



# Environmental Injustice And The Struggle For Survival: Green Criminology In Indra Sinha's Animal's People

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**Abstract:** Indra Sinha has very realistically brought the most pernicious face of environmental injustice, almost in a cinematic view about which not only he but also many other writers have remained silent yet and presented analogies with various events that happened in the real world; one such example is this depiction of bitter reality by taking reference from The Bhopal Gas Tragedy 1984. This book analyses environmental crimes and corporate responsibility through a green criminological lens. This paper discusses the confluence of these corporate, community, and environmental crime practices with a justice system that absolves powerful agents of any meaningful liability. At root, Sinha's story shows the injustices in environmental harms and poses key questions about corporate culpability, justice, and survival for those affected by industrial accidents. The analysis also explores how green criminology expands our notion of eco-violence, capitalism, and post-colonial oppression.

**Index Terms** - Environmental Injustice, Green Criminology, Eco-Violence, The Bhopal Gas Tragedy

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most acclaimed books of the year 2007 is *Animal's People* by Indra Sinha which presents a powerful commentary on corporate accountability, the destruction of the natural environment and human pain and suffering in the wake of industrial catastrophe. The novel is based on the fabricated city of Khaufpur and the calamity reflects the Bhopal Gas Tragedy that was one of the significant industrial disasters of the world. Sinha's narrative shows what growing up in the wake of toxic exposure does to people while making a comment of the systems that enable these disasters to occur in the first place yet it fails to punish the perpetrators.

Animal is the main character of the novel who is a young man and mentally and physically disabled due to chemical usage from a factory blast that destroyed Khaufpur. His monstrosity therefore portrays the dehumanizing effect of victims of environmental dangers of their humanity as he equates himself to an animal due to his disfigurement. By following the life of Animal as well as the people of Khaufpur and their struggle for vindication, Sinha brings focus to the institutional violations that remain unchecked even after tragedies that happen in the environment around.

The novel's themes are therefore best examined with the help of green criminology, a relatively new interdisciplinary field of study. It focuses on both environmental loss as well as business misconduct, together with a nexus of responsibility for various communities that are most affected by ecological losses. Green criminology provides criminology with a broader perspective by extending the scope of its focus not only victims and offender but also to the harmed environment and is a suitable framework in explaining ecological imperialism. In this paper, adopted principles of green criminology includes corporate crime, environmental Justice, and the struggle of oppressed communities, to analyze *Animal's People*.

**Theoretical Framework: Green Criminology and Eco-Justice:**

Green Criminology is a sub-discipline of criminology that builds upon the concept of criminology by including crimes that are perpetrated against nature and how such effects are experienced by different beings in the environment. Its primary focus is on environmental offences which is any act that is unlawful or detrimental to the environment, the natural resources and all species that depend on them. They include corporate criminal offenses that dexterously navigate legal frameworks to accord supremacy to undue gains at the expense of environmental conservation and any form of human rights.

Eco-justice, which is integral to green criminological approach, is the concept which supports the equitable share of burdens and gains in the environmental sphere. They clearly illustrated how the prevailing systems ensure the management of social poorer individuals especially in their handling of environmental hassle. Such harm, as experienced by the communities in Animal's people often has the least protection or influence to avoid or prosecute such incidences. Khaufpur's residents are sufferers of an industrial calamity that happened at the hands of a large company, but are suppressed by both, law and the Kampani, the fictional representation of Union Carbide.

Green criminology can be used to explain different harms in Animal's People because it offers complete approach to analysing them. Not only does it show the physical and ecological harm caused by environmental crimes but also widely looks at the social, political and economical structures that enable the environmental criminals to cause this harm with very little backlash.

**Corporate Crime and Environmental Harm in Animal's People:**

Kampani functions as the central agent of mechanized evil in Animal's People ; this multinational corporation was negligent enough to cause a chemical disaster in the fictional city of Khaufpur. Clearly this fiction is loosely based on facts where Union Carbide stands of similar ground to the Bhopal tragedy. Like, Union Carbide the Kampani also shirks legal and moral conscience thus creating a ticket of death, disease and environmental degeneration. Green criminology recognizes such actions as environmental crimes since they negatively affect people and the environment even though they do not transgress the law. The novel emphasizes this distinction: Although the Kampani's actions may not be technically unlawful especially given the ineffectiveness of the regulatory structures in the postcolonial nations, then the Kampani is guilty of a moral wrong. This correlates well with the green criminology conceptual framework that notes that environmental crime cannot be fully appreciated without minding the systemic injustices particularly as to the vulnerable population that is usually on the sharp end of environmental crimes.

The novel also shows how corporate environmental turbulences are often masked as accidents despite being premeditated negligence. The 'we are not liable for the content of the ad' attitude of the Kampani along with attempts made to downplay the severity of the issue also point towards a corporate attitude seen more often in real life examples. Through focusing on the theme of the lack of corporate accountability in the novel the work shows the inadequacy of such legal structures when it comes to ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups from environment-related afflictions. The suffering people of Khaufpur are like Bhopal, people suffer from toxicity and do not receive justice and compensation, medical aid, etc.

**Environmental Victimization:** The Marginalization of Khaufpur Sikh temple of Khaufpur is located in rural Karnal which is in the state of Haryana, India. Thus, through characterization and setting, Animal's People presents the people of Khaufpur as sufferers of ecological disenfranchisement. The event in the novel depicts the sequence of events or the change that occurred in the lives of the inhabitants of the zone surrounding the chemical plant after the disaster, most of the people living there suffer from health conditions resulting from the chemical leak he or she has complications such as chest infections, respiratory diseases, heart problems, cancer, infertility and ear disorders and eye infections among others; there were also many deaths within the community, and the survivors were left with These diseases are compounded by the poverty, voting minority status and poor or no health care access of the community.

In green criminology, environmental victimization is understood as an occurrence of how some groups of people suffer from environmental offenses. These are communities that are predominantly of color, low income and located in the wrong side of the tracks, and lack the political leverage to contend with polluters

of the environment. Surprisingly, Animal's People's citizens of Khaufpur are politically powerless, and media and legal systems do not care about them. This seems to mimic real life occurrences where global, small and less privileged societies are affected most by environmental problems whereas the affluent polluters have no impacts at all.

Animal is the first and the most obvious victim in the novel, though he is not the only one. Due to chemicals, he has a deformed body, which means that people in those communities become useless if they are in the way of making more profits. Speaking of self-identification as an animal, it is possible to note that it illustrates how victims of the environment suffer from the loss of humanity.

It also reveals that, because of environmental victimization, the individuals get the feeling of isolation and that there is no way out. It becomes the part of the culture for many inhabitants of Khaufpur to accept that justice cannot be served. Legal and political systems contributions to the perpetration of injustice to the Kampani by failing to address their grievances and hold the perpetrators accountable escalates their feeling of being victims thus entangled in the social injustice cycle.

In Animal's People the people of Khaufpur are depicted as victims of what may be termed environmental apartheid or ecological apartheid. People get long term suffering with serious health impact problems like long time respiratory system disease, cancer, infertility and more chronic diseases due to the chemical plant's disaster. However, as an added blow to the injury, the community is poor, and its members have no access to health care and are in the minority thus are are victims who are helpless against their oppressors politically.

In this society represented in the novel, there is a terrible combination of environmental pollution and social injustice. As in any other field of criminology, environmental victimization in green criminology deals with how certain sections of the population are affected most by environmental crime. They are usually a poor class politically marginalized, and live in places which are most affected by pollution and ecological degradation. Sultan is the master who demands sop and dominates Khaufpur's residents who form communities that denied justice by law and media when it puts the poor and vulnerable against the power of the 'new India'. The Kampani, through the disaster in care of chemicals is not given a face and thus escapes the wrath of law in the end but the people of Bhopal are the ones who pay dearly for the gains that this greedy company seeks.

Animal, the novel's protagonist, is an example of victimization of workers by the rich and the powerful in May's novel. Thus, the protagonist's deformed body due to the chemical leakage symbolizes that the people of the community are depersonalized and become something unnatural in the framework of environmental catastrophe. His ability to identify himself as an 'animal' reveals the effects of victimization which includes: feeling lonely, dehumanized and powerless residents of Khaufpur. How the community validates their existential narrative also displays how the society frames systems of injustice to become a part of their culture or belief that justice can never be served.

Finally, Animal's People reveals the aftermaths of environmental oppression and how it leads to recurrent social oppression to the oppressed communities, with no other option other than to suffer from both physical and emotional abuse.

**The Role of Resistance in the Struggle for Eco-Justice:** But the citizens of Khaufpur, despite all the evidence to the contrary, are not just willing to take their suffering lying down. They coordinate and protest by rallying people together to create a mass movement to oppose the Kampani. This resistance is key to the novels approach to eco-justice which is defined as the notion that every human has the right to a healthy environment or should not be harmed by it in any way.

Often round the world eco-justice movements come into being when the common legal systems do not provide justice to environmental equity. The people that inhabit Khaufpur in Marquez's Animal's People are definitely a tenacious and relentless rebellion. They perpetually counter the Kampani's efforts to shirk the blame insisting on justice even after a long and tiresome process.

Animal himself also becomes one of the participants of this kind of movement reluctantly. At first, though hopeless, Animal starts to get the value of rebellion through various interactions with the inhabitants of the

prison. On a more profound dimension, the novel demonstrates that eco-justice is a matter of law, yet it is also a question of human dignity and empowering in the face of misfortune.

### **The Global Implications of Animal's People:**

Yet, the environmental disaster that is portrayed in *Animal's People* is fictional and the themes that are propounded in the novel are universal. The novel is anti-capitalist which supports the idea of greedy multinational corporations consuming both commodities and human beings. The Kampani resembles actual corporations in the Global South, which are interested in revenues and do not care about people's and ecosystems' states.

Green criminology highlights the globalization of environmental crimes especially to the fact that they mostly occur in the backward, postcolonial countries. These are the countries that have been referred to as "dumping grounds" which means environmental depletion is considered as a worthy price for boosting up the economy. Khaufpur is one such zone in the *Animal's People* where existence and lives are of no value.

On the same note, the novel has postcolonial tones to issues of environmental degradation. Khaufpur, like actual Third-World territories of postcolonial countries is in a position to be dominated by both eds and international businesses. Lack of legal safeguards for the people of Khaufpur is a result of imperialism which has exposed many postcolonial societies to poor governance structures and minimal capability of containing influential players.

Thus, in frame of *Animal's* narration, the novel investigates the possibility of collective action to challenge corporate recklessness. The people of Khaufpur, even though the entire community remains on the outskirts of the society and is struggling with the effects of the chemical tragedy, are strong. They go on strike, demonstrate and do everything that they can in order to let their demands be heard, knowing that they are in vulnerable positions. This change shows awakening to a new possibility of transformation, no matter how unfavorable the situation appears to be as evidenced in *Animal* going from just observing the world to actively participating in it.

The novel also brings to light the issue of togetherness in the society as a key factor. However, the people of Khaufpur show a definite direction to unite around the goal and hence their movement becomes stronger with shared suffering and purpose. Such solidarity also strengthens their calls, proving that 'eco-justice' is closely intertwined with 'social justice.' Together, they criticize not just the Kampani but also the structures that otherwise dominate the lives of Indian persons to benefit from the richer pockets of profits. Finally, the novel identifies environmentalist struggle as the struggle for both the earth and the people's justice to live a equitable live free from humiliation, degradation, and chopping off their future altogether.

### **Conclusion:**

Therefore, Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* is an essential work that examines such themes as environmental racism, corporate malevolence, and the struggle for ecological redemption. In light of the analysis of the green criminology the novel stands out for a constant discussion of the relations of power that make environmental crimes are possible without most of the culprits being held to account. Khaufpur residents are presented as environmental casualties that in their defiance collectively fight for eco-justice.

In this paper, I have demonstrated how elements of corporate environmental crime, environmental victimization, and resistance are portrayed in *Animal's People*. The work demands collective intervention in cases of organized environmental injustice, and offers a vindication of justice that exceeds the framework of criminal punishment, vindicating the subjectivity and the agency of the victims of the crimes against the environment.

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