

An Applying Ecocriticism to the story "*The Ultimate Safari*" by Nadine Gordimer

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Abstract

A study of the story "The Ultimate Safari" shows how nature is depicted in literature and what the writer's concern towards the environment in indigenous people's lives, particularly in Black South African literature. Consider the work of Nadine Gordimer, "Jump and Other Stories," in light of her political background and environmental concerns. It is also a response to the feelings and narratives of South Africa's mountains, rivers, national parks, zoos, black people, and racism. The main reasons why the black people and their forest are exploited in African literature are the white people and the Civil War. Gordimer's stories emphasize the natural environment, with a focus on the animals that live there. In the story "The Ultimate Safari," a black family is forced to take a dangerous journey to escape an ongoing civil war in their region. In this paper, a young girl narrates the story of her journey to Kruger National Park, which is home to a variety of animals, perils, and their relationships with nature.

Keywords: Eco-tourism, Animality, Material eco-criticism

Introduction

Nadine Gordimer was born on November 20, 1923 in Springs, South Africa. Isidore Gordimer, a Jewish immigrant watchmaker, and Nan Myers, a British-born woman who had also gone to Southern Africa as a child, welcome Nadine Gordimer into the world. Gordimer is alone at the age of ten because of a cardiac condition. Gordimer's mother stops her daughter from engaging in strenuous activities like dance classes and dismisses her from the boarding school. Furthermore, she gets a personal trainer for three hours each day. Despite the severe loneliness Gordimer experiences during these years, she makes the most of her downtime by reading voraciously and writing a lot.

By understanding politics, this essay has attempted to capitalize on the idea that literature may be political and ecological. One stage in a political or ecological transition link can be the collection and accessibility of individual observations of the material world for reasons in literary compositions. The world can be motivated by literary works with the hope of changing human-nonhuman interactions. Literary works, on the other hand, will show our

participation in contemporary refining and expansion that oppose our environmental ideals and show our rejection of mobilization. In addition to encouraging imbalance understandings of our place in the world, literary works can show how the continuing distinction of culture from nature and text from the real world can conceal racial, social, and environmental injustices. This method also encourages the political ecology, eco-terrorism, eco-tourism, animality, and material eco-criticism concepts that will be discussed in this paper.

The short story "The Ultimate Safari" is narrated by a young schoolgirl on a "migration for survival." An African family is portrayed in the story as they deal with the consequences of the long civil war in Mozambique. Beginning with the perspective of a nine-year-old girl travelling from a Mozambican village to Kruger Park, the author has begun to tell the story. The black family thinks that, Kruger National Park is a safari park for white people; it is a dangerous environment for Mozambican refugees. Compared to the village, a South African refugee camp is far better, at the end of the story readers learn that the white people looks black people indifferently. The family portrays in this story includes the parents, older brother, middle child, and younger son. The father loses his life in the conflict with the supporters, who are referred to as "bandits" by the narrator. The mother dies during the bandit attacks. With no longer having a church or a school, the community has turned into a lifeless desert. Villagers must work harder in order to make ends meet on a daily basis. The children naturally become refugees because they don't know the names of the days of the week, like Sundays and Mondays, but their grandparents assist them. The story closes on a positive note, declaring that the families' lives of immobility and hopelessness are coming to an end. A new chapter in an altogether new migrant identity is beginning as native people progressively join the flow. In this story, I illustrate the notions of animality, political ecology, ecotourism, and Eco terrorism.

"Out of the Earth: Eco critical Readings of Irish Texts" is a collection of Eco critical reads of Irish texts. Out of the Earth's eleven essays cover a wide range of topics in Irish writing, including Eco poetics, biocentrism, agrarian displacement, and ecofeminism, as well as environmental elegies, animal connections to the land, ecology, and colonial relationships to tourism, which all serve to frame the set as a whole. When this list is combined, it forms a wide, broad, expressive, yet extremely coherent collection that accomplishes its purpose of connecting Irish literature, to the environment, politics, and history that surrounds them. Some Irish writers used nature in their writings example Edna O'Brien, George Moore, Lady Morgan, Elizabeth Bowen, and J. M. Synge, Richard Murphy, William Carleton, Martin McDonagh, and Paula Meehan.

Animality

Animals first used in fables, later on used in allegorical poems and stories as a vice or virtue characters to show different symbolic meaning in the characters. Animal stories and fables, there evolved to be a simple and obvious difference here between real animals and their representations, which people in the middle ages were no doubt more familiar. The act of portrayal of animals in fables and best stories clearly changed the animals into humans. Animal allegories are marked by dualness and complexity in the early modern history of English

literature; rather than simply referring to a primarily human sense; animal allegories simultaneously hide and reveal the contentious nature of the human-animal boundary. Joyce Sails bury writes

“Thus, in fables, the lion is a figure of nobility and the dog figure of denigration, even though in real life, most denizens of the Middle Age would not have encountered an actual lion, and many dogs would have been actually favored companions”. (50)

Writers of animal advocacy fiction prefer to portray humans as an antagonist and persecutor of animals in a much more negative and less attractive tone. Human beings enter the beauty of nature as destroyers, either of animals directly or of native animals. They are both witnesses and visitors. Animal advocacy literature, on the other hand, seldom appeals to natural "processes" and instead focuses on the effects of human-animal relationship. Because there is nothing distinctive about the human animal, animal rights activists believe that nonhuman animals have equal claim to the rights and entitlements that people claim for them. Speciesism refers to the concepts and beliefs that distinguish humans from and above other creatures. The point of disagreement is the belief that humans may exploit nature and exploit other animals as consumers choose.

Land, power, and territory were the driving forces behind the Mozambique war. Before Mozambique gained its independence, the Portuguese and Africans engaged in a nearly ten-year war. Because resources are necessary for survival, there is a need for power, domination, and land. Animals in the wild can be seen engaging in similar behavior all around the world. A pride of lions consists of 10 to 15 individuals, and there is frequently just one male in a pride. Once they reach adulthood, male pups are either killed or pushed away because they might represent a threat to the current alpha male. In J M Coetzee's collection of all his speeches is published as a metafiction novella called *The Lives of Animals*, explains about

"Animals stand for human qualities: the lion for courage, the owl for wisdom, and so forth." (50)

When the author says that another breastfeeding mother fed her small sibling, I'm reminded of this fact. Ironically, this demonstrates that people have empathy and compassion in their hearts despite going to great lengths to survive, even at the expense of other living things. The villagers made the decision to leave in order to search for a better place to live in that place until they could return to their native land. Many animals, such as the vast migration of the wildebeest and the long-distance migration of bar-headed ducks from the Himalaya to South India, exhibit this type of migrating. They are moving to a more suited home while still remaining in their current ones so they can return when the time is right. All living things also employ this strategy in their struggle for existence.

In order to avoid being captured by the authorities, white people, or animals, the migrants went silently and took care to avoid roadways. Contrary to the typical human tendency to show their supremacy everywhere they are present, one could claim that their behaviour was more elusive and covert. To survive inside the territory of the animals, they had to merge with them. All

living things in the Kruger National Park were victims of humans, the natural predators. They were able to effectively arrive at their target because of their capacity to adapt to their environment.

Food is not easily accessible inside the national park. They couldn't ignite a fire because they couldn't risk getting caught rather than because they didn't know how. They now have access to the same resources and facilities as wild animals. The animals had the upper hand, yet they did not. No fire, no weapons, and no prepared meals. In order to quench their thirst, they were forced to follow the animals to their watering spots. They drank directly from the water sources, much like the animals do, instead of using water bottles or any other containers for storing water. They were starving after circling the park repeatedly, but they were unable to find anything to eat. Roots, grasses, and other shoots cannot be digested by the human digestive system. So the villagers turned to their closest cousins, the baboons, for assistance! They consumed the baboons' diet of dried figs. They had to eat the figs despite the fact that they were covered in ants because there was nothing else to eat.

She recounts flies flying all over her grandmother's face when they were waiting for the narrator's grandfather to arrive while they were seated in the park among the high grass. We frequently witness this when we are around animals. There are numerous occasions when it makes one surprise why the animals don't worry themselves much about the insects and instead allow them to fly above them. Perhaps it's because you come to embrace the customs of the wild when you live in the wild, where there are no clean clothes to wear and no fresh baths.

The writer does an excellent job of showing how her grandmother is a strong woman who can take care of the grandchildren and the grandfather throughout the story. She is a strong woman whose main concern was the protection of the children. She does not stay around it for her husband when she noticed that the group was continuing without him. She proceeded without making a fuss since she realised that if her grandsons lost this chance, they wouldn't live. Many types of animals in the animal kingdom do not display signs of mourning. Despite the fact that primates and large mammals like elephants remember their departed family members, sentimental bonds between most species are difficult to spot unless they exist between a mother and her offspring. The grandmother had to gather her calm and move on, and at that instant, she behaved like an animal.

To feel safe and secure, animals are often seen sleeping close to one another. To protect themselves from any potential predators seeking for food, the guests on The Ultimate Safari slept on top of one another. Though the park visitors were at risk, instincts can sometimes be like magic when a person's life is in peril. When the guy in charge of the hamlet noticed the lions attempting to approach the people, he established his authority to demonstrate that he was stronger and arm-equipped when he took the wooden branch to frighten the lions. When lions believe they cannot win a battle, they frequently flee. The lions left the people alone, as to be anticipated. The man might have easily been killed by the lions despite having no chance against them, but instead of surrendering to the impulse we most frequently see in prey animals in nature, he utilized his wits to save himself and the others.

Eco-tourism

Although ecotourism, often referred to as sustainable tourism, encompasses a wide range of travel activities, they are all connected by a set of guiding principles. An eco-tourist chooses to travel in a way that respects nature and does not contribute to its extinction. Their journey to the destination of their choice begins at Kruger Park. Without the threat of robbers but with their permission, the journey begins. An attack by a wild animal is possible. The village shows the transition from the created planet to the animal kingdom as more individuals are added.

She observes that the security officers at the park are black while the white visitors take in the wildlife they are in charge of protecting. Illegal travellers use security measures to prevent getting apprehended. In the course of the security check the girl recalls other instances in which villagers were attacked by wild creatures and lost body parts, and she is overwhelmed with a mixture of delight, excitement, and terror. While the light the girl saw was on "poles that give electric light in our towns," the park is closed up for safety purposes. The leader of the troop warns them not to fire since the police will immediately capture them and send them back to their beginning point. The youngsters are fascinated as they come across a sizable herd of elephants, but the leader commands them to stop. The girl laments that the animals do not provide them with food because they always eat it. All through the day and night, they are progressing. The grandmother carries the younger child on her back. She claims that her little brother has gained weight while also becoming skinny, and that her older brother has gotten so fatigued that he has stopped speaking. She notices insects on the grandmother's face but does not make an effort to remove them since she is worn out. To draw crowds that were hungry, the whites used to cook meat in their camps.

The children are most eager to see the lion. The girl closes her eyes and cries out for the lion to let her go. The leader starts yelling and thrashing the tree with a dead branch. The lions are gone now. The grandmother's feet start to bleed while she is crossing the lake. The argument over which is more important—carrying the baskets or one's own bulky, immobile body—is settled in favour of the body with the soul. The mothers who are toting their infants on their backs keep going. The absurdity of the situation—where one end fights for fundamental rights while the other indulges in all the creature comforts—is expertly captured by the author.

Material eco-criticism

Material eco-criticism is the study of the articulate dynamics of nature's elements or the narrative agency of storied matter at any scale of being in their mutual entanglements. It seeks to dive into the world of narrative. The phrase "primary narrative agency" describes how stories, such as historical reports, archaeological and architectural evidence, literary and cultural materials, etc., will surround us. According to material eco-criticism, all elements of

nature, from the subatomic to the higher levels of life, possess agency, imagination, language, and enduring relationships that can be visualized as a massive collection of stories.

According to material ecocriticism, these stories are the result of the interaction of natural and cultural forces, routes, and currents, which result in planets of substance and meanings. To mention a few, elements, cells, genes, atoms, stones, water, habitats, and gadgets are articulated narratives that serve as containers for story-related information. Given the stories embodied in material formations of the material world, the breakdown of anthropocentrism and subsequently the binary logic of conventional humanism deeply entwined within the social and cultural patterns of othering the non-human universe is signalled by material-discursive co-emergence signals. The modern materialist theoretical perspective is complemented by narrative agency, which further undermines the dichotomies of animate/inanimate, organic/inorganic, language/non-language, and material/discursive.

The coexistence and development of humans and non-humans are stated through material ecocriticism, which is critical for bridging the gap between substance and its social surroundings. The composite existence of this cosmos, which we share with nonhuman beings, material powers, and things, is best described as natural-cultural. According to this theory, there is such a dense interconnection between human and nonhuman bodies, habitats, technology, social and cultural practices, politics, ethics, and aesthetics that it has unquantifiable effects on climatic systems, aquatic and terrestrial biomes, and human and nonhuman bodies. A variety of microbes, animals, plants, metals, and chemicals frequently combine with human agency. An animist or Pagan would see the expenses of upholding modern society as extremely high and particularly detrimental. However, the patriarchal system's near total control over people's emotions and minds, in the opinion of many contemporary critics, including myself, renders modern society considerably worse.

Material eco-criticism views humans as "actors" operating within material systems that contain a large number of additional "actors," the great majority of which are neither humans nor conscious. One may contend that because we are an overabundant, adaptive, and mobile species, our current version of human agency is the result of these traits. The break-it-and-fix-it mentality of other environmental rhetoric, which is predicated on the idea that human agents cause ecological problems but can quickly and easily remedy all of them with the correct technology, is something that materials eco-criticism seeks to fight. Adopting such "can-do" mentalities without accounting for the full spectrum of agency is a form of blindness.

The goal of materials eco-criticism is to challenge the break-it-and-fix-it mentality of other environmental rhetoric, which is predicated on the idea that human agents are the root cause of ecological problems but that, with the correct technology, they can all be readily fixed. Adopting such "can-do" mentalities without accounting for the full spectrum of agency is a form of blindness. The African natural resources they gained and the whites' agency to gain political power are symbolised in *The Ultimate Safari*. Black people are the victims of this agency; nevertheless, other groups were not participating in the civil war that one revolutionary black group declared against the British in order to save their territory. It demonstrates how

both people and nature are abused via acts of war as bandits destroy a village and force the local Mozambicans to relocate to a park. Safari finally serves as a protector by destroying the homes.

Conclusion

Critics have praised and criticized Nadine Gordimer's moving depictions of the African landscape, calling them only "visual imagery" and "local colour." The extent to which both of those in-depth passages, however, show the same environment, suggests a long-standing but underappreciated history of landscape depiction in South African English-language literature. Rarely have researchers looked into the particulars of her singular comprehension of the South African landscape as initially experienced as a kid and subsequently modified by the standards of her ideological and political project.

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