



African Journal of Biological Sciences

Journal homepage: <http://www.afjbs.com>



Research Paper

Open Access

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS THROUGH THE SELECTED NARRATIVES OF KAREN TEI YAMASHITA AND ROMESH GUNASEKARA.

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Volume 6, Issue 8, May 2024

Received: 09 March 2024

Accepted: 10 April 2024

Published: 20 May 2024

doi: [10.48047/AFJBS.6.8.2024.2715-2729](https://doi.org/10.48047/AFJBS.6.8.2024.2715-2729)

ABSTRACT

Eco criticism plays a vital role in creating awareness about various destructions to nature. In that sense, the authors write to bring impact to the human heart through their writings. Focusing and working together for the sustainable development goals will be the only solution to save this blue planet. This ecocritical study examines the ways to focus on SDGs 14 and 15. Through ecocriticism in the selected works of Karen Tei Yamashita and Romesh Gunasakera. By the eco fictions like *Through the Arc of Rainforest* and *Brazil-Marú* by Yamashita, and *Heaven's Edge* by Gunasakera, the authors direct the readers to work on SDG 15, which ultimately aims to protect forests. Gunasakera's *Reef* enlightens the readers with SDG 14 by narrating the importance of water resources and reveals the oceanic depletion of coral reefs. By examining these literary works through ecocriticism, this study highlights the urgency of addressing environmental challenges and promoting a holistic, symbiotic relationship between humanity and the natural world. This study will further provide a way forward to react to the deterioration and enable the reconstruction of damages with eco-activism.

Key words: SDG 14, SDG 15 Ecocriticism, Human-Nature interconnections, Rainforests, Coral Reef, exploitations, regenerations.

The Field of Ecocriticism:

The feelings for nature and the action to take care of nature are brought together in literature works is ecocriticism. The ecocritical factors will be useful in determining the magnitude of environmental degradation. Ecocriticism and its focus was explained by Cheryll Glotfelty, the founder of the American Association for Literature & Environment (ASLE), as “While in most literary theory ‘the world’ is synonymous with society – the social sphere – ecocriticism expands the notion of ‘the world’ to include the entire ecosphere.”¹ The primary concern of ecocriticism is all about the study of “the relationship between literature and the physical environment.”² One of the important feature along with ecocriticism is the environmental crisis which made the writer to work on it. There were four waves of ecocriticism so far defined.

The first wave is described as the focus on nature poetry and nature writing. “The first wave ecocritics focused on nature writing, nature poetry, and wilderness fiction”(Buell 138). They used to withhold the philosophy of organism. The aim of the wave was to preserve 'biotic community'(Coupe 4). The second wave ecocritics inclined towards environmental justice issues and a 'social ecocriticism' that takes urban landscape as seriously as 'natural landscape' (Buell 22). This wave of ecocriticism is always known as revisionist ecocriticism. It seeks to identify the vestiges of nature and exposes the crimes against nature. Third wave of ecocriticism started from 2000, it focused on the ways to bring changes through eco activism globally. The eco critics of this wave wrote for environmental justice and social concerns globally. This shift included the social justice along with ecological concerns like racism, poverty, gender bias etc. It's prominently identified for its eco feminist theories too. The ecocritics of this wave believed "the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action"(Howarth, 69). So ecocriticism initially aimed at earth care through writings.

Berry contrasts these two waves of ecocritics as follows: Proponents of the second wave, necessarily highlight questions of gender, class, race, and colonialism, challenging first-wave ecocritics who seem more interested in presenting ‘wild’ and untamed nature than ‘protecting the environment’ (Kerridge 234). The current wave of Ecocriticism focus on Sci-Fi to create a realistic views about the current exploitation to the nature.

Literature humanizes the SDGs by portraying the experiences of individuals and communities affected by global challenges. By following characters through their struggles and triumphs, readers develop empathy and a personal connection to the goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the very important challenging goals which prioritize the ecological wellbeing of the Earth. There are totally 17 SDGs formatted for the concerns throughout the world. SDG- 15 is “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. SDG-16 is all about “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”. In this study SDG – 15 is focused to tackle the environmental degradation in the Forest areas of the Amazon basin and Sri Lankan islands and SDG-16 is affirmed through the Reef by Gunasekara at The Indian Ocean.

Through the Arc of Rainforest:

Through the Arc of Rainforest is a Rainforest themed novel including the Human vs. Nature conflicts, The Lush and the bio diverse Rainforest. The story explores tensions between human activities, development and preserving rainforest habitats. This novel speaks about the indigenous perspectives of humans along with the rainforest. Many interesting themes of ecocriticism were handled skilfully with elements like ecology, sustainability and environmental justice. This novel gives various interesting ideas to achieve the sustainable Development Goals 12 and 15. The SDG 12.4 "by 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment". In target 12.5, Member States decided to "by 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse".

Larger philosophical, political and ethical discussions around rainforest conservation and environmental literature. In this work Yamashita speaks about the impacts of industrialization and the industrial waste which polluted the forest ecosystem. Ursula Heise argues about ecological degradation that “poses a challenge for narrative and lyrical forms that have conventionally focused above all on individuals, families, or nations, since it requires the articulation of connections between events at vastly different scales” (Huggan 93)

In a dialogue from the novel, *Through the Arc of Rainforest*, “Mané reflects on the fertility of the Matacão, suggesting that while it may not be fertile for traditional crops like manioc or tomatoes, it fosters the growth of buildings—a metaphor for human constructions”. The passage describes a conversation between the Feather Guru and his wife, Angustia. When the Feather Guru uses a metaphor to illustrate the value of nature, Angustia dismissively states that land is either fertile or not, disregarding his symbolism. This dialogue underscores the detrimental impact of human interference in natural environments and the myopic tendency to prioritize industrial development over ecological balance. Angustia's pragmatic view represents the destructive mind-set that overlooks the intrinsic worth of preserving pristine ecosystems in favor of short-term economic gains.

Rob Nixon's book "*Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*" (2011) indeed begins with a powerful anecdote that draws attention to the often overlooked forms of environmental degradation and their impact on marginalized communities. He opens the introduction with a paraphrase of a leaked World Bank memo, which highlights the insidious nature of "slow violence" – the gradual, incremental destruction of ecosystems and communities over time. “I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest-wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that . . . I have always thought that countries in Africa are vastly under polluted; their air quality is probably vastly inefficiently low compared to Los Angeles. . . Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the Least Developed Countries?” (1)

The “slow violence” to the ecosystem by Matacoa the plastic mass was clearly brought to light through these lines

“Not only birds died, but every sort of small animal, livestock, insects and even small children who had run out to greet the planes unknowingly . . . Millions of birds of every color and species . . . filled the skies, pressing the upward altitudes for the pure air, but the lethal cloud spread odiously with sinister invisibility. The Matacão was soon covered, knee-deep with the lifeless bodies of poisoned birds. Indeed, for countless days and nights, it rained feathers”. (202)

The character of the Feather Guru, believed to possess a feather with miraculous healing properties. This character symbolizes humanity with the desire to heal nature particularly in the pure Amazon Rainforest, and the plastic deposition called Matacao. The Feather Guru represents the unfamiliar value and the incredible potential of tropical plants and animals in that pristine environment.

The unwanted solid waste imbibing in to the pure parts of the Earth is illustrated as,

“The Matacão, scientists asserted, had been formed for the most part within the last century, paralleling the development of the more common forms of plastic, polyurethane and styrofoam. Enormous landfills of non-biodegradable material buried under virtually every populated part of the Earth had undergone tremendous pressure, pushed ever farther into the lower layer of the Earth’s mantle. The liquid deposits of the molten mass had been squeezed through underground veins to virgin areas of the Earth. The Amazon Forest, being one of the last virgin areas on Earth, got plenty”. (202)

The issue of the environmental justice and disproportionate burden of the waste that is placed on poor and marginalized communities, both within nations and globally. The environmental injustice of disproportionate waste burdens on poor communities globally.

In essence, the author contends that the global waste crisis is not just an environmental issue but also a matter of social justice, rooted in the unequal distribution of power and resources that enables the powerful to offload their environmental burdens onto the disempowered.

“Consumption and production patterns, especially in nations with wasteful ‘throwaway’ lifestyles as the United States, and the interest of transnational corporations create and maintain unequal and unjust waste burdens within and between affluent and poor communities, states, and regions of the world. (165)

Finally the plastic mass in the forest was decomposed by a bacteria and that was elaborated chapter 31-Plastic. The corroding of the Motacoa was evident in this chapter. “Chicolândia and its plastic jungle, once void of insects and real living creatures, had been invaded by devouring bacteria. The enormous Matacão plastic palms and the giant jatubá trees crashed and slumped, crushing the mechanical monkeys and unhinging the plastic sloths”.

Yamashita’s literary works have tackled issues of environmental justice and capitalism's toll on the planet. Through this imaginative and poly vocal novel, Yamashita has emerged as an influential voice in environmental activism and advocacy. “presumption to know the natural world scientifically to manipulate it technologically and exploit it economically” for human progress (Heise 167). With an unflinching yet lyrical approach, Yamashita's writing shines a light on

the human and natural costs of practices like toxic dumping, deforestation, and habitat destruction in pursuit of profit. Her works urge readers to confront uncomfortable truths about exploitation, unsustainable resource extraction, and the systematic devaluing of certain lives in favor of capital accumulation. The rainforest was not just a backdrop, but a teacher whose mysteries humbled her and whose resilience inspired awe. Yamashita realized that this forest, for all its overwhelming complexity, was also a delicate tapestry interwoven by a million Jahre and yet made fragile by a single harsh human touch. The rainforests could not be preserved behind glass or fences. Their sanctity could only be protected by kindling, in the hearts of people everywhere, a sacred reverence for the earth that nurtures us all. Karen vowed to have her life's arc bend towards being a storyteller - to share the rainforest's lessons of ecology, interdependence and humility with anyone who would listen. As the forest faded from view, a bittersweet solace came from knowing its resilient seeds now took root within her. Yamashita carried the rainforest's primordial truths out towards a world that needed its wisdom more than ever before.

The core of this potential conclusion tries to capture the rainforest as a transformative setting that prompts philosophical realizations about environmental ethics, respecting ecology, and humanity's intimate connection to nature.

Brazil Maru:

"*Brazil-Marú*" is a historical fiction novel published in 1992 that centers around the fabled wartime treasures known as the "Yamashita's Gold". It is based on the legend that during World War II, the Japanese general Tomoyuki Yamashita had amassed a massive fortune in gold, gems, and other treasures looted from Southeast Asian countries like the Philippines. The title "*Brazil-Marú*" refers to a Japanese cargo ship that was supposedly used to transport and hide some of Yamashita's plundered treasures. It blends elements of historical fiction, adventure, family drama, as well as Japanese folklore and mysticism related to the legendary treasures. It also aids the reader to provoke on the SDG 15 and SDG 16 which is all about peace, justice and strong institution. The novel explores themes of greed, sacrifice, cultural identity, and the lasting impacts of World War II on both sides of the conflict. *Brazil Maru* interprets the increase in the agricultural land by destroying the forest for humans.

“I did not know it at the time, but we were headed on the Noroeste Line to the far northwestern corner of the state of São Paulo on the very edges of a vast virgin forest whose borders were gradually receding with the

cultivation of coffee, sugarcane, and pasture”. The great forest arched above us, and we were alternately engulfed by its great density and surprised by large expanses of clearing, newly cut and charred by fire. We walked several miles before we reached a long but simple wood-slat house”.

The description subtly laments the loss of this biodiversity and serving as a poignant reminder of the 'wonderfully complex living space the forest once was’

“When I think about the old forest, I invariably think about the incredible variety of insects in those days. Along with the occasional appearance of some unusual bird, the great variety of insects that yet remain are a reminder of the wonderfully complex living space the forest once was.

The profusion of insects around any light source at night, exemplifies the thriving, complex ecosystem of the forest. However, this natural phenomenon, while a marvel of biodiversity, was often deemed a nuisance by humans. This juxtaposition from the novel highlights the insects' role as representatives of the forest's rich biodiversity, yet also as pests to human inhabitants.

“When the forest was still intact, you could not light a candle or a lamp at night without being visited by a small dense cloud of moths, butterflies, beetles, mosquitoes, flies, crickets, and spiders of every color and description. They flew and crept through our open windows and doors in the hot evenings or congregated near the seeping lights on the walls of our houses. They seemed to us a terrible nuisance, lighting on our bodies to suck our blood or buzzing frantically around, falling into our food and clothing. In the mornings, my mother was forever sweeping out their brittle carcasses”.

The narrator expresses a sense of regret or realization that this view was misguided. The destruction of the forest is described as potentially a great sin, indicating an acknowledgment of the environmental harm caused by human intervention.

“We thought that the forest was so wide and so deep that it would never end, that carving out our small piece of it wouldn't make such a great difference to something so immense. Besides, we had come to create a new world, and starting on new land was a special and sacred gift given only to a chosen few. Perhaps it was a great sin to destroy the forest in this way”

She recognizes that while their own lifespan is short, the forest existed peacefully for many centuries before human disturbance. This highlights the stark contrast between the longevity and resilience of natural ecosystems and the comparatively short-sighted actions of humans. Yamashita attempts at reforestation or ecological restoration are mentioned, with the narrator trying to replace the forest with new growth and sustenance. However, the narrator suggests that the process of restoring what was lost will take many lifetimes due to the slow regeneration of ecosystems and the gradual decline in the number and variety of insects, which are crucial components of a healthy forest ecosystem.

“Ever since, we have tried to replace the forest with a new life—growth, sustenance, call it what you will. I have lived here for a mere lifetime, but the forest had existed peacefully here for many centuries. What we have taken from the earth will, I think, take many more lifetimes to return in kind cleared, the number and variety of insects slowly diminished”.

The text describes a dense and enigmatic forest that blocks the view from the road. The forest's unknown inhabitants add to its intrigue. However, humans cause destruction to the wilderness by setting it on fire. The chaos that follows depicts a wide range of wildlife fleeing from the smoke and flames. The aftermath shows the devastating scene of men cutting down the remaining trees with saws and hatchets. On the other side of the road, a field of green rice conceals charred stumps, symbolizing the transformation from a lush forest to a changed landscape.

The passage ends with the suggestion that everything will soon be different, insinuating that human activity has caused irreversible damage to the natural environment.

“It was a green wall of dense forest, trees and vines and brush rising high into the sky. We could not see farther than several meters in from the road. What might be behind that wall of green life, we could not say. When we set fire to the forest, droves of yellow and green parakeets and clattering orange-beaked toucans swept up in great clouds above the flames, while small animals, armadillos, snakes, and lizards stumbled and scurried from the smoke. The novel's ecocriticism arises from a context characterized by uncontrolled capitalism, unjustifiable exploitation, and harm to nature, making readers more aware of the ecological fragility.

The novel's eco-criticism arises from a context characterized by uncontrolled capitalism, unjustifiable exploitation, and harm to nature, making readers more aware of the ecological fragility,

From time to time, wild boar and even a panther might be seen. When the fires died down and the earth was only warm to the touch, the men took long saws and hatchets and cut down the large trees that had not succumbed to the fire. Across the road could be seen the results of the labor of other settlers further along in this enterprise—the charred stumps of enormous trees now hidden in a field of green rice. Soon everything would be very different”.

The rainforest was not just a backdrop, but a teacher whose mysteries humbled her and whose resilience inspired awe. Karen realized that this forest, for all its overwhelming complexity, was also a delicate tapestry interwoven by a million Jahre and yet made fragile by a single harsh human touch. The rainforests could not be preserved behind glass or fences. Their sanctity could only be protected by kindling, in the hearts of people everywhere, a sacred reverence for the earth that nurtures us all. Karen vowed to have her life's arc bend towards being a storyteller - to share the rainforest's lessons of ecology, interdependence and humility with anyone who would listen.

As the forest faded from view, a bittersweet solace came from knowing its resilient seeds now took root within her. Karen carried the rainforest's primordial truths out towards a world that needed its wisdom more than ever before.

The core of this potential conclusion tries to capture the rainforest as a transformative setting that prompts philosophical realizations about environmental ethics, respecting ecology, and humanity's intimate connection to nature. The narrator experiences a spiritual awakening and vows to spread the rainforest's lessons through storytelling.

But hopefully this gives a sense of one impactful way an ecocritical rainforest novel. Building upon Plumwood's observation, we can see how Yamashita's narrative inadvertently perpetuates the anthropocentric view of the human as fundamentally distinct from and superior to a "plastic, passive and 'dead' nature" devoid of inherent agency and meaning.

Heaven's Edge:

In the novel "*Heaven's Edge*", Romesh Gunasekara responds to the ongoing political and environmental crises by constructing an imaginary, utopian

reconstruction of the biblical Eden. This is a very important novel that depicts the restoration of forest as the Srilankan forest got destroyed due to civil war and Tsunami. The story of young people who dedicated their life for the afforestation to save the flora and fauna in the Srilankan jungle, serves as the guidelines for the young generation to save the "Blue Planet". This stands in contrast to the dystopian realities that thinly disguise the author's home country of Sri Lanka.

This prompts the question of what allegorical significance the narrative's portrayal of hope and despair can have when it appears to detach from direct socio-political engagement. "Marc tries to find a meaning for his life, a part of heaven that his grandfather never ceased to speak of, somewhere where his father's bones were lost." - This quote encapsulates the protagonist's journey and quest for identity and purpose".

Plumwood argues that the "hyper separation between the human sphere and nature" leads humans to see themselves as separate from and not reliant on the natural world. This ethical disconnection between humans and nature stems from what you demonstrate to be the outcome of the protagonists' diminished phenomenological relationship with the natural environment.

"She laughed then, bursting a warm pod within her; a sound I had not heard for longer than I could remember, a sound from the edge of heaven. I felt that we were, at last, where we belonged. Among trees mute yet more perfect than us; their roots nourished by the whole of the earth's past, and harbouring the future already in their buds. And that in time there might even be children from the forest who would come to us and grant our lives a sense of perpetuity." - This quote reflects a moment of connection and belonging in the novel

Gunsekera encompasses the environmental crisis facing developing nations, invoking the horrific scenario of a post-apocalyptic nation due to nuclear warfare and protracted civil strife. The impending destruction of this island reflects the author's deep despair regarding the prospects of peaceful coexistence in a country scarred by civil strife. Marc and Uva, the protagonists, challenge the dominance of myopic political factions whose environmental policies harm the natural world. Yet, Marc's perspective on nature is tinged with an erotic and exoticized lens. "Legend has it that Adam and Eve were exiled to that place to become lovers, on that small island on the heaven's edge." Despite inheriting his grandfather's respect for nature, Marc often sees it merely as a romantic backdrop to his relationship with Uva, failing to truly appreciate its intrinsic value.

Gunasekera adeptly weaves together personal and political narratives, showcasing how individual lives are entwined with broader social and environmental issues. Through Marc and Uva's experiences, the novel delves into themes of identity, belonging, and the struggle for autonomy in a world plagued by violence and ecological decay.

‘I drew back the curtains and opened the windows to let the sea breeze in. There was no air conditioner. It suited me; I wanted to know what a night in a hot country was really like. To hear the crickets and the cicadas, to smell the citrus and the citronella, the warm earth dreaming, and feel the spirit of the place brush against my skin’. The narrator's deliberate engagement with the natural environment of the "hot country" setting. By foregoing the modern convenience of air conditioning, the narrator chooses to directly experience the sensory qualities of the place - the sea breeze, the sounds of crickets and cicadas, the scents of citrus and citronella, and the tangible presence of the "warm earth dreaming."

This conscious decision to immerse oneself in the nonhuman natural world, rather than insulating from it, suggests an ecocentric perspective that values direct embodied experience of the environment. The narrator seems intent on feeling a "spirit of the place" brush against their skin, implying a sense of connection, reciprocity, and respect for the agency of the more-than-human realm. In his despair over his inability to possess Uva, the protagonist sublimates his libidinal energy into the creation of a garden, seeking to construct an Edenic space. However, his motivations for this environmental stewardship do not stem from a genuine, altruistic attitude toward conservation, as exemplified by characters like Uva, her parents, and Eldon. Rather, the garden is conceived as a means to attract and possess Uva through the natural world - "a garden husbanded for her," in the hope that by cultivating this Eden, the flora and fauna it attracts will bring Uva to him, or at least allow the garden to become a metaphorical embodiment of her.

The recurring imagery associating Uva with avian, lepidopteron, and ichthyic motifs is now transformed into a vision of her as the garden itself. “Marc tries to find a meaning for his life, a part of heaven that his grandfather never ceased to speak of, somewhere where his father's bones were lost.” - This quote encapsulates the protagonist's journey and quest for identity and purpose. This suggests the protagonist's desire to possess and subsume Uva's ecological agency and inherent wildness within the ordered, cultivated space of the garden he has created. His efforts to construct this idealized natural setting are thus driven not by a genuine ecocentric ethic, but by a selfish, anthropocentric need to control

and incorporate the female object of his desire into his own imagined conception of an Edenic paradise.

Uva is depicted as playing the role of Eve to Marc's Adam in their Garden of Eden, characterized as "virgin land to be exploited, as fallen nature to be redeemed through reclamation, and as fruitful garden to be harvested" (Merchant 117). This portrayal raises concerns as it draws upon gendered and exploitative notions, equating women and nature as resources to be exploited for rational use.

As long as we relate to the trees, the rivers, the mountains, the fields and the oceans as properties which we can manipulate according to our real or fabricated needs, nature remains opaque, and does not reveal to us its true being." This quote by Henri J.M. Nouwen suggests that when we view nature as a resource to be exploited, we fail to appreciate its intrinsic value and essence. Uva challenges Marc's tendency to view them through an eroticized and exotic lens. She rejects the notion of being portrayed as part of a romantic, idealized world that is disconnected from the harsh realities of contemporary life. Her characters offer a fresh perspective to the global audience of these novels, many of whom rely on media representations to understand places that are often "forgotten" or "assaulted". Uva's viewpoints provide a counterbalance to these narrow portrayals.

The author's preoccupation with the conventions of the tragic love story, set against the exotic, romanticized backdrop of the natural world, ultimately undermines the text's potential for an incisive critique of environmental devastation. "Birds do not sing in cave, nor do doves cherish their innocence in dovecots" (Walden 882)

This approach risks reinforcing the problematic dualism that Plumwood identifies, wherein humans are positioned as external to and dominant over a naturalized domain.

Reef:

Each species contributes uniquely to the delicate tapestry of interconnection in nature. When one species vanishes, it disrupts the intricate balance of the ecosystem, sending ripples of change throughout. Tuan, in "Landscapes of Fear," characterizes these disrupted environments as sprawling and inhospitable, shaped by the looming specter of fear. He suggests that human society, in its quest for order, plays a part in shaping this landscape, seeking to impose structure upon chaos. Slovic express, "In Today's society one of the most basic roles of environmental writers and their scholarly commentators is simply to redirect our

attention to the world beyond human construction –to make us pay more attention to ourselves and to nature” (“Ecocriticism” 226).

Gunasekera's novel explores the interconnections between environmental issues, ethnic tensions, and Sri Lanka's political and socio economic troubles during a period of transition from colonial rule to a free market economy. The story expresses a longing to recreate a lost paradise, yet also subtly questions the feasibility of this. The characters discuss strategies to conserve the threatened coastal ecosystem, but ultimately little tangible action is taken, mirroring failed governmental conservation schemes that instead exacerbated environmental damage and displacement.

“For a long time we have thought we were better than the living world, and now some of us tend to think we are worse, that everything we touch turns to soot. But neither perspective is healthy. We have to remember how it feels to have equal standing in the world, to be "between the mountain and the ant... part and parcel of creations," as the Iroquois traditionalist Oren Lyons says.” This quote by Janine M. Benyus emphasizes the need for a balanced perspective, where humans recognize their place as part of nature rather than superior or inferior to it.

Through irony, Gunasekera highlights the gap between theory and action, desire and duty, power and agency regarding environmental degradation in Sri Lanka. His critical perspective traces this destruction to problematic ethnic and developmental policies. The novel juxtaposes utopian visions with the sobering reality that previous ambitious initiatives not only failed to resolve these complex issues, but at times exacerbated them due to the intricate interplay of environmental, social, political and economic forces at work. Yet the enduring - if fading - dream of restoring harmony suggests hope persists despite daunting challenges.

The disappearance of a particular species serves as a warning sign, indicating that our planet is becoming less hospitable for life. It's a call to shift our perspective and adjust our actions accordingly. When we disrupt the intricate web of life, we risk not only the loss of individual species but also the broader repercussions for evolution and the survival of all species. This novel “Reef” is poignantly illustrated in the context of coral reef deterioration, where the decline of these vital ecosystems underscores the urgent need for conscious human intervention and stewardship of the natural world. This inspires the readers to work for the underwater organisms and focus for SDG 14.

Mr. Salgado, a wealthy and youthful individual, serves as a marine biologist dedicated to examining the impact of coastal erosion on the coral reefs along Sri Lanka's shores. He possesses a slender physique and presents with a spinal curvature.

Mister Salgado only slowed down when we came to the skull-heaps of petrified coral – five-foot pyramids beside smoky kilns – marking the allotments of a line of impoverished lime-makers, tomorrow's cement fodder, crumbling on the loveliest stretch of the coast.(60)

“The one time I did swim out to Mister Salgado's real reef, back home, I was frightened by its exuberance. The shallow water seethed with creatures. Flickering eyes, whirling tails, fish of a hundred colors darting and digging, sea snakes, sea-slugs, tentacles sprouting and grasping everywhere. It was a jungle of writhing shapes, magnified, strandline and distorted, growing at every move, looming out of the unknown, startling in its hidden brilliance.”

The reef is depicted as a vibrant and flourishing ecosystem replete with a diverse assemblage of marine fauna. The shallows teeming with an abundance of creatures, encompassing fish of variegated hues, sea snakes, sea slugs, and sundry other marine organisms. Don Scheese opines similar views: "The resulting encounter with nature becomes a myth of self-education, a realization of autobiography and ecotopia ..." (233).

The imagery employed conveys a sense of reverence and wonderment at the opulence and intricacy of the subaqueous realm. The reef is described as a captivating and almost overpowering environment, with its chromatic denizens and intricate motions engendering a palpable sense of both splendor and enigma.

He would nod and smile to himself 'They have been counted, you know, but nobody can count how many polypifers surround us in the sea.' The reef is being thoughtlessly and mercilessly destroyed and sacrificed to feed these deprived classes.

To quote Pam Walker and Elaine Wood again: Stressors include a variety of events, some natural and some human made. Storms and changes in weather can alter the conditions of seawater around coral reefs, but most coral damage is the result of human activity. Exploitation of reefs, overfishing, increased rates of sedimentation in the water, and increased levels of nutrients in water are some of the most recent causes of coral death . . (122)

The narrative's emphasis on the emotional and erotic dynamics between the protagonists tends to relegate the natural environment to a merely scenic, instrumentalized function. This may obscure the urgent need to apprehend the human as embedded within, rather than lord over, the more-than-human world.

From an ecocritical perspective, Gunesequera's aesthetic privileging of the tragic love story trope, coupled with the eroticized framing of the natural backdrop, risks perpetuating the very anthropocentric worldview that ecological ethics and environmental justice seek to dismantle. A more robust engagement with the agency and meaning of the nonhuman realm may have allowed the text to make a more effective contribution to the critique of environmental degradation and the rethinking of human-nature relations.

The readers are not only entertained by an engaging fictional narrative but also encouraged to reflect on real-world issues and the importance of collective action in achieving the SDGs. The core of this potential narrative style tries to capture the natural elements as a transformative setting that prompts philosophical realizations about environmental ethics, respecting ecology, and humanity's intimate connection to nature.

Literature serves as a platform for environmental activism and advocacy. The SDG 4 focus on the quality education which can be attained by rendering morally sound education to build a sustainable world for the better future. Thus this study gives various collage of SDGs as a need of the hour is to join globally to save the planet. Writers themselves used their work to advocate for environmental causes and inspire readers to become environmental stewards.

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