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**Micro-Ecologies of the Body: Trans-Corporeality and the Ethics of Survival in Armah's
The Healers and Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go***

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Abstract:

This paper explores micro-ecology within the human body as a locus and site of ecological crisis in Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Healers* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*. These two novels chart out landscapes of toxicity, depletion, and resilience. Incorporating somatic ecocriticism and Stacy Alaimo's theory of trans-corporeality, it is imagined that bodies are not sealed entities, but are continuously mixed with ecology, politics, and history. Demonstrating how literature inscribes the body within larger scenes of governance, the study compares the postcolonial vision of Armah, in communal scenes of healing, with Ishiguro's dystopic scenes of biocapitalist exploitation. In *The Healers*, colonialism is a structural illness that splinters bodily and communal. This disruption is addressed through the novel's portrayal of indigenous restoration rituals, which aim to restore ecological and spiritual completeness. In this case, the body is a vehicle of group rehabilitation. It is a conduct through which opposition and healing are played in the face of the splitting power of imperial suppression. Instead, in stark contrast. *Never Let Me Go* shows the body as a commoditized resource, viz., as an indefinitely harvested organ pool within the closed institutionalized system. Ishiguro depicts subjects whose agency is foreclosed, so that their opposition can be reduced to the frail moves of memory, intimacy, and hope deferral. Through this juxtaposition of culturally and temporally disparate readings, the paper widens the ecocritical discussion to include the body-land continuum as a terrain of both uncertainty and strength. It claims that literary institutions reflect the ecological crises of the associated ecologies: Armah puts a priority on the survival of the collective by insisting on ecological and cultural continuity, and Ishiguro focuses on agency vulnerability within biocapitalistic regimes. Collectively, the stories shed light on the ethics of care, exploitation, and perseverance in postcolonial and posthuman landscapes. This prompts a reconsideration of the human body's position within existing planetary and political ecologies of survival in literary literature.

Keywords: Micro-ecology, Trans-corporeality, Somatic ecocriticism, Postcolonial healing, Biocapitalism, Ethics of survival

1. Introduction

Ecological criticism has extended past landscape and ecosystem to the human body itself, as a crucial ecological site. With world crises such as environmental pollution, colonial history, and biotechnological exploitation continuing to be enacted on the lived experience, literary studies have attempted to comprehend in what ways they might be marked on the body. The body is no longer seen as a self-contained and separate unit, but rather as a porous ecology, a living intersection of nature, culture, and politics.

To explore how each author portrays the human body as a micro-ecological place of vulnerability and sustenance, the paper will discuss Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Healers* (1978) and Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (2005). Drawing on the theory of trans-corporeality as articulated by Stacy Alaimo, according to which human bodies are both literally and ethically engaged in their environments, and the approach of somatic ecocriticism, this paper will show that these two novels reveal the body as the space in which social systems, ecological processes, and ethical issues intersect.

Colonialism (in *The Healers*) is depicted as a disease that attacks the communal and the individual body. The healers in Armah identify division and exploitation as signs of a systemic disease. They offer ritual and spiritual healing as a cure that reestablishes the body, land and communal identity. By comparison, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* envisions a biocapitalist society where cloned bodies are produced and harvested for organ donations. The novel shows how contemporary regimes of control and biotechnologies turn life itself into a commodity, downgrading human beings to biological capital.

This comparative study aims to demonstrate how ecological ethics are expressed through literary representations of the body. While Armah sees an ecology of healing founded on unity, care, and communal resilience, Ishiguro reveals an exploited ecology that turns care into control and life into capital. Both approaches get readers to rethink the human body as a continuum within a larger ecological framework and meditate upon what it means to survive in postcolonial and posthuman situations.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The main theoretical framework of this study is a concept known as trans-corporeality. This concept was elaborated by Stacy Alaimo in *Bodily Nature: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (2010). Alaimo confronts the Western divide between human and nature by suggesting that human and nonhuman bodies are materially interrelated in the flow of matter, energy, and history. The literary bodies can be read through this theory not as metaphorical but as material intersections of ecological and social processes.

Moreover, somatic ecocriticism used in this study explains bodily sensations, illness and healing as ecological experiences. The method presents the body as a micro-landscape that responds to and opposes external conditions. The research is further informed by postcolonial biopolitics, based on Michel Foucault's theory of biopower, which involves the regulation of human bodies as factors of production or control by colonial and capitalist structures.

2.2 Textual Materials

The analysis is based on two major texts:

1. *The Healers* by Ayi Kwei Armah is a postcolonial African novel that takes place in the last days of the Asante Empire. It investigates the disintegration of colonial intrusions and the philosophical outlook on healing through integration.
2. *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro is a modern dystopian novel set in a world where human clones are bred as organ donors. The moral and emotional implications of biocapitalist dominance are unveiled.

2.3 Methodology

The present qualitative research is based on a close reading of the text, finding and discussing the most important passages, where the use of bodily imagery, illness, or care practices can demonstrate ecological and ethical aspects. Armah and his vision of communal healing are juxtaposed with Ishiguro and his image of systemic exploitation through comparative analysis. Both novels are read through the trans-corporal approach to the body with its focus on bodies as the location where ecology, history, and power intersect.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 *Armah's The Healers: Colonialism as Bodily and Ecological Disease*

In *The Healers*, Armah talks about colonialism not just as a political invasion but as a somatic and ecological invasion. This is a disease that devastates the bodies, both physical and spiritual, of African people. The healer Damfo narrates to his follower Densu: "There are two forces, unity and division. The first creates. The second destroys; it's a disease, disintegration." In this case, the separation between tribes, individuals, body and spirit is pathology. The healer's work is to restore the lost balance. It is a physical and social regeneration that transforms into a healing. The notion that "A people can be diseased the same way" *represents* Armah's belief that bodily health and communal health are inseparable.

a. The Healer Approach: Trans-Corporeal Ethics of Inspiration.

Armah writes, "The healer's method is inspiration." In this case, inspiration transcends breath or creativity up to spiritual and ecological. Healing cannot be forced but comes from keen listening and peaceful coexistence with the rhythms of the earth. In trans-corporal terms, the act of inspiration is the act of the world being settled into the body, of the self and the world breathing into each other. In this way, Damfo and his friends are engaged in what may be termed as eco-spiritual medicine. Their rituals, in the natural sites, between the rivers and trees, are symbolic of the continuum body-land. In this case, Densu is in the river and he experiences: "It did not seem anymore as if what was outside that skin was separate from the life within."

This scene is the most pure trans-corporeality. The body and the environment lose their distinction and this gives rise to ecological consciousness through the body sense.

b. Disease as Disintegration: The Body–Community Continuum

The Armah healers understand the disease as a disintegration, destruction of relationships and wholeness. Colonialism, an alienated society founded on inequality and rapacity turns into a systematic illness. Healing conversely is a re-connecting process. The rituals of the healer are shared by song and dance and practices of collective will-power that oppose alienation by the Imperial. Armah links ecology and ethics to his pathology of colonialism by defining a disease and remedy as the recovery of oneness. Here the body is the patient, the healer, the place of pain and the source of healing.

c. The Ethics of Refusal: the Moral Ecology of Densu

Densu, the protagonist of the novel, does not desire to take part in bloody wrestling events. When asked why, he replies: “I don’t like fighting for no reason. There’s no reason I should want to beat him.” To this simple sentence, there is a profound ecological meaning. Rejection of the colonial logic of domination by Densu and adoption of an ethics of restraint and harmony. His body becomes an object of ethical protest, a body unwilling to reproduce hurt.

Armah creates a survival ethic based on care, cooperation and ecological balance using Densu and the healers. The process of recovery becomes a political and environmental liberation act.

3.2 Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*: The Body as Biocapitalist Resource

In contrast, Ishiguro in *Never Let Me Go* sees the body as a commodified ecology, under a regime of biopolitical control. The clones in the novel are brought up in institutions, trained to believe in their destiny and slowly dissected to receive organ donations. It is not the healing of the body but the exploitation of it, an instrument of value production. The narrator, Kathy H., describes her work peacefully at the beginning of the novel: “My donors have always tended to do much better than expected... hardly any of them have been classified as ‘agitated,’ even before fourth donation.” This seemingly gentle statement shows how horrifying the system is. Composure and obedience are mentioned as medical signs and emotional stability is a commodity. Human body is treated like a toxic site, managed, overworked and in the end thrown away.

a. Trans-Corporeality and Somatic Control

Trans-corporeality theory proposed by Alaimo helps us to think of such bodies as not victims of social control but elements of an ecological system. The clones are left at the mercy of technologies, institutions, and caretakers, who dictate the life of the clones and control all their aspects. The affairs of politics and materiality, the machinery of medicine, the language of care, the Hailsham and the rehabilitation centers, are involved with their bodies. It is an entanglement that is upheld by the prose of Ishiguro. Coming back home in the country Kathy says: “Driving around the country now, I still see things that will remind me of Hailsham... I’ll think: ‘Maybe that’s it! I’ve found it!’” This yearning for a lost home reflects the bodily need to have some root in the alien world. The Hailsham memory acts as a metaphor of the ecosystem: a lost country in the soul. Memory is a somatic ecology, the means of retention when all material ties are severed.

b. Biocapitalism and Foreclosed Agency

The dystopia presented by Ishiguro can be seen as the logic of biocapitalism, in which biological life can be converted to economic capital. Creative works of the clones, including painting, writing, and art, are not applied to give freedom to the clones, but to monitor them. Kathy recalls: “We were encouraged to value each other’s work... But we didn’t know a thing about poetry. We didn’t care about it.” Art is a process of domination, a tool to quantify emotional souls and rationalize exploitation. The agency is preempted; even the opposition is sucked into the system. The outcome is a cold-blooded portrait of care as control, empathy being turned into the use of punishment.

c. Ethics of Care and Slow Violence

The case of Kathy as a carer is observed to create the paradox of moral care in the system of oppression. She says: “You try and do your best for every donor, but in the end, it wears you down.” Her empathy is real but it continues the machine of deprivation. It is the term brought out by Rob Nixon, slow violence, the damage that is ritualized and effected by default. Ishiguro is exposing the veil of environmental and ethical destruction using the terminology of concern. In *Never Let Me Go*, the aspect of morality in the survival has been eliminated. The clones live to serve. Their bodies turn into a territory of deprivation and memory and tenderness are flickering instances of opposition.

3.3 Comparative Analysis: Healing and Exploitation as Poles of the Ecological Process

The comparison between Armah and Ishiguro shows that these two writers are two opposite micro-ecologies of the body.

Aspect	<i>The Healers</i>	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>
View of the Body	Communal and sacred; body–land continuum	Managed and commodified; body as resource
Type of Illness	Colonial division and social fragmentation	Biocapitalist exploitation and institutional control
Healing/Response	Ritual restoration, unity, inspiration	Slow depletion, emotional compliance
Ethical Model	Collective survival and ecological wholeness	Personal tolerance of the systemic violence.

According to the healers of Armah, healing is a kind of political protest- healing of the human and ecological fragmentations. Instead, Ishiguro has his carers who fix a faulty system to provide some comfort, and allow them to exploit the system. However, the two writers also meet one very important point: the body is porous. The line between self and environment is never set in stone, whether it is the breath of the healer or the surgery of the donor. This porosity

has a moral dimension. In case there is an interrelation between bodies and environments, then any damage caused to one is reflected in the other. Armah turns this concept into a vision of trans-corporeal solidarity, in which healing restores the circulation between bodies and the earth. Ishiguro makes it into a warning: once trans-corporeality is seized by capitalism, extraction is the flow, life is raw material.

3.4 The Ethics of Survival

The term ethics of survival is used when people and societies are trying to survive in the face of systemic damage. To Armah, the survival of ethics is the healing of the unity of oneness, the interrelation of all nature. His characters not only keep themselves healthy by isolating themselves, but they also need to integrate, recalling that a people can be sick together and thus must be healed together. Surviving in the world of Ishiguro has lost this moral aspect. The clones are not given a moral and cultural continuity, and are only maintained physically. They perish without posterity or successor. Even in this darkness, however, Ishiguro provides minor acts of rebellion--memory, friendship, tenderness that proclaim a weak humanism.

Ecocritical discourse is expanded in the two novels. Armah writes to a postcolonial ecology in which the task is to heal what was torn apart by colonialism. Ishiguro is an ecologist-posthuman where technology is going to dissolve the meaning of the human altogether. They both believe that survival is not merely biological, but also ethical, relational and ecological.

4. Conclusion

The paper has discussed how *The Healers* by Ayi Kwei Armah and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro theorize the human body as a micro-ecological place formed by historical, political, and environmental influences. Both novels, through the perspective of trans-corporeality and somatic ecocriticism, reveal that bodies are not isolated; as such, bodies are porous systems that are related to land, community, and institutions. The healers of Armah symbolize a restorative ecology philosophy, in which healing is a spiritual, social, and environmental unity. The ecology of the Ishiguro's clones is destructive, in which the biocapitalism transforms care into control, and life into profit. In contrast, these creations show the two extreme ethical poles of survival, one based on communal recovery, the other on controlled survival. In the end, these two novels challenge the reader to rethink the body as a living topography, influenced by power and care streams. Literature, in the sense of these struggles, is itself an ethical space, where we can redefine the meaning of survival not as domination and extraction, but as coexistence, sympathy, and ecological responsibility.

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