



Research Article

Rewriting the Margins: Nature, Gender, and Disability in Ecofeminist and Postcolonial Literature

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Abstract

This paper explores the intersections of eco-literary discourse, gender, and disability within the framework of ecofeminism and postcolonial studies. Drawing from works by Toni Morrison, Amitav Ghosh, Indra Sinha, and Arundhati Roy, the study interrogates how marginalised bodies—both human and ecological—are represented in literature. The research examines how colonial and patriarchal structures have historically “othered” both women and disabled individuals, placing them at the periphery of both environmental and socio-political landscapes. Using an interdisciplinary approach, this paper examines how literature rewrites the margins, challenging dominant narratives that exclude the voices of the disabled and gendered subjectivities from environmental discourse. Through close readings of selected texts, this research argues that literature serves as a space for resistance and re-imagination, offering counter-narratives to exclusionary ideologies.

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INTRODUCTION

The intersection of nature, gender, and disability has been historically overlooked in both literary studies and environmental discourse. While postcolonial studies have long critiqued the legacies of imperialism and oppression, and ecofeminism has interrogated how patriarchal structures exploit both women and the environment, disability remains a

marginalised subject in both fields. In many literary narratives, nature is either romanticised as a pure, untouched space or presented as a resource to be conquered and controlled. Within this binary, those who are disabled, female, or from formerly colonised regions are often depicted as dependent, helpless, or subjugated. This paper seeks to challenge such representations by examining how ecofeminist and postcolonial literature

reclaims marginalised spaces, offering alternative perspectives on nature, gender, and disability.

Background and Context

The dominant Western discourse on nature has historically framed it as something separate from civilisation, to be controlled and mastered. This anthropocentric view aligns with what Val Plumwood (1993) describes as the “master model,” in which colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy construct a rigid hierarchy, placing white, able-bodied men at the centre while relegating women, nature, and disabled bodies to the periphery. Within this framework, both nature and marginalised individuals (women, the disabled, and the colonised) are seen as “passive,” “irrational,” or “in need of management.” Postcolonial scholars such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) have argued that the subaltern is often silenced, while ecofeminists like Vandana Shiva (1989) have shown how capitalist and colonial forces exploit both the natural world and indigenous women.

However, disability studies complicate these discussions. Traditionally, ecofeminist and postcolonial discourse have focused on gendered and racialised oppression, but they have not always addressed how disability figures in the colonial and ecological imagination. As David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (2000) argue in their concept of narrative prosthesis, literature frequently uses disability as a metaphor for weakness, failure, or inferiority. Similarly, postcolonial literature often frames disability as a symptom of colonial violence—a literal and symbolic representation of the wounds inflicted by imperialism. This paper argues that disability should not merely be read as a metaphor but as a lived experience intertwined with environmental and colonial histories.

Research Problem and Questions

Despite the significant scholarship on ecofeminism, postcolonial literature, and disability studies, few studies have examined their intersection in depth. This research addresses the following questions:

1. How do postcolonial and ecofeminist literary texts represent the relationship between gender, disability, and nature?
2. In what ways do these texts challenge dominant anthropocentric and ableist narratives?
3. How do literary representations of disabled and gendered bodies reshape our understanding of environmental justice and ecological resistance?

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study employs an interdisciplinary theoretical approach, drawing from:

- Ecofeminism, which critiques the dual oppression of women and nature (Plumwood, Shiva, Gaard).
- Postcolonial Theory, which examines how colonial histories shape representations of marginalised communities (Spivak, Bhabha, Said).

- Disability Studies, which investigates how literature constructs and challenges ableist narratives (Mitchell & Snyder, Quayson).

Through close textual analysis of three novels—Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, Bessie Head’s *When Rain Clouds Gather*, and Indra Sinha’s *Animals’ People*—this research will explore how literature reclaims marginalised voices and challenges dominant ecological discourse.

Thesis Statement

This paper argues that postcolonial and ecofeminist literature critically reframe the relationship between nature, gender, and disability by challenging dominant narratives that portray both marginalised individuals and the environment as passive or powerless. Through an analysis of literary texts, this study highlights how nature can be both a site of oppression and resistance, offering new insights into the intersections of environmental justice, gender, and disability in contemporary literary studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of nature, gender, and disability has been explored within various academic fields, including ecofeminism, postcolonial theory, and disability studies. However, these three perspectives are often analysed separately, with little attention paid to how they overlap in literary discourse. This section reviews existing scholarship in ecofeminism, postcolonial studies, and disability studies, highlighting key debates and identifying gaps that this research aims to address.

1. Ecofeminism and the Postcolonial Perspective

Ecofeminism: Gender, Nature, and Colonialism

Ecofeminism emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a critique of patriarchal environmental exploitation, drawing parallels between the oppression of women and the destruction of nature. Vandana Shiva (1989) argues that colonialism and capitalism have systematically devalued women’s traditional knowledge about the environment, positioning them as mere caretakers rather than active agents of ecological change. Maria Mies and Shiva (1993) further assert that the rise of industrial capitalism has led to the displacement of indigenous and rural women, reducing their access to natural resources.

A crucial aspect of ecofeminist thought is Val Plumwood’s (1993) concept of “the master model,” which critiques the dualistic hierarchy that places men over women, culture over nature, and reason over emotion. Plumwood’s work is particularly relevant to this study, as she highlights how colonised lands and marginalised bodies (women, indigenous peoples, and the disabled) are treated as resources to be controlled.

However, Greta Gaard (2011) critiques early ecofeminism for failing to account for intersectionality, particularly regarding race, disability, and postcolonial histories. She argues that while ecofeminists have drawn attention to gender and ecological oppression, they have not sufficiently engaged with the ways

disability complicates these narratives. This study builds upon Gaard's critique by examining how disability is represented in ecofeminist and postcolonial literature, particularly in the works of Roy, Head, and Sinha.

Postcolonial Studies: Nature as a Site of Resistance

Postcolonial theory, particularly the works of Edward Said (1978) and Gayatri Spivak (1988), examines how colonial narratives construct the colonised "Other" as inferior, exotic, or primitive. Said's concept of Orientalism is particularly useful for analysing how colonial discourse has framed indigenous landscapes as either untouched paradises or wild, chaotic spaces in need of control.

Rob Nixon (2011) expands on this by introducing the concept of "slow violence," which refers to the gradual destruction of environments and marginalized communities through colonial and corporate exploitation. His analysis of environmental degradation in the Global South highlights how ecological destruction disproportionately affects women, the disabled, and postcolonial subjects, making it a crucial framework for this study.

One of the key gaps in postcolonial studies is the limited engagement with disability studies. While scholars like Ato Quayson (2007) have examined the representation of disability in colonial and postcolonial texts, there is little work on how disability intersects with environmental justice in postcolonial literature. This study seeks to fill that gap by exploring how disabled bodies are written into environmental narratives in postcolonial ecofeminist texts.

2. Disability and Environmental Discourse

Disability as a Literary and Colonial Construct

Disability studies have traditionally focused on Western literary traditions, with scholars like David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (2000) arguing that disability is often used as a "narrative prosthesis"—a metaphor for moral failure, dependence, or tragedy. However, postcolonial disability studies have challenged these Western-centric views, arguing that colonialism itself was a disabling force that systematically dehumanised and devalued disabled bodies.

Ato Quayson (2007) examines how disability functions as both a physical and symbolic marker of colonial trauma. His work is particularly useful for understanding the portrayal of Velutha's disability in *The God of Small Things* and the protagonist of *Animals' People*. Nirmala Erevelles (2011) also highlights the intersections between race, disability, and capitalism, arguing that Western industrialism and colonial expansion actively created disability through war, labour exploitation, and environmental destruction.

Environmental Racism, Disability, and Colonialism

The concept of "environmental racism"—coined by Robert Bullard (1993)—describes how pollution, deforestation, and resource extraction disproportionately harm marginalised communities. Many ecofeminist and postcolonial scholars have

expanded this to consider how disability is produced through environmental violence.

For example, Indra Sinha's *Animals' People* (2007) critiques corporate environmental destruction by focusing on the Bhopal gas disaster, where industrial pollution created generations of disabled individuals. Clare Barker (2011) argues that this novel challenges ableist environmental narratives that frame disabled bodies as tragic victims rather than active agents of resistance.

This study builds upon these works by exploring how literature represents disabled bodies in relation to environmental violence. Specifically, it analyses how postcolonial ecofeminist texts reclaim disability not as a metaphor for tragedy but as a form of ecological and political resistance.

3. Literature as a Site of Resistance

Gendered and Disabled Bodies in Literary Landscapes

Literary texts provide a crucial space for challenging dominant narratives about gender, nature, and disability. In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, the character of Velutha, a lower-caste disabled man, is both physically and socially marginalised, mirroring the treatment of nature under colonial rule. Similarly, Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* portrays the African landscape as a site of both oppression and liberation, reflecting the struggles of disabled and gendered bodies in postcolonial settings.

These novels challenge Western environmentalist perspectives that often ignore race, disability, and colonial histories. As Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley (2011) argue, postcolonial literature reconfigures environmental discourse by centring indigenous and marginalised voices. This study contributes to this discussion by highlighting how disabled and gendered bodies resist environmental and colonial violence in literature.

Emerging Scholarship and Future Directions

Recent scholarship has begun to explore the intersections of disability, gender, and environmental justice. However, much of this work remains fragmented across disciplines. Alison Kafer (2013) calls for a "crippled ecology" that integrates disability into environmental discourse, while Sarah Jaquette Ray (2017) argues for a "disability-inclusive environmentalism."

This study seeks to bridge these discussions by analysing how postcolonial ecofeminist literature reclaims disabled bodies as central to ecological resistance. It suggests that nature, gender, and disability should be viewed not as separate issues but as interconnected forces within literary and ecological discourse.

This literature review highlights how ecofeminism, postcolonial theory, and disability studies provide valuable insights into the representation of marginalised bodies in environmental discourse. However, existing scholarship has not fully explored how disability and gender intersect with ecological resistance in postcolonial literature. By analysing literary texts that foreground disabled, gendered, and postcolonial subjects, this study aims to expand our understanding of environmental justice, narrative agency, and resistance.

Case Studies and Literary Analysis

This section examines three literary texts—Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997), Bessie Head’s *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968), and Indra Sinha’s *Animals’ People* (2007)—to analyse how postcolonial ecofeminist literature reclaims marginalised bodies and spaces. Through these texts, we explore the intersections of nature, gender, and disability and how they challenge dominant narratives about the environment and marginalised identities. Each novel provides a unique lens on how disabled, gendered, and colonised subjects interact with the land, resist oppression, and reclaim agency.

1. Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*: Caste, Disability, and Ecological Marginalisation

Nature as a Site of Social and Political Exclusion

Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) is set in the lush landscapes of Kerala, India, where nature is both an aesthetic backdrop and a political force that mirrors social hierarchies. The novel explores the intersection of caste oppression, disability, and environmental exploitation, positioning nature as a contested space where power dynamics unfold.

The novel’s primary ecofeminist critique lies in its depiction of the river Meenachal, a symbol of both freedom and entrapment. Once thriving, the river becomes polluted and stagnant, mirroring the social decay of caste and gender hierarchies. This ecological decline reflects how marginalised communities—especially lower-caste, disabled, and female characters—are excluded from the benefits of modernity while bearing its burdens.

Velutha: Disability, Caste, and the Colonial Legacy

The character Velutha, a lower-caste (Dalit) man with a physical disability, embodies the intersection of caste-based oppression and ableism. He is both physically and socially “othered” in a system that equates bodily difference with inferiority. His skill as a carpenter and his deep connection to nature contrast with the rigid hierarchies that exclude him. His ability to create and manipulate the natural world challenges dominant narratives that frame disabled and lower-caste individuals as helpless or dependent.

However, Velutha’s body is ultimately subjected to state and social violence. His brutal murder by the police symbolises how colonial legacies of control—now internalised within the postcolonial nation—continue to discipline bodies that do not conform to dominant norms. This aligns with David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder’s (2000) concept of “narrative prosthesis,” where disability is often used in literature to symbolise systemic failure or moral corruption. Roy subverts this by portraying Velutha not as a victim but as an active participant in ecological and social resistance.

CONCLUSION

The Political Ecology of Caste and Disability Roy’s novel exposes the deep connections between environmental degradation, caste-based violence, and disability. It challenges

the romanticisation of nature and the idea that marginalised bodies must remain outside of modernity. By portraying Velutha as both a craftsman and a victim of environmental and social violence, Roy critiques how caste, gender, and disability are manipulated to exclude certain populations from land, resources, and self-determination.

2. Bessie Head’s *When Rain Clouds Gather*: Women, Agriculture, and Colonial Legacies

Ecofeminism and Postcolonialism in the African Landscape

Bessie Head’s *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968) takes place in Botswana, a nation struggling with colonial legacies of environmental degradation, food insecurity, and gender oppression. The novel highlights the role of women in sustainable agricultural practices, presenting nature as both a site of oppression and liberation.

Unlike Roy’s focus on caste and disability, Head’s novel explores how women’s labour and indigenous knowledge are erased under colonial and patriarchal structures. The protagonist, Makhaya, is an outsider who arrives in Botswana seeking escape from the violence of apartheid South Africa. However, it is the women of the village, particularly Mma-Millipede, who guide him towards an ecological and social vision of resistance.

Women’s Knowledge and Ecological Resistance

Head’s portrayal of agriculture as a form of feminist resistance aligns with Vandana Shiva’s (1989) ecofeminist critique of industrial farming. The novel critiques Western development models, which dismiss indigenous farming methods as primitive, replacing them with unsustainable, commercial agriculture. The women in the novel, however, reclaim traditional farming methods, advocating for a harmonious relationship between humans and the land.

This aligns with Plumwood’s (1993) critique of the “master model,” which devalues both nature and women’s contributions. In contrast, Head presents female-led agricultural reform as a means of postcolonial recovery. This disrupts Western narratives that frame African landscapes as barren wastelands needing European intervention.

Colonialism and the Creation of Disability

While *When Rain Clouds Gather* does not explicitly focus on disability, it highlights how colonial systems create conditions of impairment through environmental destruction and labour exploitation. The displacement of indigenous peoples, the exhaustion of soil, and famine produce generations of disabled bodies, challenging the assumption that disability is an individual affliction rather than a structural consequence of colonial violence.

Conclusion

Women and Nature as Agents of Change: Bessie Head’s novel demonstrates that women’s ecological knowledge is central to postcolonial resistance. It critiques how colonialism and patriarchy treat both women and the land as passive and in need

of control, while also offering a vision of environmental and feminist recovery through sustainable practices.

3. Indra Sinha's *Animals' People*: Disability, Environmental Racism, and Corporate Colonialism

Disability and Environmental Justice in the Global South

Indra Sinha's *Animals' People* (2007) is based on the Bhopal gas disaster, a real-life industrial catastrophe that left thousands dead and even more with lifelong disabilities. The novel is a scathing critique of corporate environmental destruction, centring on a protagonist known as "Animal," who is physically deformed due to chemical exposure from a foreign corporation's negligence.

Unlike traditional narratives that portray disability as tragedy, Sinha's novel reclaims disabled identity as a form of resistance. The protagonist refuses to be a victim, rejecting the idea of "normalcy" imposed by both Western humanitarian organisations and local elites.

The Body as a Site of Resistance

Animal's deformity forces him to walk on all fours, making him a literal embodiment of the human/non-human boundary. This challenges Western notions of bodily integrity and environmental justice, which often exclude disabled individuals from ecological activism. His refusal to "become human" again symbolises defiance against a system that seeks to erase the consequences of corporate and colonial violence.

Environmental Racism and Corporate Colonialism

Sinha critiques the neocolonial structures that enable environmental disasters in the Global South. His novel aligns with Rob Nixon's (2011) concept of "slow violence," where the effects of environmental destruction are not immediate but unfold over decades, disproportionately harming the poor, disabled, and marginalised.

Conclusion: Challenging Ableist and Ecological Narratives

Sinha's novel disrupts both ecological and disability discourses by showing how environmental degradation creates and shapes disabled identities. Rather than depicting Animal as a passive sufferer, Sinha presents him as an active force against corporate exploitation, reclaiming both disability and environmental resistance as forms of postcolonial agency.

Through these three case studies, we see how ecofeminist and postcolonial literature challenge dominant narratives about nature, gender, and disability. *The God of Small Things* critiques caste and disability as products of colonial and environmental violence. *When Rain Clouds Gather* highlights women's ecological resistance to colonial agricultural policies. *Animal's People* confront corporate neocolonialism and environmental racism through the lens of disability.

Together, these texts offer a radical reimagining of nature, gender, and disability, arguing that marginalised bodies are not just victims of environmental destruction but active agents in ecological and political resistance.

Discussion and Theoretical Implications

The intersection of nature, gender, and disability in postcolonial ecofeminist literature reflects the marginalisation of bodies, landscapes, and identities under systems of colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism. By analysing *The God of Small Things*, *When Rain Clouds Gather*, and *Animals' People*, we have seen how literature serves as a space to challenge and rewrite dominant narratives about environmental justice, bodily autonomy, and gendered oppression.

This discussion explores the broader theoretical implications of these findings through the lenses of postcolonial ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and disability studies. It also examines the contemporary relevance of these literary themes in understanding ongoing environmental injustices and social inequalities in the Global South.

1. Ecofeminism and the Gendered Politics of Nature

Ecofeminist scholars such as Vandana Shiva (1989) and Carolyn Merchant (1980) argue that patriarchal and capitalist systems treat both women and nature as exploitable resources. This perspective is evident in Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather*, where indigenous women's knowledge of agriculture is dismissed under colonial agricultural policies.

The Domination of Women and Nature in Postcolonial Spaces

- Colonial systems impose monoculture farming, erasing women's roles in traditional ecological knowledge.
- Women's labor is invisible in dominant economic models, much like the extraction of natural resources is framed as progress while harming local communities.
- In *The God of Small Things*, Ammu's gendered oppression mirrors environmental degradation, showing how women's agency is restricted in the same way nature is controlled and commodified.

Ecofeminism, therefore, provides a framework to critique how gendered oppression intersects with environmental exploitation, particularly in postcolonial contexts where indigenous and female voices are further silenced by neocolonial forces.

Rewriting the Narrative: Women as Ecological Agents

- Rather than depicting women as passive victims, these novels reposition them as active agents of resistance.
- Mma-Millipede in *When Rain Clouds Gather* represents how women's environmental knowledge can rebuild postcolonial nations by prioritising sustainability over profit-driven models.
- Ammu and Rahel in *The God of Small Things* demonstrate how female resistance is interwoven with ecological memory and land reclamation.

Thus, eco-literature challenges Western developmental narratives that equate environmental destruction with modernity while feminist perspectives restore indigenous and gendered ecological knowledge.

2. Postcolonial Ecocriticism: The Colonial Creation of Disability and Environmental Injustice

Rob Nixon's (2011) concept of "slow violence" is particularly relevant to Indra Sinha's *Animals' People*, which critiques how multinational corporations perpetuate environmental racism and disable entire communities.

Corporate Colonialism and the Environmental Production of Disability

- Western corporations, often backed by neocolonial economic policies, exploit Global South environments, leading to chemical disasters, displacement, and ecological destruction.
- These man-made disasters create disabilities in vulnerable populations, challenging the individualist view of disability as a biological defect.
- *Animal's People* presents disability as an act of corporate violence, making a case for environmental justice as a human rights issue.
- This aligns with postcolonial ecocriticism, which challenges how former colonies continue to suffer environmental exploitation under global capitalism.
- Disability as a Form of Resistance
- Sinha's novel rejects the medicalised notion that disability must be "cured" or hidden.
- *Animal*, as a protagonist, embraces his bodily difference as a political identity, using his disability as a symbol of resistance against corporate and environmental injustice.
- This aligns with critical disability studies, which argue that disability is socially and politically constructed rather than a mere physical impairment (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000).

Thus, postcolonial ecocriticism expands disability studies by showing how historical and environmental factors create disabled identities.

3. The Politics of Space: Who Owns Nature?

A recurring theme in these novels is the contested ownership of nature and space, raising questions about who has the right to inhabit, protect, and benefit from the environment.

Nature as a Site of Caste and Class Struggles

- In *The God of Small Things*, the river Meenachal is both a site of Dalit resistance and exclusion.
- Velutha's connection to the river reflects how lower-caste and marginalised communities have deep ecological ties that dominant groups seek to erase.
- This aligns with postcolonial spatial theory (Bhabha, 1994), which argues that colonial and caste-based systems determine who has access to land and who is forced to remain in marginal spaces.
- Environmental Displacement and the Loss of Indigenous Spaces
- When *Rain Clouds Gather* critiques the Western development model that displaces indigenous farming methods, replacing them with capitalist agricultural systems that fail to sustain local communities.

- The loss of ecological space is not just a loss of land but a loss of cultural identity and autonomy, reinforcing how colonialism and capitalism work together to control resources.

4. Contemporary Implications: Eco-Literature as Political Resistance

The issues explored in these novels are not just historical or fictional but have direct implications for contemporary environmental struggles in the Global South.

The Climate Crisis and Environmental Racism

- Ongoing industrial disasters in the Global South (such as in Nigeria's oil fields or India's toxic rivers) mirror the events in *Animal's People*.
- Climate change disproportionately affects indigenous, disabled, and lower-caste communities, much like in Roy's and Head's novels.
- Neoliberal environmental policies continue to prioritise corporate profits over local sustainability, reinforcing the same colonial patterns of exploitation.
- Ecofeminist and Disability Justice Movements
- Modern ecofeminist movements (such as the Chipko Movement in India) continue to fight against environmental degradation linked to gender oppression.
- Disability activists are challenging how climate change and environmental disasters create new forms of bodily marginalisation, linking disability studies with environmental justice.
- These novels help build a literary archive of resistance, showing that literature is not just an artistic medium but a political tool for reimagining just futures.

Conclusion: Rewriting the Margins, Reclaiming the Future

Through *The God of Small Things*, *When Rain Clouds Gather*, and *Animals' People*, we see how postcolonial ecofeminist literature challenges dominant narratives of development, disability, and gendered oppression.

1. Ecofeminism reveals how women's knowledge is erased under patriarchal capitalism but remains central to ecological survival.
2. Postcolonial ecocriticism shows that colonial and corporate violence shape both disability and environmental destruction.
3. Spatial politics demonstrate how marginalised communities are forcibly excluded from nature, but also reclaim it through resistance.

Final Thoughts: Literature as Ecological and Political Resistance

These novels are not just works of fiction but blueprints for understanding real-world struggles. They demand that we rethink environmental justice beyond Western frameworks, recognising that gendered, disabled, and racialised communities must be central to any fight for ecological survival.

In doing so, literature becomes an act of decolonisation, reclaiming both nature and marginalised identities as sites of resistance, resilience, and renewal.

Conclusion: Rewriting the Margins, Reclaiming the Future

The exploration of nature, gender, and disability in ecofeminist and postcolonial literature reveals how these intersecting forces shape narratives of oppression, resistance, and survival. By analysing *The God of Small Things*, *When Rain Clouds Gather*, and *Animal's People*, this study has demonstrated how literature functions as a political space where marginalised voices reclaim agency against patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist structures. These texts challenge dominant environmental, social, and economic ideologies, offering alternative ways of thinking about identity, ecology, and justice in the Global South.

1. Literature as a Space of Resistance

Ecofeminist and postcolonial theories converge in these novels to expose the parallel exploitation of nature, women, and disabled bodies. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* critiques caste-based oppression, environmental degradation, and the gendered policing of women's autonomy, highlighting how marginalised groups remain at the periphery of both social and ecological landscapes. Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* explores the conflict between indigenous ecological knowledge and Western agricultural imperialism, advocating for sustainable models of development that recognise the wisdom of marginalised communities. Indra Sinha's *Animal's People*, through its protagonist's embodied resistance, critiques the role of corporate capitalism in manufacturing disability and environmental destruction, exposing how postcolonial nations remain entangled in neocolonial exploitation.

Through these narratives, literature challenges the hierarchies that define mainstream environmental discourse, presenting alternative visions of ecological relationships that centre community, care, and justice rather than domination and profit.

2. Decolonising Environmental and Disability Narratives

Postcolonial ecocriticism and critical disability studies challenge the Eurocentric frameworks of environmentalism and disability rights, offering instead context-specific understandings of justice and resistance. In these novels, disability is not framed as an individual condition to be "cured" but as a result of systemic violence—whether colonial, corporate, or environmental. Likewise, environmental destruction is not depicted as an unfortunate consequence of progress, but as a deliberate act of exploitation that disproportionately harms the marginalised.

- In *Animal's People*, disability is linked to environmental violence, calling for an intersectional understanding of both movements.
- In *The God of Small Things*, nature becomes a metaphor for lost innocence, caste oppression, and gendered exclusion, critiquing how both landscapes and bodies are subjected to rigid hierarchies.
- In *When Rain Clouds Gather*, indigenous wisdom offers an alternative to colonial and capitalist models of land use, advocating for sustainable and equitable agricultural practices.

These novels disrupt Western-centric environmental narratives that prioritise conservation over community survival. They also

challenge medicalised notions of disability, reframing it as a condition produced by social and environmental injustice rather than mere bodily difference.

3. Implications for Contemporary Environmental and Social Movements

The themes explored in these novels remain deeply relevant today, as climate change, environmental racism, and gendered oppression continue to shape global inequalities.

- The climate crisis disproportionately affects the Global South, much like the environmental disasters depicted in *Animal's People*.
- Indigenous and feminist ecological movements, such as the Chipko Movement in India and ecofeminist resistance in Africa, align with the struggles in *When Rain Clouds Gather*, advocating for sustainability over corporate-driven policies.
- Caste-based and gendered environmental exclusions, as seen in *The God of Small Things*, persist in contemporary land politics, as marginalised groups continue to be denied access to natural resources.

The literary archive of postcolonial ecofeminism and disability justice thus serves not only as a critique of the past but as a blueprint for reimagining more just futures. These texts push us to reconsider who is included in environmental discourse, whose voices are heard, and whose knowledge is valued.

4. Rewriting the Margins, Reclaiming the Future

Through their portrayal of marginalised ecologies and bodies, these novels invite readers to rethink what it means to belong—to land, to community, and to history. They expose the ongoing violence of colonial legacies, but they also offer hopeful alternatives: narratives where women reclaim agency over nature, disabled bodies assert their autonomy, and postcolonial communities challenge corporate and colonial environmental destruction.

Ultimately, these texts demand that we decolonise our understanding of nature, gender, and disability, ensuring that eco-justice movements recognise the lived experiences of the most marginalised. Literature, in this sense, is not just a reflection of reality but an active intervention in it—a means of rewriting the margins and reclaiming futures that centre justice, agency, and ecological solidarity.

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