

**ECO-WARRIORS: THE CHAMPIONS OF THE GREEN WORLD IN RANJIT
LAL'S *FACES IN THE WATER* AND ISABEL ALLENDE'S *CITY OF THE
BEASTS***

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Abstract

Literature, a comprehensive outlook of life pertaining to different dimensions, is an excellent platform to stage the innate and inter-dependant relation among all organisms in the world. Indian Literature and Latin American Literature have their meritorious share in this endeavor and the writers hailing from these territories give voice against the dangerous venture perturbing natural order and the need to preserve the natural world. The current paper analyses Ranjit Lal's *Faces in the Water* and Isabel Allende's *City of the Beasts* in the light of ecocriticism. An ecological standpoint of the novel *Faces in the Water* focuses on the subjugation of the two ecological resources, woman and water, by a community. Isabel Allende's *City of the Beasts* narrates the exploratory tale of Alexander Cold who ventures into the Amazon forest and redeems the tribal people from danger thus preserving the natural integrity of the place and stopping human exploitation. Both novels portray the protagonists as champions of environmental sensitivity. Ecocriticism, apart from highlighting the relationship between literature and the environment, houses in it varied perspectives which emphasize its multidisciplinary approach. The theoretical framework of the current paper attempts to place both novels into the 'Sentimental ecological model of nature writing' delivered through "Magical Realism."

Key Words: Ecocriticism, Eco-warrior, Ranjit Lal, Isabel Allende, Sentimental ecological model of nature writing

Literature, a comprehensive outlook of life pertaining to different dimensions, is an excellent platform to stage the innate and inter-dependant relation among all organisms in the world. Apart from its aesthetic appeal it attempts to throw light on various issues that demand immediate attention and remedy, of which ecological crisis is one. The study underscores the vanity of humanity and human beings' delirious attempts that disturb the ecological web. Many writers worldwide have been exploring and explaining the ecological issues to the human community as it is the dire need of the hour. They portray characters as defenders of the natural resources. Ecocriticism has thus become an integral part of World literature.

Indian Literature and Latin American Literature have their meritorious share in this endeavor and the writers hailing from these territories give voice against the dangerous venture perturbing natural order and the need to preserve the natural world.

Modern Indian writers try to create awareness by recapturing the spirit of the extant order and delivering it in a novel way throbbing with modern techniques that it widens the scope for further literary uprising. Ranjit Lal is one such reputed writer and journalist who has contributed to the prestigious pages of Indian Literature. He has authored lots of books on natural history and child psychology, and has written thousands of articles. He rejuvenates the oft treaded subject matter of female infanticide with renewed outlook in his *Faces in the Water*. An ecological standpoint of this novel focuses on the subjugation of the two ecological resources, woman and water, by a community. Violation of the fundamental right of any living being to live and contribute to this ecological web is projected in a sentimental way. The author exploits magical realism to suit his purpose that the silenced voice for themselves. Apart from being factual, their intellectual and emotional reflections encourage the protagonist Gurmeet to protect the resource of a family and the world. Isabel Allende is a world-renowned Latin American writer known for her luminous expression and folk-tale eloquence. She is compared to Gabriel Garcia Marquez for handling magical realism with utmost effectiveness. She adores nature. Her sketches are so vivid that she enthralls her readers' mind and enhances their literary experience. She is a wonderful story-teller who has a strong notion on the indispensable role of novels in a society. Along with her exquisite narrative power, her amazing adventurous spirit could be sensed through the plot. Her *City of the Beasts* narrates the exploratory tale of Alexander Cold who ventures into the Amazon forest. At the end, he redeems the tribal people from danger and preserves the natural integrity of the place stopping human exploitation. Both novels portray the protagonists as the champions of environmental sensitivity. The current paper underscores the stance of the protagonists as eco-warriors fighting for the protection of the green world, ranging from a component to an indigenous race. By focusing on the two novels under study, the paper attempts to emphasize the need to protect each resource in this world, may it be water, land, an individual or a race.

Ecocriticism, apart from highlighting the relationship between literature and the environment, houses in it varied perspectives which emphasize its multidisciplinary approach. The interplay of the human and the non-human world is pictured clearly with all its nuances that the human beings get clear understanding of the ways environment interact with the other components of the ecological web. Human beings are also essential component of this ecological web that the increase or decrease in population is a matter of concern. Also, when it comes to the tribal population, many of the tribal communities are near extinction owing to the imperial attitude towards their realm. If the tribal people suffer because of anthropocentric attitude, the feminine gender suffers owing to patriarchal mode. Though social and economic parameters do not affect the term ecocriticism altogether, their influence and confluence upon the term are undeniable. Ecocritics strive to procure equality and justice for all components in the universe through their intellectual deliberations and actions.

The theoretical framework of the current paper attempts to place both novels into the 'Sentimental ecological model of nature writing' delivered through "Magical Realism." Richard M. Maggie opines in *Feminist Ecocriticism: Environment, Women, and Literature*: "In the sentimental ecological model of nature writing, the human concerns are not ignored, but are presented as parallel to, and inseparable from, the concerns of nonhuman nature"

(68). With reference to the issues that crop up in the novels regarding the human and the non-human concerns, the protagonists of the two novels, Gurmeet and Alexander Cold, are depicted as Eco-Warriors. In the United Kingdom, a media coined the term ‘Eco Warrior’ and the term is defined thus: “An Eco Warrior is an individual who cares about our environment & the diversity of life forms that share it. Being an Eco Warrior is to simply care for our environment in our daily activities and decision making” (ecowarriors.org, 2015).

City of the Beasts narrates the adventurous tale of Alexander Cold who evolves as a mature person after his connection with nature. His external journey into the interior of the Amazon forest is in a way internal also as he learns a lot about life and its mysterious intricacies with the help of his grandmother and his native Indian friend Nadia. Along with Nadia, he is able to protect the tribal people of the Amazon forest and the natural resources which are towards extinction due to the conspiracy of a group of antagonists. The storyline of *Faces in the Water* is simple that the drowned girl children of the Diwanchand family haunt the well in their ancestral farm and they, through their sentimental discourses and actions, create an aesthetic experience that the Diwanchands have never experienced beforehand, and provoke their brother Gurmeet to escort the newborn ones. The novels bring to discussion the exploitation of tribal people and women in the contemporary scenario. The clarion call of Deep ecologists stresses the importance and contribution of each being to this interconnected web. The anthropocentric attitude of humanity as highlighted in the *City of the Beasts* tends to poach the natural territory of the Amazon forest, and by extinguishing the native community residing in the forest it attempts to harm the environment. While such anthropocentric attitude bothers the societal construct of the native people, the trouble really intensifies when anthropocentrism further narrows down to gender specific issues as that alarm bell does not only signify the suppression or invisibility of the ‘weaker sex’ but the ruthless actions towards their extinction. Oblivious of woman’s role in ecology as the creator of a species, ignorance and vanity dare disturb the ecological web by striking the vital core – woman.

Magical realism serves as an important tool in both the novels for the deliverance of the theme. The term Magical Realism is used to refer to all narrative fictions which present the magical happenings in a realist tone of the narrative and this relates the term to literary realism though it differs from it in the perspective of presenting the fusion of two opposite aspects, the magical and the real thus forming a new outlook. The ordinariness of magic in magical realism relies on its capability of being accepted both in the supernatural and natural planes. Lois Zamora and Wendy B. Farris state in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* that, “... the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, and everyday occurrence - admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism” (3). In *Faces in the Water*, Ranjit Lal depicts the girl ghosts as a part of the ancestral farm house in which their presence is felt consciously and unconsciously according to the characters’ sensitivity. The creation of the virtual world in which the Diwanchands tangibly and emotionally enjoy the presence of the girl children carries a note of hope towards future. Similarly, in *City of the Beasts*, the Beasts that live uphill are considered to be Gods for the Amazon tribal people. Allende gives equal emphasis to natural and supernatural elements; natural things with supernatural powers and extraordinary things done in a natural way. With an ecological brush in her hand, she paints a vivid picture of ancient models at the backdrop of the contemporary world.

The opening of the novel *Faces in the Water* brings the central issue to discussion by the statements: "... they say no one can really remember when a girl was born the last time ... no one can remember when anyone in the family fell sick" (1). While the good health of Diwanchand family owes greatly to the water they drink from a special well in their ancestral farm, it is equally true that the pride of the family heritage not housing any female offspring also owes to the same well. On his first visit to their ancestral farmhouse, Gurmeet is forbidden to visit the magic well in which it is thought the "exotic health giving minerals leach into the water turning it into a sort of elixir" (1). He is taken aback when he casts a curious look into the well as he sees the faces of three girls Mohini, Nandhini, and the Baby glowing on the water surface. They are his sisters drowned into the water to keep the Diwanchand traditional pride intact. In spite of the periodical drowning of the new-born girl babies into the water, the water remains pure and it is yet another sample for magical realism. It is not by nature but the spirits purify the water and convert it into an elixir for the sake of their family members.

When Gurmeet suggests poisoning the water thus teaching them a lesson for their ruthless activity,

Mohini shook her head and looked pained. 'Don't even think about it. They're our parents after all, in spite of everything. We can't do such a thing' She—and the other two—was sitting at the bottom of this well ... and she was ready to forgive and forget without batting an eyelid.
(24)

Mohini's gentle refusal shows her generosity along with her responsibility not to harm and pollute the ecological components, human beings and water respectively. She even predicts that if the well water is polluted, the Diwanchands would easily switch over to some packaged water not realizing the harm they have done to their offspring. While the abstract tries to create a living space for the concrete, the concrete always seeks a comfort zone never realizing any hint from nature. Water is believed to be the origin of all living beings and here it is used as a destructive medium for the family pride of Diwanchand at the cost of human lives. The power structure is inherited generation after generation that they continue to exploit the two life-giving resources of nature – water and woman. Man's power play is portrayed by the author that it not only personally disturbs the eco system but also skillfully uses one component to abuse the other.

Well can be scrutinized from both literal and metaphorical stance as it is the platform for executing patriarchal notions and at the same time provides a non-patriarchal space inside. It also symbolizes the patterns of connection indicating panoply of ways that women and nature are related. The author's portrayal of the spirits inhabiting the well comes in line with Ellen Rooney's idea on narratives that "... some resituating of women in a new non-patriarchal space or practice ... in a new 'femininity'" (73). The complex interplay of this non-patriarchal space and femininity ultimately evolves strategies of emancipation.

The mentality of the people to lead a life defined by the socio-economic power structure paves the way for the atrocious deeds. According to them the birth of a girl baby symbolizes the depletion of family wealth. Justification for this misdeed is sought in a hypocritical way and the author projects this mental plane through the words of Surinder thus:

... Why do you think we are so respected and envied in the community? We have such a reputation to protect. Everyone looks up to us, like we were royalty.

It's a matter of great pride and the family's honour. Besides think of the amount of money that has been saved. (95)

The communal pride comes to the forefront endangering a component of the eco system. The family is unaware of the fact that they really deprive the number of a particular species that it may result in fatal consequences in future. It may be argued that the deprived number is less when compared to the wholesome product but this problem is not unique concerning only Diwanchand family rather it is universal. At various places female infanticide is prevalent through ages and a deep analysis of this would provide scope for socio-economic and gender issues. Lawrence Buell emphasizes that the community mindedness creates an “anthropocentric” emphasis on environmentalism as instrument of social justice as against an ‘ecocentric’ emphasis on caring for nature as a good in itself” (33, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond*). With regard to the issue dealt in the discourse, the author leaps forward from ‘anthropocentric’ to ‘gendercentric’ and from ‘environmentalism’ to ‘ecology’ which allows musing over the role and responsibility of each individual in the interconnected web.

Gurmeet is shocked not only by the murderous deed of his family members but also by the serene way of the girls accepting their plight. Their attachment towards the family is revealed through their tender, caring actions and words that this novel fits well into the line of sentimental discourse. There are seven girl ghosts in the well, three being Gurmeet's sisters and the other four Lovleen, Sagari, Anita and Richa are his cousins. Their behavior and approach are typical to their ages and Gurmeet does not find any violence exclusive to the spirits but for the mild pranks of Nandhini. The girl ghosts are depicted with all feminine qualities attributed by the society that even in their protest they are mild and passive. Unlike the orthodox ghost stories in which the spirits threaten or torture the victims either physically or psychologically, these meek spirits try to unravel the humanity buried deep inside the Diwanchands. In spite of the tragedy occurred to them, they try to create a rapport with the family members. By creating a virtual world in which the family cherishes the presence of the girls, they try to project what they miss in real life – a sort of sentimental appeal. Nandhini Nayar in the article “Ranjit Lal's Survival Fiction” justifies *Faces in the Water* as a Sentimental narrative since “Sentimental narratives rely on the use of sentiments, often to the point of melodrama, to portray the characters as caring people” (*Muse India*, Issue 50, July – August 2013).

Gurmeet feels the presence of the spirits; yet they are invisible. In spite of staying close with their brother, their invisibility creates a vacuum inside which is desirably sought by them as it would intensify the longing to see his sisters and feel for their absence. They even engage Gurmeet and the other three Arnav, Varun and Donny in car race and other games amusing them and giving them good company in the virtual world they create. At the same time they never fail to tighten the brother-sister bond with their arguments sparkling with sentimental touch. Expecting the Rakshabandhan day, the conversation goes thus:

‘It's a festival in which a brother renews his promise to protect his sisters. So you have to protect us.’ ‘Okay ... so no big deal.’ But my heart had sunk. ‘Ah, you don't get off so easily. Brothers also have to give their sisters elaborate and very expensive gifts at this time.’

Though the conversation is engaging and casual there is a hint that provokes Gurmeet's duty consciousness to protect the girls of Diwanchand family. He utters that it is a not big deal but his heart very well knows it is. He feels a strange heaviness owing to the irreparable past and

the responsibility in store for future. But to his astonishment, he accomplishes the mission of saving his new-born twin sisters by his daring venture counteracting the family tradition. He hides inside the well at midnight and when the new-born babies are thrown inside, he saves them heroically proving to be an eco – warrior in general and loving brother in specific. He questions the atrocity of their deeds and serves as an eye-opener for the Diwanchands to save and protect their family resource – women.

Veiled sarcasm prevails in the depiction of the behavioral pattern of the Diwanchands, particularly Gurmeet’s father. He is a man of snarling temper and on his arrival the house starts pandering to his whims and fancies; but when he hears about the birth of the twin girls he collapses down as a coward dreading to face the life ahead. Internally he is torn between reality and wish; family heritage and the girl babies. Mohini’s soft corner for her father is revealed through her words figuring him as a poor fellow whose conscience pricking him throughout or he could have been otherwise. Not stopping with this statement, she leaps forward in materializing it in a way Papa feels much happier than before in the farm house. The author pictures him as a changed man rather reveals his true nature by his unconscious association with the girl children. The guilt and family pride that covered his soft inner core melt by the magical touch of his girl children in a way Ranjit Lal tries to project equal weighting of both resources – man and woman; and in the absence of one, the other seems to be disturbed mentally that may slowly lead to physical anxiety. The girl spirits are closely associated with their Mama and Papa that they try on Mama’s jewelry and clothes; massage her; the Baby always prodding about Papa’s leg and holds onto his hand and the like. These innocuous events are loaded with sentimental significance and Gurmeet observes that the presence of the girls has affected his parents in a positive way. He observes:

Certainly the presence of the girls in the house seemed to put both Mama and Papa into a good mood. Mama’s bitter, sour look was gone, and Papa was no longer the piranha, ready to bite your head off for no reason; he was jovial and laughed a lot. (160)

Though Papa collapses down on the birth of the twin girls and poses as an inefficient father when the babies are taken to be drowned, he radically changes at the sight of the rescued babies and soars as a determinant and courageous father figure uttering: “No ... It’s over. I’m not doing anything like that ever again ... My poor girls.” (195). Answering Balvinder’s query if he knows what it would be like to raise daughters, he repartees, “Yes ... I do know. Ever since I came to live here I’ve known” (196). Too late a realization that has cost three lives but it is at least better than never.

The author handles sentimental appeal throughout in order to change the anti-ecological ‘community mindedness’ of a sect of people in particular and universal in general for which he tries to place the squadron in a non-patriarchal space using magical realism that they are able to define their own femininity and concretize their aspired vision towards the end using the same tool targeted for their oppression. The author also hints at the purest core existing inside every being in this ecology, respecting and relishing the inter-connectedness and inter-dependence; but unfortunately it gasps for breath as it is shackled by the complex interplay of society, economy, heritage, community and all such fake ideologies that breed anti-ecological notion. So, the ultimate need of the hour is analysis – not of the current scenario but the impediments and vanity covering the soft core. Once the hard shell is removed, the inner light spreads out and it becomes one with many such streaks making the ecological web throb with love and peace.

While *Faces in the Water* depicts harming the ecological web for the sake of community pride, *City of the Beasts* portrays the impairment at a large scale affecting a tribal community and its native atmosphere. If Ranjit Lal takes the readers to the farm house of the Diwanchands, Isabel Allende makes the readers travel around the Amazon forest. Both strive to explain the importance of each being in this ecological web and its peculiar role with its own responsibilities. Gurmeet saves his family resource and Alexander proves to be the savior of the world resource.

City of the Beasts may be assumed to refer to the present day scenario of the city life but the author drags the readers to a realm which is antique by nature. The plot of the story moves steadily from a small town on the coast of California to the Eye of the World, El Dorado in the Amazon forest. Allende's geographical sketch of the Amazon goes parallel with the framework of the European imagination based on the early narratives of travel. The daring protagonists of this adventure are Alexander Cold and Nadia who are mere teenagers. The chaotic atmosphere of Alexander's household is described at the outset. His mental commotion which is in sharp contrast with reality is brought out by the author. It is decided that Alexander has to be with his grandmother Kate Cold till the treatment of his mother to which Alexander strongly protests owing to the eccentricity of the old woman. John Cold, his father, offers a new explanation for the crisis of any situation that it offers not only danger but also opportunity. As his father predicts, Alexander encounters many dangers during his different expeditions which give him opportunities for understanding the concepts of life.

Alexander at first is perplexed when he is asked to undergo the journey by himself. He has not travelled so far all alone till then. John hints that he has to do a lot of things alone in near future and it sounds prophetic. Alexander takes the flight to New York. In New York, he loses all his belongings including his favorite flute while trying to locate the house of Kate. The loss symbolizes the loss of his initial state of chaotic mind since without losing heart he finds out the house in the cold midnight. His resolution not to behave childishly before Kate stands in sharp contrast with the boy who has cried and behaved madly at the slightest provocation a few days back. Kate is a strong training ground for Alexander. The bold lady who has travelled far and wide is hard in physique and has soft feelings for her grandson but vainly covers it with harsh words. A mere glance at her apartment would easily count her adventures into the natural world. Along with the books, newspapers, and magazines there are bows and arrows of the African Pygmies, human skulls from Tibet, funeral vessels from the Atacama Desert, petrified scarabs from Egypt, and many other objects which announce her far and wide travels and her different experiences with natural environments worldwide.

Kate is assigned to write an article by International Geographic Expedition on the abominable jungle man who is believed to live in the deep jungle of the Amazon. Alexander accompanies Kate in her journey into the South American forest. Alexander is in fact afraid of the epidemics that prevail in the tropical forest with a faint idea that he would conquer one at the end. The expedition consists of Professor Ludovic Leblanc; Kate; Timothy Bruce and Joel Gonzalez, the photographers; Omayra Torres, a Venezuelan doctor who is to vaccinate the native Indians; Cesar Santos, the guide; and Nadia, his daughter. Crossing Manaus, a small city in the Amazon region, the International Geographic Group starts upriver on the Rio Negro towards Santa Maria de la Lluvia. Judit Smith comments on the contribution of physical journey to Alexander's growth in *Knight Ridder Newspapers* as:

In the jungle, after meeting the other members of the expedition - Ludovic Leblanc, famous anthropologist...the beautiful Dr. Torres, Brazilian guide Carlos Santos and his daughter Nadia - Alexander sets off on a journey that transforms him from city boy to jungle man (and spiritual jaguar). It's a gradual, almost believable process, involving lots of bugs, drugs, dreams and nightmares. (2003)

His meeting with Nadia is a turning point since his association with her symbolizes a man's union with nature which teaches him through experience.

The journey towards the Upper Orinoco proves to be very risky since the vegetation is dense and complex. Apart from the native Indians who attack them constantly, they have to endure natural obstacles and dangers. When Gonzalez is trapped in the lethal coil of an anaconda, it is Alexander who attempts first to rescue him. The urgency of the situation prompts him to plunge into this risky endeavour. A few days before Alexander had been crying at the mere sight of a snake but the journey and his association with the natural environment have given him the mental strength to tackle the critical situation. His intake of anaconda's flesh symbolizes his triumph of fear. In the beginning of the journey, he is specific in his limited menu neglecting the other available items. But his fuss for food dissolves in the air very soon since he is compelled by the situations to eat the available items. As a captive of the People of Mist, he accepts whatever food is provided without complaining or frowning. His appetite has become in tune with nature. He also starts eating fish which he has excluded so far.

The environment of Amazon teaches Alexander to conquer his physical discomforts. He is sensuous by nature, and this quality has made all his senses acute and delicate. When the travelers are affected by the stench of the Beast, it is Alexander who suffers and complains the most. The convincing and moralizing tone of his grandmother helps him to overcome the nausea. As Kate has predicted, the smell makes him stronger in due course since his travel compels him to intake a variety of aromas. Nadia teaches him to bear pain like a warrior. The real implication of her words can be understood by him only when he undergoes initiation in Tapirawa days later. During initiation, he acts as a real hero who completely overcomes the pain of his body. The boy who has crouched and cried for little pain evolves out with a strong physique enduring the torments of the ceremony including letting his hands inside a sieve of fire ants. The Amazon forest proves to be the training ground for Alexander as the theories of conquering discomforts are concretized. His transformation owes greatly to his travel through the Amazon forest as its natural atmosphere makes his real inner self bloom out. The strange sensation that Alexander has felt amidst the Amazon jungle as seeing his mother is affirmed by Nadia who declares that a heart can perform the function of the senses but with a difference - not bound by distance. One can see, touch, and speak with his heart. Miles apart, Alexander's mother also feels the presence of her son by her side in the hospital. The sentimental bond between a mother and her son is thus highlighted by the author.

The tribal people in the Amazon forest, with their beliefs, customs, and tradition, find a place in the mind of Alexander. They are apt to be quoted as the children of nature. The life of the native Indians is not merely associated with nature but blended with nature. Their physical and mental statures quite concur with nature that they either appear or disappear from a place according to their desire. Even their dwellings seem to be in close association with nature since they are roofed with branches and shrubs. The tribal people are neither

greedy nor possessive. As opposed to the individual concern of the modern people they always think and act in groups based on communal harmony. Freedom means everything for them. Padre Valdomero, the priest, enumerates: “They’re good people, and free; for them, freedom is more important than life itself...” (72). And he adds that the Indians were primitive in terms of material goods, but very advanced on the mental plane. They were connected to nature the way a child is to mother. Alexander’s short stay with them brings out his innate nativity. His idea about the tribal people changes with his real experiences. He learns to respect their customs and culture.

The way to Tapirawai is a hallmark in Alexander’s development since he has risen from the level of a mere traveler to a protector. His fortitude aids Nadia psychologically and the Indian chief Mocarita physically. A short stay in Tapirawa gives him an idea about the Indians, their beliefs, customs, and *Rahakanariwa*. According to the Indian belief *Rahakanariwa* is a blood-sucking bird which may come at any moment to kill them. The bird represents the fear of death which lies in the collective unconscious of the tribal people. With the death of the Indian chief, Alexander and Nadia are saddled with the responsibility of fighting against the bird. In addition, Alexander becomes their negotiator with the *nahabs*, the foreigners, and Nadia becomes their protector.

The trio, Walimai, Alexander and Nadia travel towards *Tepui* in El Dorado to convene with the Beasts that are considered as Gods. Also Alexander intends to bring the water of health which promises the cure of his mother’s disastrous disease, and Nadia thinks that the three crystal eggs that she saw in a vision will be there. The journey towards it is not an easy one and they need to cross different types of landscapes like green, trees, groves, caves and caverns:

They were in a rock cavern with water streaming down the walls on all sides and spreading across the floor like a black lake. Several natural tunnels, some wider than others, branched off in different directions, creating an intricate subterranean labyrinth. With no hesitation, the Indian started down one of the passages, Alexander and Nadia right on his heels. (254)

At the end of the journey, to his amazement, Alexander finds that he has come to the city of gold for which thousands of adventurers had been searching. At the same time he doubts if the legend is mere illusion since the stones at that place do not glitter at the absence of light that they may be mere ordinary stones and metals. With the help of Walimai, the conversation with the Beasts begins and ends smoothly coming to the resolution that the two adventurers would protect the People of Mist. Beasts give Alexander the idea that they are prehistoric mammals which have a symbiotic relationship with the People of Mist. These extraordinary beings serve as a storehouse of every word of the tribe’s history while the tribe protects the secrecy of El Dorado thus protecting their Gods from the exterior world. The memory of the Beasts contains the history of the tribe ranging from its beginning, which is twenty thousand years before, down to recent births and deaths. Beasts are symbolic representing the dominance of memory over the written word.

The two young people get permission to acquire what they need. Nadia travels upwards climbing the mountains, overcoming her fear of heights, and gets the three crystal eggs. Alexander goes inside the earth to collect the water of health. The narrow risky passage disheartens him but he wins at last, not without offering his endeared flute as Nadia has proffered the amulet given by Walimai. Nature gives the two warriors the diamonds and the

water of health for the sake of humanity's welfare. Alexander and Nadia walk out of the magical region with a strong conviction that they could protect the native Indians. Their wit and sharp mind counteract the wicked plan of Carias at a split second by realizing *Rahakanariwa* as the epidemic. Alexander's bold action of stopping the disaster when Dr. Torres is about to inject the dangerous syringe on Tahama's arm is described by the author as, "Without thinking, Alexander threw himself like a battering ram against the warrior, sending him sprawling to the ground" (350). Carias' treacherous scheme to get rid of the Indians by passing epidemics in the name of vaccination is revealed, and Dr. Torres is exposed as his wicked associate. The harm that would be inflicted upon the human world is outwitted and also the natural world is saved from the hands of the poachers. The three diamonds found by Nadia form the source for the establishment of the Diamond Foundation for the benefit and safety of the People of Mist. Alexander's transformation is obvious that even his grandmother feels proud of his adventures that redeemed the tribal people from the disaster. Allende, throughout the novel, depicts the concern for the human and the non-human world through Alexander who not only saves the tribal people of the Amazon from extinction but also the natural atmosphere from modernization. Alexander's reluctance in detailing the facts about the Beast, even to his grandmother, shows his will to preserve the species from further intrusions thus making the jungle atmosphere conducive for them to live in. His stance is similar to what Arne Naess states with regard to policy making as quoted by Allen Drengson: "The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present and make possible a more joyful experience of the connectedness of all things" (111). The individual policy making as referred to by Allende through Alex, though not constitutional, has its positive impact owing to protecting the tranquil environment.

The flute may be considered as Alexander's significant influence. It serves as an important symbol throughout the story. The flute, which is Alexander's symbol of dependence, is submitted to nature for the acquisition of a life-giving factor thereby affirming his stance to make right use of the natural resource and to make humanity benefit out of it at the cost of his worldly attachment. Also, the sentimental drive for getting the water of health is pellucid as he wants to get it by all means to save his mother from the disastrous disease. This also symbolizes how humanity should rely upon nature cure that could surpass any modern treatment. Natural resources are abundant and proper sensitivity to the environment would reveal the world of wonder inherent in them, may it be therapeutic, aesthetic, ecstatic, revelatory and the like, to the ones who seek them.

The two boys, Gurmeet and Alexander, seem to be immature at the opening of the novels but the turn of events and their association with the external world prompt them to perceive the world in its true light. Enlightened thus, their radical change in physical and mental planes are visible as they both dare venture into the dangerous zones, one into the well and the other into the heart of the Amazon, not for their own causes but for the welfare of the natural resources. Redeeming the resources from the clutch of the poachers and vanity, they evolve as eco-warriors who stand as models for the upcoming generation, stressing to fight against all sorts of evil harming the serenity of the human and the non-human world. Alan Drengson and Bill Devall cite Arne Naess who envisions the future society with such champions of ecology:

In the future ideal society,... there will be people who might use most of their energy doing highly specialized, difficult things, but as amateurs –

that is, from inclination and from a mature philosophy of life. There will be no fragmentary men and women, and certain no fragmentary ecologists.
(122)

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