**Explore and evaluate the presentation of the natural world in Dharker’s poem.**

**“From an Ecocritical perspective, nature is presented as an antagonist in Dharker’s poetry.” Discuss.**

Blessing

**AO3** Dharavi is a locality in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.[1] Its slum is one of the largest in the world;[1][2][3][4] home to between roughly 700,000[5] to about 1 million people,[6] Dharavi is currently the second-largest slum in the continent of Asia[7][8] and the third-largest slum in the world.[8][9]

By IMTIAZ DHARKER

The skin cracks like a pod.

There never is enough water.

Imagine the drip of it,

the small splash, echo

in a tin mug,

the voice of a kindly god.

Sometimes, the sudden rush

**AO5**

“the pleasing clanging of cons[a]nants” Emily Ardagh <http://emilyspoetryblog.com/2013/06/28/blessing-by-imtiaz-dharker/>

“the noise of the children enjoying it.”

Lane Katie Taylor

<http://schs10aen2taylorl.blogspot.co.uk/2012/03/blessing-by-imtiaz-dharker.html>

of fortune. The municipal pipe bursts,

silver crashes to the ground

and the flow has found

a roar of tongues. From the huts,

a congregation : every man woman

child for streets around

butts in, with pots,

brass, copper, aluminium,

plastic buckets,

frantic hands,

and naked children

screaming in the liquid sun,

their highlights polished to perfection,

flashing light,

as the blessing sings

over their small bones.

**AO4**

Long John Silver is the main villain in the novel **Treasure Island** (1883)

“the world” is synonymous with society - Glotfelty, C. (2014) ‘What is Ecocriticism?’

It throws into sharp focus the question of what rich and poor nations should expect of each other. - Taken from Ecothrillers: Environmental Cliffhangers, by R. Kerridge:

Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture

**“From an Ecocritical perspective, nature is presented as an antagonist in Dharker’s poetry.” Discuss.**

As rightly stated in The Critical Anthology, “Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Thus, it might be fair to assume that the sun, with its harsh beams of light, is presented as an antagonist within Dharker’s poem:

The skin cracks like a pod.

Here, the onomatopoeic “crack” perhaps draws attention to the harsh environment as well as to the impoverished community who have no protection from the sun. Whilst Ardagh ludicrously claims that the “clang of consonants is pleasant,”[[2]](#footnote-2) I certainly feel that it characterises the sun as a constant antagonist. Indeed, given that Dahravi, the poem’s setting, is currently the ‘second-largest slum in the continent of Asia’[[3]](#footnote-3), this feeling of pain would certainly resonate for Indian readers in today’s context of reception. However, the “like a pod” simile may also resonate uncomfortably with more affluent European readers who may have ‘cracked’ open a vanilla “pod” or a coffee “pod”. Just like Kerridge astutely noted, “[ecocriticism] throws into sharp focus the question of what rich and poor nations should expect of each other.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Nonetheless, when one considers the simple, monosyllabic form of this opening line, it’s fair to say that Dharker is perhaps simply stating a truth rather than being savagely satirical.

Word count: 238

1. Glotfelty, C. (2014) ‘What is Ecocriticism?’ The Association for the Study of Literature and

the Environment [online], available: http://www.asle.org/site/resources/ecocritical-library/

intro/defining/glotfelty/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://emilyspoetryblog.com/2013/06/28/blessing-by-imtiaz-dharker/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharavi [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Taken from Ecothrillers: Environmental Cliffhangers, by R. Kerridge: [↑](#footnote-ref-4)