial ecocritical studies under the name of ‘postcolonial ecocritical laughter’.

According to Liam O’Loughlin, while Nixon places *Animal’s People* among a wide range of “picaresque, magic realist, social realist, gothic, zombie, and apocalyptic narrative strategies” (2011: 296), he ignores “the novel’s key formal conceit as *recorded testimony*” (2014: 107). To O’Loughlin, the narration of this historical story by a subaltern subject through tape recordings (though they are part of the fiction) upon the request of an Australian journalist invokes the *testimonio* genre, which is shaped around an oral discourse and can be defined as a literary genre that reworks historical events by employing literary instruments such as metaphor, dialogue, and poetry from an eye-witness perspective that have been extensively employed in Sinha’s work. He says, “[i]t is important to connect the novel to this tradition, because it allows us to understand Animal’s political jadedness as a fatigue with the established means of recompense for the gas-leak victims, rather than an apoliticism unrooted in experience” (2014: 107). Within this context, the *testimonio* reflects Animal’s first-hand engagement with quest for justice during aftermath of the disaster.

In addition to the genres listed above, this study puts forward the idea that these imaginary tape recordings may encourage the readers to analyse the entire work within the framework of a documentary novel with a particular focus on its relation to historiographic metafiction. Although the tape recordings are fictional, Sinha states that

he had made some recordings with Sunil Kumar and some of his stories found their way into *Animal's People*, which necessarily raises doubts about how much of its content is fiction. This would partly establish the novel's genre as documentary novel. Alan Burns' experimental work *The Angry Brigade* raises the same suggestive doubts when he says, "I could no longer use journalistic material so I had to find something else. I hit on the idea of using a cassette recorder to record many hours of natural speech. I transcribed the cassettes and use the resulting material as previously I had used press-cutting. I made a collage of voices" (quoted in Booth 2012: 347). Not denying the claim that the entire narration was a work of his imagination, Burns engaged in cutting and editing processes which blur the boundaries between his position as a writer and as an editor. Similarly, the Editor's Note claiming that the narration has been purely audial and nothing has been changed, together the writer's name on the cover of *Animal's People*, opens the way for considering the work as a *documentary metafiction* rather than *documentary novel* that is expected to "perfectly embod[y] contemporary reality" (Flis 2010: 91).

Before analysing the documentary metafiction, it might be illuminating to have a look at the relationship between historiographic metafiction and the documentary novel. Apart from their focus on self-reflexivity and historical facts, "both types of narrative point out the inconsistencies of conventions and what is more, they turn to intertexts; that is, other books, reports, letters, newspaper clips, and so on" (Flis 2010: 92). The metafictional devices such as "speculations on fiction, multiple points of view, irony, stage coincidences, mixing of real and invented characters, intertextuality, etc" (Flis 2010: 93) explicitly point out their own presence in documentary novels. These devices are available in Sinha's *Animal's People*; however, framing the work as a documentary novel would be challenging given the fact that the documentary novel "consistently refuses to abandon the link to the reality of the historical world that is placed at the core of the narrative" (Flis 2010: 93). The imaginative reworking of the past events with fictional testimony as well as extratextual and intratextual elements indicates the potential presence of the documentary metafiction as a new genre, based on the idea that "the boundaries between genres are shifting and becoming more permeable" (Abercrombie 1996: 45). Similarly, Chandler argues that it is important to recognize "the dynamic fluidity of genres" in order to avoid any possibility of defining one genre as the ultimate framework to analyse and interpret a literary work (1997: 3).

Accordingly, along with all the genres discussed above, this study aims to discuss the genre of documentary metafiction as a hybrid form within the context of postcolonial ecocriticism in *Animal's People*.

“The cycles and transformations of genres can [...] be seen as a response to political, social and economic conditions” says Chandler (1997: 4), which affirms Summer Gioia Harrison’s definition of documentary metafiction as “a particularly effective form for environmental justice narratives since it undermines absolutist epistemologies and commercialized sentimentality while self-consciously employing empirical knowledge and sentimental stories to inspire political action” (2012: 36). Examining documentary metafiction in Ruth Ozeki’s autobiographical work *My Year of Meats* (1998), to the end of which the writer adds an Author’s Note to fictionalize the work, Harrison proposes that this form deliberately brings ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ together as a way to criticize media representations of environmental degradation caused by corporations. Sharing the same perspective, Houe and Rossel (1997) argue that “commenting on the means and methods being used to gather the “documents” and to construct their “history”, this kind of discourse hinges on the limit of both fiction and non-fiction, resulting in “non-fiction fiction,” or perhaps “faction” (43).

Similarly, in *Animal's People*, Animal, as the narrator, condemns distorted media representations: “[y]ou will bleat like all the rest. You’ll talk of *rights*, *law*, *justice*. Those words sound the same in my mouth as in yours but they don’t mean the same” (AP, 3) and continues, “you were like all the others, come to suck our stories from us, so strangers in far off countries can marvel there’s so much pain in the world” (AP, 5). Animal whole-heartedly argues that the world incessantly tries to learn about and talk about the disaster and its victims out of an excessive feeling of pity aroused by the media coverage, but the facts do not reach the world as they are due to these manipulated media representations. Placing emphasis upon this idea that media distorts and exploits reality for its own interests, Sinha himself deliberately plays with reality and composes ‘a non-fiction fiction’ to make the world hear the facts released by a literary work. Taking into account Chandler’s argument that the transformation of genres might be evaluated as a response to political, social and economic issues, it is possible to claim that the use of documentary metafiction, as defined by Harrison, in *Animal's People* serves the activist-writer Sinha’s purpose of exposing the multi-dimensional sufferings of the human and nonhuman beings in the Bhopal disaster with

its ongoing effects since 1984. In specific terms, as a documentary metafiction, the novel combines sentimental stories of Animal, Ma Franci, Somraj, Zafar and many other Khaufpuris with empirical knowledge related to the lethal consequences of the gas-leak to reinforce the rhetorical power of the text for claiming environmental justice in postcolonial lands. As Sinha realizes that “environmental justice cannot be reduced to data about toxicity, pollution, and public health” (Harrison 2012: 215), the use of documentary metafiction serves to make facts more striking and visible.

In conclusion, Bartosch’s definition of *Animal’s People*, based on Bakhtin’s idea, as “an intentional and conscious hybrid” of multiple languages and meanings that engage in a dialogical interaction (Bakhtin 1981: 366) draws attention to the diversity of genres that come into play within the work. Though it is difficult to categorize Sinha’s writings, which range from journalism and advertising to fiction and autobiographical non-fiction (or fictionalized memoir), the multiplicity of genre in *Animal’s People* addresses a variety of purposes, interests and interpretations. The discussed genres and subgenres, based on the literary devices and frameworks included in the work, blur fact and fiction, thus the novel offers a literary engagement with the consequences of the Bhopal disaster to draw world-wide attention. Carrigan says, “the text’s formal hybridity” reflects “how the disaster’s toxic legacy respects no borders” (2012: 163). Among those genres listed above, this study names the novel as a documentary metafiction that seeks after the combination of sentimentality with data to effectively expose the existing conditions of postcolonial subjects and environments. To Huggan and Tiffin, “postcolonial ecocriticism preserves the aesthetic function of the literary text while drawing attention to its social and political usefulness, its capacity to set out symbolic guidelines for the material transformation of the world” (2010: 14). In this respect, the employment of the genre of documentary metafiction in *Animal’s People* might contribute to the advocacy function of postcolonial ecocriticism by focusing on the literary representation of a postcolonial environmental disaster.

CHAPTER THREE

3. THE HUMAN/ NONHUMAN DIVIDE

*I am an animal fierce and free
in all the world is none like me
crooked I'm, a nightmare child
fed on hunger, running wild
no love and cuddles for this boy
live without hope, laugh without joy
but if you dare to pity me
I'll shit in your shoe and piss in your tea
(AP, 172)*

3.1. What It Means to Be A Human?

“I used to be human once. So I’m told. I don’t remember it myself, but people who knew me when I was small say I walked on two feet just like a human being”, says Animal at the very beginning of his first tape (AP, 1). With such a deeply distorted view of his own humanity caused by the Bhopal disaster, a long-lasting eco-drama, Animal paves the way for deconstructing the binary opposition of human/nonhuman, which is widely accepted as the main reason lying behind the difficulty of embracing an ecocentric view in a postcolonial environment. Rather than offering a particular interest in animals (as the title might suggest), *Animal’s People* reflects the ecological impacts of animality/animalisation in relation to the human species and inspires us to question the characteristics assigned to humans to distinct themselves from the nonhuman, which results in the dominance of human over dehumanized human beings and nature. Val Plumwood claims that the human-animal dichotomy is the underlying reason behind the colonialist practices and discourses, which, in our contemporary world, give rise to ecological crises. This claim, in all extents, calls for the necessity of unsettling such dichotomies in order to become aware of the neocolonial practices especially those in postcolonial environments, the consequences of which are still intolerable for the local in Bhopal/Khaufpur (1993: 120). With these points made, this study aims to deal with the historical and cultural construction of the human through stabilization of the inferiority of the nonhuman, and with the boundaries between these beings, which are responsible, even today, for the oppression of disadvantageous groups, like Animal’s

people, and its legitimization. Formulated around the will to power, traditional Western perspectives of the human and nonhuman require further inquiry of relevant categories, as “[w]hat is human in one, is not so in the other” (Mukherjee 2010: 142).

A human being has lexically been defined as “a man, woman, or child of the species *Homo sapiens*, distinguished from other animals by superior mental development, power of articulate speech, and upright stance” (*The Oxford Dictionary*). Simply reporting that only the species of *Homo sapiens* are humans, considering the extinction of archaic human forms such as *Homo neandertalensis*, *Homo erectus* and *Homo rudolfensis* as defined in the historian Yuval Noah Harari’s *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (2014), this definition basically explains the distinctions between the human animal and nonhuman animal based on various physical and mental advantages of the former. Such conceptualisation of human is the primary motivation upon which many philosophers such as Aristotle, Descartes and Kant constructed the ideal human being as superior to the nonhuman. Arguing with Faroque over the place of nonhuman animals in paradise, Animal expresses that “I am not a cat, or a dog like Jara, nor camel, goat, leopard, bear etc. I’m the only one there is of this type” (AP, 208). Accordingly, Sinha’s Animal, a poscolonial ecological hybrid, places himself among animal species and thus invokes a questioning towards constructedness and instability of the boundaries imposed by the Western definition of humanity which “depended (and still depends) on the presence of the not-human-the uncivilized, the animal and animalistic” (Tiffin 2007: xiv).

Throughout history, the antropocentric, humanist and speciesist approaches set ground for the placing of the human at the centre of everything, which eventually reduced dehumanized/animalized human beings, nonhuman animals and nature to a subservient position by leaving them “voiceless and subjectless” (Manes 1996: 26). In *The Politics of Aristotle: A Treatise on Government* (2009), Aristotle argues, “plants are created for the sake of animals, and animals for the sake of men; [...] As nature therefore makes nothing either imperfect or in vain, it necessarily follows that she has made all these things for men”, and he continues with the claim that hunting is necessary “against wild beasts; and those men who being intended by nature for slavery” (40). With his human-centered way of reasoning, Aristotle put the nonhuman, including the entire flora and fauna, together with the disempowered human beings at

the disposal of mankind through ideological construction of human autonomy handed to her/him by nature.

To bring religion into this discussion as another hyperseparating motivation and source behind the human/nonhuman divide, it might be helpful to analyse the following dialogue between Animal and Farouq:

‘Farouq says if I want to end up in Paradise I’ll have to turn human.’

‘Why so, moosh?’

‘Paradise is for humans, not for animals.’

‘What harm do animals do?’

‘Not a question of harm. Do you expect that every ant that gets crushed under a villager’s horny heel goes to paradise?’

‘Don’t see why not. If they have flowers and birds in paradise why not ants? Isn’t there room?’” (AP, 208).

While questioning the exclusion of particular animals from paradise, Animal actually draws attention to the speciesist approaches embraced by the Western world based on the ancient and Christian religious sources, which results in the rejection of certain groups from the human category and their deprivation of all the advantages that come with it. Such an attitude has contributed to the ecological invasion of the colonial subjects and lands during the imperial era, and it still predominates over the world by dividing the earth as the global north and global south through the introduction of new neocolonial practices. In the rest of the dialogue, Animal continues to support the interconnectedness of all beings in a way to demonstrate the desire to destroy ‘the Great Chain of Being’, which is to be defined as a radical, hierarchical order of beings in the universe. Describing Christianity as “the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen” in his article ‘The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis’ (1967), Lynn White, Jr. argues, “Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia’s religions (except perhaps, Zoroastrianism), not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” (1967: 1205). As a matter of fact, even certain groups of human beings, assumed to be uncivilized and untamed like nature, have been claimed to be exploitable for the sake of the development of humanity. Having another moment of existential crisis, Animal says, “I’m not a Muslim, I’m not a Hindu, I’m not an Isayi, I’m an animal” (AP, 14), which might be a reference to the colonial times when it was a crucial Western mission

to turn the ‘animalistic people’ in the colonized lands into Christian by disregarding their own cultural beliefs and value systems. Animal’s rejection of such an anthropocentric religion is due to the fact that such a theological perspective generates a bloody hierarchy rendering humanity unwilling to be just towards the nonhuman, implying the reason why “the plight of non-human species continues to worsen” (Plumwood 2001: 2). In this respect, *Animal’s People* offers a fictional representation of the continuing injustices against human and nonhuman beings in postcolonial environments.

Articulating that “with us animals, our religion’s eating, drinking, shitting, fucking, the basic stuff you do to survive” (AP, 88), Animal leads us to think about in what ways human animals act differently than the nonhuman animals including those placed in the category of animal. The French philosopher Rene Descartes’ focus on the cogito “I think therefore I am” proposes a strong conceptualisation of the human as a reasonable being. While the distinctiveness of human was already a predominant perspective in the Western philosophy and religion, during the seventeenth century Descartes “famously encapsulated the western division of mind and body in his cogito ergo sum” (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 159). His distinction of mind from body and description of them as two separate entities gives way to the idea that animals are reflex-driven machines without any capability to speak, think and feel. Thus, he introduced the Cartesian dualisms that highlighted humans’ power of producing knowledge through reasoning and reinforced the idea that being a human entails renouncement of all the animalistic instincts and behaviours, which has jeopardized the position of the animals and animalized people as clearly represented with the humanity crisis that Animal and his people experience in the novel. Based on Descartes’ mind/body dualism, the ecocritic Greg Garrard says, [t]hey [animals] were bodies without minds, effectively machines” (2004: 25). Identifying the mind with consciousness, Descartes denies animal consciousness which turns into a very crucial ideology in the Western tradition. In parallel with Aristotle, he argues that it is only human beings who have souls. Thus, reason has been established as an essential characteristic that distincts human beings from other species, which naturally encourages the human to establish these qualities as the means to dominate the nonhuman.

Embracing the name of Animal and refusing to be called human, Animal deliberately positions himself as an antithesis to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant's description of the human as a being qualified with 'dignity'. While discussing with Animal about his choice of Animal as a human name, Zafar, the activist leader who struggles severely to bring justice to Khaufpur, advises Animal by saying, "you should not allow yourself to be called Animal. You are a human being, entitled to dignity and respect" (AP, 23). Based on Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), Derrida argues, in 'The Animal That Therefore I am':

The animal (and even the animal in man) cannot be taken to be an end in itself, but only a means. It belongs to the purely sensible order of existence that must always be sacrificed (this is always Kant's word when speaking of the subordination of interests and vital or sensible passions). In a word, and in order to cut straight to the chase, what the nonrational animal is deprived of, along with subjecthood, is what Kant calls "dignity [Würd]," that is to say, an internal and priceless value, the value of an end in itself.

(2008: 100)

Condemned to walk on all fours due to the chemicals that penetrated into his body when he was just a few days old baby, Animal feels obliged to accept his new identity that can be labelled as the nonrational animal. Ultimately, it is the Western society that determines who is human and who is not. Based upon Kant's claim that "[t]hus morality and humanity, insofar as it is capable of morality, is that alone which has dignity" (2002: 53), it is possible to say that Animal is not considered to have dignity because of his categorization as animal, and animals are not expected to be autonomous beings with moral obligations, and therefore an animal does not have any value in itself. As a continuation of the Cartesian perspective of animal and 'animalistic' beings, this notion deepens the discriminatory distinction between the human and nonhuman. Hence it renders the human beings too valuable to concern about anything other than themselves when the interests of both sides collide with each other. The impacts of the Kantian and Cartesian perspective in *Animal's People* can be observed through the Kampani's (the transnational company Union Carbide) destruction of human/nonhuman beings in Khaufpur. The environmental critics such as Mukherjee clearly point out that the sacrifices that 'Kampani' makes for the sake of gaining profit in Khaufpur (Bhopal) includes, without any hesitation, the human beings and the entire flora and fauna in the

local environment. At that point, it is also significant to add that it might be *Animal* himself, a stand-in for the exploitation of all these human and nonhuman beings, who consciously rejects his identity as a human being most likely because of his opposition to the Western ideal of humanity which has been for centuries constructed by distancing itself from other beings and nature. To Mukherjee, *Animal*'s rejection:

gives voice to a scandal that lurks beneath the tragedy of Bhopal: if there are those who, by dint of their underprivileged location in the hierarchy of the 'new world order', cannot access the minimum of the rights and privileges that are said to define 'humanity', what can they be called? (2010: 95)

The historian Libby Robin argues that the Anthropocene has been the age in which human beings have changed all the biophysical systems around the world including the carbon cycle, nitrogen cycle, the atmosphere and climate (Nixon 2011: 12). Accordingly, human beings are getting more responsible day by day for the survival of the nonhuman that is crucial for the sustainability of the ecosystem. However, Sinha's novel offers a frank portrayal of the damages and future risks that *homo sapiens* cause with their immense desire to gain power over the poor, weak and silent. During the fight between Khaufpuris and Kampani lawyers who appear in Khaufpur just to make a deal with the Indian authorities to escape from justice before the law, an old woman asks one of the lawyers, "Mr Lawyer, we live in the shadow of your factory, you told us you were making medicine for the fields. You were making poisons to kill insects, you killed us instead. I would like to ask, was there ever much difference, to you?" (AP, 306). This question puts forward that it is the prevailing Western definition of humanity that has prioritised the interests of powerful groups over those of the disempowered and nonhuman, involving "a form of anthropocentrism which justifies the colonisation of nonhuman nature" with all the life forms (Parry 2016: 48). Apparently, the antropocentric, humanist and speciesist approaches towards particular members of the ecosystem have all been in collaboration with each other to justify the oppression of nature together with the colonized in colonial era and of the poor and silent in the neocolonial one. In this respect, postcolonial ecocritical reading of *Animal's People* requires rethinking "the very category of the human, in relation to animals and environment" (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 18-19) not to repeat the inequalities inherited from the colonial era.

3.2. Human/Nonhuman Otherness

A more comprehensive analysis of the narrator's, called as "the beastly boy" (AP, 9), representation as a *nonhuman animal* will provide a specific basis for the Western/colonizer definition of human, lying behind all the atrocities that the Khaufpuris had during and after the disaster. The English moral philosopher Mary Midgley argues that animal "is a symbol for the forces which we fear in our own nature, and do not regard as a true part of it" (1988: 24). This fear is what motivates the Western to construct itself by creating a "hyperseparated self", one of Plumwood's significant terms used for describing the exclusion of animalised beings and separation of human beings from the rest of nature in general (Parry 2016: 86). This kind of speciesism has been a fundamental tool for the powerful groups to distinct themselves from the marginalized ones and to legitimate their dominance and oppression over them. From Animal's narration, it is understood that many journalists have been visiting Khaufpur since 1984 to let the world know how the Khaufpuris fight against the post-disaster effects. Upon the Australian journalist's visit, Animal says, "[o]nce he [Chunaram] knew why you'd come he'll have promised to show you everything. The really savage things, the worst cases. People like me" (AP, 4). No matter what is left culturally and socially in this community after the disaster, 'everything' only refers to the survival of animalised beings and their sub-human life conditions. It is still, even in the twenty-first century, a valid argument that:

through the discursive recreation of indigenous peoples as savage and animalistic, by downgrading their humanity and animalising them, it became possible to treat them as if they were animals – to own them and make their pain, suffering or loss of freedom morally unproblematic.

(Parry 2016: 48- 49)

To have a close look at the widely accepted physical qualities that are necessary to be a human, the upright posture is considered to be one of the main qualities to define the human as "the rational, speaking, bipedal, tool-making, history-possessing, incest-prohibited, fire discovering animal" (Ham and Senior 1997: 2). Animal's proclaiming himself as "a four-foot animal" and feeling like one takes us back to Freud's focus on 'erect gait' in his work *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1961), in which his approach to upright posture as the ultimate requirement for the evolution of civilization or, in other words, 'cultural evolution' can be read as another stance contributing to the Western

definition of human. Such endeavour to settle “the erect posture against the earliest type of animal existence” (Freud 1961: 62) implies that the “world system of civilization biologically linked to a species-specific body-type” (Johnston 2012: 125). This perspective might disclose another reason behind Animal’s desire to be acknowledged as animal. Determinedly taking a stand against Zafar and Farouq’s insistence on him to be human, Animal claims, “if I agree to be a human being, I’ll also have to agree that I’m wrong-shaped and abnormal. But let me be a quatre pattes animal, four-footed and free, then I’m whole, my own proper shape, just a different kind of animal from say Jara, or a cow, or a camel” (AP, 208). Since the physical characteristics of a being are widely accepted to be vital in setting out what counts as human, Animal’s own disclaim of his humanity might reveal how the Western still continues to decide for the humanity and animality of a person in a postcolonial land. With regard to the American doctor Elli Barber’s efforts, who came to Khaufpur to open a free clinic for the Khaufpuris, to cure his spine, Animal says, “[i]f I had been born in Amrika, Elli says, I’d never have had to walk on all fours all these years” (AP, 247). This has the implications that it is still the ‘Amrika’ and its long-standing power that can give his humanity back to him although it was an American company itself that took it in the first place for the sake of gaining more capital and more power. From this point, it must be the Western man who was made in the image of God with all the power to decide and alter what is human and what is not.

Due to his distorted physical posture, Animal “takes a name which specifies his failure to meet the defining conditions of the “‘proper’ western humanist human and his rejection of such a figure” (Parry 2016: 14). His social environment and reactions to his posture have all been narrated by Sinha in a way to reflect the Western definition and distinction of the human and nonhuman. One of his playmates, a girl of his age makes lines out of mud on Animal’s body which dry up and make him look “[l]ike a leopard!”, and then together with other kids they call him, “‘Animal, jungli Animal!’”, and Animal says, “[t]he name, like the mud, stuck” (AP, 16). The fact that a name grows together with its owner and becomes a strong part of her/his personality points out the dilemmas Animal might have regarding his identity throughout his entire life. While such a usage of the name ‘Animal’ is pejorative, there comes an oriental perspective to the name of Animal with Nisha’s explanation. While teaching Animal how to spell his name, the Khaufpuris Nisha tells him the meaning of his name as well. She says that Jaan means

‘life’, and Jaanvar means ‘one who lives’, so he should be proud of his name (AP, 35). On the other hand, Zafar tells him that he should not let other people call him Animal, as he is a human being, which recalls Derrida’s argument that “[t]he animal is a Word, it is an appellation that men have instituted, a name they have given themselves the right and the authority to give to another living creature” (Derrida 2002: 392). In this respect, naming appears to be another tool that indicates and enables how one group of beings can dominate the other. Declaring his animal identity when he is in front of an animal, Derrida pictures the moment as “the bordercrossing from which vantage man dares to announce himself to himself, thereby calling himself by the name that he believes he gives himself” (Derrida 2002: 381). He interrogates the boundaries existing between human and animal, which is essential for thinking about what it means to be a human in order to examine our relationship with the nonhuman beings. In the light of these arguments, it is possible to express that the Western man categorizes those unfit as ‘animal’ against which they claim their own identity as the superior one and thus they normalize their separation from nature. Thus Sinha’s choice of Animal as a name for his narrator reveals the ideology lying behind the Kampani’s neoliberal practices on another nation’s land irrespective of the ecological dimensions of such practices, which invigorates the human/nonhuman divide.

As briefly stated earlier, reason/rationality is another quality within the Western definition of human that has been used for the justification of earlier colonial and today’s environmental oppression triggered by neo-colonial practices. The reason oriented culture has been the underlying motivation behind the separation between human and nonhuman beings while each of these beings is accepted to be interconnected and intrinsically valuable for the sustainability of the ecosystem. As Huggan and Tiffin, citing Plumwood’s ideas specified in her work *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2001), put it:

‘Hegemonic centrism’ thus accounts not only for environmental racism, but also for those forms of institutionalised speciesism that continue to be used to rationalise the exploitation of animal (and animalised human) ‘others’ in the name of a ‘human- and reason-centred culture that is at least a couple of millennia old’. (2010: 5)

With these points made, the conversation between Zafar and Animal upon what Animal can do as a job has strong implications for this discussion. Animal presents himself as

an animal capable of only ritual activities such as seeing, smelling, wondering around and looking for food to survive rather than engaging in any cognitive activity:

“‘I’m an animal, I can’t do much.’ I say this to put an end to him feeling superior and also, if I am honest, to annoy him.

‘You’ve the gift of the gab.’

‘An animal must use its mouth, no other tool does it have.’

‘How does it see?’

‘Uses its eyes.’

‘You can do that,’ says he. ‘How does it find food?’

‘Smells it out.’” (AP, 26).

Animal’s sentence “I’m an animal, I can’t do much” (AP, 26) is very important like Oliver’s sentence in Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* which is “[p]lease, sir, I want some more” or Hamlet’s phrase “to be or not to be” in Shakespeare’s famous play *Hamlet* (Royle and Bennett 2016). It means a lot more than its denotative meaning by giving the whole idea of the literary work in one sentence. Both antropocentrism and Eurocentrism have been responsible for representation of “indigenous cultures as ‘primitive’, less rational, and closer to children, animals and nature” (Plumwood 2006: 504). Animal’s insistence on his animality reflects the Western perspective of the other who is deprived of rationality and thus not much different than an animal. Inhabiting “‘savage’ species of all kinds”, nature has been assumed as “the antithesis of the human (or human culture)” (Tiffin 2007: xiii). This assumption lies behind the ‘ecological imperialism’, an influential phrase invented by the historian Alfred Crosby, that has been changing the dynamics of the ecosystem for many decades. The territories, entities and native cultures of the otherized groups have been claimed and usurped by the Europeans, for these groups have been assumed not to be able *to do much*, because “the Other is inherently closer to nature and therefore distanced from the intellectual province of Reason and Mastery” (Watts 2008: 255).

In relation to the faculty of speaking in human beings, Nisha says, “‘Animal, do you ever listen to anyone else? Talk talk talk, is all you do. How you chunter. Honestly, if talking is what makes people human, no one is more human than you’” (AP, 255). Particularly the last sentence encourages us to think about the faculty of speaking that produces a language which is not only accepted as a human quality but also as a means to dominate the silent nature including all kinds of beings it embraces. As Catherine

Helen Parry, mentioning Descartes' ideas upon this issue in reference to his work 'Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences' (1985), puts it, "Rene Descartes also treated speech as central to the identity of the human, for language is tied to the rational, immaterial and transcendent soul possessed only by humans, whereas animals, being speechless, are less intelligent than even the most 'dull-witted or stupid' of men" (2016: 20). Christopher Manes offers an ecology-friendly approach to this issue, which indirectly essentializes a better treatment of the nonspeaking entities in particularly postcolonial environments for a sustainable future. Animal's construction as a speaking animal in the novel recalls Manes' argument in his article 'Nature and Silence' (1996) that:

Nature is silent in our culture (and in literate societies generally) in the sense that the status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative....It is as if we had compressed the entire buzzing, howling, gurgling biosphere into the narrow vocabulary of epistemology. (1996: 15)

With an emphasis upon a victimized Khaufpuris' communication with her/his outer world, Animal says, "[s]ince I was small I could hear people's thoughts even their lips were shut, plus I'd get en passant comments from all types of things, animals, birds, tress, rocks giving the time of day" (AP, 8). This alleged communication of Animal with the human and nonhuman, no matter whether they are all products of hallucinations or not, recalls and affirms Manes' following statement:

[A]nimals, plants and even "inert" entities such as stones and rivers are perceived as being articulate and at times intelligible subjects, able to communicate and interact with humans for good or ill. In addition to human language, there is also the language of birds, the wind, earthworms, wolves and waterfalls – a world of autonomous speakers whose intents (especially for hunter-gatherer peoples) one ignores at one's peril. (1996: 15)

However, the language is used as a tool to dominate nature, particularly animals and the animalised human beings, which in turn gives rise to the human/nonhuman otherness. Denying such groups' possession of language has been one of the methods for othering those who are not able to meet the Western expectations. Huggan and Tiffin claim that the Europeans who intervened the life of other people and their environments in the past

rarely acknowledged the status of language to the language of ‘savages’. Even if they did, this language was instrumental and simple for them, “composed, like animal sounds, of words and phrases exclusively concerned with food, sex and the threat of danger” (2010: 155). Although *Animal* uses language as “the medium that he must use to represent his thesis that he is an animal”, his “rich use of language and complex storytelling” challenges “the conventional understanding of what an animal is – a being with no capacity for human speech, rational thought, self-awareness or moral understanding, with limited intelligence, and of a species other than *Homo sapiens*” (Parry 2016: 17). This might be interpreted as a reaction to the Western degradation of other human/nonhuman beings’ distinctive linguistic qualities and values, which indeed enrich the environments and contribute to the linguistic ecology of different regions on the grounds that it is actually the ecological contexts in which communities exist and communicate.

Another point is that the representation of *Animal*’s actions and reactions in daily life reveals the idea that the attribution of animalistic characteristics to human beings with a pejorative approach underlies their construction as ‘savages’. As Cary Wolfe argues in *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (2003), according to the Western definition of human, these characteristics need to be suppressed in order to be a proper human being (101). As Wolfe puts it, “the institution of speciesism [...] relies in tacit agreement that the full transcendence of the ‘human’ requires the sacrifice of the ‘animal’ and the animalistic” (2003: 6). *Animal*’s efforts to find food to survive in the poor Khaufpur portray the fragility of the rigid boundaries between the human/nonhuman when the conditions are not favourable. Fighting with the dog Jara in the rubbish for leftovers, *Animal* starts to take action after a period of hesitation out of fear and starts running to her on all fours and “growling louder than she”, like “the warning of a desperate animal that will stick at nothing” (AP, 17). Although at the beginning he is scared and defensive, then he becomes aggressive and does the same thing with Jara to survive. The fact that Sinha’s novel brings a human (*Animal*) and nonhuman animal (Jara) together to fight for their lives challenges the Western humanist claim that it is, under all circumstances, necessary for a human being to suppress her/his animal side in order to be a *civilized* human being.

In response to Rob Nixon's question "[w]hat does it mean to be reduced to living in subhuman, bestial conditions? What chasms divide and what ties bind the wealthy and the destitute, the human and the animal?" (2011: 66-67), *Animal's People* argues that it is the Kampani (transnational companies) which now turns people into animals intentionally to exploit them more extensively. Such multidimensional exploitation does not only affect human life but also the flora and fauna of the local. Huggan and Tiffin (2010) affirm that:

While the Enlightenment trajectory of humanist essentialism demanded the repression of the animal and animalistic in all its latent and recrudescence forms, it is not until our own century, in the urgent contexts of eco-catastrophe and the extinction of many non-human species that a radical re-drawing of this foundational relationship has occurred. (134)

Postcolonial ecocritical perspective calls for rethinking of these complex relationships between human and nonhuman beings by taking into account the fatal and latent consequences of ecological crises to prevent further inequalities that might result from non-objective and self-seeking evaluation of species. At many instances in the novel, Farouq blames Animal for pretending to be an animal to escape the responsibilities of being a human (AP, 209), and at one point he tells Animal, "'all this animal crap, it's just an excuse for behaving badly'" (AP, 89). This may imply that it is the 'Kampani' which pushed Animal and many other Khaufpuris to be identified with this 'animal crap' and thus could create a vulnerable, marginalized, and animalized group. Referring to Animal's people, the female activist Nisha says, "'[m]y father's [Somraj] precious justice is of no use, our government's of no use, courts are of no use, appeals to humanity are no use, because these people are not human, they're animals'" (AP, 332). Mukherjee notes:

His [Animal's] scarred and deformed existence, his vehement denial of belonging to the human species, at first seems to confirm Union Carbide's historical defence that rights are for those humans who possess the power and wealth. The rest, humans and non-humans alike, are not entitled to any of these rights – not to health, not to life, not to affiliation. (2010: 148)

To add more, Animal's calling himself 'animal' "clearly signals that his abjected condition is the same as that of any animal, so that while he may be the object of some moral concern, he has no stake in the reciprocal duties and benefits a human with full

subject-status lives among” (Parry 2016: 55). Accordingly, it is very likely to state that dehumanization of Animal’s people is the prerequisite for justification of their maltreatment including the exploitation of their lands, resources and environments based on the human/nonhuman divide.

On the other hand, the philosopher Peter Singer claims that “our concern for others ought not to depend on what they are like, or what abilities they possess [...] the fact that beings are not members of our species does not entitle us to exploit them, and similarly the fact that other people are less intelligent than we are does not mean that their interests may be disregarded” (2003: 33). This unifying approach applies to both human and nonhuman beings, as they all have intrinsic values in our ecological system, and the capability to destroy or exploit other groups does not give *homo sapiens* and particularly the Western world any right to engage in such destructive actions. The speciesism-based perspectives towards other-than-Western groups have been responsible for ‘hyperseparation’, and today this separation continues to evolve through the increase in the economic gap between the global south and global north, which makes way for many social, economic and political problems that end up with environmental and ecological catastrophes.

Accordingly, the novel suggests focusing on a new thinking that accomodates both the human and nonhuman. This is vital for transforming the societies, based on the belief that everything has its own intrinsic value and connected with each other. Postcolonial ecocritical perspective requires rethinking of culture’s relationship with nature with a particular emphasis on postcolonial environments. With the fictionalized narrative of Bhopal disaster, *Animal’s People* develops an insight into the human-nonhuman dualism examined by many environmental philosophers to be one of the main reasons behind full-scale environmental and ecological crises. The next chapter will offer a shift from human/nonhuman otherness to ecological otherness to reflect the consequences of such crises on the human level.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. CAN THE ECOLOGICAL OTHER SPEAK?

*thou art an animal fierce and free
in all the world none like thee
in fire's forge thy back did bend
my bitter fire be thy end (AP, 342).*

4.1. Ecological Alienation of the Toxic Bodies

The previous chapter offers a discussion about the discursive and ideological conceptualisations of the human-nonhuman divide through dehumanization of postcolonial and third-world subjects based on the abasement of the nonhuman animals. The main idea is that it is the Western world's will to power that creates and reinforces this divide and ultimately subjects the postcolonial environments and their habitants to catastrophic consequences. *Animal's People* offers an insight into another discriminatory phase of this human-nonhuman divide by imaginatively reflecting the consequences of neocolonial practices imposed by the global north, whose exclusive motivation is to have control over economic, political and social dynamics in the global south. This study tries to demonstrate that the human-nonhuman divide continues its presence across the world by claiming the postcolonial subjects along with many others as 'ecological others', a phrase invented by Sarah Jaquette Ray in her work *The Ecological Other: Environmental Exclusion in American Culture* (2013). The main argument in this chapter is about the ecological otherization of the Khaufpuris/Bhopalis. Its inhabitants' transformation into toxic and disabled bodies precipitate their alienation from their own material and spiritual selves as well as their environment. As a result, they are left too powerless and voiceless to contribute to the social, economic and ecological well-being of their own habitats in the micro level and of their world in the macro level. In the light of these arguments, this chapter aims to reveal that postcolonial ecocritical reading of the novel, "engaging the complexity of global environmental knowledges, traditions, and histories" (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 19), plays a great role in comprehending and analysing ecological otherness with a special focus on the relationship between body and postcolonial environment.

This chapter seeks to shed light upon the toxic and disabled bodies that have been created out of their constructed ecological otherness. In line with Ray's conceptualisation of the disabled body as the ecological other, it examines the disabled body, emerging from the penetration of the toxic substances into the bodies, in relation to its forceful alienation from nature. It might be useful to express that while "the intersection of bodies and environments" has been discussed within the context of "the material ecocritical framework" (Oppermann 2016: 413), *Animal's People* brings out postcolonial ecocritical context based on how the postcolonial subjects and their environments have been transformed in the aftermath of Khaufpur/Bhopal disaster. Nixon defines the nature of this eco-crime as "unfolding over time and space on a variety of scales, from the cellular to the transnational, the corporeal to the global corporate" (Nixon 2011: 46). Having corporeal experience of the ecological disaster in Khaufpur, Animal, along with some other characters to be elaborately introduced later, represents trans-corporeality in the novel with an emphasis upon his bodily connection with his poisoned city that has been subjected to a great amount of the chemical leakage. Based on Ray's argument that "the crisis of the environment is a crisis of the body", it is possible to state that *Animal's People* portrays an explicit image of the body as representative of environmental injustice in postcolonial lands. Depicting his observations over the victimized bodies at the medical centre, Animal says:

On the first table is propped a huge drawing of a human body. On it are marked all the places where the Kampani's that-night-poisons have damaged people, such as eyes, lungs, joints, womb, brain. These are marked in red. In blue are marked the places which have been harmed by drinking the poisoned water, breasts, again womb, stomach, skin. Blue and red spirals are coming from the head, which is also being banged by a hammer, above all hangs a dark grey cloud with lightning. (AP, 162)

The ecological disaster in Khaufpur left its mark on each part of body by penetration of a wide range of poisons and toxic materials into the bodies through air, soil and water. Severely and permanently damaging the vital parts of the human body that are necessary for survival, the disaster has jeopardized the well-being of future generations and the sustainability of nature and environment. Not implementing the necessary precautions and failing to comply with the general instructions, which, on the contrary, are very carefully conducted by its other subsidiaries in America, the Kampani

(Union Carbide) took a huge risk in sacrificing the local population and environment. It has been reported that just a few months before the Bhopal disaster, Union Carbide stopped spending money on safety procedures and reduced the number of permanent employees from 850 to 642 (Omar 2012: 131). Drawing the reader's attention to the ways in which transnational corporations try to control the economic power in poor countries, *Animal's People* offers a harsh critique of the high level of environmental injustices in the global south. Examining the nature of these injustices, this study aims to find an answer to the question of "how do bodies of ecological others, as well as the landscapes they inhabit, serve as the very material upon which dominant forces are built?" (Ray 2013: 82) While doing so, the toxic and disabled bodies in *Animal's People* such as Animal, Ma Franci, Somraj, Aliya, and Kha-in-the-Jar will be analysed to reveal the corporeal costs of the ecological disaster in Khaufpur/Bhopal induced by the neo-colonial and capitalist practices through transnational companies in a postcolonial land. Unfortunately, rather than the local people's healthy and ecological connection to their environment, the novel portrays an image in which the exploitation and degradation of postcolonial bodies and lands are at the highest level because of the chemical exposure. Such a deformed connection between human beings and nature appears "a stark material reality" (Ray 2013: 119) that needs to be reconsidered.

Based on Ray's conceptualisation of ecological other, it is possible to state that environmental justice movements in ecocriticism have conventionally assigned certain groups as ecological others not only on the grounds of race, gender, ability and environmental behaviour but also "corporeal grounds, often at the cost to the bodies of ecological others" (2013: 24). Depicting a striking image of the Delhi road full of death bodies, Animal says, "[t]here, see the Delhi road? On that night it was a river of people, some in their underwear, others in nothing at all, they were staggering like it was the end of some big race, falling down not getting up again, at Rani Hira Patika Mahal, the road was covered with dead bodies" (AP, 31). There were two kinds of ecological victims on that night, one of whom could not survive and the other could not escape from the toxic chemicals that usurped their bodies permanently. The thousands of dead bodies crawling over the same road immediately lost their humanity and turned into merely toxic, dead bodies that would even be harmful for their lands because of their toxic storage.

While engaging in these arguments, a connection between the disaster-induced disability and toxic body should be also established through the novel's potential link to Stacy Alaimo's concept of *trans-corporeality* which concentrates on the relationship between body and environment as "the substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from the environment" (Alaimo 2010: 2). On the ground that the bodies are invested with cultural and material values prevailing in their environments, they are exposed to and in turn exhibit the physical and political impacts of the contemporary global politics in the first place. Animal's disfigured shape or Kha-in-the-Jar's, a foetus, failure to be born as a proper human being present them as emblems for the immense level of environmental degradation in Khaufpur/Bhopal.

In Khaufpur, the perpetual chemical exposure even after more than twenty years of the disaster gives rise to toxic bodies that potentially give birth to an increasing number of physically and mentally disabled ones. Ray argues, "[r]ecognizing that the body is intimately tied to environment, environmental justice charges that the same industries that degrade the environment of both inner cities and reservations, for example, undermine the bodily health and quality of life of their laborers and inhabitants" (2013: 20). Moreover, it becomes impossible for the local to be attentive to their environment, as they do not have any economic, social or political power to fight against the environmental injustices even in their own lands. To be negatively affected by their environment and not being able to positively contribute to its well-being doubly victimizes the Khaufpuris. Referring the non-sustaining relationship between Bhopal/Khaufpur and the Bhopalis/Khaufpuris, Parry claims that:

[t]he inhabitants of Bhopal suffer long term health problems including chronic eye, respiratory and gastrointestinal conditions, increased chromosomal abnormalities leading to birth defects, and psychological and neuro behavioural problems. Primary gas poisoning continues to be exacerbated for the original victims and their children; the inadequately cleaned plant still contains toxic chemicals and heavy metals which are now contaminating water supplies. While this continues subsequent generations in Bhopal will be unable to escape the effects of foreign risk relocation. (2016: 35)

These existent and potential disabilities have been portrayed through different characters in *Animal's People* with the purpose of putting forward a political and social

critique of global politics rendering the postcolonial subjects and environment ecologically disabled. The inclusion of disability within the postcolonial ecocriticism extends the scope of the theory by incorporating the relationship between the disabled material body and the environment. It makes a close analysis of the doubly victimizing impacts of the ecological crises in postcolonial environments. In his work *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (2007), Ato Quayson argues that there is a troublesome connection between global capitalism and local disabilities considering the irrevocable impairments incurred by the chemical leakage in the Bhopal disaster in 1984 (3). In this respect, the novel deliberately guides the readers and critics to get involved in the discussion of disability while dealing with the toxic bodies in order to highlight the experienced and potential risks of transnational capitalist politics that have the power and courage to create disabilities at a wide range of human and nonhuman beings. The novel conveys the idea that the disabilities that occur in the toxic bodies as a result of the excessive chemical exposure during and after the disaster reinforce the stigmatization of the local people as ecological others who are defined opposite of the able-bodied, productive and non-toxic Western community. Rob Nixon puts it:

Paradoxically, Animal appears as unique but not exceptional: in his singularity he serves as a synecdoche for the spectrum of mutations to which Khaufpuris have been subjected over time, ranging from the celebrated singer with now-ravaged lungs to the chatty Kha-in-a-jar, a double-headed bottled foetus that envies Animal his external, unbottled freedoms. (2011: 57)

The alliance between technological, economic and political developments, and neocolonial practices turn postcolonial subjects into ecological others in postcolonial environments claiming power over their body through their environment. Revealing the double-faced attitude of the so-called ecological subjects (the Western environmentalists) towards ecological others, Ray argues, “[e]cological subjects seek to emulate the Indian body’s connection to nature, obscuring the ways that those very bodies have been drawn into environmentally exploitative colonial, capitalist, and military projects, and how both Indian bodies and those environments have been sacrificed” (2013: 9-10). In this respect, this study proposes that the Kampani and the mainstream of Western ecocriticism, which favours wilderness and pristine nature in the

global north irrespective of the environmental degradation in the global south, represent ecological subjects while the Khaufpuris including Animal, Ma Franci, Somraj, Aliya, Kha-in-the-Jar and many others are forced to be in the category of ecological others. Although Ray claims that ecological others are not limited to postcolonial subalterns and it might include poor whites, rural people, refugees etc. (2013: 179-180), it is a prevailing perspective that the people of the global south are not allowed to live in their own way in their own lands, as they are the ones who would be sacrificed first depending on the broader power relations and vested interests of the global north.

To start particularly with the ecological otherization of Animal, he, with his toxic and disabled body, embodies the environmental crisis that Khaufpur has been through since the chemical leak in 1984. The neocolonial practices in Khaufpur, including capitalist and cultural imperialist interests, have been responsible for disabling the inhabitants as well as the environment with the tremendous amount of gas leak into nature. Through Animal's body, it is possible to observe that "the body is the medium through which injustice is experienced, understood, and combated" (Ray: 2013:103-104). His body becomes the site where the dynamics of human and environmental degradation are at interplay with each other. In reference to this interplay, Nixon claims, "the symbolic economy of Animal's body affords Sinha an implicit yet unforgettable image of a body politic literally bent double beneath the weight of the poisoned city's foreign load" (2011: 57).

As the first irredeemable strike of the disaster, Animal loses his parents when he is just a few days old baby. When he questions his orphanhood by saying that "how they [Kampani members] hideously took my parents' lives and left me in this world alone, I'm filled with such hatred, I think my skin will burst" (AP, 283), Animal puts forward the idea that his body is the site of experience where the transnational corporations carry out their lethal practices and again it is his body that involves in a physical reaction to the consequences of these practices. To be left as a physically and mentally disabled orphan in a world full of injustices and inequalities, Animal, throughout his narrative, wholeheartedly discloses the traumatic dimensions of the ecologic disaster over his body, induced by the economic and political power of the Kampani. Depicting the moment when the chemicals usurped his body, "where the cellular drama of mutation and adaptation rage on" (Omar 2012: 124), Animal tells:

It was so bad I could not lift my head. I just couldn't lift it. The pain gripped my neck and forced it down. I had to stare at my feet while a devil rode my back and chafed me with red hot tongs. The burning in the muscles became a fever, when the fevers got bad I was taken to the hospital, they gave me an injection. It did no good. After that my back began to twist [...] Further, further forward I was bent. When the smelting in my spine stopped the bones had twisted like a hairpin, the highest part of me was my arse. (AP, 15)

The long period of toxic penetration and its delayed severe impact catch Animal off guard and leaves him with a life-long disability. His toxic body becomes a representative of the physical consequences of what the surviving Khaufpuris/Bhopalis have been through even long after the disaster. To put it in different words, Omar argues that Animal's deformed posture is a symbol for the "invisible chemicals" that smelt all the Khaufpuris together and thus exposes the "often ignored toxicity" in these people's bodies (2012: 124). Like the factory that was abandoned with the chemicals inside, Animal and his people are forced to live with these chemicals inside their bodies. Most notably, Animal chooses to live in this factory and does not identify himself as a human because all these injustices could not have been done to a human being who is bound with a plethora of national and universal contracts promising their loyalties to protect human rights. Thus, his preference and capability to live inside the toxic factory might present him as an ecological other who has been ripped of nature and become immune to the chemicals or learned how to live with them. The rotten, poisoned factory turns into a playground or a gothic forest for Animal through which he can connect to nature. He says, "[s]ome nights, there'd be nothing here, just the ghosts and me, a four-foot creature climbing in the trees and pipes. Perched like a monkey on top of this poison-khana I'd watch the moon making shadows, and the stars cutting their circles" (AP, 32). Describing himself as a four-foot creature and using a monkey as a simile for himself, Animal reflects his alienation from nature as a human being. As a non-human animal he can only belong to the factory because he is just a toxic body, an ecological other.

A closer look at the psychological consequences of Animal's physical disability would reflect the results and consequences of labelling the postcolonial Khaufpuris as ecological other. At the very beginning of the novel, Animal speaks to the reader about his deformed psychology because of his disfigurement by saying, "mirrors I avoid but

there's such a thing as casting a shadow" (AP, 1). It gives the idea that his distorted posture is "a disfiguration of the natural form of a human" making it challenging for him to adapt to "ordinary human life" (Parry 2016: 22-23) and to accept even his own shadow. Not being able to distinguish himself from the animal species and place himself into human species, Animal, as reflected through his narrative, goes through a trauma which becomes the main force that shapes his identity around the lacks in his entire life. Even when his life is at risk during the riot against Indian government and Kampani, Animal is concerned about how the people will identify him, and says, "I don't know what is being beaten here. If they kill me what will die?" (AP, 313). Accordingly, even in the worst cases, he is still stuck in placing himself into a category and tries to find an answer to the question of what am I? This physical disability becomes the basis of his identity crisis.

Identity, a considerably influential factor in the formation of one's personality, is described by Charles Taylor in *The Politics of Recognition* (1997) as:

[p]artly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (98)

When Animal says, "[w]hat really disgusts me is that we people seem so wretched to you outsiders that you look at us with that so-soft expression, speak to us with that soporous tone in your voice" (AP, 184), he reveals his resentment towards the able-bodied Western people who on the one hand openly demonstrate that they are superior to the disabled individuals and on the other hand do not think about the causes behind these disabilities. They even exhibit a disturbing desire to hear and broadcast the stories of their sufferings. Such perspectives doubly victimize the ecological victims in Khaufpur, as they push them into trouble with their own identity. Expressing that Nisha "never seemed to notice I was crippled, nor pretend I wasn't" (AP, 22), Animal asserts the significance of being accepted as 'normal' rather than 'disabled' to be able to feel himself as a proper and healthy human being. This, in a sense, might imply the revival of the exotic body of the other that was a prevalent notion in the colonial period which has later on been critically studied in postcolonial studies. Animal laments the fact that

the Khaufpuris act like it is a necessity to introduce Animal to the visitors and journalists since his body is considered to be a valuable asset through which they can show the embodiment of the disaster and take their attention, which paves the way for the discussion of voyeurism in the novel. Omar affirms, “the journalist [who gives the tape to Animal] wants to find the most abject marvels of impoverishment and abnormality, the bodies most orphaned by toxic chemicals” (2012: 139). When they introduce Animal, almost all of them use the words, “[t]here he is! Look! It’s Animal. Goes on four feet, that one. See, that’s him, bent double by his own bitterness” (AP, 11). Thus, Animal is turned into an *exotic* object to be displayed before the Western visitors. Animal addresses to these visitors: “Your eyes full of eyes. Thousands staring at me through the holes in your head. Their curiosity feels like acid on my skin” (AP, 7). He describes the impact of such a troubling gaze over his body to show the continuation of toxic penetration into his body. Just as the chemicals and gases disseminated from the factory ripped him of his humanity, the voyeurism of the Western eyes over his body once more jeopardizes his humanity by making him feel like he is not a normal being, which in the end causes a mental disability called schizophrenia continuing to ruin his life.

The Western claim over the body of certain groups is not a recent phenomenon. To exemplify, in the nineteenth century Saartjie Baartman (Hottentot Venus) from South Africa was forced to make a contract to exhibit her body in freak shows with a tour around Europe. The size of her back and genitals drew the attention of a middle class audience and of the Western scientific world, and with the freak shows she was claimed to be “a symbol of deviant sexuality that attracted the white European gaze. White men felt lured by the *exotic* and *the other* (Chase-Riboud 2003: 137-138). Furthermore, during these freak shows, African flora and landscapes were used at the background to enable the link between the ‘savage’ body and the environment it belongs to. Such voyeuristic forms of amusement reveal the exploitative reaction of the Western to bodily differences. Citing Wasserman, Huggan and Tiffin say, “Indians paraded before royal courts; like turkeys and parrots in cages were the innocent signifiers of an otherness that was [...] exotic, that is, non-systematic, carrying no meaning other than that imposed by the culture to which they were exhibited” (2010: 7). The notion of otherness largely discussed in postcolonial studies continues to exist in ecocritical studies and can be discussed as a new form called ecological otherness. Just

the white body has been conventionally defined in opposition to the colonised people, Animal's disabled body along with his toxic environment stands as a contrast with the able-bodied Western people and their healthy environment.

Furthermore, as briefly discussed in the previous chapter, Descartes establishes the mind-soul/body dualism based on the notion that mind and body are two different essences that are fundamentally separated from but in interaction with each other. Descartes' dualism mainly claims the body subordinate to the soul, which underlines the idea that animals are no different than machines. As the only species that is considered to have mind/soul, human being is thus accepted to be the most capable and valuable being on earth. Favours the equation of body with soul in opposition to Descartes, the ecocritical scholarship accepts "the body as an integral part of being human, as an indissolubly, interwoven with our mental and emotional processes" (Caupert 2014: 166). Accordingly, the unity of body and soul is necessary to be a proper, healthy human being, as the two are in a perpetual interaction. However, the unity of mind/soul and body in Animal has been deformed as a result of consuming toxic substances. His turning into a *four-foot animal* breaks not only the balance but also the interaction between body and soul. Animal's reflections upon his disability gives the idea that his body belongs to the animal species, but his mind belongs to the human. His animal body cannot realize his capabilities as a human being, and therefore he cannot act upon his ideas, thoughts and feelings. This situation presents Animal as a hybrid form stuck between being a human and an animal, whose soul and body cannot act harmoniously.

Specifically, Animal's physical disability does not allow him to place himself among healthy and productive males who have the right to freely involve in a sexual intercourse or get married to a woman. The prostitute Anjali tells Animal, "[s]o strong, beautiful the top half of you, such a fine chest, strong shoulders. So good-looking a face [...] If only the rest of you matched, you could marry a princess" (AP, 241). Throughout his narrative, Animal frequently bursts out his anger to the injustices made to his body. Although Nisha is in love with Zafar and is supposed to be his wife soon, Animal ignores these facts lying behind Nisha's rejection of him and says, "it's because I am an animal [...] that's the real reason isn't it, that you can never marry me? I'll always be nothing but a fucking animal" (AP, 333). Constantly suffering from this idea, Animal does not believe in the existence of a proper mate for himself. He does not make sure whether his partner should be an animal or human being, because he does not

belong to either of them, and there is none like him. He feels like he is condemned to be alone. In this sense, he reminds us the monster in *Frankenstein* who is created by a human being without his will and searches for a female mate that will make him recover from his isolation and loneliness.

More importantly, Animal calls his possible sexual activities with a female as unnatural, which presents Animal as if he is involved in bestiality, defined as sexual relationship between human beings and animals. Animal claims:

Animal mating with human female, it's unnatural, but I've no choice but to be unnatural. Many times I would dream that she and I were in love, sometimes we were married and naked together like in the movies having sex. In such dreams was my back straight? Did I stand upright? No and no. I was exactly as I am now and it did not matter. Such dreams! I woke from them shaking with hope. This frightened me, I despise hope. (AP, 78)

Using the word 'unnatural' for cross-species sex, Animal's statement recalls the discussion about bestiality that has generally been accepted deviant and perverse and legally prohibited in many societies. Huggan and Tiffin claim that human and nonhuman animals have different sexual motivations. While human beings are generally accepted to make love, animals are claimed to have instinctual sex. This division can be traced back to the Great Chain of Being which consolidated the hierarchy between species. It is also noted that the Darwinian evolutionary theory labelled cross-species sex as perversion (2010: 195-196) probably due to the fact that bestiality is not favourable for evolution as it reduces the possibility of passing on one's genes. Besides, it is generally accepted as a crime against nature. Considering Animal's situation, his positioning himself within such an unnatural relationship (although he is a human partner) introduces him as an ecological other who is incapable of distinguishing himself as a member of human species and thus unintentionally stops his reproductive function. He reduces his idea of sexual intercourse with a human being into an unnatural act which is not expected to give rise to a birth that would be the natural consequence in favourable conditions.

Rickel claims, "being a human who is 'wrong-shaped and abnormal' would define Animal's existence as defective and debilitating, and it would render him a body in perpetual need" (2012: 100-101). In the case of Animal, this perpetual need is to engage in any kind of healthy relationship with a female, and his inability to do it leads

him to a kind of voyeurism different from the one mentioned before. He starts to suffer from voyeurism, defined as “the practice of gaining sexual pleasure from watching others when they are naked or engaged in sexual activity” (*Oxford Dictionaries*), as a psychological disorder. Climbing on a tree to spy on Elli Barber to learn about her reason to open a clinic in Khaufpur, Animal cannot help being involved in voyeuristic activities. He says, “[n]ow at last I’m higher than the window. Elli Barber’s in there, ten feet away. She’s taking a bath and she’s got nothing on. Her legs aren’t blue but as pale as milk. She reaches down and nothing is hidden from me” (AP, 78). In another occasion, he spies on Nisha, the woman he is in love with, and describes that moment, “I should go, because she may start getting undressed, but it’s too late, already Nisha is pulling off her kameez. Okay, so I won’t look. I am not here for a cheap thrill. She’s loosening the string of her shalwar” (AP, 117). Although he hesitates whether it is right to spy on her or not, he cannot control his feelings.

All these psychological afflictions stem from his physically disabled body which “embodies a crushing, neoliberal, transnational economic relationship and also marks him as a literal ‘lowlife’, a social and anatomical other whose physical form externalizes the unhurried metastases coursing through the community” (Nixon 2011: 56). This physically disabled body also suffers from a mental disorder, which doubly victimizes him in his social relationship with other people around and with his environment. Referring to Animal, Ma Franci says, “[f]ucking boy, crazy as fishguts. Sees things, hears voices that aren’t there” (AP, 11), which implies that Animal suffers from schizophrenia. Although the real cause of this disorder is not known, it is accepted that a combination of physical, psychological and environmental factors might develop the symptoms. The development of such a mental disorder in Animal causes the inability to sincerely communicate with the people around. Animal says, “[e]arly in life I learned to look out for myself, to put myself first, before all others and every other thing” (AP, 16). Until Animal meets Nisha and her family members, he does not have any feeling of affection, commitment or conscience. Until he is nineteen years old, he suffers from the lack of vitally important feelings needed for the formation of a healthy personality, as the human beings are inherently social beings. That’s to say, the basic motivations of a human being is to communicate, get the sense of belonging to other people and to be loved by others. Lack of such motivations is the prominent reason behind his psychological disorder. Thus, it is possible to say the disaster reduces Animal

to a toxic body with a physical disability without any culture that he could obtain through proper communication with other human beings. The motivations behind the interplay between body and environment rely on the argument that the well-being of human beings cannot be considered independent of the rest of the planet (Alaimo 2010: 18). To describe the interconnectedness of everything within the cosmos and to claim his significance as a different species, Animal says:

If this self of mine doesn't belong in this world, I'll be my own world, I'll be a world complete in myself. My back shall be ice-capped mountains, my arse mount Meru, my eyes shall be the sun and moon, the gusts of my bowels the four winds, my body shall be the earth, like its living things, but why stop there? I'll be my own Milky Way, comets shall whizz from my nose, when I shake myself pearls of sweat shall fly off and become galaxies, what am I but a complete miniature universe stumbling around inside this larger one, little does this tree realise that the small thing bumbling at its roots, scraping at its bark, clawing a way into its branches, is a fully fledged cosmos. (*AP*, 350)

Mapping the vital elements of the earth over his body, Animal tries to re-establish his relationship with the cosmos. When he is away from the factory and gets lost in the forest, he starts to remember that he is not alone. There is a world that keeps revolving. He is connected to everything in the universe. "Entangled in environmental transformations, geopolitical forces, social injustices" (Oppermann 2016: 415), Animal loses his touch with nature and the entire cosmos. The quotation above shows his urge to reclaim his place in the cosmos from which he has been separated for a long period of time. He defines his body as a miniature of the cosmos where everything comes together. Unfortunately, the penetration of toxic substances breaks down this relationality and turns him into an ecological other. Considering that "the body is a local text of global contexts" (Oppermann, 2016: 414), the corporeal otherness of Animal established through his toxic body signifies the tragic fate the postcolonial environments and their inhabitants share.

While Animal, as a narrator, appears to be the embodiment of the eco-crime committed in Khaufpur and affected by its consequences more than anyone, he is not the only visible victim in the novel. Animal's adoptive mother Ma Franci also suffers from a kind of aphasia after the gas leak at the factory. Aphasia means the impairment

of the ability to comprehend and speak a language due to the damage to a specific part in the brain. Animal says:

[o]n that night all sorts of people lost all kinds of things, lives for sure, families, friends, health, jobs, in some cases their wits. This poor woman, Ma Franci, lost all knowledge of Hindi. She'd gone to sleep knowing it as well as any Khaufpuri, but was woken in the middle of the night by a wind full of poison and prophesying angels. (*AP*, 37)

The toxic substances might have penetrated into a particular region in her brain or that part of her brain might have experienced a stroke during the disaster which affected her multi-lingual functions. Wallace argues, "[t]his aphasia leaves her [Ma Franci] not only monolingual (or at least so she believes; in fact there is some Hindi and English mixed in) but also in capable of recognizing other language as language; instead she hears 'stupid grunts and sounds'" (2016: 90). Apparently, except her native language French, Ma Franci forgot all the languages she knew including Hindi and English, and the worst part is that she lost her ability to recognize what the people around her were speaking was also a language. To her, the speech of other people consists of gibberish sounds.

This communication disorder isolates her from the people around who desperately need cooperation to fight against the ongoing lethal consequences of the gas leak. Just as she did at that catastrophic night, Ma Franci continues to relieve the sufferings of these victims with her great experience. Her loss of Hindi is very tragic and ironic both for herself and the Khaufpuris, because these people are left desperate on all fronts. Although other French nuns were taken back to their countries for treatment, Ma Franci refused it because her "work's in the kingdom of the poor, it's what she called the slums of Khaufpur" (*AP*, 40). Besides, after she has been through the Khaufpur disaster, Ma Franci, as a faithful Christian, believes that the apocalypse has literally started. Addressing to Animal, she says, "[d]on't you see, my poor little Animal, the Apokalis has already begun? It started on that night in Khaufpur" (*AP*, 63). Wallace argues that Ma Franci is unable to use the apokalis in its metaphorical sense due to her failure in translating one language to another (2016: 90). When Ma Franci says "the Apokalis took away their speech", Animal starts "wondering how anyone can get it totally wrong" (*AP*, 100). This, on the one hand, implies that Ma Franci begins to lose her sanity as well as language skills, but on the other hand it gives the idea that she is aware of the coming end of the planet better than anyone else. She experiences the

gas leak twenty years ago, but after almost twenty years, as narrated towards the end of the novel, Ma Franci experiences it once again when the same factory caught fire with the chemicals inside. This time, “[she] was in there till the end, helping other people get out, cover up their eyes. She did not protect herself against the gas, plus people who saw her said she was singing, she took the gas deep in her lungs” (AP, 363). Considering that the industrial disasters continue to happen in India such as Jaipur Oil Depot Fire in 2009 and Mayapuri Radiological Incident in 2010 (Trivedi *et.al.* 2014: 1) and many others around the world; and that we find ourselves exposed to radiation, toxic substances and the fear of “nuclear holocaust” (Nixon 2011: 62) on daily basis, Ma Franci predicts an imminent, large-scale eco-apocalypse. While the Khaufpuris are more vulnerable to exploitation as they are (or left) poor and weak, all the people around the world will be ecological others at some point, because human/nonhuman bodies, chemical agents, ecological systems and many other actors all intermingle with each other and enter into a perpetual transformation according to Alaimo’s concept of trans-corporeality. As a result, Ma Franci’s emphasis on *apokalis* appears as a prophecy stipulating that the earth and its habitants come closer to an eco-apocalypse everyday with their anti-ecological practices.

Somraj Pandit is presented in the novel as another victim of this eco-crime whose singing breath was taken from by “the Kampani’s gases” (AP, 130). He not only breathes the poisons of that night, but the wells around his house are also full of chemicals of the factory, the consumption of which is inevitable and results in long-term health issues (AP, 147). Being a famous singer throughout India, Somraj had plenty of awards and honours that let him called “*Aawaaz-e-Khaufpur*, the Voice of Khaufpur” (AP, 33). His whole life and career were shaped around his singing breath “until that night took away his wife and baby son and fucked up his lungs” (AP, 33). To describe the quality of her father’s breath, Nisha says, “[t]he breath of a singer is not ordinary breath. My father could take a breath and hold it for two minutes and then exhale it smoothly for one minute more” (AP, 226). Apparently, the toxic penetration into his body rips Somraj of his life energy. After the disaster, he goes through a complete change in his life and starts listening instead of singing anymore. With his ruined lungs and solemn face, he begins to teach music to his students and they win prizes from now on. Animal describes Somraj’s listening activities:

From where I'm perched I can see Pandit Somraj sitting in his room listening to music. Listen, listen, listen, it's all he does all day and night. If he isn't listening to records he's listening to the radio, if he isn't listening to the radio, he's listening to his students, or else to frogs and bicycle pumps and dripping taps. (AP, 77)

Although the Kampani, from the beginning, blames the local people for the disaster and claims that "the damage to people's health has been exaggerated" (AP, 159), Somraj's losing his capability to sing, which was a vital element of his identity, reveals that it is not only about the physical but also the psychological and cultural damages that upside down the Khaufpuris. Ray argues, "[t]he physical diminution of the body metonymically conveys experiences of loss of agency, loss of direction, disconnection from the land, and dispossession wrought by colonialism" (2013: 83). In the novel, Somraj used to sing Indian classical music and employed raga as a melodic structure. Mukherjee states that "in the classical tradition, the ragas are also understood as forms that express not merely human moods, but their relationship with the land and environment of their habitation" (2010: 159). Accordingly, Somraj's disability resulting from the breathing problems implies the impairment of his communication with his land and environment.

Thus, his ability or assumption to hear music in frogs, birds and many other beings can be interpreted as his attempt to re-establish his connection with nature from which he has been atrociously alienated. In his conversation with Animal on hearing music in frogs, Somraj says, a "frog contains more music than most pandits. This song of his [crikkk-crikkkk] is said to inspire the note of *dha*, which is the sixth note of our scale" (AP, 48). Mukherjee argues that in *Animal's People*, "Somraj and his music embody this principle of unity through dualities in aesthetic, social, political and environmental dimensions" (2010: 159) which suggests that his disability has personal, cultural and ecological consequences, and it introduces his body, specifically the ability to hear and sing music, as the transits between culture and nature. The eco-psychologist Laura Sewall claims that the lack of bodily wholeness is the underlying reason behind environmental and ecological crises. Sewall offers a critical insight into the inability to use our five sense organs to develop a healthy "relationship between ourselves and the more-than-human-world", and thus she describes human beings' separation from nature as "muteness" and "cultural blindness" (quoted in Ray 2013: 63-64). From this

perspective, Somraj's disability presents him as an ecological other whose connection with nature has been partially broken due to his lack of bodily wholeness.

The little victim of the disaster, Aliya, appears to be another body upon which political, social and environmental problems have been reflected. The chemicals and toxic substances left from that night slowly penetrate into her vulnerable body and turn her into a toxic body afflicted with fatal diseases. In the post-disaster period, she begins to suffer from an infection in her lungs due to the chemical exposure (AP, 150). Although she was born around twelve years after the explosion, she cannot escape from the long-lasting impacts of the disaster. Fighting against the disease for many years, unfortunately Aliya becomes the losing side. Feeling great agony with her death, Animal describes her moment of death in these words, her "voice is suddenly faint like it's caught away by wind, or whispered on the moon, or lost in the crackling of a great fire" (AP, 21). What is interesting in this part is that he uses natural elements to describe her pain which creates a contrast to her chemically usurped body. However, it has the implications that she finally managed to get rid of her identity as the ecological other and became united with nature after her death. As she was not allowed to be whole with the world she was living in bearing "the cost of the poisoning of the air and soil of the city" (Mukherjee 2010: 162), Aliya, along with many other characters, reflects the injustices made to her body and land.

A final point to make is that there is a shift of focus from subalternity to ecological otherness by assuming these victims as ecological others taking into account their broken relationship with their own selves and environments. Rickel refers to the journalists' approach to the Khaufpuris "as suffering, subaltern victims" (2012: 87) and also mentions the relationship between a subaltern narrator and global reader shaped by "socioeconomic inequalities and consumerist desires" (2012: 93). However, in her work 'Can the Subaltern Speak', Spivak criticizes the position of subaltern studies as a continuation of the Western domination over the 'other'. Similarly, in *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of the Capital* (2013), Vivek Chibber argues that the subaltern studies "assign[s] science, rationality, objectivity, and similar attributes to the west, instead of regarding them as common to both cultures" (2013: 289). Such criticisms against the subaltern studies require the change of the focus from being subaltern to being an ecological other, as observed through postcolonial ecocritical reading of *Animal's People*, to let the ecological victims in postcolonial lands to speak for

themselves. When Animal says “I put my ear to rough surface [of the pipe] and listen. Inside are voices and it’s like they are screaming” (AP, 274), he introduces the sorrowful groans of the disaster’s toxic victims, ecological others. Each time Animal tries to let the ecological other speak through words, sounds and gestures to tell the world that they can speak for themselves. During aftermath of the disaster, Animal himself is frequently asked to speak “the same story” (AP, 5) within a framework that the Western journalists set out. As a bodily and mentally victimized ecological other, he is not allowed to follow his own way in telling the stories, but he finds a way out and speaks to the Western world with a strong voice. By reducing the Western audience to just eyes, Animal turns them into bodiless and voiceless objects that are only capable of witnessing what the Khaufpuris have been going through during all these years after the eco-crime. With his overpowering narrative, Animal claims that now it is time to listen to those whom the eyes pushed to be the ecological others.

Consequently, “the interconnections, interchanges, and transits between human bodies and nonhuman natures” (Alaimo 2010: 2) are highly significant in the novel. The motivations behind such an interplay between different bodily natures rely on the argument that the well-being of human beings cannot be considered independent of the rest of the planet, and it is not possible to protect nature and ecological systems by only creating preserved areas (Alaimo 2010: 18). After the Bhopal disaster in 1984, a variety of chemicals has continued to be discharged into the lakes, rivers and drinking waters through which these chemicals kept surviving in the bodies of the local people. Sinha draws attention to these corrupted transits between the body and the environment in a postcolonial land. It is an undeniable fact that the third-world and postcolonial environments along with their habitants, throughout history, have been exploitable, and in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries an ecological form of exploitation appears by discriminating them as ecological others together with their lands. Their otherization impedes their potential to contribute to the ecologic system in which they live. Considering dissemination of toxic substances, pollution, poverty, species extinction and many other ecological issues in Khaufpur/Bhopal and many other environments, *Animal’s People*, an activist-literary work, should be evaluated as a call for leaving behind the human/nonhuman divide that causes large-scale ecological crises, posing a serious menace to the life standards of the future generations as well. The future generations can be shaped by our present actions, therefore there is a need to feel

responsible towards the earth itself in the first place in order to leave it as a liveable place for its future habitants. The novel presents Kha-in-the-Jar, along with other unborn fetuses, as the representative of the injustice towards of the future generations of Khaufpur. This type of injustice potentially endangers the natural and cultural sustainability.

4.2. Intergenerational Injustice: Kha-in-the-Jar

Kha-in-the-Jar, the unborn two-headed fetus condemned to live in a jar, is among the youngest of the Kampani's victims waiting to be properly born. When Animal visits a doctor together with Ma Franci to see what they can do for his deformity, he meets this fetus with two heads within a jar. As a would-be "child of the poison", he has been left deprived of a proper body and life. As a body "tell[s] stories: stories of social choices and political decisions, of natural dynamics and cultural practices, and of environmental risks and health issues" (Oppermann 2016: 416), the undeveloped body of Kha-in-the-Jar represents the results of wrong decisions and practices. Placing Kha-in-the-jar among the worst cases, Mukherjee says:

If you are lucky, you lose consciousness quickly and you die. If you are not, your death is a long drawn out, agonizing affair. If you survive, your lungs and eyes will never work properly again. Muscle pains and ulcers will prevent you from working or leading a normal life. You will give birth to unimaginably deformed or dead babies. This, on the night of 4 December 1984, and over the subsequent days and years, has been the experience. (2011: 135)

With the explosion at that night, pesticides produced by the Kampani have continued their survival in the bodies of the Khaufpuris, and the unborn fetuses appear to be the very embodiment of the relationship between the body and the environment influenced by multi-dimensional dynamics enforced in the global south. Alaimo argues that toxic bodies give rise to the discussion of trans-corporeal ethics focusing on "practices that have far-reaching and often unforeseen consequences for multiple peoples, species, and ecologies" (2010: 22). In the light of these invisible and potential consequences, the novel opens the long-term consequences of such ill-doings up for discussion within the framework of intergenerational justice which requires a more comprehensive understanding of justice in which "future or past generations can be viewed as holding

legitimate claims or rights against present generations, who in turn stand under correlative duties to future or past generations” (Meyer 2016).

Kha-in-the-Jar is among the mutilated bodies as “porous border[s] and permeable membranes, the living who are semi-dead and the dead who are living specters” (Nixon 2011: 458). Involved in a hypothetical identity crisis about its species just like Animal, Kha-in-the-Jar has been placed among the abnormals. Struggling to stand against the injustices of the Kampani, Kha along with others in the jars speaks, “everyone on this earth has in their body a share of the Kampani’s poisons” (AP, 237). Just as during colonial periods the differences between the white and other bodies became highly crucial reference points for determining one’s value, nowadays in the global south the focus is on the postcolonial subjects that are turned into ecological others through their toxication and mutilation. This exploitation of the body recalls Foucault’s description of “complex and floating domain of the flesh as a domain of the exercise of power and objectification” (2004: 201). Such subjugated and mutilated bodies struggling to survive in a toxic environment introduce “the world as a site of ongoing hybridizations” (Lovino 2014: 26). Lamenting for his deformed relationship with nature, Kha-in-the-Jar says, “I am the egg of nature, which ignorant and arrogant men have spoiled” (AP, 139). This is a direct criticism against the human beings acting upon their selfish interests to dominate nature. Depending his very existence on nature, Kha-in-the-Jar brings forward the idea that nature might not give birth to any egg, namely to a life, in the future due to such chemical interventions.

In this respect, these foetuses appear as a call for human beings to be just towards the future generations particularly in postcolonial environments who are the most vulnerable and the most silent. Thus, allowing other nonhuman voices to speak, Sinha not only reveals such power-greediness-oriented injustices the present generations suffer from but also those that the future generations will face due to the decisions taken by the current generations. By producing pesticides, useful for controlling pests and disease carriers in agriculture, the Kampani was supposed to create potential for solving human problems through “the bond between chemistry and humanity” (Omar 2012: 141), but instead it used the technological and chemical potential to put the humanity along with future generations in a great risk. However, “if there is an intergenerational conflict of interests, present generations may be obligated by considerations of justice not to pursue policies that impose an unfair intergenerational distribution of costs and

benefits” (Meyer 2016). After the disaster, fetuses, from the very beginning of their life, represent a life and death struggle, and the children who managed to be born develop various deformities in time including the lack or surplus of different body parts. Moreover, even the healthy women who survived the disaster become poisoned because of the chemical agents embedded in the environment, all of which give rise to injustices against future generations. Although it is claimed by some critics that justice does not apply to the intergenerational relationship due to the lack of any reciprocity between different generations, the consequences listed above reveal that present generations potentially dominate the life standards of future generations when they take decisions that might cause irreversible impacts on them (Barry 1977: 243-44).

Kha-in-the-Jar exposes that the future generations of the Khaufpuris are at great risk due to the neo-colonial practices. *Animal's People*, as a fictional re-working of Bhopal disaster, reflects the long-term harms that the present generations do to the future generations who still, even after more than twenty years, cope with the physical and mental disabilities. Such ecological crises reduce the capacity of future generations to the extent that the entire world can be negatively influenced by the consequences at macro level, because “future people’s existence, number, and specific identity depend (are contingent) upon currently living people’s decisions and actions” (Meyer 2016). No matter who are the future generations, the present generations will always be in a position to manipulate their lives with their long-term policies and projects. In contrast to De George’s notion that “[f]uture generations by definition do not exist now. They cannot now, therefore, be the present bearer or subject of anything, including rights” (1981: 198), Sinha’s novel is a call for the global north to internalize “an understanding of the ethical significance of seeing ourselves as members of a transgenerational polity and community” (Meyer 2016). The fact that the future generations cannot claim their future rights or place sanctions does not mean that the present generations are not responsible for fulfilling their duties.

The professor of philosophy Clark Wolf argues that the very identities of future generations “depend on our choices, since different people may come to exist depending on what we do now” (2005: 279). Subjected to intergenerational injustices in his own land, Kha-in-the-Jar, as a hybrid offspring and “an ugly little monster” (AP, 57), appears to be a deformed, new kind of human being together with other fetuses. The decisions to build the factory in Khaufpur/Bhopal, to decrease the safety precautions at the plant

due to their costs and not to remove the remaining parts of the plant from the land after the disaster result in the emergence of disabled generations and environments that would jeopardize the sustainability of the world at the human and nonhuman level to a large extent. The very existence of Kha-in-the-Jar in the novel is a dramatic response to Wolf's question "[c]an future persons be the victims of present choices?" (2005: 280-281). To draw attention to his and Animal's mutated bodies, Kha-in-the-Jar says, "[m]y two heads rise from one neck. From your hips, at the point where your back bends, rises a second you who's straight, stands upright and tall" (AP, 139). They, like many other Khaufpuris/Bhopalis, have been forcefully pushed into the abnormality leaving behind their humanity. To violently attack the lands in Khaufpur in order to enable massive productions, which would bring economic and political power to the producing party (*Amrika* in this case), turns out to damage not only the existing lands but also the future of the living beings these lands host. Ultimately, "[i]t is presently in our power to destroy the earth's great ecosystems, and decrease the rich diversity of species" (Wolf 2005: 280). The toxic lands and bodies that Sinha introduces in his novel exposes the present generations' ignorance of their obligation to look after the rights of future generations for a better world.

Realising that the transnational colonialism, which is perpetuated through the establishment of transnational and multinational companies in the global south, will never end, Kha-in-the-Jar forms a Board of the victims to act collectively and perhaps to be a voice for future generations who are vulnerable to the decisions of the generations preceded to them. The motivations behind this urge for collective action is "[t]o undo everything the Kampani does. Instead of breaking ground for new factories to grow grass and trees over the old ones, instead of inventing new poisons, to make medicines to heal the hurts done by those poisons, to remove them from the earth and water and air" (AP, 237). Although there are no specific norms that protect the welfare of future generations, such motivations of this Board might be evaluated as a call for embracing "the just saving principle", termed by the American philosopher John Rawls, in order to provide intergenerational justice for a sustainable future (Rawls 1971: 290). Assuming that human beings have common interests, Rawls claims that the influence of one generation over the other has vitally significant consequences, and therefore just savings, in a way to look after the social, economic, political, and environmental rights of future generations, are necessary for intergenerational justice. Accordingly, Sinha's

activist/fictional work *Animal's People* reflects that the overexploitation and overuse of the lands along with the human/nonhuman beings in the postcolonial environments violate the right to quality living of both the present and future generations, which poses a great risk for the sustainability of the ecology.



CHAPTER FIVE

5. ENVIRONMENT AS A NONHUMAN VICTIM OF THE INDUSTRIAL CATASTROPHE

5.1. Eco-Crime in Postcolonial Lands

The ecocritical engagement with postcolonial studies reveals that the impacts of the long-standing anthropocentric perspectives go beyond the concerns of racism and cause the earth to face large-scale ecological problems that threaten the sustainability of the planet earth. In the twenty-first century, the relationship between biophysical environment and human beings claims more attention as it has been neglected for centuries. The failure in understanding the significance of this relationship has isolated human from nature and turned the mankind into a violent, unconscious butcher of her/his habitat. The motivations behind the broken connection between the human and nonhuman world go back to the philosopher and scientist Francis Bacon who argues that “[m]an, if we look to final causes, may be regarded as the center of the world; inasmuch that if man were taken away from the world, the rest would seem to be all astray, without aim or purpose” (2010: para. 3). Bacon valorises the human being at the highest level and mentions the idleness of everything on earth in the non-existence of human beings. As a counter argument, Manes asserts:

[i]f fungus, one of the ‘lowliest’ of forms on a humanistic scale of values, were to go extinct tomorrow, the effect on the rest of the biosphere would be catastrophic, since the health of forests depends on Mycorrhizal fungus, and the disappearance of forests would upset the hydrology, atmosphere, and temperature of the entire globe. In contrast, if *Homo sapiens* disappeared, the event would go virtually unnoticed by the vast majority of Earth's life forms. (1996: 24)

While Bacon’s view discloses why human beings have been, for centuries, self-centred while working on the soil, consuming natural resources and using technology for production, Manes’ ecocentric perspective points out the equal significance of all kinds of beings on earth as their interconnectedness is the main source of the earth’s survival. Throughout the narration, *Animal’s People* portrays the fatal and irreversible consequences of the former perspective upon the air, water, soil, flora, fauna and many

other nonhuman beings that struggle to survive within the toxic environment of Khaufpur. Towards the end of the novel, the scene where Animal gets lost in the forest represents an imaginary return to nature, implying the necessity of embracing Manes' ecocentric perspective so that both the present and future beings can continue their survival. The reflections of these views in a postcolonial land from ecocritical perspective affirm Curtin's idea that "a self-perceived 'center' of power and civilization exploited 'distant' places and peoples for its economic benefit" (2005: 19), and in return it calls every citizen of the earth to be ecologically literate. In this respect, the postcolonial ecocritical reading of the novel highlights the fact that we cannot and should not avoid environmental problems even though they are geographically distant, because "[t]he world is intricately connected in the ways that often escape our notice" (Curtin 2005: 17).

According to postcolonial ecocritical perspective, the global north is inclined to forget that we, including any kind of human and nonhuman beings, all live in and share the resources of the same planet. This results in the re-emergence of colonialism in different disguises. Today's globalization at economic and cultural level can be evaluated as a continuation of the conventional colonialism which has been called neocolonialism since the end of the World War II. The damage to nature becomes more visible in postcolonial environments and affects the human beings with severe consequences including the large-scale environmental disasters. Such fatal disasters require rethinking the deformed relationship between postcolonial subjects and their environments for the sake of the entire planet. Underlining the influence of colonization upon this broken relationship, Plumwood says, "the concept of colonization can be applied to non-human nature itself, and [...] the relationship between humans, or certain groups of them, and the more-than-human world might be aptly characterized as one of colonization" (2003: 52). This brings forward the idea that the oppression of races has been interconnected with the oppression of the environments. Carrigan discusses that it is the Western colonialism that lies behind the devastating cultural and environmental calamities. The discriminatory consequences of these calamities leave postcolonial communities more vulnerable to the forthcoming social and natural disasters (2010: 255).

Pointing out the discrimination between the environments in the global north and south, Mukherjee says, "[w]hat is understood as the environment in one, is

incomprehensible in the other” (2010: 142). Just as the human does not mean the same thing in the Western and non-Western communities, the environment signifies different value systems between the global north and global south. The suspension of security measures in the American factory in Khaufpur due to the high costs reveals while the environment in the global north needs to be protected with utmost importance, the one in the global south is open to overuse and abuse. This implies denunciation of the early ecocriticism that “glorified the individual retreat into the pristine space of nature” (Ray 2013: 22) and involved discriminatory practices in nature preservation. As a result, the multi-dimensional ecological disasters in postcolonial environments such as Khaufpur/Bhopal have been ignored and excluded from the environmental actions. Garrard’s definition of ecocriticism focuses on the subjectivity of the nonhuman beings and the problematic boundary between the human and other beings (2004: 148). Postcolonial ecocritical reading of *Animal’s People* signifies that this boundary has been more problematized in postcolonial environments because of the underrated position of their human and nonhuman inhabitants, therefore the concept of environment needs to be more comprehensive and holistic in order to create a correct and objective awareness towards ecological issues around the earth. To DeLoughrey and Handley, the Bhopal/Khaufpur environmental tragedy calls for questioning “the spatial politics of environmental toxicity” (2011: 216) which have tremendous effects upon the lives of human and nonhuman beings. Moreover, the fact that an American multinational company is the executor of this eco-crime necessitates rethinking of “the international framework of law, justice, and rights” (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 216). In the light of these arguments, it is possible to claim that the pastoral writings over the ideal of pristine nature do not respond to social, environmental and political concerns collectively. That’s why, the environmental literature, with a closer look at the postcolonial environments, should “include representations of urban spaces, borderlands, toxic places, the home, the body, landscapes of resistance, and transnational and other views of the environment that account for a broader range of trans-corporealities” (Ray 2013: 23).

Considered among the works of the recent environmental literature, Sinha’s novel has from the outset been engaged in representation of the nonspeaking, otherized and degraded nature. The novel guides the readers to uncover the dynamics behind the eco-crime committed in Khaufpur/Bhopal as well as the reflections of this eco-crime.

Above all, it brings the question of why Khaufpur/Bhopal has been selected as a site of possible exploitation and degradation. The main reason is considered to be the Western-dominated understanding of development and progress. Drawing attention to the fact that we own a culture guided by the ideology of 'progress', Curtin says:

[j]ust like the American evacuated people from their longstanding places in nature with the idea of nature preservation while having progress, similarly it applied its idea of economic progress in which developing and underdeveloped countries have to exploit their own sources to catch up the developed countries. (2005: 9)

With the anticipation of emerging into a developed country, India offers its valuable assets to the service of the American companies that promise economic development through the movement of technological possibilities into the Indian lands. However, the legacy of colonialism in India, with its insufficient physical and social infrastructures, does not allow a healthy process of industrialization and development. Besides, the cost of the technologies that would provide better and abundant agricultural productions is too much to pay back without any drawback in Indian economy. Kim Fortun argues that Union Carbide chose Bhopal because "the region was seen as 'backward' and thus targeted for development by the Indian government" (2001: xiv). Moreover, India is required to enforce more flexible controls on foreign investment to attract more capital, but this flexibility establishes a ground for ignoring the bans against establishing industrial facilities in "ecologically sensitive zones" and building "pesticide, cement and bauxite mines" in conservation zones (Karlner 1997: 247). Apparently, the economic interests have been prior to the environmental issues, giving rise to irreversible calamities at micro and macro level. Among all others, the Bhopal/Khaufpur disaster has been the most devastating industrial disaster in the history of India. Putting emphasis on the immediate and long term effects of the eco-crime in Khaufpur, Holoch, citing Sinha, says:

One was the gas leak of 1984. The other is the one that's been going on ever since, which is the leak of chemicals abandoned in the factory, into the ground [...] Over all these years they've penetrated deep down into the groundwater, and they've poisoned the wells of fourteen different communities. (2012: 189)

It is a shocking fact that more than 40 tons of methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas was disseminated from the Kampani on December 3, 1984. The gas penetrated into the bodies of all human and nonhuman beings, some of which were destroyed immediately and the rest was left to struggle against the “slow violence” till the end (Nixon 2011). In Omar’s words, MIC and other chemicals:

not only coated the economic environment that reproduces food and debt in India, but they have also entered the invisible molecular interior of animals and humans alike. Not easily washed off, this molecular coating prosthetically links water, food, and health in Bhopal to the historical vicissitudes of corporate investment in (and abandonment of) human capital. (2012: 129-130)

Picturing the slow violence as a result of this toxic penetration, Sinha’s novel puts forward that the main components of colonialism continue their survival in postcolonial lands with various practices such as indirect usurpation of foreign lands through transnational companies, the movement of foreign technologies and labour to these lands, and the exploitation of their human and nonhuman sources for the benefit of the power holders. A critical reading of the novel offers an ecocritical approach to the damage on a postcolonial environment with its all life forms.

Khaufpur seems to be the fictional embodiment of Murray Bookchin’s statement that the natural environment was turned into a huge factory and the city thoroughly became a marketplace (quoted in Güngör 2013: 107). Due to its overurbanization, population growth, insufficient infrastructure, and malnutrition, which can be listed as the anti-developmental consequences of industrialization process in India, Khaufpur/Bhopal has already been a site in which nature was crumbling to maintain its existence. With the explosion in 1984, the city was derived into darkness where there was no sign of communication between human beings and nature, disturbingly illustrating the human dominance over the nonhuman. Plumwood argues that reason is considered to be the primary quality that determines the value of a being. As “nature includes everything that reason excludes” (1993: 19-20), it has been harshly dominated for centuries. By disregarding the intrinsic value of every being on earth, the human beings confine themselves to their reasonable worlds in which there is no place for caring nature and environment. Ironically, it is the nature itself that is the primary source of the human existence and sustainability of the earth. Turan Özgür Güngör

states that although the human is the exploiting side and nature is the exploited side within the human-nature relationship (2013: 107), human beings cannot continue their existence without the survival of nature (2013: 2).

5.2. Multi-Level Damage to All Life Forms

Around half a century ago, Rachel Carson criticized the use of herbicides and pesticides which are held responsible for victimization of the ecological components and degradation of natural process (Nixon 2011: 65). In Khaufpur, the factory built by the Kampani to produce pesticides to increase the number and quality of agricultural products deviates from the aim and turns into a biocidal attack, which indirectly places a high amount of risk on the sustainability of the ecologic system because of the penetration of various toxic pollutants into the air, water and soil. The disaster disseminated an excessive amount of air pollutants to the atmosphere, affecting not only human beings, as elaborately discussed in chapter four, but also animals, plants, organisms as well as biogeochemical processes. When the factory catches fire for the second time, Ma Franci is “hearing the voice of a horde of angels and other living beings, numbering millions and millions, they are crying out to god, and all the creatures of the air, on the earth and under it, in the sea, are crying” (AP, 339).

Since the air, the vital element of ecologic system, has the capability to infuse into all life forms, it bears an immense significance for the ecology. The deadly impacts of the gases on the creatures of the air, earth, and sea reveal the dangers that biodiversity faces because of the disaster. Carson puts it:

The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible. In this now universal contamination of the environment, chemicals are the sinister and little-recognized partners of radiation in changing the very nature of the world—the very nature of its life. (2002: 6)

With local and global impacts, the air pollution of that night initiates the chain of evil that overtakes the natural environment in Khaufpur. First of all, “the initial airborne terror morph[ed] into a waterborne terror” (Nixon 2011: 61). The water resources in

Khaufpur, which were already scarce and insufficient in quality, turned into the fountains of poison. The life giving nature of water was forcefully transformed into a life-taking agency. To picturize the pollution of the water resources, Animal says:

Another time, I'd have been about eight or nine, we'd gone to swim. Just now I mentioned lakes, really they're clay pits behind the Kampani's factory where bulldozers would dump all different coloured sludges. These pits are massive, the water in them stinks, but when the rains come they fill up and become proper lakes with reeds etc. Since rain water is clean people would wash their cows and buffalos, we kids would jump in, splash around in the water. (AP, 16)

With the lakes, Animal refers to the pits where the Kampani (Union Carbide) has been dumping its toxic wastes for many years. The little children's swimming in these pits draws a sharp contrast to the idea of enjoying the natural environment, because the lakes do not have anything to do with nature. They are just pits full of water contaminated with chemicals and metals. The Khaufpuris wait for the nature's intervention to this water pollution through rain in order to clean their animals and let their children enjoy nature. As Khaufpur is the fictional counterpart of Bhopal, it might be useful to mention the level of water pollution in the surrounding areas. Jack Laurenson reports that the organizations such as Greenpeace has found out high amounts of "chlorobenzenes and volatile and semi-volatile organochlorines, as well as metals such as chromium, copper, nickel, lead, zinc and mercury in the local water and soil", and mercury concentrations have been calculated to be seven million times higher than the limits set out by the WHO (2011). Offering a fictional re-working of these facts, *Animal's People* illustrates that "[t]hrough a system of circulation, the poisons have settled the landscape and entered bodies through the local water and food; they stick to the blood and are passed down to children through breast milk" (Omar 2012: 144). Accordingly, Animal's description of the lakes picturizes the broken relationship between human and nature, implying that any harm to nature finds its way into the ecologic system and into the bodies of its inhabitants.

Specifically, the novel brings forward that the air, water and soil pollution adversely affect trees and plants in Khaufpur by limiting their growing and nutritional capacities. During one of the hallucinations he frequently experiences, Animal says, "[s]hit's over, I'm back in this heap of stones with grass growing out the sides enough

to feed a cow” (AP, 21). The heap of stones together with the scarcity of plants implies the insufficiency of green areas due to the chemical toxicity of the resources that are necessary for plant growing. The atmosphere the plants live in is exposed to acid rain as a result of the high amount of chemicals which can destroy plants and trees by rendering the soil infertile. Animal, living in the dead factory, refers to the rise of an unnatural forest within the factory by addressing the eyes “[l]ook inside, you see something strange, a forest is growing, tall grasses, bushes, trees, creepers that shoot sprays of flowers like fireworks” (AP, 29). The employment of ‘fireworks’ as a simile for flowers implies the transformation of plants from natural to artificial. As industrial products, the fireworks symbolize the industrialization practices in Khaufpur. Besides, they are the devices that make use of combustion or explosion to create a visual show. Although the irony lies in the growing of a forest within a poisoned factory, the artificial or unnatural fabric of these plants and trees discloses the harm to the ecosystem that depends on natural plants.

Furthermore, Zafar’s warning that “if the dry grasses inside the factory ever caught light, if fire reached these brown lumps, poison gases would gush out, it’d be that night all over again” (AP, 230) reveals that the plants in Khaufpur barely carry out their life-giving function which is to release oxygen into the air. Instead, they have the potential to help the poisonous gases to usurp the natural environment in Khaufpur once again. At the very beginning of the forest scene, Animal says, “I am searching for other living things, none do I see, coloured like the back of a shrike’s the forest, browns and fawns, grasses dry, dry thorns, dry trunks, its leaves are suffering in the heat’s fierce fetch” (AP, 342-343). He draws attention to the fact that plants are also in pain, as the chemicals badly affect their respiratory functions which hinders their proper growing. It has been reported that after the Bhopal disaster the vegetation in the surrounding areas had been negatively affected, and the local survivors were advised not to consume locally grown vegetables since genetic damages and pollutants were detected in plants (Bhargava 1986: 6). In addition, some kinds of plants like terrestrial ones can absorb pollutants from water, which might find the way into the bodies of animals and human beings through the food chain. The novel draws attention to the transformation and degradation of the plants in Khaufpur/Bhopal with the latent consequences for not only the local but also the global inhabitants of the earth. This reminds Lovejoy’s statement that “[t]he perfection of the universe therefore requires not only a multitude of

individuals, but also diverse kinds, and therefore diverse grades of things” (Lovejoy 1936: 77).

Wandering in the forest under the influence of *datura* (a poisonous plant) in his stomach and of the poisonous smokes from the fire at the factory, Animal says, “not just in me’s this agony but in the world. Where are you, animals, let me introduce myself?” (AP, 343). Thus, he brings animals into the discussion about the ecological consequences of industrial disasters over the life forms other than human beings. In relation to the Bhopal disaster, Fortun reports that “[w]ithin hours, the streets of Bhopal were littered with human corpses and the carcasses of buffaloes, cows, dogs and birds” (2001: 259). This reveals that the fauna in the area had been affected as much as the human beings. The gases of that night killed and disabled thousands of animals, but the worst part is that the air, water and soil pollution has continued to destroy the animals for many years after the disaster, which exemplifies the concept of *slow violence* that Nixon introduces. Animal mentions the “peacocks, goats and even the grey herons which sometimes [they] find dead beside the Kampani’s lakes” (AP, 49). Leaving the habitat unsuitable for animal survival by not removing the dead factory and cleaning its lethal chemicals, the Kampani causes “the involuntary incorporation of Animal and all other animals (human or otherwise) into global systems of exploitation and oppression” (Parry 2012: 56).

Listening to the voices crying “[t]hat night has come again!”, Animal states, “[n]ow I know why the ground is heaving, the little light from the door of our tower shows the earth alive with snakes and other small creatures, rushing desperate to escape the flames” (AP, 339). Animal picturizes that human beings and animals struggle together to save themselves from the second disaster as both knew and experienced the consequences of the first one. Peter Singer, who evaluates the boundary drawn between human beings and animals in relation to their capability to suffer, claims, “[i]f a being suffers, there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration. No matter what the nature of the being, the principle of equality requires that its suffering be counted equally with the like suffering [...] of any other being.” (Singer 1983: 137). Such an ecocentric perspective to the suffering of any being on earth assumes abolition of the hierarchical superiority of human beings over animals, particularly because each has its own intrinsic value and vulnerability to suffering. Animal’s frequent reference to animals’ position on earth reminds that we, as human

beings, are not private owners of the earth, but just part of it as much as animals. Acting with the eco-conscious, which means being sensitive to environmental problems and impacts, will open the way to understand that “environment must be seen as a mutually sustaining network in which humans and non-humans are always already linked with each other, and on whose collective action and prosperity the functioning of the network depends” (Mukherjee 2010: 147).

In the light of these arguments, it is necessary to mention the Wisconsin conservationist Aldo Leopold’s ‘land ethic’ that extends the boundaries of a community to include soils, plants and animals. While land ethic does not seek to interfere with the use of such resources, it requires their sustainability and conservation in a natural state (Leopold 1949: 240). The concept of land “as disputed object of discursive management and material control” (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 21) reveals itself in *Animal’s People* based on its postcolonial and ecological context. The pesticides produced by the company have become the indispensable part of the land, rendering it an unhealthy and polluted landscape deteriorating the ecosystem to a great extent. As the representative of the Western power, the transnational American company claims its right to rule over the land of a postcolonial community without giving a second thought about their own relationship with their land. To challenge that kind of mentality, Leopold says, “[a] land ethic changes the role of Homo Sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such” (1968: 204).

When Animal says, “[n]o bird song. No hoppers in the grass. No bee hum. Insects can’t survive here. Wonderful poisons the Kampani made, so good it’s impossible to get rid of them, after all these years they’re still doing their work” (AP, 29), he uncovers the long-lasting impacts of the land usurpation by the Kampani over many different life forms. The Kampani shares the same mentality with the colonial forces who previously considered non-European lands open to exploitation as they were thought to be only inhabited by the *animalistic* and *savage* beings who do not have the capability to effectively cultivate the soil. However, the postcolonial ecocritical perspective rejects this attitude and requires embracing an ethic that accepts the land as “more than a scape, but a picture and a story in which humans participate along with other life forms” (Murphy 2000: 12). From this perspective, land is not just soil but “a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals” (Leopold

1949: 253). In the case of Khaufpur, the fact that the hazardous wastes due to the chemical disaster pass through the food chain to the human and nonhuman bodies turns the land into a site of degradation. In this respect, *Animal's People* invites the readers (particularly those living in the global north) to embrace a land ethic that focuses on ecological conscience through which human beings can re-establish their cooperation and peace with nature.

Favouring an equality based relationship between the land, as a non-human being, and the human being, Leopold argues that it is not morally right to treat the land as a property just as the masters did to slaves in the past (Heitman 2013: 34). Since land is the main source through which the long term survival of species can be possible, it is highly urgent in the twenty-first century to find eco-friendly alternatives to replace the detrimental practices of production in particularly postcolonial lands like the poor Khaufpur to which “foreign environmental risk has been outsourced [...] while the capital it generates is concentrated in distant states and corporations” (Parry 2012: 56). The novel’s representation of such economic and environmental injustices is a call for the global citizens to be just towards those deemed exploitable. In the end all beings share the same earth, which entails everybody to take precautions for protecting their habitat. William Golding makes a valuable contribution to this point with these words:

Our humanity, our capacity for living together in a full and fruitful life, does not reside in knowing things for the sake of knowing them or even in the power to exploit our surroundings (...) Our humanity rests in the capacity to make value judgments, unscientific assessments, the power to decide that this is right, that wrong, this ugly, that beautiful, this just, that unjust. (1965: 130)

In contribution to Golding’s guidance about figuring out what is wrong/unjust and right/just, Leopold says, “[a] thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” (1968: 224-5). It might be useful to analyse this statement in relation to the American character Elli Barber’s observation of the land in the Nutcracker, an overpopulated district of Khaufpur, which “looks like it was flung up by an earthquake” (AP, 105). After hearing the word earthquake, Animal suddenly begins to see the city as she does, and describes the centre of this district as “a wreckage of baked earth mounds and piles of planks on which hang gunny sacks, plastic sheets, dried palm leaves” (AP, 106). It is

a significant point that while earthquake is a natural phenomenon on which there is not any direct impact of human beings, the resemblance of the current state of a land to an earthquake-shaken one displays the outstanding level of human-caused degradation over the land. The “filth, litter, and plastic all over, open drains” (AP, 105) reveal the urgent necessity to find ways to process the land without spoiling it, because the survival of the ecosystem depends on the survival of the lands. When the German Philosopher Heidegger says, “[m]an is not the lord of beings. Man is the shepherd of Being” (1993: 245), he disclaims the long-lasting dominance of the anthropocentric view and announces human beings as the protector of the ecosystem that they share with other beings.

Another interesting point to make is that the Kampani’s attack to nature and environment in Khaufpur dramatically affects the cultural values. Nisha’s statement “[t]he poison in Khaufpur’s not only in the soil and water, it’s in people’s hearts” (AP, 196) implies the radical transformation of their intricate cultural relationships to nature and cultural assets because of the neocolonial intervention to the habitat of the Khaufpuris by the Euro-American culture. In his work *Ecocriticism* (2004), Garrard explains that in the Euro-American culture humans are expected to be distinguished and distant from nature which lies behind their alienation from and superiority over nature (25). With this ideology on their mind and heart, the Euro-American forces colonized the foreign lands and forcefully introduced “deforestation, railroads, loss of animal populations, and landscape alterations for settlement and farming” (Ray 2013: 102). Such practices have been responsible for keeping the local away from their “precolonial unity” (DeLoughrey and Handley 2011: 23). Thus the chemicals fusing into nature and environment corrupt the unity that in return destroys the cultural assets of the Khaufpuris. The physical violence over the land turns into environmental and cultural destruction. Elli Barber is told by a doctor that:

Khaufpur once had a high cultural life, and a remarkable history, famous it was for poets, politically progressive, a haven for refugees including a large community of Afghans. [...] He [the old doctor living by the poisoned lake] complained how all these things are forgotten because nowadays when the world hears the name of Khaufpur it thinks only of poison. [The doctor says,] ‘I curse the day the Kampani came here because its disaster erased our past’. (AP, 152)

During Zafar and Farouq's hunger strike to stand against any possible deal between the government and the Kampani lawyers who are seeking to avoid the legal punishment on behalf of the Kampani, Elli Barber warns Zafar about the fatal consequences of the disaster and tells him that he will be no different than those who get lost in a desert without any water or food (AP, 290). One of the supporting women around says, "[w]hat is Khaufpur but a desert?" (AP, 292). The use of desert as a metaphor for Khaufpur reveals how the land was transformed into an empty land, "severing webs of accumulated cultural meaning and treating the landscape as if it were uninhabited by the living, the unborn, and the animate deceased" (Nixon 2011: 17). It suggests the idea that the continuation of nature and culture is very much interrelated, therefore respect and care for the former provides the enrichment of the latter. Emphasizing the consistency and supplementary aspect of nature and culture relationship for sustainability of environmental and cultural well-being, the American environmental activist and cultural critic Wendell Berry expresses, "a human community, too, must collect leaves and stories, and turn them to account. It must build soil, and build that memory of itself [...]. These two kinds of accumulation, of local soil and local culture, are intimately related" (1990: 154). Thus, offering a critical insight into the ecological consequences of neoliberal practices in postcolonial lands as an extension of colonial practices in the past, Sinha's novel *Animal's People* reveals the root of multi-level damages given to the human and nonhuman beings in Khaufpur and calls for a return to nature, as implied in the forest scene, to re-establish an eco-friendly relationship with the earth hosting us in order to possess and hand down a promising future.

5.3. An Imaginary Return to Nature

After the fire breaks out in the factory for the second time, Animal is badly affected by the poisonous gas released from the factory and by the *datura* he consumed to commit suicide. Losing his consciousness, Animal, together with other victims, is placed into a truck heading to the hospital. On the way, Animal comes to his senses and gets off the truck to live the rest of his life in the forest, as he does not want to see "a human face" anymore (AP, 341), because human beings are the ones who are responsible for the continuous disasters in Khaufpur. Animal's hallucinatory conversation with trees, animals and the moon, and his sense of belonging to the forest are contrary to the image of Khaufpur where trees, animals and all nonhuman beings are

either dead or in great danger. Animal's personal communication with the natural elements in the forest brings the trope of *pastoral* into discussion. Accordingly, the forest scene, on the one hand, signifies an imaginary retreat into the past when the nature in Khaufpur has not yet been vastly corrupted and surrendered to the industrial plundering, and, on the other hand, it implies "an imaginative potential for the assertion of a new, and better, world" (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 84).

Unlike Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) that begins with "a picture of 'prosperous farms', 'green fields', foxes barking in the hills, silent deer, ferns, wildflowers, 'countless birds'" (Garrard 2004: 1), the forest scene in *Animal's People* comes after the fatal and latent fire at the factory, offering an ecologically damaged picture of Khaufpur. Scott Slovic argues that the texts of nature writing may either celebrate "natural beauty and wildness" or may be evaluated as a "warning or critique" encouraging the reader to involve in personal or political actions (1996: 85). From this perspective, it is not possible to consider the forest scene as a part of pastoral mode that emphasizes the idealisation of nature. It can rather be characterized as "post-pastoral" in Terry Gifford's terms (1999: 174) or "postcolonial pastoral" as termed by Nixon (2011: 245). According to Gifford, post-pastoral focuses on the symbiotic relationship between environmental and social justice at the local and global level rather than reflecting on pure nature, countryside or landscape. The post-pastoral takes a personal relationship with nature into account in order to reflect "a dynamic interplay between, inner and outer worlds" (Huggan and Tiffin 2010: 115). Nixon argues that the intrusion of colonial memories upon pastoralism gives way to a kind of writing that he calls "postcolonial pastoral" which "refracts an idealized nature through memories of environmental and cultural degradation in the colonies" (2011: 245). It is possible to observe both Gifford and Nixon's definitions of this new writing through Animal's experiences with the nonhuman world in the forest.

When Animal enters the forest, he is initially surrounded by the darkness and silence where grasses, thorns, trunks are all dry. Everything is silent and cautious. When he calls for animals and trees to speak with him, "a tear drips from the moon's eye and lands on a branch" (AP, 343), then everywhere shines and all beings show themselves to Animal. Animal's hallucinatory personification of the beings in the forest supports the idea that:

[t]hese entities possessed a consciousness, reason, and volition, no less intense and complete than a human being's. The Earth itself, the sky, the winds, rocks, streams, trees, insects, birds and all other animals therefore had personalities and were thus as fully persons as other human beings.

(Callicott 1989: 189)

Animal's attempt to communicate with these entities is a call for re-establishing the connection with nature, as this connection is still under threat due to the legacies of the colonial period. Recalling the death, poverty, poor health, hunger and filth in Khaufpur, Animal states that the period before the forest was "a fading nightmare of a city of stinks and misery" (AP, 352), and he takes shelter in the forest and tries to engage in a personal relationship with its inhabitants. His speech to the silent nature points out that there are other ways to treat the nonhuman world rather than objectifying and deteriorating it. Ultimately it is the nature that will care for and protect its every citizen. It just requires the human world to be a good listener to the nonhuman world. As a clear message for the reader, Animal tells Farouq that "all things in the forest talk to you, just listen, you too will hear" (AP, 355).

Re-uniting with the natural world, Animal begins to enjoy the protective, nourishing and recuperative qualities of nature. Likening the forest to paradise, he senses that there will be no suffer, fear, hunger or thirst anymore. To his friends, who come to the forest to take him back to Khaufpur, Animal says, "Khaufpur's gone. No more of that misery, here we are all free in paradise" (AP, 352). Identifying the forest with paradise and his hometown with hell, Animal implicitly pictures a contrasting image of Khaufpur before and after the colonial intervention. Due to the neocolonial practices, in Khaufpur, the local people are left with a land that is not much different than a desert.

Deprived of food and water in Khaufpur despite all the industrial interventions to produce more products, Animal becomes alive again by receiving nourishment from the Mother Earth. After a bee-comb falls upon his head, Animal says, "I've grabbed it, bitten into it, honey's running between my lips down my chin, never has anything tasted so good" (AP, 353). Nature provides nourishment in return for his embracement of the nonhuman world. He survives with honey and water in the forest for many days, and he feels gratitude for it. The poison inside him is cured by his direct contact with nature. Mentioning the indispensability of nature for humanity, Gifford puts emphasis on the

therapeutic benefit of trees for hospital patients and on establishing an unmediated contact with nature. He argues, “[w]e not only need this sort of contact, we need to communicate it, examine it and share its meaning through our symbolic sign-systems” (1995:10).

Animal’s hallucinatory conversation with the nonhuman world in the forest represents an imaginary return to nature. This imaginary return implies a direct criticism towards the practices that jeopardize the cooperation between the human and nonhuman world. Animal puts it:

[T]his place [the forest] will be my everlasting home, I have found it at last, this is the deep time when there was no difference between anything when separation did not exist when all things were together, one and whole before humans set themselves apart and became clever and made cities and kampanis and factories. (AP, 352)

This recalls a longing for pre-colonial and pre-industrial unity between the human and nonhuman world, the separation of whom is rapidly leading to an ecological apocalypse. Animal’s mutual interaction with the nonhuman world in the forest brings forward the significance of ecological literacy to be aware of the practices that might potentially lead to other devastating apocalypses. Ecological literacy, a concept that was invented by the environmentalist critic David Orr in 1994, requires a broad knowledge of natural systems that enables the survival and sustainability of the earth. Kalevi Kull (1998) mentions the necessity of being ecologically literate to understand the organizational principles of the ecological communities and to use these principles for creating sustainable communities (366). The interplay between the human and nonhuman world as reflected in *Animal’s People* calls the eyes (global north) to be ecologically literate by getting more familiar with the functioning of the cultural and natural history in postcolonial lands. The novel illustrates what happens to a postcolonial land when the transnational powers are ecologically illiterate and act insensitively towards the flora, fauna, soils, forests, history and culture of the region.

CONCLUSION

Through a postcolonial ecocritical reading of *Animal's People* (2007), this study has attempted to draw a picture of what a postcolonial environment looks like in the twenty-first century. It has shown that the human/nonhuman divide is the basis underlying the ecological atrocities happening in a postcolonial land. Starting from this point, it has found out that this troublesome dualism evolved over time and gives rise to another divide in the understanding and practice of environmentalism. The expendability of the impoverished (the global south) for the affluent (the global north) provokes the rise of environmental racism. Critical reading of the novel reveals that this type of racism empowers the hyperseparation of human and nature at the maximum level and jeopardizes the sustainability of ecosystems at the regional and global scale. By extending the scope of environmentalism, postcolonial ecocriticism examines how literary works such as *Animal's People* can offer a forceful critique of the late capitalist politics for their share in eco-crimes and become an authentic voice for the victimized human and nonhuman beings.

Particularly in the last two decades, postcolonial and ecocritical approaches have engaged in an ongoing dialogue to open out new lines of thought about the ecological risks that the local and the global face due to neoliberal and capitalist practices in postcolonial lands. Offering a fictional re-working of the Bhopal Disaster in India, the novel reveals the economic basis of the ecological destruction in postcolonial lands. Promising to produce more food grains by moving America's technological power to India, the Kampani (Union Carbide) benefits from the opportunities granted to the transnational companies and builds up a pesticide plant in Khaufpur (Bhopal). Instead of eradicating poverty and hunger as promised, this plant exacerbates the unfavourable economic conditions and causes a multi-dimensional eco-catastrophe after its explosion. The collaboration between postcolonial and ecocritical thinking leads this study to ground the reasons and consequences of the eco-catastrophe on the relationship between the human and nonhuman. In the study, the examination of the Anglo-European definition of the human who is accepted as the master over nature exposes how the meaning of human and environment radically differs in Western and non-Western societies. Carrying out this examination through the protagonist Animal, this study has

found out that there have been various social and ecological reflections of this semantic differentiation of 'the human' on both human and nonhuman beings in Khaufpur.

Sinha's protagonist Animal escapes from the notion of being human and places himself among the animal species when he loses his capability to walk bipedally after the disaster. This reaction of Animal to his physical disability recalls the questions of what it means to be a human and how the nonhuman is constructed and treated based on the conventional conceptualisation of human being. His adoption of the identity of an animal has been interpreted as a critique of the speciesist discourses of animality/animalisation. Because of the factory's toxic gases, Animal loses his erect posture, one of the qualities that define a human being. This severe disablement leads to an immediate dehumanization as the civilization is based on a species-specific body type. Animal's adaptation to animality reminds the reader of identification of the colonial people with the animal and the animalistic. This identification has been historically the main justification for colonial forces' exploitation of colonized people and environments. From this anthropocentric perspective, the animal and the animalistic have been characterized as machines that lack mind, soul, reason and therefore, dignity.

Postcolonial ecocriticism suggests that *speciesism*, a variety of anthropocentrism, continues its ideological impact by justifying the ecological invasion of postcolonial environments. The human/animal dichotomy predominates over the earth by associating the former with the global north and the latter with global south. Sinha's novel suggests that those living in these contrasting worlds do not have the same economic, social, politic, legal and environmental rights. The novel frequently emphasizes that the 'Amrikan Kampani' does not materially or legally make restitution for the catastrophic consequences of the explosion in Khaufpur. In this respect, this study has suggested that the identification of the poor and disempowered Khaufpuris with the animal is the underlying reason behind the delay in providing justice towards these postcolonial subjects. The novel portrays that the nonhuman environment as well suffers from this very discriminatory ideology at the hands of the transnational Kampani. The multidimensional exploitation in Khaufpur does affect both the human and nonhuman nature. Based on the mutual exploitation of the Khaufpuris and their environment, this study has deduced that those unfit for the Western definition of human and environment have been subjected to multi-level exploitation. Animal's

choice of identifying himself with the animal appears as an act of resistance to the Kampani and all it stands for.

The postcolonial ecocritical analysis of the novel's portrayal of the multi-level exploitation by corporate imperialism initially offers an insight into the physical and mental consequences of an ecological disaster on human beings in a postcolonial land. The interplay between human history and natural history, a significant component in environmental studies, is reflected through the complex relationship between the body and the environment. This study has further complicated this relationship between the body and the environment through the concept of *ecological otherness*. While doing so, the main goal has been to explore the ways in which the novel presents the postcolonial subjects living in poor environments as postcolonial ecological hybrids who, due to their disablement, lose and claim back their connection with nature. The veterans of the ecological disaster in Khaufpur such as Animal, Ma Franci and Somraj experience ecological otherization, as their bodies have been transformed into toxic and disabled bodies. The material interchange between the body and the toxic environment in Khaufpur brings the concept of *trans-corporeality* into discussion. This study has concluded that the unhealthy interaction between different bodily natures in Khaufpur pushed the victims into the category of *ecological others*. It has also revealed that such otherization is both the cause and the result of the Khaufpuris' alienation from their own physical and spiritual selves, and from their environment. The Khaufpuris are left incapable of contributing to the economic and ecological sustainability of the environment they live in, but they hopefully struggle, in different ways, to reunite with their environment.

While the Kampani claims to have established the pesticide factory to alleviate food scarcity as it declares that human beings are their most valuable assets, and therefore their health and safety is the top priority for the corporation, the factory turns into a deadly facility poisoning both the human beings and the environment. In this respect, Sinha's portrayal of the toxic bodies and the toxic environment appears to be an ironic response to this false claim that was actually made by Union Carbide itself. The novel's depiction of the toxic relationship between the Khaufpuris and Khaufpur suggests that the unity of human and nonhuman bodies in postcolonial environments is at great risk. The discussion of *intergenerational justice*, in relation to the foetus Kha-in-the-Jar and other foetuses, takes the extent of this risk further and points out the

injustices towards the future generations as well. This broken unity potentially jeopardizes the natural and cultural sustainability in the micro and macro level.

The ecocritical analysis of the environmental degradation in Khaufpur highlights the significance of the ecological connectedness of the human and nonhuman beings for their mutual sustainability. This study has identified the environment in the novel as the nonhuman victim of the ecological crisis. Due to the alarming increase in ecological disasters in postcolonial environments, ecocritical studies indicate that there has been a shift of focus from the idealization of pristine nature and conservation of wilderness to environmental concerns of the global south in the last decades. As traditional pastoral writings have not tended to respond to such concerns, a new form of writing, which is called *post-pastoral* and *postcolonial pastoral*, has arisen to represent the efforts to re-establish the connection between human and nature.

Disregarding the fact that every human and nonhuman being is intrinsically valuable, powerful human groups have for centuries isolated themselves from nature and what is natural. Animal's description of the poisoned lakes, the growing of an artificial forest within the poisoned factory and the animals' struggle to escape from the final explosion at the factory reflect the detrimental consequences of this isolation on the ecosystem. Animal's portrayal of the polluted landscape mirrors the ecological impacts of underestimating the nonhuman environment. The air, water and soil pollution due to the chemical disaster has been presented as the main reason behind the *slow violence* against the human and nonhuman beings in Khaufpur. Such an ecological attack on environment calls for embracing a land ethic to promote ecological conscience that would give rise to the communities peacefully accommodating both the human and nonhuman. This study has interpreted Animal's wandering in the jungle, within the context of *post-pastoral* and *postcolonial pastoral*, as an imaginary return to nature where the human and nonhuman beings are not separated. Animal's satisfaction with his identification as animal and hallucinatory communication with the nonhuman beings in the forest signify the necessity of re-establishing an eco-friendly relationship with the earth.

Mainly offering a critique of the human/nonhuman divide with its ecological consequences on the human and nonhuman level, the chapters in this study present a journey starting in a life-taking environment and ending in a life-giving forest. The transition from gloominess to enlightenment implies the future possibility of a more

ecologically conscious treatment of the human and nonhuman in postcolonial environments. This study has argued that the realization of this possibility can be fulfilled through the advocacy function of postcolonial ecocritical studies that are also defined as *eco-socialist*. Including both literary and non-literary texts, these studies contribute to the adoption of ecocentric approaches to the formerly colonized environments.

The broad examination of Sinha's novel suggests that this literary work serves this very purpose by making use of the imaginary power of literature. Animal's anger towards the inefficiency of journalism in exposing the multi-level sufferings after the ecological disaster in Khaufpur reveals the reason behind Sinha's endeavour to present a fictional work by adding the Editor's Note to the beginning of the novel. As a writer-activist, Sinha scrupulously fictionalizes the real and realizes the fictional in the novel. The imaginative writing Sinha presents enables the transnational visibility of the social and environmental injustices in a postcolonial land. By introducing the genre of *documentary metafiction*, this study tries to bring the aesthetic function of the novel to the forefront while dealing with its social, political and environmental implications.

Overall, this study has aimed to be a part of the postcolonial ecocritical studies attempting to become a voice for the human and nonhuman beings living in the geographies that are most vulnerable to the damaging impacts of the neocolonial and capitalist practices. Postcolonial ecocriticism offers a theoretical framework for analysing the representations of the ecological problems, resulting from these practices, in postcolonial environments. This relatively new framework is deeply interested in raising awareness of these problems around the world. Animal's depiction of the human and nonhuman world in Khaufpur and his particular engagement with the latter presents the novel as a literary call for the eyes of the global north to be ecologically and environmentally literate. Caring for the intrinsic value of each being on earth, this type of literacy leaves behind anthropocentric perspectives and embraces an ecocentric approach to foster sustainability. Offering a postcolonial ecocritical reading of *Animal's People*, this study intends to make this call more visible and audible with the hope of preventing further degradation of the ecosystems at the local and global level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The Originality Report



SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

ÖĞRENCİ BİLGİLERİ	
Adı-Soyadı	Yeşim İPEKÇİ
Öğrenci Numarası	142201105
Enstitü Anabilim Dalı	Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları
Programı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Danışmanın Unvanı, Adı-Soyadı	Yrd. Doç. Dr. Seda ARIKAN
Tez Başlığı (Türkçe)	Indra Sinha'nın <i>Animal's People</i> Adlı Romanına Postkolonyal Ekoeleştirel Bir Yaklaşım

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ'NE

Yukarıda başlığı belirtilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 101 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 05/06/2017 tarihinde Sosyal Bilimler Enstitü tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 21'dir.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler:

- 1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç,
- 2- Kaynakça hariç
- 3- Alıntılar dâhil
- 4- 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Yukarıda bilgileri verilen öğrencinin doktora tezi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yönetim Kurulu tarafından belirlenen azami benzerlik oranlarını aşmadığını ve tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Seda ARIKAN

(İmzası)

Prof. Dr. Mehmet AYGÜN

(İmzası)

F.Ü.LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ÖĞRETİM YÖNETMELİĞİ

Madde 41- Lisansüstü tezleri ile birlikte teslim edilmesi gereken belgeler şunlardır:

- a) Lisansüstü tezler, savunma öncesinde **intihal program raporu** ve ilgili makale şartını¹ sağladığına dair belgeleri ile birlikte enstitüye teslim edilir.
- b) İntihal raporu ile ilgili olarak etik kurallar dâhilindeki benzerlik oranları ilgili Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu tarafından belirlenir. (Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu tarafından tezin, intihal kapsamı dışında değerlendirilmesi için TURNITIN'den alınan raporda "benzerlik oranı"nın, "alıntılar hariç" en fazla %10, "alıntılar dâhil" % 30'u geçmemesi şeklinde kabul edilmiştir).

¹ Makale şartı doktora öğrencilerini kapsamaktadır.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Yeřim İPEKÇİ was born in Diyarbakır in 1991. She completed her primary and high school education in Diyarbakır. She took her BA from the Department of English Language and Literature at Bilkent University in 2013. She completed her minor degree in the Department of International Relations at the same university in 2013. She studied at Granada University in Spain for six months in 2012. She worked as a translator and interpreter for various companies in 2013, and continued her career as an Erasmus student advisor at Bilkent University in 2014. She has been working as a research assistant in English Language and Literature Department at Fırat University since February 2015.

