

Exploring the legacy of Resource Exploitation and Environmental Neglect in Paolo Bacigalupi's *Ship Breaker*

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Received: May 17, 2025

Accepted: June 08, 2025

Published Online: June 30, 2025

Abstract

Climate change and its current evolution of global domination shows the over exploitation of natural resources. The neglect of care and preventive measures towards environmental disaster are not found among humans because of the concept of survival and adaptation. The disastrous ecological collapse has its prevailing legacy throughout many generations of human life. The exploration in Bacigalupi's dystopic science fiction novel *Ship Breaker* brings out the real struggles of environmental crises. Paolo Bacigalupi, as an American author has given importance to social, political issues along with the devastating climatic issues in his fictitious novels. *Ship Breaker* portrays the work of scavengers, the utility of clipper ships, and child labour exploitations. The failure to protect the environment is noticed in the novel but the characters' adaptation to survive among the ocean spills mark the specific life of humans. The labour and elite class' differentiation embarks the legacy rule in scavenging work. The theories of environmental psychology developed by Harold Proshansky, Roger Barker, Kurt Lewin and others categorized an Ecological theory which means that human behaviours are lively in action because of the existing environments. The place and situation make up the personality of humans to utilize environmental power. The core assertion is that environmental legacy is important to determine the historical past of natural surroundings. The current resource exploitations can be overlooked and maintained in the society by categorizing the traditional practices of ancestors. The social insight is that

mainstream society should have the acceptance of marginalized groups which will make the evolution of new environmental space creating awareness about the past and future traditions.

Keywords: Environmental disaster, climatic issues, ocean spills, scavengers, marginalized groups.

Ship Breaker explores the past climatic patterns concentrating on the colonial power. The competitions among nations to reach the name of the wealthiest identity targets the overuse of natural resources. The lack of conservationalism remains a choice among civilians because the domination of political power has more influence in the society.

Oil tankers are used to safeguard crude oils and petroleum across the ocean. The work of scavenging is the major source for livelihood. The physical and mental illness while scavenging inside the oil tankers is mentioned using the struggle of a character named Nailer. "Despite the filter mask, he started coughing as powder leaked in around the poorly sealed edges. He sneezed, then sneezed again, eyes watering" (02). This shows that the role of guarding played by oil tankers over decades had become rusted due to climatic evolution targeting the unwealthy to drown.

The role of copper in the novel highlights the oceanic pollution due to dumping and burning of chemical substances while involved in the duty of scavenging. The copper wires with large quantity were reported to the corporate officers to make them even wealthier. The burned pollutant smell affected the scavengers. The lack of survival commodities made the poor believe it was the practice of ancestors.

The shift in the scavengers' life arises with a torrential storm. The lack of government support and protection are the neglects among sea-dependent people. The opportunity to witness a clipper ship, which stands as an example of richness is envisioned after storm. The happiness streaming out after a storm is a chance of escape from the polluted sea. Smith, an author argues in his book *Ecologism: Towards Ecological Citizenship* about storm and pollution effects stating that:

For instance, natural objects have the capacity to act upon human life, just as a turbulent weather system still involves real forces at work. The physical damage of this turbulence remains unaltered whether we interpret it as a storm or a hurricane. In the same way, regardless of the social constructions about natural habitats, the capacity of a local ecosystem to cope with large amounts of pollution poses a real limit upon human activities. At some point, the concentration of pollutants will cause the ecosystem to collapse, just as pollution can have real effects upon the life chances of individuals. In this sense, environmental problems are real problems, even though we may represent them in various ways. (92)

The raw material procurements to construct a ship are the exploitations of the land and the sea. The adequacy to meet the fulfillment of a clipper ship is more energy consumable than an ordinary ship due to the constructive lavishness. The comparison of dwelling among the rusted oil tankers and richness filled clipper ship demonstrates the failure to change environmental adaptations. Nailer and his friend Pima, being scavengers, understand that mechanical functioning along with furnished seatings are meant to be enjoyed by the capitalist power.

The swank family has taken up the role in capturing power. They neglect the normal eco-friendly lifestyle because showcasing is the legacy imbibed within their characters. The girl found in the clipper ship being treated with the help of Nailer indicates the iconic feature of belongingness to a swank family. The fear aroused after the circumstance is that the search for girl might lead to a bigger harm for the scavenging community of the beach people.

The political opponent of the Swank family explores the inbuilt nature of economic competition. The girl rescued from the clipper ship named Nita reveals out the consequences faced by their group during the travel. She also indicates that the wreck is not a natural outcome, but rather one initiated by political enemies. This incident suggests that the rich fight against themselves to use plenty of environmental resources which could bring more profit. The lost lives are the only neglects that humans pay back to environment and its creations.

The desperation is a common formula noticed among the scavenging marginalized people. Nailer, the protagonist, remains in fear of his own father Richard Lopez. This practice is a linear pattern followed down through ages because questioning someone was not allowed. The act of selling girls and scavenged wealthy products for money is the major duty of Richard Lopez. The protagonist does not want to lead a life as that of his father which gives him courage to fight against the consequences.

Nailer's fighting conversation with his father is that, "You want to gut her, that's your right. She d-drew b-b-blood. His teeth chattered. It was a fight just to stay conscious. Pima and Nita were staring at him. Nailer continued. Y-y-you want her b-blood, it's yours. It's your right. He was feeling worse, feeling more and more dizzy (142). This is a rivalry change in the cause of human lifestyle while environmental conservation does not create fear. The dependence on resources are naturally practiced without restrictions.

The threat of nature's anger in showcasing the hurricane is compared to that of the inner conflict faced by human mind. The stormy sea gives a feeling of endless disaster for the scavenging people. Nailer fights in the storm to rescue his life as well as that of the Swank girl. The emotional disconnect rises during such a situation which makes a deep neglect towards the environment.

Nailer does not want to take away the life of a human, but the situation forces him in order to escape. The nostalgia of killing a goat as a child is demonstrated in his father. This gives the courage to kill a character named Blue Eye for escaping the sea and storm in his mind. The anger and fear within a human make the vision of environmental care.

Ecological theory is a subcategorization from the theories of Environmental Psychology. David Diaz, in the article entitled "What is Environmental Psychology?" states that, "Ecological theory says that we co-exist with our environments and that our behaviours exist because of our environments. In fact, it suggests that there is no influence on behaviour than our environment".

The sensible fact that co-relates from the theory to that of the novel is that Nailer has the adaptability towards scavenging because of environment's legacy over years. The sea and its

surrounding landforms have made the poor people to scavenge while the rich women like Nita had workers to take care of them in a clipper ship. This means that categorization of human behaviour relies on the surrounding connected with Ecological theory.

The psychological environmental trauma is the outcome due to devastation and sudden decision taken by the individual in safeguarding the fellow humans from violence. Nailer faces such a traumatic situation while killing his father, Richard. The sound of the train's arrival indicates the past traumatic life left behind in their world of scavenging. The storm disappears along with the blurred vision of ocean meaning the old world was a neglectful environmental scope for scavenger's survival. The traumatic impacts along with new environmental space gives rise to formation of a land without exploitation.

The corporate war and the belongingness to a wealthy shipping, transport company named Patel Global Transit is explained by the Swank girl Nita to Nailer. Her wish is to reach Orleans which could help her migrate towards the safer hands of her father's people. The stupidity in maintaining environmental regulations are the deepest neglects due to privatization of natural belongingness. The wish to safeguard and the act to destroy evolve out as a long-term environmental trauma.

The imprint of climate collapse is observed by Nailer throughout his migratory journey from the land of scavenging to a multi corporation city. He explains the scenario as, "The great drowned city of New Orleans didn't come all at once, it came in portions: the sagging backs of shacks ripped open by banyan trees and cypress. Crumbling edges of concrete and brick undermined by sinkholes. Kudzu-swamped clusters of old abandoned buildings shadowed under the loom of swamp trees (197).

Microgeneration is an easy to practice strategy that could stop corporations into targeting another location for use of resources. The main purpose relies on using a particular biodiversity for a group of community. Climatic collapse has taken inheritance over years, but the human requirement has been increasing forming a diversified land. Nita, being a consumer from corporation world is aware of such syndromes resulting to form a protective land for their commodities.

The role of genetically engineered half-man named Tool makes a shift in the purpose of main characters' livelihood. He stands as an example for legacy protection. He stands as a protector to Nailer's father Richard. He continues to safeguard his master's son and all the ambitions along their way without any expectations. The wisdom to develop and use technological innovation is the initiation to protect environmental resource. The responsibility and sustainability of Tool provokes the environmental resources with protection.

The post- apocalyptic world is a destructive and transformed landform after a deep environmental impact. The storm in the novel makes Orleans a land of apocalyptic vision with pollution and drowned cities. The article "Uses of the End of the World: Apocalypse and Post apocalypse as Narrative Modes" states:

In this sense many fictional narratives, and especially many works of science fiction, can also be understood as apocalyptic - not because they describe spectacularly destructive events, but because they use accounts of such events to place the past and future into the same dichotomized, developmental relationship that is established in religious and secular apocalyptic historical discourses. (441)

The existing world marks that environmental changes always form apocalypses to rejuvenation. The restructuring phase of environment and the adaptability to apocalyptic Orleans is understood by the Swank girl Nita. She dedicates herself to hard work under the circumstance of poverty and never complains about the difficulty in livelihood. Environmental racism is a neglectful situation which undertakes legacy practice over generations in maintaining the post disastrous surrounding.

The historical past of environmental vicinity undermines the relationship of humans and ecology. In the previous era, humans became completely dependent upon the ecological space due to availability and productivity of resources. The dramatic change as mentioned in this science fiction by Paolo Bacigalupi makes sense to the lost natural world which is full of capitalism and economic power.

The explorations in the legacies of resource exploitation and environmental neglect are balanced with the acceptance of marginalized groups by the Swank people. The novel *Ship Breaker* from beginning to end gives a narration describing ocean lifestyle either in the livelihood of the rich or the poor. The changes in climatic disturbances make humanity realize the value of destructive environmental sources over decades. The unavoidable circumstances evolve a realization of neglect which could be limited through reuse of limited productions creating benefit to society.

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