



Full Length Research Paper

**Mining Operations and Marginalized Communities: Environmental Racism in Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow***

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**Abstract**

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*This article critically examines the impacts of environmental racism on the marginalized community and their environment as depicted in Ishmael Beah's novel, Radiance of Tomorrow. The novel was selected using a purposive sampling method because of its strong environmental and ecological concerns. The data were gathered using a close reading mechanism. Extracts were collected and categorized based on their thematic significance towards postcolonial ecocriticism with direct connections to the environment and ecology, and the analysis was conducted using tenets of environmental racism. Through a detailed analysis of the text, the study highlights the discriminatory treatment faced by marginalized communities in relation to ecological issues. The findings reveal the devastating consequences of mining operations on the lives of the natives, including forced displacement, human rights violations, and the destruction of the ecosystem. The study unearths the mining company's discriminatory policies that deny the natives access to basic resources and infrastructure, and it reveals the complicity of government authorities and legal systems in perpetuating these injustices. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for awareness, action, and justice to address environmental racism and promote environmental equality.*



## Introduction

Environmental racism is the result of a symbiotic relationship between industry practices and public policies that benefit the dominant race while marginalizing the poor. The government, military, and political, economic, and legal institutions all contribute to it. Environmental racism policies include local land use and environmental law enforcement policies, which include industrial facilities and low-income and minority housing. Environmental decisions are made by the powerful group by excluding the poor and marginalized groups from government decision-making policies. The marginalized communities are targeted for potentially dangerous environmental conditions, pollutants, toxic waste, and filthy landfills as part of a specific action plan set by the dominant race. This phenomenon is best understood as "discriminatory treatment" of people who are economically underdeveloped or socially excluded. It can also be explained by the exploitation of a "home" source by a foreign outlet, which results in the transfer of ecological problems (Plumwood 2003, 4).

Environmental racism has been significantly advanced by Robert Bullard (2003) and Sheila R. Foster (2001), who have extensively researched and written about the disproportionate burden of environmental hazards on marginalized communities. Their groundbreaking work has shed light on how race and class intersect with environmental injustice, highlighting the systemic discrimination that leads to the placement of toxic facilities near low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Through their activism and scholarship, Bullard and Foster have played a crucial role in raising awareness about environmental racism and advocating for policies that promote environ-

mental equity and justice (Bruno, 2023).

The idea of globalization is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world's economy, which is severely damaging the current ecosystem. Poor countries and communities have been severely impacted. Lands inhabited primarily by indigenous people are most affected by globalization (Bullard, 2003). The global extraction of natural resources, including the mining industries, is where this concept is particularly strong. The exploitation of indigenous people has taken the form of genocide, chattel slavery, indentured servitude, and racial discrimination—in employment, housing, and practically all aspects of life.

This systemic exploitation has led to the loss of indigenous lands, cultural heritage, and traditional ways of life. Indigenous communities often face displacement and forced assimilation as their territories are taken over by multinational corporations for resource extraction. These corporations prioritize profit over the well-being of indigenous people, disregarding their rights and contributing to the perpetuation of poverty and inequality. The environmental consequences of these extractive industries are also devastating, as they contribute to deforestation, pollution, and the destruction of delicate ecosystems.

The intricate relationships between power, race, and environmental challenges can be analyzed and understood through the lenses of environmental justice, critical race theory, and postcolonial theory within the theoretical framework of postcolonial ecocriticism. Recognizing that marginalized populations frequently suffer the burden of environmental degradation and pollution, environmental justice places focus on the need for an equitable distribution of environmental re-

sources (Mohai et al. 2009). Critical race theory highlights the ways that racism and race are intertwined with environmental injustices, as well as how they are ingrained in social and legal structures. The study of postcolonial theory looks at the effects of colonialism and imperialism, emphasizing the connections between historical processes of power and exploitation and environmental injustices.

This study aimed to address the pervasive environmental racism depicted in Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*, focusing on the discriminatory treatment and injustices faced by marginalized communities. The primary problem under investigation is the detrimental impact of mining operations on the lives of indigenous people, including displacement, physical harm, cultural disruption, and denial of basic rights and resources. Additionally, the study examined the selected novel for its depiction of the complicity of government authorities and legal systems in perpetuating environmental injustices, as well as the urgent need for awareness, advocacy, and policy changes to combat environmental racism and promote social and ecological justice.

## **Methodology**

### **Methods**

Textual analysis was employed as a method to analyze Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*, specifically focusing on how characters make sense of the physical world in the narrative. Environmental justice, critical race theory, and postcolonial theory were used as theoretical concepts within postcolonial ecocriticism to analyze the selected novel. These theoretical frameworks helped to uncover the underlying themes of inequality, discrimination, and oppression in relation to the environment. By using a multidisciplinary

approach, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the environment and marginalized communities are adversely impacted by mining operations. Overall, the combination of textual analysis and critical theories allowed for a nuanced examination of the intersectionality between environmental issues and social justice.

### **Criteria for Text Selection**

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow* for analysis based on its relevance to the objectives of the study. It was used to examine how the author depicts the impacts of environmental racism on both humans and nonhumans in his narrative as an African literary writer. The selection criteria took into account what Buell refers to as "environmentally oriented" literary texts as well as "those" that do not appear to be so (1995, 195). Finding thematic concerns that are pertinent to the study served as the foundation for the selection process. Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow* was selected to be studied because it is an environmentally-oriented literary text that explores the impacts of environmental racism on both humans and nonhumans. The novel delves into the devastating effects of mining and deforestation on the local communities, highlighting the injustices and struggles faced by the people and the natural environment.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

This research used close reading, interpretation, and in-depth analysis techniques to identify areas for investigation and evaluation in the selected literary text. Excerpts from the novel were arranged and examined in a cross-examination manner using data analysis, which made it possible to find patterns, themes, relationships, explanations,

and interpretations. Textual analysis was used to analyze the novel, with ecological and colonial thematic categories connected to the environment and ecology. Then the analysis was conducted using postcolonial ecocriticism, which examined the representation of ecology, human-nonhuman connections, and the ramifications of environmental racism.

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

#### **The Demise of the Marginalized Community's Environment**

In Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*, the demise of the marginalized community's environment is depicted as a devastating consequence of war and exploitation. The once-vibrant landscapes, filled with lush forests and flowing rivers, are reduced to barren wastelands. The villagers struggle to survive amidst the destruction; their livelihoods are lost, and their connection to the land is severed. This portrayal serves as a powerful reminder of the long-lasting impact of conflicts on both the physical and emotional well-being of marginalized communities.

Unlike the natives, the colonizers consider land and its inhabitants as commodities that can be owned in order to satisfy materialistic desires. They care less, or they do not totally care, about the well-being of the indigenous people or the sustainability of the environment as long as they are able to benefit from the wealth of the land. The indigenous community regards land as an ancestral lineage, a spiritual foundation, and a source of existence.

Beah's text vividly depicts how the colonizers who own the mining company view and treat the land and its inhabitants. The text further explains how the mining causes serious problems, including a threat to the whole environment and harm to the health

of every living thing in the village. Mining operations involve a large and broad land area, causing deforestation and the destruction of organisms. The development of mining areas necessitates building dams, roads, and housing for the mine workers, causing vegetation farms to be destroyed. The increased human and vehicle mobility harms the environment by releasing gases and causing dust to blow into the air. When natives walk on the street, drivers intentionally blow dust in their faces, exacerbating their plight. Dust covers everywhere in the town, including schools and ritual sites. It hampers the movements of the natives and makes them confine themselves to small areas of land within and around their houses. The text depicts excessive landscaping for the mining operation and the damage to natural ecosystems, which is termed ecocide.

The company owners use landscaping techniques to achieve materialistic goals, causing environmental issues such as soil erosion, biodiversity loss, global warming, pollution, and climate change. This process involves altering native land for material gain, resulting in environmental racism. Landscaping is associated with the conflict between colonizers and natives over resources like fauna, flora, oil, minerals, and water. The struggle over land resources is more than just environmental control; it also involves control over space and territories over landscapes. The colonizer's ideals of race, progress, reason, and civilization are used to strengthen colonial relations, perpetuating the cycle of colonization.

In Beah's text, landscaping is observable changing *Imperi* irreparably. The modification of elements of the natural environment by company men to achieve materialistic purposes, as in postcolonial terminology, is apparently noticeable. The mining company

builds dams and dredges by displacing the natives and clearing the land, which completely changes the landscape (131). The drilling and excavation of open-pit mines, as well as the alterations brought on by the growth of associated infrastructure, all contribute to the modification of *Imperi's* landscape during the mining process. The miner camps and the roads required to transport the extracted materials are also constructed in mass (80).

The infrastructure built by mining operations in isolated, uninhabited environments increases access to these areas, which causes additional disruption to the ecological systems and changes the landscape into an uninhabitable place. In the process, the natives' mental image of their landscape is lost in colonial space. The natives' relationship to their environment is damaged as a result of landscaping.

Beah's novel also criticizes the ecocide caused by the company's mining activities. Arthur Galston, an American biologist, introduced the term ecocide in 1970 at the Conference on War and National Responsibility, though it has recently gained popularity. Galston coined the word to emphasize his concerns about the use of "defoliant agent orange" during the Vietnam War to cause environmental destruction (Weisberg 1970). The term is also referred to as "terracide" or "planetocide" (Broszimmer 2002, 91). It is a combination of two words: eco (meaning "home") and cide (meaning "to destroy or kill") to represent the destruction of home, in which purposeful or unintentional manmade activities culminated in the extermination of planet Earth.

Most definitions of the term generally refer to the devastation of substantial areas of the natural environment as a result of actions

such as mining, nuclear war, resource misuse, or hazardous material dumping. The Stop Ecocide Foundation announced in November 2020 that they had assembled an expert panel to produce a definition of ecocide, which they defined as enormous destruction and annihilation of ecosystems—damage to nature that is extensive, severe, or systematic. One of the key aspects they emphasized in their definitional framework was that a definition of ecocide must expressly highlight environmental racism and local-level environmental injustice. Ecocide becomes more serious when it occurs as a result of environmental racism, in which environmental and racial oppression are interconnected or supported by one another in theory and practice (Huggan and Tiffin 2015, 4).

Beah's text depicts that the mining industry destroys the environment entirely. The company becomes unsafe for the natural ecosystems. Living things, including small organisms, are severely affected by the mining activities. The company digs small dams everywhere and expands its mining sites to every end of the land, polluting water bodies, soil, and air.

First, water bodies are the most affected element of natural ecosystems, as depicted in the novel. Several phases of mining and mineral processing necessitate the use of water, resulting in large groundwater resource impacts. Water is used for dust prevention, soluble particle removal, screening and separation techniques, and waste disposal drainage dams. They use chemicals in small dams to polish minerals, and these chemicals enter the soil and water bodies. The chemicals kill all forms of organisms that live in the soil. Fish and other living things that occupy the water bodies are also infected by the chemicals. The people of

Imperi lack potable water. They also lack food as they depend on fishing for their livelihood (100).

“Soil is also devastated severely as a result of the mining company’s use of chemicals in dams to clean minerals that enter it from the overflows of the dams. The farmers among them were livid. Their lands for planting next season had been dug up and flooded without any consultation. “This means that our rice fields have also been contaminated,” one of the farmers added, as he dipped a hand in the water and smelled it” (100).

Second, the air is harshly affected by the company’s mining operations. Imperi is filled with dust and car emissions; people cough everywhere, and they spit dust from their mouths. People sometimes get hit by cars because they cannot see the car coming from a distance because dust covers their sight. Children, while going to school, and women, while collecting things for household living, suffer a lot. The drivers are also so harsh; they do not care about the safety of the community. They drive fast, releasing dust into the air, and they sometimes smash anybody they get in the street. The company takes no responsibility for the car accident, and it is also not forced to compensate the victim’s family by the government.

Third, there is also sound pollution from the monster machine that operates at the mining site, and during the night, the workers of the company dance by releasing loud music from g-pass. Imperi and its habitats (all forms of life) get disturbed by the sound of music. As the eco-community has never experienced such a nightclub before, the environment feels chaotic. The indigenous people think that such disturbances are immoral for the community. The people’s storytelling

trends get interrupted by the noise. The people of Imperi use stories to educate young ones about their culture and history, so they always tell stories to their children every night. As a result, they want their environment to be quiet, and they also believe that nature does not want to be disturbed.

But the company’s men come and establish a nightclub and a bar where they can stay a night and enjoy a different life, which is totally not experienced by natives. Imperi turns out to be a dancing place, and people become restless even in the night. The habit of telling stories gets interrupted. Storytelling is discontinued, which means knowledge of the indigenous community gets discontinued, as storytelling is the means through which knowledge is transferred to the next generation. Here, the company plays a significant role in departing people from their identity—as what Africans tell their children is primarily their identity. What follows is a change toward modernization. When natives get disconnected from their own culture (knowledge of culture and history), the line totally discontinues and another one replaces it. This new line is another culture that is incorporated with the company (69–70). Water habitats, especially fish, are affected by chemicals spilled into water bodies (102-103).

### **The Demise of the Marginalized Community's Culture**

Another impact of environmental racism, which is demonstrated in the text, is that the company's men purposefully destroy the indigenous people's social fabric. They target the community's cultural lifeblood in order to create colonial space by destroying the local (traditional) way of life. As depicted in the text, there are several instances of this.

First, the company's men open a significant number of bars at the square where Mama Kadie and other elders use to educate the younger generation. "More bars opened in town, and at night music blared out, and drunken men harassed the young women who walked by" (71). The commotion from the bar and the loud music prevents the peace and quiet required for stories to captivate the young, so the elders no longer share their tales in the public square. The goal is to replace the traditional African way of life, which is viewed as primitive or backward, with that of the West. The company men succeed in achieving their goal as the elders stop using the place to educate the children and as they totally stop telling the story.

The colonial elites know very well how to create generation gaps through ideological injection. Through the creation of interruptions, they cut the young generation from the umbilical cord that connects them to the traditional source of knowledge and wisdom. In doing so, they redirect and instill the anthropocentric Western knowledge corpus in them. This is the royal colonial process of uprooting generations from eco-friendly cultures and transplanting them into anthropocentric Western cultures. Beah states this fact as, "With nothing better to do, the younger people went to the bars and stood around observing the white and black workers." They called it "going to watch television." (71). There is a shift in their interest in listening to the history and stories of their ancestors. The colonizers consider indigenous people savages, and they want to snatch them from their ancestral culture and integrate them into the colonizers' culture (colonial space). This is the subtle impact of neo-colonization, which is a continuation of colonial enterprise in this era.

Regarding what the children watch at the

bars, Beah describes them as: "Most nights ended with heated conversations and bottles thrown at walls or heads; or else swearing accompanied by laughs so hurtful to the ears they could come only from wounded souls." (71). He further reveals the covert racism through the worsening behaviors exhibited by the senior workers of the company, which ruin the young generation as follows: "Sometimes one of the senior workers... would stagger out of the bar and, barely able to stand, urinate in public, shaking his penis at whoever was around." (71).

One of the white workers pisses all over the town hall, where the elders gather, one evening. He holds a bottle of beer in one hand and his private thing in the other as he spins around in circles, soaking tables, seats, the ceiling, and the ground while saying, "I am Michelangelo, and I am making my masterpiece." The children look at him in astonishment. The guy throws money at them and demands that they cheer for him as he does so. They rush for the money and applaud him. Pa Moiwa, one of the honored elders of the town, suddenly appears on the scene and shakes his head in disgust, asking, "Do you behave in such a manner in the land you are from?" (72). After a brief but furious conversation, the man zips his trousers and brushes up against Pa Moiwa as he returns to the bar. "I am going for more paint; my work isn't done," he says loudly. "When I am finished, you will always remember John" (72).

John has something disguised in his statement, which Pa Moiwa can clearly understand. There is a strong meaning in the word "painting," which John divulges in intoxication, which is to mean erasing the indigenous culture from the minds of the indigenous young generation and filling them with that of the West. This is not John's project,

despite the fact that he reveals it in ecstasy. It is the destructive superstructure in the cultural framework of neo-colonization. It is covertly carried out within the capitalist market system.

Pa Moiwa wants to tell John that he is peeing on sacred ground where wise people have gathered for generations to discuss significant issues pertaining to their land, but he chooses not to because he knows that doing so would bring nothing. In his statement, "When I am finished, you will always remember John," John wishes to demonstrate to Pa Moiwa that the loss of indigenous people, land, culture, and identity is inevitable and that dystopia is swiftly coming to Imperi. Mining erodes indigenous communities' strong cultural ties, resulting in the loss of their culture and identity. Indigenous ways of life, livelihoods, and significant cultural and spiritual sites are in danger due to mining activity and its related social and environmental effects.

As is known, large-scale mining frequently results not only in the loss of lands for indigenous peoples, who are among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups in society, but also poses a serious threat to their culture and social fabric. This is what Imperi is facing, and the change is irreversible. Besides, John is exhibiting an extreme form of racism by pissing on sacred places and seats, where the highest level of traditional consciousness is displayed. It is intended to show the children that what they value (the elders and the sacred land) is worthless, so he is showing them that they should chase after what is worth having, which is the cash (money) he gives them. In other words, he diverts the minds of the young to the mining company, which is capable of paying salaries to its employees, and shows them that following the traditional leaders is worth-

less. For the materialists, everything—including land—is a commodity, whereas the indigenous people do not place value in money.

### **The Demise of the Marginalized Community**

In Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*, the marginalized community faces a tragic demise as their way of life is systematically destroyed. The arrival of foreign mining companies disrupts the delicate balance of the village, displacing the residents and forcing them into poverty. As the community struggles to adapt to their new reality, their traditions and culture slowly fade away, leaving them disconnected from their roots and identity. The novel serves as a poignant reminder of the devastating consequences that can occur when marginalized communities are disregarded and exploited.

In the novel, the people of *Imperi* are oppressed because of their low socioeconomic and political power, and as a result, they become victims of the combination of civil war that holocausts most of them, the scourge of diamond mining, which goes by the covert name Rutile Mining Company, and their own government's descent into metabolic capitalism and corruption. The people and the natural environment of *Imperi*, a land blessed with an abundance and high quality of diamonds and rutile, suffer greatly as a result of each of the entities preying on the country's natural resources.

The story begins with the narrator describing a burned-out village, depicting the atrocities committed against the people and the environment. Mama Kadie, a central character, searches for her house, discovering human bones everywhere. She finds another elder and works together to collect and wash the bones, vowing never to flee again. They



reflect on the heinous days of *Operation No Living Thing*, when gunmen stormed the compound and began torturing and killing everyone. Beah recalls the people's horrifying memories of the war, including raids, mass shootings, amputation, and child rapes. Imperi is in shambles, with the majority of invaders being child soldiers and many men.

Moreover, the people of Imperi who are able to survive the civil war suffer from an internal displacement and a horrific memory of *Operation No Living Thing*, which entails an impact on the active and subsequent generations of the indigenous community. This internal displacement allowed the community to exile itself into various safe zones. The people of *Imperi* are overcome with nostalgia and abhor living in exile, thinking of the peaceful, concordant, and environmentally safe life they had before the war. They feel alienated from their ancestral home and marginalized as a result of their treatment as an exotic, underprivileged group within the nation. During their seven-year stay in various parts of the country, they suffered severe psychological trauma. Even though the people of Imperi learn that the soldiers have completely killed their families and demolished their entire village, they decide to return to Imperi. Their sense of home is very strong.

Beah describes Mama Kadie's, who is one of the main characters in the novel, strong attachment to her home as: "She had returned home because she could not find complete happiness anywhere else...refugee camps, homes of kind strangers...something she knew existed only on the land she now stood upon." (10). Mama Kadie arrives at home and finds debris and piles of bones everywhere in Imperi. "The village has been completely destroyed, to the point where she despises calling it home; however, she

has always considered it to be her home. ... Her eyes moved beyond the piles to find strength to leap forward. "This is still my home," she sighed as she pressed her bare feet deeper into the earth. (11). Everyone, like Mama Kadie, gradually returns from exile to Imperi after the war ends (23–34).

This demonstrates how important home is to the indigenous community, despite the fact that there is not a single house on the land to call "home." So, the soil they inherited from their forefathers is what they call home. After their resettlement and restoration of their home, the people of *Imperi* continue to suffer from the horrific memories of the war.

The *Imperi* people, who regain their homes, are engulfed in apocalyptophobia, an intense fear of war. They avoid discussing war-related history and avoid discussing civil wars. When armed security guards arrive, they fear and rage at the sight of them. They flee to town or the forest, fearing the military squad's presence. The town becomes tense, and children become more vigilant, spending nights in the bushes. The *Imperi* people are marginalized, subjected to racial discrimination, and sometimes mocked by others. War ruins their environment, exploiting them and causing physical and psychological pain.

Beah's text also highlights the demise of the poor and powerless in the conflict between needy and greedy individuals. The *Imperi* people, who are exploited by a mining company, face environmental racism due to *the resource curse*. They are vulnerable to toxic chemicals, waste dumping, and degradation while their natural resources are exploited. The greedy white men exploit Imperi, causing pollution, burning workers, and destroying cemeteries. Residents complain, but government police detain them for defaming

generous job creators.

As depicted in the novel, the company's racist actions toward native inhabitants and workers are extreme. It is a throat-cutting situation for the people of *Imperi*, while it is a means of aggrandizing capital for the owners of the mine. The survivors of the civil war are destitute and powerless. Besides, they are a marginalized group of people, even by their own government.

The company's racism is evident in its denial of natives' access to water and electricity, despite the pipes running through their homes and soil. The company also forbids its native workers from acquiring such infrastructure. Beah criticizes the employees who lay pipes and send their children to find water, and the electricians who are given flashlights to navigate the darkness back to their homes. He tells a touching story about a father who gives his son a flashlight to write in his notebook instead of a kerosene lamp but is warned not to use it for anything else.

Bullard's explanation of environmental racism is noticeable here. The white people accumulate the benefit, but the people of color or poor communities pay the cost. The company makes *Imperi* a dilapidated village, where existence is totally impossible. The residents of *Imperi* are predominantly people of color and low-income individuals who are left to bear the burden of the company's actions. As a result, they are forced to live in a deteriorating and inhospitable environment, lacking basic necessities and struggling to survive. Bullard's concept of environmental racism perfectly encapsulates the unequal distribution of resources and the disproportionate impact on marginalized communities like *Imperi*.

The text portrays a mining company de-

stroying social infrastructure in *Imperi*, causing trauma and suffering for the natives. The school, which reopened after the civil war, is encroached on by the company, causing dust to engulf pupils and making learning difficult. Older students, mostly boys over 18, seek employment, and some teachers work in hazardous conditions for a few more years. The number of students in the school dwindles, and the company eventually uses the school land as a mining site, uprooting it. This demonstrates the situation in West Africa, where soils are rich in mineral resources and oil and humans are valued below precious stones and metals. These people are denied access to social infrastructure and are disposed of alongside toxic waste thrown away by the company.

The text depicts the deep racism of the mining company's employees, who are mostly white and from different parts of the world. The elders of the village, who are appointed to talk to Wonde, express their suffering and social disorders caused by the company's men. However, the guards refuse to allow them to enter the company's office. The elders ask the guard to confirm their appointment, but the guard refuses. The company's policy also prohibits natives from riding in its vehicles, leaving the elders disappointed and uncertain about their future. The company also displays discrimination against natives, depriving them of benefits, exploiting their land, destroying the ecosystem, and making life miserable for them.

Environmental racism has enormous negative impacts on natives. While the state and private capital benefit from rutile or covert diamond mining, the communities and landscapes of *Imperi* bear an unfair share of the environmental costs. Without the people of *Imperi's* permission, the company begins operations, displacing them and committing

numerous human rights offenses like gangrape, arbitrary detention, oppression, killings, house demolition, and destruction of graveyards, sacred sites, and property. These mistreatments take place in an atmosphere of impunity because both the state and private armed forces that commit the crimes are frequently not held accountable. The text depicts that people are unsafe everywhere: car accidents, machine failure, dams falling, explosions of dynamite, etc.

There are a lot of such instances in the text. One of them is depicted when a 16-year-old student steps on a live electric wire left uncovered and dies instantly after having his blood drained from him. The government's legal body blames the boy's carelessness. The company compensates the family with rice, and military personnel forbid street use. The marginalized are victims of government policies that exclude them.

Another instance is that the company's workers commit a horrific gangrape of native females, with Yinka being one of the victims. Despite witnessing the assault, the police do not provide justice. Another girl, Salimatu, is also raped by the same men and denied justice. Many victims are hidden and then discovered pregnant, with the child becoming part of Imperi's "forgotten population" (111). The natives are powerless, and the only respect left is silence.

The inhabitants of Imperi are prone to suffering excruciatingly painful bodily trauma: murder, savage beatings, and imprisonment. These victims include a soil surveyor who works with Bockarie. The man takes out some quite intriguing stones from the soil samples. The managers who are watching him on camera order him over the speakers to bring the stones and samples collected to their office. Then the man never comes

back. Nobody will ever see him again or learn what happened to him. After months of fruitless searching, his wife and child leave Imperi. A truck with armed security guards comes by immediately after the man is called out of the sample site; something is rapidly loaded in the back; the doors slam shut; and the truck leaves.

Car accidents are a common issue, with companies not held accountable or criminalized. The story of a little boy being smashed by a big truck while trying to run to his mother is a prime example of this. The mother, who is suffering from psychological trauma, goes psychotic and beats Rogers, the local driver. Rogers tries to calm her down by embracing her, but her efforts are futile. She runs towards the mining company's gates, dangling her son's corpse and demanding justice. After being escorted out, she electrocutes herself and the child. The woman and her child are removed from the fence at night, and nothing about them is reported anywhere. This portrayal of car accidents highlights the discrimination against people and their natural environment.

Native workers in the mining company face racism and physical and psychological abuse due to their lack of education and socioeconomic background. The job is characterized as blue-collar labor, with black miners often exploited through wage inequalities and employer manipulation. They are hired for difficult jobs with low pay and work in a dangerous environment. School instructors, like Bockarie and Benjamin, are forced to leave their profession to escape corruption.

In the story, Beah highlights the severe tasks assigned to black workers in a company, with only one worker surviving from two. The death chamber is a dangerous place

where only one worker survives. A sad story occurs when a black worker, Bockarie's friend Benjamin, watches a horror movie. A man emerges with his overalls partially on fire, his flesh burned on one side, and his hands and cheeks sucked dry. Workers near him massage wet sand on the burned flesh, while others watch. Meanwhile, another horrific event occurs, with blood in a small area and another man's body trapped in the machine's zigzag teeth, spinning his body around. The story highlights the dangers faced by black workers in the workplace.

Benjamin, a professional teacher, joins a mining company after quitting teaching, like Bockarie. He also faces hardship and death due to corruption committed by officials, including the principal who smuggled teachers' salaries. The text portrays government authorities as corrupt, including well-educated officials like Mr. Fofana, who are tied to the mining company through corruption. Higher officials are oblivious to the complaints of the indigenous community, as they lack the political and economic power to influence the government and attract international attention.

The narrative surrounding Benjamin's passing due to the dredge's collapse serves to highlight the mining company's utmost cruelty towards its native workers. Along with five other employees, he is accidentally trapped beneath one of the dredge's huge iron buckets, which falls on them; three of them die instantly, with the other two awaiting a gradual death while in severe pain (150). Being in the trap, Benjamin calls his old friend Bockarie to say goodbye and to plead with him to take care of his wife and children.

Despite threats of dismissal from the top supervisors, Bockarie rushes out of the of-

fice and back home so Benjamin can at least talk to his wife and children on the phone. After assisting Benjamin in speaking with his wife and children, Bockarie attempts to go to the location where the dredge collapses in the hopes of saving his friend's life, but he is told that no one was harmed and that he is not permitted to go there.

The novel depicts that the mining company does not value the native workers. Except for natural resources, all aspects of the native environment are discriminated against. The company maintains its claim that no one died, and Bockarie and the families of the other workers are unable to even get the bodies of their loved ones. The company posts the printed names of the people who were assumed to be on duty on the day of the accident, with checkmarks next to each person's name to show that they are all still alive. There is no mention of Benjamin or any of the other deceased individuals. Things resumed as usual in the company.

The horrific incident recalls the inhabitants of "Operation No Living Thing," who endured similar psychological and emotional repercussions after burying people without their bodies. The company vigorously shies away from accountability. The natives want to know if the owners of the company act the same way at home as they do abroad, or vice versa.

Finally, the anguish caused by the company's insatiable moves in every direction to maximize its profit from the land is another still-persuasive fact. From the statements of the investors who own companies on native land, two overwhelming conclusions may be drawn: discrimination and the pursuit of material profit at the cost of natives' suffering. The white man who owns the mining company in the village, called Kano, says, "This

is a wretched place with beautiful things in the soil." "I have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars just to set up my operations" (155–156). He worries that he may fail to attain his materialistic goal in such a "wretched place." The place was not initially wretched; on the contrary, it is packed with so many wonderful things. What the white man is doing to satisfy his insatiable wants renders the land worthless.

People are regularly displaced from Kano as a result of the bizarre operations of the diamond industry, which are related to the blasting that takes place every day at various times. The inhabitants must be ready to flee the blasting boundary at any moment because the sirens do not even give them adequate warning, as depicted in the text (159).

Despite the fact that the people suffer this much, they are not given any benefit from the company. They are dispossessed of their land for the operation of the mine; their houses and properties are destroyed by the activities of the company; and they are made to live in the wretched place, paying a price of life to the greedy owners. Despite the fact that the firm owns a superb hospital for its privileged people, it does not admit local residents who have been injured by stones thrown from the mining site (159). The corporation maintains that if their properties are damaged or they are injured or killed, it is their or their families' fault.

The people are forced to maintain their damaged houses on their own, despite the fact that they are crushed by the company's mining activity. The maintenance of the tin roofs, windows, and so forth is quite expensive. Yet, the firm does not compensate the indigenous people for any loss incurred by its own mining operations. The inhabitants

keep paying for the damages that occur on a regular or daily basis (160).

Residents in the mining area are suffering terribly as a result of the mining corporation. Women and children are the most vulnerable members of society. Pregnant women, old women, old men, and children, in particular, cannot escape the stones flung by the explosion. They are struck by the stone until they are physically harmed or killed instantly. "Children have been killed here in their sleep with rocks. older people as well. No one hears about it. "The pregnant women always have a miscarriage during the rush to escape the stones" (161).

Thirdly, Beah's text depicts that the state plays an integral role in bringing and guarding the mining company to *Imperi*; however, it does not consult with or have at least a proper discussion with the natives when it permits the company to mine from the land. Even the lower government wing administrators have no idea about what is going on in *Imperi* when it first begins operations. Beah writes, "Chiefs from the surrounding towns arrived to meet with the chief of *Imperi*." None of them had been advised of the arrival of the mining company, and they wanted to collectively send a message to the paramount chief, demanding an explanation (68).

In the text, the mining company violates the dignity and human rights of the local inhabitants by polluting the water bodies, making noise and blowing dust, destroying pasture and crop land, and generally behaving in an uncaring manner. In spite of their efforts, the communities of *Imperi* frequently fail to enlist the assistance of the government in defending their rights against these powerful corporate interests because they are politically powerless, impoverished, and desti-

tute.

Colquette et al. (1991) discuss the factors that lead marginalized people to be subjected to environmental racism, categorizing them into four categories: lack of affordable land, lack of political power, lack of mobility, and poverty. Both companies and governments look for inexpensive and easily accessible land. Indigenous communities that are powerless to successfully oppose these companies and government authorities, and those who lack access to political power, are therefore unable to bargain for just prices. Low levels of socioeconomic mobility expose the natives to vulnerability. A community's capacity to respond both physically and politically is also hampered by a lack of financial support. As Chavis puts it, environmental racism is racial discrimination in the formulation of environmental policies, the discriminatory application of laws and regulations, the intentional targeting of minority communities as sites for the disposal of hazardous waste from mining or whatever, the official approval of dangerous pollutants in minority communities, and the exclusion of poor people from positions of environmental leadership.

The text portrays the marginalized and destitute people of Imperi and surrounding villages, who are suppressed by their government and are not consulted on issues that impact their lives and environment. The local chiefs are also marginalized, as evidenced by their trip to meet with the paramount chief, who represents the provincial minister. The paramount chief advises local chiefs to be content with the mining company's arrival, promising to bring up the issue with those in charge. Despite the chiefs' disapproval, the paramount chief exclaims that those miners are bringing jobs, but they pay very low wages for natives and exorbitant

wages for nonnatives. The local chiefs also take the trip to meet with the provincial minister, who represents all local chiefs in the towns surrounding Imperi.

Beah's text highlights the Imperi people's racial discrimination in environmental regulations, highlighting Chavis' concept of environmental racism. The government lacks specific environmental laws to control waste disposal, leading to dams overflowing onto community-owned rivers and farms, killing fish and damaging soil (100). Village elders report the incident to the provincial minister, who summons police officers and threatens silence. The people of Imperi are targeted as sites for hazardous waste disposal, and government officials endorse harmful pollutants, favoring the intercontinental corporation at all costs. The government, including the president, supports the company they believe is good for their own benefit (161–162).

Finally, Beah's novel depicts the suffering of the natives because of displacement, which occurs for two reasons. The first displacement happens because of "Operation No Living Thing," the civil war that devastates every life form in *Imperi* and the surrounding villages, while the second displacement happens as a result of the encroachment of the mining company that transforms the ecosystem into an apocalyptic world. The former is the outcome of fractured domestic military racism, while the latter is the result of overt racism by a foreign corporate enterprise and the government.

The rapid development of the mining industry leads to environmental destruction and the displacement of natives, causing them to feel alienated and feeble. This is not based on their consent but rather on the govern-

ment's favoritism towards a white-owned company. This highlights the environmental racism that plays a role in the lives of indigenous people, who are forced to face a false development framework to maximize the country's economy.

The people of Imperi plead with the government to stop the company's operations, as they face environmental degradation, water pollution, and air pollution. However, they receive negative responses from the district government and are even intruded upon and beaten by policemen who are supposed to protect them. Despite their efforts, they are unable to stop the company from encroaching on their land, ultimately giving up.

The mining industry in *Imperi* has caused psychological shock to the indigenous people, causing the loss of their economic source and cultural knowledge. The indigenous people are psychologically attached to their place, and their culture and place exist in singularity. The government and company take all the land, expanding and displacing people. Schools, which are the source of knowledge, are neglected, and students are unable to attend classes due to dust and noise pollution. This highlights the government's pursuit of neo-colonization without considering education as valuable.

When the residents of *Imperi* are deprived of their land, some of them choose to migrate to the metropolitan city. In an uncertain environment, they are left to their own perplexity and disillusionment. The loss of communal lands has serious consequences for their livelihoods and well-being. Mining operations result in land loss, which has a slew of negative repercussions that they are compelled to bear.

## **Discussion**

The results of the study on environmental racism in Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow* revealed the deep-rooted and pervasive nature of systemic inequality. Through vivid descriptions of the polluted landscapes, the author highlights how marginalized communities, such as the people of Imperi, bear the brunt of environmental degradation. Beah skillfully intertwines the physical devastation with the emotional toll it takes on the characters, portraying the lasting impact of environmental racism on their lives and the urgent need for change.

First, the study revealed the discriminatory treatment faced by marginalized communities in relation to ecological issues, particularly the devastating impact of mining operations on the lives of marginalized communities, as depicted in the novel. The study shed light on the role of corporations and industries in exacerbating environmental injustices. The mining operations have led to the displacement of indigenous communities, destruction of their land and water resources, and severe health consequences for the people living in these areas. It also highlighted the lack of proper regulations and oversight from the government, allowing these corporations to exploit natural resources without considering the long-term consequences.

Second, through close reading and analysis of the novel, the study identified patterns, themes, and relationships that underscored the intersection of environmental issues and social justice as portrayed by an African literary writer. Beah can be seen as a prime example of an African literary writer who skillfully weaves together environmental issues and social justice in his novel. His vivid descriptions of the war-ravaged landscapes and the devastating effects on both nature and human lives highlight the inter-

connection between ecological destruction and social inequalities. By delving into the characters' experiences and struggles, Beah effectively conveys the urgent need for environmental preservation and the fight against injustice in Africa.

Third, the analysis using environmental justice in postcolonial ecocriticism provided a nuanced understanding of the representation of ecology, human-nonhuman connections, and the ramifications of environmental racism in the narrative. These theoretical frameworks shed light on the ways in which power dynamics, social inequalities, and historical injustices shape environmental narratives. By examining the intersections of race, class, and the environment, the analysis revealed the underlying power structures that perpetuate environmental injustices. Additionally, it highlighted the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives and voices in environmental discourse to challenge dominant narratives and promote a more inclusive and equitable approach to environmental issues.

Fourth, the findings highlighted the complicity of government authorities and legal systems in perpetuating environmental injustices, as well as the urgent need for awareness, action, and justice to address environmental racism and promote environmental equality. This is a prime example of how systemic racism intersects with environmental issues. It is crucial for policymakers and communities to recognize that marginalized groups, such as low-income communities and people of color, are disproportionately affected by environmental hazards. Only by dismantling these unjust systems and implementing policies that prioritize environmental justice can we create a sustainable and equitable future for all.

Finally, these results contribute to a deeper understanding of the environmental injustices depicted in *Radiance of Tomorrow* and emphasize the critical need for advocacy and policy changes to combat environmental racism and promote social and ecological justice.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The depiction of the demise of the environment, culture, and marginalized community in Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow* serves as a stark reminder of the interconnectedness of ecological devastation, cultural erosion, and social injustice. The narrative poignantly portrays how mining operations not only ravage the once-vibrant landscapes, leading to displacement and loss of livelihoods for marginalized communities, but also systematically dismantle cultural traditions and social fabric. The destruction of the environment mirrors the erosion of cultural identity, as indigenous knowledge and practices are disrupted, further exacerbating the marginalization of already vulnerable populations. This poignant portrayal underscores the urgent need for concerted efforts to address environmental racism, protect cultural heritage, and uphold the rights of marginalized communities in the face of ecological degradation.

### **Conflict of interest**

The author didn't declare any authorship and financial conflict of interests regarding this work.

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