

AN AFRICAN ECOCRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: A READING OF AMMA DARKO'S FACELESS

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Abstract

This study explores Amma Darko's novel, *Faceless*, through an ecocritical lens, situating it within the broader discourse of African environmental literature. Recognising the novel's depiction of human and non-human interactions in a degraded urban Ghanaian setting, the study employs qualitative content analysis to examine themes of displacement, ecocultural conflict, and environmental sensitivity. Findings reveal how Darko constructs ecological consciousness by portraying the interconnectedness of social and environmental degradation, particularly through the experiences of marginalised characters. *Faceless* contributes to ecological discourse and fosters environmental awareness in African literature. The paper concludes by emphasising the importance of environmental sustainability and the integration of ecocritical thought into Ghanaian cultural consciousness.

Keywords: Amma Darko, ecocriticism, ecoculture, environmental sensitivity, *Faceless*

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Introduction

My dream, began the boy, 'is to be able to go home one day to visit my mother and see a look of joy on her face at the sight of me ... Whenever I visit her, she does not let me stay long before she asks me politely to leave. She never has a smile for me. She is always in a hurry to see me back... One day she said to me, 'Go. You do not belong here.' ... She worries about the food that she has. It is never enough (2).

Amma Darko employs different approaches to present the relationships between human and nonhuman and their environment. In the respect, we see in *Faceless*, the relationship between humans and the physical environment, emphasising how the novel reflects and influences ecological consciousness. Environmental discourse unveils the relationship between humans and nonhumans and their response to their surroundings. The introduction of the boy's dream in the epigraph serves as a metaphor for the fractured human-nature relationship, highlighting the emotional and ecological disconnect within familial and societal structures. The epigraph presents a graphic picture of a disconnected relationship between mother and child, who are supposed to coexist within the family system, community and the environment as a whole. The unnamed boy's mother despises him and responds negatively to his visits. We see the boy's detachment from family and mother which translates into neglect of the environment and nature. The boy's lifestyle appears fragmented because he is denied the basic necessities and happiness in life which completes human beings.

Within the literary space, the setting of a literary work reveals the situational context where the event took place, and ecocriticism highlights the role and place of nature and the reaction of human or nonhuman to environmental concerns as depicted in literary texts. Environment or nature plays pivotal role in any literary work. Through the interdisciplinary approach, ecocritics uncover the ecological significance of literary works and contribute to environmental discourse by offering a valuable framework for understanding the relationship between literature and the environment (Tajane et al 2024).

Most African writers foreground human experiences as environmental concerns in their writings and literary works. In most literary works, the writers create environmental consciousness to sensitize the African people on how they should relate and embrace environmental issues. The writers present nature, environment and human interactions with the natural world and the need for coexistence. The desire for human beings to be in tune with the world and its elements seems a paradigm shift for most writers to explore pressing issues in the society. The landscape comprises the population of both human and non-human which co-exist in spite of their differences. In *Faceless* (2003), Darko explores the landscape of Ghana paying particular attention to a suburb in Accra where she exposes the interactions and the interconnections between both humans and nonhumans. We see similar representations of human interactions with nature in other works of Darko. In *Beyond the Horizon* (1991), Darko describes the plight of an uneducated girl, Mara, who accepts her father's decision to marry her off to Akobi without her consent. Mara joins her husband in Europe but faces betrayal which exposes her to a different environment initiating her into prostitution and pornography. Similarly, in Darko's *Not Without Flowers* (2007) the narrative shifts in between two worlds: the world where the protagonist, Aggie, is symbolically enveloped with nature, a garden full of lovely flowers of all shades and the other environment where she kills all the lovely plants and flowers as she destroys her enviable marriage. We see how humans and nature play out in both novels.

Faceless (2003) is the novel that made Amma Darko famous. The novel describes the lifestyle of street children of Agbogbloshie in the city of Accra, particularly the child heroine, Fofu, who ends up on the street as a result of an irresponsible mother, Maa Tsuru, who incites her daughters to go in search for greener pastures. Fofu is a fourteen (14) year old girl who has a dream like other street children living in a degraded environment. The same debased environment generates the twist of the narrative where Fofu's dream is realized after the death of her sister, Baby T. In a disguised form at the Agbogbloshie market, Fofu accosts Kabria, a married woman with three children and a worker at MUTE, a non-governmental

organisation, and this meeting begins the turning point in Fofo's life. In the introduction, we have established ecocriticism as the guiding framework for analysing Darko's *Faceless*, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of environmental and cultural dynamics in the subsequent sections.

Defining Ecocriticism: Origin and Debate

The complex relationship between literature and the natural world is the focus of ecocriticism which explores how literature reflects, influences, and responds to ecological concerns. Ecocriticism has its origins in the environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which brought attention to ecological degradation and the effects of human activity on the environment. Glotfelty and Fromm describe ecocriticism as the relationship that exist between literature and the physical environment and literary ecology is the study of the ways that writing both reflects and influences our interactions with the natural world. (Glotfelty, 1996). This relationship is crucial because basic human needs and opportunities for social and economic developments are provided by physical environment, thus, land, water, animals, buildings, other infrastructure and natural resources (Social Report, 2003: Ministry of Social Development). In Bennet's view, "Literature-and-environment studies must develop a 'social ecocriticism' that takes urban and degraded landscapes just as seriously as 'natural' landscapes" (Bennet 2001:32).

Ecocriticism also considers the notion of nature as a cultural creation as Raymond Williams contends in his seminal work *The Country and the City* (1973). For Williams, cultural and historical backgrounds influence how human beings view the natural world, and how ideas of nature, rurality, and urbanity are constructed and destroyed in literary texts. An important idea in ecocriticism is the criticism of anthropocentrism, which is the idea that people are the most important or central organisms in the universe. The *Environmental Imagination* (1995), a seminal work by Lawrence Buell, asserts that literature has the power to subvert anthropocentric worldviews and advance an ecocentric viewpoint that values all living things for their own sake. According to Buell, ecologically themed writing has four essential elements: In addition to serving as a framing device, the nonhuman environment implies that

human history is intertwined with natural history; that human interest is not the only acceptable interest; that human accountability to the environment is a component of the text's ethical orientation; and that there is a sense in which the environment is a process. A wide variety of theoretical stances and critical techniques are included in ecocriticism. While some researchers use interdisciplinary approaches and concentrate on closely reading literary texts to determine their ecological implications, others draw on knowledge from the fields of ecology, environmental science, and cultural studies. Ecocriticism also incorporates science, ethics, politics, economics and aesthetics across institutional and national boundaries (Clark 2011).

Methodology

The study employs a textual analysis of Darko's *Faceless* to transform the story into real life situation of human and its environment. Through a careful reading of the *Faceless*, we identified the historical, cultural and social context of the narrative that reveal the issue of displacement and the loss of motherhood. Also, an examination of characters' interaction with one another and their environment give insights into the intersection between culture and the environment. The role of the female figure with the employment of the child protagonist culminated into considering the interplay between feminism and the environment. It is therefore, imperative to respond to the questions: to what extent is the loss of home and motherland an environmental issue? How does Darko explore conflict between culture and environment in *Faceless*? What is the correlation between degraded environment and destabilised women in *Faceless*? These questions set the exploration of human and nonhuman interactions that illustrate the ecological complexity of urban Ghana, paving the way for a discussion on critical environmental issues.

Understanding Human Relationships with the Natural World

Both humans and nonhumans respond to the environment/ nature in diverse forms. In order to understand human relationships to the universe, one needs to know his/her environment, the background, the beliefs system, including the social and political landscape. Postcolonial Ecocriticism draws

attention to the social and political usefulness of a literary text which takes the form of material transformation of the world. Amma Darko creates ecological consciousness in the way she realistically recounts social, economic, and cultural issues. Darko metaphorically titles this novel *Faceless* to refer to people who wear masks and seem to be blind to the happenings in the environment. These people are unable to see because they live in congenial conditions, lack perception or engage in deception. The story begins with the description of the setting, the Agboghbloshie market in Accra where Darko reveals as the habitats of the suffering characters in the novel. The narrative charts the plight of the child protagonist Fofo and other street children who demonstrate the loss of home and societal neglect of the environment. As it is known, environmental changes may be driven by many factors including economic growth, population growth, urbanisation, etc., with poverty still remaining a problem at the root of several environmental problems. Clearly, it is evident that poverty seems the main motivation or driving force for the mothers of the street children to send their wards to wallow in the streets for survival. These children are displaced as a result of family neglect. Fofo reveals her exposure to adulthood as a result of making her home on the streets of Sodoom and Gomorrah enclave where she usually watches “adult films ... and drinking directly from bottles of akpeteshie” (1).

Darko describes the reckless lifestyle of the street children who out of negligence resort to open defecation causing environmental pollution and health problems and diseases. According to the narrator, the street girls and boys with their thick-set leader, Macho, “regularly unloaded the solid waste contents of their bowels onto the rubbish dumps and in the gutters and open drains.” (3) Although Sustainable Development Goal Six (SDG 6) is to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” targeted for people living in the rural areas by 2030, the people living in the city of Accra persistently defecate openly. Fofo and Odarley describe the struggles/ ordeal people go through in accessing toilet facilities: “[w]ho can walk a long distance to up there when the thing is coming with force? Ask again. And at the long line of people too always there. Ah! Even if you go there at twelve midnight, you will find a

queue.” (6) This shows how difficult it is for the ordinary Ghanaian to access toilet facilities, making them resort to open-defecation. Darko’s narrative foregrounds the effects of open defecation as an essential concern for environmental sensitisation. Her portrayal of the decaying cityscape and polluted environments serves as a metaphor for the moral and ecological decay of society.

Fofo and her friend, Odarley, answer nature’s call at the dump site “under the scrutinizing eyes of some early rising pigs and vultures” (6). We read that they found a free spot and Odarley raised her dress and pulled down her pants and got straight to business. While Fofo also lifted her dress and squatted. (6) The scenario serves as a microcosm for understanding the complexities and interconnectedness of ecosystem, revealing the coexistence between humans and nonhumans in the environment. In the ecosystem, this relationship between humans and nonhumans is termed symbiotic relationship where the presence of these species together highlights the interconnectedness of the living organisms and their environment. Therefore, the humans, pigs and vultures-relationship promotes biodiversity by allowing different species to coexist and interact. Each species plays a role in the ecosystem, and their coexistence demonstrates a balance. Also, in terms of food dynamics, pigs scavenge food, vultures feed on carrion, and humans dispose of waste. This interaction illustrates the flow of energy and nutrients through the ecosystem. The ability of these species to coexist in a shared environment, despite potential conflicts, showcases their adaptability and resilience. The dump site ecosystem relies on the presence of each species to function. Humans provide waste, pigs help break down organic matter, and vultures aid in cleaning up carcasses. The coexistence of the pigs, vultures and humans at the dump sites represents a balance between species, highlighting the importance of preserving ecological harmony. In the situation where there is loss of ecological harmony, the species suffer displacement underscoring the vulnerability of marginalised groups and their reliance on nature for survival, as the next section will show.

The Concept of displacement as an Environmental Concern

Ecocritics argue that displacement is a symptom of ecological crisis, driven by human exceptionalism and exploitation of natural resources (Buell, 2005). Nature serves as the perfect place for the creative expression of society's marginalised and silenced voices. The postcolonial tranche ecocriticism has emphasised the concerns of starving, dehydrated, banished, homeless, ill, and imprisoned people all across the world (Mabie, 2016). In *Faceless*, poverty is depicted as a form of economic displacement and Fofo personifies poverty as:

"Yes I saw it" "Head to toe. It's face; it's ugly square head; it's big fat toes. I know its shape like ..." I know its length and its breadth and its width and its stench." (27)

Fofo presents a vivid description of poverty as possessing the features of human beings with "face", "square head" "big fat toes" and shape which presupposes that she has had a personal encounter with poverty. Fofo goes to the streets out of desperation and starvation to fend for herself. She leaves home because she had to go out and beg for food "when there is no food, you don't wait to be asked by anyone to go out and beg. Hunger is a foe and it is overpowering. When it pushes you, you go. It was the same with Baby T." (100). Clearly, poverty succeeds in banishing Fofo and Baby T, making them homeless. Initially, the environment becomes the ideal place or home that accommodates Fofo and Baby T, but the aftermath presents a bizarre situation resulting in the death of Baby T.

Environmental changes may be driven by many factors including economic growth, population growth, urbanisation with poverty as the problem at the root. Fofo and Baby T are pushed into the homelessness situation because of irresponsible parenting on the part of their mother, Maa Tsuru's relationship with several partners. Maa Tsuru, in turn, blames the situation on her partners: "Not one cedi I get from the man who fathered my little girl ... (61) and accepts it as a curse on her: "You too were cursed with an irresponsible man?" (62). She justifies irresponsible parenting as an act leading to homelessness "... the act of irresponsible parents which results in children leaving home to live on the streets..." (66). Fofo

is pushed out of her home by her mother who chooses a manipulative man (husband) over her children.

The loss of home is equivalent to the loss of motherhood as well as the peace and tranquility that nature alone may provide. For Morton (2013), displacement is not just a human issue, but an ecological one involving the disruption of habitats and ecosystem (Morton, 2013). Most of the children claim to have lost touch with their homes because their mothers make their stay in the house uncomfortable and unsafe to accommodate them. A case in point is Odarley who was sacked from home by her mother claiming that: "Odarley was troublesome. That Odarley was stealing her money. She didn't want Odarley around after Odarley's father left her for another woman and she too found another man". (103). Marital/spousal separation/ broken home is presented as a form of displacement for the children. The peace and serenity of the environment depends largely on the individuals who dwell in it. Fofo confirms same treatment from her mother, Maa Tsuru: "Go away, Fofo, ... Go!. Fofo's face clouded fiercely. Is history repeating itself here? Are you sacking me, mother? Because of him?" (21) The street children are exposed to nature/ environment which offer them sense of belonging, emotional healing and shelter. Other children on the streets were subjected to begging instead of going to school. A case in point is the young girl who accompanies the mother to beg on the street: "A girl of about eight, holding the hand of a blind woman" (37), and the mother blaming others for her inability to send the girl to school: "If people like you won't give me money, how can I send her to school ..." (37).

Clearly, there is an irony of some mothers finding excuses to disown and displace their children, and pushing them onto the streets to fend for themselves, while others lose their marriages because of barrenness. We read that Dina's marriage with her campus boyfriend was abortive/ failed after "four turbulent years of childlessness" (38). However, Dina is represented as the ideal mother that the street children dream of having. She accepts Fofo in her home because she considers her home as the safest place for Fofo in spite of the fact that Fofo refuses to open up to her initially: "Fofo's presence in my home disorganizes no one" (95) Dina's readiness to accept Fofo in her home

presents the case of unconditional love and care for the poor girl, notwithstanding the challenges involved as she admonishes Kabria: "Attending to Fofo requires extra energy." (95), implying that Fofo needs a conducive environment to make her comfortable and acceptable.

Environmental Imaginations in Faceless

In exploring the complex intersections of nature, culture and human identity (Buell, 2005), Darko presents ecocultural representations which seek to identify the places the characters belong to and the attachment of the place and the environment or features of nature. The narrative raises important questions about the preservation of ecological and cultural heritage. We read about the Sodom and Gomorrah Culture where the location can be alluded to from the biblical perspective. The Bible reveals Sodom and Gomorrah as a place where sodomy (copulation between two men whether consensual or forced) appear to be common, so the wrath of God befell them, and He "rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah" (Gen 19:24). The Bible describes the city of Sodom and Gomorrah as a place where all the evil deeds/ acts take place. In juxtaposing the biblical description with Darko's representation of Sodom and Gomorrah culture in *Faceless*, the narrator describes the place as "the disheartening name of Sodom and Gomorrah" (65) while the characters describe the place as a trouble zone where all kinds of acts take place: "And what trouble here at Sodom and Gomorrah isn't big? I tell you how we boozed yesterday! That one was big trouble" (6). Others describe it as a place where there is drug trafficking: "Drugs after all, flew freely at Sodom and Gomorrah" (27). Also, the text describes Sodom and Gomorrah as a place where killings/ murderer take place frequently: "Aren't bodies always being found there like the aborted fetuses at Sodom and Gomorrah?" (23). Sodom and Gomorrah is a place where migrants from the north and elsewhere in the country in search of greener pastures, "coupled with the consequences of the acts of some irresponsible parents which results in children leaving home to live on the streets, the vices of Sodom and Gomorrah gained momentum" (66) "Who went at life alone at Sodom and Gomorrah" (27) The "filth and sin" which happen in Sodom and Gomorrah lead to environmental pollution. The Sodom and Gomorrah culture influences the street lifestyle where there is superstructure,

those with "[b]ig muscles, tiny brains. Can we normal ones ever understand these street people? Normal people? Street people?" (43). We read about street warlords, Poison and Macho who wield power over the other street children living at Sodom and Gomorrah.

Darko also offers contrasting depictions of rural and urban spaces, highlighting the environmental and social impacts of urbanization. The narrative of *Faceless* raises important questions about sustainable development and the preservation of ecological and cultural heritage in the way Darko highlights omen/taboo/curses as symbol of Ghanaian culture. In African traditional societies, curses are believed to be a form of punishment from the gods or ancestors for wrongdoing or disobedience (Mbiti 1969). Curses are often seen as a means of supernatural retribution, where the offender is punished for their actions (Evans-Pritchard, 1937). For Fortes, curses serve as a means of social control, where individuals are deterred from committing wrongdoing due to fear of being cursed (Fortes, 1945). There is the representation of ancestral curse and its effect on the victims. From the narrative, Naa Yomo recounts the circumstances leading to the pronouncement of the curse from a mother to her descendants. According to her, during the birth of Maa Tsuru, her mother pronounced a curse out of pain "the cord was still uncut when she yelled that may her lover and his descendants after him, suffer in more ways and in more forms than he had made her suffer" (93). Maa Tsuru's partner, Kwei suffers as a result of his relationship with Maa Tsuru. Kwei's mother warns him about getting involve with a cursed woman and especially warns him to go on exile fearing for the doom that will befall their family "I shall not sit down idly and watch you go on to make a fifth child with her. I shall not allow you to bring calamity to bear on this family. So go away... A cursed woman and the number five?" (126) So the suffering of Maa Tusru and her children and the aftermath of Baby T's death is characterized with African/ traditional belief in superstitions, mysticism, magic etc. Baby T's dead is perceived as resulting from a curse on the family "a girl carrying a curse upon her head ..." (119); therefore, "her ghost will not rest. It will hover among the living until the right thing is done." (43) and to pacify the gods and her soul, "[a] white fowl ... to appease the girl's soul." (42), .

Gyekye (1996) emphasizes that ritual sacrifices serve to neutralize social tensions, appease angry spirits and symbolically restore balance after transgressions, thus restoring order and peace. It is important to consider the environmental implications of animal sacrifice in the sense that it can be considered as inhumane treatment to sacrifice an animal to appease the soul of the dead. This involves killing the animal, but the improper disposal of animal remains can lead to pollution of soil, water and air. Darko creates ecological consciousness on some cultural practices that are detrimental to nonhuman species, and the recognition of the need for environmentally conscious practices.

Understanding Degraded Environment and Destabilized Women

This section demonstrates environmental degradation highlighting pollution and patriarchal oppression reinforcing the need for ecofeminist perspectives. Darko presents environmental pollution with the description of Kabria's Creamy car. Kabria ironically nicknames her 1975 VW Beetle "Creamy"; however, "the car had been in and out of every kind of workshop from Abeka to Zongo so many times and undergone all kinds of clinical and plastic surgeries, that it seemed to have grown immune to both". (15) Kabria creates both sound and air pollutions with her car. The narrator describes the movement of the car with its onomatopoeic sound, the "tu-tu-tu-tu-tu fashion". This is because the "[t]u-tu-tu-tu... Creamy's furious engine and exhaust heralded its tattooed arrival. ..." (15). To the extent that Kabria's husband feels embarrassed "[w]hen Adade saw his wife and her car, he prayed desperately for the earth to open up and swallow him whole." (15).

There are several effects of both air and sound pollution. Poor quality air is caused mainly by emissions from industries, vehicle fumes, and smoke from the usage of fossil fuels, which fosters the building up of noxious chemicals in the air (Manisalidis et al., 2020). With air pollution from cars, the emissions can exacerbate respiratory conditions like asthma, lung cancer, heart attacks, strokes etc. Air pollution from cars can cause neurological (cognitive impairment) and environmental damages (climate change). Traffic noise induces acute elevations in blood pressure and heart rate

and, over time, promotes hypertension, coronary artery disease, heart attack, stroke, and other cardiovascular conditions (Munzel et al., 2014). Generally, air and sound pollutions have a range of potentially devastating effects on the environment and wildlife. The symbolic and literal degradation of urban spaces, lead to how environmental decay disproportionately affects women.

Ecofeminism is a feminist movement that examines parallels between the oppression of nature and women; feminism and environmentalism. It is a philosophical and activist movement that combines ecological and feminist perspectives to challenge the interconnected forms of oppression that harm both women and the natural world. Ecofeminism recognizes the interconnectedness of all living beings and the natural world (Merchant, 1980, p. 12). In *Faceless*, Darko highlights the disconnection between human beings in the way she presents the relationship between men and women, women and girls, boys and girls etc. Women exploiting their fellow women. We see this in the way Fofu recounts her ordeal in the hands of a woman: "I was living with a woman who tried to sell me to a man. I was given to this woman by a relative of my mother who brought me from the village" (103). In the same way, Maa Tsuru and Kwei's relationship creates an environmentally unfriendly/ non-ecofriendly context for their children: It exposes Fofu to "street lords" described as "animals" with no mercy. It leads Baby T into child prostitution "street worker" (42). It leads to the death of Baby T: "Her face was mutilated ... and her head ... ah! That too was completely shaven... In fact, all the hair on every part of her body ... (42). Baby T suffers molestation from different men who take advantage of her because of neglect from parents. Women/girls who live in degraded environments are exposed to all kinds of attacks from their male counterparts.

It is worthy of note that patriarchy is partially responsible for the destruction/disturbance of the environment: A case in point is the project on mentally ill pregnant woman "... we smokers take turns with her when they are high." (39). Ecofeminism critiques the patriarchal systems that perpetuate the domination and exploitation of both women and the natural world (Daly, 1978, p. 23). We read

about the patriarchal system that empowers the male counterpart to exploit the female characters in the novel. Maa Tsuru suffers exploitation from her male partners. Her relationship with Kwei creates tension when she conceives the third child, he “banned her from stepping anywhere near his doorsteps ...” and accused her of “being a bad luck woman and of having a bad worm” (121). Kwei nearly terminated Maa Tsuru’s pregnancy “he pounced Maa Tsuru with his fists, landing the blows anywhere and everywhere and on every part of her pregnant body... She began to bleed.” (124), such maltreatment or inhumane treatment from Kwei to Maa Tsuru is suggestive of male dominance and exploitation of the marginalized voice. Kwei’s inability to coexist with Maa Tsuru and their children, and his neglect of the family results in a degraded environment. The environment is degraded when the women are destabilized. Similarly, individuals such as Poison, the street warlords also wield power over the street children by extorting money from them: “Poison is feared. He is very elusive. But he has many people working for him. They beat me up and sent me to him. He gave me one vicious slap and warned me to never utter a word to anyone that I knew the dead girl. Let alone that she was my sister.” (104). Poison intimates the street children, subject them to beating and collects money from them. Poison shows little concern about the children working for him. Although ecofeminism emphasizes the importance of care, reciprocity, and mutualism in human relationships with the natural world (Ruether, 1992, p. 34), it is clear that the dominant species within the Abogloshie, Sodom and Gomorrah environment molest the weaker ones and oppress them leading to deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources, destruction of ecosystems and disturbance to the environment.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine Darko’s *Faceless* through an ecocritical lens, guided by three key research questions: the extent to which the loss of home and motherland constitutes an environmental issue; how Darko explores the conflict between culture and environment; and the correlation between degraded environments and destabilised women. The findings reveal that displacement—whether economic, familial, or cultural—forces individuals into degraded urban spaces where nature becomes both refuge

and threat. This aligns with ecocritical theory’s emphasis on the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman elements and the ethical implications of environmental degradation.

Darko’s portrayal of urban decay, open defecation, and polluted landscapes reflects the notion of the nonhuman environment as a framing device that intertwines human and natural histories. The depiction of street children coexisting with pigs and vultures exemplifies the ecological symbiosis central to ecocritical thought. Furthermore, the narrative’s exploration of curses, taboos, and animal sacrifice underscores the cultural construction of nature, echoing the socio-historical shaping of environmental imaginaries.

The study also demonstrates how ecofeminism—an offshoot of ecocriticism—illuminates the parallel oppressions of women and nature. The destabilization of female characters in *Faceless* is directly linked to environmental degradation, reinforcing the ecofeminist critique of patriarchal systems that exploit both women and the natural world.

In conclusion, the findings affirm that ecocritical theory provides a robust framework for analysing African literature’s engagement with environmental issues. Darko’s *Faceless* not only reflects ecological concerns but also advocates for environmental consciousness as integral to Ghanaian societal transformation. Promoting sustainability, responsible consumption, and harmonious coexistence with nature emerges as both a literary and ethical imperative.

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