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Ecological Dystopia and Environmental Reclamation in African Science Fiction: Nnedi Okorafor's "Moom" and Martin Stokes' "Claws and Savages"

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Abstract

This paper explores the intricate and indispensable relationship between humanity and nature depicted in two speculative African eco-narratives, Nnedi Okorafor's "Moom" (2012) and Martin Stokes' "Claws and Savages" (2012). The paper asserts that humankind has often treated nature as a resource to be dominated rather than a partner to be respected; a hierarchical dynamic which strips nature of its transcendental, aesthetic, emotional, and spiritual significance. In response to this imbalance, ecocriticism has emerged as a vital field of inquiry emphasising the symbiotic relationship between humans and the natural world, and underscoring the mutual dependence necessary for their continued survival. The study employs ecocritical theory to examine representations of ecological dystopias – and of nature's restorative power – in "Moom" and "Claws and Savages." It concludes that the resurgence of natural forces, coupled with the intervention of environmentally conscious agents, can restore ecological balance and offer a vision for sustainable coexistence.

Keywords: dystopia, African science fiction, science fiction, ecocriticism, hybridity.

Introduction

Ecocriticism, as an interdisciplinary field, investigates the dynamic relationship between literature and the environment, with a focus on how ecological issues and human attitudes toward nature are represented and critiqued in literary texts. Central to this critical framework is the understanding that literature both reflects and influences societal behaviours toward the natural world. Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm argue that ecocriticism "takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies" (xviii), challenging the dominant anthropocentric paradigms by foregrounding the environment as an active participant rather than a passive backdrop in literary narratives. This

perspective facilitates a critical interrogation of how nature is imagined, valued, and impacted through cultural productions.

In the context of African science fiction (ASF), particularly those set in dystopian futures, the environment emerges as a site of contestation and crisis. These texts frequently depict a continent grappling with the destructive legacies of unchecked scientific and technological expansion. Prominent ecological threats portrayed include nuclear conflict, the depletion of natural resources, overpopulation, technological exploitation, space colonization as a strategy for waste disposal, pollution, and species extinction. A recurrent motif in these narratives is the devastation of African landscapes by multinational corporations operating in collusion with corrupt political elites—an alliance that renders the land inhospitable to both human and nonhuman life. This breakdown in ecological harmony disrupts the symbiotic relationship between people and their environment, leading to a profound erosion in quality of life.

Following the Second World War, science fiction literature has witnessed a marked shift from the portrayal of utopias to the predominance of dystopian narratives. As David Seed notes, dystopia suggests “a malfunctioning utopia,” wherein scientific progress, rather than delivering liberation—a fundamental objective of traditional utopian visions—ushers in disorder and chaos (74). Elizabeth Ann Leonard further observes that science fiction authors employ the genre's imaginative capacity not only to envision worlds in which current societal issues are resolved, but also to project futures in which these problems are exacerbated, culminating in bleak dystopian realities (253).

Moreover, while religious and philosophical discourses often idealize utopia as the reward for moral rectitude, dystopia emerges as the realm of moral decay and transgression. In science fiction, however, dystopia is not typically presented as an immutable endpoint. Rather, it is depicted as a dynamic space of ideological conflict, where the forces of light and darkness vie for dominance. Within this conceptual framework, utopia and dystopia coexist as sites of value negotiation and potential renewal, emphasizing the transformative possibilities embedded in speculative futures. African science fiction and Ecocritical theory have increasingly engaged with these issues by interrogating the intersections of environment and scientific change. In ecocritical studies as Glotfelty notes, “human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it” (xix). Similarly, Simon Estok observes that ecocriticism is a theoretical practice committed to social and material change through critical analysis of environmental representation. He posits that ecocriticism examines the thematic, ideological, historical, and social functions of nature in texts that participate in broader material realities (16–17).

Merging these concepts with African science fiction creates a powerful cultural site for expressing the environmental anxieties of a post-industrial Africa. These texts articulate the consequences of environmental degradation, often represented through metaphors of desecrated land—a symbol of spiritual and existential disintegration. The land, traditionally viewed as sacred and life-sustaining, becomes a casualty of human greed and technological hubris. Where nature rises in resistance, the result is dystopia: famine, conflict, disease, and ecological disaster. The critique embedded in these narratives is a clarion call for renewed ecological consciousness and sustainable practices.

ASF thus serves as a corrective genre within the global science fiction tradition. Unlike the Euro-American model, which often foregrounds technological progress through conquest, material rationalization, and scientific determinism, African science fiction integrates traditional ecological

knowledge and spirituality. It proposes a hybrid worldview where scientific ideals are reconciled with indigenous philosophies and environmental ethics. The genre thus creates what can be said to be a unique “mutated cultural variant” in which ecological systems are not only central but sacrosanct, offering a vision of coexistence rather than domination. While acknowledging the importance of scientific advancement, ASF authors advocate for self-reflective innovation—innovation that respects and preserves the ecological systems upon which human existence depends. These writers propose that the survival of post-industrial African societies lies in their ability to harmonize technological development with ecological stewardship.

Furthermore, African science fiction departs from Western speculative traditions by privileging the metaphysical, spiritual, and intangible dimensions of existence. Its novum—the new element that drives speculative narratives—is often rooted in the transcendental rather than the material. Characters are frequently endowed with spiritual or metaphysical attributes, and narratives are situated in both the physical and immaterial realms. In doing so, ASF asserts a distinct mode of world-building that reflects African cosmologies and environmental sensibilities. Ultimately, African science fiction is deeply engaged with the environmental crises facing the continent. Through speculative futures marked by ecological collapse, the genre highlights the urgent need for environmental justice and cultural renewal. These narratives function as socially engaged texts that contrast the ecological abundance of the past with the barrenness of projected futures, advocating for a return to practices that honour and sustain the environment. In doing so, ASF not only reimagines Africa’s future but also offers a critical lens through which to view the ethics of scientific progress in relation to ecological survival.

African science fiction not only engages in the reclamation of a pre-colonial African past and the projection of a future African utopia but also critically addresses contemporary realities. In the context of rapid techno-scientific advancement, African societies often find themselves positioned at the periphery of global transformations. This marginalization in the face of global technological shifts raises urgent questions and concerns regarding equity, agency, and sustainability in the present moment. Matthew Omelsky notes that:

> the leaders are not conscious of preserving posterity. At the moment, unbridled capitalism and the quest for financial aids and loans by these rudderless leaders, have them giving up the landscape to multinational corporations and foreign government to use the ecosystem as drilling grounds for fossil fuels and solid minerals, and its vast lands as areas used for scientific experiments with future devastating ramifications. (34)

Succinctly put, in the event of a man-made apocalypse, the African continent is likely to bear the most severe consequences. This vulnerability stems from the continent's limited preparedness to address the ecological repercussions of climate change and the scientific ramifications of phenomena such as nuclear radiation. Structural weaknesses in environmental policy, inadequate technological infrastructure, and limited disaster-response capacities collectively exacerbate Africa’s susceptibility to such global crises. Omelsky further records that:

> In the quest for capitalist gains, greed and corruption, which has been the hallmark of Africa’s postcolonial leaders, the present takes primacy over the future. But the question is, what will a post-crises Africa be like? How might these postcrisis speculations allow

> us to rethink the political, both in our current moment and those of future forms of life on the continent? What might this new "aesthetics of crisis" mean for the intersections of African aesthetics and thought? (34)

In response to the dystopian realities confronting the African continent, authors of African science fiction have increasingly assumed the role of the social conscience of their societies. Through speculative narratives, these writers employ the literary device of estrangement to explore the boundaries of possibility and to foreground the on-going socio-cultural and environmental degradation across the continent. In alignment with the broader tradition of postcolonial science fiction, African science fiction (ASF) utilizes the genre's inherent hybridity to critique neo-colonial exploitation and ecological marginalization. As Nnedi Okorafor aptly noted at the TEDGlobal 2017 Conference, "my science fiction has different ancestors—African ones" (qtd. in Morgan), signalling a conscious effort to root ASF in indigenous epistemologies and environmental sensibilities.

This reorientation reveals that the artistic vision of Africa's speculative future is not solely preoccupied with technological advancement, but is equally attentive to the ecological devastation that often accompanies such progress. Notably, many ASF texts situate their narratives in temporal settings that mirror the present rather than the distant future. This temporal proximity underscores the immediacy and urgency of the environmental issues they portray. The offshore drilling of fossil fuels, resulting in oil spills that devastate marine ecosystems, and the poaching of endangered land animals for trophies or commercial gain, are not speculative scenarios but current realities. These concerns form the central thematic focus in Nnedi Okorafor's "Moom" (2012) and Martin Stokes' "Claws and Savages" (2012) which critique the environmental violence inflicted upon African ecologies and advocate for ecological justice. By amplifying the "muted screams" of the land—silenced by those who benefit from its exploitation—ASF authors engage in a form of narrative activism. Their works not only expose the complicity of global and local actors in ecological degradation but also reassert the intrinsic value of the environment, challenging readers to rethink the ethics of progress and sustainability.

Ecological Dystopia and Reclamation in "Moom" and "Claws and Savages"

The ecological environment is among the earliest and most critical casualties of global scientific and industrial expansion. In the absence of adequate safeguards or compensatory mechanisms, ecosystems are left vulnerable to degradation resulting from industrial waste, oil spills, gas flaring, and various forms of pollution. These environmental consequences are frequently overlooked in favour of short-term capitalist profits, which drive the agendas of mercantilist corporations. The long-term global ecological disruptions caused by these exploitative ventures are often disregarded as externalities—collateral damage in the pursuit of economic gain.

Okorafor's "Moom" offers a compelling narrative that critiques these dynamics through an innovative narrative device: the story is recounted from the perspective of a swordfish, who laments the destructive impact of offshore drilling on marine ecosystems. In this work, Okorafor embodies the literary potential of science fiction to disrupt anthropocentric paradigms by granting voice and agency to non-human actants. Science fiction, as a genre, thrives on such fluidity and transformation, frequently attributing human consciousness or communicative abilities to non-human entities in both metaphorical and literal terms.

In "Moom," Okorafor transcends mere symbolic representation, imbuing nature with a literal voice through the figure of the swordfish. This narrative choice moves beyond folkloric or mythic allegory and enters the realm of realism, situating environmental critique within a tangible and urgent context. The voice of nature—whether expressed through arid lands, turbulent waters, wind, flora, or fauna—becomes a powerful conduit for ecological consciousness. Nature, in Okorafor's vision, is not a passive backdrop but an active participant in the storytelling process. Through this personification, "Moom" challenges readers to recognize the agency of the natural world and to reconsider the ethical implications of humanity's on-going exploitation of ecological systems. In the story, the swordfish is angry because her habitat is being destroyed by human explorations. She says,

> they brought the stench of dryness, then they brought the noise and made the world bleed black ooze that left poison rainbows on the water's surface. She'd often see these rainbows whenever she leapt over the water to touch the sun. (9)

Oil on water functions as a powerful ecological and symbolic anomaly—an unnatural convergence of two substances whose interaction negates the intrinsic qualities and purposes of both. The iridescent sheen of oil, often perceived as visually captivating, becomes a tragic emblem of environmental degradation, signifying widespread spillage that results in the death and mutation of marine life. Narrated from the perspective of a nature-based actant, the text conveys the devastating impact of fossil fuel extraction: "black blood" gushes from subterranean pipelines, polluting the ocean and leading the protagonist to swim through waters littered with "carcasses that glistened in the moonlight. Several smaller fish, jellyfish, even crabs, floated, belly up or dismembered. Many of the smaller creatures were probably simply obliterated" (10).

This speculative depiction bears strong resemblance to Helon Habila's realist novel *Oil on Water*, which documents the ecological ruination of the Niger Delta due to oil extraction. In Habila's narrative, the imagery is equally harrowing: as a speedboat glides across the water, the passengers observe "a dead fish on the oil polluted water" (4), followed shortly by "dead birds draped over tree branches, their outstretched wings black and slick with oil; dead fish bobbed white-bellied between roots" (8). The disturbing visual continuity between Okorafor's speculative fiction and Habila's realist prose underscores the magnitude and continuity of ecological destruction—from present-day Nigeria to imagined future worlds.

Within "Moom," the swordfish enacts a form of ecological resistance by attacking the source of the pollution. Using her sharp bill, she punctures the pipeline transporting crude oil to the surface, thereby disrupting the extraction process. She recounts that she "felt the giant dead snake deflate. It was bleeding its black blood" (10). Yet, this act of defiance has unintended consequences: the ruptured pipeline further poisons the water and causes additional harm to the surrounding marine life. In response, the swordfish retreats to deeper waters, where she encounters an extraordinary transformation: the ocean becomes "clean, sweet, sweet, SWEET! Her senses were flooded with sweetness, the sweetest water she'd ever breathed. She swam forward, tasting the water more as it moved through her gills" (10).

In this newly discovered undersea refuge, she finds an assemblage of diverse marine life—"sharks, sea cows, shrimps, octopus, tilapia, codfish, mackerel, flying fish, even seaweed. Creatures from the shallows, creatures from the shore, creatures from the deep, all here." At the heart of this gathering lies "a great shifting bar of glowing sand," the source of the purifying waters

(10). The cleansing force is identified as an extra-terrestrial or otherworldly presence— “not from the sea’s greatest depths or the dry places. This was from far, far away” (11). This alien entity not only restores the water's purity but also heals the wounded marine creatures, bestowing upon them new, mutated forms that enhance their resilience and equip them for potential retaliation against the agents of ecological destruction.

Okorafor’s narrative thus merges environmental critique with speculative intervention, imagining a post-human ecological future where nature—empowered by both terrestrial and alien forces—asserts agency against anthropogenic violence. The story reconfigures marine life not as a passive victim of ecological crisis, but as an active agent of resistance and renewal. Through “Moom,” Okorafor articulates a vision of speculative ecology wherein the natural world is not only sentient but also capable of regeneration and retribution, challenging dominant narratives of technological supremacy and environmental exploitation. The swordfish notices:

> More and more creatures swam down to it. As they drew closer, she saw the colours pulsate and embrace them. She noticed an octopus with one missing tentacle descending toward it. Suddenly, it grew brilliant pink-purple and straightened all its tentacles. Then right before her eyes, it grew its missing tentacle back and what looked like bony spokes erupted from its soft head. (11)

The octopus, once characterized by the vulnerability of its soft head, undergoes a remarkable transformation, its newly toughened form serving as a protective adaptation against the persistent threats of environmental degradation. This metamorphosis, observed by the swordfish, becomes a catalyst for self-empowerment and resistance. Witnessing the octopus's altered form—now fortified against the destructive forces that threaten marine life—the swordfish is inspired to seek a similar transformation. As the golden, bioluminescent entity—an alien presence responsible for these regenerative changes—approaches her, the swordfish articulates a desire for an analogous alteration. She petitions the being for an enhancement that would render her skin impenetrable, thereby enabling her to withstand the violent incursions of human technological exploitation. This moment signifies a symbolic and literal act of agency, where the swordfish not only embraces a physical transformation but also aligns herself with a broader movement of ecological resistance, representing the will of nature to adapt, endure, and challenge its exploitation.

> Her sword-like spear grew longer and so sharp at the tip that it sang. They made her eyes like the blackest stone and she could see deep into the ocean and high into the sky. And when she wanted to, she could make spikes of cartilage jut out along her spine as if she were some ancestral creature from the deepest ocean caves of old. The last thing she requested was to be three times her size and twice her weight. Now, she was no longer a great swordfish. She was a monster. (12)

In “Moom,” the swordfish's transformation culminates in the emergence of a being capable of defending both herself and her aquatic environment. This metamorphosis positions her as a dual symbol: both the embodiment of the environmental sickness caused by human interference and the agent of its potential cure. The narrative describes the surrounding waters as:

> so clean that a cup of its salty sweet goodness would heal the worst human illnesses and cause a hundred more illnesses yet known to humankind. It was more alive than it had been in centuries and it was teeming with aliens and monsters. (12)

Through this revitalized ecosystem, the text illustrates a reclamation of ecological agency. Nature, now imbued with renewed strength and resistance, reasserts itself against human encroachment. While traces of environmental degradation persist, the water no longer harms marine life. Moreover, it no longer permits human intervention aimed at exploitative "restoration" efforts, as the space is now populated by formidable, mutated sea creatures that thrive in a realm inaccessible to humans. This transformation challenges the anthropocentric logic underpinning capitalist endeavours, which typically view nature as a passive frontier to be explored, dominated, and commodified. Within such frameworks, value is often assigned based on economic potential, and entities that do not meet these criteria are objectified or rendered disposable.

This commodification of the natural world is central to Stokes’ “Claws and Savages,” a narrative that critiques the poaching industry and its devastating effects on wildlife reserves. The story portrays the desolation of the Kruger National Park in Cape Town, once a haven for diverse species, now reduced to a wasteland due to the systematic hunting and killing of exotic animals for profit. The narrator laments the loss of this ecological richness, emphasizing how the pursuit of financial gain through the illegal wildlife trade has transformed a site of natural splendour into a space of ruin. As a child, Sonny Matthis is viscerally repulsed by the brutality of these poachers, recalling a moment during a hunting expedition with his father in which he witnesses the callous slaughter of animals. The scene leaves an indelible impression on him, provoking intense emotional revulsion. The narrator notes that these,

> poachers had completely broken down its ecosystem…four men were taking a chainsaw to an unconscious—or perhaps dead—rhino’s horn…The sound of that chainsaw chewing through the horn of that rhino perforated through the air. They had loaded it on a waiting truck and fled while the rhino’s blood turned the earth muddy. (279)

Sonny undergoes a profound moral transformation that reflects the contradictions and ethical complexities of human interactions with the natural world. He reflects in horror, “how fucking downright disgusting those savages were” (280), identifying such individuals as morally bankrupt and devoid of empathy. At this stage, Sonny equates poaching with savagery, positioning himself on the moral high ground in opposition to those who commodify and destroy wildlife. However, as the narrative progresses, Sonny's ethical stance deteriorates, and he becomes what he once condemned.

Years later, he transforms into a poacher himself, actively participating in the exploitation of an alien species known as the Claws—exotic avian creatures hunted primarily for their talons, which are believed to possess mystical and curative properties. The symbolic weight of this transformation is significant: Sonny, who once denounced the desecration of nature, now profits from it. His involvement in the poaching trade is emblematic of the pervasive influence of capitalist motivations that override ecological conscience, where poachers amass wealth through the capture and sale of rare beings to shamans and occult practitioners seeking magical remedies and protection.

That is why this narrative arc underscores the corruptive force of economic incentives in shaping human behaviour toward nature. Sonny's moral descent serves as a broader allegory for how environmental exploitation is often rationalized or forgotten in the face of material gain. The story critiques not only the destruction of biodiversity but also the ease with which individuals—despite past convictions—can become complicit in the very acts they once abhorred. Sonny goes on a killing spree, going after the exotic Claw:

> [I]ts flesh, which was hard and rippled, wasn’t what the apothecaries and shamans paid for and in turn sold to the ever oblivious public in the form of sham medicines. It was the talon itself, all eight centimetres of dull claw, and the venom inside, which kept business flowing. (271)

Sonny Mathis has accumulated considerable wealth through his involvement in the illegal wildlife trade. The narrator explicitly characterizes him as “rich, yes, he was powerful, doubly so, but he was still a goddamn crook” (268), highlighting the paradox of his influence and illicit activities. Despite the clear illegality of his actions, Sonny evades legal repercussions, a privilege afforded by his considerable financial resources. The narrative reveals that “his lawyers were the best and he paid the Judge forty-thousand cash each month just in the event of such an occurrence” (268), underscoring the extent of systemic corruption that enables his continued impunity. Sonny’s wealth is further emphasized by his ability to rent an entire lounge, symbolizing not only his financial power but also the social dominance he wields within the context of this illicit economy. This portrayal critiques the entanglement of wealth, power, and corruption, illustrating how economic capital can subvert justice and perpetuate environmental exploitation.

> The elevator came to a stop and Sonny opened his eyes. The doors did not open on a passage or a hall, but straight into Sonny’s lounge. It wasn’t an ordinary apartment block. After the other major cities started getting a bit too crowded, development started elsewhere. Property prices skyrocketed, businesses thrived, and the majorly rich moved in. That is why Sonny owned the entire 144th floor of this building and not a few frugal rooms like other residents. (268-269)

His house is furnished with expensive mahogany, the value of which, as the narrator observes, “could have fed a family in the slums for a year” (276). His residence is equipped with advanced technological amenities, including an automatic blower, temperature regulators, electronic curtains, and circuit controls, reflecting a lifestyle characterized by considerable affluence. This wealth is directly tied to the high demand for the talons of exotic birds, which Sonny exploits. He acknowledges that “if the demand wasn’t so high, he couldn’t have sold so much Product to pay for it” (279), a demand that enables his lavish expenditures on luxury items such as genuine leather jackets and “crocodile-leather shoes—genuine, no room for imitations” (267).

The dystopian conditions permeating this African landscape are underscored by the narrator’s account of a National Park devoid of animals (270), emblematic of widespread ecological degradation. The environmental devastation has precipitated the emergence of novel illnesses that afflict the population indiscriminately, with little hope for reprieve. Compounding this crisis, medicinal supplies are both scarce and prohibitively expensive, rendering effective

treatment inaccessible to the majority of inhabitants and driving the desperate pursuit of Claws for their purported curative properties. Crucially, the narrative establishes a direct causal link between the pervasive ecological destruction and the proliferation of these illnesses, emphasizing the profound and deleterious impact of environmental collapse on human health and societal stability. The narrator notes that,

> Years of inhaling the spent fossil fuels and the thick clouds of smog that hung over the cities and slums like malicious clouds, finally took its toll on a growing percentage of the population. Cell degradation began in the alveoli, turned it black, like something charred, and eventually spread through the entire respiratory system. It wasn't unusual to see someone sneeze out bits of ebony lung tissue with a spray of blood. Conventional medicines were expensive and hard to come by unless, of course, you were of the extreme rich like Sonny Mathis. (271)

Due to the scarcity of conventional medicines and growing scepticism regarding their efficacy, there is a widespread belief that the talons of the Claws possess curative properties capable of mitigating the effects of the on-going global environmental and health crises. This belief underscores a profound irony: the very ecological degradation that has precipitated widespread illness and instability is now viewed as the source of potential remedies. In other words, the continued exploitation and depletion of the ecosystem—an act that catalysed the current dystopian condition—is paradoxically perceived as the most viable path toward its resolution. This contradiction highlights the cyclical nature of ecological harm and the desperation embedded within human responses to environmental catastrophe. That is why the Claws are being haunted, and the poachers are,

> grinding up Claw talons into powders and potions just as the Vietnamese had done in the past with rhino horn. It was still expensive, of course, because Claws weren't from Earth, but the dosage needed was miniscule in comparison to modern healing techniques. Most of them relied on illegal apothecaries and shamans who preached its wonderful healing powers to get their fix, and those little shysters relied on Sonny Mathis to procure them Product. (272)

In addition to their perceived medicinal value, the talons serve a symbolic function for Sonny, who keeps one displayed in a glass case in his bedroom as a trophy. The narrative notes, "the large white talon that had once been attached to a Claw… stood mounted in a glass case on his wall. He had almost lost his life getting that particular trophy and he kept it there as a reminder" (270). This display of conquest exemplifies the commodification of nature under capitalist imperatives. Sonny further expands his illicit enterprise by laundering the profits from the talon trade into legitimate ventures, including drug production and distribution: "drug production and sales peaked. Rich crime bosses got richer, and all the blood money involved was run through legitimate businesses to wash it clean. Eventually when the drugs and everything that followed in its wake decamped, the affluence remained" (270). Despite the clear illegality of his activities, Sonny continues unabated, driven solely by profit. As the narrative reveals, "he hunted those unsettlingly hard-to-find Claws and returned with the bounty a week or two later. It was illegal, and he knew it," yet

"questions of legality aside, it was still a profitable field of trade" (270). For Sonny, economic gain eclipses any moral or legal concerns.

However, the narrative curve bends toward ecological and moral retribution. Environmentalists, having failed to use institutional channels to hold Sonny accountable due to his entrenched influence— "he paid the Judge forty-thousand cash each month just in the event of such an occurrence" (268)—resort to extra-legal means. Mr. Lenard Landon, a committed preservationist, acknowledges the failure of legal systems in confronting Sonny's impunity and takes it upon himself to orchestrate a reckoning. "Since the courts couldn't bring down Sonny Mathis," Landon confesses, "he [has taken it into] his own hands" (275). In a calculated act of poetic justice, Landon releases two invisible Claws into Sonny's high-rise residence, declaring, "since the judge was up to his eyeballs in your filthy money, I had to take the matter even higher" (278). The very specie Sonny relentlessly exploited becomes the instrument of his demise: "the hands of that which he had hunted with such ardour" (277) deliver fatal justice.

The death of Sonny at the hands of the Claws signifies an act of ecological reclamation and narrative closure. As the text affirms, "he was a goddamn crook, and all crooks felt the impersonal and solid hand of justice eventually" (268). In this moment, the exploited nonhuman agents become arbiters of retribution, restoring a measure of balance to a world distorted by capitalist exploitation and legal complicity.

Conclusion

Nnedi Okorafor's *"*Moom" and Martin Stokes' "Claws and Savages" present compelling narratives that foreground ecological degradation and the potential for environmental reclamation through speculative interventions. In "Moom," the swordfish, initially a victim of ecological harm, evolves into an empowered agent of resistance, using her transformed body and sharpened instincts to disrupt the operations of offshore oil rigs. The transformative coral reef becomes a site of regeneration, where marine life gains new abilities to defend their habitat. By the story's end, the ocean space is successfully re-territorialized, rendered impenetrable to human exploitation—a symbolic reclamation of nature's sovereignty.

Similarly, in *"*Claws and Savages," the portrayal of Sonny Mathis and his cohort as the true "savages" underscores the destructive capacity of unchecked capitalist greed and environmental irresponsibility. Their systematic exploitation of rare alien species for commercial and pseudo-medicinal purposes parallels historical practices of poaching endangered species, reinforcing the critique of anthropocentric and profit-driven worldviews. However, the narrative resists total despair. Environmental justice is ultimately enacted through a strategic alliance between human agency and nonhuman resistance. The Claws—once the hunted—emerge as powerful agents of retribution, aided by a preservationist who subverts a corrupted legal system to deliver justice. In doing so, "Claws and Savages" exposes the fragile boundaries of ethical commitment in the society, where the commodification of life forms—terrestrial or extra-terrestrial—reveals the persistent, destructive entanglements between human greed and ecological degradation.

In total, these texts suggest that environmental restoration is possible, but only through a radical reimagining of interspecies relations and a coalition of forces—terrestrial and extra-terrestrial, human and nonhuman—committed to the protection of the planet. While the resolutions presented are far from utopian, they are nevertheless potent, emphasizing that ecological

redemption, though fraught and partial, is within reach when driven by shared purpose and collective action. Both “Moom” and “Claws and Savages” converge on a shared thematic concern: the destruction of the natural world under the pressures of capitalist exploitation and human hubris. Yet, where “Claws and Savages” dwells on the irreversible loss inflicted upon terrestrial ecosystems, “Moom” envisions a speculative future where nature evolves beyond victimhood, asserting its dominance through monstrous and alien mutations. In doing so, these texts serve as cautionary and corrective narratives, compelling a reimagining of humanity's relationship with the environment—one rooted not in domination and extraction, but in reverence, restraint, and ecological accountability.

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