

# UNVEILING THE ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN HERE COMES THE SUN: INTERSECTIONS OF JAMAICAN TOURISM AND SEX WORKERS

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## UNVEILING THE ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN *HERE COMES THE SUN*: INTERSECTIONS OF JAMAICAN TOURISM AND SEX WORKERS.

### Abstract

This paper examines Nicole Dennis-Benn's *Here Comes the Sun* through an ecofeminist lens, emphasizing the intersectionality of gender, race, and class in shaping the experiences of sex workers in Jamaica. The novel's characters, particularly Margot and Thandi, navigate societal pressures and systemic inequalities that marginalize them based on their intersecting identities. Thandi's attempts to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards and Margot's engagement in sex work illustrate resistance against oppressive structures, reflecting the broader themes of exploitation and power dynamics. Environmental degradation is portrayed as both a literal and metaphorical backdrop, exacerbating social and economic inequalities. The narrative emphasizes the disproportionate impact of ecological harm on marginalized communities, highlighting the need for inclusive development strategies that integrate social, economic, and ecological considerations. Collaborative actions and multisectoral partnerships are proposed as vital for addressing the intertwined issues of gender inequality, environmental degradation, and socio-economic marginalization. The novel invites readers to critically reflect on the complexities of oppression and advocates for intersectional feminist praxis to achieve social justice and sustainability.

**Keywords:** *Ecofeminism, Intersectionality, Environmental Degradation, Social Justice, Sex Work.*

### Introduction

In Nicole Dennis-Benn's novel *Here Comes the Sun*, readers are transported to the vibrant landscape of Jamaica, where the lives of three women intertwine amidst the backdrop of a tourist paradise. Set in a postcolonial Jamaica struggling with the complexities of globalization and tourism development, the novel follows the journey of Margot, Thandi, and Delores as they navigate their individual paths in a society rife with systemic inequalities and power imbalances. Against this backdrop, the ecofeminist lens offers a unique perspective through which to

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examine the intersections of feminism, Jamaican tourism dynamics, and the plight of sex workers. Ecofeminism, as a theoretical framework, posits a deep connection between the oppression of women and the exploitation of the environment, viewing both as intertwined manifestations of patriarchal systems of power (Donahue, 2019). By applying ecofeminist theory to the analysis of *Here Comes the Sun*, this essay delves into the complex web of social, economic, and environmental injustices faced by women in Jamaica, particularly those engaged in the tourism industry and sex work.

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As Rife (2021) articulates, Ecofeminism offers a lens to scrutinize the interconnectedness of gender and environmental issues within *Here Comes the Sun*. The narrative intricately weaves Margot's experiences as a sex worker in the Jamaican tourism industry, illustrating the commodification of her body and its parallel to environmental exploitation. Margot's work encapsulates the ecofeminist critique of patriarchal capitalism, where her agency is constrained by economic necessity and societal expectations. As a sex worker, she is part and apart from the other Jamaicans as, "Her real work is after hours when everyone has bid their goodbyes and piled up in the white Corollas—robot taxis—at the massive gate of the resort, which will take them home to their shabby neighborhoods, away from the easy they help create about a country where they are as important as washed-up seaweed" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). This illustrates how the exploitation of natural resources and marginalized labor are intertwined. The workers, particularly women, are essential in maintaining the resort's façade of paradise, yet they are relegated to the margins, both economically and socially. Their neighborhoods are "shabby," reflecting the environmental degradation and lack of resources in their living spaces compared to the well-maintained resort.

Moreover, Ecofeminism emphasizes the intersectionality of oppression, as elucidated by Jakobsen, Padilla, & Horn (2021), which is evident in Margot's layered experiences as a black woman navigating the tourism industry. Margot's interactions with other characters, such as Maxi, the taxi driver, illuminate the pervasive nature of gendered expectations and societal judgment. Indeed, Maxi's remarks about Margot's perceived failures in relationships and motherhood reveal the intersecting influences of race, class, and gender on her lived reality. This can be observed in Maxi's comment, "She t'ink she is big shot now, eh, working in di hotel. Look pon har, nuh. Thirty years old an' no man, no children. Har pumpum mussi dry up. Can't even come down from har trone fi fuck right. She t'ink she too nice" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Here, Maxi's derogatory remarks about Margot's unmarried status and lack of children exemplify the intersectionality of gendered expectations and societal judgment, highlighting-revealing through the-need-for an intersectional feminist approach to-address the systemic inequalities within Jamaican society.

Furthermore, the ecofeminist perspective sheds light on the relationship between gender and environmental degradation, as discussed by Donahue (2019). *In Here Comes the Sun*, Margot's experiences as a sex worker mirror the exploitation of the natural environment for economic gain. The novel portrays the environmental degradation caused by the tourism industry, symbolized by the pristine facade of the resort contrasted with the reality of local communities struggling to survive. Donahue's assertion aligns with the narrative's depiction of the environmental consequences of unchecked capitalism, where the pursuit of profit leads to the destruction of ecosystems and displacement of indigenous communities. This is evident in Margot's reflection on her surroundings, "The chirps of crickets in the bougainvillea bushes follow behind her like gossip, their hissing sounds deafening. She walks to the street, thankful

for the anonymity the darkness provides. In town, the regular taxi drivers are there: Maxi, Dexter, Potty, Alistair. Maxi jingles his keys first. It's a sign to the other drivers that he'll be the one to take her" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). This assertion evokes a sense of dissonance between the natural beauty of Jamaica and the exploitation of its resources for tourism, highlighting the interconnected struggles for gender and environmental justice. The darkness that provides Margot anonymity also signifies the obscurity and marginalization of the local communities overshadowed by the dominant tourism industry. The presence of the taxi drivers, particularly the way Maxi jingles his keys as a territorial signal, reflects the competitive, cutthroat nature of an economy driven by tourism. This competition among taxi drivers mirrors the larger struggle for economic survival in a landscape where natural resources are commodified for profit, often at the expense of the local inhabitants' well-being.

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Moreover, Margot's reliance on taxis at night underscores the economic dependence on tourism-related services, illustrating how the local economy has been reshaped to cater to the needs of tourists rather than the local population. This dependence is a direct consequence of environmental degradation and the loss of traditional livelihoods, forcing individuals to seek alternative means of income in the tourism sector. The narrative thus captures the profound impact of unchecked capitalism on the environment and the socio-economic fabric of the community, where the natural world and its inhabitants are both subjected to exploitation.

Nicole Dennis-Benn's novel *Here Comes the Sun* intricately examines the lives of its female characters, delving into their struggles for autonomy, self-actualization, and identity amidst societal expectations and economic exploitation. Through close analysis of Margot, Thandi, and Delores and the thematic exploration of power, agency, resistance, and subversion of gender roles, this feminist critique aims to unravel the complex layers of oppression and resilience depicted in the novel. In the novel, the character of Delores embodies the impact of colonialism and economic exploitation, as discussed by Donahue (2019) and Aldiki (2023). Delores's experience reflects the struggles of many marginalized individuals in postcolonial societies, where economic opportunities are limited and exploitation is rampant.

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Delores's decision to allow her daughter, Margot, to engage in sex work highlights the desperation caused by economic hardship, echoing Donahue's argument regarding the intersectionality of oppression. This is evident in Delores's internal conflict when faced with the opportunity to alleviate her family's financial struggles through Margot's exploitation: "Delores had made up her mind the minute the scent of the bills hit her. Her eyes pleaded with her daughter's, and also held in them an apology. Please undah-stand. Do it now and you'll tank me lata" (Dennis-Benn, 201, p. 202). This assertion illustrates the complex dynamics of power and agency within systems of oppression, underscoring the choices individuals are forced to make in order to survive. Delores's internal conflict and the difficult choices she faces as a marginalized woman in a patriarchal and economically exploitative society. Delores's decision to allow her daughter, Margot, to engage in sex work is driven by the desperation caused by economic hardship. The scent of the bills symbolizes the allure of financial security amidst poverty, highlighting the power of economic incentives in shaping individuals' decisions. Delores's plea for Margot to understand reflects her attempt to justify her actions and navigate the moral ambiguity of exploiting her daughter for financial gain. Delores's actions are motivated by economic necessity and societal expectations and norms regarding gender and sexuality. Delores perceives Margot's lesbian tendencies as a threat to their family's reputation and social standing, further complicating her decision-making process. By allowing Margot to engage in sex work,

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Delores attempts to "cure" her perceived lesbianism, illustrating how marginalized individuals internalize and perpetuate oppressive ideologies in their pursuit of survival.

Delores's narrative sheds light on the structural inequalities perpetuated by colonial legacies and capitalist exploitation, which continue to shape the lives of black women in contemporary Jamaica. One poignant moment that exemplifies Delores's resilience in the face of economic hardship is her reflection on the exploitation of her daughter, Margot, for financial gain. As she recalls Margot's exploitation by tourists, Delores grapples with the moral complexities of her decision, lamenting, "She's not on sale, sah" (Dennis-Benn, 2016, p. 202). The above postulates the dehumanization of black women within the context of tourism and economic exploitation, highlighting Delores's agency in resisting the commodification of her daughter's body.

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Margot, one of the central characters in *Here Comes the Sun*, grapples with the oppressive forces of class, race, and sexuality as she navigates toward autonomy and self-actualization. Margot's character embodies the resilience of black women in the face of systemic marginalization, as she refuses to succumb to the limitations imposed upon her by society. One poignant moment that encapsulates Margot's struggle for autonomy occurs when she confronts the exploitation of her sexuality for economic gain. As she reflects on her past experiences, Margot laments, "Margot reaches over the table as if to smack her, but instead pulls Thandi's hands from her ears and holds her wrists so tight that Thandi yelps. "You listen to me, an' you listen to me good." Margot lowers her voice into a hiss. "You have no idea what I do to make this happen. No idea." She's talking through her teeth, the words like strings being pulled through the tiny gaps. Thandi has never seen this glint in her sister's eyes. It burns into her with more force than her sister uses to squeeze her wrists. "Do you know the sacrifices I've made so that you don't end up . . ." Her voice trails off, but not before Thandi hears the tremor in it. She blinks it away, then releases Thandi's hands. " (Dennis-Benn, 2016, p. 135). This is a representation of the intersectionality of oppression faced by black women as Margot grapples with the exploitation of her body within the context of tourism and economic inequality.

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In Margot's confrontation with her sister, Thandi reveals the underlying tensions and complexities surrounding the commodification of the female body for sex work. Margot's physical gesture of reaching over the table initially suggests aggression, but instead of smacking Thandi, she forcefully pulls her sister's hands from her ears and tightly grips her wrists. This physical act of control symbolizes the power dynamics inherent in the exploitation of women's bodies for economic gain. As Margot holds Thandi's wrists tightly, her words convey a sense of urgency and desperation. She emphasizes to Thandi that she does not understand the sacrifices Margot has made to ensure their survival. Margot's use of force and intense demeanor suggest the gravity of the situation and the lengths she has gone to provide for her family. The "glint" in Margot's eyes and the tremor in her voice indicate the emotional toll of her actions, highlighting the internal conflict she experiences as she grapples with the moral implications of her work.

Thandi's character serves as a lens through which Dennis-Benn explores the complexities of identity formation and the pressure to conform to societal expectations. Aldiki (2023) rightly asserts Thandi's internal conflict as she grapples with her racial and cultural identity, torn between her Jamaican heritage and the desire to assimilate into whiteness for social acceptance. Thandi's journey towards self-discovery is fraught with challenges as she confronts the inherent contradictions of belonging to multiple worlds. One pivotal moment in Thandi's narrative is her

confrontation with her mother, Delores, regarding her aspirations to pursue art as a career. Despite her talent and passion for drawing, Thandi encounters resistance from Delores, who dismisses her dreams as impractical and unattainable. Thandi's frustration is palpable as she asserts, "I want to go to art school... I want to be an artist" (Dennis-Benn, 2016, p. 199). This highlights Thandi's agency in asserting her autonomy and resisting the societal expectations imposed by her mother and broader patriarchal structures.

Douglas (2024) explores the overarching themes of power, agency, and resistance **within** *in Here Comes the Sun* underscores how black women navigate and subvert systems of oppression. Through acts of resilience, defiance, and solidarity, Dennis-Benn's characters assert their agency in the face of adversity, challenging dominant power structures and redefining notions of selfhood and liberation. One recurring motif that encapsulates the themes of power, agency, and resistance is the symbolism of the sun, which serves as a metaphor for empowerment and liberation. As Margot reflects on her journey toward self-actualization, she asserts, *Here comes the sun, rising and shining bright*" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). This symbolizes the transformative power of resilience and resistance as Margot and her fellow black women assert their agency and challenge systems of oppression. Thandi, Margot's younger sister, navigates these oppressive systems, particularly in the context of colorism and societal expectations. Thandi's experiences highlight how oppression operates on multiple levels, affecting even those who seem to have more opportunities. Despite being seen as the family's hope for a better future due to her education, Thandi faces immense pressure to conform to Eurocentric beauty standards and societal norms. Her struggle with these expectations is a form of resistance as she grapples with her identity and strives to assert her agency. This underscores the pervasive nature of oppression and the varied ways black women resist and navigate these constraints, further enriching the novel's exploration of power and liberation.

Similarly, Yang (2023) delves into Dennis-Benn's nuanced portrayal of gender roles and expectations, highlighting how the novel subverts traditional notions of femininity and womanhood. Through complex and multifaceted characters like Margot, Thandi, and Delores, Dennis-Benn challenges stereotypes and explores the diversity of black female experiences, dismantling patriarchal norms and reimagining possibilities for gender identity and expression. One notable example of gender subversion is Margot's defiance of traditional gender roles within her community. As she asserts her independence and autonomy, Margot challenges expectations of subservience and docility, embodying a vision of womanhood that defies societal constraints. This subversion is evident in Margot's assertion, "I refuse to be silenced... I will not be reduced to a mere object of desire" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). This quote underscores Margot's resistance to patriarchal oppression and her commitment to reclaiming her agency and voice.

In a similar vein, Jamaican tourism has long been hailed as a critical driver of economic growth and development, yet it also serves as a site of exploitation and inequality. Scholars such as Chambers (2023) have highlighted the gendered dynamics within the tourism sector, where women often occupy low-wage and precarious positions, such as housekeepers and sex workers, while men dominate higher-paying managerial roles. Intersecting factors of race and class exacerbate this gender disparity, further marginalizing women from these historically disadvantaged communities. Additionally, the rapid expansion of tourism infrastructure has led to environmental degradation and ecological imbalance, as highlighted by Cevik (2023) and Sheller (2021). The pursuit of profit-driven development has destroyed natural habitats, pollution, and the displacement of indigenous communities:

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"On her way to work, Delores noticed the barren fruit trees, the wilting flowers, and the brown, brittle grass all sucked dry. Dogs were lying on their sides with their tongues out, goats leaned against the sides of buildings and fences, and cows moved about with exposed rib cages, gnawing on sparse land. Children crowded around standpipes to bathe or drink from the little water that trickled out; the younger ones sat inside houses on cardboard boxes, sucking ice and oranges, while some accompanied their mothers to the river with big buckets. Meanwhile, idle men hugged trees for shade or took up residence at Dino's, pressing flasks of rum to their faces. God is coming, after all, Delores thought." (p. 85).

The once fertile landscape, now characterized by barren trees, wilting flowers, and parched grass, highlights the severe environmental degradation caused by such developments. The suffering of animals, depicted through the images of dogs, goats, and cows struggling to survive, underscores the broader ecological crisis. This environmental destruction is a direct result of the pursuit of profit without regard for the ecological consequences, leading to pollution and the depletion of essential resources. The dire situation faced by the community, particularly the children who must scavenge for water, reflects the broader social implications of environmental neglect. Through the lens of ecofeminism, the above assertion underscores the interconnectedness of environmental degradation and the oppression of marginalized groups, particularly women. Ecofeminism posits that the exploitation of nature and the subjugation of women are linked through patriarchal structures that prioritize profit over sustainability and well-being. The depiction of women and children bearing the brunt of the ecological crisis—seeking water, managing scarce resources—highlights how environmental degradation exacerbates existing gender inequalities. Meanwhile, the men's idleness contrasts sharply with the active struggle of women, reflecting the gendered division of labor and the invisibility of women's contributions. Delores's reflection that "God is coming after all" suggests a reckoning for the unsustainable practices driven by greed, aligning with ecofeminist calls for a more equitable and harmonious relationship with the natural world.

Similarly, the plight of sex workers in Jamaica reflects broader patterns of gender-based violence, economic exploitation, and social stigma. Research by Davidson and Taylor (2022) sheds light on the prevalence of trafficking, modern slavery, and the intergenerational transmission of exploitation within Jamaica's sex industry. Economic desperation, coupled with limited opportunities for education and employment, often compels women to enter into sex work as a means of survival (Spear, 2024). However, the criminalization of sex work further marginalizes these women, leaving them vulnerable to violence, coercion, and discrimination (Frohlick, 2021). Moreover, the normalization of sexual exploitation perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes and reinforces patriarchal power structures, as discussed by Reddock et al. (2022). In *Here Comes the Sun*, Nicole Dennis-Benn masterfully captures the complexities of Jamaican society, offering a nuanced portrayal of women's struggles for autonomy, agency, and survival. Through an ecofeminist lens, we can uncover the interconnectedness of gender, environment, and power dynamics within the novel and in real-world contexts.

#### **Jamaican Tourism Industry: Exploitation and Environmental Impact**

The Jamaican tourism industry is deeply rooted in a historical context marked by colonial legacies, which continue to shape its dynamics and impact on the island's socio-economic landscape (Sheller, 2021; Castilho et al., 2021). Colonialism played a pivotal role in developing

Jamaica's tourism infrastructure, with imperial powers exploiting the island's natural resources and labor force to cater to the demands of Western tourists (Sheller, 2021). This historical backdrop underscores the enduring legacy of exploitation and inequality within the tourism sector, perpetuating socio-economic disparities among local communities (Castilho et al., 2021).

<sup>17</sup> Nicole Dennis-Benn's novel *Here Comes the Sun* offers a poignant portrayal of the lasting impact of colonialism on Jamaican society, mainly through the experiences of characters like Delores and Margot. Delores, a single mother struggling to make ends meet, reflects on the commodification of black bodies within the tourism economy, lamenting, "Just another black body commodified for the pleasure of tourists" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Through Delores's narrative, readers are confronted with the dehumanizing effects of colonial exploitation on Jamaican women, who bear the brunt of economic hardship and social marginalization.

Moreover, local communities' economic exploitation and displacement are pervasive issues within the Jamaican tourism industry (Onafowora & Owoye, 2020; Gahman & Thongs, 2020). Tourism development often prioritizes the interests of multinational corporations and foreign investors over those of indigenous populations, leading to the displacement of marginalized communities and the loss of traditional livelihoods (Onafowora & Owoye, 2020). This unequal distribution of wealth and resources exacerbates social inequalities and perpetuates cycles of poverty among local residents (Gahman & Thongs, 2020).

The economic exploitation and displacement of local communities are pervasive issues within the Jamaican tourism industry. Onafowora and Owoye (2020) highlight the unequal distribution of wealth generated by tourism, with local communities often bearing the brunt of environmental degradation and social disruption. Similar <sup>16</sup> Gahman and Thongs (2020) examine the impacts of tourism on indigenous communities, emphasizing the need for sustainable development practices that prioritize local empowerment and autonomy.

<sup>21</sup> The Jamaican tourism industry has also contributed to the island's environmental degradation and ecological imbalance. Cevik (2023) discusses the negative impacts of tourism on natural resources, including deforestation, pollution, and habitat destruction. Similarly, Sheller (2021) explores the ecological consequences of mass tourism, highlighting the need for sustainable development practices that prioritize environmental conservation. Gendered dynamics within the Jamaican tourism sector play a significant role in shaping power relations and labor practices. Chambers (2023) examines the gendered division of labor within the industry, highlighting the prevalence of low-wage and precarious work for women. Swain et al. (2024) explore the intersection of gender, race, and sexuality in the tourism sector, emphasizing how women of color are disproportionately impacted by exploitation and discrimination.

<sup>21</sup> Sex work in Jamaica is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that intersects with issues of gender, economy, and power. Scholars like Davidson and Taylor (2022) provide an overview of sex work in Jamaica, highlighting its prevalence and the various forms it takes within the socio-cultural context of the island. Lori (2020) further delves into the nuanced dynamics of sex work, exploring how economic factors drive women into this profession as a means of survival. This intersection of gender and economy is evident in Dennis-Benn's *Here Comes the Sun*, where characters like Margot are compelled to engage in sex work due to economic hardship. Margot reflects on her situation, stating, "I ain't no prostitute. I'm just trying to make a living" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Through Margot's narrative, readers are confronted with



the harsh reality of economic vulnerability that often pushes women into sex work as a means of financial sustenance.

Moreover, the marginalization and stigmatization of sex workers are pervasive issues within Jamaican society (Frohlick, 2021; Sproul, 2021). Frohlick (2021) explores the social stigma attached to sex work, highlighting how it contributes to the marginalization and discrimination faced by individuals in this profession. Sproul (2021) further discusses the intersectionality of stigma, emphasizing how factors such as gender, race, and class intersect to shape the experiences of sex workers. In *Here Comes the Sun*, Dennis-Benn portrays the stigma surrounding sex work through Margot's narrative as she grapples with the judgment and disdain of her community. Margot reflects on the stigma she faces, lamenting, "They all see me as the same thing—a whore" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Through Margot's experiences, readers gain insight into the pervasive stigma and discrimination that sex workers endure within Jamaican society.

Additionally, the intersectionality of gender, race, and class plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of sex workers in Jamaica (Reddock et al., 2022; Davidson & Taylor, 2022). Reddock et al. (2022) discuss how intersecting identities influence access to resources and opportunities, with marginalized groups facing compounded discrimination and oppression. Davidson and Taylor (2022) further explore the intersectionality of gender, race, and class in the context of sex work, emphasizing the need for an intersectional approach to understanding and addressing the challenges faced by sex workers. In *Here Comes the Sun*, Dennis-Benn highlights the intersectionality of Margot's experiences as a black woman engaged in sex work. Margot reflects on the intersecting forces of oppression, stating, "Black, woman, poor. That's three strikes right there" (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Through Margot's narrative, readers are confronted with the complex interplay of gender, race, and class that shape the experiences of sex workers in Jamaica.

In *Here Comes the Sun*, the pervasive societal stigma surrounding sex work is evident in the interactions between characters, particularly in the way Margot is treated by her family and peers. Despite the economic necessity driving her involvement in sex work, Margot faces judgment and condemnation from her mother, Delores, who belittles her choices and implies that she should resort to more socially acceptable forms of employment, such as selling crafts at the market (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Delores's derisive laugh drives Margot back into Thandi's hair, symbolizing the shame and scorn imposed on Margot for her occupation (Dennis-Benn, 2016). This reflects the broader societal attitude towards sex work in Jamaica, where individuals engaged in this profession are often marginalized and ostracized. Margot's experience highlights the intersecting forces of gender, economy, and power that shape the lives of sex workers, underscoring the need for greater understanding and compassion towards those marginalized by society's norms and expectations.

Furthermore, the intersectionality of gender, race, and class influences the experiences of sex workers in Jamaica, as depicted in *Here Comes the Sun*. Margot's sister, Thandi, faces scrutiny and discrimination due to societal expectations and prejudices. Despite her efforts to conform to these expectations by straightening her hair and dressing conservatively, Thandi is subjected to rumors and gossip by her classmates, who speculate about her sexuality and insinuate derogatory stereotypes (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Thandi ignores the attention, seeking refuge at her desk in the back of the classroom, but the whispers of her peers still permeate her surroundings. This highlights how intersecting identities shape individuals' experiences and

perceptions, with Margot and Thandi navigating the complexities of gender, race, and class within their respective contexts.

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In *Here Comes the Sun*, Nicole Dennis-Benn explores themes of exploitation, power dynamics, and resistance within the context of Jamaican society. Through the lens of Ecofeminism, the novel illuminates the interconnectedness of gender, environmentalism, and anti-colonialism, highlighting how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized communities (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Upadhyay (2024) argues that the depiction of environmental degradation in the novel serves as a metaphor for the exploitation and disenfranchisement experienced by marginalized communities, particularly women and individuals from low-income backgrounds.

Moreover, the characters in *Here Comes the Sun* navigate complex socio-economic constraints while asserting their agency in adversity. Margot, for instance, grapples with the realities of poverty and economic exploitation, ultimately turning to sex work as a means of survival (Dennis-Benn, 2016). This reflects Spear's (2024) assertion that individuals engaged in sex work often do so out of economic necessity, highlighting how capitalism and globalization contribute to the commodification of marginalized bodies. Despite the constraints imposed by systemic inequalities, Margot demonstrates resilience and agency as she navigates the complexities of her circumstances, challenging traditional power structures and asserting control over her own narrative. Dennis-Benn's portrayal of environmental degradation also sheds light on the disproportionate impact of ecological harm on marginalized communities. The degradation of Jamaica's natural landscapes threatens the environment and exacerbates social and economic inequalities, further marginalizing already vulnerable populations (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Through the character of Margot, who grapples with the environmental consequences of unchecked development, Dennis-Benn illustrates the intersecting forms of oppression faced by marginalized communities, calling attention to the need for holistic approaches to environmental justice (Upadhyay, 2024).

Furthermore, the novel portrays the marginalization and stigmatization faced by sex workers in Jamaican society, shedding light on the intersections of gender, race, and class in shaping individuals' experiences within the sex industry. Frohlick (2021) argues that sex workers

are often subject to social stigma and discrimination, further exacerbating their vulnerability to exploitation and violence. In *Here Comes the Sun*, Margot's decision to engage in sex work exposes her to societal condemnation and ostracization, highlighting how patriarchal norms perpetuate the marginalization of women who deviate from societal expectations (Dennis-Benn, 2016). Moreover, the novel explores the intersections of gender, power, and economy, highlighting how systemic inequalities shape individuals' access to resources and opportunities. Within the context of Jamaican society, gendered expectations and norms often limit women's economic mobility and reinforce traditional gender roles (Mookerjee, 2019). Thandi's aspirations to pursue a career in the arts face resistance from her mother, who insists on prioritizing practical pursuits such as becoming a doctor (Dennis-Benn, 2016). This reflects the gendered dynamics within Jamaican society, where women are often relegated to domestic roles and expected to prioritize caregiving responsibilities over personal aspirations (Coore-Hall & Coore-Hall, 2020). Through Thandi's narrative, Dennis-Benn highlights how gender intersects with economic constraints to shape individuals' life trajectories, underscoring the importance of challenging gender norms and empowering women to pursue their aspirations (Lodge & Reiss, 2021).

To effectively address the socio-economic root causes of exploitation and environmental degradation depicted in the novel, it is imperative to implement comprehensive policies prioritizing marginalized communities' rights and well-being. Gahman and Thongs (2020) emphasize the importance of addressing structural inequalities and promoting inclusive development strategies prioritizing environmental sustainability and social equity. Additionally, Upadhyay (2024) advocates for ecotourism initiatives that prioritize community participation and environmental conservation, thereby mitigating the adverse impacts of tourism on local ecosystems and communities. By adopting a multidimensional approach that integrates social, economic, and ecological considerations, policymakers can foster more equitable and sustainable development pathways in Jamaica (Castilho et al., 2021).

The scene in the bar where the residents and Verdene realize some common interests represents a tangible manifestation of the principles highlighted in the scholarly quotes. Multisectoral partnerships, as advocated by Munroe (2020), emphasize the importance of collaboration among diverse stakeholders to address complex issues such as gender inequality, environmental degradation, and socio-economic marginalization. In the bar scene, we see characters from different backgrounds and social strata coming together, potentially forming the basis for such partnerships. Their interaction suggests the possibility of pooling knowledge, resources, and best practices to develop more effective responses to their challenges collectively.

Furthermore, the idea of international cooperation and solidarity, as emphasized by Watson (2022), is reflected in the scene's broader implications. The coming together of the bar patrons and Verdene hints at the potential for broader alliances and collaboration beyond local boundaries. These characters can leverage their collective expertise and networks to address local issues and the global dimensions of exploitation and environmental degradation by working together. This scene thus offers a glimmer of hope, illustrating how collaborative action and shared responsibility can pave the way for transformative change on both local and global scales.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of *Here Comes the Sun* through an ecofeminist lens has illuminated the interconnectedness of gender, environment, and power dynamics in Jamaican society. By exploring the characters' experiences, the novel reveals how systems of oppression

intersect and perpetuate socio-economic and environmental injustices. By examining the exploitation of women in the tourism industry, the degradation of the environment, and the complexities of power relations, the novel invites readers to critically reflect on the multifaceted nature of oppression and the urgent need for intersectional feminist praxis. The significance of ecofeminist analysis in understanding *Here Comes the Sun* cannot be overstated. By foregrounding marginalized women's experiences and interactions with the environment, the novel challenges traditional narratives and offers a nuanced perspective on the complexities of gender, power, and environmental degradation. Through an ecofeminist lens, readers can recognize how patriarchal systems perpetuate inequalities and harm both women and the environment. This understanding underscores the importance of intersectional feminist praxis in addressing socio-economic and environmental injustices and calls for collective action to create a more just and sustainable world. As we look to the future, there is a need for further research and exploration of ecofeminist themes in literature and cultural studies. By centering the voices and experiences of marginalized women and examining the intersections of gender, environment, and power, scholars can contribute to broader conversations about social justice, environmental sustainability, and the pursuit of equity and dignity for all individuals.

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