

Neocolonial Catastrophe & Environmental Injustice: Representation and Re-presentation of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy in *Animal's People*

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Abstract

Neocolonialism is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon that has been criticized as a form of exploitation and oppression. It is characterized by the perpetuation of global inequality and the hindering of the development of formerly colonized countries through the maintenance of systems of domination and subjugation. As such, it serves as a powerful analytical framework for understanding the ongoing legacies of colonialism in the contemporary world. One such manifestation of neocolonialism is the Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984, in which multinational corporations such as Union Carbide Corporation sought less restricted pesticide development in the Third World, while India was looking to increase agricultural production. This ultimately led to the disaster that killed thousands of people and injured hundreds of thousands more. The effects of environmental degradation and pollution resulting from such disasters often disproportionately affect marginalized communities, such as low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. These communities are often located near toxic waste sites, chemical plants, and other sources of pollution, resulting in the unequal distribution of environmental harms and constituting a form of environmental injustice. Therefore, the relationship between neocolonialism and environmental justice is closely intertwined. This paper aims to examine the background and legal outcome of the Bhopal gas tragedy and explore how Indra Sinha's novel *Animal's People*, based on the tragedy, portrays the devastating impact of the gas leak from a chemical factory not only on the people but also on the ecology of the area. The novel depicts the incessant struggle of the Khaufpuris for environmental and community justice, highlighting the devastating impact of corporate capitalism on those excluded from the category of the human, such as the poor of the Global South, non-human entities, and the flora and fauna of the environment. By examining the portrayal of the disaster and its aftermath in the novel, this paper seeks to provide insight into the relationship between neocolonialism and environmental injustice and contribute to a broader understanding of the ongoing legacies of colonialism in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Neocolonialism, Environmental Injustice, Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Industrialization, Capitalism