



Exploring Ecocriticism And Environmental Awareness In Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" And Claire Watkins' "Gold Fame Citrus" Through Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Mamta Malik, Dr. Surbhi Saraswat
Student MA English, Associate Professor
Amity Institute of English Studies and Research
Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract: This research analyses the evolving role of literature in instilling environmental awareness, discussing Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Claire Vaye Watkins' *Gold Fame Citrus* (2015) based on ecocriticism and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on qualitative textual analysis and comparative literary approach, this research investigates the ways in which these works describe environmental deterioration, human responsibility, and sustainability themes. Employing crucial environmental theory—deep ecology and posthumanism—the research investigates the ideological and thematic grounds for both novels. Carson's *Silent Spring*, widely recognized for initiating the contemporary environmental movement, critiques the rampant application of pesticides like DDT and contests human-centered views that favor economic development over ecological health. Her application of scientific data and convincing writing supports biodiversity preservation and public health, reflecting the fundamental ecological principle of nature's inherent worth. The research places Carson's work in the ecocritical framework, emphasizing literature's function as a means for environmental advocacy and public awareness.

By contrast, Watkins' *Gold Fame Citrus* imagines a desolate future of climactic catastrophe and water scarcity in the American Southwest. Through the use of speculative fiction, Watkins critiques passivity in society and ecological disregard, exploring how climate change affects identity, agency, and social structures. The novel is centered on women's lives and vulnerabilities in a resource-scarce world and is in tune with ecofeminist concerns, while its post humanist stance challenges traditional human-nature hierarchies and envisions different modes of ecological consciousness. The comparative analysis reveals that while Carson uses a scientific and factual approach to generate urgency and influence policy, Watkins uses narrative creativity to accentuate the long-term consequences of environmental neglect. Together, these works illustrate literature's capacity to educate and encourage action, linking scientific discourse, community engagement, and advocacy for policy reform.

This study discovers that ecocriticism is critical in shaping ecological ethics, promoting interdisciplinarity, and driving sustainable approaches. In the face of mounting climate crises, literary narratives continue to offer robust channels for driving environmental consciousness and inspiring profound change.

Index terms: Ecocriticism, Posthumanism, Anthropocentrism, Deep ecology, Environmental Literature, Sustainable Developmental Goals

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental concerns have increasingly dominated literary discourse, with ecocriticism emerging as the key approach to understanding the relationship between literature and environmental awareness. As a cultural object, literature has long reflected human relationship with the natural world, and it has in recent years become a tool of environmentalism. This research examines ecocriticism and environmental awareness in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) and Claire Vaye Watkins' *Gold Fame Citrus* (2015) through the lens of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Applying qualitative textual analysis and comparative literary approach, this research examines how these texts handle themes of environmental degradation, human responsibility, and sustainability. The research employs significant environmental theories like deep ecology, ecofeminism, and posthumanism to examine the ideological and thematic underpinnings of both novels.

Carson's *Silent Spring*, frequently praised with sparking the modern environmental movement, uncovers the disastrous effects of pesticide use, particularly DDT, on the environment and human health. By meticulous scientific inquiry and persuasive writing, Carson documents the interconnectedness of nature and rebukes human-centric ideology that gives precedence to economic progress over ecological well-being (Carson, 1962), advocating for biodiversity conservation and public health awareness. The study applies deep ecology, as proposed by Naess (1973), to interpret Carson's book as an appeal to intrinsic environmental values rather than anthropocentric instrumental values. Carson's emphasis on scientific knowledge and public awareness is in line with the ecocritical perspective that literature can be used as a tool for environmental activism (Garrard, 2012). Additionally, Heise (2008) argues that environmental literature has a significant impact on international ecological consciousness, something that is evident in Carson's influence on environmental policy and public discourse. Carson's scientific acumen, combined with her literary nuance, allows her writing to appeal to a broad base, setting her work as a prominent text within both scientific and literary environmental conversations.

Contrastingly, Watkins' *Gold Fame Citrus* provides a bleak description of a future ravaged by climate, with the absence of water transforming the American Southwest into a barren desert. Through illustrating ecological collapse and human displacement, Watkins condemns the misuse of resources and climate inaction. The fictional context of the novel allows for imaginative exploration of environmental effects, extending the warnings of climate scientists through a narrative approach. The study examines Watkins' novel through post humanist ecocriticism, as advocated by Wolfe (2010), by challenging anthropocentrism and exploring how environmental degradation alters human identity and agency. The novel's central character, Luz, symbolizes ecofeminist concerns, particularly gendered dangers from climate change and resource scarcity, as observed by Gaard (2011) in her work on the convergence of ecofeminism with materialist feminism. Watkins' critique of capitalist and patriarchal systems highlights structural elements of ecological crises, and the connection between ecological concerns and social justice issues.

Comparative analysis of both texts reveals that they share the same focus on environmental consciousness while differing in approach: *Silent Spring* uses empirical facts and logical argumentation to campaign for policy reform, while *Gold Fame Citrus* uses speculative fiction to envision the long-term implications of ecological disregard. The research also examines the function of literature in building environmental awareness by looking at Carson's scientific cautionary tales and Watkins' narrative world-making, as well as their affective and cognitive functions (Heise, 2008). Such an interdisciplinary work highlights the potential of literary narratives to fill the gap between ecological science and civic engagement, corroborating the belief that environmental literature performs both didactic and campaigning roles (Garrard, 2012). Through emotional and intellectual engagement of readers, the two texts join the increasing library of literature that aims to shape environmental policy and practice.

In addition, the research focuses on the contribution of literary pieces to being a meaningful tool for inciting interdisciplinary discussion between science, activism, and the humanities. While *Silent Spring* had an impact on environmental legislation such as the ban of DDT and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the United States, *Gold Fame Citrus* broadens the conversation to speculative grounds, inviting readers to consider the possible far-reaching consequences of not acting on climate changes. The contrast shows how two different narrative strategies—scientific nonfiction and climate fiction—can be supportive of each other in raising environmental awareness and stimulating action.

By situating *Silent Spring* and *Gold Fame Citrus* in the broader framework of ecocriticism and SDGs, this research deepens the understanding of how literature can impact environmental ethics and encourage sustainable practices. The findings underscore the necessity of integrating environmental narratives into policy discussions, societal consciousness, and educational curricula to address today's ecological concerns.

As climate crises intensify, literature remains a vital medium for ensuring ecological justice and cultivating a common commitment to sustainability. The study finally asserts that literature is not merely a reflection of ecological issues but also positively determines the way societies perceive and respond to ecological problems.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Understanding Environmental Narratives- One of the primary objectives of researching Silent Spring and Gold Fame Citrus through an ecocritical lens is to understand how environmental narratives shape perceptions of ecological issues. Exploring these texts offers an insight into how literature helps understand the environmental issues and shapes the ecological challenges that humanity faces. Silent Spring is a comprehensive scientific analysis of the improper use of pesticides and their effects on ecosystems, widely understood as one of the main drivers for the contemporary environmental movement. On the other hand, Gold Fame Citrus uses a dystopian world to depict the human and environmental effects of water scarcity and climate change in a speculative future. Through the analysis of these texts, we can identify recurring themes, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies used to address ecological issues. This goal seeks to uncover how narratives influence readers' perceptions of the environment and underscore the urgency of ecological crises.

2. Literature's role in defending environment- Literature has consistently served as an important instrument for raising awareness and driving movements. Carson's Silent Spring serves as a strong example of literature that instigated change—it shaped environmental regulations and contributed to the eventual prohibition of DDT in numerous nations. In contrast, Watkins' Gold Fame Citrus illustrates a vivid scenario of the consequences of human inaction, offering a warning story of environmental disaster. This work employs dystopian fiction to illustrate disastrous results from environmental carelessness, particularly concerning water scarcity in a future California. Immersing the reader in a world devoid of natural resources, the book denounces irresponsible practices and cautions about their repercussions if no measures are implemented. The aim is to comprehend how these writings promote environmental concerns and encourage action. Literature has the ability to convey scientific ideas in accessible manners, transforming abstract dangers into concrete experiences.

3. Linking literature to SDGs- The SDGs offer an international framework to tackle urgent issues that negatively impact the environment and drive climate change. The aim of this research was to explore the connections between themes in Silent Spring and Gold Fame Citrus with particular Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 6,12,13 and 15. Rachel Carson's Silent Spring addresses concerns that align with Goal 3, 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15 by critiquing unsustainable agricultural practices and their devastating effects on biodiversity. Rachel Carson's Silent Spring addresses concerns that align with Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and Goal 15 (Life on Land) by critiquing unsustainable agricultural practices and their devastating effects on biodiversity. This exploration demonstrates how literature not only reflects societal challenges but also serves as a call to action for achieving sustainable development. By linking literary themes to SDGs, this research underscores the relevance of literary studies in addressing real-world problems, offering a creative and critical lens to explore global goals and their implications for humanity.

4. Critiquing Anthropocentrism- This objective focuses on how Silent Spring and Gold Fame Citrus critique anthropocentrism—the belief that human resource is centralized to everything on Earth or most significant entities in the universe. Both Silent Spring and Gold Fame Citrus confront anthropocentric perspectives. Carson challenges the notion that humans can control nature without repercussions, whereas Watkins examines the harmful impacts of human hubris and environmental abuse. This goal explores how these texts question human-centered viewpoints and support ecological morals. It subsequently addresses the ethical aspects linked to environmental choices by critiquing the emphasis on human priorities over ecological stability. Through this lens, the research explores how these texts advocate for a more ecocentric worldview.

5. Encouraging Sustainable Mindsets- This goal examines how these writings influence personal and group perspectives on sustainability. Literature has the power to shape thoughts, instil values, and motivate transformation. Silent Spring and Gold Fame Citrus prompt readers to reconsider their connection with the environment and adopt a more sustainable lifestyle. Silent Spring conveys a strong message about behavioural change through its vivid portrayal of environmental harm, while similarly, Gold Fame Citrus encourages readers to reflect on the harm caused by human overexploitation, urging them to evaluate their consumption

of Earth's resources. An examination of how these texts affect the reader will reveal what contributes to their effectiveness in enhancing eco-awareness. By analysing these texts, this research highlights how literature can serve as a catalyst for fostering eco-consciousness.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative research methodology with textual analysis and thematic interpretation to analyze the representation of environmental awareness and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and Claire Vaye Watkins' *Gold Fame Citrus*. Qualitative methods are better suited for literary analysis because they allow for an in-depth exploration of individual perceptions, situational nuances, and ideological frameworks embedded within narratives. Through close reading and analytical interpretation, the study investigates how each of the two texts constructs environmental themes, portrays human-environment relations, and promotes or criticizes the aims of sustainability and ecological accountability. A comparative literary analysis design frames the organization of this study, allowing an organized comparison between the two texts.

This approach supports the identification of both shared and contrasting perspectives of environmental issues, the impact of literature on environmental consciousness, and how each work relates to specific SDG targets. Through synthesizing theoretical strands from ecocriticism, including deep ecology, ecofeminism, and posthumanism, the approach emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature linking literature, environmental ethics, and global sustainability discourses.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The article, *The Role of Poetry in Promoting a Sustainability Mindset* by Molderez, Baraniuk, and Lambrechts, informs the audience about how poetry can raise awareness for sustainability and provoke thought, particularly in relation to business education. The authors state that traditional educational methods seldom engage students emotionally or help them grasp genuine concerns related to sustainability. The study examines how poetry, as a form of art, can contribute to developing a sustainability mindset through encouraging reflection, emotional engagement, and a connection to nature. Drawing from Walter Benjamin's ideas of "awakening," "wisdom," and "process," the writers define poetry as a means to stimulate a gradual yet transformative path toward sustainable thinking. Through reflective assignments, business students were motivated to read, analyze, and compose poems connected to themes of sustainability and the issues posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings showed that poetry enabled students to relate to sustainability issues on a personal and emotional basis, thus fostering critical thinking and alignment of values with the SDGs. The article highlights poetry's distinctive power to combine the "head, heart, and hand" essential for sustainable development: understanding, principles, and implementation. It advocates for incorporating arts and humanities into sustainability education to encourage enduring shifts in students' mindsets and actions.

The research paper *Expounding Sustainable Development Goals through World Literature: An Appraisal* by Chinmayee Nanda and Sidhartha Sekhar Dash explores how global literary works can explain and promote the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The authors believe that literature is a powerful tool for reflecting societal issues, influencing perceptions, and inspiring action towards sustainable development. They demonstrate how narratives encapsulate themes pertinent to the SDGs, such as poverty, gender equality, and environmental conservation, by analyzing various texts.

V. SDG 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Silent Spring

One of the main concerns brought up in *Silent Spring* is the impact of pesticides on human health, which is directly related to SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being. Carson points out that exposure to chemicals through food, water, and air leads to chronic diseases, cancer, and neurological disorders.

1. Oncology and Neurological Disorders:

Carson also is concerned with the rising trend of cancer cases, particularly attributed to prolonged exposure to DDT and other synthetic pesticides.

By exposing this hypocrisy through lines that depict one of the most concerning elements of chemical contamination in water—in a river, lake, or reservoir, or even in the glass of water presented at your dinner table—are mixed chemicals that no conscientious chemist would consider combining in their laboratory, Carson challenges the notion that pesticides are “safe” to be consumed by humans. This directly corresponds with SDG 3.4, which seeks to reduce premature deaths from non-communicable diseases like cancer.

2. Vulnerability of Pregnant Women and Infants:

Carson also warns about the impact of pesticides on foetal development and children’s health.

“For these chemicals are now stored in the bodies of the vast majority of human beings, regardless of age. They occur in the mother’s milk, and probably in the tissues of the unborn child.” (Carson. 17)

This is directly related to SDG 3.2, which aims to reduce infant mortality and encourage healthy living from birth. Carson’s claim shows that environmental pollution is not just an imminent threat but a crisis that cuts across generations.

VI. SDG 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Gold Fame Citrus

Water scarcity is one of the most urgent issues in *Gold Fame Citrus*, which pervades the novel's landscape and influences the lives of its characters. The southwestern United States is presented as a desolate wasteland, and water is one of the most precious and limited resources. Watkins emphasizes water conservation and the sustainable use of water through the novel's presentation of severe drought and actions by authorities to combat it. An example is a speech in a groundbreaking ceremony where emphasis is placed on efforts to find water for generations yet to come.

It demonstrates SDG 6's focus on the provision of clean water. The hope symbolized by Baby Dunn is contrasted with the reality of water shortage, which underlines the importance of sustainable water management. The promise is made, but the material conditions on the ground throughout the novel belie the pledge. The contest for water in *Gold Fame Citrus* reflects current debates about access to and distribution of water, especially in the parched parts of the globe where climate change has intensified drought. Watkins’ novel challenges readers to consider the ethical implications of water privatization, overconsumption, and mismanagement, urging a reevaluation of policies that prioritize economic gain over environmental sustainability.

Silent Spring

One other major theme of *Silent Spring* is water source pollution due to pesticide runoff, directly related to SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. Carson underlines that chemical pesticides permeate groundwater, rivers, and lakes, poisoning aquatic life and drinking water supplies.

1. Pesticide Runoff and Water Pollution:

Carson illustrates that chemical sprays do not remain confined to the fields but instead spread to water bodies, affecting the whole ecosystem:

“These sprays, dusts, and aerosols are now applied almost universally to farms, gardens, forests, and homes—nonselective chemicals that have the power to kill every insect, the ‘good’ and the ‘bad,’ to still the song of birds and the leaping of fish in the streams, to coat the leaves with a deadly film and to linger on in soil—all this, though the intended target may be only a few weeds or insects.” (Carson. 13)

This passage aligns with SDG 6.3, which seeks to reduce water pollution and restrict the release of toxic chemicals into water bodies. Carson illustrates how pesticides move beyond their intended targets, causing widespread pollution.

2. Destruction of Aquatic Ecosystems:

Carson gives a chilling account of the destruction of entire bodies of water due to exposure to pesticides. This depiction of dieldrin, an additional poison for fire ants, known for its well-documented risk to all forms of aquatic life along with endrin and toxaphene pose a higher risk to fish, graphically shows the destruction of aquatic habitats, in coordination with SDG 6.6, with the objective of protecting and revitalizing water ecosystems such as rivers, lakes, and wetlands.

3. Chemical Contaminants in Potable Water:

Carson further warns about the presence of pesticide residues in potable water, emphasizing public health concerns.

Her statement that says, the irrigation water for these farms also came from shallow wells. In a study conducted in 1959, involving multiple state and federal agencies, the examination of well waters revealed a variety of chemicals, falls under SDG 6.1, which aims to ensure access to and improved sanitation and affordable drinking water for all. According to Carson's research, there is no source of water that is entirely free from pollution, a point of concern for human and environmental health.

VII. SDG 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Gold Fame Citrus

A second major theme of Gold Fame Citrus is the breakdown of urban planning and migration cycles in a world short of resources. With large areas of the western United States made uninhabitable, displaced persons—disparagingly known as "Mojavs"—are compelled to move, frequently facing hostility and institutional exclusion.

One character observes on the migratory status of California's colonists:

“California people are quitters. No offense. It’s just you’ve got restlessness in your blood.” “I don’t,” she said, but he went on. “Your people came here looking for something better. Gold, fame, citrus. Mirage. They were feckless, yeah? Schemers. That’s why no one wants them now. Mojavs” (Watkins 92).

This passage aligns with SDG 11, which promotes the development of resilient, inclusive, and sustainable communities. The word "Mojavs" alludes to displacement and marginalization as a result of ruinous urban policies and environmental mismanagement. The allusion to California's past—gold rushes, citrus groves, and Hollywood dreams—secures the point of the cyclical nature of resource depletion and human migration. Former centres of civilization in the novel are deserted as a reflection on the failure to create communities that can survive environmental catastrophes. Watkins' portrayal of urban degeneration and forced migration criticizes contemporary urbanization policies that disregard environmental constraints, reiterating the need to create cities that are both sustainable and resilient in the context of climate change.

VIII. SDG 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Silent Spring

Carson's *Silent Spring* critically addresses the careless manufacturing and application of synthetic pesticides, closely aligning with SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. She advocates for sustainable options and ethical accountability in the production of chemicals.

1. Excessive Production and Utilization of Pesticides

Carson condemns the aggressive marketing of pesticides by chemical companies, resulting in overuse and needless application:

This is in accordance with SDG 12.4, which encourages the responsible handling of chemicals and waste across their entire life cycle. Carson contends that excessive use of chemicals is more detrimental than beneficial, advocating for ecological harmony rather than reliance on chemicals.

2. The Deception of Security in Consumer Goods

Carson reveals how corporations deceive the public regarding the safety of pesticides in some of her lines that convey the message that- The substances to which life is required to adapt are not just the calcium, silica, copper, and other minerals eroded from rocks and transported by rivers to the ocean; they are the artificial products of human ingenuity, concocted in laboratories, without any natural equivalents.

This is in direct alignment with SDG 12.8., which highlights the importance of providing people with pertinent information to facilitate sustainable decisions. Carson contends that corporate propaganda hinders the public's grasp of the actual dangers posed by pesticides.

3. Appeal for Eco-friendly Options

Carson not only challenges pesticide application but also promotes alternative methods, such as biological pest management and sustainable agriculture.

"The ultimate answer is to use fewer toxic chemicals so that the public hazard from their misuse is greatly reduced." (Carson. 99)

This corresponds with SDG 12.2, which seeks to ensure the sustainable management and effective utilization of natural resources. Carson contends that collaborating with nature instead of opposing it is essential for responsible consumption.

IX. SDG 13: CLIMATE ACTION

Gold Fame Citrus

The ecological breakdown in *Gold Fame Citrus* is a dire warning against the risks of climate inaction. The novel illustrates a world where human complacency and uncontrolled use of resources have led to disastrous outcomes.

This is illustrated in Watkins' accounts of the altered landscape:

"Everything here was ash. Chalk dust and filament. Everything here could be obliterated with a wave of her hand" (Watkins 107).

This imagery evokes the destruction of climate change, reinforcing the necessity of SDG 13, which calls for prompt worldwide action to reduce the impacts of climate calamities. The desolate backdrop is a reminder of the lax exploitation of natural resources. The novel imparts the notion that if prompt climate action is not taken, generations ahead could be faced with a world where large tracts of territory are made impossible to

inhabit. Watkins' depiction of climate disaster also brings into question governmental accountability and corporate responsibility in the face of climate change. Through her book, she depicts how ignoring climate action results not just in ecological devastation but also in mass societal breakdown.

Gold Fame Citrus also emphasizes the psychological and social impacts of climate change. The characters in the novel feel despair, confusion, and a sense of helplessness in the wake of environmental ruin. Their plight is symptomatic of the psychological burden of climate catastrophes, echoed in real life by the victims of rising tides, wild fires, and natural disasters. Watkins' novel is therefore as much a critical commentary on contemporary climate policies as it is a clarion call to action that compels one to acknowledge the catastrophic consequences of doing nothing.

Silent Spring

Carson's *Silent Spring* identifies the manner in which human activity destabilizes natural systems, resulting in environmental degradation—an integral problem of SDG 13: Climate Action. She warns that irresponsible use of pesticides destabilizes nature's balance, worsening environmental crises.

1. Disrupting the Balance of Nature

Carson describes how pesticides disrupt natural ecological processes and produce unforeseen consequences: The equilibrium of nature is not a fixed condition; it is dynamic, continually changing, and always adapting. Human beings are also a part of this equilibrium, but they have attempted to take charge without comprehending it.

This aligns with SDG 13.1, which emphasizes enhancing resilience to environmental risks. Carson contends that human interventions made with impunity lead to instability, leaving ecosystems prone to collapse.

2. Unchecked Human Interference with Natural Cycles

Carson cautions against human overconfidence in controlling nature, illustrating how industrial operations can leave permanent impacts:

The issue we are addressing is whether any of the chemicals we utilize in our efforts to manage nature contribute directly or indirectly to causing cancer. This corresponds to SDG 13.3, encouraging awareness and education on environmental and climate-related issues. Carson calls for a fundamental change in human interaction with the environment in favour of education over blind faith in technology.

3. The Link Between Chemical Pollution and Climate Impact

Though Carson does not address climate change per se, she points to how pesticide usage and environmental degradation are part of larger ecological imbalance:

“The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials.” (Carson. 12)

This assists SDG 13.2, which aims to incorporate climate actions into country policies. Carson's work set the stage for contemporary environmental policy, shaping subsequent debates on pollution, climate action, and sustainability.

X. SDG 14: LIFE BELOW WATER

Silent Spring

Carson spends a significant portion of *Silent Spring* chronicling the impact of pesticide pollution on bodies of water, which is very relevant to SDG 14: Life Below Water. She illustrates how chemical contamination in lakes, rivers, and oceans is hurting marine life.

1. Pesticides Polluting Ocean Animals

Carson describes how chemicals contaminate bodies of water, affecting fish and aquatic life: Every zone in the fire ant control region, whether exposed to heptachlor or dieldrin, showed devastating impacts on aquatic organisms. This is directly in accordance with SDG 14.1, which aims to reduce marine pollution that arises from land-based activities. Carson depicts how pesticides accumulate in aquatic life, disrupting food chains and leading to mass die-offs of aquatic organisms.

2. Chemical Building up in Aquatic Species

Carson explains how pesticides persist in water, accumulating in fish and shellfish, and eventually reaching humans through the food chain.

“Residues of these chemicals linger in soil to which they may have been applied a dozen years before. They have entered and lodged in the bodies of fish, birds, reptiles, and domestic and wild animals so universally that scientists carrying on animal experiments find it almost impossible to locate subjects free from such contamination.” (Carson. 17)

This aligns with SDG 14.4, which focuses on regulating catch limits and preventing overfishing to restore marine life. Carson's study underscores that pollution depletes fish populations, making them more vulnerable to overfishing and ecosystem collapse.

XI. SDG 15: LIFE ON LAND

Gold Fame Citrus

Apart from water shortages and climate change, *Gold Fame Citrus* laments the decline in biodiversity and ecological resilience. The novel depicts a world where erstwhile thriving ecosystems have been wiped out by humanity. The realignment of Yosemite, one of the United States' most renowned natural wonders, is a striking illustration:

“They were a patch of moss in Yosemite when Yosemite was still dry, ravined, surrounded by hot knobs of granite” (Watkins 135).

This passage identifies with SDG 15, which is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. The description of Yosemite as a barren wasteland serves to bring home the disastrous effects of environmental abandonment. Watkins employs the use of imagery in a devastated landscape to create an impression of loss, which provokes readers into reflection on the actual-world ramifications of deforestation, habitat loss, and species loss.

By highlighting the implications of ecological breakdown, Watkins underlines the need for conservation. The book indicates that humans' alienation from nature is a factor behind ecological degradation, and it makes a call to return to an appreciation of the planet's tenuous ecological equilibrium. The depictions of a world in which nature has been irreversibly transformed are an indicator of the lasting effects of ecological mismanagement.

Silent Spring

One of the major themes of *Silent Spring* is the devastation of land ecosystems, and it is directly connected to SDG 15: Life on Land. Carson highlights the adverse impacts of pesticides on biodiversity, soil health degradation, and disruption of entire food chains.

1. Pesticides and Widespread Avian Mortality

One of Carson's most famous assertions is regarding how pesticides, particularly DDT, were responsible for the dramatic decline in bird populations:

“There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example—where had they gone? Many people spoke of them, puzzled and disturbed. The feeding stations in the backyards were deserted.” (Carson. 10)

This aligns with SDG 15.5, which aims to reduce loss of biodiversity and prevent species extinction. Carson's descriptions of "Silent Springs" devoid of bird songs illustrate how chemical pollution threatens entire species.

2. The Disruption of Soil and Vegetation

Carson explains that pesticides not only kill insects but also harm the vital elements of land ecosystems—soil and vegetation.

The holding ponds transformed into chemical labs for creating a new substance—a chemical that was mortally harmful to many plant species it encountered, corresponds to SDG 15.3, which promotes efforts against desertification and the restoration of land that is degraded. Carson warns that chemical-dependent agriculture causes permanent soil damage, making the land unsuitable for farming.

XII. CONCLUSION

Within the constantly changing vocabulary of environmental awareness, literature has not only appeared as a mirror to society but also as a catalyst for change. This dissertation aimed to analyze the ecocritical aspects and environmental awareness in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and Claire Vaye Watkins' *Gold Fame Citrus*, with special reference to how they signify the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By comparative literary analysis, this research investigated how the two books function as cultural artifacts and warnings—emphasizing the imperative of sustainable engagement between human beings and the natural world.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* is a defining moment in environmental writing, serving both as scientific inquiry and ethical appeal. Carson's attack on the misuse of pesticides and industrial lack of care paved the way for modern ecological activism. Her work is closely resonant with SDG 15, 3, and 12. In revealing the impact of DDT and other chemical pesticides on the environment and people's health, Carson appeals to governments and individuals alike for the ethical obligation to act. Her application of precise scientific terminology punctuated by poetic imagery speaks as much to logic as to emotion, making it a multidimensional storytelling that time cannot tarnish.

That said, Watkins' *Gold Fame Citrus* presents a post-apocalyptic world that critiqued present-day environmental ruination through speculative fiction. While Carson's tone is forceful and scientifically based, Watkins builds a dystopian society that has already endured the results of environmental neglect. Her novel aligns with SDG 6, 11, and 13. The barren landscapes and desperate human migrations of the novel are allegories for the climate crisis, water shortage, and unsustainable urbanization. By presenting a world without natural balance, Watkins underscores the ethical and existential significance of environmental collapse.

Comparative analysis of these texts indicates that, though they have different temporal contexts and narrative strategies, both writers underscore a shared theme: the interconnectedness of environmental sustainability and human survival. Whereas Carson uses realism to inform and persuade, Watkins uses dystopia to shock and challenge. The first is a warning drawn from the past; the second, a vision of the future. The double vision adds depth to the ecocritical project because it illustrates how literature may serve as both historical document and as predictive instrument. Both works also highlight the gendered nature of environmental narrative.

Carson, as the voice of a woman in a male scientific tradition, reappropriates control over ecological writing. Watkins also examines the gendered implications of ecological breakdown, specifically through her heroine Luz, who traverses a literal and symbolic desert. These gendered dynamics are consonant with SDG 5 (Gender Equality), shedding light on the intersectionality between ecological decline and social injustice. Integrating women's voices provides an integrated comprehension of ecological crises, countering patriarchal paradigms that tend to exclude both women and nature.

From a methodological standpoint, this study employed a qualitative, thematic analysis rooted in ecocriticism and sustainable development frameworks. By closely reading textual elements such as symbolism, imagery, character development, and narrative structure, this research traced how each author articulates environmental themes and critiques anthropocentric attitudes. The recurring themes of environmental deterioration, human exploitation, technological excess, and disintegration of natural balance came through in unison, affirming the relevance of the texts to contemporary environmental crises. One of the general research targets was to explore how the chosen texts project and affirm the tenets of the SDGs. In doing so, the analysis showed that Carson and Watkins, apart from urging environmental concerns, indicate directions towards sustainability. Carson's call for legislative reform and social consciousness fosters environmental stewardship, while Watkins' apocalyptic vision is a call to action against complacency. Such texts thus function not only as literary works but as works of environmental activism, thus being suitable instruments for education and policy discourse.

Another central goal was to see how ecocritical understandings have the potential to connect literature and environmental policy. This research affirms that literary works are capable of presenting multifaceted ecological truths in understandable and emotionally engaging terms. In contrast to technical reports or scientific journals, literature makes data human by situating it within stories readers can empathize with. This ability to provoke empathy and contemplation is essential to building a culture of sustainability. Additionally, this study aimed to contribute to the ever-increasing field of environmental humanities by showing how interdisciplinary approaches—merging literature, ecology, and development studies—can generate meaningful insights. By analyzing *Silent Spring* and *Gold Fame Citrus* through the lens of the SDGs, this dissertation situates literature as a vital component of the global sustainability dialogue. It claims that literature is not on the periphery of policy but a part of developing the awareness and moral imagination required for systemic transformation.

In summary, the intersection of ecocriticism and the Sustainable Development Goals is a strong methodology to examine environmental storytelling in literature. The works of Rachel Carson's and Claire Vaye Watkins' prove that stories have the ability to shed light upon the moral, ecological, and social aspects of sustainability. Their texts reveal that environmental degradation is not a distant or abstract issue, but an immediate and personal crisis that touches every aspect of life. Literature, in this light, becomes a vessel for both memory and imagination—a medium through which past mistakes are acknowledged and future possibilities are envisioned.

As the world struggles with climate change, loss of biodiversity, and depletion of resources, there is an urgent need for stories that inspire, provoke, and educate. Carson and Watkins answer this call by providing cautionary tales that are rooted in fact and not afraid to venture into fiction. Their tales remind us that the struggle for environmental justice is not just scientific or political—it is also cultural, emotional, and profoundly human. This dissertation thus ends by making a plea for an acknowledgment of the crucial role of literature in informing Eco cognitive awareness. By reading environmental fictions through the lens of sustainable development, we not only gain greater insight into literature but also an enhanced ability to address the ecological issues of our era. Harmony between literary imagination and sustainability is not only feasible but imperative. It is in such harmony that we might hope to craft a more sustainable future—one that honours the earth as much as the narratives we share about it.

XIII. REFERENCES

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