

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

**UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS II -ABOU EL KACEM SAADALLAH**

**FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**A POSTCOLONIAL ECOCRITICAL READING OF  
FOUR SELECTED NOVELS BY  
NAIPAUL, COETZEE, ANTHONY AND GHOSH**

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of Doctorate Es  
Sciences in English Literature and Civilization

Submitted by:

**Khawla BENDJEMIL**

Supervised by:

**Prof. Dalila ZEGHAR**

October, 2021

A POSTCOLONIAL ECOCRITICAL READING OF  
FOUR SELECTED NOVELS BY  
NAIPAUL, COETZEE, ANTHONY AND GHOSH

## **BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

**CHAIRWOMAN: Prof. Z. BENSAFI, UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS II**

**SUPERVISOR: Prof. D. ZEGHAR, UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS II**

**EXAMINER: Prof. F. MAMI, UNIVERSITY OF ADRAR**

**EXAMINER: Dr. F. AZZOUG, UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS II**

**EXAMINER: Prof. L. CHOUITEN, UNIVERSITY OF BOUMERDES**

**EXAMINER: Dr. M. DOUIFI, UNIVERSITY OF ALGIERS II**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the substance of this thesis is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

Date: 21 Feb. 2021

Signed: 

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost my endless thanks go to Allah, without who I would not be here, for all His boundless compassion that I am ashamed in front of.

I would also like to thank all my family members especially my beloved parents (Abdelouaheb and Leila), sisters and brother (Aziza, Hana, Manel, and Billel “and his daughter Djouri”), without whom I could not finish this work nor could I be this successful. I am equally thankful for the presence of my niece Ilef in my life, whose age equals the years of my PhD journey.

Special thanks go to my supervisor, Prof. Dalila ZEGHAR, for her patience, help, kindness, and useful comments that have enlightened me during the construction of this project.

My deepest gratitude goes to all my teachers from the mosque to the university, especially those who believed in me. Special thanks go to Prof. L. TOULGUI, Prof. A. ELLAGOUNE, Prof. H. BOUDECHICHE, Prof. F. BOULKROUN, and Prof. Steve TAMARI who have supported me for my PhD.

My heartfelt thanks go to all my dearest students, colleagues, and family members, especially my uncle Mohammed, Nadjib, aunt Lisette BENDJEMIL; uncle Abdelouaheb, aunt Hassina BENTEBOULA; Mr. Toufik DAHMANI; and Dr. Amel BENKHALFALLAH RIP. In addition, my sincerest gratitude goes to all my international friends especially my American friends, Turkish Refika and Tugba YILDIZ; Moroccan Sofiane HOUDA; Egyptian Marwa and Amani; Iranian Zahra; Lebanese Safa; Algerian Halima BENS DIRA, and Asma MEFTAH, who have all been a major support for my PhD.

Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the examination committee who have accepted to assess this thesis strengthening it with their constructive remarks and comments.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the element of nature in postcolonial unnamed African country, South Africa, Trinidad and China in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1979), John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), Michael Anthony's *Bright Road to El Dorado* (1983), and Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke* (2011), respectively. The study also examines the environment that the characters inhabit (village, town or city) in these four postcolonial novels and the role of the colonizer in determining the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, the people or their land using mainly the convergence of the theories of postcolonialism and ecocriticism. In addition, given the fact that the land, as part of nature for instance, does influence the psyche and the actual behavior of people, and that many other environmental elements such as climate, wilderness, technologically altered landscapes, and topographies function as powerful forces that human beings have to react to and get affected by, this research traces the representation of such related aspects in these novels as well as their influence and significance vis-à-vis the characters, the writers and their works. Furthermore, the thesis looks at the writers' attitudes towards nature and the way they depict it, in addition to analyzing the extent to which they are aware of its significance and influence upon the characters of their stories.

**Key Words:** Ecocriticism, postcolonialism, biocolonization, nature and the environment

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Acknowledgements</b> .....   | iv |
| <b>Abstract</b> .....   | v  |
| <b>Table of Contents</b> .....  | vi |
| <b>General Introduction</b> .....   | 1  |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>PART ONE Backgrounds: Socio-Historical, Geographical, and Theoretical</b>                |    |
| <br>  |    |
| Introduction.....   | 28 |
| <br>  |    |
| <b>CHAPTER I Works and Writers: Socio-Historical and Geographical Contexts</b>              |    |
| <br>  |    |
| Introduction.....   | 30 |
| I.1. Colonialism and Environment in Central Africa.....                                     | 31 |
| I.1.1. Belgian Colonization, Independence, and the First Republic of Congo (1960–1965)..... | 32 |
| I.1.2. The Second Republic: Mobutu’s First Years of Rule.....                               | 34 |
| I.1.3. Postcolonialism in Naipaul’s Eyes.....   | 35 |
| I.1.4. Congo as the Setting of <i>A Bend in the River</i> .....                             | 38 |
| I.1.5. V. S. Naipaul Writing Nature and the Environment.....                                | 42 |
| I.2. Colonialism and Environment in South Africa.....                                       | 49 |
| I.2.1. The Settlement of South Africa: Pre-colonial Times.....                              | 49 |
| I.2.2. The Conquest of the South African Land: The White Invaders.....                      | 50 |
| I.2.3. The Union, and the Establishment of the Republic of South Africa.....                | 52 |
| I.2.4. The Republic and Apartheid.....  | 54 |
| I.2.5. John Maxwell Coetzee: Challenges of Postcolonial Writing.....                        | 57 |
| I.2.6. John Maxwell Coetzee Reading of South African Landscape.....                         | 64 |
| I.3. Colonialism and Environment in the Caribbean: Trinidad.....                            | 68 |
| I.3.1. Spanish Colonialism of Trinidad.....   | 68 |
| I.3.2. Michael Anthony Writing of Anti-colonial Discourse.....                              | 70 |
| I.3.3. El Dorado and Sir Walter Raleigh’s Expedition.....                                   | 73 |
| I.3.4. <i>Bright Road to El Dorado</i> ’s Setting: Trinidad.....                            | 75 |
| I.3.5. Michael Anthony Writing Nature and the Environment.....                              | 77 |
| I.4. Colonialism and Environment in Asia: China.....  | 79 |
| I.4.1. Ghazipur, Canton, and the First Opium Wars.....                                      | 79 |
| I.4.2. Amitav Ghosh and Postcolonialism.....  | 84 |
| I.4.3. Amitav Ghosh Writing of Nature and the Environment.....                              | 91 |
| Conclusion.....   | 97 |

## **CHAPTER II Nature and the Environment in a Postcolonial Context: Theoretical and Methodological Basis**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Introduction.....  | 103 |
| II.1. Scope of the Theories: Re-Reading the Concept of Land.....   | 103 |
| II.1.1. Land through the Lens of Postcolonialism.....  | 104 |
| II.1.2. Land through the Lens of Ecocriticism.....   | 121 |
| II.2. Interdisciplinarity of the Theories: Ecologizing Postcolonialism and<br>Decolonizing Ecocriticism..... | 128 |
| II.2.1. Ecologizing Postcolonialism.....   | 128 |
| II.2.2. Decolonizing Ecocriticism.....   | 134 |
| Conclusion.....  | 137 |

## **PART TWO Characters and Writers: Attitudes and Representations of Nature**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Introduction..... | 141 |
|-------------------|-----|

### **CHAPTER III Characters and Nature**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Introduction..... | 143 |
|-------------------|-----|

#### **III.1. Nature in the Eyes of Natives (Colonized)**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Introduction.....  | 143 |
| III.1.1. <i>A Bend in the River</i> 's Native Africans: Town, Village, or the New<br>Domain.....           | 144 |
| III.1.2. <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i> 's Native South Africans: Wilderness or the<br>Walled Town..... | 156 |
| III.1.3. <i>Bright Road to El Dorado</i> 's Natives: Sea or Land.....                                      | 161 |
| III.1.4. <i>River of Smoke</i> 's Natives: Sea or Islands.....   | 168 |
| Conclusion.....  | 176 |

#### **III.2. Nature in the Eyes of Non-natives (or Non-Native Natives)**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Introduction.....  | 181 |
| III.2.1. <i>A Bend in the River</i> 's Non-Native Natives: Where is Home: Africa or<br>Europe? ..... | 182 |
| III.2.2. <i>River of Smoke</i> 's Non-Natives: Between Plants, Opium, and Canton.....                | 188 |
| Conclusion.....  | 197 |

#### **III.3. Nature in the Eyes of Characters (Colonizers)**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Introduction.....   | 199 |
| III.3.1. <i>A Bend in the River</i> 's White Men: Imprisoned in the New Domain..... | 200 |



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| III.3.2. <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i> ' British: Imprisoned in the Walled Town..... | 204 |
| III.3.3. <i>Bright Road to El Dorado</i> 's Sea-people: Crazy for El Dorado.....         | 209 |
| III.3.4. <i>River of Smoke</i> 's Foreigners: Crazy for Canton.....                      | 217 |
| Conclusion.....  | 228 |

## **CHAPTER IV Writers and Representations: Colonialism and Nature**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Introduction..... | 235 |
|-------------------|-----|

### **IV.1. The writers' Representation of Colonizer/Colonized**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Introduction.....   | 235 |
| IV.1.1. <i>A Bend in the River</i> : Ambivalent or Objective Representation of<br>Colonialism?..... | 236 |
| IV.1.2. <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i> ' Barbarian Colonizers.....                               | 247 |
| IV.1.3. <i>Bright Road to El Dorado</i> : Land-people Versus Sea-people.....                        | 256 |
| IV.1.4. <i>River of Smoke</i> 's Foreign Merchants: Between Opium and Plants.....                   | 262 |
| Conclusion.....   | 269 |

### **IV.2. The writers' Representation of Nature**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Introduction.....   | 275 |
| IV.2.1. <i>A Bend in the River</i> 's Bush Versus Civilisation.....             | 275 |
| IV.2.2. <i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i> ' Wilderness Versus Civilisation..... | 286 |
| IV.2.3. <i>Bright Road to El Dorado</i> : Sea Versus Islands.....               | 292 |
| IV.2.4. <i>River of Smoke</i> : Canton Versus all Others.....                   | 296 |
| Conclusion.....   | 299 |

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| <b>General Conclusion</b> ..... | 304 |
|---------------------------------|-----|

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| <b>Works Cited</b> ..... | 313 |
|--------------------------|-----|

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Abstract in Arabic</b> ..... | 326 |
|---------------------------------|-----|

# **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

This thesis examines the element of nature in a postcolonial unnamed Central African country (mostly Congo), South Africa, Trinidad and China in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1979), John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), Michael Anthony's *Bright Road to El Dorado* (1983), and Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke* (2011), respectively. The study also examines the environment that the characters inhabit (village, town or city) in these four postcolonial novels and the role of the colonizer in determining the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, both the people and their land. In addition, given the fact that the land, as part of nature for instance, does influence the psyche and the actual behavior of people, and that many other environmental elements such as the climate, the wilderness, technologically altered landscapes and topographies function as powerful forces that human beings have to react to and get affected by, this research traces the representation of such related aspects in these novels as well as their influence and significance vis-à-vis the characters, the writers and their works. Moreover, this study investigates the presence of some postcolonial and ecocritical terms such as ambivalence, the "Other," biocolonisation in the four novels of the research. Furthermore, the thesis considers the writers' attitudes towards nature and the way they depict it, in addition to analyzing the extent to which they are aware of its significance and influence upon the characters of their stories.

Nature and the environment have always been present in humans' lives acting as the space where they live, a place that Edward Hoagland calls "our widest home" (qtd. in Howarth 69). Likewise, their existence is equally extant in literary and cultural works in the humanities. As far as literary criticism is concerned, the natural element

may not have always been given the focus that it deserves by researchers. However, the environmental crisis of the twentieth century has resulted in the reappearance of nature and the environment as a major issue to be spotlighted in the different fields. For literary studies, the topic is inevitable because literature reflects and deals with the matters of the time during which it is produced. Thus, one must expect that nature and environmental issues constitute one of the main topics of literary works of the twentieth century. However, this has not always been the case. This was the reason that led Cheryll Glotfelty, in the introduction of *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (1996) to criticize the absence of the problems that the earth has been facing from any major literary publication. She writes that if one checked the contemporary literary publications, they would “quickly discern that race, class, and gender were the hot topics of the late twentieth century, but [they] would never suspect that the earth’s life support systems were under stress. Indeed, [one] might never know that there was an earth at all” (xvi). Actually, Cheryll Glotfelty together with Harold Fromm edited the above-mentioned book to become one of the major references in Ecocriticism as a recent theory that concerns itself with studying nature and the environment in both nature writings in particular and/or literary and cultural works in general. Hence this research is an attempt to highlight the environment, be it natural or human-built, in the analysis of the four novels at hand.

Like ecocritics, postcolonial critics deconstruct the concept of culture and many others that have been “naturalized” through time. In addition to culture, postcolonialism revises language, class, race, and the dichotomy of colonizer/colonized. Such issues are also the focus of this research that makes use of the

convergence between the two theories that came to official existence by the late 1990s. Indeed, the environment had always played important roles in the projects of the European conquests and the imperial domination of the different countries of the Third World most importantly because it was the place on which such conquests were being conducted. The colonizer as a “superior” human-being has always regarded the “Other” as part of nature, a fact that granted him the right to dominate and control this “Other” just like what he does with nature and animals. During colonization, the environmental impact of Western attitudes on the colonized world was significant. Be it intentional or accidental, it was actually characterized by the transport of animals, plants and peoples throughout the European empires from the colonized areas. This transport caused a change of the ecosystem of both colonizer and colonized. Thus appears the need for postcolonial ecocritical studies to examine the relationships between nature and culture, animal and human in postcolonial contexts (*Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin* 6). In fact, the focal point of this research is to spotlight such issues in the four novels of the analysis.

As for the studies on V. S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River*, the scholarship has concerned itself with some subjects related to this novel as well as his writer. Some studies have analyzed the novel from a postcolonial perspective since most of the changes that occur to both the country and its people are caused by the white man’s interference in the local business of the unnamed African country and its history. Other literary criticisms have focused on the representation of the different characters in this culturally diverse African country while other studies have highlighted the idea of “paradise” that the narrator –and hence other fellow African people- is searching for

outside the space of Africa as a whole. Despite the fact that the narrator of Naipaul's story is an educated and intelligent human-like character and is objectively trying to reflect on the situation of the newly independent African country(s), some critics went further in accusing V. S. Naipaul of being a supporter of what is known nowadays as "neocolonialism" because of the bleak image this narrator-protagonist depicts of the unnamed African country he lives in in particular and that of Africa in general. Others have pointed out the fact that the voice that Naipaul uses in this novel through Salim's narration is much like that of the white colonizer. Another group of critics tend to defend Naipaul of such accusations.

In his "Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*: Time, History, and 'Africa'" (1991), William Vincent analyzes the way Naipaul represents the change that is happening to history and the role of the West in creating such change. He argues that Naipaul in *A Bend in the River* does not only talk about the African city at the bend of the river but also about other two Western cities: London and Rome, which are both situated at bends of rivers. He suggests that Naipaul relates these three cities in the sense that "[...] if Rome is the great city of the past and London the great city of the present, perhaps the African city is the great city of the future (339). A viewpoint that can be considered as supporting the group of critics who believe in the optimism of Naipaul's novel. Vincent, then, affirms that Naipaul's novel is also about the difference between history: the flow of time and events, and history: the discipline (339). Vincent argues that Naipaul believes it to be just a European construct and has nothing to do with the real Africa. Naipaul proves this through the behaviours of a number of characters. There is Father Huismans who represents "this European, colonialist construct of

history” (340) because he resembles the European characters in their inability to see the truth of Africa. Thus comes the falsity and the hypocrisy of the European construct. According to him, the colonized peoples are able to and do destroy all material remnants of their ex-colonizer but it is not always easy to discard the historical construct itself. Vincent also refers to Naipaul’s use of the American historian character, Raymond, as a possible representative of: “an American construct of Western civilization [that] can redeem Europe's colonial mistakes” (343). However, Naipaul shows that Americans are no better morally than Europeans and that their views constitute a cultural construct that is far from the real image of Africa (345).

In her article “Gurnah and Naipaul: Intersections of *Paradise* and *A Bend in the River*” (2015), Fawzia Mustafa links Gurnah to Naipaul in the sense that Gurnah fills in the missing details in Naipaul’s story especially at the level of history and past. In addition, while Naipaul overuses “the personal,” Gurnah depends a lot on “the broken collective” (238). Also, she thinks that Gurnah can be read to be providing a significant rectification of the paradoxes that Naipaul and other writers like him embody in their works (235).

Surjit S. Dulai’s main point in his article “The Ganges Flows Through Africa: V. S. Naipaul’s *India* and *A Bend in the River*” (1991) is that Naipaul’s understanding of India reflects his comprehension of the other parts of the Third world. Hence, Dulai studies Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* from this perspective. He then argues that India is found in the novels in two main ways. One is related to the African situation and its resemblance to its Indian counterpart especially in being both ex-colonies which are now independent yet corrupt societies; and the other is related to the prominence of the

novel's characters who have Indian origins and the significant role that Naipaul gives them in conveying the central meaning of his novel.

As the title suggests, Joseph Walunywa's article: "The "Non-Native Native" in V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*" (2008) is a study that focuses on the novels' characters who are neither entirely native nor entirely foreign. The position of this category of people, Salim who is the narrator of the novel is one of them, is awkwardly unstable after the independence of the countries they have always considered as theirs. Naipaul, according to Walunywa, suggests that the solution to their situation is to relocate them to "globally powerful nations like Britain (within the context of globalization), from which they can acquire more influential and internationally relevant identities" (2) since the departure of the colonizer after the independence has taken from them their middle class status. Walunywa claims that the focus in postcolonial criticism has always been on the dichotomy of colonizer/colonized neglecting the medium category of immigrants who either come to the colonized land by force or by their own choice. The way he chooses to call such characters as the "Non-Native Natives" in the title of his article is for the reason that:

They are non-natives because they trace their heritage to another part of the world. But they are natives because, like the indigenous groups, they are subjected to the power of the colonizer. Secondly, they are non-natives because they are less threatening to the colonizer than the natives, on the basis of which they enjoy privileges that the colonizer denies the native proper. But they are natives because they are excluded from certain economic and political privileges that are reserved for the colonizer. (8)

Therefore, Walunywa thinks that spotlighting the position of this category in such post/colonial situations is necessity since they play an important role in their societies.

As the title of the article shows "Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* as a Jamesonian Third World National Allegory" (2013), Nazua Idris uses the American Marxist



literary critic and cultural theorist, Frederic Jameson's term of "Third World National Allegory," which refers to the Third World writers' representation of the individual in relation to the national. Therefore, Salim and some other characters are seen as allegorical figures that represent the diasporic people like them in the unnamed African country. Idris provides an analysis of all the characters that he classifies into different groups representing different categories of the African society that he thinks it to be that of Congo during General Mobutu's rule. According to him, all these characters allegorically represent the African country with its people, immigrants, history, culture, racial conflicts and political upheavals (172). He asserts:

On a personal level, Naipaul deals with the themes of alienation, identity crisis, loss of center and inner conflict of an individual. On the other hand, Naipaul deals with the themes of national importance - loss of history and culture, economic crisis, tribal feuds, political turmoil, division and racial intolerance in Congo. (172)

For him, then, Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* is a "Third World national allegory" that describes the national disturbances in the newly independent country(s) in Africa and that stresses the urgent need to reflect on their realities by both the national leaders and the intellectuals for the reason of achieving growth and development to them.

Despite the fact that some critics do acknowledge the pessimism of *A Bend in the River*, the writer of "Writing Without a Future: Colonial Nostalgia in V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*" (1995) argues that most recent western critical analyses of Naipaul's novel sees it as an existential triumph denying the pessimism it includes. In this article, Roger A. Berger claims his attempt to confirm Edward Said's opinion about Naipaul who represents a longing for colonialism even though he was born in an ex-colonized country (Trinidad). Berger disagrees with such recent western analyses that highlight the optimism of Naipaul's novel and affirms that:

What underlies ABR [*A Bend in the River*] is [rather] an assimilationist and imperialist ideology, an ideology deconstructed by framing the novel within the context of African fiction of the late 1960s and 1970s and by identifying Naipaul's sense of the African personality (borrowed from Joseph Conrad) which is represented in the text. (147)

Berger then goes on backing up this claim of his with textual evidence from Naipaul's novel that proves its assimilative nature with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. He argues that the representation of both the natives and their land is derogatory in Naipaul's novel. And this negative image is not, according to Naipaul, because of the western economic hegemony or the colonial heritage; it is rather because of the innate savagery of the natives and their land. Berger also refers to the bush as a symbol of the absence of civilization – “an irrational, atavistic savagery that obliterates (note Naipaul's repeated use of “buried”) everything seemingly good and moral and civilized” (149).

In the afore-mentioned article written by Joseph Walunywa, this latter also refers to the number of accusations that Naipaul keeps receiving from different critics (Chinua Achebe being one of them) of him being a racist against Africans. He agrees with Achebe because:

[Salim] sees his people exactly as the colonizer sees them. He brings to his culture exactly the same prejudices that the colonizer disseminates through the literature he produces regarding Arabia, India, and Africa. He derives a sense of pride from knowing that his people have done great things in the past. But because he perceives his environment exclusively through the prejudiced perspective of the colonizer he is invariably discontented with his culture. The innovations and “adventure-spirit” of non-native natives, though an important contribution to “civilization,” are miniscule in comparison to those of the Europeans. The civilization of Europeans belongs to the present, while that of non-native natives belongs to the past. (11)

Through this, Walunywa shows how Salim confirms the stereotypes spread by the colonizers about the colonized in the story he narrates. Thus, Naipaul is accused of merely resounding the voice of the colonizer. Because through analyzing *A Bend in the River*'s main character and only narrator, Salim, Walunywa proves that Salim and

Naipaul are the same person and that the latter uses the former to convey his ideology about Africa that resembles the neocolonial approach of the Europeans. Consequently, Walunywa concludes that Naipaul fails the “test of greatness” (23) as a writer because he blames the oppressed instead of blaming their oppressors for the confused situation they live in after they get their independence.

In his article “An African Reading of Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River*” (2014) agreeing with the accusations addressed to Naipaul, Kenneth W. Harrow provides a reason why Edward Said in 1986 remarked that *A Bend in the River* is a pernicious novel. It is because Naipaul talks in the voice of the colonizer despite being himself an ex-colonized diaspora Indian. He backs up his claims with three points of reference in order to analyze Naipaul’s novel: Early military officers’ reports, Joyce Cary’s *Mr. Johnson*, and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. Harrow argues that Naipaul’s attitude towards Africa and Africans is similar to how French colonial military, leaders, writers and reporters described their enemies (the peoples they wanted to invade and take control over) during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The depiction is therefore always derogatory, just like in Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River*. In addition, Harrow links what Cary does in his novel, *Mr. Johnson*, to Naipaul’s in their use of what JanMohamed calls the racial Romance and by utilizing the authoritative voice of the narrator. This narrator is kept aloof, is always an outsider. This helps him to avoid the description of the inner suffering of local Africans consequently holding the voice of the white man. Moreover, Naipaul provides the same description of Africa to that of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*:

At the end of Marlow's voyage to the interior in *Heart of Darkness*, he discovers the former idealist, Kurtz, in time to hear his dying assessment, "The horror, the horror." This is the bush, the heart of Africa, to Naipaul. It is unknown, hidden, and secret. For

example, Ferdinand's face is described as a mask, behind which nothing can be known, a blankness periodically harboring some lower level of emotion. The same blankness is given to Africa by its bush, which stands in contrast to the human works of the West. (329)

Thus, Harrow supports this view with textual evidence in addition to some expressions and sentences he identifies them to be intertextual references to Conrad's descriptive words of Africa.

Harrow is indeed not alone in his position against Naipaul. For in the previously mentioned article of Fawzia Mustafa, for instance, she agrees with Harrow that in *A Bend in the River* Naipaul follows Conrad's "narrative and symbolic choices" (234) in the latter's *Heart of Darkness* despite some of the different details that the two stories contain. Also, William Vincent concludes at the end of his earlier-mentioned article that: "One can hardly avoid the conclusion that Naipaul feels a special contempt for these westerners who appropriate to themselves what they feel is the "true" Africa, who impose upon it their own standards and own judgments, who manipulate facts to fit their own historical construct" (345).

Surjit S. Dulai's one of main points in his afore-mentioned article of 1991 is, on the other hand, to defend Naipaul. Dulai concludes his article by commenting on the position of Naipaul who has been always accused of being in support of colonialism. Dulai argues that this is oversimplified misunderstanding of Naipaul's works in general and *A Bend in the River* in particular. He asserts that despite the fact that Naipaul admits the positive effect of colonialism, especially the British, in increasing the intellectual life of its colonies, he also shows how colonialism did more bad than good to the peoples they colonized. Dulai affirms that an in-depth analysis of Naipaul "suggests that the good that came out of the colonial situation was not the result of the

colonial rule as such and the colonists' "mission" to "civilize". It rather simply followed from the meeting of cultures that was inevitable under the circumstances" (307). Hence, the turmoil that those newly independent countries experience is the result of the fragmentation that happens to the culturally different people of the same society that was once all unified against the one foreign enemy. But after getting rid of the colonizer, what is important now is "[d]ifference and degree, rather than similarity and unity of peoples" (308), and this is one of the main reasons for the disorder and confusion the newly independent societies live in. Dulai's conclusion is that *A Bend in the River* is a novel about the contemporary world in general despite its setting "Africa" (314).

In his "Reading the Postcolony in the Center: V. S Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*" (2005), Masood Raja presents both groups of Naipaul critics: those who defend him and the others who detract him and his colonial stance that he represents in his novel. Raja takes the analysis of *A Bend in the River* from another perspective rather than the one most of Naipaul's critics have taken. He claims that the latter mentioned critics have overloaded the novel with the burden of representation suggesting from the beginning that the story is about the clash between modernity and the past traditions of the fictional novel's ex-colony. What he does in this analysis though is "[i]ndating the novel by reading Salim in his class specificity as petit-bourgeois in the Marxian sense of the term" (226). Thus, Raja sees Salim's representation of Africa and Africans as a result of his business mentality and not because of Naipaul's colonial nostalgia. He also refers to the fact that is mostly ignored by the critics who tend to focus on Salim's ambivalence that the latter is not static and does show a change of his

views concerning the natives towards the end of the novel especially because of his experience in the jail with the other native prisoners (232). After providing a different reading of Salim by looking at him from a different perspective, Raja similarly reads Naipaul

to ensure that one's criticism of Naipaul does not become an apology for the corruptions and violence of the African national elite, while silencing the very heroic efforts of the African artists and critics, who, instead of writing from a safe perch within the metropolitan academy, have actually suffered drastic and even fatal consequences within their own countries. (235)

as an attempt of his to read both the novel and its writer outside the realm of representation.

In "V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River: A Tragic Vision of Evil*" (2016), Jeffrey Folks defends Naipaul claiming that he has been misunderstood as well as his novels that have been misinterpreted. In order to be able to understand the real intentions of Naipaul, Folks traces the meaning of the word "civilization" in the essays and speeches that Naipaul had produced other than his novel under study. He claims that Naipaul does not advocate in his *A Bend in the River* the superiority of the whites over the Africans and the less developed peoples and that civilization is only related to Western cosmopolitan capitals. Instead:

What he does suggest is that a clear distinction exists between those societies in which individual rights and the rule of law are protected and those, like the Congo of the 1970s, in which they are not. In London and "place[s] like it," personal freedom and opportunity exist for all, while in much of the world the individual lives under the yoke of despotism, corruption, and repression. (31)

This corruption and "evil" that the novel is full of, according to Folks, is not only because of the dictatorship and misrule of the president's country; it is also due to the misfortune and aftermath of colonialism, which Naipaul is aware of as Folks claims. Folks concludes his analysis by declaring Naipaul's novel to be of important moral

value because it does not only consider the situation of African countries but of all human life of when people do not recover the higher values of civilization. He points to the last lines of the novel that reveal “not just a single collapsed society but the potential collapse of the universal civilization everywhere at the hands of a myriad of assaults on order and faith” (33).

For J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, critics have analyzed the novel looking at it from different lenses related to the dichotomy of civilization versus barbarism that its title entails, the depiction of torture and pain, the construction of the identity, the language used and its relation to the novel's meanings in addition to the setting of the novel.

In “Apartheid and the Decline of the Civilization Idea: An Essay on Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* and J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*” (1984), one of the points that Paul Rich analyzes is the way the empire seeks to historically justify its mission of spreading civilization through the character of the magistrate in Coetzee's novel. Indeed, the magistrate comes to lose his faith in the empire and the civilized behaviour because of the new officials of the empire like Colonel Joll. Rich pinpoints the geographical separation where “civilization” and “barbarism” exist as “a coded form of racial barrier, without any understanding of the historical meaning of [it]” (388). This is what leads the novel to continue reproducing many of the same Western imperial representations and imaginations about the “barbarians” and their “homelands.” Rich also refers to the idea of the pastoral and the reason behind its dominance in the novel as the only “anchoring point of certainty at a time of social collapse” (387).

In his “The Composition of the Self in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*” (1986), Debra Castillo affirms that it is pain that helps the magistrate find personal comfort by resisting “the temptation to assign meaning to persons and events” (81) finding such comfort in an animal existence. Whereas Susan Van Zanten Gallagher analyzes the way Coetzee represents both the torture exercised against the natives and the person of the torturer in “Torture and the Novel: J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*” (1988). She quotes Coetzee in his disagreement of the realistic description of torture in literature because he believes the writer will be part of the acts of torture through validating them when reporting the details of the methods used as they are (277). Indeed, Coetzee does mention torture in *Waiting for the Barbarians* but in a different indirect way. Gallagher then shows how Coetzee represents the difficulties that writers face when attempting to depict torture and oppression through the abundance of the images of the impotency of writing. One of the other ways that Coetzee uses in order to be able to talk about torture without having to mention all the details is through the magistrate’s “storytelling” (281). Another way is done through the setting in which the torture of the Barbarian girl and that of the magistrate occurs. Thus, Coetzee “does not ignore the obscene acts performed by his government under the guise of national security, yet neither does he produce representational depictions of these acts. Instead, he insists on his own authority, tentative as it might be, and imagines death and torture on his own terms” (282). As far as the person of the character is concerned, the situation seems to be a little more complicated than that of depicting the act of torture itself as Gallagher stipulates. The magistrate is unable to understand his torturers and how they are able to do such acts to other humans like



them. But at the end, he resumes that everyone is in a way or another convicted of the act of torture. Therefore, both “the evil and the innocent” (284) need to be purified of their guilt of participating in different ways of torture of the less powerful others. This is because “[t]hose who passively allow torture and oppression to take place are just as much Barbarians as the torturers” (285).

In “The Body, the Word, and the State: J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*” (1989), Barbara Eckstein uses a number of philosophers’ and thinkers’ ideas about the relationship between the body and knowledge, and the various definitions of torture. She argues that despite the fact that her critic predecessors have focused on analyzing the language of the novel, the latter is also about the body in pain. Thus, Eckstein shows the ways in which “Coetzee pursues the relationship of torturer to prisoner, language to the body in pain, and finds politics where language and the body meet” (182).

In his afore-mentioned article of 1986, Debra Castillo also examines the process of identity construction as it gets influenced by historical changes. He claims that through *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Coetzee calls his readers to reexamine the nature of history and the self in history. This is clear through the identity of the magistrate who goes through different transformations at the level of his thinking during the breakdown of power ploys in the time of crisis in the unnamed imperial town.

Starting with the theoretical argument that the other is the source of a convincing definition of the self, Erhard Reckwitz traces the imperial self attempts to define its identity through degrading the other in his “I Am Not Myself Anymore: Problems of Identity in Writing by White South Africans” (1993). Reckwitz agrees

with Castillo that the imperial identity in the novel is defined through “the other” represented by the “Barbarians” but he studies its construction process from a slightly different angle. He argues that even the narrator verbalizes his desire to learn about the “Barbarians;” and such attempts of the magistrate to understand the other is because it serves his own identity definition. However, this creates a problem because when “the so-called civilized can only acquire self-definition by shutting themselves off from the putative savages, such an identity becomes problematic as soon as the definition of the other is nothing but the projection of prejudices and unconscious desires” (6).

In “Truth, Reconciliation, and the Restoration of the State: Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*” (2006), Troy Urquhart relates the objectives of the South African TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) to J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* in restoring justice. He mentions a number of critics who have attempted to find any hope to prove that the novel is about giving voice for the oppressed that deems to restore justice for them. However, Urquhart objects such claim basing his objection on Spivak's conclusion that the “subaltern cannot speak” (308, qed. in 10). He asserts that the “the project of the TRC seems no less doomed to failure than the attempts by the Magistrate to understand the experience of the oppressed, for the truth that the TRC believes will lead to reconciliation cannot be articulated” (10). This is because the attempts of the Magistrate to understand and then speak for the “Barbarians” is not to achieve justice in the reparative meaning but for his own interests in finding a way to get rid of his own guilt. Thus, the Magistrate is not able to speak for the oppressed nor is he able to restore justice for them. Through the novel, then, political legitimacy of the empire is emphasized rather than justice for the

“Barbarians”: “it is the Magistrate, the speaking agent of the state-and not the silenced victim-whose dignity is restored” (9).

As the title tells, “A Further Study of Present Tense Narration: The Absentee Narratee and Four-Wall Present Tense in Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Disgrace*” (2007), Matt DelConte analyzes the influence of a number of the different forms of the narrative present tense in Coetzee’s two novels. DelConte argues that the use of the simultaneous present tense by the magistrate, who narrates what happens to him during his term in the empire’s compound, underscores the continuous process of his own awakening and his growing recognition of his own complicity with the empire’s injustices against the “barbarians”. In addition, the magistrate’s use of the simultaneous present tense makes him unsure of how his story will end as he is telling it while it is happening. In this case, “he has relatively little control over its narratological design (when compared to retrospective narrators); instead of manipulating the events [...] the magistrate’s simultaneous present tense narration exposes how susceptible he is to being manipulated by the events” (439). Quoting James Phelan, DelConte refers to the impact of the use of the simultaneous present tense on the audience’s reaction to the narrative. Moreover, *Waiting for the Barbarians* employs an absentee narratee that makes the authorial audience the direct narratee of the narrator. The audience, then, becomes “a more significant and active participant in the magistrate’s narrative than [it] would be if the text maintained [the] standard ontological distinctions” (440).

In “The Visceral Allegory of *Waiting for the Barbarians*: A Postmodern Re-Reading of J. M. Coetzee’s Apartheid Novels” (2014), Shadi Neimneh argues that

Coetzee problematizes the notion of allegory in its sense in which it speaks for more than what it actually says in his *Waiting for the Barbarians*. For the suffering of the body that is depicted in the novel cannot be hidden by interpretative meanings that are external to the text. What Coetzee does in his novel is that he “defamiliarizes allegory and allegorizes, in the process, the non-allegorical, i.e. the literal” (693). Through different examples from the novel including the undeniable suffering body, the magistrate’s translation of the wooden slaps, and the magistrate’s treatment of the girl’s body, Neimneh proves that *Waiting for the Barbarians*, performs a visceral materiality of its own, but the general effect on us is still allegorical” (694).

“Sven Hedin's “Vanished country”: Setting and History in J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*” (2015) focuses on two main points concerning the setting of the novel. The writers of the article: Hermann Wittenberg and Kate Highman argue that the displaced geographical setting that does not look like South Africa yet allows Coetzee to represent “state violence and police brutality” (106). They add that leaving the novel’s location unspecified refers to the sensitive situation of apartheid South Africa and the repression rules on censorship in the late 1970s. The other focus of the article is related to the writer’s attempt to reconstruct the novel’s setting concluding that it was built upon different geographical places. They prove that one of the main influences on the choice of the novel’s setting is the Swedish Sven Hedin’s exploration narrative, *Central Asia and Tibet: towards the holy city of Lassa*, published in two volumes in London in 1903 (112).

Amitav Ghosh’s *River of Smoke* has received fewer critical articles but was studied in a number of Master and PhD dissertations among Ghosh’s other novels. In

fact, most of the articles written on the second novel of the Ibis trilogy, *River of Smoke*, highlight the element of nature, land and plants, and their relationship with the characters. Another main topic that some critics study in this novel is the relationship between the past and the present, and the present effect of history on China and the world. Furthermore, some critics focus on the variety of languages and dialects used in the novel as a means of asserting a new world power.

In “City Botany: Reading Urban Ecologies in China through Amitav Ghosh’s *River of Smoke*” (2013), Kanika Batra asserts that both novels of Amitav Ghosh: *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke* are about “[c]ultivated nature, its bounty, and the transportation of this bounty across the seas” (322). Drawing attention to global urban spatial economy, natural and human-built environments, and the benefits of trading in plants; the novel deals with the past in order to point out the present (323). On the light of this, the writer of this article studies the urban ecology of “old” Canton vis-à-vis “contemporary” Guangzhou and the adoption of Chinese cities of certain city gardening styles on the basis of its history. Finally, the writer also refers to the possibility of talking about ecological imperialism when dealing with the Western interventions in the Chinese botanical gardens.

In “Ecocritical Readings and Descriptions of Landscape in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke*” (2014), Nesha Sabar analyzes the depiction of nature in both novels and claims that *River of Smoke* reveals how nature works in the life of human beings (308). She argues that despite the fact that ecocriticism is fairly a new critical theory in Indian academic circles, “ecological concerns and ecological wisdom might not be alien to this antique land, where civilization had sprouted so many years

ago. Now it has become one of the emerging fields of study in India and [the] world at large” (310). Ghosh’s *River of Smoke* deals with the relationship between the naturalist and botanist characters with different plants and lands, like Paulette. In addition, it refers to the danger of the disappearance of different plants and trees on earth due to the human beings destructive for personal consumption. Moreover, the novel highlights the pollution of the Pearl River because of the Creek factory established next to it (309). Thus, human destruction of trees and pollution of the river and other surfaces will inevitably affect humans and the natural environment they occupy.

In “Narratology and History in Amitav Ghosh’s *River of Smoke*” (2014), Rozy Gupta and Tanu Gupta analyze the different narrative aids and techniques that Ghosh uses in his historical novel. They argue that Amitav Gosh re-writes the historical period during the opium war in Canton in 1838 using different narrative strategies. Through the omniscient narrator and other characters, the reader gets to know different stories that happened during the opium war giving voice to the oppressed to narrate history from their personal perspectives. This is what makes them contribute to telling significant parts of the nation’s history and not only their personal stories. Thus, *River of Smoke* is about “re-inventing and re-writing the past not only through memory, interior monologue, stream of consciousness but also through the authentic and official voices of historical personas, edicts Canton journals, Hukamnamas, proclamations, letters, and memorials” (36).

In “Time and Space: A Study of Amitav Ghosh’s *River of Smoke*” (2015), the writers Rozy Gupta and Tanu Gupta analyze the elements of time and space in the novel. They note that the narrative’s actual time period is not very wide ranging, i.e:

from 1838 to 1839. This is the same case for the spatial setting that they identify as limited (526). However, they are both at the same time specific and broad thinking through Ghosh's use of different narrative techniques like flashbacks and flash-ups.

Sanjukta Poddar shows how Ghosh's novel traces the origins of globalization connecting it to colonization and the aggressive trade deals between different peoples in his "Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke*: Globalisation, Alternative Historiography, and Fictive Possibilities" (2015). He argues that Ghosh's narration of different characters "who would otherwise remain mere footnotes to events in 'world history'" (2) and his examination of how such characters were given no choice in working in the opium trade play the role of "critical historiography" (6) through the lens of fiction.

In "The Novels of Amitav Ghosh and the Integral Hegemony of English" (2015), Vedita Cowaloosur argues that Ghosh belongs to the group of some of the Indian English writers who mix different native Indian words and expressions with pure English phrases and structures "not merely in order to represent linguistic diversity and the polylingualism of characters and of the settings of their texts, but also as a means to rethink and reimagine the power equations between the Anglophone world and the world that these authors write about" (2). In addition to subverting Standard English through the use of "Inglish" (i.e: Indian English), "this prose also seeks to showcase the 'unity' and 'centrality' of India in its very form" (4).

Furthermore, one of the main points of focus of the article is related to how

this invented English (which does not only prime various bhashas but also nods to India's flourishing relationship with her diasporas, by incorporating their dialects in its midst too) invites a new reading of India in the context of its changing position in the global political and economic hierarchy. (5)

Thus, Cowaloosur concludes that the English used in the novel reflects the south-south power relations, the language of trust, and that of friendship (9).

No studies or articles written in English have been found on Michael Anthony's *Bright Road to El Dorado* (1983). In addition, only very few of the studies that have been done on the other novels of the thesis do refer to the setting and the element of nature and their signification. However, I have not found any study or dissertation that takes as its focus the environment that the characters occupy and its relationship with their personalities and the story's events. Nor did they refer to any possible connection that may exist between colonizer, colonized and their environment.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no study that has combined the four writers of my thesis together except Fawzia Mustafa who refers to three of them in the afore-mentioned article of 2015. She categorizes Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh and J. M. Coetzee in one group of "the diaspora-based spatial/ideological postcolonial," that is ideologically different from the group that includes Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, and Nuruddin Farah, and which she calls "the nation-specific (or exiled) temporal postcolonial" (235). Indeed, the novels of the study seem to be different at nearly all levels. They actually represent different colonizers and, hence, different methods of dealing with the colonized as well as their lands. In fact, this choice is intentional in regard to the variety of the landscapes of their stories as a way to connect them together at different points mainly that of the relationship between colonizer, colonized and the environment they inhabit.

I chose to work on the novels of this study because their settings represent three different continents (Africa, South America, and Asia). The aim was to discover if the



variety of the place and the differences between the colonizers and colonized does not necessarily result in a difference at the level of how nature and the environment of the colonized is being treated. This query stems from my experience with the novels I worked on in my Magister thesis. I analyzed the element of nature and the human-built environment in relation to colonialism in Assia Djebar's *Children of the New World* (1962) and Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* (2008). These two novels represent different colonizers (the French and the British), different geographies and contexts of Algeria and India, and different characters who encounter different circumstances at different times. However, the result of my thesis is indeed interesting because of the similarities that exist between these two apparently different stories. One of these main similarities is related to the fact that both the French colonizer and the British imperialist consider themselves superior to Algerians and Indians, respectively, and they hence give themselves the right to exploit their lands regardless of the damages they may cause. Another important shared point that I discovered existent between the two novels is that in both of them, the environment shapes the characters' personalities and affects their daily activities and, sometimes, determines their destinies. From such interesting conclusions, I decided to enlarge the diversity of the environments of the novels I would work on ending up by choosing two stories that occur in the middle of the African continent and that of South Africa, and two others that have their setting in Trinidad of South America and in China of Asia. The main aim is to investigate nature and the environment of the characters in the postcolonial contexts of these four novels.

In order to explore the relationship between colonizer, colonized and the environment they inhabit, it is helpful to use postcolonial ecocriticism to find out

answers to such questions. The study is both theoretical and analytical and aims at investigating how both the Western colonizer and the native inhabitant recognize the colonized landscape and the colonizer's impact on the people's lives and culture in the novels of the study. It also relies on different theoretical concepts and approaches such as those of psychoanalysis, postcolonialism, deconstruction and ecocriticism in order to decipher the language of the novels as related to the inclusion of natural elements in local idioms and figures of speech, for instance. Moreover as an attempt to analyze the link between the characters and the environment they inhabit, the study applies the postcolonial ecocritical theory that both Helen Tiffin and Graham Huggan explain in their "Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment" (2010). However, this study also makes use of many other theoretical references related mainly to both theories of postcolonialism and ecocriticism which will serve as tools of analysis and provide terms of reference for the critical discussion throughout the thesis.

This thesis contains two main parts. Each part includes two chapters. Part one provides the socio-historical backgrounds of the four novels' stories in addition to that of the writers'. Chapter I (Works and Writers: Socio-Historical and Geographical Contexts) contextualizes the novels' stories socio-historically in addition to providing some geographical information about the novels' settings. This chapter also presents the socio-historical backgrounds of the writers' lives surveying their relationships with (anti-)colonial discourses and landscape recognition including the different geographical areas they have written about and/or have visited. Indeed, the inclusion of some biographical information about the writers is needed since their lives are related to their works in general and those of the present study in particular and such

information is beneficial for the understanding of the choice of characters, themes and landscapes represented. Moreover, Chapter II (Nature and the Environment in a Postcolonial Context: Theoretical and Methodological Basis) of this part provides an overview of the theories utilized in the analysis of the four novels including colonialism and ecocriticism in addition to other theories. As far as the scope of the theories is concerned, the chapter presents concepts of “land,” “nature,” “the environment,” in relation to culture. The way these concepts and ideas are to be used in the analysis of the four novels of the study is also provided.

Part Two is composed of Chapter III (Characters and Nature) and Chapter IV (Writers and Representations: Colonialism and Nature). This part deals with the literary analysis of the four novels of the study. The aim is to examine the environment that the characters inhabit (village, town or city) in these four postcolonial novels and the role of the colonizer in determining the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, the people or their land. It also shows how the four novelists write about nature and the environment and what they actually write about in order to show whether they are aware of their depiction of nature or not. Chapter III analyzes the relationship between nature and the different kinds of characters: the native (colonized), the hyphenated or non-native native (colonized), and the foreign white man (colonizer). The analysis seeks to answer questions related to the characters’ attitudes towards nature, the way they consider it (its significance for them), the manner in which they are influenced by it (their psyche and behaviour), and the relationship between colonizer and colonized as far as the influence of the colonizer on the colonized (people and land) is concerned. Chapter IV looks into the writers’

presentation of the relationship between colonizer/colonized, their depiction of nature and the different natural elements (such as sea, desert, climate and others), the “green” language they use, and their representation of different environments inhabited by different kinds of characters in order to explore their awareness of nature’s influence on their characters.

The study of the four novels of V. S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* (1979), John Maxwell Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), Michael Anthony’s *Bright Road to El Dorado* (1983), and Amitav Ghosh’s *River of Smoke* (2011) using postcolonial ecocritical tools is an attempt to answer questions related to the relationship between colonizer, colonized, and the environment in the different geographical areas of the postcolonial unnamed Central African country, South Africa, Trinidad and China. The study also investigates the role of the colonizer in determining the relationship between colonizer and colonized when modifying the latter’s environment. In addition since environmental elements such as climate, wilderness, sea, desert, and others do influence people and are influenced by people, this connection is put under scrutiny. Lastly, the thesis attempts to answer questions related to how aware writers are of the ecosystem’s influence on their characters and, hence, themselves.

**PART ONE**

**Backgrounds: Socio-Historical,  
Geographical and Theoretical**

## ***Introduction***

Part one provides the socio-historical contexts of the four novels of the thesis. Some geographical information is also provided about the novels' settings. In addition, this part presents the writers' socio-historical backgrounds of their lives, and surveys their relationships with (anti-)colonial discourses and landscape recognition including the different geographical areas they have written about and/or have visited. Moreover, this part provides an investigation of the theories utilized in the analysis of the four novels. In fact, the presentation of the socio-historical background of the novels' stories is needed in order to contextualize the four stories of the novels. In addition, the inclusion of some biographical information about the writers is needed for the understanding of the choice of characters, themes and landscapes' representation. This part also focuses on the writers' views about postcolonialism and their relationship to the depiction of landscapes and nature in order to understand their choices in the works of the study. Moreover, this part includes a theoretical context for the study that is developed around theoretical notions and concepts related to both colonialism and ecocriticism in addition to other theories. The theoretical chapter relates both postcolonialism and ecocriticism together as an attempt to find out common concepts and topics between them. As far as the scope of the theories is concerned, concepts of "land," "nature," "the environment," as related to culture are spotlighted. Then, the need for ecologizing postcolonialism making it a theory and a methodology that focuses more on nature and its connection to humans is also put under scrutiny. Later, decolonizing ecocriticism from concepts and ideas that may hinder the main objectives of ecocritics is also studied. Lastly, the way these concepts and ideas are to be used in the analysis of the four novels of the study is also provided.

**CHAPTER I**  
**WORKS AND WRITERS:**  
**SOCIO-HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL**  
**CONTEXTS**

### ***Introduction***

This chapter provides the socio-historical contexts of the four novels of the thesis in an attempt to relate them to the stories' events. Many of the historical events and figures are directly mentioned in the stories of these novels. Sometimes, however, some other historical events of such countries are only referred to within the plots' actions.

Besides, details about certain categories of characters and individual conversations between real people, which cannot usually be found in history books, are filled in in the novels' stories. Such details reveal people's attitudes towards each other and their countries and lands. In addition, this chapter digs into topics related to the writers of the works under study. The reason is that the writers' lives and works are related to the works they have written in general and those of the present study in particular<sup>1</sup>. The link is mainly found in their way of representing the colonizer, the colonized, and their lands. Interestingly enough, all the writers to be discussed, Naipaul, Coetzee, Anthony, and Ghosh studied in Britain during certain periods of their lives. Britain is the imperial country they all write about in the stories of the four novels of the thesis. Moreover, what is interesting about these writers is that they have all visited and lived in different countries of the different continents. This refers to the variety they have experienced. Such variety is at the level of cultures, landscapes, histories, religions, colonizations, and other areas of these countries' specificities. Also, the writers visited or lived in the settings described in their novels of this thesis. This is why the inclusion of some biographical information about the writers is needed for the understanding of

---

<sup>1</sup> The resort to the authors' works and lives is also based on the ideas of Senayon Olaoluwa article: "The Author Never Dies: Roland Barthes and the Postcolonial Project" (2007). In it, Olaoluwa argues that the call for a "severance of the author's antecedent relationship to the text" is implicitly also a call "for an erasure of "history"". Hence, the act of writing a literary text becomes detached from meaning.



the choice of characters, themes and different geographical settings. The chapter also follows up the complicated relationship between the writers and the colonial and postcolonial discourses, in order to position their works in postcolonial field despite the fact that some of them, like Naipaul and Ghosh, refuse to be considered as part of it. Lastly, the chapter also investigates how the four writers see and react to nature and landscapes throughout their travelogues and other fictional works.

### **I.1. Colonialism and Environment in Central Africa**

Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* narrates the story of Salim and other characters who live in a country in the middle of Central Africa. Despite the fact that the novel's setting is not mentioned, it is mostly believed to be today's the Democratic Republic of Congo. The following socio-historical survey of this country sheds lights on many details that are either directly mentioned in the story or mostly resemble them. Then, the way that Naipaul, as a Trinidadian (by place of birth), West Indian (by place of origin), and British (by place of studies, life, and death) writer, deals with postcolonial issues in his works is presented. Furthermore, proofs related to *A Bend in the River*'s events are mentioned to justify the choice of Congo as the setting of the novel. Also, some biographical facts about Naipaul and his visits to Congo are also provided to support such choice. Lastly since ecocritics pose questions related to the writer's awareness of their writing about nature and the environment, and since one of the main objectives of this thesis is to reveal the writers' realization of the connection between the environment and their stories' characters, this section scrutinizes Naipaul's life as related to how much he writes about nature and provides it with significance in his fictional and non-fictional works.

### **I.1.1. Belgian Colonization, Independence, and the First Republic of Congo (1960–1965)**

Under the mantle of philanthropy, Belgium's Leopold II created associations and financed a number of expeditions into central Africa to explore the Congo Basin and negotiate trading agreements with local chiefs. Indeed, the king succeeded in signing many treaties primarily along the Congo River. This obliged the European powers of Great Britain, France, and Germany to agree to accept the Congo Basin as the personal domain of Leopold II, a decision codified in the Act of Berlin on 26 February 1885. Shortly after, the Congo Free State was formed and an administrative system was established: "to govern and develop the territory and "civilize" its indigenous inhabitants" (Kisangani and Bobb xii). The latter had to pay for such services, according to Leopold's decision. As a result, the Congo Free State granted European companies exclusive rights to trade on large areas of the Congolese land benefiting from almost 50 percent of the profits. In addition, a labor law was passed allowing: "the companies and CFS [Congo Free State] agents to forcibly employ indigenous laborers or oblige them to provide a certain amount of marketable produce, particularly rubber, as payment of a "state tax"" (xii-i).

Things continued to worsen for the indigenous people until the latter started asking for their land's independence from Belgium and the oppressive powers of the foreign trading companies. The riots of 1959 that lasted for two weeks led the Belgian government to offer a more limited form of self-government in the colony. As a result, elections were held for local councils in December of that year. The campaign for the elections led to the emergence of many parties, many of them were based on ethnic associations (Kisangani and Bobb xiv).

On 30 June 1960, then, the Belgian Congo became independent as the Republic of Congo. Just after five days, elements of the army mutinied as a result of their anger over low pay and lack of promotion opportunities. Violence was the result in different parts of the country. This led the Belgian government to intervene by sending its troops to protect foreigners. This was, however, refused by the Lumumba government that called for the help of a United Nations' peace-keeping force in an effort to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity (Kisangani and Bobb xvi). The UN demanded that the Belgium troops get out of the country to be substituted by UN troops. Consequently, the UN began its first "police action" in Africa (xvii). In addition to peace-keeping troops and relief supplies, the UN also sent administrators, judges, and technicians to reactivate government operations. However, still, the central government was unable to function properly because two states (North Katanga and South Kasai) were declared independent of the Republic. Another main problem that obstructed the work of the central government was its inability to specify the division of powers between the presidency and the parliament. Consequently, numerous tensions mounted between different parties (xvii).

While the UN was withdrawing from Congo, another rebellion led by Pierre Mulele, who was the minister of education under the first government of Patrice Lumumba, broke out on 6 January 1964 in Kwilu province. Such rebellions called for a radical transformation of the Congolese society under what they called the "second independence" movement (Kisangani and Bobb xviii). Indeed, nothing worked and uncertainty was the lead of the Congolese atmosphere. Hence, 14 senior military

commanders took over the government on 24 November 1965, and General Joseph-Désiré Mobutu became president.

### **I.1.2. The Second Republic: Mobutu's First Years of Rule**

Becoming a president in late November 1965, Mobutu promised to control the ethnic political demands that had divided the Congolese society since June 1960. Mobutu utilized fear and oppression to consolidate his power and fulfill his promise. He formed a secret police that was led by people mainly from his ethnic group: the Ngbandi, to launch military operations to regain control of territories that were still under rebel control. Moreover, civilian political institutions were deprived of their powers and the army was abolished. Later in April 1966, he launched the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR) proclaiming it as the sole legal party. By decree, then, political power was gradually centralized in the presidency and codified in the Constitution of 1967. Many of the early political leaders accepted the new regime. But those who did not were either exiled or imprisoned (Kisangani and Bobb xviii).

By 1967, the Mobutu government had regained control over most of the territory. It began a program called "Authenticity" that had as an objective the abolishment of tribalism and regionalism in order to develop a sense of nationhood among the people. Consequently, former colonial names of places, lakes, flora, and fauna were changed to "authentic" African ones. Congo was renamed "Zaire" and citizens changed their Christian names for "Zairian" ones (Kisangani and Bobb xviii). Even president Joseph-Désiré Mobutu became *Mobutu Sese Seko* (xv).

From 1967 to 1973, Mobutu's economic model seemed to work relatively well. So in November 1973, at the height of the economic boom and amid popular support

for Authenticity, the Mobutu government nationalized all businesses including all foreign-owned businesses in certain strategic sectors. This led to a flight of foreign capital and productivity declined. The Mobutu government was obliged to borrow increasingly large sums of money to cover a growing balance-of-payments deficit. Amid this background of economic difficulties and political centralization for the first time since the end of the post-independence rebellions, insurrections broke out against the Mobutu government. On 8 March 1977, guerrillas of the “Front pour la Libération Nationale du Congo” (FLNC) invaded southern “Shaba Region” from bases in Angola (Kisangani and Bobb xix).

With the aid of Moroccan troops, the national army was able to drive the guerrillas back into Angola 80 days later. In May 1978, the FLNC attacked again infiltrating Kolwezi to later seize the town and stop work at the mines. Amid reports of killings and atrocities, a force of Congolese, French, and Belgian paratroopers landed on Kolwezi and nearby towns and drove the guerrillas out. During the two-week occupation, two hundred foreigners and one thousand Congolese were killed. But, work at the mines was resumed. In order to address some of the grievances of the local people, a Pan-African peacekeeping force, comprised of troops from Morocco, Senegal, and Togo was formed. In the same year, another insurrection also occurred in Idiofa, but was harshly put down. As a result, 14 village chiefs were publicly executed (Kisangani and Bobb xx).

### **I.1.3. Postcolonialism in Naipaul’s Eyes**

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born in the rural town of Chaguanas, close to Port of Spain in Trinidad in 1932. Biographical information as well as analyses of his work

are found in most of the twentieth century's references to contemporary literature. He is known to be the author without a land or a country since he has felt alienated from both his Brahman ancestors and the life of his native Trinidad. This is an interesting aspect, which is manifested in the different nationalities Naipaul is being given in different books and literary guides. Sometimes he is referred to as being British (V. S. Naipaul), English Trinidadian-born (Krstović 150), Trinidadian (Stringer 478), and West Indian and Commonwealth writer (Swain 203). But, Naipaul has been known to resist such categorizations (203) since what he has been feeling towards Trinidad, England, India, or other countries he visited is "homelessness" (Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival* 94). For in the non-fiction books he wrote, the bibliographical note put on the first pages does not include any nationality for the writer. The notes provide the reader with only the country of birth, the studies he did and the books he wrote.

Whatever his nationality may be, however, Naipaul writes about most countries with which he has different kinds of connections. Both the fiction and non-fiction works that Naipaul has written deal with various topics related to a considerable number of Third World countries that belong to three main continents: Africa, Asia, and America. Naipaul visited and wrote about East African countries (Zaire/Nowadays Congo, Uganda, and others), the Caribbean (Trinidad, Mauritius, and the West Indies), India and some Islamic states (like Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia). Thus since most of his works deal with issues of such ex-colonized countries and their peoples, Naipaul is mostly considered to be a postcolonial writer. However, his views and works have always been under serious criticism from different postcolonial writers, literary critics and political commentators. Fawzia Mustafa, for

instance, emphasizes the fact that Naipaul has taken a different path from other postcolonial writers by adopting opinions and beliefs which are outside and often opposite to “the trajectory of postcolonial anticolonial discourses, anticipating as it were an entrepreneurial option within the emerging markets of, first, commonwealth, then postcolonial Anglophone, and, now, first-world cosmopolitan literatures” (232). Some commentators do blame him for his harsh criticisms of Third World societies and accuse him of sounding exactly like the colonizer. Others praise his work and acclaim it as neutral and nonpartisan depiction of “the social, psychological, and political degradation left in the wake of the Western colonialist enterprise” and recognize it “for its mixture of skepticism and rational detachment” (Mustafa 150).

Seen the variety of Third World countries he writes about, Stella Swain argues that the postcolonialism Naipaul belongs to should be taken from its widest context. This is because “this author is not so much the voice of any particular newly independent or decolonized nation, [but should be considered as] the chronicler of diverse global experiences of alienation and loss in the wake of European imperialism” (203). A skilled wordsman, Naipaul criticizes the Third World countries in different ways. In his earlier works, he employs satire and comedy. In others, he utilizes a more serious tone. Jeffrey Folks exemplifies this claim by showing how while Naipaul uses mimicry in order to explore the tragicomic downfall of postcolonial island nations in works like *The Mystic Masseur* (1957) and *Miguel Street* (1959), “*A Bend in the River* offers an unremitting vision of human evil, unalleviated by humor or irony” (28).

Using Jameson’s observations, Nazua Idris considers Naipaul’s postcolonial novels of significant interest “as they reflect the society, class, antagonism, history and

ideology of a nation along with the individual experience” (170). Surjit S. Dulai claims that Naipaul uses his knowledge about India to understand the Third World, “his views about India and Indian culture often paralleled in his portrayal of other areas, particularly areas of the non-Western world” (305). Joseph Walunywa acknowledges Naipaul’s tackling the issues of the immigrant communities “who either come to the colony of their own volition or are imported into the region from another part of the world by the colonial regime” (8). Indeed, they are so important of a part of the colonial situation since they affect it and are affected by it.

#### **I.1.4. Congo as the Setting of *A Bend in the River***

One of V. S. Naipaul’s novels is his 1979 *A Bend in the River* that the Modern Library ranked eighty-three (83) on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in 1998. It was also short-listed for the Booker Prize in 1979. The novel’s story is narrated by the Indian-African Salim who is in constant search for the good place, other than Africa, to settle in. This wish becomes insistent because of the changes overcoming “new” Africa especially continuous tribal conflicts and the racist approaches of the authorities against the foreigners. Salim provides the reader with events that occur mainly in three different places in an unnamed African country. One of them is the town which is near the bend of the river where he lives along with other Africans originated from Arabia, Persia and India; the village where local natives live; and the Domain where the white man lives along with other Africans who are close to the Big Man, the president of the country.



This unnamed African country is believed to be the Democratic Republic of Congo<sup>2</sup>. The latter, one of Africa's largest, richest, and most populated countries, is located strategically at the continent's heart. Indeed, even its geographical shape has often been compared to that of a heart. Sharing borders with nine countries: Angola, Zambia, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, Central African Republic, and Congo-Brazzaville, Congo has long been considered as one of the most geopolitically strategic countries in Africa (Kisangani and Bobb ii). Its basin is drained by the mightiest river in Africa, the Congo River, which is second in volume of flowing water only to South America's Amazon River. This river flows to the Atlantic Ocean. It also borders the lakes of the Great Rift Valley, which form the headwaters of the White Nile River (ii-i). The Democratic Republic of Congo possesses great natural resources. The hydroelectric potential of the Congo River and its tributaries, for instance, is bigger than that of the rest of Africa combined. Its mineral wealth is also of strategic importance producing cobalt, copper, and a major portion of the world's industrial diamonds. Environmentalists also argue that: "Congo is one of the largest remaining repositories of primary tropical rainforest in the world, containing hundreds of thousands of species of animal and plant life still unknown to science" (iii).

Many critics do actually analyze the novel as set in today's the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is due to many reasons related to the work itself and to its writer: Naipaul. The reasons related to the novel's characters, its society's issues, and

---

<sup>2</sup> The country changed names many times in a short period of time. It firstly emerged as the *Congo Free State (CFS)* in 1885 a private domain of King Leopold II of Belgium (Kisangani and Bobb ii). Then, it became a Belgian colony in 1908 and was known as *Belgian Congo*. On 30 June 1960, the country became independent under the name of the *Republic of Congo*. Four years later, on 1 August 1964, the name was changed to the *Democratic Republic of Congo*. In 1971, President Mobutu Sese Seko named the country *Zaire* and its citizens *Zairians*. In 1997, President Laurent Kabila changed it back to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (xv).

the descriptions of the unnamed country's place are agreed upon by many critics<sup>3</sup>.

Jeffrey Folks, for instance, claims that:

Though the president is unnamed in the novel, he would seem to be based largely on Mobutu Sese Seko, the longtime ruler of the Congo whose creation of a personality cult portraying his mother as the "African Madonna" and himself as the savior of African culture helped secure his rule. (28)

Folks backs up his argument with the comparison he makes between the Big Man, the president-character of *A Bend in the River*, and that of Congo's president Mobutu Sese Seko since their characteristics resemble one another. Folks adds that some of what Salim undergoes in the story can be connected to Mobutu's rule at the time (28). One of the instant examples can be Mobutu's policy of nationalism that affects Salim's foreign business. For Nazua Idris, he seems to be certain that the story's events of the novel are those of Congo claiming that:

V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* charts the picture of decolonization and its aftermath in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Though the place remains anonymous in the novel, the events that the novel refers to, make it obvious to the readers that the novel is set in post-independent Congo. The novel portrays characters from different strata of society struck in the newly decolonized world of Congo. The novel is narrated by Salim, an Indian Muslim shopkeeper, living in a small city. The story revolves around some of the important events in Salim's life projecting his identity crisis and inner conflicts due to the rapid changes that are taking place in his "homeland", Congo. Along with Salim and other characters' lives, the novel deals with the national issues in Congo and shows how the individual lives are affected by the economic and political changes in the country. (169)

For him, then, the lives of Salim and the other characters are affected by the national issues that Congo was suffering from during the time of the novel's story. Despite the

---

<sup>3</sup> See also: Kenneth W. Harrow's "An African Reading of Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*" (p.321), and Stephanie Jones' "The Politics of Love and History: Asian Women and African Men in East African Literature" (p.167). Fawzia Mustafa, also, deals with the novel's setting as Congo mentioning 2005 Sushila Nasta's work on Gurnah's implicit criticism of V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, that is "set in the Congo" (253).

fact that the country is unnamed in the story, the situation of economics and politics surely resembles that of Congo.

Other reasons of why Congo seems to be the best setting for the story are related to the writer himself. Naipaul's visits and writings to and about a number of African countries, especially Zaire, can be a proof to such a claim. Naipaul taught for a while at different universities in different countries like the University of Makerere in Uganda, where he became friends with Paul Theroux, who later wrote a book narrating his travels in East Africa with Naipaul. In 1975, Naipaul visited Zaire to publish four years later his 1979 novel: *A Bend in the River*. Fawzia Mustapha writes that: "[t]he route of Salim's journey is closer to Naipaul's own made during his sojourn in Uganda in 1966" (254). Surjit S. Dulai also agrees that the unnamed country resembles Zaire but comments that even though it does, it is also "about contemporary sub-Saharan Africa as a whole" (304). Dulai links his conclusion to the fact that: "[b]efore writing *A Bend in the River*, [Naipaul] had lived in Kenya for about a year and travelled to other parts of Africa" (304). Roger A. Berger also believes that Naipaul uses his trip to Zaire as a main source of writing the novel. Commenting on Naipaul's assimilation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*' notions related to the innate savagery of the African native, he notes that:

This can find this racist ideology clearly articulated in a 1975 *New York Review of Books* article Naipaul wrote entitled "A New King for the Congo." This essay—which, I might add, is essential reading for understanding what Naipaul is doing in *ABR*—chronicles his trip to Zaire, describing in essence the bizarre reign of Mobutu, still President of Zaire, over what Naipaul sees as *an* inexorably decaying and increasingly corrupt society. As in the novel, Naipaul focuses on the apparently irrational destruction of the colonial realm left behind when the Belgians retreated. In one passage in particular he emphasizes the *bush*—here not an American President but the dense shrub growth found in Zaire—as a key signifier for the decline of civilization in Africa. (149)

Thus, the setting is clearly Congo; the colonizer is the Belgian; and the Big Man of the novel is president Mobutu. Moreover, Joseph Walunywa believes Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* to be set in Congo because the fact that Salim's grandfather, for example, used to ship some slaves as a cargo of rubber refers to: "the incident [that] occurred in the Congo in the 1880s, when King Leopold II of Belgium ran the country as a personal plantation intended to meet the demand for rubber for bicycle wheels" (12). Furthermore; when Salim gets down to business in the town at the bend of the river buying and exporting gold and ivory, this refers to ivory business that boomed in the mines and forests of the Congo at the time (19).

#### **I.1.5. V. S. Naipaul Writing Nature and the Environment**

By tracing Naipaul's life as a man, one can clearly see that it can be divided into three main parts: One starting from his childhood till he became 24 years old, the other including the year 1956 during which he visited his birth-country Trinidad for the first time after having achieved a degree in English and having worked with the BBC in England, and the third one beginning with his visit to the West Indies after he was invited by the Trinidadian premier of the time to write a documentary report on the region in 1960 continuing through the years he devoted himself to discover different places and many new countries. This division is indeed significant since it reflects two types of Naipaul's work vis-à-vis nature and the environment and the way he treats them. For his novels and short stories that he wrote before he went back to Trinidad in 1956 seem not to include detailed or focused descriptions of the landscapes and environment of the characters. After two years of his going back to Trinidad (now a wise adult skilled writer), Naipaul showed some interest in the landscape especially in

his 1958 novel: *The Suffrage of Elvira*. The turning point is however his voyage to the West Indies in 1960 that resulted in his documentary travelogue of 1962, *The Middle Passage*, which recounts the life and nature of the countries he visited. Consequently due to this visit, Naipaul's literary works have totally changed at the level of their interest in nature and the landscape of the characters' surroundings.

In his book *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (1970), Kenneth Ramchand refers to this distinction of Naipaul's work. He points out that contrary to other Caribbean writers, Naipaul had not shown in his pre-1960 novels an awareness of landscape descriptions despite the fact that "Naipaul is the most observant and the least metaphysical of West Indian novelists," his novels "show little sensuous awareness of the natural world" (xxxviii). John Cooke agrees yet remarks that it happens only once in *The Suffrage of Elvira* (1958) where Naipaul begins to situate the Trinidadian landscape in a historical context (32). This is significant because Naipaul had gone back to Trinidad for the first time after he went to study in England just before two years of the publication of this novel.

Naipaul's *The Middle Passage* (1962) is, then, a key book that includes his opinions about landscapes and nature. In it, his conception about civilization seems to be related to the building of roads, markets, highways and all infrastructures of how a modern city looks like since he believes that the presence of only plantations in the British West Indies refers to no creation (24). And in his attempt to look into the history of the region, he claims that "[h]istory is built around achievement and creation; [but] ... nothing was created in the West Indies" (27). This is why, he is unable to figure out historical meanings in this area. On a different occasion, he shows

his disappointment when he only sees few buildings among so many trees: “Port of Spain is a disappointing city from the sea. One sees only trees against the hills of the Northern Range” (35). Moreover, Naipaul seems not to be comfortable in such a place that involves no human creation. For among many reasons of his decision to go out of the country he was born in, the nature of the island was apparently one of them. He emphasizes in this travelogue his fear of going back to it: “for many years afterwards in England, falling asleep in bedsitters with the electric fire on, I had been awakened by the nightmare that I was back in *tropical* Trinidad” (37; my emphasis).

The idea of the ‘bush’ has also been recurrent in Naipaul’s work. Linked to the same previously mentioned idea of the absence of buildings, the bush represents no civilization or human development. Paul Theroux, a friend of Naipaul who had visited with him a number of African countries and wrote about their experience in a 1998 book entitled: *Sir Vidia’s Shadow: A Friendship across Five Continents*. In this latter, Theroux reports Naipaul’s words explaining that: “[t]hat is what is wrong with the country,” he said. “That is the reason Uganda will go back to bush” (29). Bush, for him, is then a symbol of underdevelopment and backwardness. However later in his account, Naipaul asks Theroux to take him to the bush stating that: “I want to see the bush,” Naipaul said. “The bush is the future” (33). So, the ‘bush’ both stands for the country’s absent achievements yet holds the future in it. In later works such as *The Return of Eva Peron with the Killings in Trinidad* (1980) and *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), Peter Hughes recognizes that the “Hyacinths spreading down the Congo, ivy coiling around the cherry tree, seedlings arching into trees above East Berlin, are all parts of Naipaul’s ‘vision of a world undoing itself’, a vision that remakes through

prose a world undone by events” (19). Naipaul, then, develops his vision towards natural elements regarding them to be influential factors participating in the recreation of the world. On a different occasion, Hughes also points to the fact that Naipaul connects between natural phenomenon and his life’s decisions and events: “Naipaul blurts out part of [the world’s undoing] when he aligns the year the ivy began to take over with his own decision to leave Trinidad and everything he knew to follow a life of writing” (20).

Naipaul, on the other hand, cannot but describe nature because he visited countries and islands where nature is a major constituent of the overall landscape and view of them. In his travelogue then we find Naipaul describing the people he met, the cultures, the politics, histories and economies of the countries he visited in addition to the landscapes and geographical features of the environment. The landscape depiction seems unavoidable. Indeed, he even seems to develop an ability to read from the natural elements when he writes: “There was nothing, apart from the colour of the water, to tell us that we were near a continent.” And he carries on with the description of the place they have arrived at:

The hills grew higher, a dip became a separation, and we saw the channel. Columbus gave it its name: the Dragon’s Mouth, the treacherous northern entrance to the Gulf of Paria. Venezuela was on our right, a grey haze. Trinidad was on our left: a number of tall rocky islets untidily thatched with green, and beyond them the mountains of the Northern Range blurred in a rainstorm. (33)

He actually goes on with detailed descriptions of the landscapes that he either visited or passed by especially those he has set as titles of the book’s chapters: Trinidad, British Guiana, Surinam, Martinique, and Jamaica.

It is indeed interesting to observe how Naipaul changes his attitude towards nature and the tropics of Trinidad. The same ones that he considered to be a nightmare to him (as quoted earlier above), he now sees in a totally different way. He states:

I often went to the country, and not only for the silence. It seemed to me that *I was seeing the landscape for the first time*. I had *hated* the sun and the unchanging seasons. I had believed that the foliage had no variety and could never understand how the word ‘tropical’ held romance for so many. Now I was *taken* by the common coconut tree, the cliché of the Caribbean. I discovered, what every child in Trinidad knows, that if you stand under the tree and look up, the tapering chrome ribs of the branches are like the spokes of a perfectly circular wheel. I had forgotten the largeness of the leaves and the variety of their shapes: the digitated breadfruit leaf, the heart-shaped wild tannia, the curving razor-shaped banana frond which sunlight rendered almost transparent. To ride past a coconut plantation was to see a rapidly changing criss-cross of slender curved trunks, greyish-white in a green gloom. (57; my emphasis)

It is indeed obvious that Naipaul has changed his mind about nature due to his return to his native land after years of absence. Now, he sees the landscape from a different, more positive perspective. He can now see beauty in the same elements he has hated before. On the same page, he goes on displaying his changed positions towards different other natural elements such as the sugarcane fields towards which he expresses his previous hostility describing it as a “brutal plant” that “stood for everything [he] had hated about the tropics and the West Indies.” But now, “in the uneven land of Central and South Trinidad, [he] saw that even sugar cane could be beautiful” (57). The same case is true with many other plants (the cocoa woods and others) and aspects related to the façade of the country to the point that leads Naipaul to state that “[i]n art, as in almost everything else, Trinidad has in one step moved from primitivism to modernism” (57). In addition to his newly-acquired appreciation of all that is part of nature, Naipaul also believes that the land, among other things, has an influence on people:



Slavery, the land, the latifundia, Bookers, indenture, the colonial system, malaria: all these have helped to make a society that is at once revolutionary and intensely reactionary, and have made the Guianese what he is: slow, sullen, independent though deceptively yielding, proud of his particular corner of Guiana, and sensitive to any criticism he does not utter himself. (107)

Many writers and literary commentators have criticized the picture of the region that Naipaul provides in his *The Middle Passage*. They complain about the absence of a possible order, as Naipaul sees it, in the Caribbean society within all the turmoil it experiences. In his article “*A Vision of the Land: V.S. Naipaul's Later Novels*” (1979), John Cooke claims that the answer to such criticisms is present in Naipaul’s reaction to the landscapes he visited during his travel to the Caribbean. Quoting Naipaul’s words in his travelogue when he visited Surinam that: “[t]here is slavery in the vegetation” (61, qed. in 31) and referring to his remark on himself as if seeing Trinidad for the first time, Cooke argues that this new awareness from Naipaul is extremely significant since it led him to look for histories in the landscapes of his later novels of *The Mimic Men* (1967), *In a Free State* (1971), and *Guerrillas* (1975). But such histories are more personal than national (32) and the awareness of their existence did not assist Naipaul in finding any kind of order arising from a native history (33). Cooke also argues how the historical landscapes of *A Bend in the River* (1979) display “only a “bush” history, which yields to no foundation for a society and no sense of place for the individual” (31). He also draws the attention to the fact that Naipaul’s later novels, in addition to portraying deteriorating spoiled landscapes of Africa and the Caribbean, predict that “the contamination is re-emerging [in] England, the centre of Naipaul’s world” (46).

In his 1979 novel of *A Bend in the River*, Naipaul utilizes what he has observed and has experienced during his voyages to different African states especially Zaire:

today's the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The novel contains not only descriptions of the characters' country environment but also the writer's and sometimes the characters' attitudes and responses towards nature and their surroundings. Roger Sandall argues, for instance, that it is possible that Naipaul is the one who has invented "colonia" in its literary meaning and not the socio-political and economic ones. So in discussing the different aspects of the Third World "colonia," Sandall argues that practicality in putting in place certain things and destroying others has never been a powerful point of "colonia" (80). Indeed, this practicality is manifested in the ex-colonized peoples either abandonment of all buildings and traces of the colonizer or intended destruction of them, "the defaced pedestals and smashed floodlights and the vandalized and looted suburbs in what is left of the Belgian presence in Zaire" (80) as an example from *A Bend in the River* that Sandall employs. So, if the civilization markers that Naipaul complains that they do not exist in Third World countries are founded by the colonizer, the colonized would get rid of them as soon as they get their independence because any building or monument becomes a bearer of a historical and cultural heritage that is not welcomed among them.

The idea of the 'bush' is present again in the novel of the study. In here, too, it is considered to be a symbol of backwardness and a sign of zero worthy native accomplishment. Under his book's chapter entitled "Landscapes of Fear," Richard Kelly points out to the similarity between *In a Free State* and *A Bend in the River* in the depiction of Naipaul's vision of Africa as a menacing continent that is ending because it cannot escape either corruption or the bush (135). This latter is understood to be the source of ambiguity yet power at the same time. And like it, "the hyacinths represent

African mystery and power, [too], at odds with European incursions and African revolutions (139). It seems that Naipaul understands the double effect of the native land in general, and the ‘bush’ and ‘water’ in particular. The latter can either be used for the development of the country or be left to submerge its inhabitants becoming a “dangerous” place to live in (King 121).

## **I.2. Colonialism and Environment in South Africa**

South Africa had ignited international attention in the late twentieth century because of its policies of legislated racial discrimination. A brief socio-historical overview of the area is needed in order to understand the complex ideology of apartheid. As a result of its fame as a particular ex-colonized country with its system of racial segregation, publications about it and its history along with university courses on South African history have become widespread in Europe, the United States and Africa starting from the mid-1970s (Worden 1).

### **I.2.1. The Settlement of South Africa: Pre-colonial Times**

In order to legitimize the occupation of the South African land, the colonists claimed that they had found today’s South Africa an ‘empty land’, or that they at least started settling in the interior of the region at almost the same time as indigenous pastoralists and cultivators were moving into it from the north. However, archaeological and historical work has proven such claims wrong (Worden 10). Before colonial conquest began in the late seventeenth century, there had been many major population movements and settlements in South Africa. Some of them began at least 10,000 years ago (10). Indeed, over the first millennium, there developed in Southern Africa a tripartite division of the population including: “the hunter-fatherers, [or] ‘Bushmen’ or

‘San’, speaking one of the Khoisan ‘click’ languages, the pastoralists, speaking Khoikhoi, also Khoisan, and the agriculturalists, who spoke one of the Bantu languages” (Ross 7). Despite the fact that these first inhabitants of the region did not have writing systems of their languages, they left evidences of the land’s occupation throughout the subcontinent in rock paintings and engravings (Worden 10). Hunters, gathers of plants, pastoralists, herders, crop cultivators, or even those who: “mined and processed metals such as copper and iron” (10), these people had their own systems of economy, government and their own culture<sup>4</sup>. As a consequence, the region became both socially complex and economically diverse before colonial settlers moved in. There were no impenetrable boundaries between these people. Also despite the fact that these clans had organized themselves into chiefdoms, ethnic tribalism was a product of the colonial era (Worden 11).

### **I.2.2. The Conquest of the South African Land: The White Invaders**

The year 1652 marked the first colonial encroachment of South Africa. The reason was because the Dutch East India Company (VOC) established a fort at Table Bay as part of its expanding network of trade in the Indian Ocean. In white South African historical tradition, this year is considered as the date of the “beginning of South Africa” (Worden 11). The Cape Colony was then settled by the Dutch, serving from that time as the basis of the later colonial conquest of South Africa. Indeed, the VOC planned for this settlement as an intermediary between the East Indies and Europe. But by the end of the seventeenth century, this settlement grew. And grain production, which firstly served to fulfill the basic needs of settlers, developed now extensively.

---

<sup>4</sup> For more information see: *Ross, Robert. A Concise History of South Africa.* Cambridge University Press, 1999; *Worden, Nigel. The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid, Democracy.* 5th ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2012; and *Thompson, Leonard M. A Short History of South Africa.* Yale University Press, 2001.

Consequently, immigrants from Europe were settling on the land and colonial pastoralists were steadily encroaching on the grazing lands of Khoekhoe herders. Slave labor was imported from elsewhere in Africa, South and Southeast Asia to work on the settler farms, and a small urban community was developing around the fort and harbor in Cape Town (12). At the societal level, the region was becoming more and more diverse considering the different nationalities that came to settle in it. Later, the VOC rule had come to its last years because of the weak and financially bankrupt administration that it had to grapple with. The VOC's unsuccessful attempts to control frontier conflicts with the Xhosa and settler 'Patriots' who declared independent republic in Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet pushed the British to take permanent control in 1806. Hence, more decisive intervention was undertaken against the Xhosa. In order to be successful in this mission, the British government got into close alliance with local Dutch administrators (14).

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the British executed more hesitant colonial expansion than before at the Cape. Instead of expanding the boundaries, the British administration focused on benefiting from both the settlers and the Africans in economy. Thus, the focus of the latter shifted. As a result in the 1830s, about 15,000 eastern Cape pastoralists migrated out of the colony causing what is called the 'Great Trek' that is seen as: "the seminal event in South African history" (Worden 15). The trekkers complained both against their impoverishment by the colonial administration and the latter's failure in granting them a representative government and: "the social implications of placing freed slaves and Khoekhoe servants 'on an equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God and the

natural distinction of race and color' (Muller 1975: 154)" (16). So, In the 1850s, the British seemed as if they were withdrawing from direct political control over the South African interior due partly to armed resistance, by both trekkers and Africans, sometimes in alliance (22). But, it did not mean they were losing interest in the interior. Instead, they established considerable colonial influence through trading in ivory, skins and maize. From the 1870s, however, they adopted an aggressive thrust into the whole sub-continent (24). In the course of two decades, then, many native Africans were defeated and their lands brought under imperial control (24). Therefore, indigenous independence was largely destroyed, but South Africa in the early 1890s was still divided into settler colonies and Boer republics. Indeed, it took a major war between them (The South African (Anglo-Boer) War of 1899–1902) before a unitary state could be established in 1910 (30). While the conquests of South Africa in the 1870s and 1880s were fuelled by the diamond discoveries, the main cause of the South African War was: "the second and main stage of the 'Mineral Revolution' – the development of gold mining on the Witwatersrand" (30).

### **I.2.3. The Union, and the Establishment of the Republic of South Africa**

From 1910 to 1950, the people of South Africa had to cope with the nineteenth-century's problems that continued to exist till the twentieth-century. One major problem of them was that of the relations between Europeans and non-Europeans. Despite numerous attempts to maintain peace, the frontiers revolted against the successive governments that joined African territories to the Union bringing tribesmen under European political control. The result was particular in the sense that South Africa became: "an empire whose colonial subjects lived within her borders"

(Marquard 220). Another important problem that inhabitants of South Africa had to deal with was the relations between Briton and Boer. The fact that the British defeated the two republics established by the frontier Boers (the Free State and Transvaal) caused enmity and resentments between the two groups of Europeans: Boer and Briton that were not solved by post-war treatments (221). A third main problem is linked to the twentieth-century's added problems. Even though it was in most countries, but it worsened the situation of South Africa. It was the worldwide phenomenon of urbanization that made both Africans and Afrikaners move into the towns to become part of the industrial machinery of the time. Indeed, the process was made even faster with two world wars, some post-war depressions, in addition to the collapse of agricultural prices and the gold standard in the thirties (221). After World War II, the United Party of South Africa failed to face post-war discontents with housing shortage and rising costs, and fears and uncertainties inherent in the relations between black and white. Thus, this party made a coalition with the Afrikaner party coming up with the policy of apartheid as a 'solution' to the problem of relations between Europeans and non-Europeans (240-1). In 1948, the National Party won the white elections and took power of the country.

From 1948 to 1961, the history of South Africa revolved around the relations between whites and non-whites. During this same period, revolutionary changes were occurring to different African countries that were demanding and, hence, getting their independence from the 'mother countries' of Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal and Spain. The case of South Africa was rather different because South African whites had no home expect South Africa and non-white South Africans could not ask them to go

back to their countries. Instead, they asked for sharing the political power that was in the hands of white South Africans (Marquard 244). The latter, under the body of the Nationalist Party, were preoccupied to implement the Nationalist Party's race policies and the system of apartheid. However, this system was opposed: "in parliament, by the English-language press, by a number of extra-parliamentary organizations, and by the main non-white political organizations before they were banned" (249) like the African National Congress, the Pan African Congress, and the Indian Congress. Such resistance continued and some demonstrations against issued segregational laws were executed till the day of October, 5<sup>th</sup>, 1960 when the government held a referendum in which white voters in the Union and South-West Africa (non-white South Africans were excluded) were asked whether or not they wanted a republic (256). Thence, South Africa became a free republic from the Commonwealth on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1961.

#### **I.2.4. The Republic and Apartheid**

Apartheid in South Africa is not there because of South Africans as a society or a political system, but the roots of white racism are rather embedded in: "the lengthy process of European colonialism, the subjugation of other people in territorial conquest and black enslavement" (Worden 73). This can be proven in regards to the history of the country before the coming of the white colonizers. Actually, similar to other British colonies in Africa, Asia, and in the United States, white supremacy took strong root in South Africa. However in it, "it developed into a systematic and legalized discrimination shaping the economic, social and political structure of the whole country in a more pervasive way than elsewhere" (Worden 73).



Apartheid started to be implemented even before the creation of the Republic in 1961. Its era spanned from 1948 till 1991 and the formation of a democratic republic in 1994. Apartheid was at all levels: political, social, cultural, and economic. It was actually the policy of the Nationalist Party which referred to the English equivalent of 'separateness'. The main idea of apartheid was that because whites and non-whites are extremely different in culture that they can never live together as a community. Even when they try, there is a high possibility that the majority of non-whites would swamp the whites, or the white minority would have to oppress non-whites by force in order to preserve their identity. Consequently, the solution resides in the policy of apartheid dividing the country into areas where each group resides in their own far from the other group, giving one group alone the rights and privileges of citizenship. In this case, the natural area for Africans would be the reserves. The latter constituted their original tribal homes that were reduced by conquest (Thompson 244). The race policies that the Nationalist Party was preoccupied to implement from 1948 were represented in different ways. For instance, notices announcing Blankes and Nie-Blankes (whites and non-whites) appeared in post offices, railway stations, airports, and all other government places, "making the use of separate ticket offices, separate entrances, separate benches, compulsory" (249). In addition, a number of acts were executed. The Separate Amenities Act, for example, regulated admission of white and non-white to public places whereas the Mixed Marriages Act and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950 made marriages and sexual intercourse across the colour line illegal. As far as higher education was concerned, the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 set up a separate university college for Coloured (including one

for Asians, and one for each of the three largest African tribes) and whites. In economy, amendments to existing industrial legislation made it: “impossible for white and non-white to belong to the same trade union and empowered the Minister of Labour to reserve certain jobs for particular racial groups” (249).

Segregation was also executed at the level of geography. The Group Area Act of 1950 aimed at strict residential segregation prohibiting members of one racial group from acquiring or occupying any property in an area designated for a different group. Similarly, the Population Registration Act of 1950 was made to prevent Coloured people from enjoying the privileges of more select residential areas of whites, “better education for their children, superior travel facilities, and other political and social advantages enjoyed by the whites” (Thompson 249). Indeed, this had never been new to South Africa. The expansion of pastoralism constituted the first phase of colonial territorial conquest in South Africa. By the early eighteenth century, land of the indigenous people could be obtained from the VOC for the settlers’ private use as it could also be sold or passed on to heirs. Also, grazing permits were being issued for a small fee and the VOC guaranteed the rights of settlers to graze livestock on lands outside the original settled area as well as to cultivate them. As a result by the early eighteenth century, a complex settler society had emerged at the Cape with major disparities of wealth and status amongst the colonists over the native coloured tribes (Worden 12). In the 1670s, for instance, the Khoekhoe of the Cape Peninsula and its hinterland were defeated in a series of VOC raids, lost their cattle and were reduced to tributary status. From that time on, some Khoekhoe began to work alongside imported

slaves as laborers on the settler farms, a clear sign of their loss of economic independence in addition to their loss of lands (13).

Between adaptation and resistance to apartheid, South Africans had to suffer for long years till after conscience was aroused of most of the population including that of their fellow Whites against apartheid. Leaders of such campaign focused on the gap: “between the theory of apartheid (separate freedoms) and its practice (discrimination and inequality) and on the brutality of the apartheid state-the pass laws, forced removals, house arrests, and detentions without trial” (Thompson 204). After the end of apartheid, both the country and its people were left to attempt to heal themselves from South Africa’s traumatic past.

### **I.2.5. John Maxwell Coetzee: Challenges of Postcolonial Writing**

John Maxwell Coetzee<sup>5</sup> (1940) is a South African novelist, essayist, linguist and translator who lives now in Australia and has been granted the nationality of this country. He was born in Cape Town, South Africa. His father was an attorney and his mother a schoolteacher. A Protestant, Coetzee attended an English-medium Catholic high school in Cape Town. After he got higher degrees in English and mathematics at the University of Cape Town in 1960 and a Masters degree in 1963, he moved to England to work as a computer programmer. Also, in the same year of 1963, he got married to Philippa Jubber with whom he got two children. In 1965 he went to the USA as a Fulbright scholar to get after four years a Ph.D. degree in linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin. This experience influenced him as a novelist a lot

---

<sup>5</sup> Among the many prizes he has received such as *The Irish Times* international Fiction Prize, Jerusalem Prize, the Prix Femina Etranger, Sunday Express Book of the Year Award, and the Booker Prize (twice), Coetzee has won the 2003 Nobel Prize for Literature due to his contribution to world literature for perceptively crossing borders of culture, ethnicity, race and history in his fiction using his country's experience with the apartheid system.

starting with his doctoral dissertation that he wrote on Samuel Beckett passing by his discovery of the reports and accounts on the Khoi people that the first European explorers, travelers, and missionaries in South Africa wrote about arriving at the Vietnam War, which was at its peak during his stay in the States. The documents on the Khoi people provided him with material that he used in his first novel *Dusklands* (1974) and the war on Vietnam inspired him to compare between U.S. imperialism and South African colonialism in addition to participating in anti-war demonstrations there in which he was caught (Hacht and Hayes 392). After he got his PhD degree, he refused job offers in Hong Kong and Canada to choose to teach at the State University of New York in Buffalo, USA, for two years. Because of visa complications, he went back to his native country, South Africa, in 1971 to teach at the English department at the University of Cape Town.

Coetzee's writing career started with some critical studies that include dissertations on Ford Madox Ford and Samuel Beckett, essays on stylistics, Barthesian forays into popular culture, and studies in translation (Attwell 258). He also wrote criticisms on metropolitan writers, on the postmodernist Dutch poet Gerrit Achterberg, on the semantics of time in Kafka, and on confession in Rousseau, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky (258). The intellectual and biographical connections between his critical writings and his novels are investigated in a book edited by David Attwell and entitled: *Doubling the Point Essays and Interviews* (1992). Coetzee is thus considered as one of the remarkable authors of the Anglophone world due to the many novels, translations, fictionalized autobiographies, literary and critical essays that he wrote. Through his novels, such as his first one: *Dusklands* (1974), *In the Heart of the Country* (1977),

*Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), *Foe* (1986), *Age of Iron* (1990), and *Disgrace* (1999), Coetzee highlights the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized and gives his people's own version of their violent experience. Through his fiction, he also dealt with different themes such as those related to the South African society's danger of disintegration, madness and hunger of protagonists who witness the Vietnam war, and the psychic interest in the personalities of some of his protagonists, both male and female. The variety that he has excelled in is also manifested in his representation of both English and Afrikaans characters as regards to his bilingual education having Afrikaners parents<sup>6</sup> (Hacht and Hayes 392).

As a writer, Coetzee is concerned with the issues related to both the colonizer and the colonized and the relationship that connects them together. Some of his works are interpreted to be about the system of apartheid. This can be found in both of his fiction and non-fiction works. For instance in his first novel of 1974, *Dusklands*, in parodying the colonial discourses, he expresses criticism of colonialism and its control that leads the colonizer not to be able to see any possible connections with the colonized. When published, this novel made a widespread impression among the South African common-sense world of English-language liberal humanism (Attwell 258). His second novel, *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), also deals with issues related to European colonialism highlighting the relationship between Magda, a colonial spinster, and her native servants. In the introduction of her book "J. M. Coetzee and the Paradox of Postcolonial Authorship" (2009), Jane Poyner categorizes these two previously mentioned novels in addition to *Waiting for the Barbarians*

---

<sup>6</sup> His parents have descended from Dutch colonists who settled in South Africa in the seventeenth century, and fought for territory and power against indigenous Africans as well as rival British colonists until their 1940s political victory.

(1980) into one first phase that characterizes Coetzee's writing career. She considers this phase to be exhibitively of his historicization of madness, representation of the whites' hegemonies of "colonialism, apartheid, and US imperialism in Vietnam" (11), and the modern myths such hegemonies have caused. As a result, "myth mutates into forms of madness in its distortion of certain kinds of "truths", be they political, historical, social, or economic" (11). Through these novels that were written during the apartheid period, Coetzee deals with the pressure, that white writers have to grapple with against the imperialist and apartheid regimes, which leads them later to insanity (11). The second phase that Poyner identifies is the one that witnessed the production of both *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983) and *Foe* (1986). It focuses on Coetzee's black characters who use silence as a form of resistance. These stories coincide with the end of the Apartheid regime that was desperately trying to muffle the voices of the oppressed Black majority. Despite the fact that Coetzee's protagonists lose their political voices when choosing silence, it is this option that provides them with the ability to reconstitute their identities "as authors of their lives" (12). The third phase corresponds with the end of the apartheid regime and other important events such as the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC<sup>7</sup> (African National Congress) in 1990. As a result, the novels that belong to this phase such as *Age of Iron* (1990), *The Master of Petersburg* (1994) and *Disgrace* (1999) deal with the kind of confession that leads to truth and reconciliation (12). Lastly due to the end of the apartheid system in South Africa, new paths have been taken by South African writers

---

<sup>7</sup> The African National Congress (ANC) was formed in 1912 as a result of many grievances. This included black dissatisfaction with the South Africa Act of 1910 that established the Union of South Africa, their treatment after the South African War and numerous laws that controlled and restricted black movement and labour (South African History Online)

focusing more on the self and local as well as global matters. Coetzee was no exception; the reason why his fourth phase' novels deal with themes somehow further from postcolonial issues like in his quasi-novel *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), *Slow Man* (2005), and *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007). Thus, his novels either set in South Africa or not more or less include themes related to colonial and postcolonial subjects and apartheid matters. Such themes are related to: "colonial discourse, the other, racial segregation, censorship, banning and exile, police brutality and torture, South African liberalism and revolutionary activism, the place of women, the relationship of South Africa's peoples to the land" (Poyner 1).

In addition to his fictional works, he wrote a number of essays that were gathered together in *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988). These essays' main topic is the discussion of both the ideological and the discursive structures of the colonial discourse about Southern Africa, and how South African policies reflect some of the European values and conventions. In the first chapter of the book entitled "Idleness in South Africa," Coetzee deconstructs the European travelers' reports on the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope. He states that they contain the differences between the Hottentots and the West European, "or at least the West European as he imagined himself to be" (13). Coetzee, then, calls such descriptions of the natives the "Discourse of the Cape" (15) asserting that the European travel writers are surely unable to see the differences from the natives' perspective. As a result, all that they tried to mark down became "a mere *narrative* rather than a comprehensive *description*" (15). One of the prominent themes in the Discourse of the Cape is the natives' idleness, which is both described and condemned

in their anthropological reports about the natives. But, in the historical accounts, however “the Hottentos suddenly seem all too busy, intriguing with one another, driving off cattle, begging, spying” (23). Their idleness seems just to represent an interesting topic to be raised about elemental man. As a consequence, Coetzee clearly puts his stand against such denunciation of the natives’ idleness and argues that the Europeans are the ones who are unable to see the matter from the natives’ point of view. He explains that such attitudes towards the natives’ idleness stem from the beliefs of Protestant Europe that was colonizing the Cape at the time. Idleness was considered as both a sin and a betrayal of one’s humanity. However, Coetzee questions the fact that no European (excluding ordinary seamen and adventurous travelers) of letters and some knowledge had cared to ask the ethical question of: “which is better, to live like the ant, busily storing up food for winter, or like the grasshopper, singing in the sun all day, heedless of the morrow?” (19). Indeed, according to Coetzee, the pastoral banality of “the wandering shepherd, with his meagre possessions and his easily satisfied wants” (19) is just a way of life that is free from the cares of civilization. And this way had been neglected and hardly considered. Later, he brings out the case of the Boers (the Dutch frontier farmers) who are believed to have been sloth-contaminated by the natives when staying in Africa for a good time. Likewise, he asks a similar question stating that maybe “work is avoided as a scourge, and idleness and leisure become the same thing?” (32).

In addition to raising the issues of the colonizer and colonized, Coetzee does concern himself with the challenges faced by postcolonial writers. For in his depiction of a number of writer protagonists, he points out the contradiction of postcolonial



authorship. For while symbolically attempting to give voice to the stories of the marginal and the oppressed, postcolonial writers may accidentally dictate a similar authority they are working to fight back. Their mission is therefore demanding and critical. Hence, “white” or postcolonial writers that Coetzee studies “typically agonize over the ways in which the authority that authorship engenders will always compromise their ethico-political conviction because authorship, for Coetzee, is always already imbued with power, mastery and colonization” (Poyner 2). Yet, still, Coetzee’s novels do have common postcolonial themes with other works of South African fiction. The difference lies in the unconventionality of the critique of colonialism that Coetzee presents in his novels. Yet it is still there despite the fact that some uninformed readers may question whether such novels belong to South African literature or not (Watson 371). The novels of Coetzee, Watson argues, represent a typical type of intellectual and another kind of a colonizer that helped him provide us with more insights into the colonizing mind more than his contemporaries have done despite the fact that the type he stands for may seem to contain ambivalence in his focus (390).

Despite the fact that Coetzee may be considered as having tided over the breach between the “West” and the so-called Third World, some critics have questioned his postcolonial background because his novels are imbued with the dominant Western literary tradition. Yet still, Jane Poyner argues that in addition to the clear European influence on Coetzee’s writing, he also borrows from thinkers from the so-called Third World like Fanon, Ndebele, Césaire, Gordimer, Breytenbach, and others (5). In addition, Chris Danta argues that Western influence on Coetzee is sometimes limited

because he himself “betrays his modernist roots — the influence of Beckett and of Kafka upon his writing — when he makes the advent of the literary coincide with the scrupulous eschewal of authority” (xii). Moreover, the Western tradition can also be regarded as a tool that Coetzee uses in order to explain the postcolonial moment (Head 6). Indeed, Coetzee purposely avoids authority in both his fiction and his autobiographical writings. In fact, his double backgrounds assist him in dealing with different themes from different perspectives. Studying Coetzee’s oeuvre being a dialogic engagement of ethical matters, Alexandra Effe argues that Coetzee’s “works revisit themes, presenting them in different scenarios and looking at them from different angles” (xv).

#### **I.2.6. John Maxwell Coetzee’s Reading of the South African Landscape**

Through his literary articles and works of both fiction and non-fiction, Coetzee does manifest a deep interest in nature and the landscapes of South Africa comparing it with some European and American topographical areas. In his “Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life” (1997), he devotes a section to evoke the holidays he spent when a child in the farm of his uncle in the Karoo, the semidesert region of the Cape Province. He describes the farm in detail as well as the animals it had during his first visit and the visit he reports in this section. Coetzee is clearly fascinated with the life in the farm and everything it possesses: “Everything in the Karoo is delicious, the peaches, the watermelons, the pumpkin, the mutton, as though whatever can find sustenance in this arid earth is thereby *blessed*” (90; my emphasis). He also expresses the protagonist’s desire to live in it by asking this question: “Is there no way of living in the Karoo- the only place in the world where he wants to be- as he wants to live: without belonging to

a family?” (91). Later when he becomes a young man, the protagonist of Coetzee’s “Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life” (1997) feels older than his real age in the city of London. This latter he describes as a “cold” city where he does not see the interest of continuing to live: “What is he doing in this huge, cold city where merely to stay alive means holding tight all the time, trying not to fall?” (57). When a child, then, the experience Coetzee had when he stayed at the farm is most probably considered as one of the reasons of his continued fascination with the ancient aspect of the South African landscape. This is reflected in his novels, for instance. And *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) is an example that has this region that Coetzee visited as a child as its main setting (Gale Encyclopedia 392). In it, Jane Poyner argues that Coetzee indicates the familiar postcolonial tropes of writing the body and writing the land, as well (2).

After highlighting the European failure of representing the indigenous people of South Africa authentically in the first chapter of the book entitled “Idleness in South Africa,” Coetzee concentrates on the historical conflict between the (Dutch) Boers and the British. He actually deals with different details among which the land is one of the most prominent. The British considered the Dutch in South Africa just as lazy as the natives because the former did not work on the land:

In being content to scratch no more than a bare living from the soil, the Boer seems further to betray the colonizing mission, since in order to justify its conquests colonialism has to demonstrate that the colonist is a better steward of the earth than the native (the text usually cited in support is Matthew 25: 14-30, the parable of the talents). Nor can one neglect the element of chauvinism in the comparison British commentators draw between the diligent English yeoman and the listless Dutch boer. (Naipaul, *White Writing* 31)

The toiling on the land is, then, linked to colonialism. It should be one of its obvious impacts on the colonized territory. Coetzee recognizes the failure of the European to understand the mythologized relation of the Africaner to the land, “that struggles to

fend off the threat of urban development by invoking the motif of the farmer toiling on the land” (Poyner 5). Moreover, working the land is backed up by religious texts as a duty of the believers. However, Coetzee poses the same unasked question that he previously declared the white men to neglect that is related to the fact that perhaps the laziness of the Boers, like that of the Hottentots before them, is due to the fact that all wants have been met” (32) resembling the vision of man before the fall: a recovered Eden.

In the second chapter of his book *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa* (1988) entitled “The Picturesque, the Sublime, and the South African Landscape,” Coetzee analyzes the meanings and uses of the notions of the picturesque, the sublime, and the landscape in both the British arts and literature and the works written on South Africa and its landscapes’ descriptions. Among many writers and artists whom he mentions, he evokes Burchell who believes that the picturesque gathers the European standards of beauty since it is just one of the many varieties of the beautiful. Another important stand of Burchell is related to the aesthetic appreciation of the South African landscape and which stipulates that the European eye will be dissatisfied with Africa when looking to find European tones and forms in African landscapes (39). This habit of seeking beauty in landscapes<sup>8</sup> has become a widespread cultural recreation for the British thanks to the cult of the picturesque. This is a generation that “learned not only to view terrain as a structure of natural elements with analyzable relations one to another, but to be aware of the associations, natural and acquired, borne by these elements” (40). So, nature for them is not just a

---

<sup>8</sup> Since the word landscape is both topographical and aesthetic in its reference, as Coetzee synthesizes (40).

background that stands for beauty. It is connected to them and does have influence over its inhabitants. Here, Coetzee attempts to stress the relationship between the two words, landscape and picturesque:

It is worth stressing that, as the word landscape is both topographical and aesthetic in its reference, the word picturesque refers to nature and art at the same time, that is, to physical landscape conceived of pictorially. In this respect, Karl Kroeber points out, the picturesque differs from the beautiful and the sublime, which refer to either art or nature but not to a relation between the two (5). (40)

Going back to Burchell's stand that the European shades and tones cannot be found in South African nature, he believes that despite the fact that the South African plateau cannot be considered picturesque, "its landscape possesses a certain "harmonious beauty" deserving of study" (41).

After Coetzee's treating the case of writers and travelers like William Burchell (who is a botanist, ornithologist, anthropologist, and natural historian) as one example of them, he approaches the case of painters who are troubled by the African landscape. Problems that such artists may face are:

First, the artist's entire palette must be modified and subsided: deep greens being rare, the discrimination of shades of green at which north European landscape art excels must be replaced by discrimination of a variety of fawns, browns, and greys. Second, since foliage adapted to a dry climate transpires very little, it lacks lustre. Third, light tends to be bright and even, transitions from light to shade abrupt. Fourth, the reflective medium of surface water is rare, the diffusive medium of atmospheric moisture only slightly less so. (42)

Coetzee, then, investigates the rarity of water, the state of mountains, and "the wilderness," this latter being a resonant word in the Judaeo-Christian tradition (49).

Hence because of the topographical differences between South African and European landscapes and the European artist's refusal to see it from a native perspective, he concludes that the European failed to represent the South African landscape in both writing and art (painting in particular). Lastly, Coetzee finishes the chapter with

asserting that the existence or the non-existence of the sublimity in the South African landscape is no longer an issue. It is rather a number of demanding questions that is currently the matter. Questions, particularly in poetry, are related to how the African landscape is to be read, if it is readable at all, if it is readable only through African eyes and writeable solely in an African language, and others. Accompanied with such questions, Coetzee emphasizes, is the historical insecurity of the artist who has a European heritage in the African landscape (62).

### **I.3. Colonialism and Environment in the Caribbean: Trinidad**

Trinidad, among other Caribbean islands, has drawn attention to it because of its varied riches. In fact, one of the main reasons behind the voyages of Columbus was: “the urge to the East with its fabled stories of gold and spices popularised by the famous travelogues of Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta and the persistent legend of Prester John” (Williams 5). As a result, many colonial European powers like Spain and Britain have been competing to take control over such islands.

#### **I.3.1. Spanish Colonialism of Trinidad**

In 1492, Europe was economically ready for overseas expansion in addition to knowing how to do it (Williams 5). As a result, Columbus set out on a number of voyages to find new ways for trade and expansion. On his third voyage of May 30, 1498, he sighted the island that he himself christened Trinidad, at noon on Tuesday, July 31 (7).

The presence of Europeans on Trinidadian land, as in Hispaniola before it, caused conflict:

between the European desire for surplus production and the subsistence economy of the Amerindians, between the Spanish settlements copied from

Spain and the Amerindian village, between the Spanish Viceroy or Governor representative of the royal autocracy and the paternal rule of the cacique, between imported European diseases like smallpox and the tropical diseases like malaria and yellow fever, and between the mining economy based on the Spanish obsession for gold and the agricultural economy of the Amerindians. (Williams 8)

In this setting that is full of clashes between cultures, the Spanish conquest of Trinidad, like the Spanish conquest six years before of Hispaniola, and like the Spanish conquest of Mexico and Peru in the 16th century, instigated big contradictions “between the greed for wealth and the conversion of the Amerindians, between the lust for gold and the salvation of souls” (8). Thus, Spain was not sure if Spaniards should compel the Amerindians to work or should leave them free to be idle if they chose to (8).

During three centuries of Spanish control over Trinidad (from July 31, 1498, until it was surrendered by the Spanish Governor to a British naval expedition on February 18, 1797), Spain proved to be both inefficient and incompetent because of its well-defined practices and principles that it had set for ruling Trinidad.

The first was that the colony existed for the benefit of the Spanish monarchy and for no other reason. For the Spanish were almost only interested in gold and silver.

The second foundation of Spanish colonialism was that the native population, the Amerindians, were to be compelled to work for their Spanish masters, preferably in mines. Later on, these Amerindians were replaced by African slaves who were imported to work for Spain on the New World’s lands. The third principle of Spanish colonialism was related to the obligation of the colony to trade only with the metropolitan country. The fourth principle of Spanish colonialism was that the Governor ruled supreme even though he was assisted by a Council of local notables

who, as in the cities in Spain, had certain well-defined rights and privileges. And the fifth principle of Spanish colonialism was that it was closely linked to the Church (Williams 10). These principles showed that the Spanish model of colonialism was inadequate all over America. However, Trinidad suffered more than the other Spanish colonies. After its discovery by Columbus in 1498, Trinidad remained almost completely neglected by Spain until in 1595 a new beneficiary of the Spanish crown arrived as Governor, Antonio de Berrio, who requested that ships should be provided to Trinidad for a period of five years (11). However, the ships were not provided (13). Indeed, Trinidad could not draw any attention in comparison to El Dorado with its cities whose streets were paved with gold (13). Spain was therefore incapable of either developing Trinidad economically or defending the colony (16). Trinidad's governor, Antonio de Berrio, in a letter to the King of Spain on November 24, 1593, pleaded for helping the defenceless colony. Here again, Spain failed to provide them with any help (Williams 17). The reason of Spain's disinterest in Trinidad was again because the latter had no gold. "If Trinidad had gold, then Spain would show an interest in Trinidad. Gold was a positive obsession with King Ferdinand" (21).

### **I.3.2. Michael Anthony Writing of Anti-colonial Discourse**

Michael Anthony (1932-) is a foremost Caribbean author and historian who was born in rural Mayaro, Trinidad. He went to primary school both in his town and in the Southern city of San Fernando. In this latter, he attended the Junior Technical School as a trainee mechanic to work later as an iron molder in Pointe à Pierre, Trinidad. In 1954, he moved to England where he worked in different factories in London and as a telegraphist. Also, one of the reasons that made him go to England was to develop



himself as a writer. He started his writing career as a poet publishing most of what he wrote in the local paper in Trinidad. Four years later he married the Trinidadian Yevette Phillip with whom he had four children. In 1968, he went with his family to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to work as a diplomat of his native country for two years. Since 1970, however, he has lived in his native Trinidad along with his wife and children, who were all born abroad. There, Anthony worked as a journalist and as a cultural officer in the National Cultural Council of Trinidad and Tobago, and continued to write.

Anthony discovered early that poetry was not an art to be pursued after he got discouraged by the response of the *BBC Caribbean Voices* that was produced by V. S. Naipaul during the time when Anthony submitted his poems to them. In an interview with Daryl Cumber Dance in 1980, Anthony acknowledged “I realized too when Naipaul discouraged me that I wasn’t writing *vital* poetry ... and I began to feel like poetry wasn’t really my line” (qed. in *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook* 19). The same programme, however, encouraged Anthony to turn to the short story. As a result, he offered a collection of short stories to the program whose publisher suggested considering a novel before checking his short stories since the latter did not sell very well. The fruit was Anthony’s *The Year in San Fernando* (1965).

Michael Anthony wrote novels like *The Games Were Coming* (1963), *Green Days by the River* (1967), *All that Glitters* (1981), and *High Tide of Intrigue* (2001), and a children’s novel *Streets of Conflict* (1976); short stories and tales like *Sandra Street and Other Stories* (1973), and *Folk Tales and Fantasies* (1976); and a

considerable number of historical books like *Glimpses of Trinidad and Tobago: With a Glance at the West Indies* (1974), *Profile Trinidad: A Historical Survey from the Discovery to 1900* (1974), *The Making of Port of Spain* (1978). This has resulted in his recognition of a historian more than a writer of fiction (Fifty Caribbean Writers 20). Anthony has also been selected as one of the “50 most influential people in Trinidad and Tobago”. He also got the Hummingbird Gold Award in 1979 and the City of Port of Spain Award in 1988 for his contributions to both literature and history.

Through his historical and cultural writings or work, Anthony tackles the issue of his country’s history trying to give rise to his own people’s voice, on one hand. On the other hand, many of his novels and short stories have roughly the same background story of a child or a young adult who belongs to a well-bound family who usually either has a dead father or an ill one. This reflects Anthony’s biographical details about his close attachment to his mother and family that lost the father after a long period of suffering against illness. Despite the simplicity of his plots, Anthony skillfully immerses the reader into his stories that involve actual events and individuals he personally knew and always puts out significance to the protagonist ordinary events (Fifty Caribbean Writers 20-1).

Despite the fact that Michael Anthony has written fiction that deals with the commonplace events that happen to ordinary people (The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-century Literature in English 24) and that many critics<sup>9</sup> (West Indian Literature) consider his work to be insignificant because it has not shown substantial concern about the major racial, sociological, political, and economic issues that engage

---

<sup>9</sup> See West Indian Literature and Since 1960: Some Highlights

many Caribbean writers (*Fifty Caribbean Writers* 23), Anthony can still be considered as an important part of postcolonial writers.

His works of history and culture starting with *Profile Trinidad: A Historical Survey from the Discovery to 1900* (1975) and including many others present “a re-focused history of country, city, towns, and villages, the reclamation of the land’s unsung heroes, and a chronicle of carnival” (Drayton65). Thus despite the simplicity of the stories of his young protagonists, the adult reader is not insensitive to the importance of the issues that Caribbean anti-colonial and postcolonial literature deals with (Drayton65). So, such major themes can be presented under the subtexts of the limited perspective of the young protagonists’ uneventful marginalized lives. In addition to his fiction, his cultural and historical works assist him in raising national consciousness and pride. This, as Arthur D. Drayton believes, constitutes one of the important elements of the decolonization process, “antecedent to and characteristic of the early stages of postcolonial experience, these features establish for Anthony a place in anti-colonial discourse” (65).

### **I.3.3. El Dorado and Sir Walter Raleigh’s Expedition**

This is the expedition which some main events of the novel’s story revolve around. Although he did not have a direct appointment from the Spanish Crown, Don Antonio de Berrio appears to have considered himself specifically appointed by the Captain-General of New Grenada to search for the fabled El Dorado in order to conquer it. Because El Dorado was believed to be situated in the province of Guiana, he selected Trinidad as the base of his operations. But because of the situation of the town of Puerto de los Hispanoles (Port-of-Spain) on the shore of the Gulf of Paria, it was

constantly exposed to attacks from pirates and seekers of gold, De Berrio decided to build another town some six miles inland. The site chosen, on rising ground two miles above the junction of the St. Joseph and Caroni rivers, served the purpose very well. De Berrio gave the town the name of San José de Oruna. He also made it the capital, a position which it continued to hold till within a few years of the capture of the island by the British (Stark 7).

El Dorado, with its golden city of Manoa, was believed to be found somewhere in the near vicinity of the great river Orinoco. As a consequence, many expeditions in search of this “grand prize” passed by Trinidad. During the time of the occupation of the island by De Berrio, one of such expeditions entered the Gulf of Paria and was commanded by Sir Walter Raleigh. In the previous year, Sir Walter had sent out Captain Widdhon to obtain information about El Dorado<sup>10</sup>. During his stay in the island, eight of his crew disappeared when they were accompanied by the Indians on a deer hunt. The Indians alleged that a party of Spanish soldiers had killed them by surprise. When Widdhon complained it to De Berrio, the latter did not do anything about it. Sir Walter, on the other hand, did not seem to have forgotten the incident. When he arrived in the island, his retaliation was both “savage and merciless” (Stark 8).

When Sir Walter Raleigh entered the Gulf on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, 1595 to anchor off at Puerto de los Hispanoles, De Berrio, gave him an even better reception than Captain Widdhon. For he allowed the latter to obtain the water and the other supplies he stated he was in need of. However, De Berrio suspected at the same time the intentions of the English. This was why he sent to Margarita and Cumana to ask for

---

<sup>10</sup> Most of these details are exactly mentioned in the story of Michael Anthony's *Bright Road to El Dorado*.

immediate reinforcements (8). Indeed, Sir Walter entered into secret communication with the Indians to get all needed information about the route to San José, where De Berrio was staying at that time. Thus, he decided to attack De Berrio and his town. After he had surprised the guards of Port-of-Spain in the evening, he sent forth Captain Coldfield with sixty men to attack San José in order to follow them soon after with forty more. The town was taken at daybreak and set on fire as the Indians had requested. De Berrio was made prisoner while fighting bravely at the head of his men (Stark 9). Sir Walter, however, admitted that the only evidence he had against the Spaniards was that of an Indian Cacique, “who was one of their bitterest enemies, and who, at the risk of his life, went on board Raleigh’s vessel in order to incite him to attack them” (9). This is why, Sir Walter left the garrison’s issue in order to focus on the main purpose of the expedition, which was to search for El Dorado. Thus, he took De Berrio with him to provide him with information about the land of gold. Like all other previous expeditions, this one too ended in failure resulting in the return of Sir Walter with his prisoners to Trinidad (10).

#### **I.3.4. *Bright Road to El Dorado’s* Setting: Trinidad**

Michael Anthony’s *Bright Road to El Dorado* (1983) depicts a part of Trinidad's history. The novel is a fictional account of Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition in Trinidad in 1595. The English Raleigh is in search of El Dorado and quarrels on his way with Trinidad’s Spanish Governor, Antonio de Berrio. The main events of the story go around the conflict between these two men, details of their opinions and actions ignoring the natives’ side of the story. Thus, the novel also concentrates on the fact

that both the English and the Spanish colonizers did ignore the points of view of Trinidad's native people.

When discovered, the archipelago of islands was called the West Indies. Its inhabitants were mainly two Amerindian tribes: the Arawaks and the Caribs. The Amerindian civilisation of Arawaks and Caribs, that was essentially agricultural, represented an important advance in the scale of civilization over the paleolithic period of human history (Williams 1).

Their national food was cassava (Williams 1). In addition, they were also familiar with a variety of other crops like maize (from which in certain places a species of beer was brewed), sweet potato, peanuts, beans (as Columbus stated he saw), spices such as cinnamon and wild pimento, and some tropical fruits like: “the guava, custard apple, mamey apple, papaw, alligator pear, star apple and pineapple” (2). In addition, the Amerindians also cultivated cotton and tobacco. Fishing played some part in the economy of the Amerindian society. As a result, Amerindians developed the canoe and the pirogue which enabled them to move from island to island. As far as family life is concerned, it was well-established yet simple in which, “there appeared to be some sexual differentiation of labour” (2). The members of the whole society seemed to live peacefully together with very few crimes committed, theft being the only one known to them to which there was a harsh punishment. The Arawaks were a relatively peaceful people, and the Caribs essentially warlike. By the end of the 15th century, there were many different tribes of Amerindians present in the island of Trinidad. While the Caribs settled for the most part in the North and West, around today's Port-of-Spain, the Arawaks concentrated in the south-east (3).

### I.3.5. Michael Anthony Writing Nature and the Environment

The first collection of Anthony's fiction is mostly autobiographical tracing the development of young characters' lives. In addition to the characters stories, Anthony does present the landscape and the society they belong to, and the ethos of rural Trinidad of the 1930s and 1940s. Novels such as *Green Days by the River* (1967) and *King of the Masquerade* (1974) offer "period portraits that help reconstruct the neglected past, such as that of the selfless elementary school-teachers so fundamental to the flowering of the country's first crop of intellectuals [...] and the society's emerging ethnic pluri-verse" (Drayton 65). Indeed, his works of fiction along with those of history share a common aim that is to celebrate the physical, cultural, and historical landscape of Trinidad and Tobago. For instance, in his early three novels, *The Games Were Coming* (1963), *The Year in San Fernando* (1965), and *Green Days by the River* (1967) as in his early collections of short stories, there exists "a somewhat pointilistic proliferation of details of local colour, human and physical, [that] consolidates this landscape" (65). In *The Year in San Fernando* in particular, the first person boy narrator tells of the cultural and educational systems through the story in addition to his surroundings and the weather. He once talks about his teacher's opinion about the weather, declaring that:

There came a fine break in the weather. For a spell we began having plenty of sun and little rain and people were saying the Indian Summer was here. But it could not be. Mr. Langley said this. Mr. Langley said the time of the Indian Summer was long past. But the rains held up, anyhow. It was as if the clouds had drained themselves out and hung there sadly because they could not rain any more. (14)

In this novel, as well as in the others that Anthony has written, the weather and nature surrounding the characters are always significant factors that play a role in the story.

Kenneth Ramchand notes in the same novel the fact that Anthony presents the village

as a loved friend of a place depicting it and expressing the nostalgia towards it in a “Wordsworthian landscape” (191).

On the importance of nature in his fiction, Anthony asserts in a 2007 interview with Pascale De Souza that writers generally concentrate on what is closer to them in their writings, but he likes to include the landscape. He declares: “When I create a character, I must set him in a landscape. If I meet somebody, the very surroundings influence our meeting. We are not going to meet in a vacuum. The headland, the sea, you can't help noticing them” (158). He, then, does not only recognize the significance of depicting the environment of the characters but also the influence that can be exercised on them because of where the events happen. He adds: “For me fiction is not just telling something that happened and where it happened, but it is also conveying a part of life” (158). Consolidating the idea of the influence of the environment upon the people inhabiting them, he answers a question related to the impact his native Mayaro may have had on his inspiration claiming that Growing up in Mayaro has made him: “a different person [than] if I had grown up in Port-of-Spain or Arima. When you are writing, you do not analyze these things. But in San Fernando, for example, you can't write without mentioning the San Fernando Hill” (158). In the same interview, he also refers to the impact migration and visiting a number of countries can have on his writing (158).

Anthony is, therefore, a writer who is overtly aware of the significance of depicting nature and the environment of his characters' stories. Through this above exploration of his works, it is obvious that this writer does not only aim to celebrate the physical, cultural, and historical landscape of Trinidad and Tobago, but he also



recognizes the influence that such landscape can have on people's and characters' interactions.

#### **I.4. Colonialism and Environment in Asia: China**

Part of China's rich history is the one related to opium. By the second half of the eighteenth century, opium gained a firm possession of many of the Chinese people. Its story of how and where it started and became widespread in the country is provided in what follows. In addition, the first of two wars that was started because of it is surveyed in this section.

##### **I.4.1. Ghazipur, Canton, and the First Opium Wars:**

Ghazipur, which is situated on the banks of the Ganges some distance east of Benares in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, is one of the few places in the world where opium is still openly and legitimately prepared for market. After it is prepared, it is brought directly to the Government of India Opium and Alkaloid Works (Fay 33). An acre of the poppy plant of *papaver somniferum* produces other things than opium like poppy seeds, which in India are used in curries or pressed for oil; and several dozen pounds of the petals that were used in the preparation of the drug for export (35).

Opium was brought to India by the Arabs who used it widely as a medicine throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. Julia Lovell asserts that it came from the 'Western regions' to China like ancient Greece and Rome, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Persia and Afghanistan (25). In India, however, opium was not only seen as a medicine but as a general restorative (37). Opium in India was eaten and drunk, but in parts of Assam and Burma, in Thailand and Cambodia, in Laos and Vietnam, throughout the East Indies, and mostly in China, it was smoked particularly in the nineteenth century,

when opium was everywhere consumed more publicly than it is today (37). Thus when smoked, it was also combined with chopped tobacco or betel leaves forming a mixture called madak (37). From the East Indies, then, madak passed to the South China coast, as plain tobacco had done before it. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the Chinese were in firm possession of the technique of smoking opium (38). Some of India's immense export hardly rested sometimes along the Malacca Straits and in the East Indian Archipelago (Penang, Singapore, Anjer, and Java.) But the great majority of Indian opium chests were landed on the coast of China (41). So, this trade was carefully nourished and attended to by the Government of India, which in the early nineteenth century meant the East India Company (42).

The south China City of Canton is situated in the latitude of Calcutta, Mecca, and Havana, on the left bank of the Canton River seventy-five miles from the sea. Between city and sea there stretches a partly filled-in bay that has islands on it. At the southeast corner of the bay there is deep water, with Hong kong's mountains at its right foot, the little peninsula of Macao at its left, and a screen of barren islands across the bottom. The main entrance to the Canton River is called the Bocca Tigris or Bogue where the entrance to China started at it in the old days (Fay 45). Each year in the winter or early spring, East Indiamen left the Thames. Some sailed for China directly, but others went first to Bombay, Madras, or the Straits of Malacca, but all reached the China Sea before the southwest winds of summer. In Macao, they needed to obtain entry "chops" or permits and take aboard pilots, at the Bogue to pay a variety of fees, then worked their way up to Whampoa. They sold: "cargoes of woolens and lead from England; raw cotton from Bombay; tin, rattans, and fish maws from the Straits of

Malacca” (47). And in return, they bought many commodities at the heart of which was: Chinese tea that the British drank. Thus, there was no balance of trade; the British imported from China way more than what they exported to them. This was because it was very hard to find what the Chinese wanted. The latter seemed to have already possessed everything: “the best food in the world, rice; the best drink, tea; and the best clothing, cotton, silk, fur,” as Hart, the Englishman who was the director of China's customs service later in the nineteenth century, once remarked (qtd. in 84). In addition to food, drink, and clothing, China was also good, like India, with industrial arts of: “the wallpaper, fabrics, lacquer ware, porcelain, objets d'art, and bric-a-brac” (84). The British attempted to balance their payments with cotton and some other manufactured products and lastly by silver. The latter worked with the Chinese but it was hard to get for the British as well as Americans who used it too in their dealings with the Chinese. But, fortunately a new commodity appeared to save them. It was opium (85). But England-China trade was moved to private merchants when in 1833, a bill was introduced into Parliament to relieve the Company not simply of its monopoly of the China trade but of its right to trade there at all (89). The trade in opium flourished in China till the Chinese officials started fighting it. Even though the British did benefit from opium when they entered the trade at the end of the eighteenth century, they insisted that: “they were simply providing a service: satisfying, not creating demand” (Lovell 27).

Early in the summer of 1838, the Director of the Court of State Ceremonial, Hwang Tsioh-Tsz, represented in a Memorial to the Throne that the growing consumption of foreign opium was at the root of all China's troubles. He said that

opium: “came from England; but, though those foreigners were ready enough to weaken China and absorb her wealth by encouraging its use, so severely did they forbid smoking amongst themselves that offending ships were sunk by heavy guns” (Parker 2). Despite the Chinese’ officials war against the trade of opium, foreign merchants continued to bring it to the shores of Canton till the famous incident of the twenty thousand chests of opium and Commissioner Lin Tse-hsü, that River of Smoke has detailed accounts of the incident along with the foreign merchants’ reactions towards Lin’s order to give up their chests of opium and leave the country. Within four months of his arrival, Lin, for example, had arrested 1,600 people for opium offences, and seized nearly fourteen tons of opium and almost 43,000 opium pipes, as he had imprisoned five times more opium-convicts than the provincial governor had in three years. Lin also punished the Hong merchants who traded in opium with the foreign merchants (like Charles Elliot, the architect of Britain’s Opium War with China) as he put the latter into equal pressure (Lovell 47). He also started writing a letter to Queen Victoria, “initially forgiving her for being ignorant of the Qing empire’s recent measures against opium, then exhorting her to eliminate opium production in her dominions” (48). In response, the British traders demanded compensation for the opium destroyed by Commissioner Lin from their home government. The latter believed that the party that should compensate them was the Chinese authorities instead. Also, because China refused to play by the rules of the international game that the Europeans recently invented of free trade. In 1840, British merchants and diplomats asserted that: “the only appropriate riposte to this impossible country was

war” (Lovell 59)\*Note: Michael Keevak. *Embassies to China Diplomacy and Cultural Encounters Before the Opium Wars*. Palgrave Macmillan: 2017

It is worth bearing in mind that China had always had complex restricted relations with the West. Examining the history of China with European embassies in her country, Michael Keevak asserts that China managed to force its point of view upon the West far more than the opposite. Whenever the Westerners requested to benefit more from China and its riches, they were answered with refusal. In addition, China’s visitors were also required to: “undergo a long process of education in order to learn how to behave as tribute-bearing nations, which was the only way they could be recognized at all” (Chen 2). Expanding national interest and restoring national honour were two main reasons to go for this war (2) in addition to the British domestic political circumstances in London that happened to favour war as well as international diplomatic situations in Mexico with France, the Canadian rebellion, the Jamaican rebellion, the Ireland problem, and Russian expansion in the Middle East that would demonstrate the strength of the government (Chen 122-3). As a consequence, they sent a number of expeditions from India. These expeditionary forces ravaged the Chinese coast in a number of battles starting the First Opium Wars. J. Y. Wong, in his “Deadly Dreams: Opium, Imperialism and the Arrow War (1856-1860) in China,” lists the different namings of this war depending on who is recounting it as follows: “some Britons refer to it as the Second China War; some French as *l’expédition de Chine*; some Americans as Peter Parker and the opening of China; some Russians as the founding of Vladivostok; and some Chinese as the Second Opium War” (1). At the end of this war, the British were able to dictate the terms of settlement on the Chinese

through the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. Such failure maybe caused by one of the Qing's greatest weakness which was its warships. The Qing navy could not compete with Britain's older, copper-plate-hulled wooden warships that participated in different naval wars with France, Spain and Holland (Lovell 85). Through this treaty, the British reopened the door for further opium trade in China, fixed the Chinese fees at low rates, the Chinese Hong merchants had to pay the British traders three billion dollars in compensation for the destroyed opium, and above all provided Britain a most favoured nation status allowing them to have diplomatic representation in the country. Furthermore, the British took over the territory of Hong Kong.

#### **I.4.2. Amitav Ghosh and Postcolonialism**

Amitav Ghosh (1956-) is one of the leading contemporary Bengali Indian writers. He is a distinguished novelist, essayist, and journalist<sup>11</sup>. Because of his family background, Ghosh was born in Calcutta and then travelled and worked in different countries. This is why, the figure of the 'refugee' has followed him in a good number of his works mostly his fictional ones like in his first novel *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988) and *The Glass Palace* (2000) (Mondal 2). In addition, all of this travelling that Ghosh has made is may be the cause of the presence of many displaced people in both his fictional and non-fictional work. People like economic migrants, travelers, students, and researchers abundantly inform his works. Travelling also has helped him depict different peoples from different cultures and perspectives. In an interview with Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell in 1997, he remarked

---

<sup>11</sup> In 2009, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature for his fruitful contribution in writing in English. For his novels, he got different prizes for some separately. In 1990, he was awarded *Prix Medicis Étrangère* in Paris for *The Circle of Reason*. As he got awarded the annual prize of the Sahitya Akademi (Indian Academy of Literature) for his *The Shadow Lines*. He also won the Grand Prize for Fiction at the Frankfurt eBook Awards for his *The Glass Palace*. Along with many other prizes, he was awarded the International Grand Prix of the Blue Metropolis Festival in Montreal in 2011.

that: “for me, travelling is always in some way connected with my fictional work. It's a very close link, I would say” (171). He himself recognizes the close relationship between his fiction and travels. Multicultural and multilingual are two characteristics that can be given to Ghosh, the writer, as someone who has lived and travelled to different countries and speaks roughly five languages including Bengali, Hindi, French, Arabic, and English.

Amitav Ghosh's *oeuvre* comprises seven major novels and five important works of non-fiction among other articles and works. In 1995, he began reporting for *The New Yorker*. Ghosh is the author of *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008); and others. His fiction reflects his interest in tackling the issue of colonialism and its effect on his fellow native people as well as other peoples from different backgrounds and histories. However, he does not agree to label his work as “postcolonial”. Yet still through his regular criticism of the empire’s agency and the colonial mindset, Amitav Ghosh highlights the influence of colonialism on forming modern notions of nationhood and the violent productions of them. Moreover, he gains a significant writing strength from narrating individual stories along with the historical events and contexts that back them up moving such stories from the margin to the centre of attention. His work is also characterized by themes related to modernity and globalization and is connected to ‘postmodernism’. Ghosh has always been concerned with questions related to institutionalized knowledge and knowledge of different disciplines.

For his non-fiction, most of it is gathered together in *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces* (2002) published in India. It includes academic articles, travelogues,

reportage, journalism, and critical texts. In the same year of 1992, Ghosh published a scholarly article “The Slave of MS H.6” in *Subaltern Studies* and *In an Antique Land* (1992) which is an ethnographic work that he wrote in narrative form basing it on his visit to Egypt during his doctoral research. In 1998, he published a collection of essays *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma*. “The March of the Novel Through History: The Testimony of My Grandfather’s Bookcase” (1998) is an article that won *The Pushcart Prize*. In 2005, *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of our Times* was published in the United States. Indeed, in a mixture of both fiction and non-fiction Ghosh evokes travel, history, cultural observation, political description together in order to depict the local ordinary peoples’ stories, places, pains and challenges while also displaying their connection to global histories. Anshuman A. Mondal asserts that it is probably not wise to distinguish between Ghosh’s fiction and works and those of non-fiction since it will only be another way of creating an artificial boundary that he himself is consistently interrogating and attempting to deconstruct in order to question the link between ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ (20).

When asked about his work being part of postcolonial literature in the 1997 interview with Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell, Amitav Ghosh answers:

I must say, I have no truck with this term at all. It's a term one's begun to hear in the last five or six years, and I don't know a single Indian writer of my acquaintance who doesn't detest it. It completely misrepresents the focus of the work that I do. In some really important ways, colonialism is not what interests me. What is postcolonial? When I look at the work of critics, such as Homi Bhabha, I think they have somehow invented this world which is just a set of representations of representations. They've retreated into a world of magic mirrors and I don't think anyone can write from that sort of position. (171)

Ghosh is, hence, against his labeling either as a postcolonial writer or in reference to his works. He even disagrees to characterize his work in any particular way because it



is not him who is apt to do so and even if so, he does not know how to do it, as he claims (172). Nevertheless, many critics still consider the themes he tackles and the issues he writes about to be postcolonial. One of his main attempts is to reach a utopian humanism through the global and diverse stories he writes about. In fact, his attempt is just one version of the problem that faces the contemporary theories of colonial discourse (Dixon 21). That is, his interests do overlap with the interests of postcolonial theories. It is interesting to mention that later in 2001 Ghosh declined the Commonwealth Writers' Prize through writing a letter to the organizers expressing his unease with the term "commonwealth" since it gives the impression that contemporary writers are connected to the old colonial systems of power. Interviewing him, Chitra Sankaran asks him if his refusal is because he thinks that such colonial power structures should be dismissed because they are old or because he fears the credibility they may have in the modern world and which one should be aware of along with its dangers on people. His answer centers on his awareness of the huge revival of the imperialist ideology after the Second World War after people had been 'whitewashed' of colonialism. He also declares the unease he feels about his use of English and the historical burden it poses upon him. He states that the "Commonwealth" is a political grouping that serves its purpose and even though India has participated in such grouping politically, it should not be accepted in the field of culture since it is just a "euphemism":

Why should I accept something, which is just a euphemism for some incredible violence that was done to the world that is now seeking to whitewash itself? So I felt I couldn't in conscience accept this prize . . . You know, I feel, aesthetically, do I want my book, which is about the lives of people who were resisting empire in various ways—do I want it to be stuck with this Commonwealth Prize label on the cover? And I decided, "no, I can't live with that. I don't want it." And so I withdrew. (4)

Thus out of his responsibility as a conscious writer, he did not accept to be prized as a Commonwealth author.

In addition to telling the stories of some illegal immigrants in a fictionalised Gulf emirate highlighting the challenges they face, his novel *The Circle of Reason* “dramatizes the encounter of colonial, pre-colonial and ‘para-colonial’ knowledges within a colonial and post-colonial milieu”. This is to show how colonial power/knowledge complexes are formed and how they are “both reproduced and ironically subverted by its reception in colonised societies” (Mondal 8). In *In an Antique Land*, Ghosh concerns himself with the religious, the national and other identities of the characters in a modern postcolonial context. He traces the political problems that Hindus and Muslims in India and Pakistan and Jews and Arabs in Israel/Palestine that originate in the colonial times and the violent forms of the modern times. In it, Anshuman A. Mondal argues that Ghosh explicitly criticizes colonialism and its consequences compared to his implicit critiques in *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines* (12). In his next novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, he continues on the same path of the direct engagement with colonialism through demonstrating how the Eurocentric self-representations about the spreading out of colonial modernity, reason, development and its civilising mission (Mondal 13). Likewise one of the main themes of his *The Hungry Tide* is related to the coercion that postcolonial governments enforce on people.

In his non-fictional works, too, Ghosh deals with different topics related to postcolonialism, history and nationalism. In 2012, Emily Mkrtychian asked him if

nationalism and the nation-state play a role in the violence of the kind that is happening in Syria nowadays or not. He states:

Absolutely. You know, what we have in the Middle East, as well as in India, is the attempt to create these unitary nation states with unitary identities in places that are essentially extremely plural. It is like they are trying to take a mosaic and reduce it to one color, one shape or form. And it creates incredible violence. (n. p.)

He emphasizes the importance of the multicultural nature of people and the diversity of their cultures and the challenges that may result when attempting to build a nation-state. In his book *“The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces”* (2002), the Imam’s episode shows how the evolution of modern knowledge has been influencing both the colonial and post-colonial world in changing the environment, society, culture and mentality of its peoples (Mondal 43).

When he was asked about the European writers who influenced him like Joseph Conrad and Shelley, he answered that Tagore was a clear literary influence for him, but Satyajit Ray more than others has in some important respect formed Ghosh’s way of looking at things. In addition, more interests of Ghosh come from Ray like his interest in science-fiction and history. The latter is indeed a crucial part of the common culture of South Asians in general and the Bengali Indians in particular (172). Thus, he is friends with many critics and theorists who belong to the field of postcolonialism. Such critics and writers consider his work to be dealing with many themes and issues that constitute the situation of postcolonialism. Topics that include:

the troubled (and troubling) legacy of colonial knowledge and discourse on formerly colonised societies, peoples, and ideas; the ambivalent relationship to modernity of the so-called ‘developing’ or ‘Third’ world; the formation and reformation of identities in colonial and post-colonial societies; the question of agency for those previously seen as the objects but not subjects of history; the recovery of lost or suppressed histories; an engagement with cultural multiplicity and difference; and an insistent critique of Eurocentrism in general. (Mondal 2)

In addition to the topics that have a postcolonial flavor that Ghosh's novels contain in great number, he himself does recognize the importance of the colonial heritage and its continuing influence on people. This is what he declares in an interview with Chitra Sankaran: "this day we are constantly being manipulated by colonial powers and ex-colonial powers. As people who have been colonized for three hundred years, to feel our way into any kind of responsible presence in the world is a very difficult thing, and a historical self-awareness is one of the most important aspects of it" (2-3). Hence, he understands the difficulty that faces ex-colonized peoples in fighting back the influence of colonialism. One of the challenges such peoples do face is the construction of their nation-states. The latter is, therefore, one of the important topics that Ghosh concerns himself with in both his fiction and non-fiction. As Rituparna Roy rightly puts it: "Ghosh has never quite stopped thinking about the nation" (128). Dealing with the heritage of colonialism and building the nation are two key issues that Ghosh's works go around. To delve into the colonial heritage means to write about history or to use the latter in his works. Indeed, this is what characterizes his works, in which history always accompanies the individuals and their stories, Ghosh extracted from the general picture of national histories. Mahmood Kooria asks Ghosh in a 2012 interview about the reason(s) behind his writing historical novels and not academic history. Ghosh's answer proves again his interest in individual persons and their private stories that go most of the time untold or unnoticed using history only as a backdrop. He tells him:

[...]But there is a huge difference between writing a historical novel and writing history. If I may put it like this: history is like a river, and the historian is writing about the ways the river flows and the currents and crosscurrents in the river. But, within this river, there are also fish, and the fish can swim in many different directions. So, I am looking at it from the fish's point of view and which direction the fish swims in. So,

history is the water in which it swims, and it is important for me to know the flow of the water. But in the end I am interested in the fish. The novelist's approach to the past, through the eyes of characters, is substantially different from the approach of the historian. For me, seeing the past through the prism of a character allows me to understand some aspects of the past that historians don't deal with. But, I must admit that doing this would not be possible if historians had not laid the foundations. (9)

Recognizing the complementary nature of both fields, Ghosh insists on his interest in people whom he gets to know details about when writing historical novels rather than if he writes academic history books.

In his different works, Ghosh utilizes his own personal experiences as well as those of his family to dramatise the dilemmas individuals of ex-colonised countries that they face when attempting to establish a comprehensible sense of identity for themselves. These people, Ghosh shows, have reacted towards the violent colonial interferences in their societal institutions, their cultural being, their mentality, and even their physical environment that Ghosh abundantly addresses. When Ghosh demonstrates the psychological, emotional, political, and economic effects on peoples with different backgrounds, what stands out is a humanist attempt from him to reclaim “some measure of subjectivity and agency as a viable basis for a future decolonisation of the mind and body” (Mondal 30).

#### **I.4.3. Amitav Ghosh Writing of Nature and the Environment**

Ghosh does concern himself with both time and space. Calcutta, his native city, exercises significant influence on his imagination. When asked about the important thing that had influenced his work, he mentions his childhood, spent in different parts of the subcontinent: “I suppose the thing that's been most important is Calcutta; it's a kind of constant that runs through all my books. Calcutta has been in some way the centre of my imaginative world” (Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell 171). Calcutta like all

other cities is associated with certain classes and it has always been considered a cultural centre. In some of his novels, too, it stands as a metaphor for the knowledge/power relations brought about by colonialism. Thus, Ghosh recognizes the cultural, political, and economic importance for people of any place, Calcutta among others. In his 1998 “The March of the Novel through History: The Testimony of My Grandfather's Bookcase,” Ghosh explains how the bookcases are always shown to visitors of any house to tell them that it is a place where books have a value. He states that: “This is always important in Calcutta, for Calcutta is an oddly bookish city” (13). In an interview with Chitra Sankaran, Ghosh states his fascination with different sciences that are related to earth and place like botany and geology. He even asserts the existence of a connection between places and their inhabitants declaring that: “Human beings since the beginning of time have looked at their surroundings and wanted to make sense of it. I think this is a very deep and instinctual human urge” (8). Moreover, since Ghosh considers travel to be a significant factor in recognizing the importance of space in human experience,

it is nevertheless his recognition that space is not an inert physical dimension exterior to human consciousness but is rather intimately shaped by the particular ways in which it is imagined that determines his examination of culturally created spaces, such as nation-states, and the borders – both physical and imagined – that delimit and define them. (Mondal 4)

His novels depict a variety of locations. In some novels, the stories occur in a number of places and others happen in just one geographical area. In his *The Circle of Reason*, the story's characters are illegal immigrants from different countries like India, East Africa, Bangladesh, and some other Arab states who live in the Gulf emirate of Al-Ghazira. The final section of the novel occurs in the dunes of Saharan

Algeria. In it, both space and time are fluid and constantly shifting from one location to another, and from one given moment to another without any forced transitions (Mondal 4). The events of *In an Antique Land*'s story occur in some small villages in Lower Egypt. *The Glass Palace*'s stories happen in some parts of South-East Asia and in Burma on the opposite of Ghosh's interest in the Western half of the Indian ocean. Its characters' lives are put in the framework of both the economic and political dynamics of colonialism. The novel demonstrates the position of the economic exploitation of resources, the land and its people vis-à-vis political oppression. An interesting topic in this novel is related to the support that the colonized peoples get from their environment. When some trees do not produce rubber, it is seen by one of the white men as a form of resistance. Even the jungle and its ghosts play a symbolic role related to the environments siding with its local inhabitants (Mondal 114).

Throughout his fiction and non-fiction, Ghosh proves his interest in both humans and non-humans. In addition to recognizing the importance of any place and its relationship to its people, Ghosh also spotlights the dilemma of different animals in the modern changing world of globalization and environmental issues. In an introduction to a book entitled "Introduction: Beyond Borders and Boundaries," Chitra Sankaran argues that many of Ghosh's novels are tightly related to "the cause of the disenfranchised, both human and nonhuman, be it the forlorn refugees, the man-eating tigers of the Sundarbans, or the freshwater dolphins of the Irrawaddy [in *The Hungry Tide*]" (xix). For her, Ghosh draws the attention of the reader to the whole ecosystem and its sickly situation and to their responsibility of preserving it from the dangers

caused by a changing environment whose effects cannot be predicted and concern both humans and animals.

In addition to his awareness of the place and its influence on people, Ghosh is a writer who concerns himself with the issues of nature and the global climate. His *The Hungry Tide* deals with environmentalism and its natural, human, and ethical influences on the land and its inhabitants. It also investigates the relationship between the indigenous peoples and the environment they inhabit. The novel asks questions about environmentalism if it is only a Western way of considering the connection between people and earth or not. Anshuman A. Mondal argues that: “*The Hungry Tide* is a plea as well as a testimony to the many other songs of the earth, sung by the many different peoples who live on it and claim some portion of it as their own; a plea that they do not go unheard, that they are not swamped by the hungry tides of either development or environmentalism” (19). When asked about his sole concern with environmental change in his recent lecture at Amsterdam, Ghosh wonders how Amsterdam can defend itself against the water even though their case is not as grave as that of India because the former has a very realistic and practical understanding of the issue (Kooria16). Thus, Ghosh is very aware of the destructive effects that global change may cause to people and their lands. What is a more serious problem for him is the fact that in Asia and particularly in India, people are not even aware of the gravity of the topic. As a result, Mahmood Kooria asks Ghosh about what makes global warming more dangerous than terrorism or separatist movements for people’s lives.

Ghosh answers:

There are two things to be said on that issue. Firstly, compared to the nature of: what is happening in the environment, terrorism, elections, and so on are epiphenomena. They are minor compared to the absolutely tectonic scale of the



changes that we are now facing. Secondly, a lot of the conflicts that we see, even within South Asia, are significantly related to climate change. In the case of Maoism in Nepal, I have seen a study which shows us that the rise and intensity of Maoist movements in Nepal can be tied directly to rainfall decreases. The same is true in Chhattisgarh and Orissa in India. There is an important dimension of climate change in many of these conflicts. As a result of terrible fluctuations in rain, many people are forced to leave their land, causing enormous population displacement. (16)

This emphasizes the writer's interest to show the close relationship between climate, place and people. Ghosh is, thus, very conscious of such studies and facts that connect the environment to people. Another natural element that Ghosh recognizes to have a relationship with people's histories and cultures is the natural resource of oil. In his "Petrofiction: The Oil Encounter and the Novel" Ghosh traces the reasons for not writing about oil although it has had a major influence on the economy and lives of Americans and Arabs equally. He notes that despite the fact that many writers and poets have written about the discovery of the sea route to India, the oil encounter went deliberately unnoticed. The answer that Ghosh provides concerning the Americans is related to the connection of the natural resource to some non-natural causes and consequences:

To a great many Americans, oil smells bad. It reeks of unavoidable overseas entanglements, a worrisome foreign dependency, economic uncertainty, risky and expensive military enterprises; of thousands of dead civilians and children and all the troublesome questions that lie buried in their graves. (The Imam76)

Oil, then, as a natural resource is linked to what humans have done even though it has nothing to do with the oil itself.

Interviewing Ghosh in 2012, Mahmood Kooria raises the fact that Ghosh usually visits places before he writes about them, which might be considered a kind of anthropological fieldwork that Ghosh makes use of. Ghosh's answer is indeed interesting:

I like to visit places to see what they are like. In my books the places are characters onto themselves. For instance, I spent a lot of time in Canton (Guangzhou). It is a very interesting place. Even experienced Western travellers were astonished by its uniqueness and unfamiliarity, and they talk about it time and again. Canton has one of the earliest mosques in the world. It was built by the Prophet Muhammad's uncle. It is called the Mosque of Abu Waqqas. It is a very ancient mosque, beautifully maintained, and pilgrims from all over the world congregate there. So, the city of Canton itself is a character in my recent novels. (12-3)

He, thus, considers the place as a character. This comes from his recognition of the important role that places that people inhabit play in their lives. This is true in his fiction, too. Like him, his characters have love for places and natural elements. Chitra Sankaran asks him about one of the characters of *The Hungry Tide*, Piya, whom she sees as interesting because Piya is a diasporic who decides to go back to her motherland because of her love for the environment and for the freshwater dolphins there, and not through any of the common ways such as language or culture. He answers her that it is a different way of connecting with India that Piya discovers since she does not feel any kind of connection towards India and Indian culture (9). The importance that Ghosh gives to the place is derived from his belief that the environment where people live is directly linked to the way they live during the times they witness. When Damien Stankiewicz asks him about the fact that his books are full of ethnographic details and a serious attention paid to places and their appearances, he tells him that he considers it to be a point of power for a novel to be able to re-build a certain place, especially an unknown place: "To me one aspect of the power of the novel, as a form, is that it allows us to re-create unfamiliar worlds and unfamiliar moments in time" (538). Ghosh even seeks to learn from places. When writing about Four Corners, the only point in the USA where four states meet, Ghosh writes that "it teaches you respect." (216)

Even in his non-fictional works, Ghosh pays attention to the geographical and topographical characteristics of lands in addition to their climates and habitat. When he talks about the place of birth of the slave in his 1990 paper “*The slave of Ms. H. 6*” that might be the vicinity of Mangalore, he differentiates it from the region of the east despite the short distance between them not only linguistically and culturally but ecologically as well (19). He, then, starts describing the place of Mangalore as sitting “upon a distinctive geographical formation: the strip of land that runs the length of the western coast of the subcontinent, along the foot of the range of mountains that stands like a wall between the sea and the massif of the Deccan peninsula” (20). Indeed, he carries on describing the region, mentioning its climate and habitat. This is to prove that nature is an essential part in Ghosh’s writings to which he gives careful attention.

### ***Conclusion***

In this chapter, the socio-historical contexts of the four novels of the study are provided. In order to connect the stories’ events to the actual social and historical occurrences, the issue of colonialism in Central Africa is reviewed for the reason of understanding the complicated relationships between white men, hyphenated Africans, and natives which are represented in the story of V. S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River*. Also for the reason of highlighting the socially complex and economically diverse South African society, and the circumstances of the whites’ colonial invasion of the territory that has resulted in complicated relations between settlers, natives, and colonizers, both the society and the historical eras of colonial invasions and control of South Africa is surveyed in this chapter. This is because the history of South Africa which is pregnant with different problems mainly those related to the relations between whites and non-whites directly connects with the story’s events of J. M.

Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Moreover, since the story of Michael Anthony's *Bright Road to El Dorado* recounts the story of one of the main Amerindian tribes of the Arawaks during the Spanish occupation of their country, Trinidad, by Don Antonio de Berrio, and the European expeditions in search for El Dorado, the city of gold, one of which was commanded by Sir Walter Raleigh, the chapter also covers this part of the history of the island for the sake of contextualizing the novel's story. Lastly, since Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke* deals mainly with the foreign merchants' trade of opium in the nineteenth century, and China's war against it highlighted by the famous incident of the twenty thousand chests of opium which were destroyed by Commissioner Lin Tse-hsü and which was one of the main pretexts for starting the First Opium Wars, these historical incidents are pointed to in the chapter as a background to the novel's story.

This chapter also contextualizes the writers of the works under study in regard to postcolonialism and nature and the environment. Since how these writers represent the colonizer, the colonized, and their land in their novels' stories can be seen from the lens of their lives and works, this chapter digs into their various writings for the sake of positioning their works in the field of colonial and postcolonial discourses. It also investigates how the four writers see and react to nature and landscapes throughout their travelogues and other fictional works as to answer ecocritical questions related to the presence or the absence of the writers' awareness of nature and the environment and their influences upon their inhabitants. The chapter, thus, takes as points of focus V. S. Naipaul and the setting of his *A Bend in the River*, John Maxwell Coetzee and the South African setting of his *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Michael Anthony and the

Caribbean setting of Trinidad in *Bright Road to El Dorado*, and Amitav Ghosh and the Chinese setting of Canton as presented in his *River of Smoke*, respectively.

Because both the fiction and non-fiction works that Naipaul wrote deal with topics related to ex-colonized countries and their peoples, he is mostly considered to be a postcolonial writer. Trinidadian-born Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, the writer without a land, narrates stories of hyphenated expatriates or diaspora characters who struggle between their native lands and those Metropolitan countries. The writer is someone who has lived, studied, visited, and worked in different countries including the West Indies, Central and North America, Asia, and Africa. Throughout his work, he sometimes presents severe criticisms of the ex-colonized societies. As a result, he has been receiving many criticisms of being a different type of postcolonial writers. This is because he has adopted opinions of the colonizer himself. However, still, others praise him for providing neutral objective reflections. *A Bend in the River* is believed to narrate the stories of Salim and other characters who live in today's the Democratic Republic of Congo because of the similarities between its historical events and figures in addition to Naipaul's visit to the country four years before its publication.

Indeed, Naipaul's visit to the West Indies in 1960 marks down a turning point in the writer's works concerning nature and the environment because the way he treats them has changed. The publication of his documentary travelogue of 1962, *The Middle Passage*, which recounts both the life and the natural landscapes of the countries he visited, is an example. Henceforth, Naipaul's later literary works also focus on nature and the landscape of the characters' surroundings more than in his earlier novels and short stories that have scarce descriptions of the natural environment of characters.

The writings of South African John Maxwell Coetzee are mainly about the representation of the whites' hegemonies of colonialism, imperialism and the apartheid. Coetzee asserts, through his fiction and non-fiction, that the works of the European travel writers are mere misrepresentations of the natives and their lands. Due to his Western education, Coetzee is not safe from the criticisms of many who consider his novels to be imbued with the dominant Western literary tradition.

Growing up in South Africa, spending holidays in Karoo in the semidesert region of the Cape Province, living for a period of time in England, travelling to many countries for both study and work have made Coetzee experience various environments and landscapes. Through his literary articles and works of both fiction and non-fiction, Coetzee does manifest a deep interest in nature and the landscapes of South Africa comparing it with some European and American topographical areas.

Caribbean Michael Anthony also moved to England for work after his period of schooling. His work is mainly historical and cultural in addition to literary. In it, Anthony tackles the issue of his country's history trying to give rise to his own people's voice. Such works of his highlight overlooked parts of the country's history, city, towns, and villages. Despite the fact that the first collection of Anthony's fiction is mostly autobiographical tracing the development of young characters' lives, it contains many descriptions of the environment that these characters inhabit. This is because the writer understands the importance of landscape and the environment for the characters he creates. For this, he presents the weather and nature surrounding the characters as significant factors that play a role in his fiction's stories. This is why

some critics believe that Anthony's works of both history and fiction celebrate the physical, cultural, and historical landscapes of Trinidad and Tobago.

Bengali Indian Amitav Ghosh writes both fiction and non-fiction that tackle colonialism and its effect on peoples from different backgrounds and histories even though he does not agree to label his work as "postcolonial". Through his work, Ghosh also fuses between travel, history, cultural observation, and political description in order to depict the local ordinary peoples' stories, places, pains and challenges while also displaying their connection to global histories.

In addition to paying attention to both time and space (especially Calcutta, his native city, which exercises significant influence on his imagination), Ghosh also concerns himself with non-humans (animals, plants, and others). Ghosh is known to write about characters who belong to different cultures and backgrounds, his works also depict a variety of locations. Indeed, the writer seems to recognize the importance of places and their relationships with the people who inhabit them. Lastly, Ghosh also writes about environmental issues. He draws the attention of his readers to the issues of nature and the global climate and their responsibility of preserving it from the dangers that surround it. This is because Ghosh is aware of the destructive effects that global change may cause to people and to their lands.

**CHAPTER II**

**NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN A**

**POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT:**

**THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL**

**BASIS**



## ***Introduction***

At first glance, there seems to be no connection between postcolonialism and ecocriticism. However, there are a number of points where both theories meet. After ecocriticism started to gain force in the field of literary criticism, some scholars began to highlight the similarities between postcolonial and ecocritical studies and called for a convergence of both theories by the late 1990s because of the apparent rapprochement. In fact, this coupling is empowered by some similarities that the two fields share. They both agree on the existence of human ambivalences and environmental malfeasances. They also share a common conviction that the injustices done on marginalized people go concurrently with that of their lands and their riches. Each of them, thus, seeks social and environmental justice. Nevertheless, the combination of the two fields is not easy to consider because of their discrepancies that may cause some conflicts between one another.

### **II.1. Scope of the Theories: Re-Reading the Concept of Land**

Despite the fact that the scopes of postcolonialism and ecocriticism may differ, they both meet at the concept of “land”. This is because the latter is the focal point of study in ecocriticism since it is part of nature and the environment. It is also related to postcolonialism since colonialism itself means the occupation of land and the transformation of the ecosphere of the colonized lands. This part takes as its main subject the different considerations of land and the environment, according to both postcolonial and ecocritical perspectives.

### II.1.1. Land through the Lens of Postcolonialism

Within the scope of study of postcolonial criticism, there is a concern with analyzing all aspects related to the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Indeed, one of the main aims of postcolonial writers and critics is to both analyze and redefine all notions of race, class, culture, personality, ideology, politics, and land imposed on the colonized by the colonizer. The purpose is to “speak back” to the empire and to give the “natives” their own voice in identifying their situation. Of all these notions, however, land seems to be given less attention and focus.

Attempting to delimit the subjects that postcolonial studies cover, Lois Tyson states that as a theoretical framework:

postcolonial criticism seeks to understand the operations—politically, socially, culturally, and psychologically—of colonialist and anticolonialist ideologies. For example, a good deal of postcolonial criticism analyzes the ideological forces that, on the one hand, pressed the colonized to internalize the colonizers’ values and, on the other hand, promoted the resistance of colonized peoples against their oppressors, a resistance that is as old as colonialism itself. (418)

Thence, postcolonial critics give much attention to the mind and its workings as related to colonial agendas and deeds. This is reflected in the works of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and others. Each of these scholars has contributed to the field of postcolonialism in their particular ways because of their looking at the matter from various perspectives. Consequently, they have developed a variety of postcolonial concepts and terms that may be used in the analysis of literary and even cultural texts and contexts. This is why some of their concepts are to be used in this thesis as tools in the analysis of its four novels.

In his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967, first published in 1952), the psychiatrist Frantz Fanon utilizes psychoanalysis to decipher the complex relationship

between the colonizer and the colonized. He, thus, highlights the inherent ideology of racism in the colonizer's minds resulting in their dehumanization of the "inferior" colonized. Fanon examines how the Negro of the Antilles becomes almost a real human being and gets closer to being white due to his mastery of the French language (8). This acquisition of the mother country's language and therefore culture is done only through: "the death and burial of [the colonized people's] local cultural originality" (9). Fanon also takes what he declares to be the only text he found written on the ideology of colonialism which is the few essays of O. Mannoni's book, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, and puts them under rigorous scrutiny. He praises the work done by Mannoni yet disagrees with many points that he mentions in his essays. One of the points is related to the fact that Mannoni distinguishes between different types of racism while Fanon proves that colonial racism is no different from any other racism, and that this kind of racism is created by the "European civilization and its best representatives" (66). Another prominent point is related to the inferiority complex that Mannoni argues about. The latter suggests that there are some people who have this complex of inferiority inherent in them from childhood; his proof being that the adult Malagasy, for instance, shows signs of this complex even when he changes the environment he lives in. Fanon takes this idea again and analyzes it proving it wrong. He argues that the inferiority complex among the colonized people is a result of the colonizer's discourse that is responsible for spreading out a number of myths about the colonized to the point that: "the myth of the bad nigger is part of the collective unconscious" (68). A third equally important point is the one concerned with the fact that many scholars, including Mannoni, would

explain the reason why some people are ready to be colonized in relation to the inherent dependency complex they have. Their counterpart, however, “the white man acts in obedience to an authority complex, a leadership complex” (73). Fanon wonders why such scholars do not explain the fact that some colonized peoples did welcome the Europeans when they first came to their countries because of their hospitality towards foreigners and not because of what they call the dependency complex latent in them. The solution that the native is left with is to fight such discourses spread out about him along with all different kinds of exploitation executed on him. Fanon explains at the end of his book that:

For the Negro who works on a sugar plantation in Le Robert, there is only one solution: to fight. He will embark on this struggle, and he will pursue it, not as the result of a Marxist or idealistic analysis but quite simply because he cannot conceive of life otherwise than in the form of a battle against exploitation, misery, and hunger. (174)

The idea of violent resistance is explained extensively in his following book, entitled *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963, first published in 1961). In it, he traces the mental effects of colonialism on the coloured people who were deprived of their humanity in the process of their exploitation. Refuting the widespread opinion that the natives are innately violent, he details the reasons why the colonized resort to violence against their colonizers:

The violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world, which has ceaselessly drummed the rhythm for the destruction of native social forms and broken up without reserve the systems of reference of the economy, the customs of dress and external life, that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native at the moment when, deciding to embody history in his own person, he surges into the forbidden quarters. (40)

Therefore, the violence that the natives resort to in the process of freeing their countries is inherited from the colonizer who utilized it in destroying all forms of

social, political, geographical, intellectual and cultural life in occupied countries. This aggressiveness is manifested in the colonizer's public speeches and the resort to the authority of police in addition to all other forms of violence the colonizer utilizes in their process of exploitation and dehumanization of the natives as well as their lands.

He also analyzes the case of the native intellectuals who were taught by Europeans. The former are not safe from the intellectual influence of the colonizer's discourses which stipulate that: "the essential qualities remain eternal in spite of all the blunders men may make: the essential qualities of the West, of course" (46). The only way, according to Fanon, for the native intellectual to recognize the falseness of the Western theory is when they get the opportunity to return to their native countries during the struggle for independence (47). Moreover, Fanon argues that in addition to the physical harm that colonialism causes for the colonized, it causes them mental damages as well. He supports this claim by mentioning the mental cases he got in the hospital he worked at in Algeria during the Great Algerian war for independence (1954-1962). He states that the tortured patients he diagnosed were suffering from feelings of injustice and an "*indifference to all moral arguments*" (283).

At the end of the book, Fanon goes back to the idea of the violent resistance the colonized resort to. He claims that their official independence got them back their dignity providing them with a kind of a moral compensation. However, the colonized did not have the time to establish a well-organized society. Yet, still, the focal point he highlights is his call to all ex-colonized peoples to not follow Europe in continuing to use violence, that the latter was inevitably used to free their countries but not when building them up. He also states that the responsibility of these newly independent

peoples is to create a different new way for them in order to come up with a version of a whole man that Europe failed to bring about. For when Europeans invaded the New World, they ended up by creating a second Europe that became “a monster, in which the taints, the sickness, and the inhumanity of Europe have grown to appalling dimensions” (313). Hence, the challenge for the colonized is to avoid creating a third Europe. The solution for him is, then, to find a new way of re-establishing native civilizations without forgetting the colonial past:

It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of Man, a history which will have regard to the sometimes prodigious theses which Europe has put forward, but which will also not forget Europe's crimes, of which the most horrible was committed in the heart of man, and consisted of the pathological tearing apart of his functions and the crumbling away of his unity. And in the framework of the collectivity there were the differentiations, the stratification, and the bloodthirsty tensions fed by classes; and finally, on the immense scale of humanity, there were racial hatreds, slavery, exploitation, and above all the bloodless genocide which consisted in the setting aside of fifteen thousand millions of men. (315)

Hence, the colonized have to remember the atrocities of their country's colonial past in order to learn the lesson that they should not follow the same path the European colonizer has taken before them. History should not be neglected or forgotten; it should rather be there a source for knowledge and experiences. In a previously published book of his entitled “*A Dying Colonialism*” (1965, first published in 1959), Fanon also examines the changes that occur to the colonized people bringing up the example of the new Algeria that is being created during the years of its violent revolution against the French colonizer. Such uprising leads its actors to be able to “rehabilitat[e] the Algerian colonized man,” “wrench [...] the Algerian man from a centuries-old and implacable oppression.” The result is that “[revolting Algerians] have risen to [their] feet and [...] are now moving forward.” Fanon, then, inquires: “Who can settle us back in servitude?” (32). In a later book, too, “*Toward the African*

*Revolution*” (1967, first published in 1964), Fanon emphasizes the idea that nothing should be forgotten claiming that: “French colonialism will not be legitimized by the Algerian people. No spectacular undertaking will make us forget the legalized racism, the illiteracy, the flunkeyism generated and maintained in the very depth of the consciousness of our people” (101). Consequently the only way for Algerians (and all other newly independent peoples), according to Fanon, is to regain their social, political, cultural and intellectual systems rather than adapting to the colonizer’s way of life.

Homi Bhabha discussed roughly the same ideas Fanon had developed, agreeing and elaborating on many topics. In his *The Location of Culture* (1994), for instance, Bhabha agrees with Fanon about the idea that ex-colonized peoples have to study their past and not forget it since it has become an important part of their national identities. He actually believes that the matter is twofold. For if the colonial past is part of the colonized’s identity, it is also an important part of the colonizer’s. The immigrants from the colonized countries and who went to the ex-colonizers’ states just add to this fact. He states that: “[t]he Western metropole must confront its postcolonial history, told by its influx of postwar migrants and refugees, as an indigenous or native narrative *internal to its national identity*” (6). On a related note, too, Bhabha refers to Goethe agreeing with him about the fact that there is no pure culture for all cultures were influenced by one another due to the contact between them.

Indeed, Edward Said’s prominent book of *Orientalism* (1978), that is regarded as one of the key works of postcolonial theory, investigates the Western intellectual discourse on the Orient seeking to decipher the intrinsic ideas behind its ideology that

distinguishes between two different but related worlds of East and West. Said argues that the Orient is a mere European invention that is described from the ancient times as “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (1). All that is related to the Orient is horrifying be it the people or their lands. The Orient, then, becomes an adjacent that is connected to Europe since it was their invention. This terrifying entity is nonetheless the source of “Europe’s greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other” (1). Said also draws the attention to the fact that the act of defining the Orient has helped Europeans (or the West in general) to define themselves by contrasting the Orient’s image, personality and experience with theirs (2). Said attempts to provide his readers with different definitions of Orientalism as a field of study that is related to everything that has to do with the Orient. The ambiguity lies in the fact that although the Orient is the product of the West’s imagination, it is still real and true as part of the Western material civilization and culture. He, thus, defines Orientalism as the body that: “expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles” (2). Therefore, the Orientalist discourse does not act alone, it rather utilizes all means available to support itself and its agenda that is based on the distinction between “East” and “West” having its main function “to channel thought into a West or an East compartment” (47).

Despite the fact that Orientalism is mainly a body of texts, it has gained an interesting durability and strength. This drove Said to question people’s tendency to



favour the text over what they see or experience themselves<sup>12</sup>. He concludes that: “[i]t seems a common human failing to prefer the schematic authority of a text to the disorientations of direct encounters with the human” (94) for the reason that human beings find it easier to read about unknown distant places to them. But the problem with such textual descriptions, as Said argues, is that they over-generalize the specific overriding the Orient that is “unchanging [...], absolutely different (the reasons change from epoch to epoch) from the West. And Orientalism, in its post-eighteenth-century form, could never revise itself” (97). However, the Orientalist considers himself a hero who rescued the Orient’s past fields of study and lost languages and mentalities bringing it to modernity. Having done so, the Orientalist “could celebrate his method, and his position, as that of a secular creator, a man who made new worlds as God had once made the old” (122). Yet despite this Western hegemony over the Orient, Said emphasizes the fact that the Orient (re)created or restored and renewed is still “a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire” (204).

Like Fanon and Said before him, Bhabha believes that one culture is recognized only through the other culture’s difference. Bringing up the topic of world literature, he states that: “[t]he study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of ‘otherness’” (12). Bhabha also agrees with Edward Said on the idea of fixity of the colonized culture in the

---

<sup>12</sup> This echoes Michel Foucault’s ideas about the power of language. In the chapter “The Incitement to Discourse” of his *The History of Sexuality* (1978), he refers to the necessity of drawing the attention to the discourses that were spread about sex and the power they had over it. He states that in order to master sex in reality, “it had first been necessary to subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech, expunge it from the things that were said, and extinguish the words that rendered it too visibly present (17). Thus, language is powerful in the same sense that Said refers to.

colonial discourse. He argues that everything that has to do with the colonized is described to be rigid and not changing. The stereotype is part of such discourse as something that never changes about the colonized:

For it is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization; produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in *excess* of what can be empirically proved or logically construed. (66)

What supports the continuity of the same stereotypes about the colonized is the power of ambivalence. This latter is also utilized in the process of constructing what he calls colonial mimicry, a tendency that he defines, adapting Samuel Weber's formulation, as: "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (86). Thus, mimicry is constructed around ambivalence by representing a difference that is at the same time a process of denial. The denial occurs when the colonized "mimics" the colonizer, "by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values", the result he gets "is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening" (Aschcroft et al. 125).

Fanon's, Bhabha's and Said's ideas are related to the analysis of the four novels of the thesis in many ways. First, Fanon's commentary on the use of the colonizer's language and culture that leads the colonized to become very close to him can be linked to *Waiting for the Barbarians*' native characters who do not speak English. Their inability to speak the colonizer's language proves their distance from being civilized. Language and culture stand as obstacles to the natives' development. The colonizer's language in *A Bend in the River* also plays an important role in different social situations of the novel's story. What the Spanish and the British colonizers do in

*Bright Road to Eldorado* is an attempt to bury the natives' local culture since this is very important in the acquisition of the colonist's language and thenceforth culture, as Fanon believes. The Indian merchants who work with their British and American counterparts in *River of Smoke* do also show an example of being close to the colonizer by acquiring his language. However, they are still treated as if they are not fully "English". Second, Fanon's argument about the fact that all kinds of racism are similar including colonial racism that has been created by the European civilization and its representatives is relevant to the analysis because the four novels show proofs of colonial, environmental and other kinds of racism from the white men against the natives. Third, the inferiority complex of the colonized people that Fanon proves to be the result of the colonizer's discourse against the colonized that has been widespread over a long period of time is equally useful in the analysis. The reason is related to the fact that all four stories have characters who reveal how much myths and stereotypes about 'Third World' peoples are part of their First World countries' collective unconscious. Then, his explanation that the colonized peoples have welcomed the colonizer because of their hospitality towards foreigners but not because of an inherent dependency complex they may have is actually beneficial in reading the novels of the study. This is what the Arawak of *Bright Road to El Dorado* overtly declares to the Spanish colonizer. He tells him that he helps any foreigner who needs help out of generous humanity. In many instances, it is clear that it is not a question of a dependency complex of the colonized but rather of an authority complex, as Fanon explains. Many characters (colonizers) in the other three novels in addition to the one just mentioned talk from an authority or leadership point of view whenever the subject

is about the peoples their countries colonize and exploit. Next, Fanon's idea that the only solution the natives are left with is to fight the exploitation exercised on them is present in the four novels of the study. In fact, this is exactly what the African natives do in *A Bend in the River* and natives Amerindians in *Bright Road to El Dorado*, South African tribes of *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Chinese officials in *River of Smoke*. In fact, they are somehow obliged to resort to violence in most of the time. This, Fanon explains, is because they inherit this violence from the colonizers who used it to destroy the natives' forms of social, political, geographical, intellectual and cultural life. Another reason can be related to the fact that the colonizer's acts of torture has made them suffer from feelings of injustice. Additionally, the case of the native intellectuals that Fanon analyzes is also relevant when examining the position of the four authors of the novels. Since all of them have received a Western education, they inevitably show some qualities in favour of the West. Last, Fanon's advice to all ex-colonized peoples to not follow Europe in continuing to use violence when building their independent countries does not mean that they forget about their past. For the latter can stand as the source of lessons to re-establish their native civilizations. This can be related to the novels' stories and how the different native characters behave after they get their independence especially in *A Bend in the River* and *Waiting for the Barbarians*.

Said's point that Europeans invented the Orient and described it as a place of exotic people and landscapes is useful in answering one of the thesis' questions related to the way native characters and their lands are represented in the novels' stories. In fact, strange landscapes and virgin nature full of "scaring" bush constitute the type of

settings that almost all novels present. The idea of horror is also present in many of them like in the form of the white men and the natives' fearing each other in *Waiting for the Barbarians* and fearing the jungle of A Bend in the River. In addition, Said's point of the irony that the same place that makes Westerners terrified is their source of riches and civilizations is present in all novels. Furthermore, Said's idea about the West's inability to define itself without having to define the "Other" is also compelling. This is because such binary oppositions of defining the self and the other are all over the four stories of the novels. In fact, this is also linked to the idea of the power that language can have in spreading out stereotypes about natives, and which Fanon mentions. In addition to this kind of mental Orientalism, there is also its material side. This is present in all novels, too, when colonial discourses and representations are accompanied with supporting institutions and practices. Last, the Orientalist's belief that he has rescued the Orient's past fields of study and lost languages by bringing them to the modernity resounds father Huisman's of *A Bend in the River*, who spends his entire life gathering the natives' tools and artifacts in a museum. But even when these Westerners restore the Orient, the result is still mere representations about it. This can be traced in the same novel when analyzing the opinion of the native African characters about father Huisman's museum.

The key figures of postcolonial theory such as Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, and Homi Bhabha all focus on the ideology behind colonialism and its actors. They deal with binary oppositions, violence, the concept of the Other, mimicry, hegemony, ambivalence and other such terms related to the colonial ideology and discourse. Land, however, does not seem to take the lion's share of their analyses. Yet, still, it is not

totally overlooked. For colonialism is itself defined as the act of occupying a foreign territory. All these writers do refer to the definitions of both colonialism and imperialism and clarify what they mean by those two words in their writings. In his *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), for instance, Edward Said states that his use of the term “imperialism” is in the sense of: “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; “colonialism,” which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory” (9). In his usage of both terms, the latter share the territory as a key element in their identifications. In addition, in *Orientalism*, Said defines Orientalism as: “a field of study based on a geographical, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic unit called the Orient” (51). Elsewhere, he defines it as: “a school of interpretation whose material happens to be the Orient, its civilizations, peoples, and localities” (204). Hence, Said recognizes the importance of the geographical side of the Orient in the colonial discourse.

Commenting on O. Mannoni’s stand that colonial exploitation is different from other forms of exploitation, Fanon explains that all the forms of exploitation are exactly the same and the reason for him is that all of such injustices are applied against the same “object”: man (65). Fanon does not seem to consider the exploitation of the people’s land as one of the forms he is discussing. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, though, he finally gives “place” some “place” in his writings. He makes an interesting comparison between the apparently different towns of the colonizer and those of the natives. The former’s place of living is clean, well-equipped and taken care of:

The settlers' town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about. The settler's feet are never

visible, except perhaps in the sea; but there you're never close enough to see them. His feet are protected by strong shoes although the streets of his town are clean and even, with no holes or stones. The settler's town is a well-fed town, an easygoing town; its belly is always full of good things. The settlers' town is a town of white people, of foreigners. (39)

One the contrary of the colonizer's place of residence, the natives' reflects poverty in its poor appearance, and oits lack of comfort and space:

The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs. (39)

Indeed, the ugliness of the place corresponds to the status that the white man gives to its inhabitants. For the latter are not considered as human but as animals since the terms that: "the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms<sup>13</sup>" (42). This ugly state of the colonized town makes the difference with that of the colonizer a very obvious and outstanding fact. The easiness of life in the white man's town pushes the colonized to become envious and always looking for all the colonizer's possessions: "to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible" (39). The settler understands the colonized man's desire for their place and "he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, "They want to take our place." It is true, for there is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place" (39).

Said delves into tracing the idea of place and how it was defined and referred to in the Orientalists texts. Through different examples that he presents over a good

---

<sup>13</sup> The fact that natives are represented through zoological terms can be analyzed by using the concepts of the theory of Zoocriticism. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin dedicate Part II of their *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (2010) to discuss issues related to zoocriticism and the postcolonial.

number of pages, he finds out that there is a clear distinction between two continents: Europe and Asia in some of those works where: “Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant.” In these same works, too, Asia is always a place of danger (*Orientalism* 58). Moreover, the Orient is seen as a place that represents either “an Old World to which one returned, as to Eden or Paradise,” or “a wholly new place to which one came as Columbus came to America, in order to set up a New World (although, ironically, Columbus himself thought that he discovered a new part of the Old World)” (59). It is certain though, Said pursues, that neither of these Orients (old or new) was exactly as described. It is only the Europeans’ doubts, “their tempting suggestiveness, their capacity for entertaining and confusing the mind” (59) that make them write about the Orient in such ways. Thereafter, Said proves how some Orientalists not only defined the Orient but modified it (geographically, linguistically, and culturally) in order to protect themselves from its unsettling influences (167).

Said argues that when we agree that men are responsible for making all things in history, including history itself, then we will appreciate and understand the possibility that many objects or places or times are assigned roles and given meanings that will later be objectively validated. For this, Said provides the example of the people who make geographical distinctions setting up boundaries between some few acres of land that they inhabit and its immediate surroundings and the territory beyond, to call the latter “the land of the barbarians.” Thus, the familiar space becomes in our minds “ours” and the unfamiliar one “theirs.” And such distinctions, Said argues, can entirely be arbitrary since such differentiation does not require that the barbarians



acknowledge it. This way, both “their territory” and “their mentality” become necessarily different from “ours.” From such analysis, Said believes that:

The geographic boundaries accompany the social, ethnic, and cultural ones in expected ways. Yet often the sense in which someone feels himself to be not-foreign is based on a very unrigorous idea of what is "out there," beyond one's own territory. All kinds of suppositions, associations, and fictions appear to crowd the un-familiar space outside one's own. (*Orientalism* 55)

He, thus, recognizes the relationship between place and all other aspects of life. This is interesting because this is what ecocritics believe in, as well.

After presenting the close relationship between land and its inhabitants and the act of delimiting arbitrarily what is to be called “our” land and “their” land as a human universal attitude towards space, Said puts more focus on the expansion of colonialism over different geographies of the world. He refers to the political and intellectual circumstances that coincided in a way in France that helped make geography and geographical speculation an attractive national pastime (*Orientalism* 218). All led to what became known as the geographical movement<sup>14</sup>. As a consequence, there was a widespread renewed demand for territorial acquisition with the support of the government that worked on diffusing “the virtues (and profits) of geographical exploration and colonial adventure” (219) through the official newspapers of the country. The European taste for voyaging as a sign for intellectual supremacy fed the “view of the Orient as a geographical space to be cultivated, harvested, and guarded” (220) under the process of colonial expansion. Also, in his *Culture and Imperialism*,

---

<sup>14</sup> Among the most remarkable consequences of the War of 1870 in France were a tremendous efflorescence of geographical societies and a powerfully renewed demand for no longer confined to “scientific speculation.” It urged the citizenry not to “forget that our former preponderance was contested from the day we ceased to compete . . . in the conquests of civilization over barbarism.” Guillaume Depping, a leader of what has come to be called the geographical movement, asserted in 1881 that during the 1870 war “it was the schoolmaster who triumphed,” meaning that the real triumphs were those of Prussian scientific geography over French strategic sloppiness (Said, *Orientalism* 218-9).

Said devotes a whole chapter to discuss overlapping territories and intertwined histories entitling one of the chapter's parts as: "Empire, Geography, and Culture." In it, Said discusses the idea that both imperialism and colonialism are supported by interesting ideologies that are related to the differentiation between different places. Such ideologies include notions that certain territories as well as the people who inhabit them "*require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like "inferior" or "subject races," "subordinate peoples," "dependency," "expansion," and "authority"" (9).

Both Edward Said and Frantz Fanon agree that colonialism and imperialism are strongly connected to territories. While the former refers to the implantation of settlements on other territories, the latter is the ruling over distant ones. This is significant in the analysis of the study since its main objective is to examine the relationship between the colonizer, colonized and their lands. Moreover, the depiction of the different territories occupied by different categories of people is highlighted. In fact, Fanon examines the differences between the colonizer's town and that of the natives. His remarks are also helpful in the examination of the novels' characters' places of dwelling. Besides that, Fanon states that the colonized get envious because of the easiness of life in the white man's town. The analysis takes this point into consideration in order to find out if this is the case for all native characters of the four novels or not. Said also comments on the differences between larger territories; those of continents, which are created by the Orientalist discourses. This idea is also related to the way different continents are presented in the novels of the thesis. Furthermore,

Said draws the attention to the fact that places can have their own influences on people. This is why, he believes, Orientalists did not only define the Orient but also modified it geographically, linguistically, and culturally in order to protect themselves from its influences that may unsettle them. Such modifications are also present in almost all the settings of the novels. Orientalists used binary oppositions in defining themselves and the others. In fact, Said notes that even the dichotomy of “our” land and “their” land is defined through a set of binary oppositions, as well. As a result, places are given different meanings to them. This is actually one of the main concerns of this study, which is to look for any meaning(s) attributed to places and the possible distinctions made between one group of characters’ country and that of the others. Lastly, Said as if refers to the dependency complex that Fanon discussed earlier (without mentioning the exact phrase) from the perspective related to territories. This is important, too, in the analysis of the four stories when looking for such claims of whether certain territories are inherently in need of domination or not.

### **II.1.2. Land through the Lens of Ecocriticism**

Geography, place, and the environment do not seem to be totally neglected through postcolonial eyes. However, the theory of ecocriticism provides them with closer examination and more focus. For it is the field of study that analyses the relationship between people and the environment they inhabit. In the introduction of one of the foundational books written on the theory, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (1996), Cheryll Glotfelty criticizes the absence of the issues that the earth has been facing from any major literary publication. She writes that if one checked the contemporary literary publications, they would “quickly

discern that race, class, and gender were the hot topics of the late twentieth century, but [they] would never suspect that the earth's life support systems were under stress. Indeed, [one] might never know that there was an earth at all" (xvi). Hence comes the necessity to gather forces with the literary and cultural scholars who have separately been raising awareness about the earth we, humans and other creatures, inhabit from the seventies. Efforts were matched together and interested scholars started to meet from the mid-eighties until when environmental literary studies gained an official status by 1993 (xviii).

As in any other literary field, scholars and critics disagree on the name that should be given to this field of study, and which has nature and the environment as its focal point, although what is commonly agreed upon is ecocriticism. This latter is defined, by Cheryll Glotfelty as follows:

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies. (xviii)

By physical environment, ecocritics refer to the whole ecosphere as opposed to the narrow world that other theories refer to when analyzing literary and non-literary works. Then, Cheryll Glotfelty concludes by wishing more for ecocriticism as an international, multicultural and interdisciplinary field just as the other fields in the humanities are working more on "considering nature not just as the stage upon which the human history is acted out, but as an actor in the drama" (xxi).

Because place is one of the main focal points of ecocritical studies, the questions that are asked when analyzing literary books are related to the relationship of nature and the environment to the work, its writer and the elements of the plot.

Questions can be about how nature is represented in such works, the role that the physical setting plays in the plot of novels for instance, the consistency of the values expressed in the works with ecological wisdom, if men write about nature differently than women do, how our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it, and what the ways are of such effects and to what effect the environmental crisis is seeping into contemporary literature and popular culture. In addition, ecocriticism concerns itself with questions related to nature writing and the possibility of considering it a genre or not. It also considers if place should become a new critical category in addition to race, class, and gender. Moreover, ecocriticism also traces the change of the concept of wilderness over time, what view of nature informs U.S. Government reports, corporate advertising, and televised nature documentaries, and the possible linking between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art, history, and ethics (Glotfelty xix).

In “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” Lynn Jr. White claims that all life forms modify the places/lands they inhabit and so do human to the non-human nature surrounding them. As a result, ecology was established as a response to the changes that have been happening to nature. He says that the word ecology: “first appeared in the English language in 1873. Today, less than a century later, the impact of our race upon the environment has so increased in force that it has changed in essence” (5). Despite the fact that no one knows yet what to do about it, one way is to rethink the assumptions that underlie modern science and technology from a historical perspective. The result of this rethinking leads White to argue that the West views both man and nature as two separate entities in which “man is master” (8). This belief

comes from anthropocentric Christianity, as White argues, despite the cautionary remark that he makes about the complexity of the religion. However, still, White believes that an alternative Christian view should be presented; one that proclaims equality of all creatures including man.

The previously mentioned articles are, in fact, attempts to analyze the nature/culture dichotomy and to problematize what seems to be true and natural to all humans, especially scholars in the humanities and even those who believe themselves to be environmentalists. All of the writers seek to find out the reasons behind the (mis)beliefs about nature and trace their origins. What also connects them all is the awareness that they are not able to come up with applicable magical solutions to the ecological crisis but all of them provided a starting point of where the solution should begin. All of these writers, then, agree that a reconsideration of our beliefs, as humans, about nature should be modified and changed if need be.

Because nature is considered according to ecocritics as an actor in the drama and not just as the stage upon which the human history is acted out, this thesis uses ecocritical concepts in the analysis of the four novels. Consequently, a detailed overview on the subject is indeed useful in the examination of nature and the environment of the novels. After noting that nature has been modified by man, Lynn Jr. White addresses the issue that the whole ecosystem is affected in dangerous ways. The reason, according to him, is the belief of the Westerner that he is the master over nature which is a separate entity from him. This is significant to this research since it seeks to discover if the characters of the novels act in such a way or not. The idea that Christopher Manes discusses in his article about the silence of nature in Western

culture is important, too, since it helps finding the different ways nature is being treated by the different characters. For some native characters believe that nature is part of them while others, especially the white colonizers, exploit it as if it is there for their sole benefit. Manes' belief that nature started to be exploited in severe ways particularly when Christianity, literacy, and science were introduced to Western culture is relevant to the study of the novels because many European and American characters in *River of Smoke*, for instance, do relate their mastery over all others, human or non-human, to religion. For Manes, even environmental ethics' experts deal with nature from man-is-master point of view. Harold Fromm's belief that man's relationship to nature is not of fear anymore as it has been before can be utilized in understanding the behaviours of the different characters towards nature. Some of them do show some fear towards it and the reasons for such fear should be revealed. Frederick Turner states that societies differ in their definitions of culture and nature. His ideas can stand as tools for the analysis when examining how the dichotomy culture/nature is treated according to different societies of the novels. Turner adds that humans are the lords of creation anyways. This is why they should work for the common good of the beautiful world. Henceforth, some characters of the novels of the study do care about gardening and nature. Turner's ideas may help in understanding their positions towards nature. Alison Byerly's explanations about wilderness are equally very useful since the latter is present in almost all four novels.

The following articles seem to be a little more practical dealing with ecocriticism as a field and what exactly could be done in the literary profession as far as nature and human's relationship to it are concerned. William Howarth begins his

article: "Some Principles of Ecocriticism" with tracing back the etymology of the term "Ecocriticism": "Eco and critic both derived from Greek, oikos and kritis, and in tandem they mean "house judge," which may surprise many lovers of green, outdoor writing, [referring to]:

a person who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action. So the oikos is nature, a place Edward Hoagland calls "our widest home," and the kritos is an arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order, no boots or dishes strewn about to ruin the original décor." (69)

So, in order to help ecocritics "sustain their role as kritos while assessing the literary oikos before them" (71), William Howarth makes use of a number of principles brought from ecology, ethics, language, and criticism to help with both the theory and the method to be used in the analysis. Howarth thinks that these fields are useful in the following ways:

As an interdisciplinary science, ecology describes the relations between nature and culture. The applied philosophy of ethics offers ways to mediate historic social conflicts. Language theory examines how words represent human and nonhuman life. Criticism judges the quality and integrity of works and promotes their dissemination. (71)

Even though this sounds interesting and useful, the article seems only descriptive of how ecocriticism gained wider recognition among other fields. It does not provide us with a lot of clear principles for the ecocritics to use. However, still, the writer's reference to poststructuralism seems indeed helpful for the analytic method to be used when deciphering environmental literary texts. He, lastly, concludes with the friendly convergence between ecocriticism and feminism and gender studies for their mutual interest in the place as a defining social criterion.



In “Beyond Ecology: Self, Place, and the Pathetic Fallacy,” Neil Evernden brings to light the relationship between man and his environment and insists that it exists and that the environment influences man who inhabits it as he modifies it. One of the ideas he proposes can be linked to Alison Byerly’s examination of the objectification of the wilderness. He believes that the relationship is between man and the environment,

not simply in the object viewed, nor in the mind of the viewer. Rather than a subject-object relationship in which the observer parades before the supposedly beautiful view, we have instead a process, an interaction between the viewer and the viewed, and it is in that joint association that the aesthetic experience lies. Instead of a detachment from the environment, we have a subtle diffusion into it. (97)

After questioning the nature of this relationship, he writes that in reality there is a “relation of self to setting. Given this, one who looks on the world as simply as a set of resources to be utilized is not thinking of it as an environment at all” (98). Hence comes the role of the landscape artist which is to give us “an understanding of what a place would look like to us if we ‘belonged’ there, if it were ‘our place.’ The artist is not doing landscape paintings; he is doing landscape portraits, or place portraits” (99). Evernden concludes by emphasizing the artists’ and humanists’ obligation to tackle the issue of nature in their works and do not leave it only to sciences to hijack it.

William Howarth’s reference to the use of the principles of ecology, ethics, language, and criticism is meaningful as this study can use them to decipher the nature of the relationship between characters and their environments. Neil Evernden’s argument on the relationship between man and his environment and his claim that such connection does exist and that the changing environment influences man who inhabits it is related to this thesis since one of its main aims is to find out in what way nature and the environment are influential towards their inhabitants. His examination of the

work that the landscape artist does is significant in *River of Smoke*, for example, because in it there are characters who are this kind of artists. William Rueckert's use of the ecological principle of "Everything is connected to everything else" is equally significant in the investigation of the thesis' questions. Actually, this study is based on the questioning of the concepts that constitute the traditional hierarchies of power such as nature and culture, human and animal, self and other, civilized and primitive, and others that Sueellen Campbell discusses in her article. Lastly, the objectification of the environment and its fictionalization, which David Mazel discusses, are the main points of analysis of this thesis.

## **II.2. Interdisciplinarity of the Theories: Ecologizing Postcolonialism and Decolonizing Ecocriticism**

### **II.2.1. Ecologizing Postcolonialism**

"Ecocriticism" as a term was first coined by William Rueckert in his 1978 "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism," referring to the use of the ecological concepts and principles in the analysis of literature (Reprinted in *The Ecocriticism Reader* 105-123). Actually, the interest in the element of the environment is not new. For from the late 1960s and 1970s, the publication of works related to ecotheory and criticism was abundant. Lynn White, JR.'s *The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis* (1967), Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival* (1972), and Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* (1973) can be appropriate examples. However, such works were scattered under various subject headings such as pastoralism, science and literature, landscape in literature, human ecology, regionalism, American studies, and so on (Glotfelty and Fromm xvii). That is why scholars started to gather their forces in order to establish ecocriticism as a theory by

giving attention to nature writings. Consequently, the 1980s came to witness the establishment of the Western Literature Association. Through it, interested theoreticians and scholars met several times to discuss the issue of nature and the environment as related to literature. The fruit of these gatherings was the establishment of the Association for the Studies of Literature and the Environment (ASLE) in the USA in 1992 that gave Ecocriticism an official status in 1990. This was followed by the publication of two important works in 1996: *The Ecocriticism Reader*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and Lawrence Buell's *The Environmental Imagination*. Ecocriticism, then, became an established literary theory that opened the door for new branches to appear and affiliated organizations to gather in the late 1990s.

The widespread number of environmental issues and nature awareness topics could not go unnoticed. For the late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed the publication of works that spotlight the ecological element in postcolonial studies, for example. Two appropriate examples can be Donna Haraway's *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (1989) and Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992). Indeed, such works have helped bring together both postcolonial criticism and ecocriticism.

During the late 1990s, some scholars started to call for a convergence between postcolonial and ecocritical studies as a result of the apparent rapprochement. In fact, this coupling is empowered by some similarities that the two fields share. They both agree on the existence of human ambivalences and environmental malfeasances. Both of them also share a common conviction that the injustices done on marginalized

people go concurrently with that of their lands and their riches. Each of them, thus, seeks social and environmental justice. Nevertheless, the combination of the two fields cannot be executed so easily because of their discrepancies that may conflict with one another. The differences, as Megan Ann Casey asserts, are at the level of “ecocritics’ and postcolonial critics’ differing approaches to scientific knowledge, to the figure of the human, and to the notion of materiality” (16).

Postcolonial critics’ underscoring the environmental issues actually stems from their realization that any alteration at the level of the environment is strongly connected to the undertakings of the European conquest and the ideologies of imperialism and racism in general. For during colonization, the environmental impact of Western attitudes to the colonized’s world was backed up by the transport of animals, plants and peoples throughout the European empires, be it intentional or accidental. This transport caused a change of the colonized’s ecosystem. Here comes the need of postcolonial ecocritical studies to examine the relationships between nature and culture, animal and human in a postcolonial context, as Tiffin and Huggan assert in their 2010 *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* (6). Moreover, the convergence of the two theories is needed, more than any time, in order to address the complexity of the contemporary life in view of the current phenomena the world is witnessing such as neocolonialism and what is called ‘biopiracy,’ that refers to the profit made through the use of indigenous knowledge about nature without obtaining their permission or acknowledgment. Moreover, transports of people, either obliged or not, lead

postcolonial writers and theorist to discuss notions of ‘in-between-ness,’ ‘hybridity,’ and ‘diaspora’<sup>15</sup>.

The action of the alliance has shed light on the ecological dimensions of earlier literary analyses. In addition, Casey argues that the coupling has helped “decolonize ecocritical thought and [...] ecologize postcolonial criticism” (17). Ecologizing postcolonial studies refers to the close attention paid to non-human nature and the role it plays with the human. As for decolonizing ecocriticism, it involves admitting the power as well as the dualisms of the discourses on nature (18). Furthermore, what the assemblage between postcolonial and ecocritical studies brings to light, chiefly, is the need for a serious analysis of the complex changing relationship between colonizer/colonized people, animals and the environment (Tiffin and Huggan 12). Anthony Vital asserts in his 2008 article “Toward an African Ecocriticism,” that the task of postcolonial criticism is to explore “how different cultural understandings of society and nature [understandings obviously related to colonialism] have been deployed in specific historical moments by writers in the making of their art” (90)<sup>16</sup>. He also emphasizes the importance of examining how language both shapes and reveals the interactions that occur between people and nature (90). According to Tiffin and Huggan, another important task is to question and also provide feasible alternatives to Western ideologies of development (27). Lastly, one of the other crucial

---

<sup>15</sup> Leela Gandhi asserts that even though ‘diaspora’ refers to the specific traumas of human displacement because of indentured labour or slavery, postcolonialism generally focuses more on the idea of cultural dislocation that the term bears (131). So, diaspora refers to both physical and cultural dislocations. When postcolonialism focuses on the cultural side of it, the convergence between it and ecocriticism should focus on its physical aspect.

<sup>16</sup> Mary Louis Pratt, for instance, wrote a whole book: “Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation” that analyzes different travel writings aiming to highlight: “the tremendous historical force [that] has been wielded by the European ideologies of territory and global possessiveness” (xii)

tasks of postcolonial ecocriticism is to challenge persistent imperialist methods of social and environmental domination (2).

Ecological imperialism is a term that was first coined by Alfred W. Crosby in his attempt to describe the colonizer's physical transformation of the colonized's environments<sup>17</sup>. Regarding this view, the colonial experience has not only altered the cultural, political and social systems of the natives, but devastated and exploited their ecologies as well (qtd. in Ashcroft et al. 76). Pratt, for instance, analyzes the relations that connect travel writings and the processes of the European economic expansion (112). In fact, the forms of ecological imperialism are roughly diverse. The colonizer as a "superior" human-being has always regarded the colonized as an "other." The colonized is regarded as a part of nature, a fact that has granted the colonizer the right to treat this "other" like an animal in the process of othering all that is non-human. This is what Val Plumwood explains in the introduction of her *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2002) through referring to the concept of human's "reason centered culture" (5). She goes on arguing that the ecological crisis that humanity is facing nowadays is aggravated because of the way the human treats the non-human (precisely nature and the animal) as an "Other" (4-5). The human, then, gives himself a privilege over all that is non-human. As a consequence; due to such belief, exploiting nature is justified. Plumwood calls this attitude: "hegemonic centrism" (4). She also explains that the exploitation is, automatically, made at the

---

<sup>17</sup> In his *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (1986), Crosby takes as his main objective to explain the reason why European emigrants and their descendants are all over the place (2). One of the main points of the book is, thus, the examination of how the triumph of the European imperialism in other lands is related to not only: "their superiority in arms, organization, and fanaticism", but also probably connected to "a biological, an ecological, component" (7).

level of “animal, and (animalized humans) ‘others’ in the name of a “human- and reason-centered culture that is at least a couple of millennia old” (Plumwood, 1993, 8).

Plumwood explains the concept of dualism along with almost all of its forms and the differences created between the colonizer and the colonized. She, actually, argues that the main reason that drives the colonizer to think dualistically is his denial of his own dependency on the subjugated other (Plumwood, 1993, 41). She further asserts that such dualism is the main cause of appropriating and incorporating the colonized into the culture of the colonizer (42). These dualisms, Plumwood argues, reveal the master’s naturalization of gender, class, race and nature calamities (48). The colonizer, then, makes profit from the other, exploits him, but denies his dependency on him. Plumwood adds a significant pair to the list known in postcolonial studies which is the opposition, according to the colonizer, of culture and nature, and reason and nature. This differentiation actually asserts the strong connection that the colonizer relates between the colonized and nature. A fact that gives him the right to mercilessly and equally exploit both of them.

Another form of ecological imperialism is what is referred to as “environmental racism.” In the introduction of *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin quote the American environmental philosopher, Deane Curtin, who defines this term as: “the connection, in theory and practice, of race and the environment so that the oppression of one is connected to, and supported by, the oppression of the other” (2005:145). Both writers argue that environmental racism is a sociological phenomenon that refers to the environmental discrimination against dominated groups of people at both levels, economically and socially (4). And the majority would agree

that one of the roles of postcolonial scholars is, as Lane asserts, to question and subvert any dominant boundaries in the field for a considerable period of time (113).

The convergence between ecocriticism and postcolonialism is used in this research since both theories agree on the existence of human ambivalences and environmental improprieties. The latter constitute the main concern of this study. Biopiracy, which is one of the concepts that postcolonial ecocritics discuss is present in Ghosh's *River of Smoke*, for instance. In addition, almost all four novels discuss issues related to the different kinds of the transport of people (either obliged or not). As a result, concepts like 'in-between-ness,' and 'hybridity,' are relevant in the analysis of these novels' stories. Anthony Vital's remark on the need for the exploration of the different cultural understandings of colonized societies and nature is related to this study as it investigates such understandings. Moreover, his concern with how language both shapes and reveals the interactions that occur between people and nature is also beneficial. Furthermore, concepts like ecological imperialism that is related to Plumwood's hegemonic centrism and environmental racism are used in the analysis.

### **II.2.2. Decolonizing Ecocriticism**

The second part "Ecocritical Considerations of Fiction and Drama" in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* analyzes, criticizes and problematizes the literary genres of fiction and drama and see them from an ecocritical perspective. It is an attempt from these critics to assert the first law of ecology that "everything is related to everything else," that ecological order reflects and is reflected by literature and artists should deal with it from this perspective. The objective is also to analyze aiming at liberating and uncovering the dualism of the discourses on nature.



In her “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction,” Ursula K. LeGuin observes that human beings did not eat a lot of meat and hence were not obliged to hunt after animals at the beginning of their existence in the temperate and tropical regions because their main food consisted in vegetables. Their pursuit was to:

gather seeds, roots, sprouts, shoots, leaves, nuts, berries, fruits, and grains, adding bugs and mollusks and netting or snaring birds, fish, rats, rabbits, and other tuskless small fry to up the protein. And we didn't even work hard at it-much less hard than peasants slaving in somebody else's field after agriculture was invented, much less hard than paid workers since civilization was invented. (149)

It was only during the Arctic Age, as she observes, that humans transformed into mammoth hunters hunting down the big wild animals not very much for their meat but rather for the story they bring back with them of how they fought back heroically the beasts and knocked them down.

What Le Guin tries to do in this article is to deconstruct and then reconstruct the story of the hero that is all about him but not about women and the others. She thinks that the hero's story is contained in cultural devices and it is the responsibility of ecocriticism to see the other side of the story and present it.

For Joseph W. Meeker in his “The Comic Mode,” life is already just like comedy. For while this latter imitates the actions of men who represent the minority or the ordinary type of people, tragedy imitates the deeds of ‘great’ men. However, to stay alive all creatures including man do and should live with their weaknesses and not try to rise above them as tragedians try to convey the ultimate end humans have to meet. Meeker agrees with Ursula in the fact there is a serious, urgent need of deconstructing the present systems of fiction and drama that lead to humans' downfall but keep those strategies, in this case the comic ones, that promote the idea that men should not die for moralities that are not worthwhile. So, Meeker states that: “The

tragic view of man, for all its flattering optimism, has led to cultural and biological disasters, and it is time to look for alternatives which might encourage better the survival of our own and other species” (158). Meeker means by the alternative the comic view of man instead of the tragic one. He actually backs up this claim by the comparison he puts between comedy and biology stating that:

Productive and stable ecosystems are those which minimize destructive aggression, encourage maximum diversity, and seek to establish equilibrium among their participants-which is essentially what happens in literary comedy. Biological evolution itself shows all the flexibility of comic drama, and little of the monolithic passion peculiar to tragedy. (160)

Thus, both comedy and biology are two systems that encourage accepting necessity over moralities that lead sometimes creatures to accomplish the impossible. This is why Meeker concludes that many problems that man is facing nowadays are caused by his own mistaken choices. So, as he thinks, it is now time to realize that “to evolution and to comedy, nothing is sacred but life itself” (165), and so man should act accordingly. This is because creatures who can survive on this earth are those that “remain alive when circumstances change, not those who are best able to destroy competitors and enemies” (166).

The articles such as those written by Le Guin, Meeker, Kolodny, Sanders, Deitering, Philips, and others all attempt to uncover the ambivalence present in the discourses on nature and culture. This is why their analyses and observations are useful to this study. Le Guin’s idea that man has been constructing a story about him where he is the master over everything else, women, other creatures and the whole ecosphere is relevant in understanding the damages done to nature in the novels’ stories. Joseph W. Meeker points to the necessity that man should be flexible with the changes occurring to nature and not try to destroy it. In addition, Annette Kolodny

states that the feminization of nature has been one of the main reasons that gave man the right to exploit and transform nature to his own benefit. This study is an attempt to see if the novels' characters behave in such ways or not. Moreover, Scott Russell Sanders analyzes how wilderness and nature in general are considered differently according to different writers. Cynthia Deitering is also concerned with writers and to what extent they are conscious of the toxicity and the dangers that have been facing nature and the earth humans and other creatures besides how much they write about them in their works. Lastly, Dana Phillips' question of if nature is necessary or not is relevant to this thesis since it also poses the same question as far as the novels are concerned. Questions asked are about if nature is necessary to both characters and the four writers.

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter summarizes and connects the scopes of study of ecocriticism and postcolonialism highlighting ecocritical considerations of postcolonial theoretical and literary works. The survey and the analysis in the chapter both focus on how and when postcolonial critics underscore the environmental issues connecting the theory to that of ecocriticism. Indeed, different postcolonial and ecocritical writers and theorist are quoted to shed light on the convergence between the two fields and on how both see land, the environment, and the ecosphere as related to colonialism.

The concepts and ideas which are mentioned in the chapter are beneficial in the analysis of the four novels of the thesis. William Howarth refers to the possible use of the principles of ecology, ethics, language, and criticism in studying the relationship between characters and their environments. Since there is a close connection between man and his environment, Neil Evernden claims that the changing environment

influences man who inhabits it. William Rueckert's utilizes the first law of ecology of "Everything is connected to everything else" to prove that the reading, teaching, and writing about literature can help in the biospheric redemption from human intrusions. Sueellen Campbell questions the concepts of the traditional hierarchies of power such as nature and culture, human and animal, self and other, civilized and primitive and others. David Mazel examines the objectification of the environment and its fictionalization by man. Such topics can stand as the theoretical basis of this thesis.

The convergence between ecocriticism and postcolonialism is used in this research since both theories agree on the existence of human ambivalences and environmental delinquencies. Biopiracy, in-between-ness, hybridity and diaspora are relevant in the analysis of the four novels of the study. Postcolonial ecocritical issues related to the different kinds of the transport of people (either obliged or not) are equally significant for the thesis's objectives. In addition, concepts like ecological imperialism that is related to Plumwood's hegemonic centrism and environmental racism are used in the analysis. Anthony Vital notes the need for the exploration of how differently colonized societies culturally understand nature and react to it. He also examines how language both shapes and reveals the interactions that occur between people and nature.

Le Guin, Meeker, Kolodny, Sanders, Deitering and Philips attempt to uncover the ambivalence present in the discourses on nature and culture in their writings. This is why their analyses and observations are useful to this study. Le Guin's believes that man has been constructing a story about him in which he is the master over women, other creatures and the whole ecosphere. Joseph W. Meeker points to the necessity that

man should be flexible with the changes occurring to nature and ready to prevent its destruction. Annette Kolodny states that the feminization of nature has been one of the main reasons that gave man the right to exploit and transform nature to his own benefit. Scott Russell Sanders analyzes how different writers react to both wilderness and nature. Cynthia Deitering is also concerned with writers. Her focal point is to look for the extent to which the writers are conscious of the toxicity and the dangers that have been threatening the earth, humans and the other creatures. Lastly, Dana Phillips questions the necessity of nature to people, writers and all.

## **PART TWO**

### **Characters and Writers:**

### **Attitudes and Representations of Nature**

### ***Introduction***

Part Two is composed of chapter III (Characters and Nature) and chapter IV (Writers and Representations: Colonialism and Nature). This part deals with the literary analysis of V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Michael Anthony's *Bright Road to El Dorado*, and Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke*. The aim is to examine the environment that the characters inhabit (village, town or city) in these four postcolonial novels and the role of the colonizer in determining the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, the people or their land. It also shows how the four novelists write about nature and the environment and what they actually write about in order to show whether they are aware of the significance of depicting nature and the influence it can have on its inhabitant-characters. Chapter III analyzes the relationship between nature and the different kinds of characters: the native (colonized), the hyphenated or non-native native (colonized), and the foreign white man (colonizer). The analysis seeks to answer questions related to the characters' attitudes towards nature, the way they consider it (its significance for them), the manner in which they are influenced by it (their psyche and behaviour), and the relationship between colonizer and colonized as far as the influence of the colonizer on the colonized (people and land) is concerned. Chapter IV looks into the writers' presentation of the relationship between colonizer/colonized, their depiction of nature and the different natural elements (such as sea, desert, climate and others), the "green" language they use, and their representation of different environments inhabited by different kinds of characters in order to explore their awareness of nature's influence on their characters.

**CHAPTER III**  
***CHARACTERS AND NATURE***



### ***Introduction***

This chapter deals with the study of the environment that the characters inhabit (village, town or city) in these four postcolonial novels and the role (if any) of the colonizer in determining the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, the people or their land, in addition to his interference in modifying the colonized environment and lands. The characters are, hence, grouped in three main categories: Natives (Colonized), Non-Native (travelers, immigrants, or Non-native Natives who were born in the country yet originate from another), and Foreigners (Colonizers or foreign businessmen who come from colonizers' countries). In each section, there is an analysis of these characters' reaction towards the human-built environment. Also, the sections investigate how different characters act towards nature and how this latter reacts back to them. Furthermore, there are also descriptions of where each category of characters dwell. Moreover, the comparison between the different dwellings (like village, town, village, and others) is presented. Lastly is the study of any possible influence of the place and its weather on its inhabitants.

### **III.1. Nature in the Eyes of Natives (Colonized)**

#### ***Introduction***

This section investigates first the reaction of the natives towards the buildings of the town built by the European ex-colonizer. This reaction is mostly violent in which the natives destroy any monuments or buildings that are related to the white man. Also, the position of the natives towards their colonized/taken lands is also highlighted whenever possible. Then, it follows up the attitudes of nature towards the natives. Indeed, nature usually stands on their side by sometimes helping the natives in

achieving their goals and other times protecting them from danger coming from the Europeans or from their fellow people who mimic the Europeans. Later, the section provides details about where the native characters of all four novels live in addition to comparing between the different existing places. Lastly, the influence that the geographical areas and their climates may have on the inhabitants is also highlighted.

### **III.1.1. *A Bend in the River's* Native Africans: Town, Village, or the New Domain**

The native African characters of Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* rarely have a voice throughout the story. In an attempt of the reader to understand their reactions to nature and the environment as well as their attitudes towards it, the only available way is to learn about some of their stands through the voice of Salim, the only narrator of the story.

Contemplating the town in the bend of the river where he arrives to, Salim sees a place that is composed of ruins and traces of buildings that are now eaten up by bush (4). Salim wonders about the African rage against everything that the Europeans built. Through him, the reader gets to know how the natives consider the human-built environment that belongs to the white colonizer. Salim finds that the natives have tried to destroy all signs of a once-European presence on their land. The reason behind it is to try to wash off the traces of the European existence on their land. So, they have started with the steamer monument by knocking it down in addition to all the other colonial statues and monuments like pedestals, protective railings, and floodlights. Moreover, the names of all the main streets have been changed even though nobody really used or cared about them before. This is because the wish has only been to wipe off the unwanted past and the memory of the intruder (17). The natives' resort to

violence can be explained through Fanon's ideas. Indeed, they do not seem to be eager to resort to violence for no reason. They seem rather obliged to use violence in order to wipe off the negative memories of the colonial intruder. This is apparently for them one of the important ways to build up a new country of their own. Also in addition to the fact that they are obliged for destruction, the natives seem to have learned violence from another party. For according to Fanon, the natives have inherited this violence from the colonizers who had used it to destroy their life in all of its forms: social, political, geographical, intellectual and cultural.

Salim also remarks that there has been no attempt to tidy up everything again as the ruins are left untouched. This is ironic because the Africans' attempt to erase the memory of the European from their land is not fully accomplished and the ruins will always stay there as reminders that the Europeans were there before. However considering a different perspective, one might guess that some Africans may think that the existence of the ruins is necessary for them to remember they were able to chase intruders from their country and destroy all that is related to them. Also, the ruins are signs that make them recall the past, which needs not be forgotten as Fanon asserts. Nevertheless, the wish to destroy everything without paying attention to consequences is what troubles Salim and sees it as "unnerving" (17). Indeed even though that later Salim shows his understanding of the reason that makes Africans destroy all that is related to the exploiter of their country, he seems not to understand the intensity of the Africans' rage. He even adds that:

But more unnerving than anything else was the ruined suburb near the rapids. Valuable real estate for a while, and now bush again, common ground, according to African practice. The houses had been set alight one by one. They had been stripped--before or afterwards--only of those things that the local people needed: sheets of tin, lengths of pipe, bathtubs and sinks and lavatory bowls (impermeable vessels, useful

for soaking cassava in). The big lawns and gardens had returned to bush; the streets had disappeared; vines and creepers had grown over broken, bleached walls of concrete or hollow clay brick. Here and there in the bush could still be seen the concrete shells of what had been restaurants (Saccone and Speed wines) and nightclubs. One nightclub had been called "Napoli"; the now meaningless name, painted on the concrete wall, was almost bleached away. (17)

Thus, Salim finds it bewildering that what was once a valuable estate is now mere bush. He actually thinks that it is a real loss. However, Salim does not seem to recognize that this may be a real loss only from his point of view. He declares it clearly above that the natives leave only what they are in need of. Keeping the bathtubs, the sinks and the lavatory bowls, for instance, does not mean that the natives will use them in the same way the Europeans do. Salim asserts that they are used to soak in cassava in these tools. So, the fact that the natives get rid of everything else that is useless to them should not be seen as "a real loss" simply because for them it is not so. Moreover, the Europeans' buildings that Salim thinks are positive to the place are not actually so even to the native land. This is because the bleached walls of concrete and clay bricks that changed the virgin appearance of nature are now destroyed for vines and creepers to replace them. And this is what the natives are mostly in need of.

After this reflection, Salim should then find the answer to his bewilderment. For the Africans do not seem to care about the consequences of destroying the useless European settlements. In fact, the houses are emptied from the things which they are not in need of. Salim should not oblige them to see the life of the modernized city as the only appropriate "civilized" way to live. Their native ways satisfy them enough but Salim does not seem to fully understand this reality. This is despite the fact that he acknowledges at the beginning of his coming to the town that the natives' life in the

village is more satisfying than that in the ruined town. If the town were in the previous situation just like Europeans had left it, things would be possibly better for Salim.

Moreover, the natives get rid of the park that has been once by the river's side to turn it again in to a fishing village as it had existed before. This is actually another clear example which proves that the natives do not destroy without caring for the consequences. Their destruction has a purpose that is beneficial to them. They do not need the park but, rather, the fishing area, which is more useful to them:

Once that spot had been a little park, with amenities; but all that remained of the park was a stretch of concrete river wall and a wide cleared area, muddy in rain. Fishermen's nets hung on great stripped tree trunks buried among the rocks at the edge of the river (rocks like those that, in the river, created the rapids). At one end of the cleared area were thatched huts; the place had become a fishing village *again*. (28; my emphasis)

The natives seem to prefer the virgin nature without the superficial additions of humans. The presence of the concrete wall is a sign of the Europeans' interference that is not needed. The natives can do without that wall or even the cleared area. The fact that that part of land is cleared, here, means that many trees and plants were destroyed to wipe off the area. Here again, the destruction that the natives resort to can be explained, along with Frantz Fanon's ideas, that it is the same violence the white man has resorted to in his attempt to build a town on the site of the fishing village cutting off by this trees and plants, and consequently causing the driving out of many animals. Such changes at the level of the ecology of the natives' areas constitute what is referred to as ecological imperialism, which refers to the colonizer's physical transformation of the colonized's environments.

Salim praises only the places that have a European touch. After independence, there are some European-like buildings that have been built by non-Africans in the

town. However, even such buildings are getting lost during the fightings between the president's army and the soldiers of the warrior tribe, Salim describes one of the nightclubs as follows:

It had been started by a refugee from the Portuguese territory to the south (a man avoiding conscription), and it was beautifully sited, on a cliff overlooking the river. It was a place to which we had just begun to get accustomed. The trees were hung with small coloured bulbs and we sat out at metal tables and drank light Portuguese white wine and looked at the gorge and the floodlit dam; it was like luxury to us, and made us feel stylish. That place had been captured by the rebels and pillaged. The main building was basic and very ordinary—walls of concrete blocks around an unroofed dance floor with a covered bar at one side. (49)

Here again, the nice place where Salim and others like him feel “stylish” is destroyed by the rebels. The latter are very furious against the same things that their fathers and grandfathers were furious against just after the independence. Salim notes that the rebels' rage: “was like a rage against metal, machinery, wires, everything that was not of the forest and Africa” (49). The environment, again, holds some symbolism to men to which they react. Here, Salim seems to understand what provokes the rebels' rage. It is their refusal of anything that does not belong to the forest and to the Africa they have always known. He also conveys other signs of this same rage in other places. One example of such signs is when the rebels defaced the plaque that had been put to mark down the fact that the United Nations agency was in charge of repairing the power station and the causeway at the top of the dam. Moreover, the old European cast-iron lamps that decorated the beginning of the causeway, which Salim sees as a “pretty idea,” was also battered and its letters filed away (49).

Nature helps the natives to achieve their goal of erasing the European presence in their land. For the “[s]un and rain and bush had made the site look old, like the site of a dead civilization” (17). They do not want anything that links them to the

Europeans' civilization and nature has helped the destroyed monuments and buildings to look like belonging to the old past. Furthermore, most of the natives do not reside in this ruined town. They actually have their own villages to live in and travel to the town just for business or education. Zabeth is one of those natives who travel to the town for business but live in their own villages which are unknown to Salim and the other non-natives. Another main privilege the natives get from nature is the role it plays in protecting them. Salim describes Zabeth's fishing village as: "the true, safe world, protected from other men by forest and clogged-up waterways." Thus, nature here protects the village and its inhabitants by hiding it with its trees and waterways. Moreover, Salim notes, the natives' village is also protected in other ways which are related to the fact that every African is serene knowing that he is watched "from above" by their ancestors who preserve their land creating a "part of the presence of the forest" for them. Hence despite the dangerous channels Zabeth and the others take to go back to their village, and which Salim and people like him cannot imagine to take, they insist to continue living in it because it is a safe place for them. This is a fact that Salim himself recognizes: "In the deepest forest was the greatest security. That was the security that Zabeth left behind, to get her precious cargo; that was the security to which she returned (7). Another instance mentioned in the novel that reveals the belief of the Africans about nature is when Metty, Salim's servant, recounts to him about the confrontations between the army's soldiers and the African rebels. Metty recounts to him what has happened with the soldiers. Arriving at a bridge where they were running back, "their guns began to bend." This, Salim explains, refers to the fact that the natives believe: "that bullets couldn't kill them, that all the spirits of the forest

and the river were on their side” (42). Here, again, nature embedded in the spirits of the forest is on the side of Africans and acts as a protector to them.

Salim expresses his reactions towards Zabeth, the native female merchant who deals with him. He also provides readers with his opinion on the journeys she makes to reach the town downriver. He remarks that the journey Zabeth makes is quite dangerous because of the coupling and the uncoupling of the dugouts and the barge. Another reason of the dangerous journey is that Zabeth and her women need to come after the steamer leaves the town at four in the afternoon. This means that they have to come in the deep night when the lights are all off to make sure the barge and the steamer are not there. This is why Zabeth prefers to pole and push their dugouts “below the overhanging trees” (7) at night taking with the other women secret channels to their village to hide off the entrance to their village. Salim, then, compares what these native women do to what he does. He admits that he has never liked going home at night because he never feels safe in doing so. This is because he cannot see much at night in the darkness of the river and the forest even in moonlit nights. In addition to his inability to see in the dark the river and the forest, it is somehow frightening to do so because one hears himself as if he were another person when making any kind of noise. Salim affirms that: “[t]he river and the forest were like presences, and much more powerful than you. You felt unprotected, an intruder” (7). Therefore, Salim as an intruder is not comfortable travelling upriver at night while Zabeth and her women do so in an easy way because they are natives to the place. Indeed, the only time when Salim feels fairly comfortable is daytime. He declares that



in the daylight, despite the fact that the colours can be “very pale and ghostly”, he can imagine the town being “rebuilt and spreading”. He can also foresee:

the forests being uprooted, the roads being laid across creeks and swamps. [...] In daylight, though, you could believe in that vision of the future. You could imagine the land being made ordinary, fit for men like yourself, as small parts of it had been made ordinary for a short while before independence--the very parts that were now in ruins. But at night, if you were on the river, it was another thing. You felt the land taking you back to something that was familiar, something you had known at some time but had forgotten or ignored, but which was always there. You felt the land taking you back to what was there a hundred years ago, to what had been there always.  
(7)

Salim is unable to see things otherwise, like the natives see them for instance. He believes that the future lies in comfort only if people change the general appearance of the land. Through what he remarks above, Salim acknowledges power and meaning to both land and river. These elements do not only constitute the setting where people live but they are “presences” that tell of the past and of how the country looked like. It bears the history of the country standing as a reminder to Salim and all those residing in the area.

The attempts at creating a modern Africa by the native African president (the Big Man) are made through the building of the New Domain. The latter is a separate compound at the outskirts of the town. People talk about what it has inside of furnished houses, a great new model farm and agricultural college, a conference hall and holiday houses for loyal citizens. Indeed, Salim tells us that at first people has not understood the reason for the building of the Domain. Later, though, they understand that the president has been trying to astonish the rest of the world with this miracle of a building in the middle of the bush. According to Salim’s words, the president: “was creating a miracle that would astound the rest of the world. He was by-passing real Africa, the difficult Africa of bush and villages, and creating something that would

match anything that existed in other countries” (62). This is clear in the different photographs of this State Domain and of others like it in other parts of the country that are spread out. Also, this image of New Africa is publicized in the magazines about Africa that are published in Europe but supported by governments like the one the Big Man presides over. Here, again, the proof of civilization and modernity is the building of different infrastructures changing the topography of the country’s land. Salim asserts again that such building: the Domain is sending the message of the new president that: “Africans had become modern men who built in concrete and glass and sat in cushioned chairs covered in imitation velvet. It was like a curious fulfillment of Father Huismans's prophecy about the retreat of African Africa, and the success of the European graft” (62). Thus, the Big Man’s attempt to create this new Africa that resembles the Western cities can be explained as colonial mimicry. This is because of his desire for a “recognizable Other”. But, when the Big Man mimics the West, he only gets a “blurred copy” of the European and/or the American. Something that resembles the West but it is not quite the same.

The Big Man is indeed mimicking the whites in his building of the New Domain. However, he is as unsuccessful as were the Whites before him. For after the fast building of the Domain, its decay comes up very fast too. Indeed, it is very interesting to learn that the factors that help in the decay of this Domain come from nature. Because of the sun and rain,

The farm didn't materialize. The Chinese or the Taiwanese didn't turn up to till the land of the new model African farm; the six tractors that some foreign government had given remained in a neat line in the open and rusted, and the grass grew high about them. The big swimming pool near the building that was said to be a conference hall developed leaks and remained empty, with a wide-meshed rope net at the top. [...] After the first rainy season many of the young

trees that had been planted beside the wide main avenue died, their roots waterlogged and rotted. (62)

The arbitrariness of building the Domain is without a specific objective except showing off to the whole world that Africa is becoming a modern place to live in, and the belief of the president and many others like him that the only way to modernity and civilization is to transform the natural landscape into cement walls and houses. As a result, after finishing the building that now exists without a clear aim, and in order to find a function to it, the State decides to use it as a university hall of residence and a research centre turning the conference hall into a polytechnic for people of the region, and other buildings into dormitories and staff quarters. For this, the capital starts to send lecturers and professors from there as well as from other countries. Indeed, a parallel life develops in the Domain about which those in the town know little.

Commenting on the placement of the Domain, Salim notes that it is built: “on the site of the dead European suburb that to me, when I first came, had suggested the ruins of a civilization that had come and gone” (63).

There are clearly differences between these three different places: Town, village and the New Domain, which all characters seem to recognize. The town is full of decay of the European buildings inhabited by non-native natives; the village is hidden inside the African jungle inhabited by the natives; and the New Domain that constitutes modern buildings inhabited by Americans and Europeans and few African professors and students. In the village, Salim describes the life that Zabeth lives as: “a purely African life” (22). He asserts that for Zabeth, the only thing that is real in life is Africa. But for her son Ferdinand, she wishes something different. Salim comments that there is no contradiction in the way she thinks. This is because her life in the

village is hard so she wishes something better for her son. This better life may be found only inside the modern buildings of the New Domain. This is why, Salim thinks that this better life cannot be found in “the timeless ways of village and river” (22). It can be found only in the town where education is afforded by the foreigners, but not by Zabeth and many Africans of her generation (23). Nevertheless Ferdinand does not feel that he belongs to the town, Salim remarks. Indeed, Ferdinand does not feel any equal belonging to the New Domain either. When the upheavals of some strange-to-the-town African tribes start, Salim describes Ferdinand as someone who is: “almost as much a stranger in the town as [he] was” because Ferdinand, too, gets terrified of what is happening in the town (43). Thence, education is one of the things that make life in the town different from that of the village among other factors. And because of the differences that exist between these two lives, many village practices cannot be transported to the town for instance. When Zabeth brings her son to Salim, Ferdinand makes a half bow to Salim then stops, not finishing the reverence. Salim explains this gesture as Ferdinand’s inability to do something that belongs to the village in the town. Salim comments that it is a traditional reverence that the children of the “*bush*” (23 [my emphasis]) do in order to show their respect older people. But, this cannot be practiced in the town because: “It was a custom that had spread from the forest kingdoms to the east. But it was a custom of the bush. It couldn't transfer to the town” (23). Just because it is a practice of the villagers, Salim and Ferdinand think it should not be done in the town. Therefore, despite the fact that life in the New Domain seems more promising and comfortable, as Salim believes, yet African Ferdinand is not

surprisingly attracted to it. One can deduce that Salim is not again able to understand the natives judging them from his sole point of view.

When Mahesh warns Salim of the local Africans informing him that they are “malin.” Using the French word instead of its English counterpart like “wicked,” “mischievous,” or “bad-minded” because these alternatives do not convey the right meaning he wants him to get. Salim explains the meaning that: “[t]he people here were -malins- the way a dog chasing a lizard was –malin-, or a cat chasing a bird. The people were -malins- because they lived with the knowledge of men as prey” (34). Interestingly, Salim relates this characteristic of the Africans to the place they live in. Africans behave with men just like the other animals that live by their side behave towards each other. Salim also thinks that because these people have very small bodies, they use their hands to wound “as though to make up for their puniness in that immensity of river and forest” (34). This recalls the ideas of many ecocritics who believe that man destroys nature and living creatures in order to prove to themselves that they are able to stand in front of the stronger Mother Earth. When some soldiers come to the bar to destroy it, the native hotel servants become terrified despite the fact that they have been telling each other stories about how boldly their people in the forest have reacted. Now that they become so quickly “abject,” Salim comments: “In one way it was good; in another way it was pitiful. This was how the place worked on you: you never knew what to think or feel. Fear or shame--there seemed to be nothing in between” (46). Here again, Salim acknowledges the influence that the place can have on its inhabitants: Natives or non-natives. This is why he relates one’s reactions

and feelings of fear or shame to the place. It is the place that controls how its inhabitants feel and react towards others.

### **III.1.2. *Waiting for the Barbarians*' Native South Africans: Wilderness or the Walled Town**

Like in Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, Coetzee's native characters rarely speak or have a voice in the telling of the stories that happen on their land. The only means to analyze their stand towards nature and the environment can be done through the lens of the narrator and some of the other foreign characters who report "facts" about the natives. Or the rare times, the native girl expresses some of her ideas. However, still, these reports and instances are very few in the novel.

The dwellings of natives and empire people are two different separate places. Throughout the story, the only information we get about the natives is that they live outside the walled town that was built by the British. Therefore, these natives prefer to live in what the white men call 'wilderness' other than the walled 'protected' city of theirs. This town is occupied by the British and very few native servants who wait on the settlers of the town. Outside this town, there are some natives who go around lakes and rivers to fish. Another type of natives consists of nomads who live in different places, far from the town. When the British Colonel comes to the town for inspection of its situation, he goes along with other soldiers outside the walled town to capture natives. The narrator, who is the magistrate of the town, gets outrageous when the colonel sends him "fishing people" (25). He tells the officer: "You are supposed to help him track down thieves, bandits, invaders of the Empire! Do these people look like a danger to the Empire?" (25). He also asks him if he and the soldiers who were with him did not tell the colonel "the difference between fishermen with nets and wild

nomad horsemen with bows? Did no one tell him they don't even speak the same language?" (26). But, the truth is that none of them even speak the fishing people's language. From this, we get to know the two types of natives that exist in the area: fishermen or nomads. But however different the natives may be (speaking different languages and living in different distant places), the British colonel of the novel considers them all dangerous "others". Thus, the natives are generalized in one box despite their differences and considered one big threat to the empire.

Fishermen or nomads, they are all then the target of the British imperialists. The empire people want to push the natives further from their lands. It is not enough for them to take parts of the native lands by building forts and towns for themselves. Now, they want to push them away from them: "The rumour going about brigade headquarters," he says, "is that there will be a general offensive against the barbarians in the spring to push them back from the frontier into the mountains" (68). Despite the fact that the narrator calls the natives barbarians himself now and again, he defends them by saying that: "The people we call barbarians are nomads, they migrate between the lowlands and the uplands every year, that is their way of life. They will never permit themselves to be bottled up in the mountains" (68). He says this to the newly coming young officer of the Bureau despite his belief that the latter will not like it. He keeps on defending the natives through talking on their behalf after the officer asks him about what the "Barbarians" want: "They want an end to the spread of settlements across their land. They want their land back, finally. They want to be free to move about with their flocks from pasture to pasture as they used to" (69). So, it is a quarrel over the land which both parts claim their own. However, the narrator does confess

that it is the natives' land and the latter want their land back. Also when the Magistrate meets the real nomads, he discovers the apparent truth about them. They are just normal people trying to lead a simple life: "Bodies clothed in wool and the hides of animals and nourished from infancy on meat and milk, foreign to the suave touch of cotton, the virtues of the placid grains and fruits: these are the people being pushed off the plains into the mountains by the spread of Empire" (98). So the natives do not stand as threats to the empire; they are just simple people who try to lead their simple way of life. However, it is important to note here that these natives do also make use of animals for their survival. The main difference between their exploitation and that of the white European is mainly of degree and purpose. The natives kill animals only for their basic needs not like the Europeans who hunt big numbers of animals for the sake of mere pleasure. This can be analyzed according to Fanon's argument about the fact that all kinds of racism are similar equal in their negative influence on the people exercised against them. In this situation, the white colonizers do not only show signs of colonial racism against the natives by considering them "barbarians" and "threats" to the empire as a whole, but they also exercise an environmental kind of racism towards the native flora by exploiting and stealing the natives' lands and the native fauna by purposelessly hunting their animals. Both kinds of racism are, therefore, both equally intimidating to the natives.

One of the captives that the Colonel sends is a native girl that the Magistrate keeps at his own service in his house, particularly for his bedroom. At the end of the story, he decides to send her to her native land and people. During the journey, the travelers (the girl, the Magistrate and the other two officers that accompany him) get



affected by the hostile environment. Because the girl is accustomed to the weather and water of her native land, she does not fall sick. The narrator and his white companions, however, do: “After a day of salty tea all of us except the girl begin to suffer from diarrhea” (81). This resounds Crosby’s ideas about ecological imperialism. He affirms that on the contrary of what Westerners have believed that their problems with the lands they colonize to be: “military, logistical, and diplomatic, and possibly theological” (63), their main “and immediate difficulties usually have been medical” (64). The narrator, then, continues by describing how tired he gets of waking in the cold weather. He does not have any appetite anymore and his bones ache (82).

However, the girl again, seems not to be influenced at all by the long and tiring marches in the cold weather. “The girl does not complain. She eats well, she does not get sick, she sleeps soundly all night clenched in a ball in weather so cold I would hug a dog for comfort” (82). It is also significant to point out that the girl seems to be in comfort on the natives’ land far from the walled town of the white men. The narrator notices her comfort while travelling with them, contrary to their struggle and tiredness, saying that “...he is riding asleep, [but] her face as peaceful as a baby’s” (82). Thus, this same girl, who has not been well inside the “warmth” of a house in a “protected” walled town, is safe and comfortable out there in nature. The opposite is true for the narrator. He has been mostly comfortable in his own house but not so much so outside it, distant from the walled town.

The Magistrate is mostly kind with the girl. So, he helps her get back to her family. But, it is only when they are outdoors that he is brave enough to ask her to stay with him: ““Tell them what you like. Only, now that I have brought you back, as far as

I can, I wish to ask you very clearly to return to the town with me. Of your own choice." I grip her arm. "Do you understand me? That is what I want"" (97). However, the girl's answer comes somehow surprising. Readers do not get to know anything that goes inside the girl's mind. The Magistrate is the only source of information as far as his relationship is concerned with the girl. So, one does not really learn about her feelings towards the Magistrate who seems to do only good to her. This is why learning about the way the Magistrate treats her so nicely makes people think that any girl would generally want to stay with that good man. Yet, still, her answer is a firm "no": "She shakes her head." No. I do not want to go back to *that place*"" [my emphasis] (97). The girl does not, actually, refuse to go back with the Magistrate because of him but she says the place is the reason of her refusal. She does not feel comfortable, happy or safe in the walled imperial town. To her, nature without walls is way safer and preferable to her. One of the few times that we hear her utter words is when she starts crying and crying in front of the Magistrate in his bedroom earlier before their journey back to her own people. She tells him once that:

I am terrified to think what is going to become of us. I try to hope for the best and live from day to day. But sometimes all of a sudden I find myself imagining what might happen and I am paralyzed with fear. I don't know what to do any more. I can only think of the children. What is going to become of the children?" She sits up in the bed. "What is going to become of the children?" she demands vehemently.  
 "They won't harm the children," I tell her. "They won't harm anyone." (203)

He only tries to comfort her but the truth is that the British soldiers have already hurt the children and all other natives including the girl. They do not care of young or old, man or woman. Their sole goal is to push the natives further from their town and eliminate any possible danger that may come from them. As a result, the girl decides

to go back to her people and land without any hesitation. Because even though the town is protected by walls, she is still, like her people, not safe there.

Nature is thus the only safe resort for these natives. In addition to this, it also assists them against their enemy. When the British start their raids against the native nomads, the latter cannot confront them, because of all the developed weapons the British have. Hence, they use their good knowledge of their native land and weather to win over the raiding British. One of the very few soldiers who make it after they attack the natives reports what has happened to them to the Magistrate saying that:

"We froze in the mountains! We starved in the desert! Why did no one tell us it would be like that? We were not beaten—they led us out into the desert and then they— vanished!"

"They the barbarians! They lured us on and on, we— could never catch them. They picked off the stragglers, they cut our horses loose in the night, they would not stand up to us!" (196)

Thus, with no much effort and with so much intelligence the natives win over the British by using nature. In this instance, it is the “desert” that has won over the British helping the natives to get rid of their enemies. So, they just drive them to their inner lands which are unknown to the British foreigners leaving it for the desert and the cold to do the rest.

### **III.1.3. *Bright Road to El Dorado*'s Natives: Sea or Land**

In *Bright Road to El Dorado*, except for Arama -the cacique of the town of Chacomaray- and his son, Ayun, the native characters do not exist in the story. Indeed, we only hear about them in general but the main characters are these two natives and some European characters (British and Spanish) who communicate among each other.

The relationship between the natives and their land can be learned about through some of the occurrences that happen between the cacique and the Spanish

and/or the British characters. When the Spanish Don Ricardo goes to the hut of Arama and calls him: “Cacique”, the latter falls silent for a moment thinking that how or why this Spaniard has come into his hut so brashly and unannounced. He thinks: “These sea-people are very foolish. I strain to hold back my warriors and yet these people act so roughly. And they are only a few!” (2). The reason why the natives get angry every time a Spaniard comes to where they live is that, in addition to the fact that they have taken many parts of their land, they still come to their faraway huts to disturb them. Arama imagines that consequently the warriors of his tribe should be now waiting tensely for any sign of violence. He can see the bows and arrows and poisoned darts (2). This reflects the kind of relationship that exists between the natives and their Spanish invaders. It is not friendly at all and each party does not like the other as it mistrusts it. The reaction or non-reaction of the cacique angers General Don Ricardo Alvarez. Thus, he wants to draw his sword, but he remembers that Don Antonio de Berrio has prevented him from doing so. This is because: “he knew that if he killed a cacique the whole land would rise up against the Spaniards and there would be no expedition to El Dorado- even if they escaped with their lives” (2). Killing the cacique does not seem to bother Spanish Don Ricardo at all. For a mere gesture like this one, he thinks of killing him out of punishment. But because the only concern of Don Ricardo is El Dorado and nothing else, he is unable to do so. So, he tells Arama with a broken accent of the latter’s native language about the approaching of the ships on the shore. The cacique is surprised and he repeats what Don Ricardo says in Spanish asking: “ships?” (2). Hence, Don Ricardo starts off calling the cacique a traitor (3) that already knows of the coming of the ships which are English despite the fact that the

cacique does not say anything that shows his knowledge of the coming of the ships. He just repeats the word in surprise. The Spaniard calls the cacique again with a pejorative name telling him: “infidel” (3). These adjectives that the Spanish General uses prove the nature of the relationship between his people and that of the natives, which is of complete mistrust. This has kept Arama silent for a moment to inform Don Ricardo that: “I help everyone who comes to this province. To Chacomaray. The strangers come and I help.” (3). This clearly shows the hospitality of the natives as peaceful people who do not want to engage in wars and conflicts with whosoever. The cacique’s words prove Fanon’s theory that the native peoples, whoever they are, welcome the colonizer because of their hospitality towards foreigners but not because of an inherent dependency complex they may have. But because of what Arama says, the Spaniard Don Ricardo gets even angrier raising a bit his sword to frighten the cacique. This is the utmost point that he can reach for he keeps on thinking of the expedition to the “golden land” of El Dorado. He thinks that he and the other Spanish should keep the goodwill of this tribe for two main reasons. The first one is for the natives to guide them in finding El Dorado. The second one is for the natives to carry the heavy burden of gold after they return from El Dorado. He, thus, thinks: “We cannot anger these people-we need them still. We are too few and they are too many. We cannot trust them.” (3). Even though he cannot trust the natives, he intends to exploit them in every possible way. Thus, the racist look of the Spanish against the natives makes the former think of the latter in only exploitive ways. The General then threatens the chief of the native tribe by destroying their village if they allow the English to land. Here again is an example that proves that it is the white European who

first uses violence and teaches it, in a way, to the natives. But, the cacique insists that: “Like yourself, the sea-people come. I do not know from where. I do not send for them. When they come I help them” (5). The natives are again peaceful people who help whom they call: the sea-people (the Europeans who come to them from the sea side) even though they come and occupy their lands building settlements and forts.

Ayun, the son of the Cacique Arama, has a different opinion from his father’s. The conversation between the father and the son: Arama and Ayun about the sea-people is telling of their attitudes and beliefs:

Arama said sadly, ‘I always help the sea-people to live.’  
 ‘Yes, and they always help us to die.’ Ayun felt his blood growing warm. ‘And they fight our brothers in the north. And often they destroy their villages. They preserve Chacomaray, yes, because we supply the food and the water.’ (23)

Ayun blames his father for helping the sea-people who in return seek only their benefits. The only reason for not destroying their village, Chacomaray, is because its inhabitants supply food and water for them. This is why, Ayun’s plan is to get rid of the Spanish on their island by making the English kill them. Ayun, then, thinks of using the Europeans’ violence against each other. However, his father draws his attention to the next step of when the Spanish are killed. The Englishmen may want to destroy the Arawaks, too. Ayun agrees because he thinks that all the sea-people are blood-thirsty. This cannot happen because if it does, it means that many Arawaks will die. Ayun poses the question of: for what will they die? He prefers instead that the sea-people destroy each other rather than destroying their lands and villages (24). Here, we are given the natives’ side. We get to learn their opinions about the foreign invaders. This is interesting because it is the natives who consider Europeans as violent and blood-thirsty and not the contrary.

Ayun, whom Don Ricardo thinks to be Spanish and loyal, is in fact hateful of them. More than one time, he expresses his hatred towards all the sea-people even though he feels warmth towards Robert Dudley. Nevertheless, he repeats to his father that: “The sea-people are ruthless - *all* of them!” One of the reasons that make him feel this way is when the English pirates kidnapped him many moons ago. All what he remembers are the marks of whippings on his body (24). Another reason that makes Ayun hate all the sea-people is that they are only seeking gold; they think they own their land and want to drive them out of it. Ayun puts clearly again this time to his father that: “This land is ours and was always here, yet the Spaniard says: ‘Colón *discovered* it for Spain.’ It is as if Colón had made it, instead of meeting here” (25). Here again, one gets to learn the natives’ point of view vis-à-vis the discovery of the “New World”. For the fourth time in his short conversation with his father, Ayun says again overtly that he hates “these people from the sunrise”, and that they have to destroy them. And the reason of hatred now is the fact that they mean no good to them. For whenever they come, it is for the sake of El Dorado to take the gold from it, and “they want to rule over us” (25). Arama is shocked to hear his boy expressing all of this hatred but he is more surprised to learn about his dream that happens to be the same as his father’s. Ayun tells his father that he dreams every night of flocks of white hawks from the sunrise swooping down to devour them. This makes him wake up in panic regularly. Consequently, Ayun informs his father that he will go himself to the English ship to make sure the people from the sunrise destroy each other until none is left to trouble them. For this land is theirs (25). Thus in addition to the fact that these sea-people occupy the lands of the natives changing them, they also seek more. El

Dorado is an example of the land that the Europeans desire but in order to exploit its riches, mainly gold. In many instances, Ayun expresses his astonishment about the Europeans or the sea-people as he and his people call them. These Europeans are blinded by El Dorado to the point that they are not able to realize that it is just an imaginary city that exists only in their minds. When Ayun sees the light shining out of the lantern in the ship of Sir Walter Raleigh, he wonders: “how had the sea-people the magic to capture the stars and yet could not find El Dorado or know it was a dream” (35). It is worthy to note that the natives connect everything to nature. This is reflected in the way they call Europeans, the way they count time, and even in their dreams. And, this is clearly to the contrary of the European characters who only think of how much they can benefit from nature.

In addition to changing the lands of the natives, the Europeans also transported to this part of the world some animals from Europe. This stands for one of the forms of ecological imperialism under which colonialism devastated and exploited the natives' ecologies. One of these transported animals is the horse. Despite the fact that a European considers it a friendly and useful animal, the natives do not like them. For them, the strange animals are terrifying beasts: “[Arama] had been told of the terrifying beasts that the clothed ones had brought with them – frightful beasts, called horses. The northern warriors has broken and run. Hawks from the sunrise!” (26). The horses, then, make the natives afraid of them since they are strange to them. The weather is also different in both continents. When Dudley mentions the word “winter”, Ayun cannot really understand it. In fact, he cannot even believe it because he has never seen such a thing. Also, he believes that it is Osaho, the Unconquered, who



climbs up every day to heat up the sea and the land. For them, nature and religion are connected in the sense that it is God the creator and the link between both. Dudley tells the boy that the reason why they wear clothes is because of winter. But, Ayun thinks that it is because of vanity that they wear clothes in addition to wearing things on their heads. But, what he cannot get is the reason why the sea-people are so anxious for gold (36).

The natives seem to be anxious of what has come out of the sea mainly the sea-people who have come to harm them and to damage their lands. Whereas the sea-people are afraid of the land of the natives that is both new and unknown to them along with its weather. The latter stand on the natives' side or the natives wish it to do so. When Ayun lies to Don Ricardo that there are thousands of native warriors among the trees of the island to help the Spanish defeat the British sailors coming to the island, he wishes that:

There were really warriors amongst the mangroves so that he could have invited the English to land, then listen to poison arrows whistling like the wind, and hear the shrieks as the English fell on the sand. And then with the first light, with Osaho climbing the sky, watch the tide wash away the dead bodies from the beach. Oh, how he would have loved to see this! (42)

Ayun, then, wishes that nature helps them defeat all the sea-people. So, the wind carries their arrows and the tide washes off the bodies that are held on the sand of the shore. Also when Sir Walter Raleigh keeps the boy as a captive to show him the bright way to El Dorado, the boy tells one of the members of a tribe to which he does not belong that he will show the sea-people and Sir Walter the forests and swamps of the Oronokee land instead of El Dorado, which the British and the Spanish refuse to believe it does not exist. Ayun expresses his reliance on natural elements like the forests and weather maybe to help his people and himself get rid of these sea-people. He tells the native that the

sea-people are for the sea-people, and the latter are for gold and for El Dorado. So, he just helps them as they asked to send them to El Dorado (132). However, the main reason why he does so is: “because [he] knew they were all going to jungles from which they would never return” (133). So, Ayun’s knowledge that the sea-people are ignorant about the place makes him send them to the forests and jungles to make them disappear forever.

#### **III.1.4. *River of Smoke*’s Natives: Sea or Islands**

One of the prominent characters in the first novel of the Ibis trilogy: *Sea of Poppies* (2008) is Indian Deeti. The third-person narrator tells of her birth place village in addition to that of her grandmother in the second novel of this trilogy: *River of Smoke*. The point to notice about these two villages is their houses and the building materials with which they were built. Indeed, in addition to the interesting geographical position of Deeti’s birth village: Nayanpur, which was in northern Bihar “overlooking the confluence of two great rivers, the Ganga and the Karamnasa,” its houses were quite different from the houses of the island where Deeti is now. For those houses had no tin roofs, and extremely few metal or wood were seen anywhere in their structures. Instead, the villagers used mud to build their huts thatching it with straw and plastering it with cow-dung (10). For Madhubani, Deeti’s grandmother’s village, was known for “its gorgeously decorated houses and beautifully painted walls,” which was a point of pride the village. For each town and village had things to separate them from the others just like in Mauritius but even more than it. When Deeti moved to Nayanpur she taught her daughters and granddaughters the different ways and traditions of Madhubani with her. They used to use rice flour to whiten their walls and fruits, flowers and tinted soils to create vibrant colours (10). Even for their food, the natives use open fires to cook it which is always vegetarian and as a consequence

very plain. Their simplest feast's food contains breads of parathas and daal-puris eaten with: "bajis of pipengay and chou-chou, ourougails of tomato and peanut, chutneys of tamarind and combava fruit, and perhaps an achar or two of lime or bilimbi, and maybe even a hot mazavaroo of chilis and lime - and, of course, dahi and ghee, made from the milk of the Colvers' cows" (10). Indeed, everything they use is from fruits and nature. No harmful materials!

Boat-people are strangely banned from sitting for the Civil Service examinations. The reason why Yee Ma could not see the point behind Uncle Barry or Bahram's insistence on educating their boy is that she sees no interest for him to use calligraphy when the law itself prohibits such exams. In addition to that, she sees that the lessons her child takes in boxing and riding mean nothing to him since boat-people are also banned from building houses ashore. This is why she thinks that what is useful for her boy is to learn how to fish and sail and handle boats just like all the other boat-people (36). The natives do have their fears of water. Yee Ma does not allow her child to swim in the water despite the fact that she wants him to grow just like any other boat-child. This is because of the nightmares she has had in which her son is attacked by a dragon-fish or a sturgeon. Also, the boat-people make their necessary precautions to protect their younger children from water. For instance, they make them sit in barrels when the boat moves. Also, they would tie their children's back to a wooden board tied to their backs in order to float in case they fall in (36). Also, one of the ways from which the boat-children earn money is to dive in the river "to amuse the Aliens" (36) by fishing out the coins and trinkets that the strangers to the place throw in the water. Ah Fatt narrates to Neel the way he learned to swim in the water adding that the

“pun-tei” or the land-people mock the boat-people saying that they have fins instead of feet (36). All of these instances from the novel’s characters reveal the relationship between the natives and nature. Despite the fact that that the natives are connected to nature, they do have their fears of water and the sea. This can maybe related to the fact that it is the sea that brings them dangers and threats particularly, colonizers, invaders, and exploiters of their riches and lands.

Generally, there are only few native Chinese characters’s voices in the story. Some of the existent characters in the story do display their attitudes towards their birds, land, and plants. Birds, for instance, are one of the main sources of the Chinese’ wealth. Finding it so strange, Ah Fatt’s father tells him that Jodu and his grandfather discover that the islanders pay a lot of money for the nests of the birds which they call hinlene. He says that despite the fact that those creatures look insignificant but they make something that is of immense value, which is their nests that the Chinese boil becoming their most expensive food. This is why the islanders revere those birds. Ah Fatt tells them that it is called ‘yan wo’ in Canton, and it is of great value, “as good a currency as any that existed in eastern waters - depending on their quality they were worth their weight in either silver or gold” (15). So despite the fact that they are friendly with nature, natives do make use of nature and its creatures. The difference between the use of the Chinese and foreigners seems to lie in the degree. Foreigners’ use is usually damaging to the environment while the natives’ is mild.

As far as opium is concerned, the Chinese officials start to issue and apply laws that are against the trade of opium on their country’s land. This is a plant that destroys the health of the Chinese and needs to be fought against. Despite the different trials of

the Weiyuen to explain to the foreign merchants that it is clearly stated in the Emperor's decrees that all foreign residents in China must abide by the Chinese law, they refuse claiming that the custom in Canton has always been that foreigners would conduct their affairs according to their own laws. The Weiyuen asks them, then, if in they allow foreigners in their country to act as they wish without respecting the laws of the land. Because their answer is negative, he asks them hence why they consider themselves exempt from the Chinese law. Their only excuse is always the same, which is related to the fact that the foreign community has been accustomed to regulate itself freely in Canton. The Weiyuen then tells them that their custom can be valid only when they do not openly disregard the laws of the land. For despite the different edicts and warnings they have continued to bring opium ships to the Chinese coast disobeying the law. Here, he asks them why they are not be treated as criminals. The belief that they are above all laws just because of their nationalities persists. After Dent and Burnham, it is Mr. Wetmore's turn now to affirm the same beliefs again. He is the one who answers this time: "that as Englishmen and Americans, we enjoy certain freedoms under the laws of our own countries. These require us to be subject, in the first instance, to our own laws" (170). This refers to the superiority complex that Europeans and Americans have about themselves. The reaction of the Weiyuen is, thus, addressed in a strong tone. Mr Fearon conveys to them what he says that: "[...] he cannot believe that any country would be so barbaric as to allow its merchants the freedom to harm and despoil the people of a foreign realm. This is not freedom - it is akin to piracy. No government could possibly condone it" (170). Mr. Slade loses patience and asks Mr. Fearon to tell him that he will know what freedom means when

he sees it coming at him from the barrel of a sixteen-pounder. Mr. Fearon tells him that he cannot of course tell him that. Consequently, it is Mr. Wetmore who provides him with the last answer which is that they can do nothing without going back to the English Representative, Captain Elliott, who is currently in Macau but will be in Canton soon (170). All of this, thus, clearly shows to what extent the British and American merchants think that they are important and are able to do whatever they wish on the Chinese land. Here again, as Fanon argues, the Chinese' suffering from foreign exploitation is done not because of their own dependency complex but rather because of the white man's authority complex.

After negotiating with Commissioner Lin, Captain Elliott addresses a letter to the provincial authorities to ask them to issue travel permits to all the foreigners of the town, specifying that if they do not do so he will consider that both the people and the ships of his country will be detained and he will act accordingly. He also informs the foreigners that he has noted in his letter to the Chinese authorities that the peace between the two countries has been placed in "imminent jeopardy" because of the "alarming" proceedings of the authorities in Canton. He also informs them that he does care about keeping the peace between the countries. This is indeed alarming for he does not care for the peace and the possible war that may be started between two countries or more for mere personal benefits. The British fellow speaks with superiority towards the Chinese despite the fact that he is on their land. After informing his fellow foreign residents of Canton, Captain Elliott adds that he has received the answer of the High Commissioner that his translator Mr. Robert Morrison

will read some passages from it to them (176). One of the important passages is the following:

'I, High Commissioner Lin, find that the foreigners have, in their commercial intercourse with this country, long enjoyed gratifying advantages. Yet they have brought opium - that pervading poison - to this land, thus profiting themselves to the injury of others. As High Commissioner I issued an edict promising not to delve into the past but only requiring that the opium already here should be entirely delivered up and that further shipments should be effectually stopped from coming. Three days were prescribed within which to give a reply but none was received. As High Commissioner, I had ascertained that the opium brought by Dent was comparatively in large quantity and summoned him to be examined. He too procrastinated for three days and the order was not obeyed. In consequence a temporary embargo was placed on the trade and the issuing of permits to go to Macau was stayed. In reading the letter of the English Superintendent I see no recognition of these circumstances, but only a demand for permits. I would ask: While my commands remain unanswered and my summonses unattended, how can permits be granted? Elliott has come into the territory of the Celestial Court as the English Superintendent. But his country, while itself interdicting the use of opium, has yet permitted the seduction and enticement of the Chinese people. The store-ships have long been anchored in the waters of Kwangtung yet Elliott has been unable to expel them. I would ask then what it is that Elliott superintends?' (177)

The Commissioner, then, states it very clearly to the foreign merchants that they make commercial profits on the expense of the injury of the Chinese on their own land. He also refers to the double standards of the British who prohibit opium in their country but seduce the Chinese to use it. Through a direct question, he refers to the fact that the British Elliot as the English superintendent does not fulfill his responsibilities that were firstly assigned to him. Bahram wonders about the High Commissioner and his ability to confront the British and all the foreigners. He asks: "Who was this man, this Lin Tse-hsu? What gave him this peculiar power, this authority, this unalloyed certainty?" (177). Bahram's question tells of the fact that no one before has dared to talk back to any European or American. But, the Commissioner Ling asks Captain Elliott overtly and clearly that he speedily and securely delivers the opium as obedience to the High Commissioner's orders. If not, he will understand it that the

Captain has no power to encounter his fellow men. The strong tone that the High Commissioner's words bear make the translator pause to ask if he should continue reading. The Captain allows him to do so even though his face starts reddening. This refers to the Chinese resistance and refusal of what the foreigners do to their people on their land. Through Commissioner Lee, the Chinese do not seem to be afraid of the Europeans or the Americans and are keen to stop the harm that these foreigners are making to their people on their land. This harm is actually exercised because of both the colonial racism and the environmental one.

The Chinese seem to recognize the value of the natural world especially that of plants considering them as treasures that they have. This is maybe one of the reasons that make them prohibit the foreigners from meddling in their land such as in the case of Canton. In it, foreigners are not allowed to take any kind of plant or even set foot on the land without travel permits to limited places of the city. Moreover, women are prohibited from going to Macau/Canton. But in Hong Kong, the foreigners have more freedom to collect whatever they wish as Fitcher explains to Paulette. He tells her that the only time he was able to collect in the field of China was in Hong Kong, the island that is situated at the eastern end of the Pearl River whose inhabitants did not seem to mind if foreigners (men or women) went ashore. There, he was able to find some fine orchids (42). One of the reasons why the Chinese do not welcome foreigners is because they exploit the plants and other riches of China. Foreign vessels need chops to be permitted to enter the Pearl River. Throughout the events of the novel, we get to know that it has become even more difficult to get such chops in addition to entering the harbour at Macau. The reason why many foreign ships choose instead: "to take



shelter at the opposite end of the river mouth, in the strait that separated the island of Hong Kong from the promontory of Kowloon” (56). So, the Chinese seem to be aware of the dangers that the foreigners may hold against their land and people. As a result, they do not welcome them. It is not because it is the Chinese nature not to welcome the foreigners, as these foreigners have used to spread about them, but because they have learned that these foreigners cause harm to them. As a consequence, one deduce that these Chinese are resisting the process of ecological imperialism that Europeans and Americans are undertaking as shown in the story’s events of the novel.

Nature seems to be on the side of the natives, protects them and makes them get closer to each other. When Neel recounts his story of escape from the *Ibis* with the others, he explains how the violent blowing of the wind makes them forget to be afraid while they are in the middle of the storm’s eye. Here, the wind provides Neel and his mates a hand helping their boat to move far from the danger of the *Ibis* crew. Later, when they are on an island, they seek the refuge under an overhand of rocks from the full blast of the storm. Their concern is actually that they are in some desolate place in which they will find no food to survive. But this fear is soon eliminated by daybreak after the storm is over. In such nice weather with a sunny clear sky, Neel recounts how they discover outside their shelter thousands of coconuts spread everywhere on the ground and in the water because they were torn off by the wind (14). Sea is actually the place where Ah Fatt and Neel get closer to each other. Neel thinks that he had never spent so much time with another human being in such close proximity (35). So, in addition to the weather that helps these native characters, the sea as a natural element also makes them close.

### ***Conclusion***

In *A Bend in the River*, there is a clear separation of where each category of characters reside. Native Africans live in their own villages whereas very few of them, who are the young “lycée-boys”, stay in the New Domain for the time of their schooling. Mimicking the white man, the New Domain is the city that the Big Man or the president has built to prove that modern Africa can exist inside the bush. It is a separate compound situated at the skirts of the town. This area that looks like European architecture and design is only inhabited by foreign visitors, especially professors who come from Europe and America. People talk about what it has inside of furnished houses, a great new model farm, an agricultural college, a conference hall, and holiday houses for loyal citizens. This is analyzed to be an instance of colonial mimicry in an attempt to become a “recognizable other”. However, like white men before him, the president does not succeed in transforming the African land in this way. Indeed, all what he gets is a “blurred copy” of the European colonizer. The ruined town, which was first established by the European colonizer, is inhabited by the non-native natives of the country: people who are born in Africa but originate from Arabia, India and other countries. The fact that such town was built in the middle of the African jungle is a proof of the ecological imperialism that had happened to the country’s territory. There is actually a clear differentiation in the novel between these three different places of town, village, and the New Domain. The differences are not only at the level of appearance and infrastructure but also at the level of the behaviours, attitudes, and the whole culture of the inhabitants of each different place.

In addition to recognizing the influence of the place on its inhabitants, African nature is also considered as a resort and supporter of its native inhabitants. However, the attitudes of the latter towards the human-built environment are totally different. First asserting in an indirect way that nature and the environment have both significant influences on people, Salim does relate some characteristics of the Africans to the place they live in. Also, the villages where most of the natives of the story reside, like Zabeth and her boy “Ferdinand” and women, are described as a safe place that is protected by the forest and some other natural elements to hide it from foreigners. Second Salim, the narrator of the story, finds the natives’ violent reaction towards the European-built environment surprising. He sometimes shows some understanding of the native rage against all that is European while at other times he keeps being surprised at why the natives have so much wrath against buildings and monuments. The instances where he shows his comprehension are when he comments that the reason why Africans destroy all European monuments is to wash off all signs of the European existence on their land. According to Frantz Fanon’s ideas, colonized natives have learned to resort to violence from the European colonizers. However, in this case, the natives are only attempting to erase signs of their country’s ecological imperialism. Salim believes that those buildings could have been very useful to the inhabitants, natives or non-natives, yet he cannot understand how these Africans destroy them without caring so much about the consequences. However, it is because of Salim’s inability to see things from the perspective of the natives. Many events prove that these natives destroy monuments and buildings that they do not find useful for themselves. It is only from Salim’s point of view that they are beneficial. In fact,

this is because the two modes of life that Salim and the natives have or want to have are very different. As a result, what Salim sees as very important is not necessarily so according to the native villagers of Africa. The same is also true concerning his opinion about the human-built environment. Salim finds everything that has a European touch beautiful while this is not always the case for Africans. The park that was built by the Europeans by their river is destroyed, and returned to its first state of bush because for the natives the fishing area is way more needed than such a park. Another thing that Salim notices is the fact that there has been no attempt to tidy up those ruins. This is symbolic because their existence reminds everybody that even though the white man has left the country officially independent, his influence on different levels is still at work.

Despite the fact that the native characters rarely speak throughout the story of *Waiting for the Barbarians*, we get to know some of their opinions and attitudes towards their land through the voices of one native character, the girl, and a few foreigners, especially the Magistrate of the British walled city who narrates this story. Thus, there are two main settings in the story: the walled city that is inhabited by soldiers and civilians who belong to Britain; and the lake neighbouring the town and the desert where the native fishing people and the nomads are pushed to live. So even in this novel, there is a clear physical separation of these two types of characters. Their treatment of animals is also different. For while colonizers carelessly hunt down animals for mere pleasure, the natives wisely use them for their basic needs. In different areas of life, the colonizers show both colonial and environmental racism towards the natives.

While wilderness is strangely a safe resort to natives, the British settlers are afraid inside their “protected” built town. Natives do not talk at all about the situation of their country. It is rather the British Colonel, his soldiers, and the inhabitants of the town who spread out rumours about the natives preparing to fight to get back their lands/country. Despite the fact that the town is protected by walls surrounding it, it does not become a safe place for its inhabitants. They are always in constant fear that the “Barbarians” come kill them while they are asleep, especially at the end of the novel where the rumours of the war become very alarming. On the contrary, the wide desert is a very safe place for the natives. For instance, the native girl is more comfortable out in the desert than in the warmth of the Magistrate’s room in the walled town. In fact, they use nature and their excellent knowledge of the place to defeat the well-armed British invaders.

The case of the natives in *Bright Road to El Dorado* is not very different from that of *Waiting for the Barbarians*’ natives. This is because there are also mainly two places where the characters belong to: the Sea or the Land. The sea is where the European comes from, and the land that constitutes of islands and isles is where the native Caribbeans live. The European invaders build towns on the lands of the natives separating themselves from their huts found inside the jungles. In fact, these two parties mistrust each other. Through Ayun, the son of Arama who is the Cacique of Chacomaray, we get to know that the natives want the sea-people (as they call them) to leave their lands. This is because they come only to destroy their villages, exploit them, and protect themselves by building their own forts on the natives’ lands. Thus, these Europeans are racist towards the natives and are the first ones who resort to

violence. Moreover, the attitudes of these two types of characters towards both the sea and land are equally opposite to one another. While the natives (who are generally connected to nature in general) are afraid of the sea since it brings to them the invading Europeans, the latter are afraid of the lands because they are the dwellings of the resisting natives.

In addition to changing the appearance of the natives' environments (which is a sign of ecological imperialism), the Europeans also bring with them some animals that are strange to the natives and consequently frighten them. Exploitation comes in many forms especially in the case of El Dorado. Hence through the voices of a number of British and Spanish characters, especially Don Ricardo and Sir Walter Raleigh, we get to know that these people do not care about the people as much as they care about their lands and the fortunes the latter bear. The only important matter that they seek is to find El Dorado to get its gold and transport it to their countries. This refers to the Westerners' belief in the mastery of man over nature, animals and the whole ecosystem, as ecocritics clarify. In order to get rid of these intruders, Ayun thinks of sending them to unknown places in the jungles so that they get lost forever and do not come back to their native place. Hence, the natives use their knowledge of the place in resisting these Europeans.

The story of *River of Smoke* presents different groups of natives. The first group consists of the Asians who are living now in Chinese Canton. They are natives with their stories of how they have treated nature in their homelands. Like Indian Deeti, who comes from a village that uses flowers and plants as materials for painting, as medicinal herbs and as gifts to their gods. There is also the other group that consists of

Indian Yee Ma and Ah Fatt, who belong to the category of boat-people, different from the other natives who live on land in many attitudes and habits. However, what connects them all is their close connection to nature except for their fear of water. One of the possible interpretations for this fear can be related to the fact that Western invasions and attacks usually come from their seas and rivers.

In many instances in the novel, these natives are protected by nature recognizing themselves both in its importance and its power over them. The native Chinese, whose voice is more apparent and stronger by the second half of the novel, do actually care about their country's well-being and interest. Despite the fact that there are some Chinese traders of opium, the native characters are presented as caring so much for their plants; they depict them in spectacular paintings and other arts in addition to their birds and other animals, and very cautious of what may result in the interference of the foreigners, who come from the sea, in their land. Furthermore, nature is clearly the source of wealth for the native Chinese without much abuse. Finally, many native characters are provided with voice in the novel to highlight their refusal of the opium trade. This latter is indicative of the Westerners' authority and supremacy complexes and not of the dependency complex that the natives may have towards them.

### **III.2. Nature in the Eyes of Non-Natives (or Non-Native Natives)**

#### ***Introduction***

This section analyzes only *A Bend in the River* and *River of Smoke* because they are the only novels among the four of the study that have non-native characters who are not colonizers. The other two do have non-native characters but they are either direct

colonizers or come from colonizer's countries for the sake of benefiting from the natives' lands. The first part includes non-native natives, the citizens of the African country yet have foreign origins. The second part studies foreigners like Indians and their relationship with their own native lands in addition to Canton where most of the story occurs. Other characters analyzed in this part are Europeans like French and British, and Americans. Despite the fact that some of them belong to colonizer countries, they behave differently from the other characters of their same countries. These characters are friendlier to nature and the environment of China. Some of them even express their love for Canton and their inability to live far from it.

### **III.2.1. *A Bend in the River's* Non-Native Natives: Where is Home: Africa or Europe?**

There are two types of people of Africa in the story, the natives who have always belonged to the land, and the non-native natives<sup>18</sup> who were born on the African land and lived there for centuries yet originate from other places than Africa. Salim is representative of this latter type. Describing the category of people they belong to, Salim says:

Africa was my home, had been the home of my family for centuries. But we came from the east coast, and that made the difference. The coast was not truly African. It was an Arab-Indian-Persian-Portuguese place, and we who lived there were really people of the Indian Ocean. True Africa was at our back. Many miles of scrub or desert separated us from the upcountry people; we looked east to the lands with which we traded--Arabia, India, Persia. These were also the lands of our ancestors. But we could no longer say that we were Arabians or Indians or Persians; when we compared ourselves with these people, we felt like people of Africa. (8)

It is indeed so interesting that Salim uses the past tense in claiming Africa as his home. Africa was but does not seem to be his home anymore. This is what readers will understand more as the story unfolds. In addition, Salim does not like the place where

---

<sup>18</sup> This title is taken from the article of Joseph Walunywa: "The "Non-Native Native" in V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*" (2008)



he lives in the east coast. When his friend Indar tells him that they are washed up in Africa (12) because they are not strongly given the fact that they are not fully African, Salim expresses his disgust with the place despite the nice weather on the day during which the conversation occurs: “The afternoon sun fell on the soft black asphalt road and the tall hibiscus hedges. It was all so ordinary. There was as yet no danger in the crowds, the broken-down streets, the blankwalled lanes. But the place was poisoned for me” (13). This is one of the main reasons that push him to leave his family’s place and “land”.

Salim used to live in a green place, a house that is surrounded by open spaces full of trees and greenery. However, he does not show any love for nature or formulate any other kind of opinion, be it negative or positive, towards nature. After his conversation with Indar about the danger that people like them are facing, Salim goes upstairs to his room looking out over their compound to see his aunt calling to one of her daughters. He thinks:

I looked at that devout woman, sheltered behind her wall, and saw how petty her concern with the brass vases was. The thin whitewashed wall (thinner than the wall of the slave stockade on the beach) protected her so little. She was so vulnerable--her person, her religion, her customs, her way of life. The squalling yard had contained its own life, had been its own complete world, for so long. How could anyone not take it for granted? How could anyone stop to ask what it was that had really protected us?  
(13)

Here, the human-built wall doesn’t protect them because the yard was inhabited unlawfully from the beginning. It is interesting to note how nature can protect the natives while walls cannot protect the non-natives.

Salim compares between the life he and the other multicultural inhabitants of the town live and that of the native Africans who have gone back to their villages:

Wine! It was hard to get the simplest food; and if you wanted vegetables you either got them out of an old--and expensive--tin, or you grew them yourself. The Africans who had abandoned the town and gone back to their villages were better off; they at least had gone back to their traditional life and were more or less self-sufficient. But for the rest of us in the town, who needed shops and services--a few Belgians, some Greeks and Italians, a handful of Indians--it was a stripped, Robinson Crusoe kind of existence. We had cars and we lived in proper houses--I had bought a flat over an empty warehouse for almost nothing. But if we had worn skins and lived in thatched huts it wouldn't have been too inappropriate. The shops were empty; water was a problem; electricity was erratic; and petrol was often short. (16)

It is among the very few times that Salim prefers the simple life that the natives live over their life in the European town. But, the only reason is possibly the destruction of that town. Here, Salim's opinion seems balanced. He does acknowledge the life that nature provides in addition to the life that the human-built environment adds. When talking about the flat he bought in the town he has just arrived in, he writes that the Belgian lady who was the owner of his current flat "had attempted to introduce a touch of Europe and home and art, another kind of life, to this land of rain and heat and big-leaved trees--always visible, if blurred, through the white-painted window panes" (26). Indeed, the natural aspects of the African life cannot be ignored. The interesting part is that what this Belgian lady has done to the house seems to be of no significant value to the natives. Salim arrives at this conclusion from Ferdinand's reactions towards his flat and shop. For Ferdinand seems to hardly see any big difference between his life and that of Salim. This has made Salim think that whatever the place he is at and however it is better furnished and however rich and successful he might be, his life would only be a version of the same life he is living now (26). He means that the main cause of his problems and unsatisfactory life he is now leading is not the house he lives in. This is partly true because it is not always the place that has its influence on us. As ecocritics believe, the influence is reciprocal. In this case, it is Salim's aspirations towards the

place he occupies that govern him and not the place itself. But, he gives up the idea asserting that it is only his loneliness that makes him feel that way and that there is more about him than his setting shows or his routines does. He, actually, does not have many things to do in his daily life, so he falls into showing material things to Ferdinand to prove to him he is something important. He actually tells him in different words what he has always wanted to say like: “Look at these magazines. Nobody pays me to read them. I read them because I am the kind of person I am, because I take an interest in things, because I want to know about the world” (26). It is actually interesting to note how Salim claims to want to know about the world while he refuses to see it or does not realise that he has no interest in learning about it.

This is where Zabeth lives and where Ferdinand comes from. It is their village and Salim refers to it to be the hidden one. This is another proof that Salim ignores anything related to the dwelling of the natives. Salim thinks that the town where he lives now should be better than the village Zabeth comes from and he notices the fact that Zabeth’s son willingly accepts to accompany his mother to their village. Salim gives us the impression that the weather may hinder the easiness of the life of those village people but he still does not know anything about how life goes on there:

The rainy-season school holidays came, and Zabeth came to town to do her shopping and to take Ferdinand back with her. She seemed pleased with his progress. And he didn't seem to mind exchanging the lycée and the bars of the town for Zabeth's village. I thought of rain on the river; Zabeth's women poling through the unlit waterways to the hidden village; the black nights and the empty days. (28)

Here again, Salim’s surprise that Ferdinand prefers to go back to his mother’s village over the “lycée” and the bars of the town confirms his belief that the town is better than the village. This actually proves Salim’s ambivalence. For despite his total

ignorance of the place, he thinks that the European-like town should be better than the village without any reasonable cause for such preference.

Salim still thinks that the life of the town should be better than the life in the village. When Ferdinand comes back from his mother's village spending the holidays there, Salim thinks the following: "I thought also that though he had been cool when he had gone to his mother's village for the holidays, he had probably been shocked by his time there--how, I wondered, had he spent the days?--and no longer took the town, and the life of the town, for granted" (29). This shows how Salim thinks that life in the village should not be comfortable at all even though he does not know anything about it. However, he does not talk about the reason(s) that make Ferdinand be shocked in the place he always lived in for a very long time. Later, he deduces that the truth is simpler than all of those speculations, which is related to the fact that Ferdinand is growing up and is building up his personality.

Salim's reaction towards the place is interesting. For the first time, he refers to the causes of his dissatisfaction and restlessness not only because of the pressures he experiences, his temperament, or solitude but also because of the place as well. He claims that:

It also had to do with the place itself, the way it had altered with the peace. It was nobody's fault. It was something that had just happened. During the days of the rebellion I had had the sharpest sense of the beauty of the river and the forest, and had promised myself that when the peace came I would expose myself to it, learn it, possess that beauty. I had done nothing of the sort; when the peace came I had simply stopped looking about me. And now I felt that the mystery and the magic of the place had gone. (59)

Another example of Salim's attitude towards the weather can be noted in his indifference about the rain falling: "From the shop I would see the rain beating down the flamboyant trees in the market square" (28). He just describes how people become

powerless watchers of the rain as it kills their trade during the rainy season, when they have to take shelter because it muddies their red streets. Explaining the reason for the redness of the streets, Salim mentions that the earth's colour is red which is the kind of earth that the bush grows on. Among the few times Salim tells the readers about his liking of one of the natural phenomena is when he narrates: "But sometimes a day of rain ended with a glorious clouded sunset. I liked to watch that from the viewing spot near the rapids" (28). In the same passage, however, he carries on describing in a neutral way the very pleasant nice atmosphere near the rapids. Strangely enough, Salim does not express any further feelings towards:

The sinking sun [that] shot through layers of grey cloud; the water [that] turned from brown to gold to red to violet. And always there was the steady noise of the rapids, innumerable little cascades of water over rock. The darkness came; and sometimes the rain came as well, and to the sound of the rapids was added the sound of rain on water. (28)

The only two words he uses are the verb "to like" and the adjective "glorious" to describe the atmosphere. However, Salim does not mention any attempts of him visiting this place again to seek comfort or tranquility. Salim thinks that the sound of the rain is comforting. He compares the comfort he oddly feels when he hears the sound of the weapons of the big man's white men announcing order and continuity to the same comfort he feels when he hears the sound of rain in the night. So, the gunfire that Salim hears from the inside of his flat sitting there hearing Ferdinand and Metty talking in their warm room, all make him feel: "[...] like being transported to the hidden forest villages, to the protection and secrecy of the huts at night--everything outside shut out, kept beyond some magical protecting line" (48). Salim confirms the idea that the village is a safe place to be in. Among the few times Salim refers to nature is the time when the newly organized army of the president kills and defeats

many soldiers of the famous warrior tribe in addition to taking from them guns, uniforms, and the quarters they have spent so much of their money furnishing. Of this defeat, Salim comments: “A famous tribe, now helpless among their traditional prey: it was as though some old law of the forest, something that came from Nature itself, had been overturned” (49). Thus, like white men, Salim does not show significant awareness of the weather and nature except for few times since he lives inside it. Opposite to natives, Salim does not usually hear the voice of nature. He believes that life is mainly connected to the power of man and his achievements but not nature or natural elements.

### **III.2.2. *River of Smoke*'s Non-Natives: Between Plants, Opium, and Canton**

Many pages in Ghosh's novel are dedicated to plants and their trade. Fitcher, for instance, brings with him some American plants to exchange them for the Chinese species that have not yet been introduced to the West. This is not an original idea as it seemed to Paulette but Fitcher informs her that the idea was of Father d'Incarville (32), and that has been around for many years. Fitcher is a white American man who cares for plants. The way the ship on which Fitcher and Paulette are travelling, the *Redruth*, is designed in a way that reflects its captain's care for nature. The reader is informed that she was created not by a crazed scientist or a deluded dreamer, but rather by a diligent nurseryman. The latter is not a speculative thinker, but rather a practical solver of problems, “someone who looked upon Nature as an assortment of puzzles, many of which, if properly resolved, could provide rich sources of profit” (32). The way nature is looked upon is interesting. What is to be noticed, here too, is the fact that the letter “n” of “Nature” is capitalized. This is a proof that comes early in the novel to

inform readers that “Nature” can be a character in the story, too. Since it is given emphasis, its power and influence on people is recognized. Paulette actually finds the idea of seeing nature from this perspective totally new to her. For her father, Pierre Lambert, taught her what she knows of botany and nurtured in her the love of “Nature” as “a kind of religion, a form of spiritual striving: he had believed that in trying to comprehend the inner vitality of each species, human beings could transcend the mundane world and its artificial divisions. If botany was the Scripture of this religion, then horticulture was its form of worship” (32). For Paulette’s father, the Frenchman, tending a garden was not just planting seeds and pruning the trees’ branches but rather a spiritual discipline through which the gardener can communicate with such mute forms of life via carefully studying these forms’ own means of expressions or their own languages. That is to say: “the languages of efflorescence, growth and decay: only thus, he had taught Paulette, could human beings apprehend the vital energies that constitute the Spirit of the Earth” (32). Moreover, what makes the Redruth a unique ship is the green loads she has on her decks. Indeed, plants have always been on different sailships used for nutrition or for decoration. Another reason for having plants on decks of ships can also be that the presence of the colour green has always been seen as a good match to the blue colour of the high seas. But such plants are usually few, not as many as those of the Redruth’s. For the latter’s stock of flora is more than the usual half-dozen pots:. On the ships, too, there are a very big number of ‘Wardian cases’, a new invention that resembles “miniature greenhouses”. The business of transporting plants in this way has been revolutionized, and made it easier and safer (32). Many bystanders mock the appearance of the Redruth with the green

plants and the glass-covered containers of the Wardian cases by asking if it is a kind of the famous ‘asylum ships’ that have a reputation of deporting lunatics to faraway islands at the time. But what is ironic is the fact that although the ship’s brig seems eccentric only in appearance, nothing really makes the ship different from the others of her kind. It quickly becomes obvious to Paulette that nothing is fanciful about the Redruth at all. For, on the contrary, every element of the ship has been determined by: “the twin motives of thrift and profit”. This is because the ship’s stocks of greenery, for example, do not require big amounts of money to be spent on them yet the profits of their business are tremendous. Interestingly enough, the ship’s goods that are mocked by bystanders also receive zero attention of pirates not knowing their true value (32).

Despite the fact that Fitcher does benefit from the business of plants, he still cares for the natural world. One of his only disappointments in his two sons is their disinterest in either botany or natural history. To the Penrose boys, plants “were no different from doorknobs, or sausages, or any other object that could be sold for a price on the market” (33). Of his children, his daughter Ellen is the only one to inherit her father’s interest in the green world. This is why her father loved her exceptionally, due also to her resemblance to her mother. But, Ellen insists on finding a spot in the Redruth despite her weak body and her father’s attempts at dissuading her. She, thus, reminds him of the story of Maria Merian. Fitcher used to give his daughter reproductions of Merian’s paintings of the flowers and insects of Surinam as gifts. Merian was a legendary botanical illustrator who travelled from Holland to South America at the age of fifty-two (33). All details of the plants and the process of taking



care of them are mentioned. This stands as another proof (in addition to the capitalization of the letter “N” in nature and others) that this novel cares abundantly about nature and the natural world. The way Fitcher takes care of the wilting plants is presented. He explains their illnesses by relating them to the kind of soil they were planted in. He differentiates ‘hot’ soils from ‘cold’ ones. The hot ones are those which heat up faster than other soils while the cold ones tend to retain their heat for a long period of time. For such issues, Fitcher keeps barrels of soil in reserve on the ship on which some carry the label ‘cool’ and some ‘hot’. Even the details of how each kind of soil looks like is provided. This refers to the fact that the writer is both aware and knowledgeable of this field. The cool soil has a lighter colour since it is composed of chalky soils while the hot one has darker colour because of the bigger amount of the vegetal matter in its composition. When he needs any kind of soil, he asks Paulette to find it for him to apply the remedy in particular measured amounts (39). This shows the connection between these non-natives and earth, whatever its “nationality” may be. Thus, their care of nature has no frontiers or boundaries like his fellow people who differentiate between a British soil and a Chinese one, for example.

In addition to living plants, the Redruth has got on it a ‘painted garden’, which constitutes a collection of botanical paintings and illustrations. For Fitcher, the pictures do not mean a lot to him nor does he recognize the aesthetic merits of them. He actually regards the paintings as tools that may guide him to find new and unknown species of plants (48). Fitcher, then, represents those people who do not consider the world around them as an environment at all, according to Neil Evernden’s arguments. For despite the fact that he does care for the natural world, he still sees it as a set of

resources to be utilized. For Paulette, however, she is astonished that paintings are used to search for plants as an unusually inventive and curious procedure. This is because she finds it really strange to look for new species of plants in the most exclusive realms of human artifice rather than in “Nature” itself. However, Fitcher explains to Paulette that this is an old and proven method that dates back to the earliest European plant-hunters who worked in China. Among these is the British botanist James Cuninghame, who visited China twice in the eighteenth century. Fitcher recounts to Paulette the story of this botanist. The reader gets to know about the background of the business. During those times, Fitcher narrates, travelling in China has been somehow easier for foreigners than it is now. During his first visit, Cuninghame discovers in the port of Amoy the skill of the Chinese painters at the realistic depiction of flowers, plants, and trees. This has led him to build up a ‘painted garden’ returning to England with more than a thousand pictures because nobody thought it possible at the time to transport live specimens from China to Europe by sea. In addition, he collected seeds and ‘dried gardens’. The illustrations brought to England caused both admiration and skepticism. For Europeans could not believe such extravagantly beautiful flowers could actually exist. Some thought that such illustrations might have been the botanical equivalents of phoenixes, unicorns and other mythical creatures. But, Fitcher continues, these Europeans are wrong because later the whole world has witnessed that Cuninghame’s collections contain pictures of the most notable flowers the world can receive from China like: “hydrangeas, chrysanthemums, flowering plums, tree peonies, the first repeat-flowering roses, crested irises, innumerable new gardenias, primroses, lilies, hostas, wisterias, asters

and azaleas” (48). These details are significant since they stand as proofs that, again, this novel deals with everything that related to plants and the natural world in abundance. Different from Fitcher are the Chinese painters and the British botanist Cuninghame, who can be included in a different category of nature-lovers. According to Neil Evernden, these artists do recognize the existence of a firm relationship between man and his environment. Therefore, their role is to provide us with understandings of what a place would look like if we “belonged” to it. Hence comes the importance of such stories that Fitcher tells Paulette about. Readers learn about nature from the work that such artists do that is different from that of the scientists, as Evernden believes.

In addition to sea, islands and mountains, the image of the forest is present in this novel, too. When Ah Fatt and Neel have their full of the coconuts, they start discovering the place. Neel describes:

the island, or what we could see of it, was like a single enormous mountain; it rose sheer out of the sea, and where the land touched the water, the slopes were edged with dark rocks and golden sand. But everything else was forest - a dense jungle it should have been, but now, with the greenery having been stripped clear by the storm, it was just an endless succession of naked trunks and branches. It seemed to be exactly what we had feared: a completely desolate place! (14)

A place that has no human existence in it is a place that makes them afraid. When Serang Ali awakes, he tells them that the island is not new to him. For when he was young, he visited it so many times and that it is called Great Nicobar that is surely a deserted wilderness. But, their fear should not be there because in the far side of the mountain, down by the water, there are a couple of surprisingly rich villages full of people (14). Life, in this sense, should be where humans are. For the natives, then,

virgin nature is not the preferable place for them to live. In fact, there should be some human presence in the place even though they are friends with nature.

By the end of the ceremony with the British traders of the Chambers in Canton, Bahram turns around to discover that the Bombay contingent is quarrelling with some half-a-dozen young Englishmen. Bahram decides to call his contingent to go out of the hall even though he is not part of the dispute only to witness that order starts to be regained. Later on the way home, Bahram asks about what happened earlier. The answer he gets is that those English men working for the Chamber's foreign merchants called their Indian fellow workers different kinds of names. Bahram suggests that they should have ignored them knowing that they were drunk. His contingent exclaimed how they could do so when they were calling them monkeys and niggers, and that they should leave even though they gave a big amount of money for the dinner (142). Here again stands another example of racist discourse towards the non-whites despite the fact that they deal with them in trade and use their power and money. But when the occasion occurs, many whites would always express their superiority over the natives and their hidden racist attitudes, which refers to the kind of relationship they have.

Besides the above-mentioned incident of the Indian trader of opium: Bahram, his opinions are not given much space. He trades with the British and Americans in opium transporting it to Canton and hence to China, but the main decisions are taken by them. He is even told by one of the British traders that he does not belong to a powerful country as Britain to defend his loss of opium because of the Chinese officials' decision that all foreign merchants should give up all their loads of opium to the Chinese government. Bahram's thoughts about the matter are presented in a few

times where the only thing that bothers him is the money of other small traders in India that he needs to pay by other means since he will not be able to sell opium. He does not actually think of free trade or any other hypocrite pretexts the British and American traders give. The only thing that bothers him is that he will owe big amounts of money to other people and which he cannot afford. Despite his many successful deals he has made before, this time neither the Chinese officials nor nature are on his side. For on the way to Canton, he has lost a lot of chests of opium because of the storm that hit his ship (16). At the beginning, things were better for him. Bahram enters the world of opium trade after he has convinced his father-in-law, who has been working in the building of Indian ships all his life, that the trade in opium is way more profitable. He tells him:

I know you and your family are committed to manufacturing and engineering. But look at the world around us; look at how it is changing. Today the biggest profits don't come from selling useful things: quite the opposite. The profits come from selling things that are not of any real use. Look at this new kind of white sugar that people are bringing from China - this thing they call 'cheeni'. Is it any sweeter than honey or palm-jaggery? No, but people pay twice as much for it or even more. Look at all the money that people are making from selling rum and gin. Are these any better than our own toddy and wine and sharaab? No, but people want them. Opium is just like that. It is completely useless unless you're sick, but still people want it. And it is such a thing that once people start using it they can't stop; the market just gets larger and larger. That is why the British are trying to take over the trade and keep it to themselves. (23)

Giving his father-in-law all of these arguments, Bahram asserts that there is no harm in making some money from it. So for him, even though opium is useless and even harmful except when one is ill, people still want it. Bahram's reasoning is that there is no harm in trading with something that people want. This is actually what they have been looking for during these last years, as he asserts. They are glad to pay more money on things that are neither useful nor beneficial to them. As a result, he asks his father-in-law to firstly give him permission to make an exploratory voyage to Canton

because all those who trade with China profit the most. His father-in-law and his brothers-in-law, who have not been in agreement with this, are all surprised with the money he brings after his first trade in canton. However, this time things have changed and Bahram is losing a lot. His opinions show that even some non-native native characters are involved in the trade of opium like the British and Americans but not quite so. They do imitate them both in the trade and the excuses they provide, but they cannot reach the same ranks of these Europeans and Americans.

Canton, thus, represents a place of profit for many foreigners as it serves as a refuge for prisoners and unjustly-convicted foreigners like Deeti, Neel, and many of the Ibis ship travellers. Commenting on the situation of the foreign traders of opium in addition to the trade in plants, Robin writes in a letter to Paulette that he does not know what to make of all of what has happened because the latter is very special and extraordinary. But, then, he writes that it may not really be so for Canton. He writes:

Flowers and opium, opium and flowers!

It is odd to think that this city, which has absorbed so much of the world's evil, has given, in return, so much beauty.

Reading your letters, I am amazed to think of all the flowers it has sent out into the world: chrysanthemums, peonies, tiger lilies, wisteria, rhododendrons, azaleas, asters, gardenias, begonias, camellias, hydrangeas, primroses, heavenly bamboo, a juniper, a cypress, climbing tea-roses and roses that flower many times over - these and many more. Were it in my power I would enjoin upon every gardener in the world that they remember, when they plant these blooms, that all of them came to their gardens by grace of this one city - this crowded, noisome, noisy, voluptuous place we call Canton.

One day all the rest will be forgotten - Fanqui-town and its Friendships, the opium and the flower-boats; even perhaps the paintings (for I doubt that anyone will ever love these pictures (and painters) as much as I do; this is, after all, a bastard art, neither sufficiently Chinese nor European, and thus likely to be displeasing to many).

But when all the rest is forgotten the flowers will remain, will they not, Puggly dear? The flowers of Canton are immortal and will bloom forever. (185)

All that Robin writes about Canton is indeed very important. This is not the first time he expresses his love and strong attraction he feels towards Canton. He also summarizes how this place gathers different things that can be opposite to each other.

This makes Robin into the category of non-natives who have a friendly relationship with nature. His amazement of the generosity of nature that provides beauty when humans spread evil all over the place is telling of his recognition of the power of nature and innate beauty of Canton. The passage is informative, too. For while he is trying to emphasize the fact that Canton has given the world different plants, he even bothers to mention real examples as proof of what he is saying. However, Canton that has given the world harmful things like opium, Robin forgets that who has promoted this trade are foreigners and not Chinese. What he writes to Paulette also shows the power attributed to plants and greenery. For when men can possibly be forgotten, plants and flowers will always remain there with all the beauty they hold. Here again is another proof of the power of nature that non-natives like Robin recognize unlike his fellow men who see things very differently from him.

### ***Conclusion***

In *A Bend in the River* and *River of Smoke*, there are non-native characters who are foreigners to the country, either totally or partially, but are not at the same time colonizers. *A Bend in the River's* non-native natives fluctuate between Africa and Europe. Through the point of view of Salim, the Indian-African narrator of the story, we get to learn that his situation and that of people like him has become awkwardly unstable after the independence of the countries they always considered as theirs. As a consequence, Salim believes that the solution should be in living in another European country like Britain since it is more powerful and open for him to live a better life. Salim keeps comparing between his life and that of the rest of the inhabitants of the town (the few Belgians, some Greeks and Italians, and a handful of Indians) and the

life of the natives in their villages. He sometimes thinks that the villagers are better off in their villages back to their traditional mode of life having sufficient food for themselves while they, living in the town, have cars, houses and shops but with shortages in water, food, electricity, and petrol. But, he sometimes thinks that their life should be easier than the one Zabeth and the others have in their hidden villages. He thinks this way even though he does not know how life goes on there because he has never set foot there nor has he ever asked Zabeth about her life in the village.

Regardless of the shops, cars, and houses Salim and other have in the town, Ferdinand does not see any big difference between his life and that of Salim. This has led Salim to think that whatever the place he is at and however it is better furnished and however rich and successful he might be, his life would only be a version of the same life he is living now. This is because it is one's aspirations towards the place they occupy that govern them and not always the place that makes them change their beliefs. Salim thinks this way but later disregards the idea under the pretext that it is only his loneliness that has made him live such a life. He also relates his feelings of unrest to the place itself. For him, the change that the place/country has witnessed has had its influence on him, his mood, and even beliefs. But nothing seems to strongly connect Salim with the place, nature and the environment. He does not really want to see that there is anything that has to do with him or that makes him want to continue his life where he is currently living in.

For *River of Smoke*, foreigners like Fitcher trade in plants but do care for them and do not only see them from a profit-led perspective. In addition, Robin, Paulette's friend, who is in Fanqui-town in Canton, helps her investigate and find many plants



she and Fitcher are looking for especially information about the Golden Camellia. Robin does acknowledge the fact that Canton has provided the whole world with different beautiful plants and seems to worry about the fact that people may forget about this. Canton is also a main place for the trade in opium for British, American traders, and Indians like Bahram. The situation of this latter is somehow different from the former because he looks at the matter from the perspective that he will owe the lost money of opium to many Indian traders in his country. He does not react hypocritically to the Chinese officials' decision of spoiling their chests of opium in order to prevent them from smuggling it in in the country like the other European and American traders do, who they relate the matter to the principles of free trade and questions of power of their countries as compared to that of China. So, foreigners are racist towards him and his fellow Indians in the same way they are to natives.

### **III.3. Nature in the Eyes of Foreigners (Colonizers)**

#### ***Introduction***

This section analyzes the places that the colonizers in the novels occupy. In *A Bend in the River*, the European and American professors and business men do not go anywhere outside the New Domain. If very few of them visit places, it would be for hunting like Father Huisman. Nobody obliges them but they keep themselves imprisoned in the modern city built by the Big Man, not leaving it. For *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the British imperialists keep to the town protected by walls along its contour after they have pushed back the natives from their lands. The few times they go out of it is for hunting or attacking the natives. For the case of the Magistrate of the town and the narrator of the story, he sometimes goes out to contemplate nature or to fish. The British and the Spanish of *Bright Road to El Dorado* have also built forts

fearing each other and any possible attacks from the angered natives. But, they either keep to their forts or are constantly in search of El Dorado, preparing expeditions to collect the gold believed to be there in huge amounts. The foreigners of *River of Smoke* are equally obsessed with Canton because they see it as their door to success and big money. They keep to their assigned quarters in the island in order to deal with the native merchants in the trade of opium, in particular. Canton is also the source of many various plants and herbs with which they trade, as well.

### **III.3.1. *A Bend in the River's* White Men: Imprisoned in the New Domain**

The big man has established a modernized town in the middle of the forests of the country, which is different from the natives' villages. This has caused a change at the level of roads, buildings and the general appearance of the natives' country even though what is left now is just the ruined European town next to the newly built New Domain. The white men are invited to reside in this modern town that looks like their countries'. Such European influence in the African land can be linked to one of the influences that were executed in the past. Indeed, they brought different plants to the place. But since plants are foreign to the land, they actually stand as obstacles to the local people and their businesses just like the water hyacinths that float on the surface of the river:

But the water hyacinth was the fruit of the river alone. The tall lilac-coloured flower had appeared only a few years before, and in the local language there was no word for it. The people still called it "the new thing" or "the new thing in the river," and to them it was another enemy. Its rubbery vines and leaves formed thick tangles of vegetation that adhered to the river banks and clogged up waterways. It grew fast, faster than men could destroy it with the tools they had. The channels to the villages had to be constantly cleared. Night and day the water hyacinth floated up from the south, seeding itself as it travelled. (28-9)

So, natives consider what they call the new thing in the river as another enemy in addition to the one(s) who brought it. This is significant since the same Africans who believe nature to be on their side considering it as a refuge for them do not like foreign plants because they see them as harmful. In fact, this is the only case in the novel where one of the natural elements constitutes a problem to the natives. And interestingly enough, this is because this plant is foreign to the native land.

Describing one of the days without electricity where the smoke of charcoal braziers and other open fires is rising up among the imported ornamental trees of cassia, breadfruit, frangipani, flamboyant, Salim points out that such a view gives a touch of the forest village to the residential area where he lives now. This same area was forbidden to both Africans and Asians during the colonization period. This proves that the differences between different places of residence do exist and that the characters, Salim in particular, are aware of them. However, one cannot be sure if Salim's comment about the added touch of the forest village is negative or positive. But, what is certain is his awareness of such differences. But, such forest village touch can always stand as a reminder that this European-like town is situated in the middle of the African jungle. However, when Salim comments on the imported trees brought to the town can be linked to his previously mentioned idea of the forest village touch that he may find ironic. About the trees, he asserts that: "I knew the trees from the coast. I suppose they had been imported there as well; but I associated them with the coast and home, another life. The same trees here looked artificial to me, like the town itself. They were familiar, but they reminded me where I was" (32). Thus, everything that is foreign looks artificial and does not always suit the land that is brought to it. Or

it may be the opposite, it is the land that does not welcome what is foreign to it. After the natives destroy many of the buildings built by the white men, everything seems to go back to nature and all what the European has added up to the virgin land of Africans has been gained back by nature. This fact does not seem to bother the natives at all but it does so for Salim. When talking about the game parks that used to exist and because of which many tourists used to come to take pictures and engage in the games, Salim asserts that: “The game parks had gone back to nature, in a way never meant. The roads and rest houses, always rudimentary, had gone...” (31). In almost all of the examples he mentions, Salim expresses a kind of a loss that such human-built environment is being lost to nature. As a result when the land is taken up by bush, it is a sign of ‘backwardness’ and a certain proof of the absence of civilization.

Father Huismans, the teacher at the “lycée” of the New Domain is an example of white men who show a certain interest in the civilization and culture of the natives. However what he does in his journeys to the “bush” and forests during the times he goes out of the New Domain is collect different masks and utensils that belong to the natives stocking them in a museum. During the military unrest of the country, Father Huismans gets killed without knowing the identity of his killer(s). His body is seen by many people floating down the main river in a dugout. Salim comments on his death as: “terrible” because it makes his life seem such a waste. This is because a big amount of his knowledge about the country and its people will be buried with him. In addition to his knowledge, what is more depressing, according to Salim, is “his attitudes, his relish for Africa, his feeling for the beliefs of the forest. [Therefore], [a] little bit of the world [is] lost with him” (50). Thus, Salim recognizes that Father Huismans both

understands and feels for Africa and the beliefs of its forests while he and others like him do not. Salim adds that he has admired Father Huismans for his purity despite the fact that he starts to question if his life has been of any value because of a death like that. Thus, Salim considers everything that has to do with Europeans and that is not here anymore as a loss to the African country, its people and history. But, apart from questioning, Salim asserts that: “as a life-loving man, [Father Huismans] had passed his time better than most of us” (50). It is important that at this incidence, Salim recognizes the fact that getting in touch with the real Africa is a right step to take in one’s life in that land. This is because the idea Father Huismans has had of “his civilization” has made him live a special kind of dedicated life. This life:

had sent him looking, inquiring; it had made him find human richness where the rest of us saw bush or had stopped seeing anything at all. But his idea of his civilization was also like his vanity. It had made him read too much in that mingling of peoples by our river; and he had paid for it. (50)

Here, again, Salim recognizes the importance of getting closer to Africa and acknowledges the fact that there are more things to see and learn about the country rather than mere bush. The latter being the only thing that Salim and others like him see for most of the times.

Even though Salim reports the fact that Father Huismans has had the reputation in the town (though most people have been rather vague about him) that he has been a lover of Africa, and that some of the boys at the lycée get embarrassed and ashamed of his killing. Others, Salim reports, get aggressive about it. Ferdinand is one of them because after he recovers from the days of fright, his wish to be back in his father's or mother's village is representative of his aggressiveness (50). But, Ferdinand, the native African has a different opinion about Father Huismans than that of Salim. Ferdinand

tells Salim: “It is a thing of Europeans, a museum. Here it is going against the god of Africans. We have masks in our houses and we know what they are there for. We don't have to go to Huismans's museum” (50). This refers to the fact that what Father Huismans has been doing during his whole life is meaningless to the Africans and may not really tell a lot about them. In addition, Ferdinand asserts that he and his people are aware of the meaning of such masks to them but the Europeans are not. This is because Father Huismans merely collects natives' tools without understanding their real meanings to the natives. Here, one would pose the question of the purpose or the usefulness of such a museum that can be for Africans or others. Like colonizers, Salim sees it as an addition to the natives' heritage. But, natives hold a different position, which refers to the meaninglessness of such a museum to their culture and religion.

### **III.3.2. *Waiting for the Barbarians's* British: Imprisoned in the Walled Town**

The novel opens with the narrator and the new comer to the town, Colonel Joll, talking about the invention of the sunglasses that protect one from the sun in the desert. From the first paragraph of the novel, the reader gets to know that the characters are in the “desert” (4). The narrator and the colonel who has just come to the town also talk about hunting, fishing and native ways of doing them. The following passage indicates the narrator's sympathy towards the animals while the foreign to the place Colonel Joll brags (shows off) about the hunting of hundreds of animals for no reason except the pleasure of hunting instead of talking about the reason why he has newly come to the place: “Instead we talk about hunting. He tells me about the last great drive he rode in, when thousands of deer, pigs, bears were slain, so many that a mountain of carcasses had to be left to rot ("Which was a pity")” (4). While the narrator tells him about the

native ways of fishing, the colonel continues talking about hunting “and about a huge antelope he shot” and how some natives eat snakes as a “delicacy” (5). This is a proof that colonizers in this story belong to the category of human beings who harm nature and the other creatures for their mere pleasure. In addition, there is no serious care for what they are causing to the whole ecosystem. The Colonel can be considered as one of the representatives of the ecological imperial process of colonialism. In order to understand the attitude of the Colonel and many British like him in his actions towards nature and animals, Lynn Jr. White’s ideas can be usefully used. Thus, the reason why the Colonel hunts down animals for his mere pleasure is possible because he believes himself to be a separate entity from the natural world. Moreover since he is the master over nature, as Lynn Jr. White proves, he gives himself the right to do whatever pleases him even when the whole ecosystem gets affected in dangerous ways.

The narrator who has lived a considerable amount of time in the African town seems different from his fellow British colonel in his attitudes towards nature and the environment. He is actually amazed by the nature that surrounds him in the town. Actually, the fact that he has lived close enough to the natives’ natural world makes him different from his fellow people who are indeed foreign to the place. The narrator thinks: “From the sky thousands of stars look down on us. Truly we are here on the roof of the world. Waking in the night, in the open, one is dazzled” (5). The town is a peaceful place in which few crimes occur to the point that they do not have prisons. If ever any crime happens, they only charge the doer gets is a fine or he is obliged to do some work (6). There has been a raid twenty miles from the town, which is not the ordinary case. The narrator tells the colonel that the nomads usually keep well away

from the fort. So, the place is a safe peaceful one. But, it is because of the intruder that things will get worse. This new comer is described as “blind” because of his wearing the sunglasses. This is symbolic because he is blind to the whole situation of the natives and their village. He cannot see anything related to him except that what he has in mind. The narrator recounts: “I turn to Joll. "He has probably never seen anything like it before." I gesture. "I mean the eyeglasses. He must think you are a blind man." But Joll does not smile back. Before prisoners, it appears, one maintains a certain front” (7). Another proof that the town is so peaceful and only brings good crops and benefits to the empire is the fact what was once an outpost and then a fort on the frontier has grown into an agricultural settlement, “a town of three thousand souls in which the noise of life, the noise that all these souls make on a warm summer evening, does not cease because somewhere someone is crying,” as the narrator asserts (9).

The narrator regrets the fact that he has watched the colonel’s investigations of the old man and his grandson. He, thus, thinks to go out to nature instead of witnessing such violent interrogations. He regards nature as an escape:

-if I had gone on a hunting trip for a few— days, as I should have done, a visit up-river perhaps, and come back, and without reading it, or after skimming over it with an incurious eye, put my seal on his report, with no question about what the word *investigations* meant, what lay beneath it like a banshee beneath a stone-if I had done the wise thing,— then perhaps I might now be able to return to my hunting and hawking and placid concupiscence while waiting for the provocations to cease and the tremors along the frontier to subside. (14)

If he fled to nature, it would have consoled his soul and saved him from the atrocities or the ugliness he witnessed with the colonel in the town. Nature in this context is, for the white man narrator, a refuge and a consoler just like it is mostly for the natives. Here again, nature is the place of comfort for the narrator. “So I ride back, relieved of my burden and happy to be alone again in a world I know and understand” (20). Even



though he does not understand the world of the nomads, he still finds comfort in that environment far from the colonel and his plans. In another instance, too, the narrator expresses his ease far from the town when he goes out of the walled city to wilderness. He thinks: "Another day and another night I spend away from the empire of pain" (32). So, the narrator flees all the pain he bears because of what the empire obliges him to do by passing time by the side of the native almost blind girl. However, the fact that he pushes her away from his bed when he sleeps at night may have a meaning: that he wants her yet does not at the same time.

The colonel does reflect the stupidity and blind-mindedness of the empire that believes the natives are stupid, ignorant and barbarous. He is impatient to raid out against the natives taking the ill boy as a guide. However, the narrator who is experienced enough and is less ignorant about the nomads recounts:

I try to dissuade him. "With no disrespect, Colonel," I say, "you are not a professional soldier, you have never had to campaign in these inhospitable parts. You will have no guide except a child who is terrified of you, who will say whatever comes into his head to please you, who is anyhow unfit to travel. You cannot rely on the soldiers to help you, they are only peasant conscripts, most of them have not been more than five miles from the settlement. The barbarians you are chasing will smell you coming and vanish into the desert while you are still a day's march away. They have lived here all their lives, they know the land. You and I are strangers you even more— than I. I earnestly advise you not to go." (17)

And, this is the main difference between the white intruders and the native inhabitants of the land: Knowledge of the land. The narrator describes the natives' land as "inhospitable". This same land, however, is considered a source of power for the natives and an important weakness for the empire. Moreover, what empire people fear the most is the unification of the natives of the north and south (14). This is exactly what the colonizer works on: disuniting the colonized to weaken them. As a

consequence, we learn that “garrisons were strengthened” (14) on the frontier and different people were sent to the frontier from the empire’s government. Thus, the colonizer is in the land of the natives taking more of it and oppressing them as much as he can. Meanwhile, he protects his people by distancing them from the natives.

Nature is the thing on which the white man should keep an eye. They are afraid of it because they are ignorant of the weather and the land. The narrator says: “I speak to the lieutenant in private: “Do not depend on your guide. He is weak and terrified. Keep an eye on the weather” (18). Likewise, weather seems to be a sign for what is going to happen to the narrator later in the story. For he keeps on having the same dream. In it, there is snow with which “dark figures” (15) are using to build a snowcastle. These children run away from him except a girl whom he cannot see her face. Indeed, when later the narrator accompanies the girl to deliver her to her people, it is because of snow that he suffers the most during the journey. Moreover, the soldiers in the campaign that the Colonel orders in the lands of the natives die because of the cold weather and the rarity of water.

Despite the fact that the narrator seeks refuge in nature for many times, he has a contradictory opinion about the town he lives in. The fact that he describes the town as civilization is meaningful: ““I ask,” I continue, “only because if you get lost it becomes our task here to find you and bring you back to civilization.” We pause, savouring from our different positions the ironies of the word” (18). It is ironic to call this faraway town civilization but since it is human-built and surrounded by walls, it can still be considered in a way civilization. This recalls the ideas of civilization and bush in ecocritical considerations and analyses. But after the Magistrate warns the colonel,

the latter does not consider his piece of advice. The colonel is ignorantly arrogant; he thinks that the maps (science) they got will save them from the natives or cover up their ignorance of nature and the severe weather of the nomads' lands: "'Yes, of course," he says. "But that is unlikely. We are fortunate to have the excellent maps of the region provided by yourself"' (18). But, the narrator assures him that those maps are based on little but hearsay. This is because they constitute some travelers' accounts that date back to over a period of ten or twenty years. He ensures him that he himself, the Magistrate, has never set foot where the colonel plans to go (18). However, still, the colonel does not listen to him and goes. But, the raid is surely met with failure. This stands as a proof to the white man's arrogance (and that of most human beings, as some ecocritics believe) that they are able to 'defeat' nature using their brains, science and technology.

### **III.3.3. *Bright Road to El Dorado's* Sea-people: Crazy for El Dorado**

When English Dudley informs Sir Walter Raleigh that he has heard that there is gold in the isle of Chacomaray (28), the latter thinks to himself that there may be gold there but it is not like the gold in El Dorado. He also believes that it is because of El Dorado that Dudley is full of life (28). El Dorado, then, is the source of motivation and life for Dudley and many like him. Later on, Raleigh again compares between the bright stones that Dudley tells him about and which are found in Chacomaray and those of El Dorado. He asks himself about the necessity of bothering himself to look for gold in the river of the isle while El Dorado is there waiting for him (31). He is thus looking for easier ways to get gold. When Sir Walter Raleigh does not hear anything from the natives, he just keeps looking towards the coast "feeling depressed" (30). The attitudes

of the characters towards the sea and the coast are interesting. The natives are afraid of the sea (because of what comes from it) and the sea-people are depressed because of the coast (for the same reason).

The reason why Raleigh wants to land on the isle of Chacomaray is that he wants to replenish his stock of food, wood and water before he sails up to San José to avenge the death of his kinsman whom the Spanish killed, “and then hurry to El Dorado” (31). El Dorado is the main reason behind his whole voyage from England to the New World. Later on, he even shows his preference of reaching El Dorado on avenging his killed captain for El Dorado comes first and last (33). He also thinks to himself that: ““El Dorado is brighter to the mind”” (32). This is because: “El Dorado would reward them – there would be no disappointment in El Dorado” (31). In addition to all of these reasons that Raleigh convinces himself with and which make him anxious to go to El Dorado, he adds that the latter will not only provide him with gold but also with “the fame of discovery” (35). Hence, the orientalist discourses that the Europeans have been spreading about their noble missions of helping out other nations are proved wrong in this context. For the only important matter to Raleigh and his expedition is the discovery of gold and the land it comes from. Furthermore, the mistrust that exists among the British, who supposedly belong to the same group, is telling of how much crazy and selfish they are about El Dorado. Raleigh, readers are told, trusts no shadow about the whereabouts of El Dorado (35).

For the British’ counterpart: the Spanish, the case is no different. All what the latter also care about is gold and material profits for themselves and their country. They are also self-centred to the point that they believe God favours them and that

most of the natives support them and not the British. This is related to their ignorance because we learn in the novel's story that the natives consider all Europeans are alike because they all come from the same place, which is the sea. Comparing the two Arawaks, father and son, Don Ricardo thinks:

True, they still looked alike-all Arawaks looked alike. In any case, he had never seen the cacique's face plain and simple; there was always the green parrot-feather stuck in the hair, there was always the red-painted face. But this was not the main difference that crossed his mind now. He was struck by the expression of respect on the boy's face-the expression of respect and servitude. It was easy for him to see that Ayun had given all allegiance to Spain. But looking at the old man he could tell that Spain meant nothing to him. There were the calm, confident smile and the face as red as if it was proclaiming victory. (6)

Here again, the idea of not being able to see the other natives is recurrent. Just like the British, the Spanish see all matters from their sole perspective. However, the comparison between the two generations of father and son is worth the analysis. Don Ricardo sees that the younger Arawak is more obedient and respectful towards Spain while the older one does not see Spain at all. The General then reminds Arama that he helped the English pirate Dudley when he came to look for El Dorado keeping him in their huts for many weeks. Don Ricardo complains that the Spanish have not learned about the English staying until after he left the village for England. The cacique thought he left for El Dorado. Thinking about the idea that he might have gone to El Dorado, Don Ricardo gets even more frightened. But, he tells the cacique: "God is keeping El Dorado for Spain. No one can find El Dorado except Don Antonio de Berrio." (7). Arama thinks of the word "God" that he has heard from the Spaniards a number of times by now. He wonders if the God of the sea-people is the same as: "the true and only God, the Blazing Spirit in the sky" (8). He does not think it is the same God, though. For the Spaniards do not look at the fire above when mentioning the

name of “God”. But whoever the God of the Spanish is, the cacique is sure that He does not favour Spain despite his ignorance of anything related to Spain itself (8). This innocence that the cacique reasons with is indeed significant to the reading of the ambivalent reactions of the European invaders and colonizers. The cacique’s thoughts take him to El Dorado but he refuses to think about it for he believes it to be: “the madness of the sea-people” (8). He thinks that they are all obsessed by it wondering if the city that all the sea-people speak of really exists. So the natives, through the cacique, are all aware of the true intentions of the sea-people behind coming to their lands recognizing the similarity between all of them despite the fact that they treat one another as enemies. He however thinks that the only difference between the English and the Spanish is in the way they refer to the city and in the words they use to name gold. The English Dudley calls it ‘gold’ while the Spaniards call it ‘oro.’ And the main similarity between them lies in the fact that they are both “crazed about it” (8). General Ricardo interrupts Arama’s thoughts to tell him that: “although the English are determined to seek El Dorado, we laugh, for they will never find it. They are the enemies of Spain and God will confound them” (8). Here again, he supports his claim with mentioning God believing that He is with them. As if God is a personal property. He also describes the cacique and his fellow tribesmen as: “the ungodly” who make friends with the English by providing them with food and water when they come (8).

The cacique tells Don Ricardo that the English are of his tribe, too. But, he starts off denying the fact that they are of his tribe (10). At this point Arama reminds him of what he and his tribe do to all foreigners; that while other Arawaks fight off the sea-people with bows and arrows, his people help them to make peace; that when the

first Europeans of Don Ricardo's tribe came to Arama's land "many moons ago", they let them pass in their huge canoes to which their cacique was Colón (10). Don Ricardo agrees with Arama asserting that that was the way how they came "to own" the land when Cristobal Colón, who was one of the sea-people as you call us he tells him, discovered Trinidad for Spain (10). This happened in the year 1498 as Don Ricardo adds to Ayun, the son of Arama, despite the fact that the latter would not understand what the year means for they count time with moons. This is the first time readers get to learn about Ayun's thoughts. He does not express his opinion overtly to the Spanish General but the latter's words make the boy feel as if his blood is boiling inside him. For he thinks to himself that he may not know about the year because each day is the same for them. However, what he knows for sure is that Colón did not discover them but they rather discovered him. They were actually the ones who saw the canoes come and it was unfortunate they did not kill him and his men because his people, the sea-people come now "with almost every moon" (11). This can be read as a powerful way to speak back to the colonizer by claiming the discovery by the natives and not the opposite. Ayun also adds to himself that: "Even if Colón discovered Trinidad, he did not discover Kairi. This land is Kairi and Kairi it will always be, whatever name the sea-people give it" (11). This refers to the idea of naming and the power of language that Michel Foucault discusses in his books. When Don Ricardo thinks of rewarding Ayun for helping him after they come back from El Dorado, he considers to "brighten his eyes with gold". But, he tells himself that gold among these people will mean nothing for they will not be able to either work it or even appreciate it (13). This reflects the racist inferior attitudes that the Europeans react with towards the natives.

For them, the natives are not able to appreciate what they do just because their ways of life are different. This, however, should not mean that it is less civilized or inferior.

Don Ricardo brings the idea that the natives prepare all of their warriors to eliminate the English for the sake of Spain. Ayun, full of anger, thinks to himself that:

Don Ricardo would like a battle here. Here at the beach and at our little village, Curiapan. And he would like a great number of our warriors to fight for him and to kill the English. Even if the English are many and the battle destroys our huts, he does not mind. Even if many of us are killed. It is for the glory of Spain. (15)

Don Ricardo does not see it from this perspective. He even tells himself that it is a great idea that he has come up with for it will not only eliminate the English for them but it will also provide them with a good extra ship to use for the expedition to El Dorado. Here is again another proof of the sea-people's selfishness and self-centeredness. Nevertheless, such idea makes Ayun want to explode out of hate and revenge (15). After the latter informs General Ricardo that it is Walter Raleigh, whom they call Guatteral is the one who should be on this English ship, the General feels more enraged for he knows what this English ship is looking for (El Dorado). Consequently, he feels the urgent need to finish the Englishmen forever (17). So, it is foremost a war of power and money that the Europeans are making on the natives' lands with their serious attempts to exploit them in every possible way.

Don Ricardo is not able to see the natives as they really are. He rather sees them as he wants them to be. He thinks excitedly about the battle that will be held between the natives and the Englishmen posing the question: "How could they reach the shore, facing those hordes of wild, hostile Arawaks?" (18). Despite the fact that these natives are known for their hospitality and generosity, he thinks that they are "wild" and "hostile". On another instance, Sir Walter Raleigh remembers what Dudley has told



him about Trinidad in general and the isle of Chacomaray in particular, telling him that the friendliest isle of all the Carib seas is Trinidad. And the friendliest part of it is Chacomaray, of the Cacique, Arama (28). But, these Europeans keep looking at the people and their land as they wish to see them and not as they really are since they are blinded by the stereotypes they have in their minds about the “other”. Don Ricardo also thinks selfishly that he does not want to see any Spanish blood spilt for he needs every man of his (18) not caring, as Ayun thinks, about the blood of the natives whom he is pushing to fight a war that is not theirs at all. He confirms this with him telling Ayun that he knows that together they will be able to bring “glory to Spain” (19). Ayun hesitates before telling him and “to Don Antonio” because he almost says “to Elizabeth”. This is related to the fact that to Ayun they all belong to the same tribe despite them having different languages. Nevertheless, he happened to like Robert Dudley very much.

Ayun liking Robert Dudley in addition to his father, Arama, feeling the same is interesting. The reason why the boy is not mentioned in the story may be related to the fact that he has engaged with Dudley in a more friendly way than he has ever done with the Spaniards. We learn in the story that: “Ayun [...] had been with Dudley everywhere – in the forests, at the rivers; everywhere looking for gold–” (19). In spite of Dudley asking Ayun to help him look for gold, the place that makes them get closer to each other and make Ayun like him very much is nature. They go around together in nature strengthening their relationship as friends. It is out there in nature by the river where Dudley takes off his clothes for Ayun and his father, Arama to know that the sea-people are just like them without clothes (9). Thus, the friendly attitude of Dudley

is one of the reasons too but what is interesting is that everything happens in nature. It is in it that they feel closer to each other and where differences melt. This shows the power of nature and the generosity and humanity that the natives have towards others.

The reaction of the foreign Europeans towards weather and the general atmosphere of the island are worth the notice. After Ayun tells General Ricardo that one thousand warriors are ready with their darts, bows, and poisoned arrows scattered in the clumps of *icacos* (19), the General gets afraid of everything in the dark beach. He goes to the Spanish fort, he comes back to Ayun afraid. The latter cannot help but laugh telling the General that it is only the wind in the trees, nothing else. This shows the ignorance of the General about the place and the surrounding despite that he lives in it. The General thinks that the island is not a place of wealth and splendour when he considers again rewarding Ayun for the help he is providing him with. Despite the fact that the native Caribbeans consider their land a home and a source of life, the Spanish General cannot see it so. Consequently the best reward, as he believes it to be, should be to take Ayun to the expedition with him to have the days of wealth and splendour later on. This is when he tells himself: “Here? Days of wealth and splendour here? No” (21). Instead, he thinks of talking to Don Antonio to assign him as the first Arawak General in the New world as a reward to him for saving “Trinidad for Spain (22). This proves, again, that this Spanish foreigner does not see things from the natives’ perspective. According to him, holding the position of a General in the New World is a precious award. He, however, does not think of how the natives would take it. From Ayun’s stands in the story, one can expect his reaction, that he will not like it

at all. For more than one time, he declares it very openly that all he wants is the departure of these foreigners from their lands.

### **III.3.4. *River of Smoke's* Foreigners: Crazy for Canton**

The novel is divided into numbered parts. The first ones focus on the natives and it is only in the last part that the writer recounts to us the British's and the Americans' deeds and opinions about different topics in addition to their reactions towards the matter of opium trade that is mostly executed on the land of the Chinese island of Canton. Thus, the natives are given much attention in comparison to the other novels. However, foreign characters and their opinions, and deeds are not ignored either.

One of the important British characters in the novel is Mr. Dent. This latter, as Robin Chinnery, her childhood friend, recounts to Paulette, is just as rich as Mr Jardine yet controls even more of the flow of opium. Being preoccupied with building up his fortune, Mr. Dent preferred to hover in the background for so many years. But now, as Paulette's friend learns from Mr. Karabedian, Mr. Dent is seeking to replace Mr. Jardine. The reason is, according to Mr. Karabedian, that as a student at Edinburgh Mr. Dent became influenced by an obscure doctrine about the wealth of nations to the point he becomes both a disciple and apostle of it. This is significant since Robin as a foreigner disagrees with Mr. Dent's beliefs describing them as 'obscure'. Hence, Mr. Dent attempts to apply it on everything and everyone he encounters. Recounting this, Paulette's friend feels even sorry for Mr. Dent. He writes to her in the same letter he sends her that his pity for Mr. Dent is related to him being enslaved to such ideas asking her: "can you imagine a more horrible fate than to be enslaved to a doctrine of trade and economy? It is as if a tailor had come to be convinced that nothing exists that

does not fit the measure of his tape” (79). Through this, readers get to learn that these Europeans who think that they are superior to many other peoples of other continents are indeed a source of pity and sorrow. Their faulty ideas imprison them to the point that they become unable to see the truth. The truth is that they are selfishly harming other people on the name of free trade.

After learning about the new measures of the Chinese officials for stopping the flow of opium to China, foreign merchants and traders gather to discuss the matter together. The conversations of the British traders in Canton are so much telling about their views. Most of them are for the principle of free trade that suits their interests. Mr. Slade, for instance, tells Mr. Jardine that he has clearly expressed so many times his disappointment with “His Lordship” (Lord Palmerston, the foreign secretary) at every turn claiming that despite his competence that was a source of hope that: “he would understand the importance of trade and commerce to the future of the Empire” (85). However, the result is not successful, according to Slade, because the measures that “His Lordship” has attempted to both protect and promote the British trade in China have failed “utterly and disgracefully.” And the reason, according to Slade, is the mistake “His Lordship” has made to appoint a man like Captain Elliott to occupy the position of the Representative of “Her Majesty’s government” in China (85). Mr. Slade then proceeds to defend his point by asserting that Captain Elliot has got his position just because of the connections he has in both Society and Government despite the fact that he does not understand the financial matters causing him to not be able to adequately appreciate the principles of Free Trade being himself a military man. The reason why, Mr. Slade thinks that Captain Elliot is not fit to protect his and

the other British business men like him nor their interests. Consequently, Mr. Slade requests from Mr. Jardine to clarify it all to His Lordship in addition to urging him to change his policy. Mr. Slade, indeed, declares overtly that this is no longer the age of military colonialism but rather the economic one by stating that His Lordship should

stop reposing his trust in soldiers and diplomats and other representatives of the government. This is a new age, and it will be forged and shaped by trade and commerce. His Lordship would do better to make common cause with men like us, who are here and who are acquainted with the conditions of this country. (86)

Thus, all of what Mr. Slade cares about is his own interests in addition to his country's. He never mentions the possibility of harming the others: the Chinese in particular. He does not seem to care. He also refers to neo-colonialism in an overt manner. The reason why he disagrees with "His Lordship" because of the latter's military background. Mr. Salde, then, believes it to be the time of economic dominance and not of military expansion. Then, Mr. Slade affirms that if His Lordship decides to continue as he began, then the future of the British subjects in this country becomes gloomy and dark. The reason why His Lordship should react immediately to Mr. Slade's demands in order to also prevent harsh criticism later and to not sacrifice the honour and interests of his own country (86). Mr. Slade surprisingly relates the British tradesmen's interest to the honour of their country only to protect their benefits.

After clearly declaring his strong position, Mr. Lindsay directs a frown at Mr. Slade from the other end of the dinner table at which they are sitting. He, then, reminds him that he is so lucky to be British because in some countries other than England he might be executed for the tone he utilizes with his leaders. But, Mr. Slade answers him by saying that he knows very well the value of his freedoms. This is why, it will be his utmost pleasure to see those freedoms extended to "the uncountable

millions who groan under the yoke of tyranny - most notably the wretches who suffer the rule of the Manchu despot" (86). These are mere imaginations of Mr. Slade. For his words do not show any interest from him to worry about those peoples whom he thinks oppressed and not free. What seems to matter to him is merely the money he gets from his trade in opium. It is Charles King who intervenes this time to answer him questioning the meaning of the word "freedom" if it becomes a mere stick for Mr. Slade to beat others with causing the word to lose all of its meaning. Charles King, then, draws the attention of Mr. Slade to the fact that he has blamed Lord Palmerston, Captain Elliott, and the Emperor of China but have not once mentioned the name of the commodity that has brought them to the present impasse, which is opium (86). Charles King, then, represents a category of foreigners who use their logic to understand matters and are able to self-evaluate the mistakes that they may commit or their country does. Mr. Slade indifferently answers that he would not mention opium nor any of their hobby horses because they are only obeying the laws of Free Trade. But, Charles King asks him about the laws of conscience. Mr. Slade, then answers him as follows: "Do you imagine, Mr King, that freedom of conscience could exist in the absence of the freedom of trade?" (86). However, before Charles King could respond Mr. Jardine broke in explaining to Mr. Slade that they cannot go very harsh on either the Foreign Secretary or Captain Elliott (86). However, one may deduce that it is okay if their trade of opium that is destroying many young men's lives harms the Chinese. The only drive for them is profit, which proves their ambivalence while coming up with such excuses and pretexts to obscure their main motivation and goals.

James Innes is caught unloading opium from a ship's cutter in his house in the Creek Factory. His case is another example of the foreigners' hypocrisy and selfishness. He is hence asked by the Chinese officials to leave Canton. There are also orders that any kind of commercial dealings should not be executed with him. The Chamber, which is the body that has been established to facilitate trade and commerce and which members are the foreigners, announced an urgent meeting to discuss Mr. Innes' punishment. The meeting is between the foreign merchants as well as the Co-Hong merchants. As the former refuse to leave and see that the party that should be blamed is that of the Hongists, who are the Chinese merchants who buy opium from him. Mr. Innes then keeps to his position and refuses to be the "scapegoat" to be blamed for something that he and others all accepted to deal in. Mr. Dent and Mr. Slade seem to be on Mr. Innes's side but Mr. King is astonished that they ask the Chamber to support a guilty person on the name of freedom (120). Here, again, Mr. King proves to belong to the category of foreigners who are sincere and conscious of the mistakes that their fellow men are committing. He does not change his position; the reason why he gets surprised that the other British traders ask him to stand on the side of a guilty man. However, the President of the Chamber addresses the Hongists:

‘I would be grateful, Mr Fearon, if you would inform our esteemed friends and colleagues of the Co-Hong that the Chamber is powerless in this matter. As it happens Mr Innes is not even a member of this body: he is here today at my express invitation, but it must be noted that the Chamber has no jurisdiction over him. Mr Innes protests his innocence of the charges levelled against him. As a British subject he enjoys certain freedoms and we cannot make him leave the city against his will.’ (122)

This stand of the Chamber's president makes Bahram, the Indian merchant and who is a member of the Chamber, too, smile to himself as he has been listening to it thinking that although the arguments are very simple yet they are still irrefutable. He, thus,

comments on English as a language that no other language like it is capable of “turning lies into legalisms” (122). This proves that at least the majority of the opium merchants are aware that the arguments they use are mere lies. The declaration of the Chamber’s president makes the Hongists fall into disbelief asking (through the translations of Mr. Fearon) the Chamber’s members to endeavour to make Mr. Innes leave Canton by reasonable arguments and as regards to the many years they have known each other in addition to considering that the consequences of the whole foreign trade will be involved in difficulties because of the defiance of Mr. Innes. On top of all of this, they are asking them to do so in the name of their long friendship (122). But Mr. Fearon cannot finish what the Co-Hong merchants have to say because of Mr. Innes’s interruption due to his inability to bear continuing to listen to that. He, then, bursts out shouting that:

‘I will not be defamed by a caffle of yellow-bellied heathens. They point their fingers at me, and yet heaven knows that they themselves have no equals in sinfulness and venery. They’ve slummed the gorger out of us at every turn; if they could put the squeeze on us this minute they’d do it in the twinkling of a bedpost. Why, I would not cross the room to spare them the cangue! It will only be a foretaste of the fate that awaits them in the afterworld.’ (122)

Even though the Chinese merchants think innocently that their British counterparts will have mercy on them on the name of their friendship, but the latter do not turn to that. What is more important than their friendship or anything else seems to be their money. In addition, the racist reaction of Mr. Innes towards the native merchants is indeed striking. Despite the fact that he makes profit from dealing with them yet he still dares to insult them on their own proper land. As a consequence to this reaction of his, the Hongists leave the room believing that Mr. Innes will not change his opinion. This latter bursts out to the other fellow foreign merchants:



'Oh look at all of you, sitting there with long faces while the stench of your hypocrisy fills this room! You who preside over the Sodom of our age dare to look at me as though I were the sinner! Between the lot of you there is no sin left uncommitted, no commandment unbroken - your every act is shameful in the eyes of the Lord. Gluttony, adultery, sodomy, thievery - what is exempt? I have only to look at your faces to know why the Lord willed me to bring those boats into this city - it was to hasten the destruction of this city of sin. If that purpose has been advanced then I can only be glad of it. And if my continuing presence brings the hour of retribution any closer, why then, I would consider it my duty to remain.' (122)

The point to be highlighted in his message addressed to his fellow merchants is the fact that he attributes sin to the whole city and not to the people who live in it committing the sins he mentions above on the city's land. This is highly significant to the postcolonial ecocritical analysis of this character's words. His anger and racism are addressed not only to the people but also to the geographical place that they occupy. Thus, the people and their land are both regarded as inferior and sinful. Here again, colonial racism is combined with ecological racism that both result in ecological imperialism.

After a number of events, Mr. Slade writes a letter against Captain Elliot's reaction towards the Chinese prohibition of opium and its trade on their country's land. Mr. Salde writes that what is understood from Captain Elliott's words is that both he and the English government reprobate the smuggling of opium on the river yet approve it and encourage it outside the river and on the coasts of China. Thus, to smuggle a hundred chests outside the Bogue is not considered either an offence or a degradation. But, simultaneously, to do so even if it is just one chest or a few balls inside it is both. This makes Mr. Slade question the consistency in the principles of government and public men and in those of the political and the commercial moralities. He also wonders about the way Captain Elliott will explain these orders of

the English to the local government without having to implicate the whole of the opium trade in the question. Another part of the letter states the following:

‘ “We have just heard that Captain Elliott has dispatched a petition to the Governor of Canton through the Hong merchants. He has thus betrayed the property and disgraced the character of British subjects to this lying, corrupt and unjust government. It is reported indeed that he has petitioned the Governor to place him in command of a Chinese cruiser in order that he may, in person, expel the British-owned boats from the river. This proceeding appears to us very likely a felony injurious to the Queen’s prerogative, being the offence of serving a foreign prince without permission. [...] ‘ “By custom, as is well known, virtually all the Chinese laws were suspended in the case of foreigners, except in capital offences. Let then the Chinese enjoy their opium pipes and the Emperor and his magnates proceed in their cruel and indefensible policy of sacrificing human life for the mere indulgence of a luxurious and debilitating habit until ‘the spears and lances arise to avenge the misrule’ of the dynasty.” ’ (134)

Here again Mr. Slade criticizes the Chinese and their government very harshly using adjectives like: “lying,” “corrupt,” and “unjust” blinding his eyes on his own government that he criticizes of the very accusations without having the courage to describe it with the same adjectives he uses with the Chinese and their government. In this context of opium, the Chinese government does not seem to have lied about anything. Their laws are clear and the intention is good in attempting to protect its people from the ills of this plant. However, because it opposes his business interests he wrongly accuses the government describing it with adjectives that it does not deserve. This is just another example that proves the double standards of these foreigners.

The ambivalent discourses of both Mr. Slade and others like him (Mr. Dent and his friends) who support his very idea of free trade are present again when they all meet to dine together. They express their solemn endorsement of free trade believing that the latter is: “[...] the cleansing stream that will sweep away all tyrants, great and small!” (142). The question here is how Free Trade can sweep away tyrants while the dealers of opium on the name of Free Trade are being the tyrants of the trade who

cause many damages to the people who consume the drug they sell. These are apparently just lies being turned to arguments, as Indian merchant Bahram notices earlier. After the ceremony ends, dancing starts among these foreign merchants. Dancing happens ironically as if they are not aware of the gravity of the situation. The authority and superiority complexes that they have prevent them from recognizing reality as it is.

Despite Mr. Innes's case and the different warnings and proclamations, the foreign merchants insist on continuing to do whatever suits them and their profits without considering the laws of the land on which they execute their businesses. When the High Commissioner of Canton -who has been provided with special powers by the Emperor himself- orders that Mr. Dent and the other foreign merchants give up their opium chests that they have brought to Canton, they refuse solemnly asking Mr. Fearon, their translator, to explain to the Weiyuen that he does not have jurisdiction over Mr. Dent or any other British merchant. Mr. Burnham adds to the translator that he needs to explain to the Weiyuen that: "nobody, not even the Grand Manchu himself, can claim jurisdiction over a subject of the Queen of England" (169). It is striking how even in this dilemma that all foreign merchants are stuck in, they only argue for the favour of the British merchants and not the other Asian merchants. This is actually another proof of their bias towards all "others".

As far as trees and plants are concerned, we learn in the novel that Britain and the major foreign powers have been doing all their best to obtain the most valuable trees and plants of China. The fact that refers to one of the forms of eco-colonialism. So, using the plant of opium in a negative way to damage the people and their lands

has not been enough for Europeans and Americans after them. Moreover, they have tried to exploit the benefits of plants and trees by transporting them to their native countries. Despite the fact that Britain's rivals have started earlier than her in this race, but she does have many advantages in this concern. For instance is the fact that the East India Company's establishment in Canton was larger than any other. Through it, Joseph Banks had encouraged some of the Company's agents who were more scientifically oriented to gather collections of plants and trees as much as they could. Despite the fact that they have been somehow successful but they have faced many obstacles in this trade. One of them was the transportation of the plants from China to England. Indeed, many factors made this transport very difficult to execute. For in addition to the "vagaries of the weather, the seepage of salt water, and the many changes of climate" (41), the attitudes of the seamen constituted a major problem as well. For the latter were not suitable for the job of taking care of the plants. In addition, they did not care about learning how to do so. On the contrary, these mariners "seemed to regard the plants as threats to themselves, and would deny them water at the least sign of any scarcity; when their vessels were menaced by storms or shoals, the pots were treated no better than the most dispensable kinds of ballast" (41). It is not left to the reader to understand the way these men regard plants and trees, but the narrator expresses it overtly by commenting on their attitudes that make one understand that they consider plants enemies to them. Here again, this is another example of many foreigners who consider natural elements as rivals and enemies to them just like the people who occupy the same ecosphere of those plants are.

It is not only Britain that makes profit out of China's plants, even its rivals and enemies across the Channel have recognized the value of China's plants. For instance, the gardens and herbariums of both Holland and France do contain many collections of the Chinese flora. However, like Britain, they too are not much successful. Among many reasons of their failure is one important matter which is related to the "obduracy" (41) of the Chinese people. The latter are different from other peoples whose lands are rich in plants and flora. The "Celestials" do have an eager appreciation of the value of their natural blessings. As a result, China has had one of the most knowledgeable and skilful gardeners and horticulturists in the world. These gardeners and such could not be tempted by the continuous attempts of the Europeans with bribes and traps to give up what they recognize to be their land's treasures as opposite to other natives. An example is the Europeans' attempts for years to obtain viable specimens of the tea plant is faced with total failure despite the generous rewards they have offered (41).

Fitcher had accepted the assignment of gathering as much plants as he could from the foreign lands, and even though his departure and arrival to Canton were much delayed, the ultimate results of the voyage were good enough to earn him the patronage of the powerful Curator. So, a few years later he was sent out to China again, not just as a custodian this time, but as a replacement for William Kerr. It was this second voyage that was to establish the trade of plants for the British. Indeed, Fitcher is an example of those botanists and horticulturists who have been able to transport to his country many new plants from Macau and Canton, which will later be established in English gardens. As an example of his introductions to Britain's gardens

are: “two varieties of wisteria, a seductive new lily, a fine azalea bush, an unusual primrose, a lustrous camellia and much else” (41). Fitcher, then, stands as an example of those successful gatherers of plants and roses for the good of Britain over changing the whole ecosphere of countries, mainly those of Britain and China. The British and many other foreigners, then, are aware of the treasures that can be gained from the trade in plants and trees. The reason why they spend money and effort for this business almost equal to those they spend for opium trade.

***Conclusion:***

This section analyzes the places that the foreign characters, particularly the colonizers, of the novels occupy. In *A Bend in the River*, the European and American professors and business men reside in the newly-built New Domain. This is a number of buildings that has a European and American modern style and architecture and which was established by the Big Man, the president of the country, in the middle of the forests of the country. These foreign residents do not know anything about the real Africa that is outside the walls of this modern town. Father Huismans, one of those few foreigners who go outside this town, does so to hunt and to collect African objects. Indeed, they are not prevented from going out of the New Domain but they choose to keep themselves imprisoned in it. But Father Huismans, the teacher at the “lycée” of the New Domain, collects different masks and utensils that belong to the natives in order to store them in a museum. For him, and Salim, this is because he is interested in the civilization and culture of the natives. But native characters, particularly Ferdinand, do not see the matter from this perspective and cannot see the man as a lover of Africa at all.

This European influence on the African land, the modernized town inside the African jungle, does not actually stand alone. Europeans have always brought about changes to the African land. Plants are other examples that were brought to the land. However, foreign plants, like their human counterpart, seem to be in the wrong place. The water hyacinths that float on the surface of the river, for instance, stand as obstacles to the local people and their businesses. In addition, the residential area of the New Domain is clearly different from the native African villages. This is overtly expressed and recognized by many characters of the novel particularly Salim.

Describing one of the days without electricity where the smoke of charcoal braziers and other open fires is rising up among the imported ornamental trees of cassia, breadfruit, frangipani, flamboyant, Salim points out that such a view gives a touch of the forest village to the residential area where he lives now. Thus despite the foreign general appearance of the New Domain, there are always reminders that it is situated in Africa where native touches are added to it. Another example similar to the water hyacinths that are foreign to the land Salim mentions is the imported trees from the coast linking their artificial appearance on this foreign land to that of the town itself.

After the natives destroy many of the buildings built by the white men, everything seems to go back to nature and all what the European has added up to the virgin land of Africans has been gained back by nature. This fact does not seem to bother the natives at all but it does so for Salim. In almost all of the examples he mentions, Salim expresses a kind of regret that such human-built environment is being lost to nature. This is because Salim believes that when the bush takes over the land, it is a sign of 'backwardness' and an absence of civilization.

For *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the British imperialists keep themselves imprisoned in the town since they feel protected by the walls that surround it. They have pushed back the natives from their lands far to the desert establishing this town for themselves. The novel opens with the narrator and the new comer to the town, Colonel Joll, talking about the invention of the sunglasses that protect one from the sun in the desert. Because of his sunglasses, people think he is blind. This is symbolic because the Colonel, and many foreigners like him, is blind to the whole native situation. An example is the way he brags about hunting hundreds of animals for his own pleasure leaving the carcasses out there in the desert. However, the narrator, who also belongs to the colonizers, is different from his fellow men. He sympathizes with the animals wondering why the Colonel does not talk about the reason why he has newly come to the place instead of talking about hunting and native ways of fishing. Thus, the narrator who has lived a considerable amount of time in the African town seems also different from his fellow British colonel in his attitudes towards nature and the environment. He admires nature and finds it, in many instances, a refuge to him and a place of comfort and escape from the violent attitudes of the Colonel. He also seems content with the town because it is very peaceful and only brings good crops and benefits to the empire. He even calls it “civilization” because it is human-built.

The few times the foreign colonizers in which they go out of their walled town are, then, for either hunting or attacking the natives. This is because what frightens them the most is the unification of the natives of the north and south. As a result, they start strengthening their garrisons and sending more people from the empire’s government to the frontier. This stands for both the colonial and ecological racism that



these colonizers have towards the natives and their land. Furthermore, they start expeditions to attack the native tribes. The colonel can stand as a representative case of the stupidity and blind-mindedness of the empire. The raids he leads are all met with failure because of his ignorance of the place, its environment, and its native people.

The British and the Spanish of *Bright Road to El Dorado* have also built forts fearing each other and any possible attacks from the angered natives. But, they either keep to their forts or are constantly in search of El Dorado. They even show a considerable amount of ignorance and fear towards the land and its weather. Even though British Sir Walter Raleigh declares that he intends to land on the isle of Chacomaray in order to refill his stock of food, wood and water before he sails up to San José to avenge the death of his kinsman whom the Spanish killed, he also thinks to himself that what is more important is “El Dorado”. Indeed El Dorado, the place of gold, is the main reason behind his whole voyage from England to the New World. These Europeans do not care about the native people and their development. The only thing that draws their attention and interests them is gold. This is also apparent in the mistrust that exists among the British, and between the British and the Spanish who supposedly belong to the same group. They are all selfishly crazy about El Dorado. They even believe that God will favour them over each other. The natives, however, cannot understand how these sea-people are able to believe that such golden city exists. On the other hand, the European characters do not seem to care about looking at matters from the natives’ perspective. The only thing that matters to them is their interest and their countries’. For despite the fact that Arama -the cacique of the Arawaks’s tribe- explains to Spanish Don Ricardo that his people help all foreigners

make peace while other native tribes fight off the sea-people with bows and arrows, the Spanish still thinks that the natives are betrayers. He, then, asks the natives to prepare all of their warriors to eliminate the English for the sake of Spain not recognizing that he is including them in a war that has nothing to do with them or their interests.

The foreigners of *River of Smoke* are obsessed with Canton since it stands as their main source of wealth, power, and trade. They actually have their own quarters in the island where to stay in order to deal with the native merchants in the trade of opium, in particular, and that of plants and herbs. Such European and American traders in Canton believe themselves to be superior to other peoples of other continents, especially those of Asia and China. Their faulty ideas imprison them to the point that they are ready to wage wars against the Chinese or any other government that would stand in their way of making money. Indeed, whatever the outcome of their trade in opium may be in relation to harming the natives is not important to them arguing that they work under the principles of free trade.

The foreign merchants are mainly of three categories. The British and Americans who endorse the values of free trade regardless of the harms that they may cause to others since they believe themselves and their countries to be superior to all others; the few British characters represented by Charles King who still use their consciousness and logic admitting some of their fellow men's mistakes; and the Asian merchants as represented by Indian Bahram who are marginalized in the process of attempting to find a solution to Commissioner Lin's orders to surrender the opium chests.

As far as trees and plants are concerned, foreigners do also spend considerable amounts of money and effort in the gathering of such natural creatures. This can be explained as another form of eco-colonialism or ecological imperialism. Fitcher is one of the successful examples of gatherers of plants and roses for the good of Britain despite the consistent resistance that he and all foreigners face from the Chinese, who do recognize the treasures of this kind of natural riches and as a consequence resist these foreign attempts of trading in plants, herbs, and trees.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**WRITERS AND REPRESENTATIONS:**  
**COLONIALISM AND NATURE**

### ***Introduction***

Chapter IV presents the ways the four writers considered in this thesis represent both the characters with different types and the ecosystem that they occupy. The first section that is entitled: “The writers’ Representation of Colonizer/Colonized” deals with the ways and the space the four writers provide to present the attitudes of the different categories of characters: be they foreigners, natives, or non-natives. The second section of “The writers’ Representation of Nature” investigates the ways of depiction and the space given to nature and the environment, as well. In addition, it also analyzes the language the writers use in depicting nature and natural elements like climate, animals, and others revealing to what extent these writers are aware of the influences the whole ecosphere can have on its inhabitants.

#### **IV.1. The writers’ Representation of Colonizer/Colonized**

##### ***Introduction***

This section analyses the ways writers represent both colonized characters (the natives) and the colonizers (the foreigners). Through the analysis, the space that each writer allows for any kind of character is revealed. V. S. Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* fluctuates between sometimes ambivalent and other times objective representations of the process of colonialism and the influence it may have resulted in on the people and their lands mainly through the voice of the narrator, Salim. In his *Waiting for the Barbarians*, John Maxwell Coetzee presents through the voice of the white man and the narrator the image of the foreign colonizers as being the real Barbarians. Michael Anthony provides a clear distinction between the gentle peaceful land-people, who are the natives, and the gold-seeking violent sea-people, who are the British and Spaniards searching for El Dorado: the land of gold. *River of Smoke*’s foreign merchants are

presented by Amitav Ghosh as people who are blinded by their own profits not paying attention to any damage they may cause to others especially the natives of the land on which they trade: China. Ghosh, however, also presents the other group of foreigners who seem not to mean harm towards China and its people. On the contrary, even though they are a minority but they like the place appreciating its worth.

#### **IV.1.1. *A Bend in the River*: Ambivalent or Objective Representation of Colonialism?**

V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* has been widely celebrated as being one of the greatest stories that deals with the process of how ex-colonized peoples establish themselves and their countries as nations after independence<sup>19</sup>. For this reason, the novel is dealt with as part of postcolonial literature. Salim, the novel's narrator is an ethnically Indian Muslim and a shopkeeper in a small growing city in the heart of the unnamed African country's interior. Given his hyphenated identity, Salim is theoretically able to observe objectively the rapid changes in Africa with an outsider's distance. However, despite the fact that the narrator of Naipaul's story is an educated, intelligent, and humane character and seems to be objectively attempting to reflect on the situation of the newly independent African country(s), some critics go further in accusing V. S. Naipaul of being a supporter of what is known nowadays as "neocolonialism" because of the bleak image this narrator-protagonist depicts of the unnamed African country he lives in in particular and that of Africa in general. Such critics argue that the voice that Naipaul uses in this novel through Salim's narration is much like that of the white man colonizer<sup>20</sup>. What follows is, thence, an analysis of

---

<sup>19</sup> See McCrum, Mukherjee, Mustafa, Packer, Shankar and Wheatcroft.

<sup>20</sup> See Burger, Harrow, Said and Samantrai.

how the writer through the lens of Salim represents the colonizer, colonized and the connection and/or comparison between them.

Salim is in constant search of the good place, other than Africa, to settle in. This wish becomes insistent or is intensified because of the changes overcoming “new” Africa especially continuous tribal conflicts and the racist approaches of the authorities. Salim relates his feeling of insecurity for his and his fellow-people’s position on the coast to his temperament. But he asserts that events in the country have been accelerating and nothing is able to calm him down. He recounts: “Events in this part of Africa began to move fast. To the north there was a bloody rebellion of an up-country tribe which the British seemed unable to put down; and there were explosions of disobedience and rage in other places as well” (11). His accounts seem objective without siding with any party. But, he also declares in that same passage that what accentuates his fear is not his nervousness: “that made me feel that the political system we had known was coming to an end, and that what was going to replace it wasn’t going to be pleasant. I feared the *lies*--black men assuming the lies of white men” (11). Through this, Salim proves his awareness of the fact that the African leaders of the newly independent countries are mimicking the colonizers in their lies about a better future. He, thus, acknowledges that white men too lie to the peoples they colonize. Henceforth, the native Africans who take over the control of the country are no different from the ex-colonizers. This can be analyzed as the colonized’ attempt to “mimic” the colonizer by adopting his cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values. But, the result is almost a reproduction of those traits in the form of a ‘blurred copy’ of the colonizer that seems to be as quite threatening as that of the colonizer.

Salim does relate the violent status that the country has reached to the colonizer. He believes, in different instances, that the white man is the reason for the Africans' disconnections with their own past. He observes:

If it was Europe that gave us on the coast some idea of our history, it was Europe, I feel, that also introduced us to the lie. [We] had never lied about ourselves . . . because we never assessed ourselves and didn't think there was anything for us to lie about. . . . But the Europeans could do one thing and say something quite different; and they could act in this way because they had an idea of what they owed to their civilization. It was their great advantage over us. The Europeans wanted gold and slaves like everybody else; but at the same time they wanted statues put up to themselves as people who had done good things for the slaves. Being an intelligent and energetic people, and at the peak of their powers, they could express both sides of their civilization; and they got both the slaves and the statues. (16-7)

The Europeans are therefore, according to Salim, the ones who have encouraged Africans' backwardness and sense of inferiority about themselves. White men are the ones who have written Africans' history and, hence, have asked them to only believe in their version of it because they are more powerful than the natives. This can also be linked to Michel Foucault's concept of "power" and "knowledge." Since the white man is the one who writes the Africans' history, he is the one knowledgeable about them and who consequently has power over them. So, Salim recognizes the fact that they do not know much about their past and the little they know may not be true. Furthermore, Salim analyzes what Europeans have been doing to their history. He asserts that they have been constructing lies about what they have done to other nations. The result of such lies is the establishment of the statue of nobility to the European despite the fact that he has got gold and slaves in the process of their mission. Salim takes it further when he criticizes the order that has been established by the white man's administration before independence. He says: "[t]here had been order once, but that order had had its own dishonesties and cruelties-that was why the town



had been wrecked" (36). So, even the order that had prevailed during colonial times was a fake one, full of its own violence and injustices. This is why, according to Salim, the town has met its downfall.

Till now, Salim seems to be on the side of Africans and Africa. He objectively describes the changes occurring to people and their dispersing as well as their environment. But, soon, he starts to identify the country as not actually his own. As a consequence, he constantly searches for a safer place to settle in. This safer place can be found nowhere in Africa but rather somewhere else. The problem with Salim, then, seems to be that he is even more pessimistic than the white man himself. His encounter with Father Huismans, the Belgian headmaster, is indicative of the man's optimism about the future of Africa, optimism that Salim cannot see, himself: "Out of simple events beside that wide muddy river, out of the mingling of peoples, great things were to come one day" (39). So, Africa is no safe place either now or later, according to Salim. But for Father Huismans, things will have to get better one day. It is a "futureless" country for both Salim and people like him who are not purely Africans. What is ironic is the fact that Father Huismans does not believe in Africa for its own sake but rather because of his belief and trust in Europeans. Salim states:

[Father Huismans] wasn't resentful, as some of his countrymen were, of what had happened to the European town. He wasn't wounded by the insults that had been offered to the monuments and the statues. It wasn't because he was more ready to forgive, or had a better understanding of what had been done to the Africans. For him, the destruction of the European town, the town that his countrymen had built, was only a temporary setback. Such things happened when something big and new was being set up, when the course of history was being altered. (39)

Father Huismans, the Belgian principal of the town's school is then, on the contrary, optimistic about the future of the African country because he believes the Europeans

will come again to this African place. Many have thought that he has been a lover of Africa, but Salim is aware that he is not really. Salim continues:

There would always have been a settlement at that bend in the river, he said. It was a natural meeting place. The tribes would have changed, power would have shifted, but men would always have returned there to meet and trade. The Arab town would have been only a little more substantial than the African settlements, and technologically not much more advanced. The Arabs, so far in the interior, would have had to build with the products of the forest; life in their town wouldn't have been much more than a kind of forest life. The Arabs had only prepared the way for the mighty civilization of Europe. (39)

So, the optimism of Father Huismans does not stem from his understanding of the Africans' situation and what they have been through, but rather his certainty of the Europeans taking the control over the town again and the country as a whole. Father Huismans' attitude, thus, is representative of the typical white man's ideology of power. To fight against the oppressor's abuses, Fanon believes, the oppressed have sometimes to resort to violence. Something that Salim does not seem to see very clearly at all times. Along with their attempt to decolonize their country, the colonized have to start building a national culture that suits their particularity. One that is different from that of the colonizer conflicting with this latter's hegemony that he consolidates in the minds of the oppressed. This is exactly what Salim and, thence, *A Bend in the River* fails to understand/present in all the story's situations.

Despite the fact that Salim has lived a considerable period of time with the Africans on the coast or in this town, he is still ignorant of who they really are. This is because he does not show any interest in getting closer to them in order to learn more about their ways of thinking and their culture. When Zabeth asks him to keep an eye on her son, Ferdinand, and to teach him well, he thinks:

What could Ferdinand learn from me? I had heard it said on the coast--and the foreigners I met here said it as well--that Africans didn't know how to "live." By that

was meant that Africans didn't know how to spend money sensibly or how to keep a house. Well! My circumstances were unusual, but what would Ferdinand see when he considered my establishment? (25)

Salim has been dealing with Zabeth as a tradeswoman for a good period of time now, and it seems that Zabeth is a wise woman who excels in business. Even Salim admits that she knows what to buy according to her own uses and those of her village people along with the other women who come to do business with her. Salim forgets all of this and repeats what he “has heard”, that Africans do not know how to “live”. What is ironic is that he gives himself excuses for his house’s untidy appearance as resulting from his “unusual” situation. As a consequence, Ferdinand cannot learn from Salim how to live. Also, he admits his ignorance of the whole place along with the other foreigners. He asserts that most of them only know the river and the damaged roads and what lies besides them. And beyond what they know is “the unknown” to them. They just keep to the places they know of flat, shop, club, bar, and the river embankment at sunset. The only far place they would go to is the hippopotamus island in the river, above the rapids during the weekends. But, “there were no people there, just the hippopotamuses--seven of them when I first used to go, three now” (40). Salim does not mention the reason of the disappearance of the animals but he confirms his ignorance of the place and consequently its people. In this case, Salim can be connected to the white man colonizer who has not attempted to learn about the native people keeping his distance from them. In addition, Salim does not know anything about the African religion and masks. He actually gets the only few things he knows of from a white man and not from natives themselves. Throughout the story, one notices that Salim never bothers himself to ask Ferdinand or Zabeth for example about the meaning of the masks. As a consequence, he thinks that the masks and other objects in

the museum lose their meanings with the death of Father Huismans. He describes the situation of the museum after Father Huismans' death stating that visitors are usually invited to it in which the wooden carvings remain as they have been whereas the masks start to deteriorate because of the un-ventilated room they are put in. He asserts, that the masks themselves, "crumbling on the slatted shelves, seemed to lose the religious power Father Huismans had taught me to see in them; without him, they simply became extravagant objects" (51). This is indeed very inaccurate since the real people who are the owners of these masks are still present. So, why would Salim think that their meaning will be lost with the death of their collectors who also have no authentic knowledge about them?

The relationship between Salim and Ferdinand is very telling of the uneasy situation Salim is at as far as the native Africans, especially the young ones, are concerned. Salim sometimes feel neutral towards Ferdinand whereas other times he feels envious of him. He also usually finds himself unable to understand Ferdinand's mind. This however does not encourage him to talk more to Ferdinand to understand. He just keeps believing that he is not able to understand him. When thinking of what is going on in the 'lycée', that he describes as to turning to being: "so quickly colonial-snobish again" (30), Salim does not feel he is getting closer to Ferdinand even though he understands more of how the boy thinks at this point. Salim thinks: "When I had considered him a mystery, distant and mocking behind his mask-like face, I had seen him as a solid person. Now I felt that his affectations were more than affectations, that his personality had become fluid" (30). Salim is, thus, distant from Ferdinand and consequently natives especially young ones to the point that he decides he does not

want to go to the 'lycée' that is "full of Ferdinands" (30) because just the idea makes him feel nervous. Here one can deduce that Salim develops a kind of resentment towards young native Africans. Thinking more about Ferdinand and native Africans like him comparing the latter's situation with his own and that of people like him like Mahesh, and the uneducated Greeks and Italians in the town, Salim asserts that the world is really quite a simple place that can be understood. Indeed, if too many obstacles are not put in their way, Salim thinks that he and his people can master their life simply. Actually, it does matter that they are far away from their civilization, "far away from the doers and makers." Actually, the less educated they are, the more at peace they can be (33). This is how he thinks their life get simple. But this case is not possible for Ferdinand, as Salim believes. For Ferdinand, "there was no such possibility. He could never be simple. The more he tried, the more confused he became. His mind wasn't empty, as I had begun to think. It was a jumble, full of all kinds of junk" (33). It is strange that Salim thinks of Ferdinand's mind in this way. Why is it full of junk? He does not actually inform readers of anything that can be related to this "junk" he refers to. And what about his own mind? On the contrary of Salim, Ferdinand is represented as a young man who is looking for a good future. Salim is the one who is always anxious and is not sure where he should go to continue his life or even start it over. Here again, Salim sounds just like the colonizer in many ways. One of them is that, like them, he ignores the natives and believes myths and stereotypes about them which constitute the white men's collective unconscious. Another one is when he resorts to binary oppositions when he describes natives and his people and Europeans. Furthermore like colonizers, he even shows his inability to

define himself without having to define the “Other”, the natives. This, as Edward Said believes, is what Westerners do with the peoples they colonize. Lastly, Salim seems to see this African country where he lives with European eyes. According to Said, Europeans invented the Orient and described it as a place of exotic people, strange landscapes, and virgin nature full of “scaring” bush. In fact, this is exactly what Salim describes to the readers, a place that is full of horror and uncertainties.

On a different occasion, Salim admits that he believes the future of the country to be insecure for all people. Yet, still, Salim envies Ferdinand because of his luck since life has been made easy for him:

You took a boy out of the bush and you taught him to read and write; you levelled the bush and built a polytechnic and you sent him there. It seemed as easy as that, if you came late to the world and found ready-made those things that other countries and peoples had taken so long to arrive at--writing, printing, universities, books, knowledge. The rest of us had to take things in stages. I thought of my own family, Nazruddin, myself--we were so clogged by what the centuries had deposited in our minds and hearts. Ferdinand, starting from nothing, had with one step made himself free, and was ready to race ahead of us. (63)

Even though Salim earlier compares himself to Ferdinand and African like him asserting that the “hyphenated” Africans can lead simple lives than native Africans who cannot help but being complicated, he now declares his life to be more difficult than that of Ferdinand. The envy he feels for “Ferdinands” is indeed extremely apparent. Salim is a contradictory character; for he sometimes does not like the fact that the African country is in bush showing his disagreement with the Africans’ destruction of the European town, but some other times (like in this example) envies the rapidness in building a modern town in the middle of the African jungle. Salim adds, admitting the jealousy he feels towards Ferdinand, that:

It was absurd to be jealous of Ferdinand, who still after all went home to the bush. But I wasn't jealous of him only because I felt that he was about to race ahead of me in

knowledge and enter realms I would never enter. I was jealous more of that idea he had always had of his own importance, his own glamour. We lived on the same patch of earth; we looked at the same views. Yet to him the world was new and getting newer. For me that same world was drab, without possibilities. (63)

He, thus, confirms that the bush is not a place to be envied of. But, the difference between him and Ferdinand is not the place but how they both look at things. Even though he realizes this, he still believes that Africa is not the place for him to flourish relating his future more to place rather than his personal potential. Thus according to his analysis, Salim should on the contrary be aware of the fact that the problem lies in himself and not in something else or the place. Like the colonizers, he is also ambivalent in his attitudes towards the place and its people. He seems to be stuck in his old world refusing to imitate the example of Ferdinand who sees newness in things. Nevertheless, Salim is happy to follow the lead of Europeans for his future endeavours. Later in the novel, Salim praises Ferdinand and the polytechnic students. He thinks that they are bright young men who have developed so fast speaking French not patois. "The magazines about African affairs--even the semi-bogus, subsidized ones from Europe--and the newspapers, though censored, had spread new ideas, knowledge, new attitudes"(73), to which these young Africans relate. Here again, Salim seems to go back to his objectivity by stating facts as they are.

At the end when things get worse in the country and Salim is imprisoned, Ferdinand urges him not to ask about him nor about anyone else:

"You don't have to ask. You mustn't think it's bad just for you. It's bad for everybody. That's the terrible thing. It's bad for Prosper, bad for the man they gave your shop to, bad for everybody. Nobody's going anywhere. We're all going to hell, and every man knows this in his bones. We're being killed. Nothing has any meaning. That is why everyone is so frantic. Everyone wants to make his money and run away. But where? That is what is driving people mad. They feel they're losing the place they can run back to. I began to feel the same thing when I was a cadet in the capital. I felt I had been used. I felt I had given myself an education for nothing. I felt I had been fooled.

Everything that was given to me was given to me to destroy me. I began to think I wanted to be a child again, to forget books and everything connected with books. The bush runs itself. But there is no place to go to. I've been on tour in the villages. It's a nightmare. All these airfields the man has built, the foreign companies have built--nowhere is safe now." (146-7)

Thus, the education that Salim always envies Ferdinand is seen by this latter as the means to destroy him. Ferdinand, after he becomes a civil servant in one of the government's institutions, comforts Salim by telling him that Africa is now no good place for all people, be they native or foreigners. This is why the lucky person is the one who gets a chance to flee violence, chaos and injustice. In fact, Salim presents to us a falling apart country that is not worth for living in anymore especially for foreigners. This is the reason why he leaves at the end of the story. But what Ferdinand confesses to him confirms the fact that the situation is bad for all inhabitants, be they natives or foreigners. This is not like what Salim attempts to highlight for more than once that it has been harder only for non-native natives like himself.

Salim's position, and behind him Naipaul's, is therefore ambivalent. He seems to condemn colonialism for some time and for others he acts in the same colonialist mentality. Attempting to objectively analyze the situation of the African country, Salim proves how the Europeans have been constructing lies about their colonization presenting it from a positive perspective even though they have benefited a lot from it on the expense of other peoples. In addition, he believes that the reason why the Africans have lost connections with their past is because of European colonizers. Moreover, he links the violent situation of the African country to be a result of the colonizer. The Europeans are also, according to him, the ones who have encouraged Africans' backwardness and sense of inferiority about themselves. In other instances,



however, Salim thinks of the natives and their ways of living just like how a white man colonizer would do.

#### **IV.1.2. *Waiting for the Barbarians*' Barbarian Colonizers**

John Maxwell Coetzee presents in his *Waiting for the Barbarians* two main types of white men. The narrator-type, that objectively attempts to admit his own mistakes towards the natives and their lands questioning the whole idea of the Empire; and the Colonel-type, that refuses to see anything other than what his imagination dictates on him. The narrator, the magistrate of the walled-town of the empire, is questioning himself. He is torn between who he is and the cruel side of the empire that Colonel Joll represents. He does not want to relate himself to the colonel. The following quote shows the existence of two types of colonizers: the ruthless type of colonel Joll and the more humanistic-like type of the narrator:

There is nothing to link me with torturers, people who sit waiting like beetles in dark cellars. How can I believe that a bed is anything but a bed, a woman's body anything but a site of joy? I must assert my distance from Colonel Joll! I will not suffer for his crimes! (61)

The narrator, then, distances himself from his fellow people who are torturers. He should not suffer because he is not like them and he does not torture the natives. However, in other instances, he seems to see himself as a cruel torturer. He is only sometimes aware of such a behaviour and he blames himself.

The natives are treated very badly by the 'civilized' inhabitants of the town. Indeed, it is significant to learn this from the narrator himself who informs the new officer about it:

There is a time in the year, you know, when the nomads visit us to trade. Well: go to any stall in the market during that time and see who gets short-weighted and cheated and shouted at and bullied. See who is forced to leave his womenfolk behind in the

camp for fear they will be insulted by the soldiers. See who lies drunk in the gutter, and see who kicks him where he lies. (69)

So, the natives are being insulted on their own land. And the British inhabitants of the walled town call them Barbarians while they are the ones who behave in barbaric ways. In another instance, again, the people prove to be peaceful and do not revolt except stealing some sheep now and then seemingly whenever needed. And the colonizers raid them back! “These are the only prisoners we have taken for a long time,” the Magistrate informs the Colonel. “A coincidence: normally we would not have any barbarians at all to show you” (8). This is the first time the word “barbarians” is mentioned and it is the narrator who seems good to them who uses it. But, he still supports them but he is now afraid of the colonel’s reaction: “I grow conscious that I am pleading for them” (8). However, he is angry at him because of the methods he uses with the natives. The Colonel explains his stand to the Magistrate of why he resorts to violence:

I am speaking of a situation in which I am probing for the truth, in which I have to exert pressure to find it. First I get lies, you see this is what happens first lies, then pressure,— then more lies, then more pressure, then the break, then more pressure, then the truth. That is how you get the truth. (9-10)

The colonel proves his blindness. He is here to see what he wants to see and hear what he wants to hear. He claims to be looking for truth while he is himself telling lies. He tortures the old man who is clearly innocent and has nothing to do with the raid the colonel is accusing him of being part of. So, he ends up by lying in the report he makes the guard write. Also, the narrator is wondering about the atrocities the colonel commits. This can be understood on the whole empire, too. The magistrate asks

himself of what such torturers do to clean themselves from the atrocities they commit against the peaceful natives and their lands:

I find myself wondering too whether he has a private ritual of purification, carried out behind closed doors, to enable him to return and break bread with other men. Does he wash his hands very carefully, perhaps, or change all his clothes; or has the Bureau created new men who can pass without disquiet between the unclean and the clean? (19)

Through this, one can deduce that the narrator is the only one who cares for the consequences of the tortures executed on innocent people. The others, like the Colonel, do not seem to be bothered of what they are doing since they have their own excuses for what they do. They are actually the masters who have the right to behave as they wish with people or with their nature and the environment.

The following passage can also be symbolic of imperialism. In it, the narrator judges his ignorance about the “barbarian” way of life and how the natives think about the white colonizers. He firstly admits that the girl is submissive to him as all barbarians are because of the way they have been raised but then draws back to reflect on his own knowledge of the barbarians:

She adapts without complaint to the new pattern. I tell myself that she submits because of her barbarian upbringing. But what do I know of barbarian upbringings? What I call submission may be nothing but indifference. What does it matter to a beggar, a fatherless child, whether I sleep by myself or not as long as she has a roof over her head and food in her belly? I have hitherto liked to think that she cannot fail to see me as a man in the grip of a passion, however perverted and obscure that passion may be, that in the bated silences which make up so much of our intercourse she cannot but feel my gaze pressing in upon her with the weight of a body. I prefer not to dwell on the possibility that what a barbarian upbringing teaches a girl may be not to accommodate a man's every whim, including the whim of neglect, but to see sexual passion, whether in horse or goat or man or woman, as a simple fact of life with the clearest of means and the clearest of ends; so that the confused actions of an aging foreigner who picks her up off the streets and installs her in his apartment so that he can now kiss her feet, now browbeat her, now anoint her with exotic oils, now ignore her, now sleep in her arms all night, now moodily sleep apart, may seem nothing but evidences of impotence, indecisiveness, alienation from his own desires. (76-7)

The narrator may stand for the aging British Empire that still desires the young African countries. Despite the fact that he ignores everything about the girl and her upbringing, he still admits his desire for her. In addition the narrator, just like imperialists, feels the responsibility to take care of the girl by cleaning her and massaging her body with “exotic” oils not caring whether she really wants it or not. Also, the Magistrate is representative of the empire he belongs to when he too resorts to violence. For despite the fact that he desires the girl/the land (in the case of the British imperialists), he still beats the girl from time to time. The reason of this violence he addresses to the girl can be analyzed to be because of his subconscious anger with his desire for her. Later, when he tries to take her back to her people, the Magistrate regrets not trying to learn about the girl and her culture. The fact that he is not able to use her language in order to effectively communicate with her is a mistake he admits to have made. “Perhaps if from the beginning I had known how to use this slap-happy joking lingo with her we might have warmed more to each other. But like a fool, instead of giving her a good time I oppressed her with gloom” (86). The narrator is frank in admitting his oppression of the girl. Like a typical colonizer, he does not even think of learning the language of the people they colonize. This is because it is usually the opposite; it is the natives who get obliged to learn their colonizer’s language. Because of his treatment to her, then, the narrator should not be surprised when the girl chooses her own people over going back with him when he asks her to do so. Indeed, the magistrate’s relationship with the girl is symbolic of the whole relationship of the empire and the natives and their land. In the following passage, the magistrate is reflecting on this relationship with her:

Is it then the case that it is the whole woman I want, that my pleasure in her is spoiled until these marks on her are erased and she is restored to herself; or is it the case (I am not stupid, let me say these things) that it is the marks on her which drew me to her but which, to my disappointment, I find, do not go deep enough? Too much or too little: is it she I want or the traces of a history her body bears? (88)

The narrator is not able to come up with one answer to his question of what he exactly wants from the girl. His relationship with her is of sure one of desire but he is not sure what he really desires the most. So, likewise is the relationship between the British imperialist and the colonized African native country. The desire of the imperialist for the country seems to fluctuate between the wanting of the country itself and the need for what bears of opposite notions that may help define the colonizer. The narrator is then objectively reflecting on what he really wants from the girl. But, the Magistrate does not see any need to communicate with the native nomads. It is only when he comes in a real contact with them that he recognizes the time he has wasted when the girl has been living with him without trying to learn anything of her native language. He now thinks that it is such a waste: “[S]he could have spent those long empty evenings teaching me her tongue! Too late now” (97). Consequently, when in nature together, he clearly sees how distant the girl has been for him. He claims that when he tightens his grip on her hand, no answer comes out of her. The only thing he can see is her outward physical appearance. But, he is unable to see her from inside. She is just: “a stranger; a visitor from strange parts now on her way home after a less than happy visit” (99). This is indicative of the whole relationship between the British imperialists and the colonized native South Africans. The latter stand as strangers to the former despite the considerable number of years they have spent together on the same lands. The town seems to narrow down the field of vision of the narrator. He is now able to

see, in nature, what he has not been able to do so in the enclosed place of his town in general and that of his room in particular.

When an officer from the Third Bureau of the Civil Guard investigates the Magistrate after he comes back from his visit to the nomads to give them back the girl, the narrator reminds him: ““We are at peace here,” I say, “we have no enemies.” There is silence. “Unless I make a mistake,” I say. “Unless we are the enemy”” (105). The narrator is being convicted that he has been consorting with the natives because of his going to send the girl back to her people leaving his post. Because the officer keeps silent, the narrator wonders if he understands him. The narrator shows courage in confronting the officer with the bitter truth of the possibility that they are the enemy, and not someone else. What the officer responds to him with instead is that: “[t]he natives are at war with us” (105). This shows the colonizer’s exaggerated imagination and fear towards the natives. This is because there is no sign that they really are. It is only their assumptions about them. The latter are just peaceful people doing nothing for the British or anyone else. But the British, because they have stolen their lands, are always alert to receiving any reaction from the owners of the land. The narrator then thinks to himself that this officer may have never set eyes on a barbarian in his whole life. The idea of ignorance is again recurrent here, as well. One of the reasons why the Magistrate takes back the girl to her people can be read as a sign of repentance for what he and more importantly his fellow people have been doing to the natives. As an act of kindness from him, he decides to take her back to her people as if the empire people should also give the natives their lands back. But, the officer and a big majority

of the people of the empire do not see the situation from the narrator's perspective. In fact, the Magistrate is trying to act fairly between his people and the natives:

One day my successors will be making collections of the artifacts of these people, arrowheads, carved knife-handles, wooden dishes, to display beside my birds' eggs and calligraphic riddles. And here I am patching up relations between the men of the future and the men of the past, returning, with apologies, a body we have sucked dry—a go-between, a jackal of Empire in sheep's— clothing! (98)

The natives have their own civilization. The colonizers seem only to be interested in it after a couple of years when they dig to find it to store it later in museums. However, they actually do not care about the natives themselves. Yet, still, they accuse him of being a traitor siding with the natives against the Empire. So what he has done, according to them, breaks the bond that connects him to the Empire. He actually sees it as a sign of freedom. He thinks:

I am a free man. Who would not smile? But what a dangerous joy! It should not be so easy to attain salvation. And is there any principle behind my opposition? Have I not simply been provoked into a reaction by the sight of one of the new barbarians usurping my desk and pawing my papers?" (106)

The narrator is, then, very aware of the serious consequences of this freedom. Indeed, what is interesting is that the narrator calls the Colonel who usurps his office as the "new barbarian." So, here again the real barbarians are the British imperialists not the natives. Also when the Colonel accentuates his torture against the natives, the narrator tells Colonel Joll: "You are depraving these people!" (143). And that the hammer he is using to torture them would not be used even on beasts! But, the Colonel does not consider those natives as human beings, the reason why he allows himself to use the hammer in torturing them. As far as animals are concerned, he hunts them just for pleasure. Thus, he would not care if he tortures them as well. This can explain how he is able to use the hammer on the natives' bodies. Also on another occasion, the

Colonel states it very clearly that the natives are “low”: “I do not think you are aware of how much you forfeited by neglecting your duties, shunning your friends, keeping company with low people” (152). But, the narrator does not consider himself part of the Empire anymore. For the Empire people are the real barbarians while he is not. He thinks that: “if there is ever anyone in some remote future interested to know the way we lived, that in this farthest outpost of the Empire of light there existed one man who in his heart was not a barbarian” (140). So even if he dies, people will recognize in the future he is not barbarian. But, the Colonel is aware of the empire’s power and control of the writing of history. He tells the narrator: “You want to go down in history as a martyr, I suspect. But who is going to put you in the history books? These border troubles are of no significance. In a while they will pass and the frontier will go to sleep for another twenty years” (153). But whatever the narrator’s intention may be, what is important is his objectivity in narrating and analyzing what is going on in that remote walled town.

The British hallucinate even more and more about the natives exaggerating their possible attacks on the town and its inhabitants. Many people of the town claim to hear cries of the natives announcing the war against them. Some of them would wake up in the middle of the night fearing a ‘black’ hand that is trying to kill him or her. As a result, the Third Bureau has given permission to the new commander in chief to build up more cells around the walls of the town. The magistrate comments: “time for the black flower of civilization to bloom.” The new commander does not understand him, he asserts (107). He may mean that the flower is black because it is symbolic of fear, ignorance, and hysteria of the Empire people towards the peaceful



natives. And without much effort, the natives have become again the main source of fear for the colonizers. It is their turn, then, to take over the control of matters.

Therefore, the Magistrate gets 'barbaric' punishments from his fellow people because he is, in their eyes, no longer a British man like them but a mere traitor who is siding with the natives. And this "traitor" dares to express loudly what they fear to think is factual about the real truth of the Empire and many people who belong to its institutions. So, they send this colonel because of the recent unrest that the natives, whom the narrator sometimes calls barbarians, have been causing. However, he denies himself the fact of hearing about any. It is only because of the hallucinations the empire people or the colonizers have against the natives:

Of this unrest I myself saw nothing. In private I observed that once in every generation, without fail, there is an episode of hysteria about the barbarians. There is no woman living along the frontier who has not dreamed of a dark barbarian hand coming from under the bed to grip her ankle, no man who has not frightened himself with visions of the barbarians carousing in his home, breaking the plates, setting fire to the curtains, raping his daughters. These dreams are the consequence of too much ease. Show me a barbarian army and I will believe. (13-4)

Such nightmares occur when someone knows for sure in his unconscious that they have stolen something or have done grave things to others because of which they are afraid from in their dreams. Also, this is very indicative of the way the colonizer deals with the natives. It is all related to ignorance, again. The white man does not understand the natives' language as he is not interested in doing so. "I strain to pierce the queer floating gabble of their voices but can make out nothing" (15). What is interesting about the above-quoted extract is to learn that who is actually suffering are the colonizers and not the colonized. The latter cannot help but having nightmares about when the "Barbarians" are coming for them. The narrator, Coetzee behind him,

succeeds in exposing this side about colonizers despite the silencing of the colonized natives in this novel's story.

#### **IV.1.3. *Bright Road to El Dorado: Land-people Versus Sea-people***

The third-person narrator informs readers of both natives and sea-people's internal thoughts of each other. One can distinguish between two types of attitudes: those of the natives, who do not like the intruders who only come to either exploit them or destroy their villages; and those of the Europeans, who do not trust the natives degrading them since they just see them as mere means to attain their goals. In the introduction to *Bright Road to Eldorado*, Anthony writes that his novel seeks to create the atmosphere of that particular place and period – an atmosphere which: “to the Europeans was pervaded by El Dorado, and to the gentle Arawaks of Kairi, an atmosphere pervaded by the sea-people” (ix). Michael Anthony is subjective in his description of the natives but keeps neutral in that of the Europeans. For he just call them “Europeans” in the first time he mentions them while he describes the natives as “gentle” in addition to calling their land: today's Trinidad like the natives call it “Kairi”. In the second time, he refers to the Europeans, borrowing again the natives' words, as the “sea-people” relating them to the place they come from.

The main voice of the natives in the story is that of Ayun, the son of Arama, the cacique of Chacomaray. Anthony gives the natives a resounding voice through Ayun's feelings and thoughts. In one instance, he tells his father that the sea-people: “are not cannibals, like the Caribs, but they are killers and plunderers and that is how they laugh when they are thinking of gold” (36). He also expresses his hatred of them because they kill his fellow people in their search for gold. This is a fact he repeats

over and over again throughout the story. It is interesting how the boy keeps repeating the same thing so many times to the same person (his father or a native from another tribe). This seems the author's way of asserting the real truth from the natives' perspective. This hatred is actually not addressed to all sea-people because Ayun feels closeness to Dudley with whom he goes to different places on his native island. When he accuses the sea-people of being murderers of the Arawaks, he feels "a tinge of pain for the bearded Englishman who had gone": Dudley. The reason of his feelings towards the Englishman is not only the trouble Dudley has taken to teach him English so that he, Ayun, can indicate to him the route to El Dorado (37), but it is also because he has been kind to him unlike all other sea-people Ayun has met. This asserts again how gentle these Arawaks are. For mere gestures of kindness touch their hearts to the point that Ayun and his father, too, have liked English Dudley. For Ayun can never forget when the other Englishmen in boats surprised him, captured him, and put him on board their ship. He recounts this incident, remembering that it has been his first time he has ever heard of El Dorado. But the fact that Ayun still likes Dudley makes the difference between him and many sea-people who over-generalize assumptions and stereotypes about natives. Instead, Ayun treats each one according to what he has done not to misleading presumptions about him. Ayun is, then, taken on the expedition with them so that he helps them find El Dorado. When he cannot do so, they start starving and beating him because they think he is hiding the way from them. He also remembers now that "many moons had come and gone before they returned, not finding the golden city they were craving for" (40). This can stand as another proof that the first group that resides to violence is that of Europeans and not the natives.

Later, what they have done is that they have just left him in the Gulf and sail away. The third-person narrator asserts again to the readers that Ayun remembers this: “vividly and bitterly” (40). Consequently, he has developed hatred towards these sea-people who, after they were gone, “had left him with [...] a body full of weals, and the English tongue” (40). So when Sir Walter Raleigh arrives at the boy’s island, and whenever Ayun hears them talking about El Dorado, he just feels like wanting “to spit” (42). Ayun feels disgusted with everything that has to do with these wicked foreign sea-people especially when it concerns gold. Thus, Anthony through the voice of the third-person narrator overtly expresses such hatred towards the foreigners backing it up with reasons of why native Ayun actually has such feeling.

There is also the problem of naming that bothers Ayun and the natives. When the boy tells Captain Raleigh about his “made-up” trip to El Dorado, he tells him that the tribe of the city is a very strange one. He also tells him that he has recognized that the place is different too because of the trees that he has never seen before and which are different from those of his native land: Chacomaray. The captain interrupts him, then: “Ye Gods, it was not? Not Trinidad?” When Sir Raleigh calls Kairi with the name that the Spanish or the sea-people use to call it, we learn that: “A flash of anger swept through the boy at hearing the Spanish word Trinidad. He suppressed his feelings and tried to smile. No, it was not Kairi, he said” (47). So, it is their land and it is up to them to give it whatever name they chose. The fact that the sea-people change the name of their native land makes him very angry. Moreover when Ayun attempts to describe the houses (but not the huts) found in El Dorado comparing them to the ones the sea-people build in their forts, Sir Raleigh prevents him from doing so. This is

because: “[t]he most great and noble buildings. Arawak, you cannot fancy them, so try not. Tell me of the houses of which you speak” (49). Describing El Dorado can stand as another form of power that the boy can exercise on the sea-people. With these lies Ayun has come up with about El Dorado, he seems to exercise power over the sea-people. He describes El Dorado to the captain in a way that bewilders him. He tells him:

‘The streets before me were of gold and the houses were of gold. The boat came up to the river-bank and a great cacique came towards me and his dress was of gold, and in his hair there were feathers of gold, and his skin was covered with dust of gold.’ (50)

Ayun laughs inside him and wonders how these people who have been able to invent many strange things that the boy’s people have not thought of making cannot see that El Dorado is just mere imagination! But, he enjoys the fact that he plays with them by telling them what they want to hear in order to get rid of them. It is also a form of power that he has over them because he is the main source of information for them. So, one can conclude that Anthony empowers his native characters. For in addition to providing them with a voice in the story, he shows how they exercise certain kinds of power over the invading foreigners.

The sea-people on their side go back and forth in the way they deal with the natives. Sometimes, they resort to violence while at other times, they go milder so that the natives help them find the bright road to El Dorado. So, for many times Sir Walter Raleigh feels impatient with the boy and thinks of drawing his sword, to cut off the boy’s head with one stroke in order to end the time-wasting episode during which the boy asks of seeing his father before leaving the island for El Dorado. Sir Raleigh does not show any care about such request and asks the boy to accompany him and his men immediately to find El Dorado. The only reason that prevents Sir Raleigh from killing

the boy is: “that it would make a mess here in the cabin and stain all his papers and maps and charts and books” (43). This is again another example that proves that these Europeans do not consider the natives as humans at all when the only obstacle to kill the boy is Raleigh’s concern about his cabin. Thus the boy’s, and hence any native’s life, is not important for this man who comes from the sea. The only important thing that interests him is: El Dorado. Sir Raleigh and all of his men are indeed crazy for it impatiently waiting to reach it. They are in fact just like the Spaniards who are on their side too, so much excited about finding the bright road to El Dorado, bright because of the shining gold the city has. When the boy informs Sir Raleigh about his knowledge of the “bright road to El Dorado,” this latter gets “so awe-struck” that he cannot speak. Instead, he looks around to make sure nobody has heard what he has just done (44). So, Sir Raleigh does not even want that his men know about anything that is related to El Dorado. He is greedy to this point. Moreover, when he decides to go to Port of Spain before going on the expedition to the golden city to revenge his men who were killed by Spanish Don Antonio De Berrio, he declares:

‘Seek I Don Antonio? In faith, I seek him not. It is my sword. I myself want none of him and I would to heaven he had not touched the men of good Captain Whiddon. But I am told,’ and he said this as though the matter were of no importance, ‘that de Berrio has a map – a map of El Dorado, and that he knows the way. If I could speak with him and get some of the information from him and then send him to -.’ And he said on low voice, ‘to heaven’.’ He looked at the boy, ‘Then we shall both rejoice.’ And more to himself, he said, ‘For then he will not fret for El Dorado and the route thereto will be no use to him in heaven.’ (43-4)

So, Sir Raleigh is frank with himself that he does not really care for revenging his killed men as much as he cares for El Dorado. However to others, he does not reveal his real intentions. So, he is ready to kill anyone in order to reach the golden city. Thus, his main purpose of going to Port of Spain is not revenge but it is the map that

Don Antonio has and which he thinks will help him get to El Dorado. This can be analyzed through Le Guin's idea that man has been constructing a story about him where he is the master over everything else, women, other creatures and the whole ecosphere. Thus, because these Europeans believe themselves to be the masters over the natives and their lands, they allow themselves to exploit El Dorado after they find it. They actually do not even think of the possible damages they may cause to the land and its people.

When Ayun tells Sir Raleigh that he knows the bright road to El Dorado, he gets really excited. Readers learn that: "He was feeling wild with joy. Deep down in him, he was still hearing the voice of Ayun: 'I know the way. The bright road to El Dorado'" (45). So, he tells his man Thomas Greensmith that he shall never sail away without entering the City of Gold. For he is sure he will be a conquistador. He goes on repeating the same thing to Greensmith asserting that: "I shall capture the golden land for my Queen, and my name shall be written in gold. I shall-" (45). Then, he repeats it again confirming that he speaks sober and that he is not in wine. But, his shipmate interrupts him telling him: "My Lord, you did drink-" (45). This is symbolic because El Dorado should be believed to be real by only drunk people, by people who are not really using their minds to recognize the fact that it is mere imagination. But, Sir Raleigh never backs off, he repeats: "...the City of Gold, even if I have to slit de Berrio's throat" (46). What shows to which point these Europeans are insane about this land of gold being ready to do anything for the purpose of reaching it. Also what is ironic, as Edward Said notes, is the fact that this same place that Europeans are afraid of is the source of their riches and civilizations. This is why it is understandable that

they are very much eager to find it. Finally, such instances from the novel's foreign characters go with Said's point that Europeans invented the Orient and described it as a place of exotic people and landscapes. In fact, these characters behave according to this belief even when they do not admit it overtly. In fact, strange landscapes and virgin nature full of "scaring" jungles is the way these foreigners see the native lands.

#### **V.1.4. *River of Smoke*'s Foreign Merchants: Between Opium and Plants**

In his *River of Smoke*, Amitav Ghosh presents almost one type of foreigners: those who see China from a profit-perspective. Even those kinder foreigners like Mr. Fitcher do benefit from China's riches and resources. Two main trade items are mentioned throughout the whole novel: Opium and plants. The Chinese's attitudes towards foreigners have recently changed to be unwelcoming except for the few native traders who deal with Europeans and Americans in the smuggling of opium and fewer others who help foreign botanists and naturalists to find rare plants in the country. However, still, Canton officials and people have always opened the door to foreigners for trade. What they do not agree on is their disrespect of the country's laws that prohibit the trade in opium and the transportation of its native plants and roses. Among those foreign traders, there are a few foreign businessmen who agree with the Chinese about the damages that opium may cause to people, and agree that all foreign merchants should obey the laws of the country.

Through the voice of the third-person narrator, Ghosh overtly shows the foreigners' real intentions and true opinions about the natives, their land, and the trade with them. The meeting between the Co-Hong merchants and the foreign traders to discuss the matter of Mr. Innes (who is caught by the Chinese officials smuggling opium to Canton)



shows that the foreigners would sacrifice the lives of the native merchants than part with their opium. This is because the High Commissioner has asked them either to encourage Mr. Innes to leave or the Hongists will be badly punished. Recognizing that these foreigners think big of themselves, the High Commissioner asks the biggest opium smuggler Lancelot Dent to go to his office to be questioned, and he orders that no travel permits will be issued to foreigners, so that they cannot leave Canton. Indeed, Mr. Dent refuses to give up his opium as well as the other members of the Chamber whose answer is to wait for the British Representative to come to Canton. Paulette's friend: Robin sends her a letter from Markwick's Hotel in Canton in March, 25, 1839 to inform her about all of these events in addition to the comment of Charlie King on the first reactions of Mr. Dent after the latter has received the order from the High Commissioner. He writes:

Charlie says that Mr Dent's face was quite a sight when the warrant was served on him. Within minutes he became a pathetic shell of a man; his vaunted doctrine of Free Trade was forgotten in a flash, and he lost no time in seeking refuge within the skirts of his government. He and his Free-Trader cronies are full of braggadocio and false conceit, but in fact they are the rankest of cowards - men who would count for nothing if they did not have the British Army and Navy to stand behind them as the guarantor of their profits. (173)

A different perspective is given here from Mr. Dent's fellow Englishman. The latter represents a minority of foreigners that endorses facts without any kind of biases.

Charlie King, then, thinks that Dent and his supporters are a group of cowards who use the principles of Free Trade as a mere pretext to their smuggling of opium but do not sincerely believe in them. The first experience that tests them out is that they seek the coverage of the army and forget about those principles. Amitav Ghosh provides us with all different perspectives of these foreigners. When Captain Elliott arrives in

Fanqui- town, Paulette's friend describes to her how he is received by a huge crowd of Chinese as well as foreigners who gather to watch as he goes from his cutter to the Consulate in order to hoist the flag. Then, along with his sepoys he goes to the Paoushun Hong to bring Mr. Dent, "who was, by this time, shivering like a leaf" to go to the British Factory that has now become his refuge and hideaway. Here again, Charlie expresses his disagreement with protecting a person like Dent who is known now as a criminal. As a result, Charlie thinks that Mr. Dent should not be provided with the shelter of Britain's flag as it is both a shame and an infamy for her (173). Moreover, the British believe that they are so powerful because of their army. Zadig, Bahram's friend, reminds him that he is not an American or an Englishman. This means that he does not have any warships behind him. Thus, this makes him ask that if the Chamber has to surrender him or Dent, "who do you think they would pick?" (171). This power that the British hold is again asserted through Bahram himself. When the British Representative arrives to Canton feeling that he is close to him makes Bahram feel safe for the first time in many days. He thanks God and murmurs a prayer of gratitude because having the British Representative nearby "was like being granted a reprieve" (172). But, the discrimination is clear among the same groups of foreign traders, which proves again the white supremacy complex of many of them especially the British characters of this story.

The long awaited meeting with the British Representative is called off in the British Hong where many foreigners are jostling for seats to attend referring to their big number who live in Fanqui-town. Paulette's friend informs her about the Captain's speech that has not lived up to the excitement and is unfortunately "the usual Burra

Sahib stuff' (173). In it, the Captain does not mention all the ways in which his government has connived in the business of opium smuggling. In addition, the case of Mr. Dent and the other smugglers is not referred to at all. Instead, he announces that he will request travel permits for all foreigners. If his demand is refused, this will be a sign of an act of war. Then, he concludes his speech with asking all foreigners to move their belongings to the English ships that are currently anchored at Whampoa making them think that he will later ask them to evacuate the whole place and leave. This speech stands as another proof of the Europeans' biased discourses showing their supremacy complex. The comment that Paulette's friend (Robin) puts in parentheses is interesting and worth mentioning since it comes from a French citizen, a foreigner who lives in Canton, too, but disagrees with what the foreign smugglers do. So, Robin is representative of the minority of foreigners in the story who are objective and do not mean harm to China. In fact, Robin asks his friend: "(does it not put you in mind, Puggly dear, of a dacoit leader marching into a courtroom and demanding the immediate and unconditional release of his gang?)" (173). This comment is really powerful in its comparison for Robin recognizes that what these British and other foreigners are doing is totally wrong. The reason why he puts that comment to show his shock of the Captain's reactions. Furthermore, Paulette's friend comments on the idea that an evacuation may be asked later from them. He asserts that he is not happy with the decision if taken. His disappointment with the idea of leaving "Jacqua" as he calls it is unbearable to him because he sees the town as: "the one place on earth that has offered me some small measure of Happiness [...]" (173). Canton is a place of happiness for foreigners not only those who deal in opium and get rich because of this

kind of business but also for others, who do not deal with opium but find it a real source of happiness to them. Here again, Robin proves himself to belong to the other group of foreigners who do recognize the positive side of the country to the point that he refers to it as the only place that has offered him “Happiness” (with capital H in order to emphasize it). However, it is worth noting that Robin is almost the only one of this type of characters. This shows a conscious stand of the writer to convey the truth that such friendly foreigners are indeed very few.

In addition to highlighting the opinions of foreign characters like Robin, Ghosh supports the idea that Canton can be beneficial to others in many positive ways with the opinions of a number of Chinese characters. The fact that Canton is a welcoming city for foreigners is something that the Chinese officials emphasize in the letters they send to the foreign merchants in Canton. The only thing that they ask them to respect is the Chinese law. All foreign merchants refuse to listen to the courteous requests of the Chinese officials to give up all their loads of opium stopping their business in this plant that the East India Company has been spreading on foreign lands but not on theirs. This again refers to Fanon’s argument that colonized peoples have welcomed the colonizer because of their hospitality towards foreigners but not because of an inherent dependency complex they may have. The reason why the Chinese officials emphatically repeat this very idea. Mr. King is among the few foreign merchants who are honest to themselves joining the group of Paulette’s friend: French Robin. He writes a letter to his fellow traders and merchants reminding them of the countless benefits they get from Canton in order to convince them to surrender the loads of opium they brought to Canton. He writes that: “[t]he energies and truth of God go with

us in every effort to hasten the reign of universal amity and freedom; but that era must be coeval with the time when 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' (186). Agreeing with most Europeans about the white man's burden that obliges them to help spread out freedom and democracy principles and the like, he still keeps wise drawing their attention to the fact that they should stop when it reaches violent "solutions". He, thus, also reminds his fellow foreign merchants that there are substitutes that have proven very profitable for all of them, tea as an example. So, he concludes his letter with another reminder that wars should not be started for mere economic issues and that they are responsible for keeping friendship between the two countries. But his voice seems to be a minority among his fellow British and other foreign merchants.

Ghosh provides readers with tiny details about the native Chinese officials' opinion giving them a resounding voice and a considerable amount of space in the matter of how the Opium Wars have started. The high commissioner sends another letter to the foreign merchants to emphasize the fact that Canton has always been opening its doors for them. But, he states that a few "evil" foreigners who trade in opium and bring it for sale cause fools to destroy themselves for the sole reason of reaping financial profits for themselves. He also states that because of such merchants, the number of opium smokers is augmenting. Consequently, he informs these merchants and all that the Chinese officials have decided to inflict very severe penalties on opium-dealers and opium-smokers, in order to put a stop to the propagation of this vice. He adds that they know that England forbids the smoking of opium "within its dominions with the utmost rigour." This means that the English are

aware of how harmful this weed can be. He, hence, asks them that should it not be wrong to send such evil to another nation? Also:

Suppose those of another nation should go to England and induce its people to buy and smoke the drug - it would be right that You, Honoured Sovereign, should hate and abhor them. Hitherto we have heard that You, Honoured Sovereign, whose heart is full of benevolence, would not do to others that which you would not others should do to yourself. Better than to forbid the smoking of opium then would be to forbid the sale of it and, better still, to prohibit the production of it, which is the only way of cleansing the contamination at its source. So long as you do not take it upon yourselves to forbid the opium but continue to make it and tempt the people of China to buy it, you will be showing yourselves careful of your own lives, but careless of the lives of other people, indifferent in your greed for gain to the harm you do to others. Such conduct is repugnant to human feeling and at variance with the Way of Heaven. (187)

Thus, this stands as another example that overtly shows the double standards of the foreign merchants and officials, especially those of the British. In this extract of the letter, the commissioner writes to the British official very powerful words as an attempt to address their consciousness kindly enough to surrender the opium. At the beginning of his letter, he uses all reasonable arguments available to convince them that this trade is harmful to the people. But afterwards, he uses harsher tone that it will mean that they are biased concerning their people and that of China if they are not convinced with the Chinese's reasoning. However, many refuse to hear or change their minds as they will be losing money. The latter is more important, for them, than the health and well-being of the Chinese. Something that the Chinese are aware of and hence clearly share with the British officials. This is what Ghosh succeeds in achieving: giving voice to the native Chinese group in addition to that of foreigners, particularly the British, in order for the reader to have the full picture of what has really happened before the start of the Opium Wars.

**Conclusion:**

The overall story of V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* is that of how a recently independent country is establishing itself as a free nation. The novel's narrator: Salim is an ethnically Indian Muslim who was born in the Eastern Coast of Africa and is now working as a shopkeeper in a small growing city in the heart of an unnamed African country, most probably today's Congo. Considering his hyphenated identity and his apparent distance from the native African tribes, Salim seems to be theoretically able to provide readers with an objective observation of the African country. As the novel's story unfolds, Salim does not cease from providing the readers with criticisms and objective examinations of colonialism in African countries in general backing up his arguments with what has happened in many of these countries. Salim recognizes that the country he is now living in is not the right place for him to spend the rest of his life. He explains his sense of insecurity because of both his temperament and the accelerated events occurring in the country. Indeed, for Salim, there seems to be no hope for him to change his mind especially because the African leaders of the newly independent countries are merely mimicking the colonizers in their lies about a better future. Salim, then, goes on explaining how the country has reached this state of violence. The main reason, according to him, has been the colonizer. This latter has also caused Africans to be disconnected with their own past pushing them to backwardness and feelings of inferiority about themselves. These Europeans have also played with their history in which they have given themselves all necessary pretexts and excuses for what they have been doing to others. Finally, Salim also draws the attention to the falsity and dishonesty of the order that has been established in the

African country by the Europeans. The reason why the country cannot prosper and consequently falls apart just after independence.

Despite such objective examinations of Salim, Naipaul has received a considerable amount of criticisms of being a supporter of “neo-colonialism” in many of his novels including *A Bend in the River*. In fact, the analysis shows that one of the main reasons for such conviction is related to the fact that despite his criticism of colonialism, Salim is way more pessimistic about the country and its future than the white man himself. This becomes apparent if compared to Father Huismans’, the Belgian headmaster, who has always shown optimism for the future of Africa. However, still, Salim is aware of the reasons of Father Huismans’ optimism as related to his belief that Europeans will come again to African countries leaving them now just as a temporary break. Also, the analysis reveals another reason that makes Salim related to the colonizer. It is his inability to understand the native Africans’ obligation to resort to violence during their process of decolonization. Even though he relates violence to the colonizer in the first place in some instances, he is still unable to understand the sometimes violent reactions of the ex-colonized. Moreover, Salim can also be linked to the European colonizer in his ignorance about the natives despite the considerable amount of time he has spent with the Africans on the coast or in this town. His ignorance is at the level of the Africans themselves, their ways of life, nature and the environment, religion, and masks. In fact, he does not even show interest in learning about anything related to them except for Ferdinand. He sometimes admits his inability to understand him. He even confesses the envy he feels for young African Ferdinand and the nervousness he gets because of the many “Ferdinands”. This is true



of Salim even if he does not see any possible good that can come out of the bush which seems somehow racist. All in all, Salim is ambivalent in his stands towards the natives using in many instances the same lens that the colonizers use to see the “other”, or the natives.

In his *Waiting for the Barbarians*, John Maxwell Coetzee presents to readers two main types of white men. The one who objectively examines his experience in the walled town on the African desert of seemingly today’s South Africa. This type is represented only by one character who is the narrator of the story and the magistrate of the town. The second type is mostly represented by the Colonel who recently comes to the town and other empire officers and British inhabitants of the town on the frontier. We learn that these characters are scared of the possibility of the native tribes’ attacks to the walled town they live in. They are always in constant waiting for the “barbarians”. However through the depiction of such characters’ ‘barbarian’ attitudes, it becomes obvious that they are the real barbarians. Consequently, one can deduce that the writer’s depiction of the colonial situation is relevantly objective in his providing both points of view with a voice. Nevertheless, the native colonized have an extremely limited voice in the story.

The narrator reveals incidents to the new officer of when the ‘civilized’ empire’s inhabitants of the town abuse the natives in different ways. But, Colonel Joll seems to be completely “blind”. For he refuses to see and believe any “truth” about the natives, if it does not go with what he really wants to believe. Consequently, he prepares for a raid against the neighbouring native nomads only to bring some to torture them so that they inform him about their people’s plans to attack the empire.

Moreover the real barbarians, as the Magistrate shows, are the empire people who “barbarically” punish him after they have accused him of siding with the natives. For the rest of the British inhabitants of the town, they spend most of their days in panic. There is almost, as the narrator informs us, no one in it who has not hallucinated about the natives or has not dreamed of native “black” hands that would strangle them or attempt to do something bad to them.

In his self-criticism throughout the story, the narrator feels a kind of regret because of his ignorance about many issues related to the natives. Actually despite the fact that he has stayed in his post in the town for years, he still does not know a lot about the “barbarian” way of life, how the natives think about the white colonizers, and even their language. He even blames himself for not learning from the “barbarian” girl during her stay with him. In fact, his relationship with the girl may be read as echoing that between the British Empire and its colonies especially this African country. This is because the magistrate of the town cannot figure out what he desires in the girl; is it her body or something else? Thinking that he has taken good care of her, he gets somehow surprised that she does not choose to stay with him after he asks her to choose between doing so and going back to her people. As a result, he also ends up by admitting that he has sometimes oppressed the girl. Furthermore, he confesses to himself that he has not been able to see the girl from inside. The only thing he has been successful to do is to appreciate her physical appearance. The narrator, despite his calling the native nomads “Barbarians” now and then, he seems to side with them in many instances. For example, when an officer from the Third Bureau of the Civil Guard investigates him after he comes back from his visit to the nomads to give them

back the girl, the narrator reminds the officer that they have been in peace with these peaceful natives. Also, he dares to tell him that they have no enemies in the town except if the empire people are the real enemies themselves. Even though he sees it as a mistake he has committed in front of the officer, the narrator also acknowledges it to be a sign of freedom that he has been able to speak in that powerful way to the officer. Thus, despite the fact that natives in this story are mostly silent so that readers cannot learn about their opinions, the narrator (and Coetzee behind him) has been successful in presenting the other side of the colonial story in this part of this African country.

In *Bright Road to El Dorado*, readers get to learn about the opinion of both the natives and the Europeans, namely: the Spaniards and the British. The natives are peaceful people who welcome all foreigners considering them all belonging to one tribe of the sea-people. The native Arawaks of Chacomaray are aware of the fact that these people have come to take away their lands, fight them, and use them in every possible way to reach their own goals. The Europeans, on the other side, degrade the natives even when they are in need of them to help them find out the route for the golden city of El Dorado which they are helpless to get to.

Ayun, the son of Arama who is the cacique of Chacomaray expresses his hatred towards the sea-people who kill his fellow people in their search for gold. Ayun and his father, though, have affection for English Dudley who has spent a good time with them on their land teaching Ayun English. This is apparently because these two parties have communicated with one another unlike the Spaniards who keep aside from the natives resorting to them only when they need them. But, the natives have always been welcoming providing these foreigners food and shelter whenever they showed up to

their lands. But when these foreigners come to their land, they change its name, build forts, and fight the natives who do not seem of much help to them. Knowledge of the place is the natives' source of power. It is because of this privilege that the foreigners are in urgent need of the natives to show them the way to El Dorado, which they are crazy about. Hence, we learn that these Europeans are so selfish fluctuating between being nice to the natives and showing signs of violence towards them. On one hand, they cannot be patient with the natives wanting to kill them immediately. On the other hand, they cannot do so for the mere reason of needing them.

In his *River of Smoke*, there is also a presentation of mainly two kinds of foreigners as well as detailed accounts about the natives and their opinions in different matters. The majority of foreign characters falls into the category that prefers its own profit over everything else. They also have, especially the British, a superiority complex over the native Chinese and other Asian nationalities. In the novel, they are mostly traders of opium and collectors of different native plants. Canton officials and merchants assert that the Chinese doors have always been open for foreigners for trade. But the latter have abused the freedom they have been provided in their smuggling of opium that is prohibited to deal with in their own countries. Charlie King belongs however to the foreign minority that admits their fellow people's faults arguing with reason. King thinks that Dent and his supporters are a group of cowards who use the principles of Free Trade as a mere pretext to their smuggling of opium but do not sincerely believe in them. But since the British believe that they are so powerful because of their army, they do not seem ready to take any step back in their opium trade despite the repeated requests and orders of Commissioner Lin. Robin, Paulette's

friend, falls into the category of nice people too. He disagrees with what European traders do on the Chinese land. He even expresses his love towards the place particularly Canton, which provides him with only happiness.

## **IV.2.The writers' Representation of Nature**

### ***Introduction***

This section is about how the writers depict and present nature and the environment in addition to the amount/care they allocate to them. Moreover, it is an investigation of the language the writers use in depicting nature and natural elements like climate, animals, and others revealing to what extent these writers are aware of the influences the whole ecosphere can have on its inhabitants.

### **IV.2.1. *A Bend in the River's* Bush Versus Civilization**

*A Bend in the River's* story starts with its narrator, Salim, describing the journey he takes from his home in the east coast to the town in the interior, "at the bend in the great river" (4). When Salim moves from his country of the east coast to the centre of the African continent, he provides a detailed description of the nature that he encounters; he narrates:

As I got deeper into Africa--the scrub, the desert, the rocky climb up to the mountains, the lakes, the rain in the afternoons, the mud, and then, on the other, wetter side of the mountains, the fern forests and the gorilla forests--as I got deeper I thought: But this is madness. I am going in the wrong direction. There can't be a new life at the end of this. (4)

This means that where there are bush and forests, the life that people would like to have cannot be imagined to exist in such a place. Nature is then, for Salim, the symbol of nothingness. The bush refers to what is opposite to human existence and civilization. Also when Salim arrives to the town he has decided to move to, he

describes the place as being taken by the “bush.” The bush is here again a symbol of deterioration (5). Indeed in many other instances in the novel, the bush is referred to as something that hides human infrastructural achievements and ordered gardens. When talking about the Arabs’ power in Africa that had been destroyed by Europe, Salim mentions the bush as the natural element that swallowed up the towns that were built by Arabs as well as the orchards that they planted in the African forests (10). In fact, the natural environment stands with its inhabitants by shutting out the voices of the slaves and their revolt:

I knew other things about the forest kingdom, though. I knew that the slave people were in revolt and were being butchered back into submission. But Africa was big. The bush muffled the sound of murder, and the muddy rivers and lakes washed the blood away. Metty said, "We must go there, *\_patron\_*. I hear it is the last good place in Africa. *\_Ya encore bien, bien des blancs côté-qui-là\_*. It have a lot of white people up there still. They tell me that in Bujumbura it is like a little Paris. (33)

Nature is usually presented as a protector of the natives and Salim seems to be aware of this fact. As a result, the writer is consequently equally aware of such truth. But in this incident, even though it is still on their side but it somehow stands against the unfortunate slaves. Here again the idea of the presence of the white man is a sign of the well-being of life is asserted, as Salim points out in more other different situations in addition to this one. People describe the town to be like Paris, which makes it a good place to live in. This echoes Fanon’s idea that the colonized envy the easiness of life in the white man’s town. The only difference in this case is that it is the group of non-native natives who only get envious yet not the natives.

Even though the bush is presented as a symbol of nothingness, the river symbolizes life and livelihood. Salim does refer to the river from time to time. This

means that there is a conscious awareness of the surrounding environment of the place. He informs the readers that he can sometimes hear from the shop the noise of the rapids, which he refers to as the eternal noise at that bend in the river. However, on a normal day he cannot hear it from his shop. At midday, everything seems to be dead except the river: “it was only the river, glittering in the hard light, which seemed alive. No dugouts, though; only the water hyacinths travelling up from the south, and floating away to the west, clump after clump, with the thick-stalked lilac flowers like masts” (43). Whatever the situation of the town is, the river seems to never die. In this description, the river seems to be the provider of lively motion and somehow hope of the town. Salim’s depiction, though, seems ordinary. He does not seem fascinated by the river. He just describes what he sees objectively without expressing his feelings towards such situation.

The economic changes that are happening in the country are narrated with certain attention to their influences on the people. After the end of the second rebellion and the coming of the new president, Salim remarks that people like himself start to feel the new ruling intelligence and energy that has resulted in the period of boom. This is because both order and the money coming from copper give Salim and his fellow people confidence to engage more in business. Therefore, different kinds of projects were started mainly the one that deals with natural riches. For instance, Mahesh, Salim’s friend is thinking of importing a Japanese machine that cuts wood to make spoons and flat wood sticks for ice cream. Salim is actually not sure if this product will appeal to the African tastes. But liking the idea, Salim declares that he now sees the trees differently learning how to smell and taste different kinds of wood

local and international that Daulat, the man with the trucks, brings them to him and Mahesh (55). From this, we learn that foreign trees and wood are being imported to the land. Here, Salim mimics the white man in his exploitation of nature yet he does not see that he is committing a sin by doing so. Then from the idea of wood, Salim and Mahesh start to think of any possible business from which they would gain money. Mahesh reports to Salim what he hears the salesmen chatting about in the van der Weyden club about the copper market and how it is gaining a lot of money. In fact, Mahesh reports: "It's that war the Americans are fighting. I hear they've used up more copper in the last two years than the world has used in the last two centuries" (57). Then, from copper he turns to the other metals like tin and lead in addition to uranium talking about the topic with Salim sometimes quite ignorantly, as Salim notes (57). This is again another form of natural elements' exploitation that falls into ecological imperialism even though Salim and his people are not direct colonizers of the country. However, their behaviour is exactly like that of white men and colonizers. Indeed, Christopher Manes' ideas that nature started to be exploited in severe ways particularly when Christianity, literacy, and science were introduced to Western culture can be used here to understand Salim's changed attitudes towards nature and the environment. In fact, this is exactly what is happening in this place. Because of the economic boom and the arrival of Western technology to the African town, its nature is being exploited by Salim and his fellow people. This is why they now see nature and natural elements differently. After Salim and his people engage in the business of natural riches, the idea of the bush comes up again to Salim but in a different way. The same bush that has always been a symbol of primitivism is now seen as a source of financial profit.



Salim declares that salesmen and himself felt that there was treasure around them waiting to be picked up, and that it was the bush that gave them that feeling. Indeed, he does comment on their attitudes towards the bush before and after this commercial boom noting that: "During the empty, idle time, we had been indifferent to the bush; during the days of the rebellion it had depressed us. Now it excited us--the unused earth, with the promise of the unused. We forgot that others had been here before us, and had felt like us" (58). This means that the relationship between man and nature is linked to the inhabitants' impressions and reactions that change from one time to another. Nature has always been there; but how it is viewed changes according to these people who are foreign to the place. For Salim who has always shown fear and uncertainty towards the surrounding nature seems now to be totally comfortable with it. As a consequence, he thinks of the different ways he can exploit it. This resounds Harold Fromm's belief that because man's relationship to nature is not of fear anymore, its devastative exploitation becomes more severe. This is exactly the case of Salim and his people.

Salim changes the way in which he sees the town after he experiences life during peace and the country's economic boom declaring that with these two factors in hand he begins to see the town as ordinary for the first time. He remarks about the period that preceded the boom:

The flat, the shop, the market outside the shop, the Hellenic Club, the bars, the life of the river, the dugouts, the water hyacinths--I knew it so well. And especially on hot sunny afternoons--that hard light, those black shadows, that feeling of stillness--it seemed without further human promise. (58)

The serene nature gives Salim the impression that nothing is going to change. Again, here, his belief that the bush and the untouched nature is not a sign of the modern

civilized life he is looking for. This is proved by his comment that despite the boom and the peace the town is living, he still thinks that he will not be spending the rest of his life at the bend in the river, like Mahesh and the others. However, Salim does not know where the good place he should be spending the rest of his days is because he never thought about it constructively waiting for an illumination to guide him of the whereabouts of this place (59). But, surely, the place should be something different from bushes and forests.

On the contrary of what virgin nature or bush stand for, the human-built environment symbolizes civilisation. But, according to Salim, the civilisation is not dead. "It was the civilization I existed in and in fact was still working towards. And that could make for an odd feeling: to be among the ruins was to have your time sense unsettled. You felt like a ghost, not from the past, but from the future" (17). Salim, thus, sees the future in buildings. This is why he describes the place to be a place where future has come and already gone because the buildings that have been built are now mere ruins. Moreover, the human-built European town that replaced the Arab one and which is built in the centre of the continent at the bend in the great river is a source of charm, money, and success. "And it was from that town that Nazruddin, reappearing among us from time to time, brought back his exotic manners and tastes and his tales of commercial success" (14). Thus in many instances, Salim informs us about his opinion of different towns consolidating the analysis that he believes in human-built environment to be the symbol of civilisation and prosperity. This reflects Naipaul's ideas about civilisation.

Everybody, mainly from Salim's group, is looking for the city or town where he can start a real life. Bush is not considered a place to live in or cannot be considered a potential source of life or success. Of course, the case is different for many natives who seem to be satisfied with their way of life in their villages. When Nazruddin's adopted country becomes independent from Europe suddenly, news of war and disorder have arrived to Salim and his town. Nazruddin later recounts to Salim the circumstances under which he has decided to go to Uganda and leave the country he has been used to praise the opportunities of success it offers:

One Sunday morning I went out to the development where I had bought a few lots. The weather was bad. Hot and heavy. The sky was dark but it wasn't going to rain; it was just going to stay like that. The lightning was far away--it was raining somewhere else in the forest. I thought: What a place to live in! I could hear the river--the development wasn't too far from the rapids. I listened to the river and looked up at that sky and I thought: This isn't property. This is just bush. This has always been bush. I could scarcely wait for Monday morning after that. I put everything up for sale. Lower than the going price, but I asked to be paid in Europe. I sent the family to Uganda. (15)

Nazruddin, like Salim, sees bush as the sign of despair. Because there is no human-built environment or no "property", he thinks it is insane to stay in such a place. He adds that in addition to being a "lovely country" with its nice high hills that people compare to those of Scotland, the British have given the place the finest administration with very simple and efficient "wonderful roads" (15). It is interesting how both Salim and Nazruddin look for any place that at least has Europe in its spirit if not ruled or constructed by the Europeans. For when Salim decides to move to the town in the African interior that Nazruddin has always praised for him, he stipulates:

All that I knew of the town at the bend of the river I had got from Nazruddin's stories. Ridiculous things can work on us at moments of strain; and towards the end of that hard drive what was often in my head was what Nazruddin had said about the restaurants of the town, about the food of Europe and the wine." (16)

Even so, he asserts later that he has never been to a real European restaurant or even tasted wine before since it is forbidden to them. However, still, he decides to go to this town that Nazruddin has always talked about in the hope that such life will possibly be recreated for him after its end (16). Here again, what attracts Salim to the town is everything that is European about it that Nazruddin has told him about. When he arrives at the town, he finds that it has come back to “the bush [Nazruddin] had had a vision of when he had decided to sell” (16). Here again, bush is depicted as a symbol of the existence of no life and nature is silenced.

The creation of the Domain with all its luxurious houses and facilities has its impact on Salim changing his attitude towards the whole town. He declares that after the attempts of the president to show both Africans and Europeans a new Africa, he himself saw it in an unprecedented way seeing:

[...] the defeats and humiliations which until then I had regarded as just a fact of life. And I felt like that--full of tenderness for the Big Man, for the ragged villagers walking around the Domain, and the soldiers showing them the shabby sights--until some soldier played the fool with me or some official at the customs was difficult, and then I fell into the old way of feeling, the easier attitudes of the foreigners in the bars. Old Africa, which seemed to absorb everything, was simple; this place kept you tense. What a strain it was, picking your way through stupidity and aggressiveness and pride and hurt! (62)

The Domain changes the way Salim looks at the town because of its neat, clean and well-constructed areas that highlight the difference with those found in the ruined old town. But, at the same time, he finds that the place keeps one tense because of its complexity, apparently. However, old Africa is as simple as it has always been. Furthermore, he gets the mixture of feelings because of this newly-built European-like town. Salim is, therefore, just like white men in his beliefs about civilisation.

Despite its shoddy grandeur, the Domain turns out to be a hoax as Salim claims. For despite the fact that the building turns out to be a hoax and that even those who either asked to build it (the president) or those who actually built it (the foreigners) believed in it, it does change the attitudes and life of people. Because questioning the faith of its builders and that of the president in the building makes Salim wonder about the previously built city(s) exclaiming:

But had there been greater faith before? *\_Misericordie probat populos et foedera jungi\_*: Father Huismans had explained the arrogance of that motto. He had believed in its truth. But how many of the builders of the earlier city would have agreed with him? Yet that earlier hoax had helped to make men of the country in a certain way; and men would also be made by this new hoax. (63)

This quote shows the influence that buildings can have on people. For Salim goes on explaining how that can happen by bringing up the example of Ferdinand. The latter takes the polytechnic seriously because it is going to lead him to an administrative cadetship and eventually to a position of authority. Thus, the building in this sense can have a say in the future of the people who live, work or study in it.

It is also worth noticing that before the establishment of the Domain, Salim does not show any overt hatred towards the place. He does express his opinions about the bush as a symbol of nothingness. But, the creation of the Domain seems to make him aware of his flat and the place as a whole. He thinks:

I grew to detest the physical feel of the place. My flat remained as it had always been. I had changed nothing there, because I lived with the idea that at a moment's notice I had to consider it all as lost--the bedroom with the white-painted window panes and the big bed with the foam mattress, the roughly made cupboards with my smelly clothes and shoes, the kitchen with its smell of kerosene and frying oil and rust and dirt and cockroaches, the empty white studio-sitting room. Always there, never really mine, reminding me now only of the passing of time. (63)

Dirty, smelly, and old are the adjectives that describe Salim's flat. At the beginning of his arrival in the town, he wants to show the grandeur of his flat to Ferdinand because of its European furniture and touch. But, he now hates it perhaps because he sees better newly furnished houses and flats in the Domain that are not his. In addition to the fact he mentions that the unchanged flat with all its content reminds him of the passing of time and how long he is staying in this place he does not consider either his or even appropriate for the better life he is seeking.

Salim does not actually stop at only hating his own flat. He also expresses hatred towards the ornamental trees of his childhood because they seem unnatural in this non-native town to them. Indeed, what makes these trees' presence unnatural is:

the red dust of the streets that turned to mud in rain, the overcast sky that meant only more heat, the clear sky that meant a sun that hurt, the rain that seldom cooled and made for a general clamminess, the brown river with the lilac-coloured flowers on rubbery green vines that floated on and on, night and day.  
(64)

According to Salim, everything about the African town is ugly and improper for living. Every natural element is described in a negative way. The overcast sky is just a source of the heat that bothers the inhabitants, apparently the inhabitants who have the same attitudes like Salim because the natives never show any feeling that they are bothered by any geographical or climate feature of their country. In addition even when the sky is clear, it does not mean a better weather is coming but rather just more heat that hurts. Here again, Salim does not specify who exactly is going to be hurt by the sun. Moreover, rain is another natural feature that just adds to his suffering because it does not cool down the heat of the African weather but it just creates muddy roads that make it difficult to move around. In fact, the only time Salim mentions a natural

element, which is the river, without mentioning something negative about it. However, he does not express any possible positivity of the brown river especially that he is talking about it in the context of showing how everything is unnatural to the presence of the ornamental trees of his childhood. Later, Salim expresses overtly his envy of Ferdinand who goes to the Domain to study. Despite the fact that the polytechnic is just a few miles away, “I, so recently his senior, felt jealous and deserted” (64). Salim feels that Ferdinand is in a better place while he is not even though the distance between Salim’s town and Ferdinand’s school is very short. Also when Salim receives Indar in the town, he is impressed of what Indar has made of himself: “for his London clothes and the privilege they spoke of, his travelling, his house in the Domain, his position at the polytechnic” (70). Here again, what impresses Salim is the way someone looks and where he lives in addition to the position the person holds. But, the fact that Indar has a house in the Domain and wears London clothes is a reason to make Salim impressed. Even the people who occupy the facilities and houses in the Domain are looked at differently. Salim explains:

We were aware of the new foreigners on the periphery of our town. They were not like the engineers and salesmen and artisans we knew, and we were a little nervous of them. The Domain people were like tourists, but they were not spenders--everything was found for them on the Domain. They were not interested in us; and we, thinking of them as protected people, looked upon them as people separate from the true life of the place, and for this reason not quite real, not as real as ourselves. (76)

It is very strange of Salim how he sees these foreigners separate from the true life of the place. It is not clear to us how the true life of the place looks like because Salim does not show any appeal to this kind of life. It is as if he contradicts himself after the European-like town is built. He now thinks it is not in its right place even though he

has always longed for places that offer the kind of life it is now offering. This is possibly because the presence of the jungle still bothers the overall atmosphere of the newly-built environment.

#### **IV.2.2. *Waiting for the Barbarians*' Wilderness Versus Civilisation**

Through the narrator's voice, the writer does show significant care in relating what happens inside the walled town as well as outside it to nature, day and night, and the natives' use of it.

In nature, outside the doors of the imperial town, creatures, human and animal, become united. The relationship of the magistrate, the two men accompanying him, the girl and the horses becomes stronger and closer as they go deeper into the desert: "We press together, man and beast, sharing our warmth, trying to endure" (92). The Magistrate himself confirms it when he states that: "In twelve days on the road we have grown closer than in months of living in the same rooms" (95). This can be read as an effect of nature that makes people come closer to each other, contrary to the walls that seem to alienate people and do nothing to bring them together. When they are outdoors, the characters and the Magistrate in particular show remarkable sympathy and care for animals: "Though the loads grow lighter every day, it hurts our hearts to have to flog the emaciated animals on" (94). This is a concern that he has not shown before in the walled-town.

The empire people, even though they live on the land of the natives, are ignorant about everything related to them: their language, land, weather, customs and others. This is what Coetzee attempts to highlight through the voice of the narrator. When one of the native woman's baby dies, the narrator orders that it is taken to be



buried. However, the woman does not want to give them her baby until they take it by force. He wonders: "Have we violated some custom of theirs, I wonder, by taking the child and burying it? I curse Colonel Joll for all the trouble he has brought me, and for the shame too" (29). Colonel Joll is ignorant as ever and despite all of the soldiers' attempts to explain to him the uselessness of the fishing people and nomads he brings to the town he claims that "prisoners are prisoners" (31).

There are some clear references to civilisation that the white man is part of. "Throughout a trying period he and I have managed to behave towards each other like civilized people. All my life I have believed in civilized behaviour; on this occasion, however, I cannot deny it, the memory leaves me sick with myself" (33). So, the colonel does not deserve to be treated in a civilized manner. And it is the narrator who is confirming this. Despite the fact that the narrator seems so honourable and righteous but he does state some racist surprising comments about the natives:

Now herded by their guards they stand in a hopeless little knot in the corner of the yard, nomads and fisherfolk together, sick, famished, damaged, terrified. It would be best if this obscure chapter in the history of the world were terminated at once, if these ugly people were obliterated from the face of the earth and we swore to make a new start, to run an empire in which there would be no more injustice, no more pain. (34)

Despite his objectivity, the narrator here misses the possibility of the unjust white men to disappear for the world to become more peaceful. It is fortunate that he later in the same page, the narrator asserts that he is not the right man to go with this solution. But, it seems easy and preferable for the people of the empire. The narrator is kind and he confesses now that it is because of the white man's civilisation that the natives are being exploited:

I have also tried to keep the taverns closed to them. Above all I do not want to see a parasite settlement grow up on the fringes of the town populated with beggars and vagrants enslaved to strong drink. It always pained me in the old days to see these people fall victim to the guile of shopkeepers, exchanging their goods for trinkets, lying drunk in the gutter, and confirming thereby the settlers' litany of prejudice: that barbarians are lazy, immoral, filthy, stupid. Where civilization entailed the corruption of barbarian virtues and the creation of a dependent people, I decided, I was opposed to civilization; and upon this resolution I based the conduct of my administration. (I say this who now keep a barbarian girl for my bed!) (53)

The relationship between the narrator and the native girl is complex. He does not desire her but he seems to want to take care of her, sometimes; and some other times, wants to submit her: “There is no link I can define between her womanhood and my desire. I cannot even say for sure that I desire her” (59). But, he then decides to take her back to her people because he seems to be acting just like the empire people from whom he has chosen to depart. In this instance, then, there are clearly two different environments where two different people react differently to each other. The town that stands for civilisation, for them, and wilderness where the natives live that stands for its absence.

After the Magistrate goes on the trip to take back the girl home, he shows more care and awareness for nature and landscapes. Indeed, he states:

I climb the stairway to the watchtower over the angle of the wall and stare out hungrily over the beloved landscape: the belt of green stretching along the river, blackened now in patches; the lighter green of the marshes where the new reeds are shooting; the dazzling surface of the lake. (131)

While living inside the walled-town, the narrator does not show this “love” for nature as overtly as he does after he steps out of the town’s frontiers. Now, he finds the landscape beautiful, and more than that: “beloved” and the surface of the lake “dazzling”. He thus develops a new connection with the land he now loves. The narrator recognizes even the other creatures. He reflects about human beings as a

miracle of creation. He adds: “It occurs to me that we crush insects beneath our feet, miracles of creation too, beetles, worms, cockroaches, ants, in their various ways” (144). This is very significant because this care for all of these creatures, small or big, is unprecedented by the narrator. Moreover, the change of the Magistrate after his visit to the nomads’ lands reflects in the fact that the best time for him is now the early hour of the morning: “The best hour is early morning, when I wake and lie listening to the first birdsong outside, watching the square of the smoke-hole for the instant at which darkness gives way to the first dove-grey light” (107). Nature now stands as a refuge for him from the atrocities he has seen because of the Colonel and other soldiers of the Empire. This awareness actually starts as early as when he goes out to the girl’s native land. For the first time he reflects about the land and describe the land in the oasis as paradise. He writes during the trip that:

“No one who paid a visit to this oasis,” I write, “failed to be struck by the charm of life here. We lived in the time of the seasons, of the harvests, of the migrations of the waterbirds. We lived with nothing between us and the stars. We would have made any concession, had we only known what, to go on living here. This was paradise on earth.” (205)

He, thus, asserts that no one will be able to deny the beauty of the oasis. He describes the life in it as various and full of different striking things and natural phenomena that happen. He then talks about the fact that they have lived without anything between them and the stars. This means that man and the ecosphere are one, nothing obstructs that connection. This reminds us of the beginning of the novel where he also mentions the stars. When he awakes in the dawn looking at soldiers sleeping thinking that they should be dreaming of mothers and sweethearts to mean that they miss their homeland, he comments that thousands of stars look down on them from the sky. He adds:

“[t]ruly we are here on the roof of the world. Waking in the night, in the open, one is

dazzled” (5). So, the stars are the only natural elements that he can see inside the walled town. His perception of the whole place gets clearer as he goes outside the limits of the town. Consequently if they only knew that it was paradise on earth, they should not have made any concession to leave the place. However, he is the only one who seems to recognize the worth of the place. All the others see it as a place of threat towards them and the Empire they belong to: nothing is actually special about it.

In order to fight the white colonizers, the natives use nature and their knowledge of it in an intelligent way. When the narrator and the Colonel discuss the barbarians and their treachery, the Colonel tells him that they never stand up and fight. Instead, their way is to creep up behind you and stick a knife in your back. Thence, he poses the question of: “Why can't they leave us alone? They have their own territories, haven't they?” (133). It is indeed ironic that the Colonel asks such a question. The right one that should be addressed to his people is why they do not leave the natives alone on their own lands. They are the ones who have seized the natives' land and pushed them outwards. The natives, as a way of resistance, resort to nature changing it for the British settlers. The Colonel tells of their ways in order to drive them out of the walled town. He informs: “Barbarians. They cut away part of the embankment over there and flooded the fields. No one saw them. They came in the night. The next morning it was like a second lake” (133). Moreover, the natives are not considered as human beings. Everything related to them is strange: “We stand watching them eat as though they are strange animals” (26). After the first puzzlement that the inhabitants of the town have vis-à-vis the fishing people, they start dealing with them as if they are real animals. The narrator provides us with a description of these people (28). The torture and

ugliness of the brutal empire is described through the words of the magistrate of the town: “The grey beard is caked with blood. The lips are crushed and drawn back, the teeth are broken. One eye is rolled back, the other eye-socket is a bloody hole” (12). Thus, the white man does not really see the natives. He rather ignores them by refusing to see them. The narrator is actually aware of his reluctance to recognize the natives. He thinks: “I last saw them five days ago (if I can claim ever to have seen them, if I ever did more than pass my gaze over their surface absently, with reluctance). What they have undergone in these five days I do not know” (34).

Acquaintance with nature makes the difference in the war between colonizer and colonized. As a result of the raid the soldiers start against the nomads, many of them are sent back in big carts. This is because they fall sick from the bad water due to their ignorance about the whereabouts of the good water out there (133). In fact, the colonized’s ignorance of the place defeats them without much effort from the natives. The narrator carries on describing the consequences of the natives’ flooding the lake. He asserts that the spring wheat is indeed ruined, that warm ochre mud squelches between his toes, that in some places there are still puddles, and that many of the young plants have been washed out of the ground. All show a yellowish discoloration of leaf. The area nearest the lake is the worst hit. Nothing is left standing, indeed the farmers have already begun to stack the dead plants for burning. As in the far fields, a rise of a few inches in elevation has made all the difference in order to save a quarter of the planting (134). This way, the foreign settlers are driven out of the natives’ lands without being obliged to raise any war. It is the knowledge of the place that helps natives beat these foreigners. As a result, many of the empire people start leaving the

town. However, resentment builds up against those who are seen to be making preparations to go. They are insulted in public, assaulted or robbed with impunity. Now there are families that simply disappear in the dead of night, bribing the guards to open the gates for them, taking the east road and waiting at the first or second stopping-place till the party that accumulates is large enough to travel safely (174). Therefore, more soldiers come in the town to frighten its inhabitants. Readers learn that few of the settlers choose to stay with the slogan daubed on the walls everywhere in the town of: “*WE STAY*” (174). This actually refers to the fact that colonialism has not ended yet in the place. These foreigners refuse to leave all the profits they benefit from this land and its people.

#### **IV.2.3. *Bright Road to El Dorado: Sea Versus Islands***

Michael Anthony combines each event with its natural description through the voice of the omniscient narrator. Each time he tells a story or narrates an event which happens either among natives or Europeans, or between the two groups, the writer always provides detailed descriptions of where these events happen. For example when describing the journey that Sir Walter Raleigh’s ship is taking, he writes: “As they moved through the Gulf wild waves were rising and lashing the ship violently, and a breaker crashed against the deck and sent the boy rolling to the sides...” (63). Also, the language his characters use is indeed sometimes special as it is related to nature and their environment they inhabit.

Throughout the novel, Michael Anthony uses some “green expressions” like when he wants to describe how the cacique’s skin looks. He writes: “the cacique straightened up on the stool, his black-brown, wrinkled skin looking like tree-bark in

the gloom of the hut” (3). In addition, the recurrent expressions used by the native characters are all related to nature and or the place from where foreigners come. For instance, Europeans are called sea-people because they come to the native’s islands by the sea. Some other times, they are also referred to as the people “from the sunrise” (8). Also, the language of the natives is all related to the weather and the universe surrounding them. Instead of saying next morning, Ayun tells Don Ricardo that the English will land now or “in the next light” (16). To describe one of the laughter of Ayun after thinking of the destruction of the sea-people, the novelist writes: “His very laughter was like the snapping of a wild beast” (58). So, he compares it to the snapping of wild beasts, the animals that are found in the natives’ land. Even Europeans use expressions that recall nature. Since they are people of the sea, we read once that Sir Walter Raleigh explains a matter by referring it to be: “as clear as crystal waters” (41). This can be read as an influence of the environment on him since he has spent a considerable amount of time out in nature.

The natives do care for their native islands and they want them back from the Europeans’ domination but as far as El Dorado is concerned, they consider it to be a curse for Europeans. Ayun asserts again that: ““This is Kairi, our land, the land of our gods and our forefathers. Not the land of the sea-people” (60). And the old man thinks that El Dorado is real. Ayun tells him that it is the curse of the sea-people. “And this is god, for it is the only way we can defeat them. It is not easy for us to kill them, but we can help them to kill each other” (59). Thus the natives, through Ayun’s voice, rely on god and nature to take care of the sea-people. This nature constitutes in their native lands’ deep jungles, rivers, or the beasts. So, Ayun thinks that it will be a great fight in

which the two tribes of the sea-people will destroy each other. He thinks that the more these sea-people kill each other, the better it will be for their land. He also asserts that he does not care who wins. If the English win, for example, he will take them to the far shore, where they think they will find El Dorado. But, “[t]here will be no bright road but the deep jungles, where the wild beasts will devour them or the rivers will drown them. Or maybe sickness and hunger and thirst will take care of them” (58). Hence, without much effort, nature will do the necessary to get rid of these foreigners.

Despite the fact that the natives are friendly towards nature seeing it as a supporter to them, their attitude towards the sea is somehow different. For throughout the story, we learn that the natives are anxious of what comes out of the sea. A possible interpretation of this fear can be because the sea brings Europeans who destroy their native villages. However when the Spanish establish themselves in forts on the natives’ islands, they also become afraid of the sea because it can bring English ships. Don Ricardo, for example, asks his soldiers to: “[k]eep away from the beach. Keep behind the icaque trees. The mangrove” (1). From the beginning of the story, we get to know that the Spaniards use the trees of the island to hide from the sea not approaching the beach. But, when they are at sea, the Europeans or the sea-people consider the native islands as wilderness and do fear what may come out of them: either of the unwelcoming natives or of the foreign islands themselves. The third-person narrator describes to the readers the reaction of the captain, Sir Walter Raleigh, towards the natural scene in front of his ship. We learn that the captain sees it a wilderness that lies before him because all that he and the others can hear is the water rippling around them breaking on the shore in the distance. For while they have been



waiting to hear anything from the natives that may welcome them to the isle, Raleigh and his crew receive nothing:" The pitch black night had fallen so thickly that the English seamen could no longer see the trees, nor even the outline of the coast. And there was no longer the twitter of the birds flying in. Nor the cry of seagulls that had followed them. *All these things had gone silent*" (27; my emphasis). The silence of every natural element in this scene is telling. Nature here supports the natives and acts just like them by keeping silent. This means that both the narrator and the writer behind him recognize its significance. It can also refer to the fact that nature has been silenced by Westerners, as many ecocritics believe. So in this case, Europeans do not think that nature can talk to them because they objectify it in order to be able to exploit it freely. Later on, Raleigh shows his bewilderment once more concerning the fact that everything in the isle seems to support the natives in their silence. Raleigh finds it really strange that everything is so quiet except the sea and the wind even though he recognizes that it is deep night (32). Also when in sea, it is interesting to notice that Sir Walter Raleigh fears nature, not the Spaniards, nor the Arawaks: we read that: "he knew there could be no Spanish sentries in these thick forests. And somehow he had no fear of the Arawaks. The only reserve in his mind was the question of rocks and shallows" (64). All in all, we have two types of characters: natives, who are friends with nature but fear the sea; and Spaniards, who come from the sea but fear the native islands. Thus even for Europeans, the power of nature does not go unnoticed. They are actually aware that nature has an ability to defeat them with all sophisticated tools they may have.

#### IV.2.4. *River of Smoke: Canton Versus all Others*

One can clearly see that there is a connection between land and what happens on it in the language Ghosh uses through the third person narrator. When talking about the tragedy that had occurred to the plantation across the bay to which Deeti and her shipmates from the *Ibis* were brought, the narrator informs that even though the tragedy happened some years before Deeti and her friends came to it, “its memory still saturated the landscape. In the coolie lines, when the wind was heard to howl upon the mountain, the sound was said to be the keening of the dead, and such was the fear it evoked that no one would willingly set foot upon those slopes” (11). It is not only the place that still bears the memory of the tragedy, but it is also the wind that is thought to be the sound of the dead that actually makes the inhabitants afraid of going to the mountain where the tragedy occurred. In this instance, one can clearly see that nature and the environment bear meanings that the inhabitants are aware of. This refers to the fact that such society that Deeti is part of has its own definitions of culture and nature. Actually, Frederick Turner states that societies differ in their ways of defining this dichotomy. Also Turner admits that since humans are inevitably the lords of creation, they should work for the common good of the beautiful world. This is what Deeti and other native Indians do in this story. They are people who care about gardening and nature. Despite the fact that they make use of different natural elements in their food, paintings, daily activities, medicine, and others, these people seem not to harm the environment in severe ways. Their uses are moderate and reasonable.

Throughout the novel, we get to know about so many different places with details of their social, cultural, commercial daily lives. This shows Ghosh’s awareness

of nature and the environment and their significance to their inhabitants. The number of the islands, isles and places that the writer describes in details is really huge. He seems to care about everything not leaving any place un-described. He thus depicts places and attitudes of their inhabitants that may not be found in history or anthropological books. One gets to know, for instance, about the weekly clothes market in the Chulia kampong. The latter consists of one of the poorest quarters of the makeshift new frontier town by Singapore River, which is squeezed between dense jungle on one side and marshy swamplands on the other. The market that receives different kinds of visitors who come by brightly painted boats from the Malay and Chinese parts of the town (45). More topographical descriptions of places are provided. For example, we learn that the last stretch of water that is left for Fitcher in his journey to China is indeed new to Paulette. Water that is dotted with thousands of craggy islands that look deserted. The reader is assisted to imagine how these small islands look like. Some, the narrator points out, look as picturesque as the names that are identified on the charts Fitcher has like: 'Mandarin's Cap', 'the Quoin', 'Tortoise Head' and 'the Needle Rocks.' The islets are wild and wind-blown with some greenery clinging to their steep, rocky slopes (56).

Canton is given much attention, as well. It is described as the city that stands out in comparison to all other cities in the world. A number of foreign characters care about it, love its life and have their own perspective towards the place also called as Fanqui-town. Zadig Bey narrates the story of how at the beginning this walled city was built. This city's building was an answer to the problem that had faced Chinese. He says: "It was built not because the Chinese wished to keep all aliens at bay, but

because the Europeans gave them every reason for suspicion” (133). This latter was caused by the Netherlanders who first came to Canton. They were given the little island of now Fanqui-town as they needed a place to set up warehouses, just like the Portuguese had done in Macau. After that, they asked to be permitted to build a hospital for their sick people and the Chinese could not refuse the request. So, the Dutchmen began to fill that hospital with huge numbers of tubs and barrels of provisions and building materials, as they claimed. But the tubs were strangely heavy and it was discovered by coincidence that they were full of guns. This is one of the reasons among others that pushed the Chinese to keep foreigners out of their country by building a walled city that does not have all the walls in the same position now after around five hundred years but still helps authorities control these foreigners. This is very significant because Ghosh sheds lights on the other side of the story of why the Chinese do not welcome foreigners. It is to the contrary of what Europeans claim, the Chinese are not hostile to them by choice or out of arrogance. Indeed after these so many years, the foreigners again bring a harmful weed to Canton and thence to China instead of guns: this is just another form of going against the interests of the country they trade with. It is also one of the forms of ecological imperialism.

In addition to most characters of the story, Ah Fatt for instance envies Neel that he will visit: “number-one city in whole world” (55). Neel does not understand why Ah Fatt tells him so. He then asks him to go to discover for himself. We also learn that in China “everything new comes from Canton. Better for young men not to go there - too many ways for them to be spoiled” (55). Many news items are provided to the characters before their actual visit to Canton, where more descriptions and information

are provided. For example, the intensity of Fanqui-town's social whirl constantly amazes Neel: "that a place so small, and inhabited by such a peculiar assortment of sojourners, should have a social life at all seemed incredible to him" (82). What astonishes him more is also the fact that very few people participate in all of this activity because the foreign traders and their Chinese counterparts make no more than a few hundred. One of the characters, Zadig Bey reads the landscape of Canton as being connected to the city's history. He exclaims that: "the true surprise of Canton, he said, is that its streets and lanes are strewn with reminders of the presence of Aliens. 'Why,' he said, 'even the city's guardian deity is a foreigner - an Achha in fact!'" (132). So, Canton is the city of foreigners and this is found on its land. Here again is another example that shows that the land bears meanings and history through it.

### ***Conclusion***

V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* provides some of the views of both colonizer and colonized characters but most importantly opinions and attitudes about people and the nature and the environment they occupy. Through Salim, the writer's voice in *A Bend in the River*, the dichotomy of the bush versus civilization is provided. On the one hand, Salim believes that "bush" is the symbol of nothingness and no creation. In fact, Nazzrudin and other people like them also share Salim's view on the bush. This actually echoes Naipaul's opinions about civilisation and wilderness in his works (as clarified in Chapter I of this thesis). On the other hand, Salim also thinks that the human-built environment symbolizes man's creation and civilisation. His views are highlighted when the Big Man, the president of the country, asks for the building of the New Domain with all its luxurious houses and facilities.

Despite the fact that Salim believes virgin nature to be the symbol of nothingness, he does seem to recognize its power and influence on people. This is because he narrates a number of circumstances when nature stands with its native African inhabitants helping them against their enemies. Thus, one can deduce that Naipaul is actually aware of such power nature can hold. Along the same lines, Salim also admits that the New Domain as a building has its own influence on the future of its people. The Domain also influences him as it stands as a reminder to him that his flat is poor. On a different occasion, Salim describes the river to be the source of life and livelihood. However, one can notice that his descriptions are void of emotions. Salim seems to recognize the power of natural elements without connecting their effects to himself.

At the end of the novel, Salim changes many of his views related to nature and the human-built environment. In fact, the economic boom of the country has had its impact on Salim's changing attitudes towards the whole town and his life in it. He now sees life as somewhat promising in the same town that he has despised beforehand. Also because of the widespread of science, Salim acts like colonizers in their exploitation of nature somehow participating in the process of ecological imperialism. As a result, Salim now sees the bush differently. The same bush that he has always seen as nothingness is now for him a potential source of riches for the trade in wood and diamonds he is engaged in. Another changed attitude is when Salim expresses his dislike of the ornamental trees because they are foreign to the place. In addition, many other natural elements like the rain and the sun are all now negative in his eyes. He seems to connect his hatred of staying in the country to the place as a whole.

Furthermore, the fact that Salim considers the New Domain as a “hoax” is equally important. For despite his belief in the necessity of “taming” earth by building infrastructures, Salim thinks that such buildings in the middle of the African jungle do not suit it. This proves his ambivalence towards the whole place and its people. Finally, Salim is not always consistent in his views about nature and the environment in Africa. However, what does not change is his firm belief that the bush stands for nothingness while civilisation is created by man.

For John Maxwell Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*, one can distinguish two main categories of the British imperialist. The exploiter, who sees the people and their land as sources of riches and profits, and the milder kind, who reflects on the situation of the whole Empire admitting the mistakes he and/or the empire people may have committed in their process of acquiring more lands. Through their voices, we can understand their beliefs towards the people, and their nature and the environment.

In the novel, there is a separate distinction between wilderness and civilization. The desert, where the native nomads and fishing people live, is seen as wilderness where civilization does not exist. This latter exists only inside the walls of the city that the British have built for themselves. Also, the writer relates between what happens in the walled town as well as outside it to nature in many instances. At the end of the story, the British narrator seems to change attitudes towards nature. He now sees it like the natives for he recognizes its beauty and worth more than he has done before when he has been imprisoned in the walled-town of the Empire.

In his *Bright Road to El Dorado*, Michael Anthony makes both voices of the British and the Spanish, and that of natives heard. Through the story, one gets to know

about the different attitudes of both parties. As far as nature is concerned, he combines each event with its natural description where he provides how each type of character: natives, who live on the islands, or Europeans, who come from the sea, acts and reacts towards the environment they occupy.

Michael Anthony seems to give significant attention to the surrounding environment of the characters through his detailed descriptions of where events occur. In fact, he connects each event with its natural description. Also, he utilizes the language that his characters use as it is in the story; this language is connected to nature and the environment they inhabit like when they call Europeans either “sea-people” or the people “from the sunrise”. Even the third person narrator of the story uses some “green expressions” to describe the appearance of a certain character. The natives are attached to the land of their forefathers and would like that the foreign intruders retreat from it. They also consider El Dorado to be a curse for Europeans. In addition, the natives, through Ayun’s voice, rely on god and nature to take care of the sea-people. They use their knowledge of the place to lead foreigners to jungles, rivers, and the beasts to get destroyed by them. For the sea, the natives’ attitudes are slightly different since they are scared of the sea. The reason is obviously because of it is where the foreign unwelcomed invaders come from. On the contrary, Europeans are generally afraid of the land because it is where the natives reside. There is also the idea that these Europeans consider the islands of the native tribes to be wilderness, which protects the natives with its silence. This means that the significance of nature is given attention in the story. However, this same silent nature has been objectified by Westerners in order to be able to exploit it freely, as ecocritics assert.



Lastly is Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke* which narrates of the personal details that have happened between individuals shedding light on both natives' opinions and foreigners' stands as far as the trade of opium and plants is concerned. In addition, it also gives space to the geographical and topographical descriptions of different places.

In the novel, lands bear the history of people on them in addition to other natural elements like the memory of Deeti's place that is saturated in the landscape and the wind that is believed to be the sound of the dead. Another example is when, Zadig Bey reads the landscape of Canton as being connected to the city's history. Also, the Indian native characters work for the common good of the beautiful world, as Frederick Turner asserts, when taking care of nature and the world of plants. However even though these people make use of different natural elements in their food, paintings, daily activities, medicine, and others, their use is still moderate and reasonable. Moreover, Ghosh depicts many different places with details of their social, cultural, commercial daily lives. This shows his awareness of nature and the environment and their significance to their inhabitants. Among these places, Canton is given the lion's share in which the history of how it was built is provided. Canton is described as the city that stands out in comparison to all other cities in the world which many foreign characters care about it, love its life and are comfortable inside it. However to Canton, foreign merchants bring a harmful weed and trade with it participating in one of the forms of neo-colonialism.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

“Tell me the landscape in which you live, and I will tell you who you are,”

José Ortega y Gasset

V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1979), John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), Michael Anthony's *Bright Road to El Dorado* (1983), and Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke* (2011) present postcolonial stories of different categories of characters that occur in an unnamed Central African country (apparently Congo), South Africa, Trinidad and China. This thesis examines the element of nature and that of the environment that the characters inhabit (village, town or city) in these four postcolonial novels. It also searches for the role that the colonizer may play in determining the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, both the people and their land. In addition, because nature, the climate, the wilderness and technologically altered topographies do influence the psyche and the actual behaviour of people, this study traces the representation of such related aspects in these novels as well as their influence and significance vis-à-vis the characters, the writers and their works. Using the convergence between postcolonialism and ecocriticism, this research investigates the presence of concepts like ambivalence, the “Other,” biocolonisation in the four novels. Lastly, the thesis takes into consideration the writers' attitudes towards nature and the way they depict it, in addition to analyzing the extent to which they are aware of its significance and influence upon the characters of their stories.

Part One of the thesis covers socio-historical, geographical and theoretical backgrounds of both the four works and their writers. Chapter I contextualizes the works and their writers socio-historically as it also presents some of the geographical significance of the four stories' settings. The survey of the history, society and

geography of the four novels' settings provided in the first chapter shows the factuality of many of the historical events and figures mentioned in the four fictional stories.

Indeed, what the writers do through narrating such stories is filling the gaps that may exist in the books of history with details that may happen between people or significant information about the nature of the countries. Chapter I also presents the writers' views about postcolonialism and their relationship to the depiction of landscapes and nature.

Indeed, important links can be traced between the writers' lives and the works of the present study. Interestingly enough, all of them studied in Britain during certain periods of their lives. Hence, they have all received a Western education that has its significant impact on the type of discourse they present in their novels. Also, Britain is the imperial country they all write about in the stories of the four novels of the thesis. Their depiction of the colonizer goes therefore under severe criticism because of their close relationship to the colonizer country. Moreover, the variety of cultures, landscapes, histories, religions, colonizations and others that these writers have experienced does relate to the amount and the way they depict nature, the environment and landscapes. Chapter II surveys some of the important theoretical notions and concepts related to both colonialism and ecocriticism as interdisciplinary fields. It ends up with showing the way these concepts and ideas are related to the analysis of the four novels of the study.

Part Two of the thesis deals with the literary analysis of the four novels of the study. The third chapter of the thesis analyzes the relationship between nature and the different kinds of characters: the native (colonized), the hyphenated or non-native native (colonized), and the foreign white man (colonizer). The analysis answers

questions related to the characters' attitudes towards nature in addition to its significance for them, the manner in which they are influenced by it (their psyche and behaviour), and the relationship between colonizer and colonized as far as the influence of the colonizer on the colonized people and land is concerned. The fourth chapter analyzes how the four writers present the relationship between colonizer/colonized, their depiction of nature and the different natural elements (such as sea, desert, climate and others), the language they use and their representation of different environments inhabited by different kinds of characters in order to explore their awareness of nature's influence on their characters and its significance for them.

In the four novels of the study, nature is a significant element that plays a role in the lives of the characters: colonized or colonizers. Their different environments reflect some crucial changes in their culture which is reflected in their behaviours. In these novels, natural elements like seas, deserts and rivers have their own significance in the characters' surroundings. In addition, different climates sometimes have a role to play in the characters' lives. The three categories of the novels' characters, including: Natives (Colonized), Non-Native (travellers, immigrants, or Non-native Natives who were born in the country yet originate from another), and Foreigners (Colonizers), have different reactions to the environment they inhabit. Firstly, the places where they live are separate from each other and different varying from village, town or city; on land, by the sea, or upriver. The characters affect their environments as the latter affect them, as well. This is equally true with many elements of the places' climates, too. The native colonized seem to be satisfied with where they live in spite of the colonizers' or foreigners' disdain of it. In addition to disliking where the natives

live, the foreigners even degrade those environments connecting them to wilderness or nothingness that symbolizes the absence of human civilisation. Nevertheless, these foreigners do exploit different available riches the natives' lands provide out of their belief that they are the masters of the whole world. In these four novels of the study, the colonizers do change the environments of the colonized causing considerable influences on the life, commerce, and the whole culture of the colonized through the process of ecological imperialism. For the characters in-between, their identities are actually unstable fluctuating between opposing opinions and positions depending on their situation in the countries they live in. For they sometimes show intimate connection to both nature and its natives while other times the contrary is true. However like the other two types of characters, they also get affected by the places they reside in while most of them recognize the significance and power that nature and the environment have on their inhabitants.

The writers' attitudes in representing the colonized and the colonizers and their relationship are varied. In his *A Bend in the River*, V. S. Naipaul presents through the voice of the narrator, Salim, different opinions and descriptions of the natives and their land in addition to reflections on the Europeans and Americans who live in the New Domain of the country. Some critics argue that these descriptions are objective coming from a distant character. However, others claim that his representations are biased as they resound the white man's opinions and discourses. The analysis shows that Salim's opinions do fluctuate from one perspective to another. He sometimes sees the worth of natives being comprehensible of how they generally react to the colonizer. But some other times, he seems to side with the colonizer throwing harsh

criticisms on the natives. In his *Waiting for the Barbarians*, John Maxwell Coetzee harshly criticizes the British imperialists through the voice of one of them, the Magistrate of the walled town. This narrator admits that the Empire is wrongly misbehaving concerning the natives' lands both with their ignorance and atrocities they commit against them and their land. This realization only comes after he himself has mimicked his fellow men in different situations. In *Bright Road to El Dorado*, Michael Anthony provides a clear distinction between the land-people and sea-people, who both see matters differently and consequently behave towards each other and towards the native lands in opposite ways. However, the natives are given a significant part in speaking up their minds freely. *River of Smoke*'s foreign merchants are presented by Amitav Ghosh as people who have interests in either opium or plants looking at them from a profit-perspective. All they care about and thrive for is the money they gain from their trade in these two items not caring for anything that may affect negatively the Chinese or their country. However, Ghosh does not neglect the other category of foreigners who are friendly to both the native Chinese and their land in addition to giving the native characters a considerable space in the story to express their opinions.

The postcolonial ecocritical analysis of these four novels brings to light the similarities that these four novels and their writers share despite the apparent differences among them. The similarities are at the levels of the colonizers, the colonized, the environment's influence on its inhabitants, and the four novelists. One of the common points that the examination of these four works highlights is the colonizer's "othering" of both the colonized people and their environment be it natural

or human-made. All colonizers in the four novels show proofs of individual, institutional, and environmental racisms towards the natives and their lands. However, these entities are ironically their same sources of riches and civilisation, as Edward Said argues and as the analysis shows. In fact, all the different foreign colonizers in the novels studied consider themselves superior to Africans, Chinese, Caribbeans, and the whole ecosphere, and hence give themselves the right to exploit their lands regardless of the damages they may cause. One of the forms of exploitation falls into the category of ecological imperialism which is related to the modification of earth by establishing different infrastructures on it in ways that are not necessarily useful to the native inhabitants. Another way is related to the colonizers' transport of different species of animals, plants, and trees resulting in serious changes, mostly negative, of the flora and fauna of the countries they colonize. Moreover, such practice of moving both plants and knowledge of the native people about them to the Western countries to use them in their companies to make money without providing fair financial compensation falls into the act of biopiracy that is manifested particularly in *River of Smoke*. At the level of places of residence, colonizers set themselves in separately distant dwellings from those of the natives and non-natives. In fact, they prefer to keep themselves imprisoned in their modern walled buildings to feel protected from the natives and their nature. Nevertheless what is common among all of them is the fact that despite all precautions, all of them still feel unsafe in the countries they colonize. Another main similarity is related to the colonized native characters of the four novels. Despite their different ways of life, nationalities, environments, belief systems, and histories, they all seem to be more friendly connected to nature considering it as their own supporter.



Even when they make use of natural elements, plants, animals and others, these characters do not abuse nature and the environment in the same way Westerners do. A third and important similarity is related to the environment's impact on the people living in it. In all novels, whatsoever the amount writers give, it is clear that the environment shapes their personalities and affects their daily activities and, sometimes, determines their destinies. Thus, the environment and nature in the examined novels have their say on the culture of Africans, Chinese, and Caribbeans of the novels. The weather, too, is another natural element mentioned in the four novels that affects the actual and psychological life of the people along with their destinies. A fourth similarity is that between the four writers of the novels. Despite the differences that exist between these male writers, who were chosen almost randomly, all of them have either studied and/or worked in Britain, the ex-colonizer country, to which they all have a connection, real and intellectual. All writers who are still alive (except Naipaul) do not currently live in their native countries yet still write about them; the fact that provides them with the ability to see things from an outsider's lens. Also, all three writers (except Anthony) are criticized because of sounding just like the colonizers, a fact that Coetzee recognizes because of their Western education. In addition, even though the novels are all set in ex-colonized or currently colonized African, Asian and Latin American states, the native characters are not always given a resounding voice in the stories. However, still, the writers have been successful in spotlighting the other side of the colonial story than the one always advertised by the Western colonizers. A last similarity between these four writers is related to their belief, like Westerners, that the human-built environment of towns, forts, and other infrastructures is "civilisation"

while wilderness stands for nothingness and the absence of human creation. Anthony and Ghosh may be an exception in this belief since it is not indeed clear that they agree with the characters they depict. Furthermore, what connects the four writers is their awareness that nature and the environment both can have significant influences on the people that inhabit them. However, this influence is dealt with in all four novels but with different degrees of awareness and importance that is given to it by their writers.

The analysis of the four novels of the study sheds light on the postcolonial ecocritical aspects of these four works. The novels clearly manifest either intentionally or unintentionally ecological awareness but with different degrees of emphasis. Obviously, these are the main issues facing the contemporary world in which such questions as neo-colonialism, cultural colonialism, environmental racism, exploitation, and biopiracy constitute an essential concern. This dissertation finds out that the element of nature in postcolonial unnamed African country, South Africa, Trinidad and China in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1979), John Maxwell Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), Michael Anthony's *Bright Road to El Dorado* (1983), and Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke* (2011), is important to be studied and does influence the behaviours of the characters as well as it reflects their beliefs. The study also results in the fact that the environment that the characters inhabit (village, town or city) in these four postcolonial novels is significant to them and to the events that they are experiencing. The role of the colonizer in determining the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, both the people and their land, is equally important.

## **WORKS CITED**

### 1. Primary Sources

Anthony, Michael. *Bright Road to El Dorado*. Ian Randle Publishers, 2000. Print.

Coetzee, John Maxwell. *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Vintage Books, 2004.

Ghosh, Amitav. *River of Smoke*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

Naipaul, Amitav. *A Bend in the River*. Vintage, 1989.

### 2. Other Writings

Anthony, Michael. *The Year in San Fernando*. 1965. Heinemann, 1996.

Coetzee, J. M. *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*. Yale University Press, 1988.

Coetzee, J. M. *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life*. 1997. Pinguin Books, 1998.

Coetzee, J. M. *Youth: Scenes from Provincial Life*. 2002. Vintage, 2003.

Ghosh, Amitav. "The March of the Novel through History: The Testimony of My Grandfather's Bookcase." *The Kenyon Review* New Series, vol. 20, no. 2, Spring, 1998, pp. 13-24.

Ghosh, Amitav. "The slave of Ms. H. 6." *Center for Studies in Social Sciences*, Occasional Paper, no. 125, 1990, pp. 1-135.

Naipaul, V.S. *The Middle Passage*. 1962. Vintage Books, 2002.

### 3. Secondary Resources

"ANC Origins and Backgrounds." *South African History Online*,

<https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/anc-origins-and-background>. May, 15th, 2018.

Aschcroft, Bill, et al. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. Routledge, 1998.

- Attwell, David. "J. M. Coetzee." *Encyclopedia of Post-colonial Literatures in English*, edited by Eugene Benson and L. W. Conolly, Routledge, Vol. 1, 1994, pp. 220-225
- Batra, Kanika. "City Botany: Reading Urban Ecologies in China through Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke*." *Narrative*, vol. 21, no. 3, The Ohio State University Press, October 2013, pp. 322-332, [doi:10.1353/nar.2013.0015](https://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2013.0015).
- Berger, Roger A. "Writing Without a Future: Colonial Nostalgia in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*." *Essays in Literature*. Vol. 22. No.1, 1995, pp. 144-56.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Byerly, Alison. "The uses of Landscape: The picturesque Aesthetic and the National Park System." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 52-68.
- Campbell, Sueellen. "The Land and Language of Desire: Where Deep Ecology and Post-Structuralism Meet." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 124-136.
- Castillo, Debra. "The Composition of the Self in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*." *Critique*, vol. 27, no. 2, Winter 1986, pp. 78 - 90. *Periodicals Archive Online*.
- Cooke, John. "'A Vision of the Land': V.S. Naipaul's Later Novels."

- Caribbean Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 4, Dec 1, 1979, pp. 31-47. *Periodicals Archive Online*.
- Cowaloosur, Vedita. "The Novels of Amitav Ghosh and the Integral Hegemony of English." *English Studies in Africa*, vol. 58, no.1, 2015, pp. 1-13, doi: 10.1080/00138398.2015.1045157.
- Crosby, Alfred W. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Danta, Chris, et al., editors. *Strong Opinions: J. M. Coetzee and the Authority Of Contemporary Fiction*. Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.
- Deitering, Cynthia. "The postnatural Novel: Toxic Consciousness in Fiction of the 1980s." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 196-203.
- DelConte, Matt. "A Further Study of Present Tense Narration: The Absentee Narratee and Four-Wall Present Tense in Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Disgrace*." *Journal of Narrative Theory*, vol. 37, no. 3, Eastern Michigan University, Fall 2007, pp. 427-446, doi: 10.1353/jnt.2008.0011.
- Dixon, Robert. "'Traveling in the West': The Writing of Amitav Ghosh." *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*, edited by, Tabish Khair, The University of Permanent Black, 2003.
- Drayton, Arthur D. "Michael Anthony." *Encyclopedia of Post-colonial Literatures in English*, edited by Eugene Benson and L. W. Conolly,

Routledge, Vol. 1, 1994, pp. 423-430

Dulai, Surjit S. "The Ganges Flows Through Africa: V. S. Naipaul's India and *A Bend in the River*." *Journal of South Asian Literature*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1991, pp. 303-321. *MISCELLANY*.

Eckstein, Barbara. "The Body, the Word, and the State: J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 22, no. 2, Duke University Press, Winter 1989, pp. 175-198, [www.jstor.org/stable/1345802](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345802).

Effe, Alexandra. *J. M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Narrative Transgression: A Reconsideration of Metalepsis*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skins, White Masks*. 1986. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann, PlutoPress, 2008.

---. *A Dying Colonialism*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier, GrovePress, 1965.

---. *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier, Grove Press, 1967.

---. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington, Grove Press, 1963.

Folks, Jeffrey. "V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*: A Tragic Vision of Evil." *Modern Age Winter*, vol. 58, no. 1, Winter 2016, pp. 27- 33.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*. Translated by Robert Herley, Pantheon Books, 1978.

Fromm, Harold. "From Transcendence to Obsolescence: A Route Map." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryl

Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 30-39.

Gallagher, Susan Van Zanten. "Torture and the Novel: J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 29, no. 2, University of Wisconsin Press, Summer 1988, pp. 277-285, [www.jstor.org/stable/1208441](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1208441).

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. Columbia UP, 1998.

Glotfelty, Cheryll, and Harold Fromm, editors. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp.

Gupta, Rozy, and Tanu Gupta. "Narratology and History in Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke*." *IJIMS: International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies*, vol. 1, no. 9, 2014, pp. 35-40, [www.ijims.com](http://www.ijims.com).

Gupta, Rozy, and Tanu Gupta. "Time and Space: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke*." *IJELLH: International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities*, vol. 2, no. 10, February 2015, pp. 525-533.

Hacht, Anne M, and Dwayne D. Hayes, editors. *Gale Contextual Encyclopedia of World Literature*. Detroit: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009. Print.

Harrow, Kenneth W. "An African Reading of Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*." *Journal of South Asian Literature*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1991, pp. 322-336.  
*MISCELLANY*.

Head, Dominic. *J. M. Coetzee*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.



- Howarth, William. "Some Principles of Ecocriticism." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 69-91.
- Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. Routledge, 2010.
- Hughes, Peter, *V.S. Naipaul*. Routledge Revivals, 1988.
- Evernden, Neil. "Beyond Ecology: Self, Place, and the Pathetic Fallacy." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 92-104.
- Idris, Nazua. "Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* as a Jamesonian Third World National Allegory." *Stamford Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 0, April 2013, pp. 169-182.
- Kelly, Richard. *V. S. Naipaul*. The Continuum Publishing Company, 1989.
- King, Bruce, *V.S. Naipaul*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Kisangani, Emizet Francois, and F. Scott Bobb. *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 3rd ed., The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010.
- Kolodny, Annette. "Unearthing Herstory: An Introduction." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 170-181.
- Krstović, Jelena, editor. *Short Story Criticism: Criticism of the Works of Short Fiction Writers*, Gale: Cengage Learning, Vol. 121, 2009.

Lane, Richard J. *The Postcolonial Novel*. Polity Press, 2006.

LeGuin, Ursula K. "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 149-154.

Manes, Christopher. "Nature and Silence." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 15-29.

Marquard, Leo. *A short history of South Africa*. Praeger, 1968.

Mazel, David. "American Literary Environmentalism as Domestic Orientalism." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 137-145.

Meeker, Joseph W. "The Comic Mode." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 155-169.

"Michael Anthony." *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, edited by Daryl Cumber Dance, Greenwood Press, 1986, pp. 124-136

Mondal, Anshuman A. *Amitav Ghosh*. Manchester University Press, 2007.

Mustafa, Fawzia. "Gurnah and Naipaul: Intersections of *Paradise* and *A Bend in the River*." *Twentieth-Century Literature*, vol. 61, no. 2, Duke University Press, June 2015, pp. 232-263, doi: 10.1215/0041462X-3112216.

- Neimneh, Shadi. "The Visceral Allegory of *Waiting for the Barbarians*: A Postmodern Re-Reading of J. M. Coetzee's Apartheid Novels." *Callaloo*, vol. 37, no. 3, Johns Hopkins University Press, Summer 2014, pp. 692-709, doi: /10.1353/cal.2014.0115.
- Olaoluwa, Senayon. "The Author Never Dies: Roland Barthes and the Postcolonial Project." *Kritikos*, Vol. 4, International and Interdisciplinary Journal of Postmodern Cultural Sound, Text and Image, April 2007, n.p., <http://intertheory.org/olaoluwa.htm>
- Phillips, Dana. "Is Nature Necessary?" *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 204-222.
- Plumwood, Val. *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. Routledge, 1993.
- Poddar, Sanjukta. "Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke*: Globalisation, Alternative Historiography, and Fictive Possibilities." *Postcolonial Text*, vol. 10, no. 1, Ashoka University, 2015, pp. 1-22.
- Poyner, Jane. *J. M. Coetzee and the Paradox of Postcolonial Authorship*. Ashgate, 2009.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Routledge, 1992.
- Raja, Masood. "Reading the Postcolony in the Center: V.S Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*." 2005.

- Ramchand, Kenneth. *The West Indian Novel and its Background*. Ian Randle Publishers, 2004.
- Reckwitz, Erhard. "“I Am Not Myself Anymore:” Problems of Identity in Writing by White South Africans.” *English in Africa*, vol. 20, no. 1, Rhodes University, May 1993, pp. 1-23, [www.jstor.org/stable/40238702](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40238702).
- Rich, Paul. “Apartheid and the Decline of the Civilization Idea: An Essay on Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* and J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*.” *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 15, no. 3, Indiana University Press, Autumn 1984, pp. 365-393, [www.jstor.org/stable/3819663](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3819663).
- Ross, Robert. *A Concise History of South Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Roy, Rituparna. *South Asian Partition Fiction in English: From Khushwant Singh to Amitav Ghosh*. Amsterdam University Press, 2010.
- Ruckert, William. “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism.” *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 103-123.
- Sabar, Nisha. “Ecocritical Readings and Descriptions of Landscape in Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* and *River of Smoke*.” *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, vol.5, no. 5, October 2014, pp. 303-310.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. 1993. Vintage Books, 1994.

---. *Orientalism*. Penguin Group, 1978.

Sandall, Roger. "'Colonia' According to Naipaul." *Commentary*, vol. 76, no. 6, Dec.1, 1983, pp. 77-81. *Periodicals Archive Online*.

Sanders, Scott Russell. "Speaking a Word for Nature." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 182-195.

Sankaran, Chitra, editor. *History, Narrative, and Testimony in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction*, State University of New York Press 2012.

Stankiewicz, Damien. "Anthropology and Fiction: An Interview with Amitav Ghosh." *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2012, pp. 535–541, doi: 10.1111/j.1548-1360.2012.01159.x Stringer, Jenny, editor. *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature in English*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Stringer, Jenny, editor. *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature in English*. Oxford University Press, 1996.

Swain, Stella. "V.S. Naipaul." *Dictionary of Literary Biography: British Novelists Since 1960*, edited by Merritt Mosele. Vol. 207, The Gale Group, 1999.

Theroux, Paul. *Sir Vidia's Shadow: A Friendship across Five Continents*. Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Thompson, Leonard M. *A Short History of South Africa*. Yale University Press, 2001.

Turner, Frederick. "Cultivating the American Garden." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and

- Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996, pp. 40-51.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Garland Publishing Inc., 1999.
- Urquhart, Troy. "Truth, Reconciliation, and the Restoration of the State: Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*." *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 52, no. 1, Hofstra University, Spring 2006, pp. 1-21, [www.jstor.org/stable/20479751](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20479751).
- Vincent, William. "Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*: Time, History, and "Africa"" *Journal of South Asian Literature*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1991, pp. 337-349. MISCELLANY.
- Vital, Anthony. "Toward an African Ecocriticism: Postcolonialism, Ecology and Life & Times of Michael K.," *Research in African Literature*, Vol. 39, no.1, Spring 2008, pp. 87- 106.
- "V. S. Naipaul." [Nobelprize.org](http://Nobelprize.org), Nobel Media AB, January, 3rd, 2018, <<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2001/press-release/>>
- Walunywa, Joseph. "The "Non-Native Native" in V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*." *Postcolonial Text*, vol. 4, no. 2, Egerton University, 2008, pp. 1-25.
- Watson, Stephen. "Colonialism and the Novels of J. M. Coetzee." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 17, no. 3, Special Focus on Southern Africa, Autumn 1986, pp. 370-392.
- White, Lynn Jr. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, edited by Cheryl

Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, The University of Georgia Press, 1996,  
pp. 3-14.

Williams, Eric. *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*. Frederick A.  
Praeger Inc, 1964.

Wittenberg, Hermann, and Kate Highman. (2015) "Sven Hedin's "Vanished  
country": Setting and History in J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the  
Barbarians*." *Scrutiny* 2, vol. 20, no. 1, 2015, pp. 103-127, doi:  
10.1080/18125441.2015.1034164.

Worden, Nigel. *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Apartheid,  
Democracy*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

### ملخص البحث

تدرس هذه الأطروحة عنصر الطبيعة في عدد من البلدان في فترة ما بعد الكولونيالية، هي: جنوب أفريقيا، ترينيداد والصين. وذلك من خلال رواية نايبول 'منحنى في النهر' (1979)، ورواية جون ماكسويل كوتزي 'في انتظار البرابرة' (1980)، ورواية ميشال انثوني "الطريق الساطع الى الدورادو" (1983)، ورواية أميتاف غوش 'نهر من الدخان' (2011)، على التوالي.

تفحص الأطروحة البيئة التي تسكنها الشخصيات (قرية، بلدة أو مدينة)، ودور المستعمر في تحديد العلاقة بين المستعمر والمستعمر أو الشعب وأرضه، باستخدام تقارب نظريات ما بعد الاستعمار ونظرية النقد البيئي. مثال ذلك: حقيقة أن الأرض كجزء من الطبيعة، تؤثر على النفس والسلوك الفعلي للناس، وأن العديد من العناصر البيئية الأخرى مثل المناخ، والبرية، والمناظر الطبيعية المعدلة تقنياً، والطوبوغرافيات، تعمل كقوى تفاعل وتأثير على البشر.

كما تتبع هذه الأطروحة، تمثيل الجوانب ذات الصلة بالطبيعة في هذه الروايات، ومدى تأثيرها وأهميتها تجاه مواقف الكتاب وطريقة تصويرها، بالإضافة إلى تحليل مدى إدراكهم لأهميتها وتأثيرها على شخصيات قصصهم. وتتفحص وجود بعض المصطلحات الناشئة عن فترة ما بعد الاستعمارية، مثل: الآخر، الاستعمار البيولوجي في روايات الدراسة الأربعة.