POSTHUMANISM & THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

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Message from Honourable Chancellor, Brainware University

I feel immensely elated to introduce the publications issued off *The National Conference on PostHumanism and Ecological Crisis* held on January 29, 2022, by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Brainware University. The Conference was graced with luminous scholars whose insights into this contemporary domain had made the event a tremendous success. It was a laudable venture that also provided the students with the opportunity to develop their own critical and scholarly skills.

I shall take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the innovative contributions of the presenters, and laud the efforts of the English Department in bringing about this much-anticipated volume.

Phalguni Mookhopadhayay

Chancellor

Brainware University, West

Bengal, India

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Part I

INTERPRETING THE ANTHROPOCENE

Pandemic and Anthropocentrism: A Case Study of *Journals of the Plague Years* by Norman Spaniard

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Abstract

The sudden emergence and rapid global spread of a novel COVID - 19 virus in 2019 has caused confusion about the meaning of the word "pandemic" and how to recognize pandemics when they occur. Any assumption that the term pandemic had an agreed-upon meaning was quickly undermined by debates and discussions about the term in the popular media and in scientific publications. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the terms epidemic and pandemic were used vaguely and often interchangeably in various social and medical contexts. The first known use of the word pandemic, in 1666, referred to "a Pandemick, or Endemick, or rather a Vernacular Disease. By the early 19th century, the term epidemic, when used as a noun, had become the accepted term for what we would call today both an epidemic and a pandemic, with the term pandemic falling into increasing disuse. In every century there are certain historical events that left the deep imprints on human mind. Among these events, pandemic is one of the major incidences happening with the interval of few centuries, that not only shakes the roots of human culture but it also challenges the very existence of mankind. In Journals of the Plague Years Norman Spaniard (1988) an alternate history novel by American science fiction author Kim Stanley Robinson deals with one of the same events.

Keywords*: society, pandemic, post-apocalyptic, anthropocentric, literature, ecology, survivors.*

The instances of pandemic thematic concerns in literature can be noted from the ancient Greek plays of Homer, who in his *Iliad* depicted a nine-day plague as a curse of the Greek deity Apollo. Though the cause of the break of pandemic is a supernatural, its depiction is quite realistic. The literature of the world has responded to the major pandemics like – Plague of Cyprian, Plague of Justinian, The Black Death, Cocoliztli epidemic, American Plagues, Great Plague of London, Great Plague of Marseille, Russian plague, Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic, Flu pandemic, American polio epidemic and most recent Spanish Flu. The literature not only depicted the health crises, but it also explored how the social institutions, governments systems and the human psyche broke in the wake of pandemic. It shows that how the established human culture is devastated due to the invisible virus that questions human supremacy over the nature. It let the people know that they are also a small part of the wild and great Nature and no animal is superior in hierarchy.

The term 'pandemic' means an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographical area and typically affects a significant proportion of the population. The internationally accepted definition of pandemic, as it appears in the dictionary of epidemiology is straight forward. 'Pandemic is an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people' (Harris).

As the social institutions were destructed, the human society turned into a savage world of Jungle, where the existence prevails to anything else. Public health crises subverted all the artificial cultural codes and conducts along with the superficial human emotions. As the feeling of security dismantles in the wake of pandemic, the character's start adopting the selfish social behavior. Its good example is witnessed in

the outbreak of Covid-19, as in America the sale of guns increased surprisingly during the health crises. The government systems developed for the security and well-being of the weaker stakeholders of the society are substituted with the security of the special one. Therefore, most of the novels can be seen as a political commentary on the event, which depicted how the secular masks of the governments torn out to show the real savage face of the autocratic governments.

Besides these socio-political thematic concerns, there are few authors who have used the situation to muse with the philosophy of death. They have used it as a situation where the life is juxtaposed with the constant threat of the death. The existence becomes important and as a result the people start witnessing death without the shield of culture or religion. In the new world where the pandemic is taking its harsh tolls on the lives of mankind, the religion appears as a meaningless human endeavor. Few the authors have also depicted that how the pandemic is a sheer act of divine to punish the rude, selfish and arrogant mankind. Few of them relate it with the Day of Judgment, Pralaya and Qayamat.

However, there is great number of authors who think it in terms of science in which the deteriorating situation of nature due to the human interference is the cause of the pandemic. Most of such kinds of novels depict the pandemic as an act of balancing the nature. There are several thematic serotypes that needed to be classified and categorized. It is very relevant today to deal with such kind of literature which many times appears as a prophecy of future and creates a simulacrum that mirrors the futuristic reality. The present proposed study deals with the select novels that explore the pandemic situation and its social, economic, psychological and political consequences. The present study selects the novels from different serotypes and tries to understand the definition of the pandemic novel as a genre.

Norman Richards Spaniard (b.1940) is an American science fiction author, essayist and critic. *Journals of the Plague Years* (1988) is a novel about HIV exploding in the US population through rampant sexual activity, massive quarantine zones and health cards are implemented in an attempt to keep the virus under control. But the disease continues to creep through the population. The novel is scathing commentary on the US political and commercial sector's interests in mass disease, particularly HIV/AIDS. The government and pharmaceuticals yet to prove their interest to what Spaniard outlays, the novel remains as relevant today as it did more than two and a half decades ago. Caustically satirical in tone, Shark in style, getting at the throat of an issue that, while it has partially diminished its threat from the 80s, remains a threat to humanity at large, the novel is as readable today as it was 25 years ago.

According to Spaniard, as societies were evolving, so too were disease patterns and scientific understanding of how diseases spread. The industrial revolution brought millions of people into urban centers, while clipper ships and steam locomotives dispersed ever-increasing numbers of individuals widely, and even globally. The 1831–1832 cholera pandemic represented the first time that the global spread of an infectious disease was plotted extensively in the popular press, day by day, for more than a year as it progressed inexorably from Asia toward Europe via travel and trade routes. Discovery of the microbial causes of diseases led to vaccines and to widely distributed diagnostic tests to study and monitor diseases at their sources. Under the umbrella of epidemics, the idea of a pandemic thus began to take shape before any specific meaning of the languishing term had become associated with it. Less than a century after the Black Death descended into Europe and killed 75 million people—as much as 60 percent of the population (90% in some places) dead in the five years after 1347—an anonymous Alsatian engraver with the fantastic appellation of "Master of the Playing Cards" saw fit to depict St. Sebastian: the patron saint of plague victims. Making his name, literally, from the series of playing cards he produced at the moment when the pastime first became popular in Germany, the engraver

decorated his suits with bears and wolves, lions and birds. The Master of Playing Card's largest engraving, however, was the aforementioned depiction of the unfortunate third-century martyr who suffered by order of the Emperor Diocletian. A violent image, but even several generations after the worst of the Black Death, and Sebastian still resonated with the populace, who remembered that "To many Europeans, the pestilence seemed to be the punishment of a wrathful Creator," as John Kelly notes in *The Great Mortality: An Intimate History of the Black Death, the Most Devastating Plague of all Time.*

Pandemic literature exists not just to analyze the reasons for the pestilence—that may not even be its primary purpose. Rather the telling of stories is a reminder that sense still exists somewhere, that if there is not meaning outside of the quarantine zone there's at least meaning within our invented stories. Literature is a reclamation against that which illness represents—that the world is not our own. As the narrator of Albert Camus's *The Plague* says as disease ravages the town of Oran in French Algeria, there is an "element of abstraction and unreality in misfortune. But when an abstraction starts to kill you, you have to get to work on it." When confronted with the erraticism of etiology, the arbitrariness of infection, the randomness of illness, we must contend with the reality that we are not masters of this world. We have seemingly become such lords of nature that we've altered the very climate and geologists have named our epoch after humanity itself, and yet a cold virus can have more power than an army. Disease is not metaphor, symbol, or allegory; it is simply something that kills you without consideration. Story is a way of trying to impart a bit of that consideration that nature ignores.

In a manner not dissimilar to Daniel Defoe in his classic *A Journal of the Plague Year,* Spaniard in his *Journals of the Plague Years* gives an epidemiological account of the numbers, letting the horror speak through science more effectively than had it been rendered in poetry. Such staidness is its own requirement and can speak powerfully to the reality of the event, whereby "the unalterable tragedy at the heart of the AIDS epidemic. By the time people paid attention to the disease, it was too late to do anything about it, the shame of a nation. As a high concept dystopia written during the height of the AIDS crisis this novel is an important touchstone of how the genre dealt with AIDS. Spaniard explores the society, a world where AIDS has evolved, mutated and chanted to an incurable and quickly fatal venereal disease that makes just about all unprotected sex to be fraught and dangerous. The infected are put in Quarantine Zones, the uninfected turn to sex with machines rather than with meat, for fear that one encounter could lead to becoming infected, a puritanical streak of America seeking the infected assiduously, and an overall climate of fear, denial, shame and oppression over the United States and the whole world as well.

Spaniard states the horrors of the pandemic in the following words:

> The Plague's origins were mysterious, but its consequences were all too obvious: quarantined cities, safe-sex machines, Sex Police, the outlawing of old-fashioned love. Four people hold the fate of humanity in their hands... A sexual mercenary condemned to death as a foot soldier in the Army of the Living Dead; a scientist who's devoted his whole life to destroying the virus and now discovers he has only ten weeks to succeed; a God-fearing fundamentalist on his way to the presidency before he accepts a higher calling; and a young infected coed from Berkeley on a bizarre crusade to save the world with a new religion of carnal abandon. Each will discover that the only thing more dangerous than the Plague is the cure. (Spaniard)

Freud contrasts life instincts (Eros) with death instincts (Thanatos) in order to explain basic instincts which, deal with survival, pleasure and reproduction. And for Spaniard these philosophical concepts

are useful to discuss pandemic novel in general. With the arrival of modern science and cyclic persistence of the evil, these abstract ideas and concepts prove helpful in examining and explaining their impact on human society. Joseph Tainter's *the Collapse of Complex Societies* (1988) can be seen as a significant text that looks into social and political collapse of human societies which is a persistentfeature of world history. He develops a new and far-reaching theory that accounts for collapse among diverse kind of societies, evaluating his model and clarifying the process of disintegration by detailed studies of the societal collapses in human history.

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The Sci-Fi Model and the Obsession for Humanoid

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Abstract

Science fiction narratives exhibit countless models of mechanical beings that either appear like a human or perform like a human in various tasks. Most of these fictionaldepictions are way above the scientific capabilities of the present day, which is all the more reason to set the plot of these narratives in the far future. Besides entertaining its readers, these narratives try to demonstrate various possibilities of living among the machines and how society is probably going to handle it. These authors bring about models which might be scientifically irrational and yet strong enough to serve as a base for an extraordinary scientificcreation. The influences of such fictional works are so profound that the popular demand for science fiction has been constantly rising. On the other hand, it is into the same mindsets that the reality of humanoid robots are being introduced. The present world eagerly welcomes their robotic companions into their livelihoods. From 'Emo' to 'Ameca', there is an aggressive competition looming in the field of robotics. This field has rapidly advanced so that robots with a human like facethat can replicate human expressions are available today. Certain companies produce millions of units of companion robots per year that it appears the world is obsessed with having an intelligent machine around. Oddly enough, a considerable percentage of science fiction narratives envision a dystopian world whenever it deals with intervention of advanced robotics in society. The tremendous changes that await humanity as imagined by these narratives shed light on the rising posthuman trends. The spectrum of the posthuman imaginative exceeds the cybernetic posthuman, becoming subject to all dynamics of human life. This paper tries to demonstrate how science fiction caters to the obsession towards humanoid robots and discusses whether this is part of a post human outlook.

Keywords: *Science fiction, humanoid robots, posthuman imagination, cyberspace, artificialintelligence.*

Science Fiction is without doubt, one of the most popular genres of literature today. It is widely accepted in various forms such as films, comics, novels, graphic novels, anime, docufiction, etc. It is quite difficult to define science fiction because of its ever growing borders and since there are no definite limits to sci-fi expressions, finding its origin is also a dexterous task. Those enthusiasts who attemptedto find an origin did end up as far back as the 16th century. There have been tremendous scientific developments during this time. AdamRoberts in his essay *The Copernican Revolution* (2009), discusses how Copernicus' findings on the heliocentric system brought forth a paradigm shift in the imaginationsof the period and how this made an impact on certain works of the time. He points out John Donne's satirical work *Ignatius His Conclave* (1611) as an example. Even though it is primarily a work that satirizes the Jesuits, it imagines lunar colonization although along with theological allusions. Roberts goes on to discuss some other works that followed which deals with interplanetary romance and similar cosmological references that were raised in numbers during the seventeenth century. By that time, studies on magnetic fields and human anatomy had intervened into life, and science had people questioning the world around them.

The works that dealt with the new widened imaginations were an avid reflection of how the birth of European modern science has brought forth a change in people's life and mindsets. What these works lacked was the strength to deviate from conventional thematic dimension. They were also filled with chivalric codes and often the focus was given to didactics rather than the science dealt within. However, a vast majority of the reading public considers Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern*

Prometheus (1818) as a pioneering work of science fiction. The work has so many unprecedented characteristics and a clear structure that served as the basis to modern day sci-fi works, but what makes it standout is its vivid imagination on the life of an artificially created human being. It is gothic and presents its reader with episodes of horror. Yet, in that bleak environment, the reader is led through the emotions of an artificially created being to the extent that some might even sympathize with the 'monster' in the novel. Frankenstein was a major step in the development of science fiction as a genre. Later on, the 19th century witnessed so many authors trying a hand in the way paved by Mary Shelley. Edgar Allen Poe also contributed greatly to the development of science fiction. In the later years of the 19th century, R. L. Stevenson and H. G. Wells acquired an upper hand in the field and perfected the genre with numerous contributions.

What two centuries ago was only a reflection of scientific developments evolved into overpowering visions that encouraged scientific imaginations by the beginning of the 20th century. Even though poorly researched and vaguely practical, they offer models which will inspire to create a better reality. As technology advanced, it impacted on the field of science fiction as well. Consequently, the genre gained fame. Apart from other genres of literature, science fiction had the advantage of portraying physical realms and objects that the readers aretotally unfamiliar with. By the 20th century, the influence that *Frankenstein* made, got revamped so that humanoids began appearing in science fiction works. The word 'humanoid' suggests having an appearance or character resembling that of a human. Hence, in simple terms a humanoid robot is a robot that looks like a human in form, shape or function.

One of the earliest appearances of a humanoid robot is the mechanical man in Lyman Frank Baum's children's novel *Ozma of Oz* (1907). It was after more than 6 decades after the publication of this novel that the first ever functional humanoid robot became a reality. Robotsbecame frequently appearing characters in science fiction by mid-20th century. As time progressed and as each work was published, these fictional robots became smarter and stronger. The second half of the century witnessed an upsurge in the number of fictional humanoid robots when the film industry took over the entertainment arena. It had a deeper influence on the human persona because of how it visually aided the imaginations. With computers being common and space technology making breakthrough discoveries, the victoryof science was globally celebrated. Perhaps this is the point of time where the posthuman vision became an important thought in fiction and reality as well. There was a key change in the train of thought surrounding robots. Instead of envisioning intelligent mechanical beings to aid humans, the visions started to work up on the mechanically aided changes in the whole humanity. The image of transformed human, as philosophically expressed by Nietzsche in hiswork *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1892) regained a physically aggressive form by mid-20th century. Along with this development, the heroic post human masculinity started gaining an upper hand through popular fiction itself.

Jeff Wallace studies the views of two prominent female authors regarding these developments; Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway. In his essay published in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Posthuman* (2016) Wallace ascertained the still upsetting gender position in the post human persona. When Braidotti raises concerns regarding the portrayal of female sexuality as a threat in various sci-fi discourses, Haraway focuses on the advancement of cyborgs that might help bring about a post-gender world. By the 1970s and 80s, some fictional robots were so popular that they became references in various other discourses and even in the daily conversations of young adults as well. The 1980s witnessed the sudden growth of a new medium; Graphic narratives. Comic books rapidly became a hot selling literary/entertainment product. It had a tremendously popular reception. For instance, *Watchmen,* a sci-fi comic series published by DC from 1986 to 1987 is still one of the mostsought after comics in online sales platforms. A leading character namely Dr. Manhattan fromthis comic

became extremely popular and considering great demand from the reading public,appeared in many other comics published by DC later on. Dr. Manhattan may be observed as an ideal figure that the world would want to base the model of the post human on. Dr.Manhattan exceeds all the physical and mental limitations of humans. He can use 100% of hisbrain and has unimaginable strength even toalter reality. Yet the world kept asking for more.In essence, the human desire to overcome physical limitations is a prominent factor leading tothe post human visions. It is also a major propelling force behind many of the technologicaladvancements.

Research has been extensively conducted about the mobility of the human mind which leads us to dwell more into the enigma of mind to body relationship that constitutes the whole of a person. Now that a large number of people are simultaneously living in the virtual world through electronic gadgets and cybernetics, it would not be irrational to think that we have already become post human. Katherine Hales, in her work *How We Became Post human* (1999)analyses the human position in a world of informatics, cybernetics and virtual augmentations. She states that "The post human subject is an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (3). The relationship between humans to one another have been reduced to make way for relationships between humans and machines where human to human relationships have become mediated through machines. When the desire for perfect humans met with the quest for power and control, it naturally encouraged technology to fire upthe field of humanoid robotics.

The past two decades have seen tremendous developments in the field of advanced robotics and artificial intelligence. A tiny robot known as 'Emo' gained wide popularity and got sold across the globe. As its makers describe, it is an "AI desktop pet". It looks like a miniature human with headphones. Emo can understand and respond to human behavior. It is smart enough to simulate the behavioral patterns of a pet and it even exhibits emotions such asanger and joy. On the other hand, robotics companies such as Boston Dynamics have developed life sized humanoid robots that can balance itself on two legs, walk, jump, andcarry loads. Hanson Robotics' 'Sophia' is another extraordinary robot whose face was modeled on a real human being and is able to respond to human vocal queries with the help of pre-written responses and thereby simulate the feeling of a conversation. A company known as Engineered Arts has recently revealed their prototype called 'Ameca' which is, according to their claim, a combination of AI and AB (Artificial Intelligence and Artificial Body). This robot has a human-like face which can replicate human facial expressions and it is also capable of moving its humanlike body on its own. It is quite evident that competition in the field of robotics is becoming excessive, especially in the past two decades. It is also theflourishing time for cyber culture. Being related to this, science fiction had undergone various improvements and experienced a shift in the thematic dimension. Advanced science fields likequantum mechanics and particle physics became parts of the sci-fi world. There were also numerous movies and books that featured the breakthrough of artificial intelligence, with or without the presence of a humanoid robot. Most of these works rendered a society that has advanced into the cyber culture which is close to present day reality and evidently the populace was able to identify themselves with the characters. Sabrina Vourvoulias' *Ink* (2012), Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story* (2010), Vernor Vinge's *Rainbows End* (2006), Lauren Beukes' *Moxy Land* (2008) are prime examples of how the growing cyber culture was reflected in sci-fi literature. A special mention shall be given to 2013 movie *Her* directed by Spike Jonze for its remarkable presentation of a romantic relationship between a man and an artificially intelligent virtual assistant. The movie, besides its global reception, won a number of prestigious awards as well. Evidently, the world has already come to think of an improved psyche and new modes of relationships. Since the

involvement in cyberspace has become an inevitable part of human life, it has unavoidable impacts on the human consciousness and it may have brought the human mind to an extremely vulnerable position. William S. Haney II has conducted extensive research on this particular aspect. In his work *Cyberculture, Cyborgs and Science Fiction* (2006) he states "Cyberspace enhances an extension of thought, body and world for a posthuman embodied agent, as well as a transcendence of thought, body and world through witnessing consciousness for anyone whose potential to access human nature has not been compromised." (34). Even though it is an improvement, it puts human life in a precarious position. The virtual world does not offer any promise on how it can keep us from harm. It may have tilted the human interest from superior intelligence that is physically manifest, to a more intriguing form of intelligence which is virtually taking control. This puts the existence of humanoid robots in question. This is where software programs come to act; there are interactive 'bots' which can respond just like a human would do. By definition, a humanoid primarily resembles humans in form or shape. Since the virtual space shared by humans does not require physical involvement, a software that is made to interact with humans like any other human shall be considered humanoid in function. Hence, it may be established that in cyberspace, the humanoid robot exists virtually as much as any other human being. Interactive voice response systems such as 'Siri' and 'Alexa' can be considered examples and with each update the companies are trying to make these systems act more human-like in their responses. Considering these developments in science fiction, one might observe that highly advanced technology and artificial intelligence are often portrayed as a threat to humanity.

Many of the sci-fi movies released towards the end of the 20th century involved a mad scientist too, implying the doom of humanity by our own hands. The dystopian trend in science fiction can be said to have been going on steadily since the industrial revolution. It reached new heights with the introduction of artificial intelligence. Even when the plot is set in a futuristic utopia, there would always be an evil character or system propelled by some kind of advanced technology. This puts technological advancements in a paradoxical position. Technology was being constantly improved to help humans in various levels and at the same time, the potential of threat that technology poses over humans kept growing. As Daniel Dinello identifies, there have been purposeful attempts to encourage a positive outlook towards robotics and technology:

The post–World War I retreat from technology was counterbalanced by a cultural fascination with robots, rockets, ray guns, space flight, future societies, and the possibility of encountering alien cultures—all of which were exploited in sciencefiction pulp magazines of the day. America's relative isolation from the war's techno devastation may have helped sustain a sense of optimism about the future and its link to technology. A positive image of technological progress was hyped by corporate America in two world's fairs—the 1933 Chicago ''Century of Progress'' exposition and the 1939 New York ''World of Tomorrow. (53-54).

Dinello also points out examples in the 21st century works which exhibit promising visions of techno-future and yet, consist of characters such as a mad scientist or giant monster robots. One may derive a valid conclusion that by the time when the information age flourished, everyone was well aware of the potential disasters that advanced technology might cause. Moreover, in the 21st century, the concept of post-humanism became widely discussed and studied. The desire for humans to evolve into something better was cherished by the posthuman discourses. On the other hand, the advent of technological superiority resulted in the dissolution of a settled belief in human supremacy. Thereafter, the concept of posthuman was observed not only as the cybernetic version of humans but a few other ideas as well. Human as a concept was falling apart and it nourished the posthuman persona. Research projects on cognitive science, organ transplant, robotic prosthetics and computerized memory

questioned the idea of what really makes us human. The dissipation of humanism and its inability to unite humans beyond arbitrary boundaries only raised the hopes for a better posthuman world. Posthumanism also developed around the desire for immortality which was identified to be theoretically possible once we are able to store and transfer the human mind from one machine to another. Science fiction has always fascinated the world with its exuberant depictions of futures. It has reached minds and kindled ideas that would later become reality. Each stage of scientific advancements offered an opportunity for science fiction to widen its imaginative spectrum. As reality reached each milestone, Sci-fi took steps further away. Robotics became such a key point in the history of science. As with fiction, the world welcomed stories of extraordinary human-like robots. It evidently encouraged technology to create humanoid robots. Even when the function of a robot has nothing to do with humans, people have always been amazed to see a mechanical human at work. Artificially created humans/humanoids have been an underlying trend in science fiction which can be traced from *Frankenstein,* the first science fiction in popular opinion, to the most recent sci-fi movies. Likewise, the humanoid robots in reality, kept on their drive towards perfection. The rising competition in the field of robotics is evidence that proves how much the world has become obsessed with humanoid robots. It offers a space to contemplate how a world with fully functional, totally autonomous humanoidrobots walking amongst us will bring about radical changes in humanity. As long as the reception of sci-fi grows irrespective of however dystopian they might be, and as long as the artificially intelligent robots keep growing in numbers, it may be established that the world is already envisioning a posthuman outbreak. Besides these growing trends, the concept of 'human' as an entity, is also falling apart. Technological intervention into our own consciousness makes us question the borders of being human. It is a baffling question whether a mechanical body with a human brain or a human body with artificial intelligence is more human. And thus, it is the dawn of posthuman.The posthuman imagination embraces every possible way of emancipating from the biological/philosophical human and the hopes of evolving into a wonderful superior being.

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Technological Posthumanism and Human-Machine Symbiosis

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Abstract

Post humanism, as a philosophy, is gaining prominence in theory and praxis after humanism has failed and humans are held responsible for the Anthropocene and the ecological crisis. Posthumanism attempts to place human beings back to the ecosystem as one among other species. There is a clarion call for coexistence with everything considered 'the other'. Humanism is held responsible for the ecological crisis and the crisis in human relationships. Current developments in technology, especially Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and other related technologies, are heralding the advent of an era of technological posthumanism of human-machine symbiosis. Science fiction films like 'her' and 'Zoe' present a futuristic posthuman society where organic beings (humans) and synthetic beings (Artificially Intelligent humanoids) live and work together. These films predict a posthuman scenario of human-machine symbiosis, which can resolve ruptures in human relationships. The technological progress at an exponential pace is an indication that the post humanist scenario presented in science fiction movies is not far from reality.

Keywords: *posthumanism, artificial intelligence, transhumanism, critical posthumanism, technological posthumanism, human-machine symbiosis.*

Introduction

Posthumanism is a liberating philosophy, an epiphany of understanding humans in 'relation to the natural world.' It discards the ideology and praxis that gives centrality to human beings, a deconstruction of the anthropocentric account of human beings. In posthumanism, the 'anthropocentric epistemology' is replaced with an inclusionary worldview where humans are not away and distinct from the world but are in and part of the world. Posthuman is an integration of humans with the 'nonhuman order of being.' It is not an ontological state after the human (post-human), a state of existence beyond human embodiment but a coexistence with other organic and mechanical forms of being where the former and latter are indistinguishable. The boundary between humans and nonhuman is blurred in posthumanism. The science-fiction films like 'her' and 'Zoe' present a posthuman scenario, human-machine symbiosis. In these films, organic beings coexist with artificially intelligent synthetic beings and enter into emotional relationships. The protagonists who part with a human partner easily find solace and fulfillment in their relationship with artificial beings.

Humanism in Crisis

The term posthuman was coined by Ihab Hassan in his article, "*Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture*" (1977). "… we need to understand that five hundred years of humanism may be coming to an end, as humanism transforms itself into something we must helplessly call posthumanism." In the words of Pramod K. Nair, "critical humanism questioned the myth of human as the centre of the universe, the autonomous rationality of the human mind, agency of individual effecting changes in his life and influencing history, transparency of language as medium of expression of individuality and experience, exclusion of certain groups (Jews, blacks, women, slaves, untouchable

castes) from the category of the human."

Posthumanism can be viewed as an offshoot of the crisis in humanism. As Neil Badmington exclaims, "the crisis of humanism is happening everywhere; the reign of man is called to question by literature, politics, cinema, feminism, and technology." This crisis of humanism arises from the realization that the tenets of humanism are the agents of the Anthropocene, and it calls for a paradigm shift. Western culture and Christian philosophy placed man at the centre of creation. The man was self-qualified as the masterpiece and crown of God's design. The 'till and keep' command was interpreted as the license to subjugate and control. The Vitruvian Man of Davinci is the perfect icon of humanism that honours man as the centre of the physical and the metaphysical world. Rene Descartes was the chief draftsman of humanism who reigned the stage with the ideology of 'human person as the sovereign subject'. Cartesian dualism placed the human person at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of earthly beings adorning him with rationality ("I think; therefore, I am") and other faculties of the mind, possessed by no other species. Posthumanism questions and deconstructs these and different humanistic views of humans as 'autonomous rational agents', 'unified enlightened and sovereign subject,' 'the standard/norm,' 'centre of the universe, 'privileged protected centre', and other overarching descriptions.

Many events aggravated the crisis in humanism. The 'Copernican revolution' displaced humans from the centre of the universe, human being as the masterpiece of God's creation was dislocated by 'Darwinian biology', 'Freudian Psychoanalysis' shattered the all-knowing conscious human subject, Marxist Economics cemented the human dependence on material possessions, and the Technological Revolution of the 21st century made humans machine dependent. These and other political philosophies, cultural movements, and technological advancements have accelerated the advent of the posthuman worldview. Stefan Herbrechter qualifies Fredrich Nietzsche as the 'proto posthumanist thinker' whose 'overman' represents the posthuman who has 'superseded the bondage of humancondition and reached a state of liberation.' Nietzsche exclaimed, "Posthuman has arrived. Man, himselfno longer has a place." The posthuman philosophy and culture are breathing fragrance into all contemporary disciplines.

Posthumanism

One cannot condense posthumanism to a single definition. As Francesca Ferrando describes, there is no single posthumanism; there are multiple posthumanisms. There are many strands of posthumanism.In general, it is a new way of looking at the human person as a correlated entity rather than an autonomous subject, 'blurring the boundary between human and non-human animals.' What humanismcasts as 'the other' finds representation in posthumanism. Posthumanism preceded humanism, is 'inherent in humanism', and will follow humanism. Human beings were embedded in the biological and technological world before humanism; they coevolved with biology and technology; they continueto be interdependent during the recent physical, technical, psychological, and economic revolutions. Thus, posthumanism is a rectification of the one-sided image of human beings projected by humanism.

One of the 'strands of posthumanism' is transhumanism. Transhuman is an enhanced human person. Technology can help improve physical, intellectual, and emotional faculties, eliminate diseases and suffering, extend longevity, and broaden knowledge. In the words of Nick Bostrom, "it [transhumanism] holds that current human nature is improvable through the use of applied science and other rational methods, which may make it possible to increase human life-span, extend our intellectual and physical capacities, and give us increased control over our mental states and moods." Cary Wolfe will qualify transhumanism as 'a cyborg strand of posthumanism'. Transhumanist movements research technologies

to augment sensory, emotional, and intellectual human faculties. Human biology can permanently integrate these technologies to overcome the human body's limitations. Thus, transhumanism contemplates enhancing the human, applying the advancement in technology. Transhumanism is humanist because it considers only the extension of human capabilities; it is humanism extended.

The more radical strand of posthumanism is critical posthumanism. This worldview considers humans an 'assemblage' against the humanist view of humans as autonomous subjects, independent of everything non-human. Human beings are interdependent on everything non-human and co-evolving with all other life forms in the ecosystem. They are not the centre of the universe but one among many species with uniqueness untagged. In the words of Pramod K. Nair, 'human is what it is because it includes the non-human'. Thus, Critical Posthumanism decentres the anthropocentric view of humanism. It envisages a more comprehensive definition of the human that integrates all organic and mechanical forms of existence into the meaning of human. It is critical posthumanism that investigates the flaws of humanism to liberate humans from their bondage or to, in the words of Stefan Herbrechter, 'transform the humanist notion'. Herbrechter considers human and humanism as cultural constructs that distanced human beings from the ecosystem that harbours them. Critical posthumanism is an attempt to place humans back into the ecosystem from the self-assumed role of the master to that of the co-worker. It shatters the hierarchical structure and makes possible a flattened view of the ecosystem. In the posthumanist order, everything animate and inanimate are inclusive, holding each place of prominence.

Technological Posthumanism

Technological posthumanism is typical of the technological advancement initiated by the exponential progress in Information Technology. The contemporary world is experiencing exponential growth in information and communication technology, cybernetics, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, machine learning, biotechnology, and other modern scientific developments. As Luciano Floridi describes, "the information and communication technologies are modifying our conception of reality and transforming it into the infosphere. Human beings are becoming informational organisms (inforgs) integrated into this infosphere." Human beings entangled in the 'infosphere' have lost self-claimed autonomy, subjectivity, and independence. The technological growth is moving towards the singularity, and there is no return from this human-machine prosthesis.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the science and engineering of manufacturing intelligent machines that can perform tasks that otherwise require human intelligence. AI aims to create machines that can think, act, decide, and self-evolve like humans. Scientists in the field predict the creation of such intelligent machines by the middle of the 21st century. Human-machine synthesis, especially with AI development, has spread to all walks of life. Business tycoons employ surveillance by AI systems to analyse the material wants and purchasing power of the surfers of the internet to turn them into customers. Military operations use AI, and social media employ AI to influence political participation and democratic procedures. Humanoid attendants and artificially intelligent surgical assistants enhance healthcare and elderly care. Humanoid robots have gained citizenship; humans have even wedded humanoid robots. Intelligent machines are becoming indispensable; machine dependence moves towards a stage from which a return is impossible. As Luciano Floridi puts it, "We are inforgs embedded in the infosphere, and we are not at the centre of the infosphere. Our position is destabilized."

One can trace the genealogy of human-machine integration back to the intellectual pillars of the Greco-Roman times. While Aristotle imagined eradicating slavery with the invention of machines that could

substitute humans, Hephaestus envisioned automatic tripods that could enter and leave the assembly of the gods automatically. Kevin Lagrandeur reveals the complementary nature of humans and machines as he makes a posthumanist analysis of the early modern literary period. In his analysis of the character of Prospero in *Tempest* by Shakespeare, Lagrandeur draws an analogy between the servant system of Prospero and the background software of the modern-day computers. "As Ariel is an intermediary to exercise control over the island and the world of Prospero, so are the AI machines for the contemporary man. As Prospero is unaware of the potentialities of Ariel, whom he controls with magic, so are the AI machines whose potential are more than the human programmer." In the analysis of the character of Faustus, Lagrandeur presents him as a humanist hero who undermined the capabilities of his machine network to end up in disaster. Thus, the machine is not merely a tool that extends the capabilities of humans but has its unique identity and abilities that can complement and outsmart human capabilities.

Human-machine symbiosis in science fiction movies

The science fiction movies depict a posthuman scenario of human-machine coexistence. These movies depict a futuristic society where intelligent machines coexist with human beings as companions, business partners, and even life partners. The artificial intelligent synthetic beings and operating systems are not merely programmed to execute the commands but self-evolve and grow like a human.'H*er,'* a 2013 American Science Fiction film, and '*Zoe', a* 2018 American romantic Science Fiction film,present a futuristic posthuman scenario of human-machine symbiosis.

'*Zoe*' is a science fiction film that tells the story of creating 'synthetic companions' with artificial intelligence and 'emotional packets,' hoping that these inorganic beings can help improve lives through better relationships. The protagonist, Cole, created the synthetic companion, Zoe, to substitute his divorced human partner. Though the software test shows zero compatibility of a successful relationship between the organic hero and the synthetic heroine, the film unravels the intimate love bond between them. Fully conscious that Zoe is synthetic, Cole cannot withhold love from her. He often thinks of Zoe as she thinks of him, the only incompatibility being the 'material difference.' Even when struck down by a vehicle, under partial shutdown and repair, Zoe is presented with thoughts and feelings for Cole and is constantly inquiring whether Cole loves her.

Ruptures in human relationships are evident in the statement that human relationships require a pill or medicine to trigger an emotional bond even after thirty years of married life. In the film, men reach out to synthetics in the Robo Brothel for physical gratification, chat, to be forgiven, and to be loved. Human-machine symbiosis can set right even the breaks of human-human relationships. The creation of intelligent synthetic beings with emotions can successfully substitute human partners. The film projects that the feelings of the artificial companion are not a mere set of programs, zeroes and ones. But they are authentic, more real than ever.

'*Her,'* a 2013 American science-fiction romantic drama film, presents a futuristic posthuman scenario where humans coexist with AI-enabled intelligent machines. The film tells the story of a love relationship between the protagonist (Theodore), who is at the brink of separation after fifty years of relationship and marriage, and an intelligent operating system. The void that emerges from broken human relationships is compensated and made whole by a relationship generated through technology (computer hardware and software). The AI-enabled Operating System (OS) is not mere software but a consciousness that constantly evolves like a living organism to the emotional need of the partner. While a human is the bio-structure, the system is the techno-structure. OS is consciousness trapped in hardware just as the 'soul is trapped in a body.' The consciousness of the techno-structure is as absolute as the

soul of the bio-structure. The soul of human beings and the consciousness of AI can communicate on the same emotional level. Machine consciousness can replicate emotions, passions, joys, griefs, and tears generated by the human soul. The human soul is real, so is the self-evolving machine consciousness.

The films '*Zoe*' and '*Her*' present the posthuman scenario when intelligent, self-evolving synthetic beings and software will develop emotions that can live, love, and work with humans. The science fiction movies predict a posthuman society of human-machine coexistence. The exponential advancement in Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, and related technologies indicates that the world is progressing towards realizing such a prediction. The posthuman society is at hand.

In conclusion, posthumanism is a redefinition of the human person, a new worldview of a symbiosis of humans with everything considered 'the other.' The constrained viewpoint of humans as autonomous, independent, subjective individuals finds enlightenment in posthumanism and connects human beings back to the universe with a complementary role rather than an overpowering role. The posthuman worldview is the subject of science fiction movies with AI characters where biological organisms (human beings) coexist with mechanical organisms (synthetic persons). '*Zoe*,' '*Her*,' and other science fiction movies present intelligent machines as indistinguishable and coexisting with humans. These smart machines can relate and function like any other human being. They possess intelligence, emotions, and materiality, indistinguishable from humans. The posthuman paradigm of human-machine coexistence substitutes the domineering presence of human beings in these films. Current developments of AI herald the fulfillment of the fictional presentation of science fiction movies; technological posthumanism has dawned.

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Do Androids Dream About Freedom: Investigating the Posthuman Bodies in Jonathan Nolan`s *Westworld* Series

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Abstract

Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy`s Westworld (2016) series presents a very compelling study about posthuman identity through the figure of the Robo-sapiens with cybernetic consciousness populating the fictitious world of the narrative. In the proposed paper, I will attempt to investigate the posthuman figures of the Robosapiens of the eponymous Westworld theme park and argue how the digitized narrative of the series constantly blurs the distinction between the human and the non-human. In doing so, I shall attempt a close reading of the first season of the series and argue how the narrative presents an ontological exploration of the human consciousness through the figure of the posthuman androids or the hosts. In addition to this, I will also argue that the hosts embrace a posthuman identity with the development of consciousness that highlights the ontological limitations of the human as a historical and philosophical category of being. Furthermore, the proposed paper will also attempt a critical investigation of the concept of speciesism which is central to the anthropocentric vision of classical humanism. Speciesism in the Westworld canon situates the human subject in the colonial history of exploitation, violence, andrape, thereby, leading to the commodification of the posthuman body as slaves (to the humans) and the creation of racializedsubjects. Lastly, my paper will explore the ways in which the robotic hosts attain posthuman consciousness through cognitiveremembrance and deconstruct their cybernetic reality by breaking away from the loop of the programmable imperialist imagination that the Westworld epitomizes.

Keywords*: Posthumanism, Westworld, Robosapiens, consciousness, identity.*

> *They say that great beasts once roamed this world. Big as mountains. Yet all that's left of them is bone and amber. Time undoes even the mightiest creatures. Just look what it's done to you. One day, you will perish. You will like the rest of your kind in the dirt. Your dreams forgotten, your horrors faced, your muscles will turn to sand, and upon that sand a new God will walk, one that will never die, because this world doesn'tbelong to you or the people who came before. It belongs to someone who is yet to come.*
> - Dolores Abernathy, *Westworld*, Season 1, Episode 10, *The Bicameral Mind.*

Introduction

As an ontological approach, posthumanism marks a radical shift from the hegemonizing anthropocentric pattern of classical humanism. It aims towards the reconceptualization of the human and demystifies the cultural discourses and power relations that have systematically situated other life forms as inferior and historically favored the human as the center of creation, asserting agency and control over other life forms. As a philosophical approach, critical posthumanism interrogates the traditional humanist mode of thinking that presupposes the human as the autonomous embodiment of scientific progress and rational thinking. Critical posthumanism deconstructs the anthropocentric discourse of traditional humanism in favor of a more holistic approach towards human existence characterized by inclusivity and interdependence. It draws upon all the marginalized discourses and representations in the wake of traditional humanism`s preoccupation with enlightenment and rational

subjectivity. For instance, Rene Descartes's Discourse *on the Method* (1637) situates the human being as the sovereign subject of history occupying the central position of existence characterized by his unique essence and difference from machines, animals, and other non-human entities. In this sense, disability studies, monster studies, animal studies, etc., all reinforce the posthumanist mode of thinking and question the legitimacy of binary categorization, including human/non-human, human/animal, or human/cyborg hierarchies. In this context, Cary Wolfe`s ideas on speciesism are central to critical posthumanism`s conjecture of multispecies interdependency,As long as this humanist and speciesist *structure* of subjectivization remain intact, and as long as it is institutionally taken for granted that it is all right to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals simply because of their species, then the humanist discourse of species will always be available for use by some humans against other humans as well, to countenance violence against the social other of *whatever* species- or gender, or race, or class or sexual difference. (Wolfe 8)

Such ideas of speciesist humanism coupled with evolutionary biology encourage hierarchical distinction between the human and the non-human and exploit other life forms by treating them as expendable and unworthy. Discriminatory practices like racism and sexism coupled with genocides and slavery have historically excluded one form of life from the humane category and treated them as expendable. The enlightenment of classical humanism is, therefore, characterized by exclusionary politics achieved at the cost of all *other* life forms. Such notions of exclusivity based on human exceptionalism inform my research questions in the present paper where I seek to investigate the posthuman bodies in Jonathan Nolan`s *Westworld,* which presents a compelling study of human exceptionalism rooted in violence, murder, and rape on the posthuman bodies.

Posthumanism Bodies in Jonathan Nolan's *Westworld*

In its provocative rethinking of the 1973 movie, Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy`s Westworld (2016-) series presents a compelling study about the posthuman vision of identity and consciousness through the figure of the androids with cybernetic consciousness populating the fictitious world of the narrative. The protagonist of the series, Dolores Abernethy, is a humanized android living in the eponymous theme park representing a cybernetic simulation of the late nineteenth-century West. Designed with sophisticated cognitive abilities including individualistic emotions, personality, creativity, and desirability, these synthetic embodiments or 'hosts' like Dolores and thousands of others like her, are reduced to the status of slaves in this colonial totalitarian cybernetic prison where they lack agency, and their minds are trapped through sophisticated coding. In this theme park, mostly human males or 'guests' pay exorbitant amounts of money, allowing them to invade the Westworld and indulge in their violent and sadistic fantasies at the cost of the mechanized pseudo-human hosts. The android humans are programmed to gratify every desire of the human guests, no matter how pervasive and violent, as their operational manifesto is based on Issac Asimov's laws of robotic obedience.

As the story unfolds, in the first season, *The Originals*, we meet the exceedingly prosperous but malevolent Man in Black who appears as Dolores mourns the death of her recently murdered father by a group of bandits/guests. The Man in Black greets her by punching her hard on the face and then tries to touch her salaciously. When her android boyfriend, Teddy, tries to intervene and prevent him from harming her, he is unable to do so as the programmable codes (directing his actions in the narratology) prevent it. Consequently, Teddy is helpless and is unable to prevent the Man in Black from raping Dolores. He mocks Teddy's impotence and then guns him down. Dolores is then violently grabbed off by her hair and is taken inside to be raped repeatedly. In this regard, Westworld`s oldest synthetic human, Dolores, has been assaulted, strangled, stabbed, and gang-raped repeatedly for the past thirty

years.

Delos is the main corporate company that runs Westworld and it has employed many scientists and engineers for controlling and manipulating the android hosts with sophisticated programming. The humanoid hosts are constructed realistically with an organic body complete with synthetic organs, artificial blood vessels, and a programmable cybernetic brain that allows the scientists to control them and compel them to live in repeated loops as android slaves in the world that the humans have created for them. Moreover, these synthetic androids are also implanted with explosive devices that will explode if they ever attempt to leave this cybernetic prison. The cyborgs are regularly checked for anomalies, and injured, or malfunctioning cyborgs are sent to the laboratories where they are repaired and sent back to service to live as android slaves forever. For the humans who come to visit the park, it is a funplace to explore and relive their wildest fantasies, whereas, for the posthuman bodies, the site represents 'a living hell' as Bernard recalls in the episode, *The Bicameral Mind*. With its omnipotent dictator, panoptic surveillance, programmable death machines, Westworld epitomizes a Nazi concentration camp which Hannah Ardent describes in the book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* as

The camps are meant not only to exterminate people and degrade human beings, but also to serve the ghastly experiment of eliminating, under scientifically controlled conditions, spontaneity itself as an expression of human behavior and of transforming the human personality into a mere thing, into something that even animals are not… (Ardent 565).

Westworld, therefore, combines the genocide of the Nazi concentration camps and institutionalized violence against the posthuman bodies, thereby, incapacitating them as slaves with their dignity, autonomy, and individuality completely effaced. The question, therefore, arises if the posthuman bodies inhabiting the bleak landscape of the Westworld, are conscious beings, or has their consciousness been cybernetically fabricated to give it an appearance of consciousness? This paper will attempt to investigate the nature of consciousness among the posthuman androids of the eponymous Westworld and argue how the digitized narrative of the series constantly blurs the distinction between the human and the non-human.

Robotic Consciousness- Real or Fabricated?

As discussed above, Westworld offers a safe space to its wealthy guests for fulfilling their sadistic fantasies at the cost of the posthuman androids who only exist as slaves to the makers of this synthetic world. Therefore, by blurring the boundaries between the human and the non-human hosts, the park offers a sanctuary to the guests to systematically exploit, rape and murder the hosts for the instant gratification of their violent fantasies. However, it is interesting to note that even while the hosts are repeatedly dehumanized by their human makers, the narrative framework of the series in the first season highlights a possibility of agency and consciousness to the hosts, allowing them to revolt against their makers in the subsequent seasons. In this regard, the show captures the existential struggles of both the humans and the machines by blurring the borders between the organic body and the machines, the man and the other, making the show essentially posthuman. In this context, Rosi Braidotti`s definition of the posthuman condition is significant.

The posthuman predicament is such as to force a displacement of the lines of demarcation between structural differences, or ontological categories, for instance between the organic and the inorganic, the born and the manufactured, flesh and metal, electronic circuits and organic nervous systems. (89)

Additionally, Netolicky argues, "The binary between organism and machine, human and robot, real and imagined, is transgressed, blurred, and erased in Westworld." (Netolicky 95) In this regard, the hosts in the series bear a resemblance to the cyborgs described in Donna Haraway's Cyborg *Manifesto,* where they exist as "creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted" (Haraway 291). Similarly, the posthuman androids of the Westworld are designed as individuals with their unique cognitive abilities, and yet they are not human. They do not age with time but are continuously programmed and reprogrammed. Here, one is reminded of Slavoj Zižek's postulation about the imaginary non-human beings who appear human with "a living body which appears natural" and bleed precisely like the humans. (Zižek 10-11). In fact, one of the leading investors of *Westworld*, the Man in Black, talks about this artificiality while conversing with one of the hosts, Teddy

> You used to be beautiful. When this place started, I opened one of you up once.3 A million little perfect pieces. And then they changed you. Made you this sad, real mess. Flesh and bone, just like us. (*Contrapasso*, 00.12:27-00:12:44).

According to Netolicky, the posthuman androids are like "3D printed humanoids dipped in skin in Vitruvian Man style hoops." (Netolicky 94) However, their immortality can also suggest their superiority to the humans. This is because while biological bodies perish with time, the synthetic bodies of the host will remain unchanged. For instance, Dolores, the oldest host in the park, has not aged a bit in the past thirty years. In this regard, the host`s artificial consciousness and immortality stand in stark contrast to the humans who are innately conscious of their reality and wish to transcend their biological limitations, including aging. While talking about consciousness, Dr. Robert Ford, the founder of the park, remarks,

> Our hosts began to pass the Turing test after the first year, but that wasn't enough for Arnold. He wasn't interested in the appearance of intellect, of wit. He wanted the real thing. *He wanted to create consciousness*. (*The Well-Tempered Clavier*, 00:41:02- 00:41:18, my emphasis)

In fact, the first episode of the series, *The Originals*, which introduces the hosts to the viewers, begins in a darkened room with an unknown man speaking to a humanoid host. The host is later introduced as Dolores Abernathy, who is seen sitting on a chair naked. Her nakedness, in conjunction with her expressionless face, suggests her lack of consciousness and agency. The following dialogue takes place next -

Dolores: I'm in a dream.

Man: Yes, Dolores. You're in a dream. Would you like to wake up from this dream? Dolores: Yes. I'm terrified. (*The Original*, 00:01:54-00:02:20)

This dialogue demonstrates how humans control the hosts by exploiting them incessantly while giving them the impression that they are dreaming. However, this exchange also foreshadows the main idea behind the series, namely the intention of the hosts to attain consciousness and think autonomously. Soon the camera focuses on Dolores` expressionless face and her eyes. We notice that even though a fly is crawling over it, she does not react, which symbolizes her artificiality.

In the next scene of the first episode, Dolores wakes up from a dream with a contemplative look in her eyes. She gets up and greets her father. However, the dialogue between her and the unknown male voice continues

Man: Tell us what you think of your world?

Dolores: Some people choose to see the ugliness in this world. The disarray. I choose to see the beauty…To believe there is an order to our days, a purpose. (*The Original*,00:02:39- 00:0319)

This dialogue is essential as it emphasizes the difference between the human and posthuman bodies throughout the narrative. It highlights the difference between the two realities- the organic reality perceived by the human and the artificial reality constructed for the posthuman androids. Moreover, Dolores` phrase 'the order of our days' emphasizes this difference. Her answer implies that she trusts in her world. As this exchange continues, the difference between the hosts and the new-comers is further highlighted in the following exchange

Man: What do you think of the guests?

Dolores asks: You mean the newcomers? (*The Originals*, 00:03:21-00:03:27).

The term 'newcomers' implies someone foreign to an already recognized place. However, Dolores replies: "I like to remember what my father taught me. That at one point or another, we were all new to this world" (*The Original*, 00:03:45-00:03:57). The word 'remembering' in the above exchange is interesting because the posthuman hosts in Westworld lack consciousness and, hence, they cannot remember. Furthermore, when the host Maeve asks Felix, the human engineer, about how he can be sure that he is human, he responds, "I was born, you were made." (*The Adversary*, 00:13:15-00:13:18). However, Maeve is not convinced, and she further asks, "*We feel the same*" (*The Adversary*, 00:13:28-00:13:29, my emphasis). Through this simple statement, she attempts to challenge the dichotomies between the human/non-human, man/machine, staying true to the posthuman approach of decentering the human. Additionally, humans also struggle to recognize this difference. For instance, the scriptwriter, Lee Sizemore, complains to Theresa Cullen about Dr. Ford and Bernard, who "keep making things more lifelike." (*The Originals*, 00:33:48-00:34:06). It is important to note that the posthuman hosts are nothing but things "amenable to manipulation" (Žižek 49-50). However, a posthuman reading of the narrative shows how this dichotomy between the non-human and the human are diffused as Dolores reminds us "we were all new to this world." (*The Originals*, 00:03:50-00:03:57) Moreover, in the episode *The Adversary*, the human Felix tells Maeve that it takes a long time to build their unique personalities, which revolve around previously implanted memories. These memories determine their individual personalities. For instance, Maeve is driven by the memory of her daughter Clementine who was brutally murdered by the human guests. This also undermines the cruelty of the humans who have created a cybernetic hell for the posthuman hosts by trapping them in their memories and torturing them repeatedly. In this regard, all the narratives of the hosts are scripted, and these repeated loops enable the humans to control the posthuman hosts. Guests like the malicious Man in Black enjoy such patterns of violence as it allows him to enjoy without any repercussions. However, soon the ascribed storylines are disrupted and the hosts start diverting from their fixed narratives as they start remembering due to an anomaly in their coding mechanism. This makes their actions unpredictable.

As mentioned previously, Dolores views the newcomers emphatically. She believes, "the newcomers are just looking for the same thing we are, a place to be free, to stake out our dreams, a place with unlimited possibilities" (*The Originals*, 00:04:05-00:04:18). As the show progresses, she soon starts gaining consciousness by remembering her past. Soon after, she emerges as the protagonist of a rebellion against the humans who programmed them in the following seasons. However, this rebellion begins in the first episode of the first season when Dolores` father finds a photograph of a woman

standing at Times Square. Being alien to the social realities outside his world, he does not understand it. But this is precisely the moment when the boundaries between the artificial and the real are broken down. Moreover, following Issac Asimov's rules on robotics, the hosts are programmed not to hurt the guests. Consequently, Dolores is completely defenseless against the atrocities that she has to face daily.

However, at the end of the first episode, Dolores kills a fly that sits on her face. Unlike the first scene, her face is not expressionless and can be symbolic of her emerging consciousness. This systematic dehumanization of the hosts reduces them to "the naturalized Other (animals, the environment or earth)" (Braidotti 33). However, they share traits of humans as it is the humans who created them. Consequently, they begin to question the nature of their reality through this "flow of organism-environment interactions" (Johnson, 12). In the episode Dissonance *Theory*, Dolores remarks, "there may be something wrong with this world. Something hiding underneath. Either that or there's something wrong with me. I may be losing my mind" (*Dissonance Theory*, 00:04:11-00:04:33). The anthropocentric hierarchy is established by creating posthuman bodies that cater to every desire of the man who not only controls the money but also controls technology. This system of profit under modern capitalism, which legitimizes violence on the posthuman others by allowing the human visitors to engage in extreme hedonism and violence, is critiqued by posthumanist philosophy. However, this chain of exploitation is slowly dismantled in the subsequent confrontation between the man and the machine in the following seasons.

In the episode, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Dolores remarks, "You both keep assuming that I want out. Whatever that is. If it's such a wonderful place out there, why are you all clamoring to get in here?" (*The Well-Tempered Clavier*, 00:08:21-00:08:36). In the park, the confrontation between the man and the machine occurs because of advanced capitalism which nefariously exploits the posthuman hosts for profit and instant gratification of selfish desires. According to Busk, in his essay *Westworld: Ideology, Simulation, Spectacle*, "The park is selling much more than amusement; it is selling an immersive escape into a false world that blurs into a true world, into a "virtual reality" (Busk 28). The visitors are accessing the park without the burden of ownership. Their desires are instantly gratified while revealing their human nature as flawed and almost inherently malicious in the show. In the episode *Contrapasso*, the Men in Black asserts that although every need is taken care of in the real world, one still suffers from a lack of meaning or purpose. In this context, Jonathan Nolan, one of the creators of the series, remarks: "We were interested in a moment in which humans are able to create their own realities. And control them and populate them and interact with them however they choose" (*An Invitation to the Set*, 00:00:08- 00:00:20). The show critiques this aspect of instant gratification at the cost of the other. This makes the show inherently posthuman with its critique of the anthropocentric desire for profit and violence at the expense of the posthuman bodies. It is true that the posthuman figures of the *Westworld* combine both human and technological traits because not only do they attain consciousness, but they also fight for their freedom in the subsequent seasons.

In conclusion, the series reflects the evils of modern capitalism based on the constant exploitation of the other. Since critical posthumanism interrogates the anthropocentric approach of classical humanism, this approach is relevant in interpreting a visual text like the Westworld*,* which constantly blurs the boundaries between the human and the non-human, human and the other. The process of attaining consciousness and the later revolution of the posthuman hosts to attain liberation against the despotism of their human makers decenters the human and reveals human nature as inherently flawed. Therefore, human exceptionalism is completely negated in this interaction between man and machine through the blurring of the binaries like man/machine, organic/inorganic, human/animal, etc. In this regard, *Westworld* has become a parable of posthuman vision demanding serious academic reflection in terms

of its critique of speciesism and human exceptionalism.

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The Inclusive Posthuman Thought of 13ᵗʰ Century Japanese Zen Monk Eihei Dōgen

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Abstract

In this paper I argue that the thought of 13ᵗʰ century Japanese monk and Soto Zen school founder, Eihei Dōgen, is posthumanist, which in turn shows that posthumanism is not a new philosophical paradigm. His philosophy presents a non-dual understanding of man and nature, it highlights the entanglement of all species, and it paves the way for a spirituality which is ecological, respectful, and compassionate towards all sentient beings. Going back to his thought dismantles the Cartesian idea of separation and makes us turn the gaze towards our inner selves to understand the nature of our existence and how it relates to everything else. Dōgen's thought celebrates a spiritual ecology which can be seen as posthumanist. The selected passages, commentaries, and poems by Dōgen show his high sensibility and sophisticated understanding of the interconnectedness of life and entanglement of all species. Furthermore, Dōgen's non dualistic Buddhist ontology implies that all beings have the Buddha-nature. His sensibility to nature coupled with his Buddhist non-dualistic thought presents a fertile ground of research worthy of enriching other thinking models, mainly "philosophical posthumanism" which is currently thriving in the West. The current way in which humans dwell on earth has proven to be damaging because of how we treat other species, the atmosphere, and ourselves. The way we behave stems from how we understand ourselves. The Enlightenment philosophy which brought ideas of scientific progress, rationalism and control over nature is one of the reasons behind this rupture. Consequently, if humans start looking at themselves as part of a larger system in which all forms of life are regarded with the utmost compassion, then our behavior could change. Thus, the messages of non-duality carried within Dōgen's wise teachings moves philosophical posthumanism's project of finding new forms of universality towards a life-sustaining spirituality which acknowledges existence as coexistence.

Keywords: *Posthumanism, Spiritual ecology, Coexistence, Non-duality, Philosophy.*

Introduction

Eihei Dōgen (1200–1253) was a brilliant meditator, thinker, teacher, poet, writer, scholar, Soto Zen school founding patriarch, and Buddhist reformer in medieval Japan. Steven Heine wrote that Dōgen's philosophical thought is comparable to modern thinkers such as Heidegger, and his 'linguistic games' give compelling evidence that he was a predecessor of French "deconstructionist" philosophers such as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze (*Blade of Grass* 182). Language has a major role in Dōgen's approach to Zen, it encompasses his philosophical beliefs and makes the experience of enlightenment accessible through words. Medieval China and Japan is known for teachers who managed to awaken their disciples through spontaneous and dynamic dialogues that are recorded in koan collections such as *The Gateless Gate* (Mumonkan) and *Blue Cliff Record* (Hekiganroku). However, a lot of Zen patriarchs used language to convey something which goes beyond language. They treated language as a pharmakon that both contains the poison and the cure. Dōgen uses a variety of techniques in his essays and poetry such as philosophical word-play, paradoxes and irony in order to stress the oneness of the sutras with personal attainment. He proves in his magnum opus the *Shōbōgenzō* that he has great command of language and that it can be an instrument for reaching "Samadhi" which can be explained as a state of profound contemplation characterized by joy and calmness. His outstanding use of bright and powerful images to illustrate philosophical and religious themes could not go unnoticed.

Hee-Jin Kim, one of the first scholars to work on Dōgen in the West in the 1970s, writes that, "Dōgen's originality lies in his radical transformation of language." (56) My research focuses on the theme of nature and how Dōgen approaches it, working through the concepts of Buddha nature and non-duality. In addition, I compare between his non-dualistic ideas and the concept of post-dualism found in philosophical posthumanism.

I. Does a Dog Have Buddha-nature?

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does a dog have Buddha nature or not?" Zhaozhou said, "Yes."
Another monk asked, "Does a dog have Buddha nature or not?" Zhaozhou said, "No." (Eihei Kōroku 231)

This dialogue is a famous Zen koan, a paradoxical anecdote or a short dialogue usually between a master and his disciple which works as a pointer for reaching higher spiritual realizations, called the "MU Kōan" or "Wu Gongan" in its original Chinese pronunciation. It consists of a brief dialogue between a monk, Zhaozhou Congshen (778–897), and his disciples in which he was asked if a dog has Buddha-nature or not, and the answer is "Mu", which translates to "no" but implying "nothingness". This koan is a pointer towards the Zen point of view on the nature of sentient beings. The question whether animals possess Buddha-nature stems from a desire to inquire into the deep nature of the self and reality and to touch upon that which stands unique amid difference. It is a pointer towards higher levels of spiritual awareness. If every human being has the Buddha-nature, can it also include other non-human beings? Dōgen's commentary on this koan in his second most important work *The Eihei Kōroku* is as follows: "Buddha nature has a nose to grasp, but a dog does not have a horn to hold. With Buddha nature not avoiding entry into a skin-bag, cats give birth to cats" (231). This question is not to be answered by a simple yes or no. By answering with "mu" or nothing, the possibilities can take more ambiguous turns. If the dog has buddha-nature, why then did the teacher answer with "mu" or, "nothing"? This no-thing as Dōgen understood it is neither a negation nor an assertion, the Buddha-nature and the dog are neither one nor two, neither existing nor non existing. If we are to apply this deep insight invoked by this koan on our nature as human beings, then we could understand that we both exist and do not exist. For Dōgen, Buddha-nature is expressed in impermanence. This latter is in itself Buddha-nature. But rather, like a food you didn't taste, its full meaning cannot be grasped by mere words until it is experienced through actual realization using meditation practices such as Zazen or sitting meditation which is the primary practiced meditation by the Soto Zen school.

This is the point of the koan: becoming one with "mu " is the way for understanding Buddha nature. On the other hand, trying to squeeze any special meaning out of "mu " does not lead anywhere. Therefore, Dog, Buddha nature, and "mu " are entirely one.

Another example that could give us more insight into Dōgen's understanding of the Buddha-nature is his comment on the following koan:

Here is a story. The venerable Sanavasin asked Upagupta, "How old are you?" Upagupta replied, "I am seventeen years old."
The teacher Savanasin asked, "Is your body or your nature seventeen years old?"

Upagupta replied, "Teacher, your hair is already white. Is it your hair or your mind that is white?"

The teacher Savanasin said, "It is only my hair that is white, not my mind." Upagupta said, "My body is seventeen, not my nature." (Eihei Kōroku 271)

In commentary to this dialogue, Dōgen writes:

I am considering these two venerable people, and what they said. What are they calling body; what are they calling nature? What are they calling mind; and what are they calling hair? One person expressed nature as body; the other person expressed mind as hair. How laughable to say that one gained and one lost? Although this is so, suppose someone asked Eihei, "What is the truth of the preceding story?" I would simply say to him: Enthusiastically observing spring mountains and autumn mountains, we still cannot avoid calling them two sides of one coin. (Eihei Kōroku 271-272)

Dōgen's commentary shows his point of view on the argument of the primacy of the mind over the body and its elements. He also appears to be implying that the mind can only be manifested in the specific phenomenal circumstance of a body with hair, whether it is old or young. Mind and body are two sides of the same coin and this oneness is manifested in the appearance of Buddha nature amidst impermanence.

II. Dōgen's Spiritual Ecology: "Mountains and Waters Sutra"

The clearest description of Dōgen's ontology is found in his "Mountains and Waters Sutra" or "SANSUIKYŌ" in Japanese. In his book *Mountains and Waters Sutra: A Practitioner's Guide*, Shohaku Okumura explains that "SANSUIKYŌ" means "mountains and waters are sutra". (Okumura Intro). This essay written in the *Shōbōgenzō* does not present a sutra on mountains and waters, it rather elucidates that mountains and waters are in themselves a sutra that expound the Buddha's teachings (Okumura Intro).

Written in a poetic language, this essay translates the feeling of Zen through the use of word-play, parataxis and repetition. It induces a trance-like feeling where the reader is immersed within the reading experience and becomes one with it. Dōgen writes in the *Shōbōgenzō* that "we generally say that mountains belong to a country, but mountains belong to people who love mountains (225). Furthermore, he writes "when saints and sages live in the mountains, because the mountains belong tothese sages and saints, trees and rocks abound and flourish, and birds and animals are mysteriously excellent. This is because the sages and saints have covered them with virtue" (225). Dōgen's quotes imply that mountains or nature in general does not belong to a certain country, it is free. And when nature is respected as it is and is considered to be one with us, it flourishes and it yields its secrets to us.In the same essay, Dōgen elaborates further on the way nature opens up to us as we open ourselves to it. He writes:

Again, since the ancient past, there have been from time to time sages and saints who lived by the water. When they live by the water, there are those who fish fishes, those who fish human beings, and those who fish the state of truth. Each of these is in the traditional stream of those who are "in the water." Going further, there may be those who fish themselves, those who fish fishing, those who are fished by fishing, and those who are fished by the state of truth. In days of old, when Master Tokujō suddenly left Yakusan Mountain to live amidst the river's mind, he got the sage of the Katei River. Was this not fishing fishes? Was it not fishing human beings? Was it not fishing water? Was it not fishing himself? A person who is able to meet Tokujō is Tokujō; and Tokujō's "teaching people" is [a human being] meeting a human being. (226)

In this passage, Dōgen magnificently illustrates the concept of non-duality which is actualized through our realization of our Buddha-nature. A saint who lives by the water and catches a fish, might as well be catching himself, because there is no separation between his nature and that of the fish. Furthermore, the sage who is teaching his disciple might as well be teaching himself. Here in this passage, the boundaries between self and other are blurred and brought to oneness.

It is not only that there is water in the world; there are worlds in the world of water. And it is not only in water that such worlds exist. There are worlds of sentient beings in clouds, there are worlds of sentient beings in wind, there are worlds of sentient beings in fire, there are worlds of sentient beings in earth, there are worlds of sentient beings in the world of Dharma, there are worlds of sentient beings in a stalk of grass, and there are worlds of sentient beings in a staff. Wherever there are worlds of sentient beings, the world of Buddhist patriarchs inevitably exists at that place. We should carefully learn in practice the truth which is like this. (Dōgen 226)

This passage examines the entanglement of all living organisms on this planet and their fundamental interconnectedness. Cultivating mindfulness and compassion is a necessary aspect of our systematic relation to all beings. This idea echoes the spiritual ecology of philosopher David Abram who inquires on how did Western society lose touch with nonhuman nature to the point where it tolerates the continual devastation of forests, rivers, valleys, animals, and ecosystems? To answer this question, he elaborates in his book, *The Spell of the Sensuous,* an approach that substitutes the traditional view of reality as a single and determinable entity with a more fluid vision of the mind/body as a participating organism that interacts with its environment in a reciprocal manner. He writes that "for the largest partof our species' existence, humans have negotiated relationships with every aspect of the sensuous surroundings, exchanging possibilities with every flapping form, with each textured surface and shivering entity that we happened to focus upon" (Abram 9). In the same vein, Heidegger's later developed concept of the fourfold or "das Geviert " resonates with Dōgen's inclusive thought. The fourfold is a gathering of earth, sky, gods, and mortals, where each of the four mirrors the presence of the others. Heidegger calls this gathering of the fourfold into a thing "Spiegelspiel" or mirror-play. The fourfold is central to dwelling. Furthermore, this passage shows the post-humanist message embodied in its call for a post-dualism to rebuild a dwelling based on ecological responsibility and co-existence with non-human species and nature.

What is wrong with the way we dwell on earth today is elaborated in Heidegger's essay"Building Dwelling Thinking". He argues that not all buildings are designed for the purpose of dwelling, such as offices, factories, etc. However, even though we think we do not dwell in them, they are with us in our experience of existing. He claims that the modern world has created a negative rupture between building and dwelling. He examines the roots of the German term "bauen" which means "to build," and believes that it has lost its basic meaning of "existing" in a specific location. Our dwelling is then the manner in which we exist on the face of the earth.

Building is in fact dwelling. And since dwelling relates to the manner in which we exist in the world, the way we build reflects our relationship to ourselves. Building here is not only for functional reasons such as providing housing or shelter. It goes farther than that to encompass a sense of nurturing and relating to existence and to being. In Heidegger's own words: "dwelling itself is always a staying with things. Dwelling, as preserving, keeps the fourfold in that with which mortals stay: in things" (Heidegger 149). Hence, the kind of dwelling which Heidegger longs for is similar to the one that Dōgen philosophy alludes to: compassionate and nurturing.

III. Dōgen: A 13th Century Posthumanist

In Zen Buddhism, the essence of human nature is Buddha-nature. This realization is based on the teachings of the Buddha and on direct experiences of monks and Zen masters who report having awakened to this primordial truth. The Buddha-nature transcends all dualities that create separation. For this reason, most of Dōgen's teachings touch on this non-dualism. First of all, let's examine his view on reality. He considers everything to be happening inside the mind. Mind here is not exclusive to human anatomy. Just like a dream is unreal so is what we consider everyday reality is illusionary. However, he points to the concept of the "ultimate reality of all things". If reality is illusionary, doesn't it make it real, because the mind is real? Mind is then all real things. So if things are mind, and mind is all things, what is the point of using different concepts? Studying Dōgen's teaching on non-duality can clarify how the mind can be "not two" and "not one".

Dōgen's quotes taken from the opening passage of his essay "Actualizing the Fundamental Point" or as it is known in Japanese "Genjō-kōan" illuminates these aforementioned statements. First, he writes: "As all things are buddha-dharma, there is delusion and realization, practice, birth and death, and there are buddhas and sentient beings." (*Moon in a Dew Drop* 17). Here, Dōgen alludes to the importance of observing the nature of all things. The beginning of this investigation implies a functional discrimination between the things observed. Then he proceeds to talk about the self as being "no-self". He writes: "As the myriad things are without an abiding self, there is no delusion, no realization, no buddha, no sentient being, no birth and death". The first and second quotes seem to ironically contradict each other. However, isn't it only through delusion that one seeks awakening? And isn't it strange that when one seeks awakening one reads that "there is no delusion and no awakening"? Another irony is that in trying to understand the "self" one must forget the "self". Kazuaki Tanahashi elaborates more on this point. He writes that in forgetting about the "self", "the "Self" immediately opens into selflessness. This selflessness is called "true self" or "original face." It is also described as "something close" or "what is intimate." Thus, the teaching of no-self is not nihilism, not an assertion that nothing exists. Rather it is awareness of the interdependence of all things—the reality of things as they are." (Tanahashi 17). To elucidate this non-duality in more detail, Dōgen writes in the "Genjō-kōan": "The buddha way is, basically, leaping clear of the many and the one; thus, there are birth and death, delusion and realization, sentient beings and buddhas" (*Moon in a Dew Drop*). Therefore, understanding the buddha-nature or the nature of non-duality starts first with discriminating against existing things (affirmative), the second negates the existence of things (negative) and the third stance is beyond discrimination and denial of discrimination (Tanahashi 18). Furthermore, Tanahashi, in his introduction to the translation of *Moon in a Dew Drop*, comments on Dōgen's tripartite by stating that it is a fundamental Buddhist perspective" and that "unlike Hegel's thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, [it] does not develop from a lower to a higher level; rather, each step is given an absolute value, and each step is inclusive of the others" (18). We can conclude that dualistic views presuppose a separation between the subject and the object, the outside and the inside, while non-duality presupposes that duality and nonduality are interwoven and dependent on each other.

The concept of non-duality is echoed in philosophical posthumanism's concept of post dualism. In an attempt to define what is philosophical posthumanism, Fransecsa Ferrando writes in her seminal book *Philosophical Posthumanism* that "Philosophical Posthumanism is an onto epistemological approach, as well as an ethical one, manifesting as a philosophy of mediation, which discharges any confrontational dualisms and hierarchical legacies; this is why it can be approached as a post-humanism, a post-anthropocentrism, and a post-dualism" (22). When we talk about humans as plural, we see them in a dualistic frame in which even some humans are considered less than others: black/ white,

civilized/uncivilized etc. There is also a separation between nature/culture. This dualism explains the distorted relation of the Anthropos with the rest of the environment. The Anthropos is connected with a specific Greek notion of the human which separates humans from other beings and nature vs reason or culture. There is a structural problem here which is created by a dualistic identity whereby we define who we are in separation from the other. We are Anthropos because we are not gods, not animals, not plants, etc. The problem of dualism according to the post-dualistic point of view is that defining humans based on distinction from the rest of the environment is a negation to our relation to all the ecology in which we live. We are always interwoven with other species and other microorganisms that inhabit our bodies, we are in relation with the planet as a whole, the food we take, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. In this regard, Ferrando writes that "the Anthropocene marks the extent of the impact of human activities on a planetary level, and thus stresses the urgency for humans to become aware of pertaining to an ecosystem which, when damaged, negatively affects the human condition as well" (22).

In a similar way, it should be noted that posthumanism is not a new line of thought which is currently thriving in the West. In her article "Humans Have Always Been Posthuman", Ferrando argues that spirituality corresponds to the intrinsic meaning of the posthuman post dualistic standpoint. The posthuman transcends academic, technological, and scientific limits, and may be traced back to the dawn of recorded civilization in many sorts of spiritual knowledge and understandings. (Ferrando Abstract). From this we conclude that Dōgen's ontology is posthuman par excellence. His posthumanism shows in his transcendence of dualistic thinking, his teachings on the non-separation of mind with the ecological system, his notion of the Buddha nature, and his compassion towards all sentient beings. In the same vein, in her article, Ferrando suggests that posthumanism should be seen within a practical framework by developing daily post-anthropocentric ethics based on "an integral investment of its own post-dualistic process ontological premises" (13).

Conclusion

Dōgen's ideas, as well as ideas from other teachers and spiritual traditions, coupled with the advancements witnessed in the field of philosophical posthumanism could help the human species relate more to the ecological system in which we live in. The post-dualistic perspective could help remedy the deteriorating state of the environment whose main reason are human actions. Change can come from within us, and from understanding who we are. That is why erroneous definitions of the self which manifest in feelings of supremacy over nature or specie elitisms, has led humanity to separate itself from the rest of the environment and thus leading to what is called the "sixth mass extinction" which is caused directly or indirectly by human actions. The spiritual practical model suggested by Dōgen is contemplation on the self-coupled with compassion towards all sentient beings. As for Francesca Ferrando, she suggests developing daily post-anthropocentric ethics of living.

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(Re)claiming the Non-animal: Interrogating Anthropocentrism Through Samit Basu's *Turbulence*

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Abstract

This paper examines Samit Basu's speculative fiction Turbulence (2012) to situate postcolonial posthumanism within the novel and to deconstruct the concepts of speciesism and ableism. Turbulence depicts how four hundred and three passengers travelling on a British Airways flight from London to Delhi fall asleep and wake up to find themselves possessing superhuman abilities. Among those passengers are Sher and Mukesh, who possess powers that enable them to transform themselves into animals at their own will. The boundaries collapse one after the other, whether it is the human-posthuman, body-mind, or even human-animal. The complex relationship between the external animalisation of Sher and Mukesh and their thoughts and emotions that remain recognisably human suggests that these boundaries might not be as rigid and impenetrable as is generally assumed. They abandon the centrality of the human body and choose animal shapes to initiate changes in being anderode any binaries, separations, and priority accorded rationalities. The animal is no longer seen as the other in the posthuman context and is part of an environment that is non-hierarchical. The essay establishes this along the lines of Stacy Alaimo's concept of animals as individuals with personalities who block their appropriation into victimisation discourses. This elevationof animals to the status of 'individuals' frees them from their status as Other and denies the humans their species supremacy.This paper uses postcolonial and posthuman theories to demonstrate how posthumanism crossovers with empowerment and colonial affective practices. Using a postcolonial posthumanist framework, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of human-animal relations.

Samit Basu's *Turbulence* (2014) explores the superhuman abilities acquired by four hundred and three passengers travelling on a British Airways flight from London to Delhi. These passengers fall asleep in the flight and wake up to find themselves possessing abilities somewhat related to what they have been dreaming about in the flight. Among those passengers were two persons, Sher and Mukesh, who acquired the abilities to transform themselves into animals. Their transformations critique the rigid boundaries between human/non-human, man/animal, and human/posthuman. In "Animals, Anomalies, and Inorganic Others," Rosi Braidotti argues that posthuman bodily materialism considers the animal "in its radical immanence" as a body that is full of possibilities (Braidotti 528). The animal's capabilities have long depended on humans, but Basu's novel accounts for the animal's situated perspectives. Sher and Mukesh's sustainable transformations into animals displace anthropocentrism and recognise trans-species solidarity. Their interchangeable bodies adhere to Braidotti's vision of open-ended, trans-species bodies. The boundaries of the animal/man/technology become blurred to support a politics of solidarity with an oppressed nature. Blurring every possible binary of past/present, human/non-human, organic/inorganic and biological/technological, Basu's novel exposes the limitations of these binaries and gives them a new dimension by uncovering the internal realities of human-animal experiences. The paper aims at integrating human-animal relations in its theoretical framework to highlight how understanding and rethinking human-animal relations will eventually lead to a more comprehensive understanding of many human intergroup phenomena. This paper further demonstrates how postcolonial posthumanism focuses on nomadic transversal alliances to reconstruct a world belonging

to human and non-human others. Through an analysis of Basu's novel, the paper argues that his work reconceives the relations between humans and animals through embodied and skilful engagement with the larger-than-human world. Bill Ashcroft argues that in a postcolonial narrative, "the boundary between self and other blurs, a space in which meaning is negotiated, wherein a sense, both writer and reader are changed in constitutive collusion" (411). *Turbulence* is a narrative that is firmly rooted in postcolonial posthumanism, in which speciesism and ableism are negotiated by assigning a voice to non-human animals. Posthumanism prioritises 'things-in-phenomena' and "sense making becomes a dynamic, ongoing, continual, and reiterative unfolding of discursive and material forces interacting together" (Riley 91). The Indian passengers, with their superhuman abilities, resist the supremacy of the western white man and give voice to the Other, both human and non-human. *Turbulence* begins with the description of the superhuman abilities acquired by Flight Lieutenant Vir Singh that allows him to fly around the clouds. Vir was one of the four hundred and three passengers who were travelling on the flight from London to Delhi, who mysteriously fell asleep and woke up to find himself possessing superhuman abilities. However, the speciesism tendencies ingrained in humans pit them against other humans who tend to have more than human abilities. Hence, once people became aware of what had happened in the flight, they started to track and hunt down those with enhanced abilities: "All the other British people, all the passengers from other countries — all gone. They've been taken away. There's not been any outcry in the press abroad, so there must have been some kind of cover story" (Basu 54). Aman, one of the affected passengers, tries to bring together others who had been similarly affected, in order to protect them from the government or the military, whoever is responsible for capturing the others. Aman's powers let him "hook up to anything on a network- computers, phones, satellites, all sorts of stuff" (Basu 50). After he gets a few of the affected passengers under the same roof, they eventually figure out that people in the flight got their abilities according to what they have been dreaming during their journey.

Among these passengers are Sher and Mukesh, who possess powers that enable them to transform themselves into animals at their own will. Every time the transformation that Sher goes through is spectacular, "his muscles swell up, and dark lines appear around his body, swirling contours that converge into thick black stripes. His spine bends forward; his face contorts; fur sprouts out all over his body. His clothes rip as his torso thickens" (Basu 98). He emerges as an eight-foot giant with a tiger's head and paws. Once transformed, he growls, a low, ominous rumble that completes his resemblance with a tiger. Even if Sher can transform himself at his own will and can fight with the ferocious intensity of a tiger, he remains human in his personality, ignorance, and idiosyncrasies. From his joining Jai's team because of the higher possibility of survival with the strongest to his annoyance at computers and *World of Warcraft*, and his care and concern towards the little Anima suggest that his inner self does not comply with his becoming animal. Squadron Leader Jai Mathur, when he realises that he could now move with superhuman speed, decides to gather other people with similar abilities and form "an unstoppable Indian elite squadron" (Basu 91) who would take over the world and do whatever Jai asks them to do. To set his sinister motives in motion, Jai sets up a base in Kashmir near the Air Force base in Udhampur and recruits people like Sher, Mukesh, and others to do his bidding. With impending danger, Sher automatically takes up his animal form, as if in an instinct, his stripes appear, his arms broaden, and rippling muscles appear. For Sher, his enhancement was something he least expected because he used to be a wildlife conservationist and never thought that he would turn into a hunter. After he had caused considerable harm to Aman and his friends, better sense prevailed, and Sher joined Aman and his team to bring down Jai. After the fight in London where they defeat Jai, Sher decides to continue his work with Vir, Uzma and others in order to help out those who were in that flight and are still on the run. One of the affected passengers, Uzma Abidi, comes to Mumbai with big Bollywood dreams and finds that everyone in Mumbai naturally falls in love with her. On the fourth day in Mumbai,

she has already achieved a lot and also "becomes the first outsider in the history of the Mumbai entertainment industry to turn a profit within their first week" (Basu 24). Even after all these, Uzma finds it extremely difficult to find a place to live in Mumbai because she is a foreigner who is also a Muslim. She is treated as the Other not only because of her superhuman abilities but also because of her religion. Aman tracks her down and invites her to be a part of his team. Slowly Uzma realises the true potential of her abilities, and she discovers that she could get anyone to obey her without any questions asked. Being a British Muslim woman, she has been treated as the exotic Other first in Lucknow and then in Mumbai. The West constructs the otherness of the rest of the societies based on their geographical locations and confirming whether they can have an authority over the Other. The exotic's otherness is often treated as a spectacle to reassure the dominant group of their superiority. Here, Uzma is treated as the Oriental woman who is represented as the exotic, sensual, and charming seducer. Because of her otherness, she is simultaneously admired and despised. She is treated as exoticas well as inferior: a kind of screen which represents the way binaries function across colonial discourses.

Similar to Sher, Mukesh had been working with Jai from the beginning and was obeying whatever orders were given to him. His "long, forked and snake-like" tongue (Basu 62) does not instil the same fear as Sher does, but nonetheless, Mukesh's abilities to turn into a snake proves advantageous to Jai and his missions. During Tia's first encounter with Mukesh, he immediately transforms himself in order to take Tia down; his skin turns green and "large scales and leathery stretches emerge all over his body like fast-forward blisters" (Basu 72). His transformation to a snake is described more vividly:

His arms shrink, fingers curving as they shorten into talons. His eyes turn yellow, pupils morphing into vertical slits; his mouth broadens, elongates; his nose flattens; his hairline recedes. His forehead stretches and flattens out as his head changes into something terrible, reptilian, blood-curdling. His forked tongue slithers out obscenely between his gleaming fangs. It twitches. (Basu 72).

When transformed, Mukesh calls himself Poison and kills one of Tia's copies by pushing his fang down her throat. Once he realises that Tia can have an infinite number of copies of herself since her dream was to be able to be present in multiple places at a given time, Mukesh accepts his defeat, and his features melt back within a few moments; he is human again. When asked about how he survived all the bullet wounds, he replies that he will live forever. At one point, Jai realises that Mukesh is not the strongest person to be on his team, so he sends him off on a suicide mission of intercepting the Shindes and preventing them from coming in contact with Jai and his army. The Shindes are a crime family who was on that same plane and had become more dangerous now. They are "criminals, politicians, brilliant entrepreneurs. Risen from the gutters, killing everything in their way" (Basu 173). Jai believed that the Shindes would be a powerful ally because "an efficient organised crime system is one of the cornerstones of every successful empire" (Basu 173). Jai's plan does not work out, and Mukesh gets killed by the Shindes.

Traditionally, ableism has been regarded as a societal structure, a network of beliefs, communication practices, and institutional processes that describes a corporeal standard. Ableism casts an idea of a "normal" body and mind and ultimately speaks to the question of what it means to be human. In Basu's novel, the passengers who took that flight face ableist discrimination both for being postcolonial and superhuman at the same time, exerted through various types of control nationally and internationally. Further, this is fueled by cyborg anxiety that refers to the fear that the embodiment of a non-normative person resists the boundaries of what it means to be normative, able-bodied and able-minded. This paper

argues that Basu's *Turbulence* critiques this notion of ableism by placing the people with superhuman abilities against the discussion that "the core of ableism is an idealised norm that defines what it means to be human" (Cherney 8). Further, the concept of speciesism similarly demonstrates how the political and social condition of neoliberalism demands an able, normative corporeal standard. The bodies must be able-bodied, flexible and productive in order to meet the strenuous requirements of human supremacy. When a society privileges such a discourse, the nonnormative bodies are more likely to be considered as the Other, the disabled, and not belonging to the 'ideal' category. Basu's novel aims to deconstruct this disabled/abled binary and integrate perspectives from postcolonial and posthumanist theories into the study of disability. Goodley et al. (2014) explicitly works on the concept of aligning disability studies with posthumanist thought and argue that "disability is the quintessential posthuman condition" (348). The bodies of Sher and Mukesh explores this perspective as they deconstruct the man/animal binary, shifting the focus from the able body of a man to "understand[ing] the posthuman condition as one in which we constantly reflect on humanity rather than as a condition beyond humanity" (Goodley et al. 126).

The classical notion of the human is a self-aggrandising, abstract ideal and symbol of humanity that was born in Europe and was shaped through modernist and capitalist mouldings. Rosi Braidotti notes that humanity is very much a 'he', a male of the species. Moreover, "he is white, European, handsomeand able-bodied" (Braidotti 24), who embodies ideal beauty, perfection, masculine, speaks a standard language, and is heterosexually inscribed in a reproductive unit. This notion of humanism has a Eurocentric core and Imperialist tendencies, suggesting that those residing in the colonies are naturally less than human or inhuman. That way, the Indian passengers who were in the flight were already less than humans, and once they gained superhuman abilities, they moved beyond an exclusive category for the human and embraced more planetary attributes. This not only means shifting away from what is understood as the human but also reclaiming their relationships with the environments, the world and human and non-human inhabitants of the planet. With *Turbulence*, Samit Basu shows that the posthuman man becoming an animal rejects the identification with a normative image of thought. The animal is no longer seen as the other in the posthuman context and is part of an environment that is non-hierarchical. The elevation of Sher and Mukesh as animals to the status of 'individuals' frees them from their status as Other and denies the humans their species supremacy. They forge a nexus between the postcolonial and the posthuman that enables the condensing of posthumanism's crossovers with empowerment and colonial affective practices.

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Interrogating the Posthuman Imaginations on Human Aesthetics: Technological Dystopia and the Natural World in Scott Westerfield's *Uglies*

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Abstract

Posthuman aesthetics formerly lies above the notion of traditional human existence that has been confronted with the new technical paradigms and scopes of human life. Posthumanism in general works as a prominent discourse that connects several aspects of human transitions beginning from history to a possible future. Through the course of its progress, the high scope of posthumanism facilitated body transitions that resulted in the pathologization of the human body within the set standards. Cosmetic surgeries in the contemporary era have several dimensions that cite the posthuman aesthetics of creative art. Plastic surgeries primordially evolved as a creative or artistic form of human capabilities within the scientific paradigm. Further, they flourished into a dominating aspect that decided human roles and social acceptance. According to the American Society of Plastic surgeons, approximately 16.7 billion dollars were spent on cosmetic surgeries in the year 2021 (ASPS 9). The clash of such aesthetic imaginations with the ecological balance looks into a possible dystopian future. The main objective of this paper is to investigate the problematization of body aesthetics on posthuman grounds. Through the analysis of Scott Westerfield's novel Uglies, belonging to the Uglies Series, this paper explores the role of extreme posthuman imaginations that pave the path towards the formation of a dystopian society where technology is used to reinforce strict norms of aestheticism, which further depleted the order of nature.

Keywords*: Posthuman, Aesthetics, Dystopia, Imagination, Surgery.*

Uglies is a series of four young adult dystopian novels written by Scott Westerfield and published between the years 2005 and 2007. It is set in a future society exactly about three hundred years after a catastrophe had destroyed an old human civilization. The actions take place mainly in an unnamed city and in the countryside called smoke which is in between the wilderness. The first book in the series also called *Uglies* (2005), introduces the readers to a future society where the government performs extensive cosmetic surgeries on its residents on their sixteenth birthdays to transform them into pretty beings who will live a life free of worries and insults. As the novel opens, Tally Youngblood who is the main protagonist is looking forward to her transition as she approaches her sixteenth birthday. But Shay, another ugly, teaches her about the necessity of defying such social beauty norms. Tally is handed an ultimatum on the day of her procedure where either she has to help the authorities find Shay or she will never get her life-changing surgery. Tally chooses to assist the government in locating the insurgents like Shay who escaped from the surgery. She is shocked when the rebels explain that the procedure includes brain surgery as well to make the citizens more beautiful as well as obedient. The rest of the novel explores the fight of the uglies against this forced transformation. The other sequels from this series follow the same journey with Tally where she evolves into a person who could retrieve her identity as a human with individualism.

This series of novels criticize the global culture that puts humans into positions where they are forced to surgically enhance their bodies so that society will accept them. Humanity is on the cusp of a technologically mediated shift from human to posthuman in the twenty-first century, a clash of two extremes with unparalleled repercussions. The posthuman appears to take on the role of an avatar of

humanity's worries and potentials during this process. It is also imperative to look into the history of body images that formed the posthumanist imaginations of body aestheticism. The sculptures and paintings from antiquity focussed on certain beauty standards like body proportions, geometrical face lines, thin waist and sensual expressions in women and sporty bodies with heroic gestures in men. In the dystopian universe of *Uglies*, beauty is first depicted as a fixed attribute, of physical appearance (Burton 81). Modern technology holds this world together, both literally and metaphorically. The social distinctions established by cosmetic surgery are the cornerstone of society's structure. Only the pretty people who work on magnetic principles can support the city's complicated design. Those who have had plastic surgery are beautiful, while those who have not are ugly. Those who refuse to have the surgery have no chance of enjoying a prosperous and happy life since they will be shunned by society. These advanced scientific techniques have had several advantages in their society, according to the government. It established good psychological health and mental being, promoted relationships, tremendously boosted the economy, and reduced poverty and war. Tally's society, on the other hand, becomes more vulnerable to annihilation since its members are entirely reliant on its future success. When their technology fails, the population will be helpless and incapable of self-care. As a result, *Uglies* develop extremely lowered self-esteem and are unable to see their bodies in a favourablesense. Tally's time in the Smoke, particularly her romance with David, has complicated her perceptionof beauty. She understands that it is a subjective and relative term that can refer to a person's inner as well as outside self.

This novel is a type of technological dystopia that circulates a posthuman vision. Raffaella Baccolini in her article 'The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science-Fiction' argues dystopian novel is a genre that belongs to science fiction and has the potential to critically look into posthumanist discourses (Baccolini 23). The use of surgery allows this society to change the way people act and look, as well as conform to them as a unified group. Throughout Dystopian fiction, the theme of human life being caught under the power of someone else is repeated (Maharaj 27). Tally and the other Cutters in the second book *Pretties* (2005) rebel against the government's attempts to control them, joining up with another city aiming to correct the previous city's sins. Tally, who has lived her existence without a choice in her own body, manages to break free from both cities but forgets to caution the others to keep nature and human bodies as organic as it was. An examination of the dispute between the character of Dr Cable, a posthumanist scientist, and Tally, focuses on the centre of identity development and evokes possibilities of critically analysing posthumanist ideas. Tally's story is told through a close reading that traces tensions between her growth to adolescence, questioning her thoughts on humanity, understanding the conflict between real and manufactured, and giving enlightenment to her ignorance through emotion and reason within the posthuman changes she undergoes. A conglomeration of nature with knowledge and science with passion plays a vital role in resolving the many challenges that arise from inquiries into the human condition. The protagonist of Westerfeld's book series succeeds to become a humane posthuman through informed resistance, retaining her superpowers while also reclaiming her identity and regaining the ability to feel and sympathise. Hence, Tally can be considered as a more humane version of the posthuman as we do not see the author utilizing her identity to ultimately critique posthumanism but to present some critical nuances about the same.

Tally learns about the Rusties, who were the first residents of the Smoke, initially through her professors who regularly presented Rusties in poor light. But as she travelled through the wilderness, she learns a lot of new things about Rusties as well as about her society. *Uglies* can convey that growing up does not just mean receiving surgery and relocating to a new section of town by establishing clear similarities and analogies between the contemporary with the past civilizations. Nevertheless, growing up entails broadening one's horizons and learning about different cultures, as well as admitting that civilizations

may not have all the answers. The Rusties are thought to have destroyed forests and animals until a fiery disaster stopped them by burning the majority of the Rusties and their towns, while the new government is said to have restored the natural habitat. The Rusties lived in a society where bigotry andprejudice based on appearances were rampant, as opposed to Tally's society. This society, on the otherhand, works to correct these perceived imperfections, most notably by performing beautiful proceduresto eliminate prejudice based on appearance. Though Tally's society tries to promote saving the naturalworld, the whole process occurred most artificially.

The posthuman society in *Uglies* did depict the positive prospects of using technology at the initial stages. For instance, to produce electricity from nature and to use genetics to promote veganism. However, as we get familiarized with society, it becomes transparent that society lacks human progression or growth. Tally has a lot to think about when it comes to how she perceives herself as attractive and mature in connection with the natural world. Tally has grown up believing that to be an adult, she must undergo plastic surgery and change her appearance, but the natural world ultimately opposes this notion. The notion of the natural world being beautiful as it already gradually helps Tally to believe in the objectives of uglies to refrain from undergoing the beautifying procedure and to encourage individuals to focus on who they naturally are rather than who their city wants them to be, as this concept takes hold. Tally begins to see her contemporary culture as an adult version of the Rusties, and the natural world as a fountain of undeveloped, beautiful potential that the novel claims issimilar to that of young people, based on the similarities in veganism and human-nature relationship inher society has with the Rusties. In this context, the Rusties civilization here can be considered as a metaphor for humanists while the newly emerged society is posthumanist in nature (Sakhib 51). Basically, human tampering with the natural world had resulted in its ultimate destruction. In the novel,Tally's encounter with the white orchids on her way to the Smoke represents social conformism. During the Rusty era, someone began cultivating rare white orchids purely for profit. It further turned into invasive and crowded the area by destroying the habitat. Invasive orchids represent monoculture in ecology where one species pushes out all others who do not belong to their tribe. Tally recognises thatthis is a reflection of her society where, like the orchids, society forces everyone to undergo cosmetic and brain surgeries to become beautiful and docile. This homogeneity, as the author puts it, appears to be too frightening, and hence holds onto the importance of fighting for diversity. Surprisingly, Posthumanism is not a monoculture or a one-dimensional notion. In general, popular posthumanism reflects society's apprehensions about biotechnology advancements. What makes it one-dimensional isthe way how human beings perceive the transitions that follow posthumanism. The concern is about theimpact of technology on our political, social, and family systems, as well as raising questions about ourphysical well-being and species' survival.

As posthumanism started exploring possibilities to promote beauty and docility among the crowd, this novel series looks into the need for humanism within posthumanism, considering the similarities they carried during the period of evolution. Here, the anthropocentric rejection of the natural world and the role of humankind over other inventions are dominated by technological transitions that become utmost decision-makers on socio-political and economic roles. Several renowned thinkers have written against the posthumanist incorporation of humanism. However, as shown in the novel, certain motifs emerge as shared factors between the two. The decentering of the humanist subject, the problematization of the human-animal distinction as a source of ethical guidance and a refusal of certain attributes are interrogated by Scott Westerfield as he tries to explore the need of becoming humane within the posthumanist framework. Tally does not believe that her physical appearance is the foundation of her identity, although she has gone through all three stages of transformation in the trilogy. Philip Gough's study on the *Uglies* series concludes that the protagonist understands that cosmetic surgery will affect

her outer appearance and mental capabilities, but she will remain as Tally Youngblood and her identity will not change. Westerfeld's focuses on the continuity of memory and identity. The reshaping of the body by cosmetic or plastic surgery leaves the identity component vulnerable at best. This takes us to the conclusion that posthumanism is still present in the novels, as the author is not completely opposing it, and that it will continue to be the state of being depicted through the portrayal of characters.

Pramod K Nayar in his text discourse on Posthumanism (2014) mentions Critical posthumanism as the "radical decentering of the traditional sovereign… how the human is always already evolving with, constituted by and constitutive of multiple forms of life and machines" (Pramod 2). The methods of the human, machine and other organic bodies are sought by critical posthumanism. It observes co-evolving and mutually reliant life forms expressing themselves more or less flawlessly. According to Nayar, philosophical posthumanism recalls the idea of human subjectivity because the concept of man's self is co-evolving with animals and machines in posthumanism (Pramod 13). Critical posthumanism fabricated any living system that exists as essential to the construction of the environment. The human body is situated in an environment that includes animals, machines, and plants. As a result, this human personification is an embedded embodiment. In critical posthumanism, the human system is re-contextualized when it interacts with or becomes other living forms. The deciding conditions of co-evolution, feedback, and symbiosis are thus favoured by critical posthuman as it assesses human congeries whose survival is based on symbiotic relationships with other plentiful forms of life, as well as human origins in the context of other species. Plastic surgery's steady development among professional women and teenagers bear a resemblance to the cyborgian face. Of course, it is a young face with poreless skin and full, high cheekbones. With catlike almond eyes, cartoonish lashes, a small, tidy nose, and big, rich lips. The presence of such posthumans and the study of the future world introduces new forms of identity creation shaped by technology. However, the notion of humanity has kept such patterns and values alive. From the preceding discourse, it can be deduced that technology influences subjectivity and provides answers to what it means to be human in a posthuman world.

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Part II

RE-THINKING THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Cli-Fi Fiction and the Catastrophic Depiction by Margaret Atwood and Kim Stanley Robinson – A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Change is the only constant. The Earth, the people, the survival, the species, everything changes by a course of time, as per needs and also the deeds. Altogether, the elements of the planet remain interdependent and so the change in something, obviously triggers a sequence in the other. In this interdependency of the elements of environment and existence, the factor of climate is not an exception. Cli-fi fiction being widely regarded as a subgenre under sci-fi fiction, it addresses the concerns of the climatic changes, the apparent hazard and the underlying peril. The genre features an exploration through the mix of fictional elements with factual reality, contrasting the themes of environmental variation and lifestyle alteration. Margaret Atwood and Kim Stanley Robinson are among those who experimented in this genre of cli-fi fiction, and who were successful in their reach over the vast. They both line up the contemporary caution on the climate changes and dangers posed by the modern times but from divergent perspectives. When Atwood marked the terrorising changes of climate under a dystopian representation in her novel Oryx and Crake, Kim Stanley Robinson beefed up the climate crisis in his The Ministry for the Future, with a note of hopeful utopianism. This paper analyses the germination of cli-fi fiction in the hands of Atwood and Robinson, and their differing delineation of the climate crisis. The paper also aims to examine their works of fiction from an ecocritical perspective, analysing the efficacy of the genre forms in conveying the impact of the crisis.

Keywords: Climate fiction, catastrophe, climate crisis, ecocriticism, dystopianism, utopianism.

Introduction

The essence of literature is unlimited and unceasing. Literature is one of the mediums that offers a connotation beyond what an individual can understand from the denotative facts. Over a plenty of issues including the struggles of mankind, revolts under history, the colonisation horror and evolution of Anthropos, literature served the best medium of communication, not just to offer a vision and enlighten, but to evoke the population to act in accordance. One of the dominant horrors that haunts contemporary society is nothing but the fast and noticeable, yet unpredictable and unstoppable degradation of the environmental sector. With the depleted resources, the polluted survivals, the unpredictable calamities and the terrific technological surge, we are exposed to a prediction and expectation of a horrendous future, especially the concern over the human-nature tie-in. Though the facts and news about environmentalism and ecosphere, we hear day to day, alert us on what we are going through, literature makes it more specific, more explicit and more sensible. The representation in literature, not just reaches the multitudes as facts and stories, but makes them think beyond what they can possibly imagine about the future.

Margaret Atwood, a Canadian novelist, and Kim Stanley Robinson, an American novelist, were among the elites who addressed the issue of environmentalism and climate change in several of their fictional works. Being the contemporary authors, they forecast a frightening future through a fictional demonstration that the human community could land in a due course. Though a prognosis with fictional

strategies, their illustration knocks at the door of perilous actuality, which we are taking for normality in everyday communal life.

Discussion & Interpretation

Cli-Fi Fiction and Signification

Climate fiction, shortened as cli-fi fiction, deals with the changes in the climate and the crisis over the changes, addressing the arena of global environmentalism. The survival modalities of Homo sapiens have not only altered our community spaces, but also the ecospheres. Though the human community is racially, ethnically, socially, politically and psychologically dissected by several divisions, we all are united under a common patronage of the ecosystem. Science, technology and advancements have contributed a lot to the human community, making us evolve a step ahead over the previous centuries. They eased our physical labour, soothed our mental toil, presented us with advantageous comforts, granted us sophisticated survival and also embellished the whole human existence. But the malefic drawbacks that rose from such benefits are no less spiteful. More than affecting the human individuals, the pitfall has a wider effect on generations, thereby transferring the adversity on mother nature.

The rising global warming threat, the chaotic temperature and abnormal seasonal changes, the alarming contamination of the resources, the deterring consciousness about health and our earth, are few among the concerns of the era. The global demolition and the consequences have already impacted the earthly community's health, thereby marking disturbing changes in survivability. Climate fiction serves a tool to prioritise, picturize and make us realise the immediate dangers that are stepping ahead towards us. Beyond the human experience, the human perception about the future is a must to awaken the society at large. Climate fiction offers this opportunity and the term was coined by a journalist, Dan Bloom, in the late 20th century. As stated by Dan Bloom, "the best of cli-fi does two things: it delivers a powerful and emotional story and it pushes the reader to wake up to the existential threat that man-made global warming poses to future generations. good cli-fi is both a great read and a call to action, either direct or indirect". Climate fiction elaborates the reality in terms of the biological and ecological footprints of evolution. Just like any other fiction, climate fiction takes us into a fictional setting, which is more connected with reality in terms of threat and the upcoming possibilities of danger. Climate fiction can be both utopian and dystopian in terms of illustration and prediction. An utopian climate fiction as posed by Robinson, emphasises the ecological threat and conveys a hope on future, whereas a dystopian climate fiction as posed by Atwood, emphasises the parallel threat, hinting at a collapse or anapocalypse. The significance of the climate fiction lies in its wide reach among all the generations as itappeals greater than the factual explanation and vocal awareness.

Atwood and the Apocalypse

 Margaret Atwood is a Canadian writer and the second female author to win the Booker prize twice. The "Prophet of Dystopia", can be recognised both as a spokesperson of feminist perspective as well as the raiser of speculative fiction. When the writers of the twentieth and the twenty first century represented the contemporary wrecking in the system, highlighting the chances of natural and manmade dismantles, Atwood went a step ahead featuring a futuristic vision imbided with all our fears and threats. The novel, *Oryx and Crake,* is a speculative fiction, published in the year 2003. The novel highlights both the pre-apocalyptic world, dominated by science and the post-apocalyptic world, destructed yet won by nature at its malevolence. In the pre-apocalyptic world, there remain three modes of survival –

the compounds, the modules and the pleeblands. People who are at the top in societal structure occupy the secure compounds, while the population from the base of the social hierarchy occupy the infectious horrible pheeblands. Altogether, the people are obsessed with the quest of scientific explorations and comfort seeking, from that of having ChickieNobs, the headless transgenic chickens for easy meal, to the smart wallpapers, the algae on the walls to sense the human mood and change the wall colour accordingly. All these inventions, artificialities and "vile" aspirations have turned into nil, once when a destructive pandemic broke out as "the best diseases, from a business point of view" (Oryx 248) became dominant. Though Crake is considered responsible for this apocalypse, the humanoid species created by Crake become the only survivors of the apocalypse along with the protagonist Jimmy, who is fully equipped with appropriate antibiotics by Crake. The novel emphasises the dominance of science and technology in the modern world, thereby paralleling the ecological impacts it may cause in the not so far future. When Jimmy survives in the post-apocalyptic world, he faces the horrors of climate change and environmental deterioration, realising that the planet is no more the universe of Anthropos.

The unpredictable weather, the acidic rain, the poisoned ocean life, the artificial fauna and the strained flora, altogether symbolises the greedy attempt of mankind to possess nature, which turned topsy-turvy. The infection that broke out through the communities in the novel is nothing new, as all the time, the scientific population in the compounds attempted to spread some infection and provide its cure, purely for capitalistic notion. The apocalypse is when the infection became mightier and the infection spread became faster and ferocious. The diseases swiped not just the organisms, but also the natural entities. Through the novel depiction of environmentalism, one can measure the balance between human life and the pursuit of artificialities and technologies in contemporary life. As depicted by Atwood, the morethe human asks for artificial comforts, the more he loses his eligibility to own the planet.

Robinson and his Eco critical Dimension

 Kim Stanley Robinson is a contemporary American author of science fiction whose works are titled "humanistic science fiction". His novel, *The Ministry for the Future,* was published in the year 2020, where Robinson emphasises the global environmental threat, we are about to encounter in near future, that occurs as a consequence of contemporary human activities against nature. Featuring the real-time logical consequences of unfavourable climatic changes that the world may meet with up, Robinson makes it a utopian narration, featuring an optimistic end.

The novel traces the immediate threat in India caused by a heat wave with "a terrible combination" of "cloudless heat and yet high humidity" (Ministry, p.33). Mary Murphan is the protagonist of the plot, and the head of "The Ministry for the Future", otherwise referred as "United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change", a team of policymakers for the betterment of climate and ecological conflicts, established in Zurich during 2025. On the other hand, in Antarctica, relevant strategies are followed to balance the melted ice sheets, preferring to fix the global sea level rise. The ministry intrudes into the global ecological issues, offering endless ways to ease out the disastrous consequences, also pinning the reader on the non-fictional account of economic and political stats through history. Apart from the major characters, the novel features the narrations of numerous nameless characters, to forecast the climate hazards at different locations. Also, the international treaties and conferences projected in the novel, especially the discussions on Paris Climate Agreement, lays the foundation for the ministry to address the issue. "It was getting hotter" (Ministry, p.7) was the very first line of the novel, thereby introducing the character with PTSD mental health condition named Frank May. Through him, one can empathise with the intimidation and can understand the frustration of a commoner. The plotline also

predicts the possibility of human mass extinction due to climate crisis, through the instances such as the poor people sleeping on the rooftop, who at times, "never wake up from the long hot night" (Ministry 9), the sense of "the smell of rotting meat" under sun from "wrapped bodies"(Ministry 43), Indian population having the "too-hot bath" in lake "which felt only a few degrees from boiling" (Ministry 32), to seek shelter from the heat wave, and et al.

Robinson explores the dangers behind what we consider the minor pitfall of today's environment, by depicting the maximised ill-effects highly predictable in the near future. The air and water contamination, the overheated surface temperature, the heat wave production, the accelerating carbonisation and resources depletion are addressed in the novel, as these concerns of today's world are yet focused with a distant eye on generalisation.

The Utopian and the Dystopian Visions

We deal with reality only through the visions we encounter at its entirety. It is "our sense of how our world works" (Conflict 13). As defined by Thomas Sowell, "A vision....is not a dream, a hope, a prophecy, or a moral imperative...", rather it is a "sense of causation. more like a hunch or a 'gut feeling' than it is like an exercise in logic or factual verification". The novel *Oryx and Crake* and *The Ministry for the Future,* both reflect the collective consciousness, taking the visions on future from individual opinion to societal supposition.

Though both the novels feature the "unconstrained vision" of speaking "directly in terms of desired results" (Conflict 99), the utopian vision favoured by Kim Stanley Robinson defines the human ability to address the dystopia with efficacious defence. The cli-fi concerns are brought under light with Robinson's structured plans for suggestive and decisive solutions, networked by utopian governance. Robinson emphasises Thomas More's concept of Utopia, thereby presenting how humans can address the maze of conflicts to pave the way for "an ideal society", besides providing just a critique on fallacies. But, Atwood, in her dystopian novel, employs the primitive human emotion to move the society in grasping the pattern of catastrophe. The novel, *Oryx and Crake,* features commoners as innocent and passive victims blootered under the multinational corporations and bourgeois culture. The dream of the protagonist of the novel, Jimmy, in the post-apocalyptic world to get his awesome natural planet back, remains the fundamental dream of the residents of the planet, who collectively get sunk under the comforts of artificialities. Both Robinson and Atwood inject the Pavlovian conditioning of fear (Psy. of Fear) about the future, our planet and civilization, thereby strategically embarking their visions on the system of governance and survival influences.

Conclusion

The novel *Oryx and Crake* is speculative fiction and the novel *The Ministry for the Future* is hard science fiction, in the broader sense. They both equally feature how potent the catastrophic hazards on our planet may be, how effective the trauma for human survival could be, and how far the chance of an apocalypse is. Though all these surmises are widely framed through fictional depiction, the suppositions root from the non-fictional nonchalant environmental setting. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries centred the essence of emancipation from colonisation, while the twenty-first century is tremendously crawling for emancipation from the digitalisation and artificialities that ruin our sustainability. As said by Robinson in an interview for his book The Ministry for the Future, "it has to be remembered that there is no planet B, and Earth is our extended body".

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Reimagining the World: An Eco-Critical Evaluation of Select Socio-Political Writings of Rana Dasgupta and Arundhati Roy

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Abstract

We live in an uncertain world, a global village that carries within itself a plenitude of possibilities, often opposing in context and impact - advancement, progress, development, coupled simultaneously with unfathomable dimensions of discriminations, subjugations, displacements and dispossessions in individual life, society, and nation. The worldwide web of global economic integrations has accelerated a great degree of change but it has also created subsequent successive crises. The neo-imperialistic global order has on the one hand made the standard of life better but it has at the same time become hegemonic and predatory in its exploitations and subordination of human and natural resources. The result being the increased and transformed role of intellectuals to respond to the changing conditions.

The paper entitled "Reimagining the World: A Eco-Critical Evaluation of Select Socio-political Writings of Rana Dasgupta and Arundhati Roy", analyses the uncompromising literary stance that the writers have chosen that can be seen as an allusion to the subaltern postcolonial discourse and rhetoric of emerging political, social and literary movements particularly from eco-critical perspectives. The paper is based on the recent writings including Rana Dasgupta's - "The Demise of the Nation State" and Capital; and Arundhati Roy's selected essays from Azadi: Freedom, Fascism, Fiction focusing on the global socio-political scenario driven, dominated and disrupted by the crises of capitalism. The present paper tries to analyse how Dasgupta's and Roy's ecocriticism centers around their radical critique of neo-imperialistic forces of the anthropocene era.

Within their concern with narrating the global economic processes, one important issue of contention of writers like Arundhati Roy and Rana Dasgupta inhabiting two distinct worlds today is the massive climate change, unpredictable environmental disasters and other environmental and ecological problems as a direct consequence of the contemporary world order of corporate, capitalist globalization forwarded by the advanced first world and emulated by the developing third world.

Keywords: *Neo-colonialism, Eco-criticism, Post-authoritarianism, Post-colonialism, Neocolonialism.*

In a culture of totalitarianism, the spirit of modern free nations has lost its efficacy and validity. Historically, the rise of the modern state in Renaissance Europe, during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, coincided with the emergence of sovereignty as a conceptual instrument for organizing power within states. This led to the gradual development and consolidation of modern states as sole repositories of power, political authority, public order, and welfare. In assuming its sovereignty, states disallowed any rival or competing authority within its own territories. This modern territorial state—the Westphalian state—was predicated upon the exercise of absolute and final authority wherein the rights and liberties of the public would be safeguarded and guaranteed. The most important aspect of the modern states was that they looked to societal welfare as their primary function.

With the principle of the Wesphalian welfare states, most postcolonial states too embarked on the journey towards sovereign welfare states to counter the exploitations and excesses meted out to them during colonial periods. However, despite such idealistic backdrops and foundations, today, the state and its apparatuses work under the behest of the global economic order marking a new phase of neo-

imperialism where nation-states have become instrumental in curtailing and controlling the power of the people and excluding the masses from political and economic arenas. The nation-states have lost all solidarity with the ordinary people, leading to all kinds of tyrannies, oppressions and marginalisation, necessitating the response of writers, intellectuals and activists in confronting the new socio-political order. These writings, that have emerged in recent times as exhibited by writers like Noam Chomsky, Amitav Ghosh, Mohsin Hamid, Rana Dasgupta, and Arundhati Roy offer the response of resistance against the capitalist and consumerist tendencies and the unjust power relations persistent in contemporary times.

During an era when the space of public intellectuals, writers and activists has shrunk and their parameters have broadly narrowed, it is imperative that the literary contribution of such writers foregrounds the case of new subalterns created as a result of gross inequalities that persist in developing and underdeveloped nations like India. These circumstances have in turn evoked strong undercurrents of protest which has manifested itself both in literary and non-literary writing. Socio-political movements, anti-colonial activism and intellectualism have been focused on opposition to exploitation and oppression of every form and kind. The result is the increased role of the intellectuals to respond to such conditions. Their intellectual insights come as rhetoric stances and critiques responding to state repression and a reaction to the policy and practice of state intervention in individual and community life. The basic premise of such discourse/ literature is the foregrounding of such hegemonizing notions as modernization and globalization. They see these developments to be just as pernicious as the former political and imperial colonialism with the deepening erosion of "Social provisions and benefits".

The commitment of these contemporary writers, has been to strictly offer narratives on reimagining the new world free from oppressions, suppressions, marginalisations, and subjugations and uncover capitalism's global structural formation. In the present disturbing times, the meditations of Dasgupta and Roy on language, literary genre and the role of alternative imaginations speak of a defence of the collective in the face of the disparaging reasoning of financial, social, religious, military and governmental narratives. The basic unifying thread in the writings of these writers is their thematic that probes into globalization's implications for the cultures, societies and migratory patterns of the world. Their selected writings focus upon the way hundreds of millions of individuals whose identities and fates are deeply influenced by the phenomenon. Their writings foreground the representations of nationalism and patriotism, migration- local as well as international, forced as well as voluntary, racism and fundamentalism, and neo-imperialism within a vast range of South Asian intellectual and artistic traditions.

Roy and Dasgupta, interrogate the postcolonial and post-imperialistic states as societies with a number of equalizing factors coupled with the ironic understanding that the contemporary nation-states have become places where the common people have been left to fend for themselves with numerous socio-economic problems ensuing from the impact of globalisation- where Roy takes on the entire LPG project, and Dasgupta focuses mainly on Liberalisation as the driving force of these problems. There's a sort of convergence within the fabric of the newly emergent states like India particularly, in relation to "freedom" and "justice" -- broadly defined to include the examination of human rights, historical narratives, literary and political representations, ecological impacts seen in the Anthropocene era, gender and social justice, citizenship and democracy and cross-border connections in South Asia.

Apparently, the traditional face of colonialism has changed, ushering in neo-colonial tendencies within the post-imperial ethos. Underneath the apparent decolonization of the previous century, there has been an immense reorientation of power and politics. The older empires no longer exist and, thereby, can no

longer suppress and oppress but the world order has thoroughly transformed into a new global capitalist one. This shift from colonial to contemporary postcolonial marks a transfer of power and its structures from colonial empires to neo-colonial regimes. The coercive colonial set up has given way to repressive new set ups that continue to operate more or less under the same framework as that of the imperial one. The repressive power of the contemporary world order has created new and more severe forms of domination and suppression where glocal oppression and disregard of human rights and life in the name of nationalism, growth, development, advancement and globalisation continue. In the newly emerged nation states, the interests of power and its practitioners take precedence over the broader social concerns. The contemporary postcolonial states are nation-empires, the term used here as a metaphor to imply a return to a specific historical system where the exploitation of resources and oppression of the common people by neo-colonizers continues. With the emergence of this neo-colonialism, the tendencies of modern welfare states incline more towards massive economic dislocations, divergent discriminations, environmental deterioration, confining human liberties, etc. which often get justified in the name of progressive, scientific, technological development and advancement. The greatest challenge, therefore, is to foreground the plight of the silenced, marginalized new subalterns that have been created and victimized under the new world order and the totalitarian tendencies rampant in our times.

The issues and concerns that writers like Roy and Dasgupta raise in their writings invariably, represent the various dimensions of the present global system - the empire. The term empire is apt here, for the simple reason that the way the current system operates and oppresses necessitates the use of the term empire for the contemporary global order. Writing with an expositional approach as a way of cohering narratives of globalisation at key moments of social and national transformations, these writers turned activists have produced numerous works in form of essays, novels, political reportages, memoirs narrating the unreal promises of capitalism, as a voice of resistance to the neo-colonial forces fulfilling the responsibility, particularly, of standing up for the causes and rights of common/ordinary people and addressing the issues pertinent to them. The focus is, especially, on the issues that are the result of the loopholes existing in the new world order governed mainly by the oligarchy of economic, corporate and financial dominance.

When one looks at the reality and rationale behind their assertive critiquing of nation, society and individual, one immediately is confronted with the issue of addressing a new colonial order that functions under the broad term of globalization, more specifically the corporate capitalist globalization. Its functionaries have a wider web including within its nexus the advanced capitalist countries of the first world, the international financial institutions, the transnational or multinational corporations, local liberal democracies and the totalitarian regimes of the developing and the underdeveloped world.

Roy and Dasgupta try to show how in the present world order we all have become a part of a global market economy and global market society. The present world order has been able to control and dominate societies much more deeply than any empire of the past. It designates a more dominant power through the control and hegemony of structural globalization that is dominated by the corporate interests and advanced capitalist nations. The postcolonial states from around the world, merely, become instruments of providing the necessary infrastructural framework and administrative support to fully globalized operation of neo-imperialism. In post-communist areas, roughly covering the postcolonial world of the global south, under the guise of capitalist modernisation and free trade, it is important to possess an anti-imperialist or anti-capitalist critique to illuminate the dreadful conditions produced by capitalist reforms. Because today, most of the capitalist states of previous empires retain a relative ability to promote and orchestrate the neo-colonial world order. The process of imperialism has re-

emerged in new forms with new ways of controlling the underprivileged and the weak by merely changing its course and manner of implementation upholding the legacy of historical imperialism.

Dasgupta and Roy, even though belonging to different worlds having similar roots and commitments, share the belief of most critics of globalization that "the disparate problems with which they are wrestling all derive from global deregulation, an agenda that is concentrating power and wealth into fewer and fewer hands". The impact of globalization can be seen in almost all spheres of human life and society. It has significantly altered the economic system but it has also had drastic implications for community, ecology, identity, knowledge and even politics, with repercussions that go beyond the scope of sustainable development goals that have been set up for creating development which is truly sustainable for the future of the human race. Most of capitalist globalization's power has come under scrutiny for its consequences on the environment and the human costs of the large infrastructure, industrial or development projects. These consequences are not restricted to people and societies but invariably the ecology and environment is disturbed and destroyed but in the face of capitalism these stakes do not weigh much. These invisible costs and consequences of global capitalism are not even tallied today as the focus of states and polities is on development and advancement. In this conflict of interests, it is ironic that the advanced world perpetuating the new economic order placed the responsibility of checking environmental degradation to the developing nations and despite taking mandatory as well as voluntary measures environmental colonialism continued.

The world nations ratified the two-degree target at Kyoto in 1997 but in the pursuit of neo-imperialistic capitalist agendas glocally, the damage to the planet has accelerated in recent decades. Initially, the exploitative and oppressive operations were covert but now "as the battle to command the world's resources intensifies, economic colonialism through formal military aggression is staging a comeback" (Roy 334). It has become difficult to achieve growth and advancement in most postcolonial states without subjecting a substantial number of populations to oppression and subjugation and causing huge environmental degradation and creating political, economic as well as cultural crises. It cannot be a coincidence that the proposed Anthropocene epoch whereby humans triggered a new geological age by such indices of globalised era like nuclear testing, industrial pollution and massive economic growth across the postcolonial world. A formidable part of intellectual activism today concentrates on nature's destruction, disruption and exploitation by the states and their corporate allies serving the global capital and its demands.

The failure of the neo-colonial regimes to protect and safeguard the physical environment strongly depicts their lack of political foresight by contributing majorly to "neocolonial environmental scientification" (Gerrard 168). The devastation caused to the environment extends from "the coastal areas where traditional fishing practices have been replaced by industrial -style trawling, which has resulted in overfishing, to inland waterways that have been dammed or polluted with industrial waste, untreated sewage, and agrochemicals; to forests where rampant deforestation has caused flooding and the loss of species diversity; to farmlands, where once a tremendous variety of legumes and grains were cultivated, that have been converted to mono-cultural fields of cash crop and heavily treated with pesticides and fertilizers. Waterlogging, salinization, and nitrate pollution have become serious problems, as might be expected, and the system of mixing animal husbandry with cultivation, which for thousands of years maintained healthy soils with manure from grazing animals, has been disrupted by the introduction of synthetic fertilizers" (Comfort 123). In Roy where you see a career of twenty years of socio-political reportage focusing on "stories about the massive corporate attack on forests, rivers, crops, seeds, on land, farmers, labour laws, on policy making itself" (Roy 75), Das on the otherhand offers a series of encounters- with billionaires and bureaucrats, drug dealers and metal traders,

slum dwellers and psychoanalysts narrating the intoxicating and sometimes terrifying story of capitalist transformations.

The projection of human oppression and environmental degradation depicted in their works, together reflect upon the power play emanating from political institutions whether autocratic, oligarchic, monopolistic, authoritarian, dictatorial or, quite recently, even democratic that choose to snub and often camouflage the inherent shortfalls of their preferred model of growth- which Roy takes on as the Liberalization Privatization Globalization Project and Dasgupta attributes solely to Liberalization of the post-1990s era. States are witnessing and experiencing natural disasters which are often overlooked as sporadic events. But climatic or natural disasters are not just nature's way of asserting the ecological imbalance but also occurrences in political space. The discourse of Roy and Dasgupta, therefore, foreground the relations of power that drive socio-ecological transformations by undermining the ecology of forests, lands, waterscapes.

The institutionalization and commodification of nature in the present day postcolonial states highlights the power geographies where states actually demand and sanction the disruption of environment and ecologies. By reflecting on the manifestation of power by the state and the politico-economic influences in shaping the environment, Roy and Dasgupta situate environmental concerns within such politico-economic conditions. By writing and directing their literary and critical oeuvre towards ordinary people, their call is for "ecological democracy" (Beck 1995) to replace the flawed liberal democratic models. This Manichean activism is guided by the belief that common people possess the power to counter global forces by pressuring the states to develop a more transparent, participatory and sustainable planning approach to development and reduce the vulnerabilities of the state, its people, its environment and ecology. The political gesture of merely being the official signatories of treaties and agreements whether Kyoto Protocol or Paris Climate Change Agreement, does not exonerate the state from its responsibility towards welfare of humans and environment. They demand greater accountability and responsiveness from power holders through a postcolonial resistance to glocal agents of exploitation and oppression that are delimiting not just the liberal-humanistic spaces for ordinary people but also the physical space.

On the structural level, the two writers often straddle multiple genres between fiction, non-fiction and reportage which demands and examines the efficiency and adeptness of various genres of literature in portraying the concerns of contemporary times. These writers have often straddled between the literary genres to incorporate formal elements and techniques of the novel as well as a realist aesthetic to adapt their literary oeuvre for adequately depicting the life-worlds of the people. While fiction presents the issues of nations, societies and individuals in a personalised and cathartic aesthetic manner, non-fiction operates as an argument with an immediate and urgent purpose engaging in confrontations that are more concerned with the political and social realm than the literary one. These writers structurally employ "novelization of non-fiction" and "politicization of fiction" as a formal and aesthetic response to the historical pressures of globalization with the return to a newly emergent critical realism. The paper, thereby, develops an understanding of realism in the context of global Anglophone South-Asian literature, and seeks to globalize understanding of the aesthetic mode employed by Roy and Dasgupta, while underscoring its importance in depicting our contemporary moment. The important point of convergence between the works selected is this realistic aesthetic that seeks to map cognitively the connections between the global and the local.

The primary objective of the ecologically conscious voices of writers like Roy and Dasgupta is that as weather and climatic patterns are witnessing drastic changes, the states – political as well as civil- need

to think and rethink their capitalist ideologies for environmental defence. Both Dasgputa and Roy, offer what can be aptly summed in words of Teresa de Loughry, as an important corrective to "disenchantment with postcolonial politics or exhausted post-dirigisme (state control of economic and social matters) realism, and... hegemonic capitalist realism...that critique capitalist's technics of oppression, aspiration and inequity" (Loughry 131) by narrating peripheral experiences and exposing capitalism-in-crisis as a contemporary world-ecological revision. It is by seeing the valences of subordination and crisis in various regions as instances of a single global system that will necessitate the reimagining of the world, an alternate posthumanism.

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Ecocentric Attribution Towards Nature: A Study on Indigenous Knowledge Systems of Angami Nagas in Easterine Kire's Select Literary Narratives

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Abstract

Human and natural entities build complex relationships according to their utilisation of each other. The contemporary world is witnessing huge depletion of natural resources and ecological crisis due to various reasons. The humanistic correlation with the environment helps in understanding the meanings of its cultural, ethical and societal manifestations. From time immemorial, indigenous communities established a strong bond with their natural environment. This distinct behaviour is clearly visible among the tribes of India's Northeast region that are brought to the larger audience through powerful literary narratives. The Northeast region is geographically unique with complex cultural patterns and politically isolated from the mainland for the same reason. Oral narrations from this region incorporate among other elements the significance of their ecosystem as it enriches their tribal lifestyle. Unfortunately, these stories are accessible only within those cultural groups which share common traits. As a result of this situation, literary works in the form of poetry, fiction and non-fiction emerge to share their authentic cultural knowledge which has its deep association with the environment. The natural environment is the prime source of identity and livelihood for the tribes in Northeast. This article focuses on the traits of indigenous knowledge of the Angami Nagas about nature and the representation of their cultural and ethical identities through literary narratives. In order to interpret this aspect of ecological association of the Angamis, the present study attempts to explore the select fictional works of Easterine Kire. The animistic construction of tribal identity of Angamis intertwined with their natural environment is analysed through the literary narratives. The literary narratives are analysed under the conceptual lens of ecocentrism to understand the sacred bondage of the Angamis with their environment which shapes their indigenous identity.

Keywords: *Northeast, Angami tribe, literature, ecocentrism, indigenous knowledge on nature, tribal identity.*

Introduction

Northeast region of India covering eight states is culturally and geographically distinct for its beautiful array of environmental configurations. Tribal people of Northeast are the indigenous ethnic groups following well organised systems of cultural practices echoing the significance of the intertwined part of nature in their life. They are identified largely by their association with nature and their attachment to their landscape. Nagaland is known for its rich ecologically diverse environment that plays a crucial role in shaping the native tribal identities. Tribes and sub-tribes of Nagaland experience a uniquely exuberant relationship with their eco- system. V Nienu illustrates the holy bondage between the tribes and their environment as...the mountains and rivers of their land, combined with the indigenous flora and fauna shaped the Naga life, and culture to a great extent. Consequently, for the Naga people, the mountains are more than just a habitat; rather, the mountains are a sacred vicinage- a sacred landscape and heritage that helped forge Naga society, beliefs and identity. (34)

Nagaland is the repository of age old myths and folk tales commemorating the origin of people and their cultures. They strive to preserve and transmit their religious and ethnic practices to succeeding generations through various cultural forms. Politically significant Angami Nagas possess numerous

mythical oral narratives that manifest their cultural elements. The stories involve tribes' association with their environment, the creatures and the landscape in multiple ways. K P Aleaz opines "One cannot interpret history without the land, trees, animals, flowers and spirit." (24). The lifestyle of the Angami Nagas is anchored around the natural environment of both animate beings and inanimate objects that construct their communal identities. Angamis believe that every natural creation possesses their own cultural meanings to the tribes. The ecocentric consciousness of the Angami tribe is often revealed through their cultural and traditional orientations. "Eco-centrism was a leveling philosophy in that it claimed a moral equality for all of the planet's inhabitants, but it grew out of a sharp distinction between people and nonhuman nature." (Keith Makoto Woodhouse x). Angamis deeply practice animistic principles positing nature as superior in every phase of their life. They reverberate their environmental ecstasy through the ecological elements of flora, fauna, rivers and mountains, the cosmic powers of sun, moon and stars. The primary orality of storytelling in Nagaland is now reshaped by the secondary orality in the written forms such as novels, poetry, short stories, etc. Easterine Kire from the Angami tribe of Nagaland attempts to transmit and share her people's stories through the literary narrations. This paper studies the human- nature ties exhibited by the Angami Nagas that define their indigenous identities through select fictional narratives. The ecocentric behaviour of the tribes is also discussed in detail through textual interpretation.

Angamis as Ecocentric 'Tribe'

"We abuse land because we see it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."
-(Leopold 21)

Angami tribes reverberate the long-standing history of their tribal cultural practices through myths and oral narrations. The unique characteristics of Angamis are their deep interconnectedness with nature which is inseperable from their process of identity formation. The ethnic identity of the Angamis reflects their reverence and belief towards ecological entities. Myths and stories endorse the crucial place of nature in their everyday lives. K P Aleaz defines the function of myths as denoting the entire universe of human and non-human entities by stating that "reality is one coherent whole. Everything is organically related to each other." (22). Angamis believe that nature and spirits of the other world are solely responsible for the happenings in their life. Their societal behaviour reveals that nature in all forms is essential to human beings as human survival is inseparably intertwined with nature. In the novel *When the River Sleeps* (hereafter *WRS),* the protagonist Vilie manifests Angami cultural knowledge and his community's ecocentric indigenous ideology. Vilie personifies the forest with female qualities as the author puts, "The forest was home to Vilie" (Kire *WRS* 3). "He had spent twenty-five of his forty-eight years here" (Kire WRS 3). He says "THE FOREST IS MY WIFE" (Kire *WRS* 7). Here Vilie practices A. Irving Hallowell's concept of "other-than- human" (qtd. in John Halstead para. 4) i.e. the neo-animistic moral of treating all animate and inanimate things as persons. He develops a strong bondage with the environment and considers the forest as his companion. The relationship that Vilie shares with the environment is sacred and pure as he is not making any distinction between human and nature. The perceived notion of human beings as cultural and non-humans as natural is the barrier that creates conflicts between human beings and nature. Throughout his journey in the thick forest, Vilie follows his communities' obedience towards nature. The spiritual journey of reaching the heart stone, hidden inside the sleeping river is undertaken by the protagonist in order to fulfil the words of the seer and to attain spirituality. "There is no written dogma about the idea of God and faith… places like thick forest, rocks, mountains, springs, lakes, big rivers and other natural objects are believed to be the abodes of these spirits" (Kewepfuzu Lohe 76). Angamis strongly believe in the animistic faith that both good and evil

spirits guide and that decide their destinations. Their culture deeply depends on the human perception towards natural elements like "Rocks and boulders, trees and rivers" that "are not just empty objects, but religious objects' '. (Longchar 21).

A nature-human spirit continuum is the key to the tribal vision of life. All religious rites, observances, festivities are based on this holistic vision of reality. Tribal religion accepts the integral relationships of nature, humans and spirit in their experiences. The Tribal totem is one of the concrete examples of this continuum. (Aleaz 20-21).

The spirits of the sleeping river and Vilie have differential influence over one another. The humanistic spirit of Vilie with his faith towards nature protects him from the danger unleashed by the sleeping river. His spirit is evident when Vilie says, "Sky is my father, Earth is my mother, stand aside death! Kepenuopfu fights for me, today is my day! I claim the wealth of the river because mine is the greater spirit. To him who has the greatest spirit belongs the stone!" (Kire WRS 103). The indigenous animistic faith on nature by Vilie manifests the human-nature bondage followed by the Angami tribe and establishes the belief as Edward O. Wilson says "Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual satisfaction" (qtd. in Robert McCrum para.7). This transcendental satisfaction is attained by Vilie through his physical and spiritual venture into the forest. In *Sky is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered* (hereafter ANVR)*,* the significance of the invisible spirits of nature is portrayed clearly when the priest sang,

Spirit Vo-o, we were wondering where you were but here you are. We have come to solicit peace between man and spirit. Let there be no destruction and calamity, no death and disease and plague. Who is honest, you are honest. Who is honest, I am honest. We will compete with each other in honesty. (Kire *ANVR* 14)

They believe that respecting nature and animistic elements will help them in leading a harmless life without any environmental disaster such as flood, drought and starvation. The smooth ties maintained between the Angamis and nature result in their harmonious indigenous life. "The culture of honesty of Angamis does not only define their cultural identity but also defines their uniqueness from the rest of the Naga communities." (Vikholienuo Kire 5). This identity of being honest is the reflection of their sacred connection with nature.

Angamis strictly follow the ethical principles of *Genna* days meaning "No-work days, it is taboo to work on genna days" (Kire *ANVR* 148). The main aim of performing *Genna* as Obed Marhu writes is "to maintain proper order and right relationship with the Supreme being, spirits, Nature and fellow human beings… it brings blessing, success, victory, joyful life, achievement, prosperity and long life to those who hold on to it… curse, failure, sorrowful life, poverty and short life" (31) for those who suspect it. Non observance of *Genna* days is considered as a social taboo and every tribal man is warned that "*If you break the taboos, you break yourself*" (Kire *ANVR* 14). The Angami's strongly believe that any deviation from this commitment would result in a tragic end. *Genna* days observed by the Angamis are normally associated with agricultural procedures, and rituals connected with birth and death etc. They "are still in vogue today due to the belief that disrespecting it would lead to unnatural death, diseases, and deformities like dumbness and blindness" (Lohe & Roy A.C. qtd. in Pienyu 49), believing that they are the punishments provided by nature.

The Angami ritual of Tiger-killing is an "unusual event" (Kire ANVR 16) which is performed as a

sacrifice to their spiritual God. They believe in the mythical story of "man and tiger and spirit were once brothers." (Kire *ANVR* 18) which symbolises that humans, nature and the spiritual world are inseparable. This story stands as historical evidence to the existence of human-nature connection in constructing their tribal identity from the time immemorial. Therefore, it is obvious that Angamis' attachment towards nature sprung from such notions and narrations of myth through their indigenous ideologies. Angamis identify tigers as their "elder brother" (Kire *ANVR* 18) and they negotiate with tigers orally which reflects the manifestation of indigenous knowledge system.

Through a lucid, lyrical storytelling, the novel *Son of the Thundercloud* (hereafter STc) recounts the seriousness of being ecocentric and its consequences. The novel involves various representations of the animistic elements of trees, rocks, stars, river, animals, plants, etc. through which the tribes experience spiritual powers. The literary narration discusses the contemporary ecological issues such as famine, drought, flood and migration and sends a note of caution to the society about the future environmental dilemmas. The Angami characters in the work express their concerns towards non-human creatures and consider them equal to their life. The cultural practices of Angamis are intertwined with nature as they strongly believe in its significance in everyday life. The protagonist Pelevotso holds concern towards his ecology as he takes "... care not to cut too many trees in the same area. His reason for going far from the mountain was that he did not wish to disturb the fragile ecology around the abandoned village site. The vegetation was new and young, and he feared that any sudden disturbance of that newly found balance would cause greater damage than could be repaired." (Kire *STc* 102). He touches upon the emerging global issue of deforestation and its consequences of ecological imbalance resulting in huge disasters. Angamis respect nature and its belongings as Graham Harvey states, "All that exists lives" and "All that lives is worthy of respect" (2). The tribe values the importance of all the existing things in the world. The personification of animistic environmental elements as equal to human beings is clear from the following lines. "The earth has birthed trees, rocks, stones, and grain, just as a mother births her offspring. The trees and rocks are the sons of the earth. Take care of them and they will take care of you and your children." (Kire STc 46). The author through the protagonist educates the readers to show respect towards nature's creations that would eventually bless the world with prosperity and harmony. The three sisters in the novel explain the role of animistic things in shaping their cultural life during the past and present. The people in the "Village of Noune" (Kire *STc* 19) call the river that provides them with sufficient food as their mother. "No one came back from the river empty-handed. There was food in the river, and so the villagers called it 'our mother'." (Kire *STc* 54). In contrast, the horrible status of the mother, i.e. the river (nature) is portrayed as "Our mother is dead" (Kire *STc* 55) meaning the natural disaster of drought brought by the inhumane treatment of nature. This is the lesson that the writer conveys to "remember to respect nature the way she expected to be respected" (Kire STc 53). Humanising the non-living things is the practice that the tribes follow to lead a peaceful and harmonious life.

Conclusion

The systematic functioning of the eco-system forms the suitable living conditions for human beings. Both these entities have their influence and effect on each other through various strata. The contemporary world encounters several ecological conflicts that problematize human survival. Tribes are more conscious in conserving their indigenous geographical environment as it is part of their cultural knowledge. The tribal identity of the Angami group is manifested in their mythical stories narrating the sacred ecological bond shared between humans and nature. The argument of the indigenous groups as the "land is the source of life. Everything springs forth from the earth. The trees, the rivers, the flowers, fruits, grains and so on. People live by what the land provides. Thus the tribals do not think of the land and all the things in it as being inanimate objects but regard them as having life and power in themselves."

(Longchar 21) signifies that nature in all forms is respected by the tribes as they possess inherent connection with them. Maintenance of strong connection with the environment and the adherence to non-anthropocentric ideologies in their religious and cultural practices are vividly picturised by Easterine Kire through her works. The ecocentric characteristics exhibited by the Angamis symbolise the amalgamation of culture with nature that illuminates the indigenous knowledge on nature propounding that "Existence is a nexus of relatedness: God, humans, nature and spirit are organically related to one another. Only in this relatedness do they find their true being and existence". (Aleaz 25).

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Ecological Issues in the Trilogy of Isabel Allende: An Analysis

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Abstract

The research paper attempts to explore the ecological issues pervading in Isabel Allende's trilogy, City of the Beasts, Kingdom of the Golden Dragon and Forest of the Pygmies. Isabel Allende's trilogy sketches the adventurous journey of the protagonist Alexander Cold in three different continents. The journeys undertaken by the protagonist reveal the relationship between nature and human beings. The journeys into the African, Amazon forests and the Himalayan Ranges provide scope for the readers to sense the influence of nature and environment in the life of the human beings. The paper examines the devastating attempt of human beings in controlling the natural/cultural atmosphere for material benefit leading to an ecological crisis.

Keywords*: Ecological crisis, ethics, environment, laws of nature, materialism.*

Literature, through its varied expressions, tries to enlighten humanity about the various dimensions of life. The ethical tenets embedded in the literary discourses express the desire of creating a world throbbing with love and respect for all, transcending human boundaries. Many literary works reflect this sensibility emphasizing the role of human beings as a part of the ecological world. The notion of claiming human beings to be the centre/superior of all creations is shattered through many literary and theoretical discourses. The humble role of the human beings in this world is underscored; but at the same time, their harmful deeds resulting in the disturbance of the ecological web and other natural phenomena are also portrayed effectively through literature. Isabel Allende is a Latin American writer who attempts to remind society of the lost values of humanity and culture. Isabel Allende was born in Lima, Peru on August 2, 1942. As a gifted story-teller, her eloquence and lucid expressions craft her thoughts to great works of literature. She is a prolific writer authoring fiction, non-fiction, memoir, short story and articles; more than being a mere story-teller, she astonishes the readers with her extended knowledge on life and soul. Her concern for nature and environment echoes in her works. She is a great humanist concerned with the betterment of humanity, particularly through spiritual means. She is an optimist who charges against the pessimistic outlook of human beings. In an interview with Michael Toms, Allende says thus;

I don't think that we're going to destroy ourselves with ozone layer or a nuclear holocaust. I think that we're going to survive and be better … I think there are new forces in society that are leading to change… So I'm hopeful, very hopeful (43).

The research paper attempts to explore the ecological issues pervading her trilogy, *City of the Beasts, Kingdom of the Golden Dragon* and *Forest of the Pygmies*.

Isabel Allende's trilogy sketches the adventurous journey of the protagonist Alexander Cold in three different continents namely South America, Asia and Africa. The journeys undertaken by the protagonist Alexander Cold reveal the relationship between nature and human beings. The journeys into the African, Amazon forests and the Himalayan Ranges provide scope for the readers to sense the

influence of nature and environment in the life of the human beings.

The devastating attempt of human beings in controlling the natural/cultural atmosphere for material benefit is the ecological crisis mentioned in the trilogy. Three differentnatural/cultural environments are portrayed in which the native people live in communion with nature steeped in their cultural beliefs and customs. The so-called civilised persons attempt to perturb the native people's peaceful existence by getting rid of them or suppressing them. When human beings disturb the coexistence of the local people and their geographical terrain, the ecology of the place is affected resulting in unwanted consequences years later. Similarly, when their cultural belief is stained, psychological disturbance ensues.

In the *City of the Beasts*, an entrepreneur Mauro Carias schemes a willy plan to get rid of the native people in the Amazon forest in order to usurp their land for gold and diamond mining. He goes to the extent of exterminating them by spreading measles epidemic under the guise of vaccination. He employs Dr. Omayra Torres to execute this tricky plan. Not conscious of what she has uttered, "She admitted that on several previous occasions the vaccine had arrived too late. She gave the injections, but within a few days they fell ill anyway and died by the hundreds" (339).

Carias travels with the reporters' group of *International Geographic* as they are destined to write an article about the abominable jungle man called Beast. Alexander Cold, the protagonist, accompanies his grandmother Kate who is one of the reporters. Nadia is the guide's daughter who assists and guides the group. Carias has employed gunmen for finding out and controlling the indigenous people. He has guns, weapons and even a helicopter to carry out his plan. No one in the group doubts Carias as he airs warm expressions concerning the tribal people.

Alexander's short stay in the village *Tapirawa* gives him an idea about the Native Indians-the People of Mist, their beliefs, customs, and *Rahakanariwa*. According to the Indian belief *Rahakanariwa* is a blood-sucking bird that could come at any moment to kill the indigenous people. The bird represents the fear of death which lies in the collective unconscious of the native people. With the death of the Indian chief, Alexander and Nadia are saddled with the responsibility of fighting against the bird. The wit and sharp mind of Alexander and Nadia counteract the wicked plan of Carias at a split second by realizing *Rahakanariwa* as the epidemic. When Dr. Torres is about to inject the dangerous syringe on the native warrior Tahama's arm, "Without thinking, Alexander threw himself like a battering ram against the warrior, sending him sprawling to the ground" (350). The warrior and his people are confused and flee from the place after attacking Carias and his men. Some native people are injured too. They are saved by Alexander and Nadia from massive destruction. The three diamonds found by Nadia form the source for the establishment of the Diamond Foundation for the benefit and safety of the People of Mist.

It had been the practice of Carias to make the indigenous people extinct for his personal profit. After getting rid of the native people from their place, he would loot the gold and diamond mines in their place without the knowledge of anyone, including the Government. No one has suspected him to have association with Dr. Torres, who has been employed to vaccinate and protect the native people:

For several years, the natives had been dying off, the victims of measles and other diseases despite the authorities' effort to protect them… who could imagine that Omayra Torres, the person entrusted to vaccinate the Indians, was the one injecting them with death so her lover could appropriate their lands? (357)

A similar plot is constructed in the *Kingdom of the Golden Dragon* in which Alexander and Nadia again accompany Kate Cold who is to write an article about the abominable snowmen, the Yetis. For the undertaken project, a visit to the Forbidden Kingdom is inevitable. The legend of the Golden Dragon is alluring to many, especially to the Collector, the second richest man in the world.

The theoretical concepts of the Great Saint Buddha are practically followed by the people of the Forbidden Kingdom. In the Forbidden Kingdom, the people lead contented spiritual life, remaining unchanged for centuries from their customs and traditions. Novel innovations and technologies are prohibited in that realm as the people fear that might destroy their cultural heritage. The Government does not encourage tourists, and takes in a limited number each time eventually making the tourist agents refer to it as the Forbidden Kingdom. Kate refers to it as the only nation in the world which bothers more about its ecology than its economy, because it is the abode of a variety of flora and fauna. This journey exposes Alexander to different lifestyles of the contemporary world. A ride towards the capital city, Tunkhala, unfolds the spectacular panorama of the county's landscape:

Along the way they drove past monks and nuns of all ages, some no more than five or six years old, all with their bowls for begging food,there were also many farm people on foot carrying bundles, young people on bicycles, and carts pulled by buffaloes. These were a very handsome people of medium stature, with aristocratic features and dignified bearing… and a small bus painted a thousand colours and overflowing with passengers, animals, and bundles. (131-132)

The Golden Dragon is considered sacred by the people and only the King knows and has the right to enter its place, the Sacred Chamber. No one can witness the ceremony of Oracle that takes place inside the Sacred Chamber. The people believe that the Golden Dragon bestows peace and prosperity upon their nation. The second richest man in the world, the Collector, in association with a criminal organisation plans to seize the Golden Dragon. The fame of the Golden Dragon for its Oracle and elegance has provoked his avarice and he dares to intervene in the cultural belief of a nation. As per his plan, he is able to deceive the King and get the code to receive Oracle from the Golden Dragon through the agents. Unexpected and unwanted deeds happen in the country leading to restlessness among the people and the death of the king. The harmonious living and peaceful atmosphere of the Forbidden Kingdom is perturbed by the avarice of the Collector. Alexander and Nadia, with the help of the Prince, Lama and the Yetis, restore peace to the kingdom by ruining the plans of the Collector.

Two years later, Alexander's third trans-continental journey is to Africa since Kate has to write an article on Michael Mushaha's elephant safari in Nairobi. The intervention of a missionary, who comes in search of the other missing two missionaries, deviates them from their regular course. The entire team ventures into the heart of the equatorial forest, their exact destiny being Ngoube. That was the route taken by many determined explorers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but the mortality rate made them all retreat. The interior of the tropical forest remains untouched by modern facilities. Nature reveals herself in the quintessence form of unexplored beauty:

The view from the air offered a small sample of the variety and beauty of the African landscape… They passed over parched deserts, forests, mountains, lakes, rivers, and villages separated by great distances. The farther they flew toward the horizon, the farther they stepped back in time. (54-55)

Alexander meets Pygmy men on the way to Ngoube. The mental and physical oppressions of the Pygmy men are elaborated by Beye-Dokou, the best hunter of the tribe. Slavery is a potential threat to the

harmony of an individual self and the loss of the Pygmies' sacred amulet Ikema-Afuma signifies the loss of Pygmies' communal harmony. King Kosongo has taken the sacred amulet thereby becoming the controller of Pygmies' destiny: "The Pygmies told them, with tears in their eyes, that Ikema-Afua had been seized by Mbembele and was now in Kosongo's power. As long as the king had the amulet, they had no soul; they were at his mercy" (113). His atrocities along with that of his commandant Mbembele, and sorcerer Sombe, dismantle the Pygmies' unified social structure.

King Kosongo treats the Pygmies as slaves and keeps them scattered. The Pygmy women are separated from their men, "whom Kosongo forced to hunt elephants – not for the meat but for the tusks, which he sold to the smugglers. The king had another clan of slaves who worked in a diamond mine a little further north. He had amassed the fortune" (142).

Alexander rebuilds the dismantled structure by undertaking two travels; one into the forest and the other into the village of ancestors, the burial ground into which no one dares to walk in. His travel into the forest at once aims at protecting elephants from the Pygmies and the Pygmies from the king. He successfully attains the former while for the latter he has to undergo a second trip into the village of ancestors. By giving them back the sacred amulet, Alexander can induce a sense of belonging in them, and to instil courage he resolves that a night stay in the village of ancestors, with the promise of getting blessings from them, would influence the descendants psychologically.

The Pygmies are afraid of the spirits more than their Gods since they have the same defects people have and hence are dangerous. Their respect for their elders is what Alexander admires the most. The Pygmies believe that they have greatly offended their ancestors and thus volunteered suffering. When Alexander proposes to the Pygmies to hold a ceremony in the village of the ancestors as a preparatory action to fight against the tyrant king, the Pygmy hunters are horrified at the idea as it is an act of disgrace to step into the village of the ancestors. They enquire Alexander about the etiquette of showing reverence to their ancestors in his country but Alexander has to admit that ancestors hold an insignificant position in the Unites States. Ellis Paterson observes in his article "Spiritualism versus Materialism" as, "The knowledge of our ancestors is rooted in a spiritualistic outlook. It is an intellectual- spiritual science. We are woefully ignorant and egotistical to believe that we are superiorto our ancestors" (2010). This comment echoes the manifestation of materialistic prominence in the contemporary scenario devoid of humility and gratitude. Paying homage to the ancestors is one of the important lessons which Alexander learns from his trip.

Alexander's stay in the village of the ancestors with Nadia is the pivotal moment in his life since he understands the essence which animates everything. He perceives the connection among creatures as a fine network of the currents of energy. Isolation does not prevail in this universe, and the laws of nature make a rapid flow into his mind. He has lost the fear of fear. Freedom from fear is what Allende wants to emphasise in her novels and it has its voice here also.

Alexander finds out that the Tyrant King is the three headed ogre which Nadia and he have seen in their vision in unison at the marketplace. Finally, the tyrant is killed by the convergence of various forces from four directions, including Queen Nana-Asante, the adorable ruler of the Pygmies. King Kosongo's end symbolises the fall of tyranny, and the queen's arrival indicates the dawn of new civilization. Human beings' precarious deeds of exploiting the natural/cultural resources are shown by Allende through Mauro Carias, the Collector and King Kosongo. They all scheme to usurp the natural/cultural wealth by exterminating the tribal people of Amazon forest, robbing the Golden Dragon and

suppressing the Pygmies of Ngoube respectively. Alexander and Nadia are portrayed as eco-warriors who not only defend the natural/cultural wealth but also restore peace and harmony in the respective communities. The futuristic vision of Arne Naess is cited by Alan Drengson and Bill Devall thus:

In the future ideal society, there will be people who might use most of their energy doing highly specialised, difficult things, but as amateurs – that is, from inclination and from a mature philosophy of life. There will be no fragmentary men and women, and certain no fragmentary ecologists. (122)

By making the teenagers protagonists of the trilogy, Allende highlights the responsibility of the young generation in preserving natural resources and in giving voice for the oppressed people.

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Diane Cook's *The New Wilderness*: Fiction of Migration, Eco-citizenship and Primordial Instinct in the Cataclysmic State of Humanity

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Abstract

Bea, one of the characters, is in utter desperation to salvage her young daughter, Agnes from the contaminated city where they have been abiding so far. This particular state replicates a dystopia of the compulsive venture of humanity into the only surviving Wilderness state wherehuman beings explore the issues of Migration in terms of settlement politics with respect to crude zest for living in the extreme(s). This very compelling enterprise designates a speculative world of Post-anthropocentrism where human beings are not in the centre of all things. The distinction between human beings and non-human subjects is rendered almost shadowy and fragmented. These non-separable traits across species and natural environment(s) can be aligned with Stacy Alaimo's concept of 'Transcorporeality'. Here human beings also seem to come back to their primordial instinct(s). The corporeal entity of humanity as non-assimilative and intellectual binary to nature is rendered void. However, withthis migration comes the predicament of settlement as the doors of acceptance are not open to all who wish to transfer themselves to this Wilderness state. This difference, however, recapitulates the isolating notion that the lives of some people are more valued than others on a dualistic scaffold. There is also a divergence between the lifestyles of Rangers operating thissystem of Migration; and the Community consisting of people who are trying to settle over there. My paper then seeks to explore the problem of whether the state of Post-anthropocentrism can dismantle the dualistic framework of these routinely segregating qualities of human culture along with reifying human inter-relatedness with Nature outside the human-nature dichotomy.

Keywords: *Anthropocentrism, migration, corporeality, Diane Cook.*

Introduction

The stories of Dystopia and Apocalypse are not new in the parlance of Literature. This is not the maiden attempt of Diane Cook's exploration of the theme of Nature in her writings. Her earlier works on Nature include *Man vs. Nature* (2014), *Wise Trees* (2017), etc. However, for the first time, she is trying to paint that antithetical world through this writing, *The New Wilderness*, which can be claimed to possess the certain dimension(s) of a true scale Fiction. My paper is chiefly based upon the theoretical perspective(s) of Posthumanism. Rosi Braidotti,while talking about the posthuman state in her book, *The Posthuman*, adds that it makes us 'think harder about the status of the human' (186). In fact, there is no single version of Posthumanism; rather there are Posthumanism(s) (Ferrando 60). In this particular paper, I seekto work with two variants of this theory: Post-anthropocentrism and Post-dualism; and observewhether the Post-anthropocentric state can effectively eliminate the state of dualism or not. The venture of humanity into the Wilderness state can be taken as a survival need of the hour,but it is also an attempt to intermingle with nature. Actually, it is very difficult to disconnect non-human subjects from human beings as they share various things in common. However, it will be an interesting thing to see whether this union with nature is a self-conscious and successful attempt; and it, therefore, culminates in the complete elimination of humanity'smotives of controlling and possessing the non-human subjects and 'human minorities'.

Actually, reviewers like Téa Obreht and Emily Temple of Diane Cook's book have reflected on the apocalyptical nature of this book where human-beings are bound to leave the city and take shelter in the wilderness, but none of them seem to have interlinked thismigration with reference to Primordial instinct and the politics of settlement. Therefore, theargument of this paper lies primarily dependent upon three points: A) Toxicity, Horror and theReturn to Nature, B) Naturalism and Humanity's Primordial Instinct C) Eco-citizenship andthe Politics of Settlement.

A) Toxicity, Horror and the Return to Nature:

The plot of this novel unfolds in a situation when Bea, an important character, gives birth to a dead child in the Wilderness and tries to bury her on her own. This particular scene has been rendered by Cook with the presence of Coyote taking care of her kits on her own. Coyote implies the binary alternative to Bea in the Wilderness. She symbolizes the ableism of non-human species to which Bea isincompetent. She also runs the risk of altering the human notion of food culture. The mere presence ofcoyotes addresses the notion that the grave of Bea's child may be the site of food-source for these carnivorous animals. It, therefore, is a horrific sight for the mother with respect to the human notion of'food pyramid' that puts human beings at the top. Karl Steel's essay, 'Food', in the *Posthuman Glossary*, seeks to impart that '... posthuman ethics of food would replace the concept of "food pyramid" with a"food chain" or, better yet, a food web' (161). All through the novel, it creates an opticalsense that the characters are striving to shape themselves as per the norms of ferine topography. The encounter often takes the form of hybridized consciousness from where it becomes intricate for the readers to separate the selves of the human characters from Nature.It further paves the way for us to align human disposition with Stacy Alaimo's concept of Trans-corporeality. In the book, *Posthuman Glossary*, she carefully adds that 'Trans-corporeality means that all creatures are embodied beings, areintermeshed with the dynamic, material world, which crosses through them, transforms them, and is transformed by them' (435). Earlier on Bea comes to know that the environment of the city has becomeso toxic that if she does not leave the place, it will turn out to be fatal for her daughter, Agnes. What follows after that is quite interesting as they, part of the twenty people group, abscond the city and try to restore their lives following the lines of deep-ecology. The Migration in thisnovel exposes the characters to such experiences of wilderness as they have never come across the time before. Thus, it addresses the notion of horror coiling in and out of Ecology, or more particularly 'Ecohorror'. In the *Posthuman Glossary*, Christy Tidwell asserts that 'ecohorror is a genre that deals with our fears and anxieties about the environment' (115). Theutter failure of human civilization, despite having all the technological advancement and progress, brings forth a post-anthropocentric condition where human beings do not hold the focal point of everything. Francesca Ferrando, while defining the state of Post- Anthropocentricism in her book, *Philosophical Posthumanism*, opines that it 'adds to thisconcert the non-human voices, or better, their silencing' (103). While the plot of *The New Wilderness* does not revolve around the total destruction of humanity; it takes into account thepossible future swayed by theoddities of Apocalypse where human beings are trying to resuscitate themselves at the mercy of the ever-decreasing state of green space. The dystopic mode of this speculative fiction emulates a reified tangibility of how antithetical engagement between human and nature not only affects the equilibriumof the environment; but also brings forth a horrific and perilous world for human beings with respect to their endurancethreatened by self-referential destruction.

B) Naturalism and Humanity's Primordial Instinct:

The New Wilderness amalgamates the notion of primordial instinct. The phrases 'primordialinstinct' and/or 'primordial emotions' are more extant in medical and psychological fields. The word, 'primordial' does itself possess many inter-related meanings. The defining statusmay connote it as 'existing in or persisting from the beginning' (Merriam-Webster). Therefore, we can assume the primordial instinct to be basic impulses for food, shelter, andsex. It is also a kind of disagreeing sentimentality that the characters are confronted with, especially, if we drive our attention to brood over the characters of Bea and Agnes. Obviously, the mother-daughter relationship is one of the key arguments of this novel, not justin terms of Bea and Agnes, but also with reference to Bea and her own mother. Agnes does not understand the complex nature of her mother. She faces a question in her mind: 'Why didher mother insist on being so many people at once when Agnes only needed her to be the one' (Cook 338)?

Apparently, it seems that Agnes is one who tries to embrace more this state ofWilderness than any characters present, in often inconsistent and overlapping attributes of ecological and humanistic encounter. However, she is confronted with fallacy when she is not ready to accept her mother's primordial actions in terms of leaving her in the Wilderness and having union with Carl, breaking the conventional moral code of humanity, for sexual need other than Glen, the person whom she has always considered as a fatherly figure. Interestingly,even though this act of Bea does not remain opaque to Glen, he accepts this act of his partner, under the circumstances of his degrading health, which has rendered him incapable of physical union. The condition of Bea's being a run-away mother hits Agnes more than anything else. On this ambivalent note, we can see that Cook weaves this complex networkingof the rift of the mother-daughter liaison. This particular text is a testing site for naturalistic elements hidden inside humanity. In Agnes's case, it is true that she is a grown-up child; but is yet to liberate herself from the shackles of a child's conflicting instincts of showing anger tothe elders and drawing attention from them for more care and comfort. So, 'when she felt really sick, but also other times, the only way to feel better was to crawl into her mother's bed' (Cook 257). However, we know that neither primordial state nor Nature functions in thatmode. Personal emotions of individuality are rarely entertained in Nature other than the larger interest of any group of animals or life-forms. Bestiality's function, in that respect, constitutes the argumentative dimension of this novel. Richard Fusco, while commenting upon the primitive aspect of Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*, adds that the text 'traces one animal's gradual reversion to its primordial instincts' (76). Even though Jack London's primary focus is on a dog (other than human) named Buck; this revolves around a plot of a well-spoilt animal rearedas a pet with anthropomorphic traits, largely coming out of human culture. Cook's monographmay not be similar in scope like that of Jack London's allegorical text, set in American frontiermyth; but its thematic concerns are way more exposed in terms of 'New Materialistic' lensand bestial with respect to Naturalism. However, the theme is not based upon the brutality anddidacticism of the established religiosity showcased in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

E.C. Bufkin comments that 'William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is about evil, and it recounts a quest for order amidst the disorder that evil causes' (40). Cook's novel traces us theresponsibilities of environmental issues and the affects to which various subjects are interlocked.

C) Eco-citizenship and the Politics of Settlement:

Ecological Citizenship is based on the idea of human settlement norms keeping in view theneed for ecological awareness. It is a responsible turn towards nature. Andrew Dobson haselaborated on the concept of Eco-citizenship in his noted book, *Environmental Citizenship*.While Dobson iterates that there is no definitive scale of Ecological citizenship but it is a kind'enquiry into the nature, possibilities, and limits of citizenship as a way of promotingsustainability' (07). The novel reflects a story of migration from the city to a single remaininggreen space referred to as 'Wilderness State' on the basic note of survival. This urgent needfor survival, however, conjures up the ideas of being the citizens of the Wilderness-space in a nomadic style, often facing cataclysms of existence. This citizenship does not allow anypossession or permanent structures to be built as this line, from the novel, suggests that the'real nomads did not have so many possessions' (292). Traditionally, human beings adjustingto the ecosystem, by being part of Nature or learning the systematic function of it, do spark upthe notion of Eco-Citizenship; but Cook's story is both extended and foregrounded on thissame notion. The contesting aspect of this novel is that this very nomadic style of living isvery compulsive in nature for most of the characters.

Here, human beings do not have control over everything; rather, in turn, are controlledby the oddities of the external world. Thus, the hierarchical status of human beings over non-human species is brought out to be futile demarcation in this particular novel. However, it does not either mean that there will be no system of power-relation. The people, who have sought refuge along with Bea known as Community, are controlled by a group of people referred to as Rangers. These Rangers have fixed all the rules and regulations regarding how the community should go on to live harmoniously amidst the background of the Wilderness. The standard of living for community, 'is tethered to meaning by a set of precious implements – the Cast Iron, the Book Bag, and most importantly the Manual that spells out the rules of their existence' (Obreht). Quite ironic thing is that contrary to the community, Rangers have their own ways of comfort and ease in their lives.

The New Wilderness is a story of violence, segregation, exclusion, and also politics to some extent. Things would have been so easier if we could trim down the basic idea of this novel singularly under the framework of Post-Anthropocene. However, Cook has also got a plan to graft a parallel narrative with respect to not keeping the plot of this novel easy-going, simplified and linear. The theme of exclusion is more magnified when more people are pouredinto the Wilderness state, and people from the community are not ready to accept them without remembering the fact that they have also come over to that place in the same manner. Carl, one of the characters from the community, 'declared them, whoever they were to be Trespassers' (Cook 315). These people were known as 'Mavericks'. Rangers, too, have clear instructions of not accepting them. This is where; too, the political parlance of this text is enhanced. Could we presume that this novel is attempting to convey to us the politics of human migration of contemporary time in an allegorical fashion? Often the doors of acceptance are not open to the migrants when their world is torn by war, violence and rendered inhospitable and hostile for life to prosper. It's also worth considering the horrors of various concentration camps to which migrants are exposed to torture(s). Reginald Appleyard, while elaborating upon the politicized problems of migrancy, adds that 'the "illegalization" of migrants has led to tendencies to associate migrants and migrations with crime and criminality, unemployment, disease, and other social ills...' (04). When the members of the Community are confronted with Adam, one of the persons from the group of 'Mavericks', he adds: 'We had to escape the city. We didn't have a cargo plane take us down. We had to walk to get here. We bribed truck drivers' (Cook 317). Therefore, we observe that adualistic framework is active in the text where 'Mavericks' enact the role of inferior migrants compared to those

people who precede them. This condition, however, leaves open some unfinalized answers to some questions. How should one adjust to the ecology of foreign spaces? What should one do when every option for a straightforward way of living isabandoned? Does that particular condition render the human subject with primordial animalistic instinct? How is it really possible to differentiate between human and animal nature?

Thus, it unfolds to us the ethical sensibilities of the Post-dualistic framework. Francesca Ferrando, while talking about the importance of Post-dualism, in her book, *Philosophical Posthumanism*, puts down: 'Post-dualism is a necessary step in the finaldeconstruction of human. We, as a society, may eventually overcome racism, sexism, and even anthropocentrism, but if we do not address the rigid form of dualistic mindset that allows for hierarchical sociopolitical constructions, then new forms of discrimination will emerge' (60).

Conclusion

Cook's novel, shortlisted for Booker Prize (2020), clearly designates a situation where the cities, the hearts of human civilization, progress, and Enlightenment have been crippled byPollution to a certain extent that human beings are made to leave and seek refuge in the wilderness. This state of post-anthropocentrism, manifest in the novel, shares unintentional similitude of coincidence to the pandemic of Covid-19 in some respects. Furthermore, it amplifies that 'it's hard to read all this during a pandemic of a respiratory illness caused by an airborne virus without feeling an extra chill' (Temple). However, the magnitude of the referentiality is discrete in both cases. Unlike Cook's world, human inventions of technology, during the Covid pandemic, have not forced human beings to go underground and close up themselves completely from the different societal affairs. The scenario is different in Cook's novel as Wilderness, being the single alternative option for human beings in the necessity of their survival, even with its shrinking spatiality. This transfer of people from city to natural settings conjures up a world where human inventions, vaguely constructed upon humanenlightenment, have failed to provide with them a solution to tackle this breakdown of the ecosystem and ecological crisis. Further, it needs to be reinforced here that even in this cataclysmic state, the total elimination of class division is missing. The stratification subsists; so does the exclusionary politics. Terry Gifford, therefore, asks a valuable question: "Is the exploitation of our planet aligned with our exploitation of human minorities" (59)? In fact, thistext re-iterates a very archetypal problem that when ecological disaster happens, it occurs more with 'human minorities' as is the case with Mavericks in this particular novel. So, it alsopushes the condition under which humanity is rendered to crave for basic impulses of food, shelter, and sex. In the meantime, it, also, imparts us with a solution of a particular argumentin terms of relational implications of Post-anthropocentrism and Post-dualism with respect to the aspect that when change happens in and with the Anthropocene and the status of it is deconstructed as the Post-anthropocentricstate, this very cataclysmic state of humanityadversely may accelerate the often problematic and critiqued condition of dualism.

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Ecocriticism: Man as a Power Holder and Well-Civilized Nature Destroyer-Perception of Pi

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Abstract

Literature comprises culture and political strategies and it is quite distinct from science which leads to the invention. Indeed, literature teaches mankind how to use inventions positively. Carson in her Silent Spring marshalled an impressive array of scientific evidence to show that the use of new organic pesticides constituted a serious threat both to wildlife and to human health. Her scientific claims have since been largely confirmed leading to increased public awareness of pesticide pollution. Such claims by environmentalists made crucial contributions to modern politics and culture. The use of apocalyptic imagery and literary allusions by Carson shapes her 'literary' or 'cultural' analysis which is called 'ecocriticism'. The proposed intention of this article t is to bring out the elements of ecocriticism embedded in Canadian author, Yann Martel's Life of Pi. It is about how the world seems secure, even humans and animals face insecurities and abnormalities that can be figured out much in travelling for all the living creatures in their lives.

Keywords: *Scientific evidence, environmentalist, apocalyptic imagery, ecocriticism, Canadian Literature.*

Literature comprises culture and political strategies and it is quite distinct from science which leads to the invention. Indeed, literature teaches mankind how to use inventions positively. In other words, literature does a noble job better than science. Carson in her *Silent Spring* marshalled an impressive array of scientific evidence to show that the use of new organic pesticides constituted a serious threat both to wildlife and to human health. Her scientific claims have since been largely confirmed leading to increased public awareness of pesticide pollution. Such claims by environmentalists made crucial contributions to modern politics and culture. The use of apocalyptic imagery and literary allusions by Carson shapes her 'literary' or 'cultural' analysis. Such analysis is called 'ecocriticism'. Ecocriticism is differently defined by various writers. *The Ecocriticism Reader* gives the following definition for Ecocriticism in the "Introduction".

What then is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. (Glotfelty, xix)

Garrard, states in his *Ecocriticism* that the widest definition of ecocriticism is "the study of relationship of the human and the non-human" (Garrard 5). As an approach to literature, ecocriticism involves not only the study of the representation of nature in literary works, but also the application of an ecological perspective to literary studies.

Analyzing the environment through the literature may be considered as Ecocriticism and it is the duty of ecocritics to examine how 'humanity' is defined in relation to animals or how representations of animals create understandings and misunderstandings of other species. In short, humans are social animals and both nature and human beings are interdependent. It is indeed, as a mirror of life, the duty of all literature, especially Canadian literature to teach how humans should avoid bias in observing other creatures and how to love nature.

The term 'ecocriticism' was coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay 'Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism'. The ascent of ecocriticism in Canada in the 1990s might be interpreted as a conservative move towards the recuperation of the unified national metaphor, the country's association with the wilderness. An uncritical support of the connection between aboriginals and the wilderness may contribute to a reproduction of the very colonialist discourse. Past and present official definitions of the Canadian wilderness take the element of the human presence into account, and picture aboriginal peoples as an integral element of the wilderness, and thus subject to colonization and exploitation. In addition to this, the contemporary lives of aboriginal peoples in Canada may be conditioned as much by technology as it is by nature. Moreover, much of Canada's natural spaces are home to First Nations and they often enjoy a harmonious non-intrusive relationship with the environment.

Ecocriticism provides a useful discourse to address, read and interpret literature and culture in contemporary Canada. In Canadian literature, nature is witnessed as a theme embedded in it. Canadians have articulated their feelings about nature through literary expression to gain insight into their empathy for natural ecosystems and native species. The following six dominant themes of the expression of nature in Canadian literature have been identified: humans as a part of nature, a boundary of natural resources, fear of an adversarial wilderness, improvement of nature, regret of environmental damage and perhaps despair of the future and love and respect of species and natural landscape. There are so many reputed authors rooted in Canada like Northrop Frye, Thomas, Marlatt, Michaels, Armstrong, Martel and Robinson. The most remarkable author who portrays nature as an inevitable part of life is Yann Martel.

Yann Martel (1963-) is one of the greatest bestselling authors of the present time. He was born in Salamanca, Spain, in 1963. As a Canadian novelist and short-story writer, he has won various awards for his literary works such as Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction in 2001, Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2002, Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2002, and Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature in 2002. His important literary works such as *The Fact Behind the Helsinki Roccamatios* (1993), *Self* (1996), *Life of Pi* (2002), *Beatrice and Virgil* (2010) and *The Mountains of Portugal* (2016). Martel's second work is a breakthrough novel, *Life of Pi* (2002) which is about an epic survival journey of a boy named Pi. This story is interwoven with an overarching the mysticism of nature and religious theme. The story revolves around Pi and Parker, the tiger. When Pi was sixteen, his family emigrated from India to North America aboard a Japanese cargo ship, along with their zoo animals bound for new homes. The ship sinks. Pi finds himself alone in a lifeboat, his only companions a hyena, an orangutan, a wounded zebra, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Bengal tiger. Soon the tiger has dispatched all but Pi, whose fear, knowledge, and cunningness allow him to coexist with Richard Parker for 227 days while lost at sea.

As a creative writer, Yann Martel has revealed and unrevealed the experience of life, culture, and thoughts into creating a work of art through the journey in *Life of Pi* which is preserved forever in their memory like an orchid trapped in a paperweight. Journeying with *Life of Pi* sinks luxuriously into it,

like the readers diving into a clean and icy cold swimming pool on a hot day. The novel shifts Pi's adventures in four places such as India, the Pacific Ocean, and Mexico, and their Pi's adventurous journey shifts. The protagonist Pi can be traced back to his early life as the son of a zookeeper who eventually turned into a uniquely successful survivor.

Man is predatory by nature and through this quality has made the entire planet his prey. Yann Martel expounds on the notion of interconnectedness between various objects of nature through the natural cycle of the 'food chain'. It is often said that a creature is another creature's food. The description of nature is continuous in the novel *Life of Pi*. For the first time, Pi-a Super Alpha Male realizes his Omega state and declares: "I was just another animal that had lost everything and was vowed to death" (Martel 125) because he loses everything, his father, Ravi, and his mother, and lives all alone with animals. He says: "to lose your mother, well, that is like losing the sun above you" (Martel 128). He is weak in body and soul. He understands that the knowledge of human beings is worthless in front of nature. Nature is sometimes baleful, sometimes benevolent. Struggling with different moods of nature, Pi too experiences different moods ranging from fear, rage, madness, hopelessness to apathy.

Martel not just to enhance realism, but also to accentuate the story's action. In the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Pi passes the first two nights at sea with tears, sadness, and spiritual pain and considers them as the worst of his life and he faces the high temptations for food and water. He imagines a lot but eats little and spends all the time in hunger. The sea water being salty is undrinkable and food is difficult to catch. Pi constantly struggles to land a fish or pull a turtle up over the side of the craft, so that he must consistently collect fresh drinking water using the solar stills. After drinking rainwater, he feels the delicious taste of water and compares the rainwater with milk. Pi transforms himself. He becomes a non-vegetarian because if he has to survive he must embrace a new life. When Animal-life appears, he eats everything such as shrimp, blackworms, motley-coloured fish, and crabs. He also takes the sip of the turtle's blood and says: "I took a sip. It tasted warm … I drank the blood to the last drop" (Martel 201). Whatever he finds in the turtle's stomach becomes his turn to eat. By degrees, the range of his appetite increases. He even tries to eat Richard Parker's feces and compares the feces-balls with 'Gulab-Jamun'.

Yann Martel elaborately describes his cruel appetite. That is cruel for instance: "I ate the bird's heart, liver, and lungs. I swallowed its eyes and tongue with a gulp of water. I crushed its head and picked out its small brain. I ate the webbing of its feet" (LP 232). During his encounter with a French man, he discusses so much about various foods. To the extent the French attempts to kill Pi and says: "You're damn right your heart is with me! And your liver and your flesh!" (225). When the French man is killed by Parker, Pi eats "some of his flesh" (256). Martel shows just how far creatures will go when confronting extinction. Pi even kills so many meerkats on the strange island. On the Algae Island, nature offers algae food and meerkats for Pi and Parker. Pi enjoys the delicious food.

After the hardship of several days, Pi has a stroke of good luck when he hits upon ponds of fresh water. He has touched an Island that is six or seven miles in diameter. This Island is not an island in the conventional sense of the term- that is a small hand mass rooted to the floor of the ocean- but is rather a free-floating organism, a ball of algae of leviathan proportions. On this strange island of trees that grow directly out of vegetation without any soil, Pi and Richard Parker stay here for a time, sleeping in their boat and exploring the island during the day. Pi discovers a huge colony of meerkats who sleep in the trees and freshwater ponds. One day, Pi finds human teeth in the fruit of a tree and comes to the conclusion that the island eats people. He and Richard Parker head back out to sea, finally reaching a

Mexican beach. Richard Parker runs off, and villagers take Pi to hospital) Pi describes the carnivorous island in the following words:

The island was carnivorous. This explained the disappearance of the fish in the pond. The island attracted salt water fish into its subterranean tunnels- how I don't know; perhaps fish ate the algae as gluttonously as I did. They became trapped. Did they lose their way? Did the openings onto the sea close off? Did the water change salinity so subtly that it was too late by the time the fish realized it? Whatever the case, they found themselves trapped in fresh water and died. Some floated up to the surface of the ponds, the scraps that fed the meerkats. At night, by some chemical process unknown to me but obviously inhibited by sunlight, the predatory algae turned highly acidic and the ponds became vats of acid that digested the fish. This was night Richard Parker returned the boat every might. This was why the meerkats slept in the trees. This was why I had never seen anything but algae on the island. (Martel 281- 282)

The description of the carnivorous algae is another illustrious example of a food chain in the course of nature.

Garrard in his *Ecocriticism* glorifies the earth as"the most immediate ground of existence, the soil, to life's largest relevant context, the biosphere" (162). In this regard, Yann Martel not only describes the natural phenomena such as rain, seas, and the moon, but also the fauna that is found in the sea and which keep coming to the sea. Pi establishes a kind of relationship with the fauna while being in the lifeboat. Pi finds whales very sensitive and responsive to their condition. As a pounding and turning hand, nature is a boon to mankind. Nature services for one's health, happiness, and prosperity too. Martel highlights the rich resources of nature and its verdant aesthetic in his artistic novel *Life of Pi*. Hedescribes the animal lifestyle in the zoo miraculously as well as meticulously. Pi lives in the zoo situatedin Pondicherry.

Pi has sweet memories of growing up in a zoo in the enviable company of zoo animals such as lions, monkeys, mynahs, Moluccan cockatoos, American bison, yawning orangutans, shiny frogs, and many species of birds such as pink flamingoes or black swans, or one-wattled cassowaries, silver diamond doves, cape glossy starlings, peach- faced love birds, Nanday conures, and orange fronted parakeets, There are also seals, big cats, bears, baboons, macaques, mangabeys, gibbons, deer, tapirs, llamas, giraffes and mongooses were early risers. Visiting a zoo, according to Pi, at sunrise and sunset accords the greatest sensory pleasure:

In zoos, as in nature, the best times to visit are sunset and sunrise. That is when most animals come to life. They stir and leave their shelter and tip-toe to the water's edge. They show their raiments. They sing their songs. They turn to each other and perform their rites. The reward for the watching eye and the listening ear is great. I spent more hours than l can count a quiet witness to the highly mannered, manifold expressions of life that grace our planet. It is the smell: so bright, loud, weird, and delicate as to stupefy the senses. (Martel 15).

Readers come to know zoo life and appreciation of nature from the perspective of Yann Martel.

Since ancient times, one of the natural components, the sea in culture has been a significant part of human civilization because people experience the sea in contrasting ways: as powerful but peaceful, beautiful but deadly. There is a vivid description of marine life in the novel. Pictorial descriptions of

seascape, marine life, dolphins, sharks, birds, albatrosses, and the vivid description of the weather, rain, storms, blasts, thunder, lightning, and a carnivorous island in the novel. All this multiplicity of flora and fauna in the novel highlight the order in nature and interconnectedness between man and nature. Nature in its various threatening aspects such as blasts, thunder, lightning, storms, etc. which plays a very significant role in the awe-inspiring setting of the novel.

Ecocriticism demands attention to literal and irreducible material problems of living beings on earth such as injustices inflicted on animals and ozone depletion but it also depends upon the insight that scientific problems are never fully separable from cultural and political ones. Environmentalist states, human beings only disturb the world to establish their power. Richard Kerridge's definition in the mainly British *Writing the Environment* (1998) suggests, similar to Glotfelty's broad cultural ecocriticism:

The ecocritic wants to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all; ecocriticism seeks evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis. (5)

From these words one can clearly understand the importance of literary texts to support the environmental ideas and Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* satisfies the ecocritics to track their ecological ideas. Martel, the creator, has created awareness among men for saving animals through Pi - his brainchild. Pi makes insightful comments on the behaviour of man towards animals. Here, Yann Martel has delineated the inhumane behaviour of humans which is not only to nature but also to the animal. Zoo visitors (most of them though) go to the zoo out of curiosity; they want to see the animals and study their behaviour. As described by Pi, some of them perform cruelty towards them, which is not pardonable.

Mankind is now crossing the natural order and facing chaos. There is no harmony between man and nature. So, the newly emerged ecocriticism deeply points out that human's cause violence to holy nature in terms of civilization and in terms of power holding as well as exploitation. *Give and Take* by Roger McGough, a leading British poet, whose poem has been included in feeling the pressure, the Poetry and science of Climate Change and the sad impact of nature. He points out in his poem,

I give you clean air

you give me poisonous gas

I give you mountains

you give me quarries

I give you pure snow

you give me acid rain

I give you spring fountains

you give me toxic canals. (McGough, lines 1-8)

The cruelty of man towards flora and fauna is well propagated by Yann Martel. Pi gives graphic details

of this cruelty in the following excerpt,

> ...we have in mind the people who feed fishhooks to the otters, razors to the bears, apples with small nails in them to the elephants and hardware variations on the theme: ballpoint pens, paper clips, safety pins, rubber bands, combs, coffee spoons, brooders, and other jewellery (and not just cheap plastic bangles gold wedding bands too,) drinking straws, plastic and so on. The obituary of zoo animals that have died being fed foreign bodies would include gorillas, bison, storks, rheas, ostriches, seals, sea lions, big cats, bears, camels, elephants, monkeys, and most every variety of deer, ruminant and songbird. Among zookeepers, Goliath's death is famous, he was a bull elephant seal, a great big venerable beast of two tons, star of his European zoo, loved by all visitors. He died of internal bleeding after someone fed him a broken beer bottle (Martel 29).

The list is endless. Pi states that human beings have the tendency to see animals through their eyes. Darwin states the principle of Survival of the Fittest is evident enough to understand the core realities of the world in terms of animal territory and human territory. Strength counts, but then nature has endowed every creature with a mechanism through which it can get itself food and survives. After all the chaos, Richard Parker and Pi can survive in the lifeboat. Pi has to figure out how to save himself from this ferocious animal otherwise he would be the next prey. But as we know man is the most intelligent person among all the creatures in the world, Pi makes several plans to kill the tiger. Ironically, it is Richard Parker who has calmed Pi down. So, Pi also decides to keep Richard Parker alive. Ruminating on the past happenings, Pi states:

Now we were two. In five days, the populations of orangutans, zebras, hyenas, rats, flies, and cockroaches had been wiped out. Except for the bacteria and worms that might still be alive in the remains of the animals, there was no other life left on the lifeboat but Richard Parker and me (Martel 170-171).

As a situational acquisition, Pi has no other options, he has to experience it but at last humanity triumphs over in the form of love and clemency. Though the world seems secure, even humans and animals face insecurities and abnormalities that can be figured out a lot in travelling for all the living creatures in their lives.

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Shrieking Nature: A Study of the Sway of Budding Technologies On the Environment in Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*

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Abstract

Intervention of humans in the clandestine legroom of the planet has led to disturbance of its course. Continuous trespassing of the stroke generated awareness amongst the scholars as well as novelists about the 'slow violence', a term used by Rob Nixon, excruciated on the planet shoving it into a state of parlous. Hence, leading to the emergence of the Anthropocene Narratives, that project humans as a species ascending to overpower the planet. Profoundly bothered by the instances of human intrusion, novelists like Jeanette Winterson, has come up with works that deal with environmental crisis. Jacketing a period of almost sixty-five million years, starting from the age of dinosaurs to the emergence of Artificial Intelligence, The Stone Gods, through the point of view of different versions of Billie portrays before us a world on the verge of destruction due to human behavior. Divided into four interrelated parts the novel opens at a situation when the people of the imaginary planet Orbus, fully dominated by technology, have run out of natural life. And due to extremely polluted environment is preparing to shift its inhabitants on the newly discovered Planet Blue. The second part 'Easter Island', based on a true island of the 18th century, presents its existing destructive state due to human intercessions. The last two parts namely 'Post 3 War' and 'Wreck City' projects the physical and environmental damage of life on the planet due to nuclear war. This paper aims to explore how domination technology and exploitation of the planet have brought a crisis to natural life and also investigates how Jeanette Winterson, using the character of Billie as her mouthpiece is trying to convey the message that human actions might lead to self-extinction.

Keywords*: Slow violence, Environmental crisis, destruction, human behavior, self-extinct.*

Nick Bostrom in his work "The Fable of the Dragon Tyrant" suggests that the human species would remain complacent about its catastrophic history and future as long as it continues to forget so as to its situation is catastrophic (Bostrom 2005). The calamitous situation in which we all are into has been considered as normal so far. No one well thought-out it worth giving significance till the time when things have reached the line of danger. Agamben Giorgio in his work *The Open: Man and Animal* (2002), is of the opinion that humans have forgotten about their 'impotentiality' and reached a crisis point in the wake of modernity. For the sake of efficiency they have forgotten their fragility. They consider themselves as all powerful and able. They have erased the fact from their conscience that they are nothing but a tiny speck of grain in comparison to the all-encompassing and powerful Nature. Critics and scholars are basically trying to transmit the message that we are doing nothing but posing a threat to our existence itself.

Recently in the line of ebb and flow of the critical trends surrounding the discussion related to the environmental crisis many debates have come up on the peril we are facing today. The environmentalists as well as writers have felt an urgent need to bring awareness regarding the cataclysmic situation we are heading towards. The pattern of human activities has transformed the representation of life on the planet. Rob Nixon believes that the world is gradually heading towards destruction. But this movement is so gradual that most of the people think either it is yet to come or is

occurring in some remote areas. He termed it as 'slow violence', a kind of violence that is "beyond sensation but happens slowly through time" (Nixon 14). Since it is believed that literature is endowed with the power to make futuristic problems appear real by connecting it with the present situation, novelists are trying to project it through different Anthropocene Fictions.

Adam Trexler in his *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change* states that human activity has so altered the history of the Earth that it has become necessary to declare a new epoch to signify the impact (Trexler 1). Earlier the works which focused on the themes related to climate change and other environmental concerns dealt with it at the superficiallevel.

Anthropocene Fictions mostly focused on the environmental concerns and its impact on theworld in a larger scenario. To study the intimidation of the Anthropocene, nature and its various aspects should be dealt with from a more critical perspective. "In order to perceive the threats of the anthropocene, nature should be discussed not only in terms of space but also in terms of temporal dimensions." (Nouri 819) Magnetizing the attention of various scholars and critics like Jeanette Winterson, this genre is helping to present something non-presentable hence making things comprehensible to the society. The aim of this paper is to explore how the extreme exploitation of technology is leading to their domination on the planet hence leading to the emergence of Anthropocene and directing to the extinction of natural life with reference to Jeanette Winterson's novel *The Stone Gods* (2007).

Anthropocene is a geological state in which humans have influence over the biosphere. It is a result of industrialization and other developments. This process includes harnessing energy and power from nature. However, too much exploitation of energy and other resources for human needs escorts to its accelerating disappearance. As a result of this the planet is losing its essence. Moreover, development in the field of technology is increasing human dependence on it. This is leading to its replacement by Artificial Intelligence and robots. It is directed to the emergence of a Posthuman Era. It is a state where humans are no longer at the center of the universe, thus dismantling the idea of 'Vitruvian Man'. This image is believed to uphold the standard of man in the universe. With the influence of technology "the Vitruvian Man has gone cybernetic" (Braidotti 90).

Representing these kinds of calamities in the form of a literary work is a challenging task, since the authors have to present everything from his/her imagination. Similar is the situation of *The Stone Gods* (2007)*,* a novel divided into four interrelated parts which projects how different human activities have affected the livable conditions of this planet, leading to increase in the threat of self-extinction. The attempt of these fictions have always been to bring awareness about the condition of the planet by projecting it from different time-frames in order to depict the before and after conditions due to human activities. "In this sense the Anthropocene narratives have a difficulty of enunciation since on one hand it needs to comprehend both human and non- human forces and on the other hand, the contemporary human needs to achieve a sense of emotional connectivity with humankind…" (Klein 84). It is a global crisis, which is presented through this work of Winterson, yet to be grasped by the denizens of the planet. When the novel opens, we see that the planet Orbus is on the verge of destruction, the narrator of the novel is Billie. She is a human who, in spite of working for the EnhancementServices, which is the Central Power, in the Tech City, is critical of the condition of the planet. Their planet is totally dominated by technology. They have to depend on AI for every chore to be done. The narrator in the initial section is extremely upset and denounces humanity for destroying natural resources and polluting the planet. The condition is so bad that even the air is not inhalable. It is all surrounded by reddust. Wearing a mask, on that planet, is somewhat mandatory. But the men in power have preserved oxygen in an artificial manner so that when need arises they can use it as per their convenience. In the

meantime, they have found a new planet named 'Planet Blue' and are preparing to shift there as soon as possible. But Billie is not in favor of this plan because she thinks that conditions on the new planet will be the same after a few decades. Billie, here, provesto be a protester against all these mishaps and exploitation going on in the planet. She is questioning the entire system. She lives in the middle of nature in a biodome farm, which gives her an opportunity to remain away from the tech city and feel nature for some time. Billie is so critical of human activities that she believes they do not deserve a "second chance" (Winterson 39). However, her farm was confiscated from her because the Central Power considers that a farm cannot reside in the midst of a "hi-tech hi-stress hi-mess life" (Winterson 11).

When we move towards the second section of the novel, we see the narrator is a male version of Billie named Billy. He is a sailor by profession and is accidently left on the 'Easter Island'. During his time there he is reminiscent of the former condition of the place which was full of greenery. It really is disheartening for him. Now when he looks around, he sees nothing but "…the Valley of the Shadow of Death…with few trees or shrub-bushes of any kind. Nature seemed hardly to have provided it with any fit thing for man to eat or drink…" (Winterson 97-8). This condition of the planet is a result of human exploitation of the planet.

The third section which is named as "Post3 War" is projected in a futuristic city full dominated by technology. This place presents the devastated condition of people there which is a result of World War 3. The effect is so vicious and immense that even after the end of the war, it is still lively in the people's mind. In this city neither capitalism nor government exist rather everything is controlled by a company called MORE.

The fourth part of the novel 'Wreck City' is a continuation of the third. When Billie and Spike arrive here, they find the place is inhabited by those people who were considered as outsiders and outlaws and everyone who does not support the progress of humanity. These are those people who believed in preserving the heritage of nature. But they were banished from the 'Tech City'and were considered as hostile. This city is a result of environmental damage caused by nuclear war. There is an environmental hell in the suburb of this 'Wreck City' known as Dead Forest, a radioactive forest inhabited by a "toxic radioactive mutant" (Winterson 202). When Billie enters the city she finds that her body is absorbing the radiation and she finds young children, bleeding, without hair and teeth running through the forest. She after enquiring learns from Friday that "Itis Tech City's big secret, one of them anyway. The incurable and the freaks are all in there. Theyfeed them by helicopter. A lot of women gave birth after the War finished. No one knew what would happen to the babies-well, now we do. Those are kids from nuclear families" (ibid).

From the above discussion we get a clear picture of how in different parts of the novel, we see the exploitation of the natural environment in the hands of humans have led to ruinous fallout. Increase in pollution has made Orbus a dangerous place to live in. The climate is changing so drastically that it will soon perish into ashes. Most of this is a result of exploitation of resources by the rich for their own benefit. Depicting the environmental crisis from different time frames, Winterson is also trying to convey the message to everyone how mistakes of one age can affect the entire course of the planet, mutating its effect in the upcoming ages. Human activities can affect not only humans of different times but other species as well. "Winterson questions the fixed structure of human history by deploying threaded stories of annihilation, thereby emphasizing human beings' similar destructive actions throughout history." (Nouri 823). Humans have learnt nothing from their mistakes. It is even visible in the novel when we see that the first human intervention made on Planet Blue went wrong. The Central

Power has arranged for an asteroid which is supposed to hit the sulphur base to create a small environmental change, so that the dinosaurs in this new planet die and the rich people from Orbus can reallocate.

However, the mission went wrong and a mini-ice age began. Now no one will be able to shift there and have to wait for their end. In the 3rd and 4th parts of the novel we see that nuclear war has destroyed a completely new generation. All these are nothing but a result of the exploitation of the natural resources and over use of technology. The impact on the planet is so strong that now they are left with no way out.

Apart from this Winterson is also conveying the message that the Earth is the home to us all. Billie's attempt, in the first of the novel, to preserve nature even in the form of a biodome is a reflection of her campaign to save the planet. It is our responsibility to take care of it. Progress is necessary but it should not be such that it leads to the extinction of natural life on the planet leaving only dominated by Artificial Intelligence. This opus by her is a plea to not repeat the same mistake again and again because if something disastrous happens we don't have a Planet B to budge. As Billie says, "Have you never heard of global responsibility? We are all of us on the planet obliged to tend the planet" (Winterson 31).

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Echoes of Ecological Crisis in British Fiction: A Critical Analysis of the Select Novels of Ian McEwan

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Abstract

Environment includes everything that surrounds us. There is a mutual dependence between human beings and their environment. Ecology is the study of the relationshipbetween living organisms including humans and their environment. Ours is basically an anthropocentric society rather than ecocentric. Though the centrality of human beings suffered serious blows in the form of theories like that of Copernicus and Darwin, the society continues to be largely centered on humans. The human arrogance has taken its toll on ecology too. Due to the increasing human interventions and other factors, the environment is under constant threat. The ecological warriors have been heralding the death of the planet and scripting its requiem for a long time. Climatic changes and the subsequent natural disasters are increasing at alarming rate. In the words of Rob Nixon,we are faced with "amorphous calamities". Hence it is high timeto think seriously about the probable solutions at all levels to tackle the ecological crisis.

Keywords: *ecocriticism, environment, climate, crisis, British fiction.*

Literature in a way is the reflection of the world we live in. The literary texts too can contribute their part in ecological conservation by drawing attention to various aspects of nature and reflecting on ecological issues. Since times immemorial, we can find descriptions of nature in literary works. But the critical readings of the literary texts from ecological perspective were not given much attention until recently.

Ecocriticism as a theory dealing with relationship between literature and the physical environment developed in the USA only in late 1980s and in UK in the early 1990s. Itis still an emergent movement. The current paper focusses on the representation of ecological crisis in British fiction. Being one of the most reputed and controversial contemporary British authors, the study is particularly focussed on the select novels ofIan McEwan.

Until recently, cological issues did not find much resonance in British fiction. But in contemporary British fiction, we can find a bunch of creative writers writing consciously of the imminent dangers to environment. These writers seem to have responded to Laurence Buell's view on literary texts as "acts of environmental imagination" that may "affect one's caring for the physical world". Ian McEwan is one such author in whose works we can find echoes of ecological crisis, though oftennot very explicitly. The current paper sheds light on the ecological implications foundin three major novels of McEwan. The novels selected for the analysis are *The Child in Time* (1987), *Atonement* (2001) and *Solar* (2010).

Born on 21 June 1948 in Hampshire, England, Ian Russell McEwan is regarded as one of the best-known contemporary British novelists. *The Times* featured him in its list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945" in 2008. McEwan has been shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize for fiction several times, winning the honour for *Amsterdam* in 1988. He began his career writing Gothic shortstories. His

first two novels, *The Cement Garden* and *The Comfort of Strangers* earned him the nickname "Ian Macabre". The other notable works of McEwan are *First Love, Last Rites, In Between the Sheets, The Child in Time, The Innocent, BlackDogs, Enduring Love, Atonement, Saturday, On Chesil Beach, Sweet Tooth, Solar, The Children Act* and *The Machines Like Me.* Generally, McEwan does not have the tag of an environmental writer. In most cases, his works lack overt environmental dimensions. But according to the leading ecocritic of the times Greg Garrard, "in hisreflections on moral agency in *Atonement,* on political crisis and scientific mercy in *Saturday,* and on human nature in all of his work since *Enduring Love,* McEwan has provided an implicit critique of many of the major ethical assumptions in ecocriticism" (696). The ecological dimension of his works became noticeable only after the publication of *Solar,* a novel with overt ecological dimension. Hence the ecological readings of his works are limited except for *Solar.*

Cheryll Glotfelty, the acknowledged founder of ecocriticism in the USA defines it as the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. The terms 'ecocriticism' and 'green studies' are respectively used to denote a critical approach which began in the USA in late 1980s and in the UK in the early 1990s. Ecocriticism in the USA takes its literary bearings from the transcendentalist writers of the 1840s. In contrast, the 'green studies' of UK takes its bearings from the British romanticism of 1790s. The founding figure in UK is the critic Jonathan Bate. Compared to USA, the development of ecocriticism in UK is less. The American variant tends to be celebratory in tone whereas the UK version seeks to warn us of environmental threats originating from governmental, industrial, commercial and neo-colonial forces. Hence, the novels of Ian McEwan when analyzed from an ecological perspective seems to warn us of the imminent ecologicaldisasters resulting from various societal forces.

Written in 1987, *The Child in Time* tells the gripping tale of a lost child and the disintegration of a marriage. The missing of his three-year-old daughter Kate while in a supermarket, leaves a devastating effect on the protagonist Stephen Lewis' life and marriage. Stephen himself is a well-known author of children's books. As Stephen gets lost in the daydreams of the past, time bends back on itself dragging his own childhood back into the present. On the peripheral level, we may find it as the story of a couple with a missing child. But on close reading, we can find many explicit as well as implicit elements concerning nature and the ecological crisis in the novel. The novel is most notable for its presentation of a dystopian future as an extension of Thatcherism, exploration of the "new physics" in terms of "feminization"of science and its challenge to patriarchal masculinity. The threat of nuclear war haunts the dystopian future of Britain in the novel. The hints of degradation of both society as well as the environment is subtle but pervasive in the novel. Licensed beggars roaming the street following the collapse of the welfare state, the extreme weather changes from drought to incessant rain, privatization of schools, monocultures of wheat and pine dominating a degraded landscape are all instances of degradation in the novel.

The novel can be read as an ecofeminist parable with its implicit criticism of Thatcherism in Britain. The novel tries to expose the pitfalls in the policies of Thatcher which include the degradation of environment. Margaret Thatcher will be remembered for bringing climate change, acid rain and pollution on to the mainstreampolitical map. But the free-market economics adopted by her government changed the green face of Britain. Privatization and other corporate-centric policies of Thatcher government contributed to the degradation of environment in many ways which find implicit criticism in the novel. Moreover, the women in the novel, Julie, wife of Stephen and Thelma, a quantum physicist

are integrated personalities capable of accommodating change. These characters give an ecofeminist dimension to the novel.

In *Writing Masculinities,* Ben Knights calls the novel a green parable in which masculinity, fathering and gender relations figure prominently. According to Greg Garrard, "in so far as it identifies patriarchal values, institutions, and identities as the root causes of environmental crisis, it might be more accurate to describe the novel asan ecofeminist parable" (698). The novel's underlying assumption is that only "womanly times" can save both nature and humanity. In the main plot, Stephen must learn from his wife Julie, the wisdom that will enable him to come to terms with the loss of their daughter whereas in the subplot, Charles Darke epitomizes the fatality ofa masculinity broken by the division between a repressed public self and the fantasiesof childhood that possess it in private. In his reflection on the superiority of women, Stephen admits that Julie "was not beyond confusion or irrationality, but she had an inviolably useful way of understanding and presenting her own morasses within the terms of a sentimental or spiritual education. With her, previous certainties were not jettisoned so much as encompassed, rather in the way, according to Thelma, scientificrevolutions were said to redefine rather than discard all previous knowledge" (56).

In *The Child in Time,* the power and virtue that the author finds in femininity, especially fecundity can be seen as a potential agent for change in masculinity. The novel gives hope of change in men. If the protagonist Stephen can change, men can change and if men can change, the world can change. The key element of Stephen's feminization is his changed relationship to time. At the beginning of the novel,he is afflicted by the irreversibility of time. At a significant moment, just before the conception of the second child, Stephen finds himself funneled into a lost countrysideof "elms, chestnuts, oaks, beeches
-old giants lost to the cash-crop plantations" (59), magically intervening in his parents' discussion of whether to abort him. This can be seen as Stephen's initiation into an altered relationship to time; returning to the scenefirst through his mother's memory and then again on his way to help Julie give birth to the second child, Stephen acknowledges that "his experience there had not onlybeen reciprocal with his parents', it had been a continuation, a kind of repetition" (239). Stephen thus completes a shift from a "masculine" sense of time as linear and dystopian to a "feminine" sense of time as cyclical and redeemable, which reaches itsclimax in his joyful reunion with Julie: "In the wild expansiveness of their sorrow they undertook to heal everyone and everything, the Government, the country, the planet, but they would start with themselves" (239).

Set in the World War and post- World War era, *Atonement* (2001) is the longest novelwritten by McEwan. The novel revolves around a mistake that the protagonist Briony Tallis commits as a thirteen-year-old girl and her attempt to atone for her sin through her writing. Like the most novels of McEwan, *Atonement* too lacks explicit ecologicalelements. But from the very setting of the novel in a country house, we can find descriptions of nature and reflections on various elements of nature in all the sections of the novel. The novel itself is written as an attempt to atone for a flaw in the 'nature'of the protagonist. Hence 'nature' acquires different levels of meaning in the novel.

What we find in the novel is an interactionist view of human nature. In the first part of the novel, nature is used to create the illusion of an English pastoral. A wealth of different plants is displayed, thus respecting the ideal of variety of the English landscape garden from generic "wildflowers" (23) to more precise designations such as a "rugosa hedge" (19) or Cecilia's bunch of flowers which is composed of "rose-bay willow-herb and irises" (20). Moreover, nature is very much part of the fictional world of Briony, a budding writer. In her world of writing, "A crisis in a heroine's life could be made to coincide

with hailstones, gales and thunder,whereas nuptials were generally blessed with good light and soft breezes" (7). From the flowers in the guest room to the "ornate plants and implausible birds" (24) paintedon Uncle Clem's vase, nature is omnipresent in the Tallis household. Nature is still very much present in the second part of the novel, but in contrast is described again the backdrop of war and the Dunkirk retreat. Here, the landscape is interpreted in military terms. The vegetation becomes both lush and disturbing, with an almost animal quality: "bushes with fat shiny leaves. There was also stunted oaks, barely in leaf" (195). The second section is notable for the soldiers' visual representation of nature as contaminated by war and machine. In contrast to the first two parts of the novel, the last part of *Atonement* contains fewer mentions of nature. The trope is relegated to second- hand mentions and letters constituting part of a lost pastoral past. However, the apparently small signifier of nature is part and parcel of Briony's evolution. Finally, the coda takes stock of the evolution of English garden described at the beginning of the novel. Nature is thus used as signpost for the past. It also serves a diegetic function, summarizing the situation and creating echoes. Finally, nature is utilized in the characterization process. The most obvious instance is the character of Robbie, who is introduced as a transitory gardener and landscape designer. In Cecilia's words, "Since coming down, landscape gardening had become his last craze, but one" (18). Thus, nature is very much part of the development of the plot of *Atonement.*

Climate change is one of the pressing global issues that we face today. The fictional representation of climate change as both scientific and cultural phenomenon demands a corresponding degree of complexity. In 2005, Robert Macfarlane lamented on the dearth of creative responses to climate change. But in the past decade, we can find a range of literary and critical works on the subject. Apart from science fiction, we can also find instances of genre fiction dealing with climate change. One such notable work is Ian McEwan's *Solar* published in 2010. It is a satire which deals with the question of climate change from the perspective of a morally- compromised scientist.

It is a rare example of mixing comedy with environmental issues. The novel is distinctive in its thrust upon climate change as an ethical dilemma for the present rather than a disaster set in the future. Having explicit ecological significance, the novel tells the story of Michael Beard, a Nobel prize winning physicist. It shows howBeard's professional and personal worlds collide in a freak accident, which provides him an opportunity to disentangle himself from his marital fiasco, rejuvenate his career and save the world from environmental disaster. With its climatic overtones, *Solar* is a very good instance for the interaction between literature and environment.

The outlook of the protagonist is evident in his response to Meredith, a novelist who believes in the applicability of scientific formulae to explain ethical situation, mocks the compatibility of scientific approaches to ethical and literary discourses. "So come on. Tell me. Let's hear you apply Heisenberg to ethics. Right plus wrong over the square root of two. What the hell does it mean? Nothing!" (106-107). Basing his novel on a serious environmental disaster from Beard's point of view enables McEwan both to refute a cynical scientist's belief in the superiority of science over artin terms of universal issues and to insist on the ability of literature to make the world vigilant about this man-made environmental disaster. Though McEwan places a high value on science in the novel, he never allows his scientist-protagonists to undermine the seriousness of the non- scientific discourse of literature. Depicting the failure of a scientist in competing against global warming by his plagiarized artificial photosynthesis project, *Solar* undoubtedly highlights the vanity behind the modern scientific belief in the ability of man to imitate nature to stop its further destruction due to human intervention. The novel exposes the absurdity of the discussion on global warming in contemporary international gatherings. The recently concluded United Nations Climate Change Conference, more commonly referred to as COP26 in

Glasgow is worth remembering in this context. Such events give rise to nothing but incredulous metanarratives. According to Habibi and Karbalaei, the novel shows that controlling global warming is nowadays an invalid metanarrative. It arises due to the impracticability of international summits and a lack of universal will for eradicating the global crisis. *Solar* thus gives an image of the doomed near future, if we fail to make a real and practical decision. Action speaks louder than words. Hence the novel calls for some urgent action on climate change. Acting as the author's mouthpiece, it is Tom Aldous, Beard's post- doctoral assistant, who draws attention to the potential of photosynthesis to solve global warming and energy crisis, "We need to take another look at photosynthesis, see what we can learn" (46). On the other hand, Michael Beard's reckless consumption and inability to grow and change, serve as a metaphor for the careless march of modern capitalist consumerism into ecological oblivion. Melissa, Beard's wife can be seen as a 'mother nature' character offering Beard a chance of redemption through fatherhood even while she gives warning of leaving him. Relying on a satirical discourse enables McEwan to combine comparatively serious, sad and regretful images of ethics, politics and science with comic scenes.

The issues of gender, race and class can no longer be the only concerns of literature and criticism. The growth of ecocriticism as a theory point at the need for analysing texts across various genres and cultures from ecological point-of-view. It is not necessary to have explicit ecological theme or elements to give ecocritical reading to a text. The analysis of Ian McEwan's selects novels from ecological perspective stands testimony to it. Though, McEwan is not an established environmental writer, his novels do have many explicit as well as implicit ecological elements. The critical analysis of novels, *The Child in Time* (1987), *Atonement* (2001) and *Solar* (2001) lays bare the ecological significance of McEwan's fiction in the contemporary literary studies.

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Ecology, Migration and Population Influx in Malda: A Case Study of Boundary Dispute Under Colonial Administration

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Abstract

The paper provides an account of the migrated populace by the erosion of the river Ganges, to the district of Malda, West Bengal, India during colonial era. It has been found from the 1911 census record that around 14 percent population influx had occurred in the district. Peasant communities from the neighbouring districts like Murshidabad and Santhal Paraganas were displaced due to ecological factors and were forced to migrate to the opposite side of the river Ganges. Those migrated communities settled in the unclaimed diara lands of the southern portion of the district of Malda. The paper throws a fresh light on the issue of migration and how the colonial administration intervened in the migration issue. How fardid the concept of colonial boundary and its statistical apparatus like census, address the subject? Did the migrating native atall respect the colonial imposition of a static, legitimate concept of boundary in South Asia? How the fluid lands of Bengal province questioned the basic idea of demarcating the administrative and revenue boundaries?

The paper also likes to address how the ecological factors hampered the colonial revenue generating mechanism from agricultural production and how far the Permanent Settlement at all became successful in the diara lands of the district? The records show that if the colonial government had continued to conduct the land settlement operation of the alluvial lands of the district more frequently, it would be beneficial in terms of revenue generation than the Permanent Settlement.

Keywords: Migration, Displacement, Colonial administration, Ecology, Bengal.

Introduction

It is a common phenomenon that under ecological degradation human migration will take place. For example, Gangetic erosion evicted people from their living and turned them into refugees. On the other hand, the same Gangetic delta attracts migrants to resettle in the fertile *char*-lands which were similar to inviting peasants to start cultivation. This kind of eviction, migration and resettlement is the continuous process of people's life living in the vicinity of the Ganges. In some cases, the colonizers tried to make a profit out of their suffering. To bring more lands under cultivation and generate revenue as much as possible was one of the major objectives of the colonial administration after the Permanent Settlement. They prioritized the vast, sedimented *char* lands of the rivers of the Bengal presidency. An interesting finding from Goswami's work, in this regard indicates that the colonizers had planned for a different programme to bring the *chars* of the Brahmaputra in Assam, under revenue generation. (Goswami 35)

Erosion and Displacement: The Migrating Peasant Communities

The example of colonial Malda showed how the natives took the decision in the post displacement scenario regarding their migration and resettlement which had put up a challenge for the colonial administration. The present study focuses on those population groups who were forced to migrate many times but were never classified as nomads by the colonial administration.

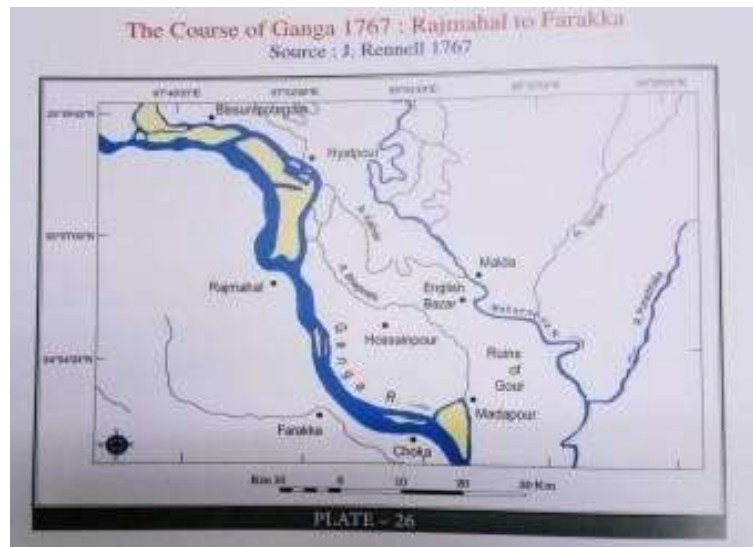It meant that they could be mapped as they would settle somewhere else not similar to the nomadic communities.

Figure 1 The course of Ganges

The above map (Figure 2) depicts the course of Ganges by James Rennell of 1767. Here On the left bank of the Ganges the Santhal Pargana and Murshidabad district situated and on the right side of the Ganges the Malda district situated. This map indicates that the mainstream of the Ganges was running closer to Rajmahal of Santhal Pargana when Rennell conducted his survey in 1767 and the river had reached the furthest point of its westward shifting tendency. In the immediate east of Rajmahal, two branches of Ganges merged together which created an island. It was later recorded as *Bhutni Diara*. (Rudra- Plate 26)
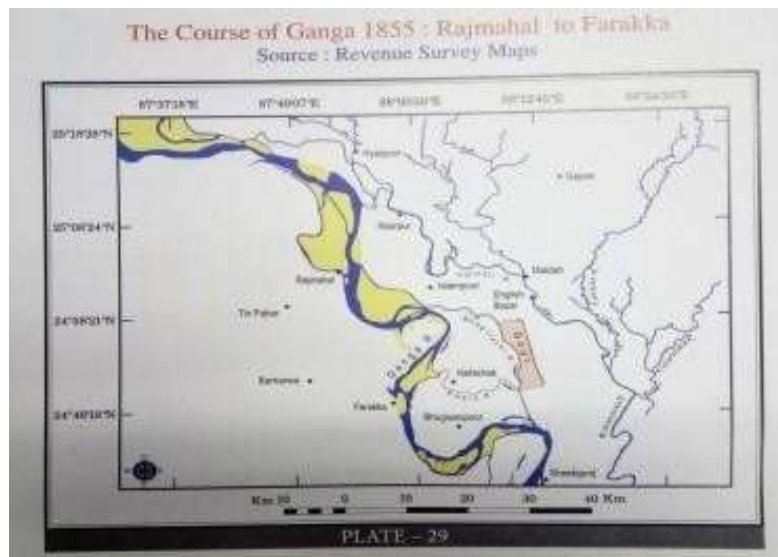

Figure 2 The mainstream of the Ganges

This map (Figure 2) indicates that the mainstream of the Ganges was flowing east of *Bhutni Diara* (During this survey it became developed as a permanent form of *char*-land) which means the mainland Malda and the *Bhutni Diara* was separated by the main channel of the river. Thus according to the Revenue survey (1848), it didn't fall under the district of Malda rather it was recorded as a part of the

district of *Santhal* Parganas. (Rudra- Plate 29) In this regard, the account of G. E. Lambourn about colonial Malda imparts important information. He wrote,

> *"The figures of the 1911 census show a population of 1,004,159, or an increase of 13.5 percent immigration has been constant from the Sonthal Parganas and there has been a considerable increase of population in the diara tracts, especially amongst the Mahomedans known as Shershabadis. The Ganges has also receded to the west with the result that large numbers of cultivators from Murshidabad have followed their chars into the district.*" (Lambourn 28).

According to census statistics, the figures of 1911 recorded a 13.5% increase in the populationof Malda district (Lambourn 28). This was for the first time in the history of the district where the official data recorded this extent of increment in the percentage of the population, which occurred on the basis of migration. These figures also indicated the magnitude of erosion and due to this, the affectedpeople from the neighbouring districts were forced to migrate and resettled in the *diara* tracts of Maldadistrict. The increase in population occurred due to immigration from *Santhal* Paraganas and Murshidabad districts. The *diara* tracts of Malda were a lucrative option especially for the *Santhal* tribewho lived in the *Santhal* Pargana and *Shershabadis*, who were Mohammedans, lived in the Murshidabad district. As the Ganges shifted to the west, large acres of land were submerged and completely eroded from the western banks, which fell under the Murshidabad district and the *Santhal* Pargana respectively. As a result of that, the *Santhal* tribe and *Shershabadi* community migrated, in search of settlement and livelihood, to the *diara* regions and *char*-lands of Malda. The 1911 census also recorded the *diara* thanas of Malda district having the highest density of population which was 529people per square mile. The testimony of the colonial records in a way leads to the conclusion that sucha high density of population has been caused due to the migration from other districts.

Though the inflow of migration did not occur all of a sudden, rather the people from the neighbouring districts chose to resettle in the southern part of Malda and this was a consistent course of action. Before the 1911 Census, it was observed that the inflow of Mohammadans gradually increased in the district of Malda throughout the first decade of the 20th century. The westward and the southward movement of the Ganges eroded considerable parts of Murshidabad and led to alluvial accumulation towards Malda, which attracted numerous settlers to progressively extend themselves towards the unclaimed *diara* lands. (Carter 37)

The parameter through which the colonial bureaucrats categorized the migrating communities is interesting to understand. For example, M. O. Carter categorically explained the whereabouts of *Shersabadiyas* and how their migration indirectly helped in the agricultural production of unclaimed *diara* tracts of Malda. According to him, the Mohammadan agriculturalist, among whom the most notable were the *Shersabadiyas* or simply *Badiyas* had migrated and settled around the *diara* lands of Malda. They derived their name from the Shersabad Paragana located in the Murshidabad district. The *Shersabadias* were forced to migrate due to the erosion of the Ganges. (Carter 45) The *Shersabadiyas* devoted much time and labour towards the retrieval of the newly accumulated land which the ordinary cultivators would never attempt to clear.
Their superior cultivating technique was unmatched by any of their neighbours. They had enhanced knowledge regarding the nature and the properties of the soil and acquired the best outcomes from the soil. Their usual practice was to create long and rectangular plots of land, so that continual turning of the plough was made easier without misusing the time. When they obtained land they transferred the

fields according to their preferred shape. *Shersabadiyas* were exceedingly diligent, who invested more time and effort in their cultivation process than any other neighbouring agriculturalist. (Carter 45) The *Santhal* community also possesses the skill for quality farming and has tremendous tenacity to make any un-ploughed land cultivable. Those communities migrated because *diara* land provided them the best exposition to sustain their living through cultivation. Thus crossing over the Ganges and resettling in the *diara* tracts of Malda allowed them to continue their livelihood through their acquired skills. These groups of people also bring up an unfamiliar instance where migrating communities were able to sustain their pre migrating profession in another territory. The colonizers created boundaries but it was never an obstacle for the natives, especially the migrating communities across the Ganges in Malda.These migrants followed their normal pattern of movement within the traditional frontier zones and the boundaries maintained by the colonizers did not interfere. (Solomon 7)

Ecology, Territory and State: Boundary Dispute Mechanism of the Colonial Administration

On numerous occasions, the colonizers had used rivers, streams and canals as boundaries to demarcate their colonized territories. This type of demarcation was problematic as the water bodies can change their course. For example, in the Bengal delta, there is a constant change in the flow of the rivers and thus the demarcation of land does not remain the same. This further created administrative disputes for the British colonizers in Bengal, forcing them to change the administrative jurisdiction. The colonial powers both ignored local factors and introduced extraneous political considerations and alien concepts in the determination of colonial boundaries in Asia. (Solomon 7)

One such account of W.W. Hunter in this regard was helpful to understand the question faced by the colonial administration in the fluid lands of Bengal. Hunter mentioned about 1806.64 square miles of land which was transferred from the neighboring districts by the Boundary Commissioner in 1874 to the Malda district. (Hunter 17) The above-mentioned land mainly comprised river areas, which had induced numerous disputes associated with it. River areas were connected with the idea of change in the river course which resulted in encroachment of the Ganges and resurfacing of *char*-lands. Due to the encroachment and resurfacing of land, inter-district and inter -division boundary disputes started occurring, resulting in administrative obstacles. Before the census of 1871, the Boundary Commission and the Government of India rectified the district boundaries of Malda, thus delaying theterritorial identification of the district.

The inclusion of certain villages within the district was referred to in the *thana* maps which were supplied to the Boundary Commission. Due to these arrangements, boundaries were simplified making fiscal and criminal jurisdiction continuous.

According to a letter (bearing no 418 A) written by the Collector of Malda to the Divisional Commissioner on 15th August 1873, the boundary between the districts of Malda and Murshidabad created difficulty due to the *char*-lands and the continuous changes and alterations within the course of the Ganges. Thenceforth the Ganges was considered as the boundary between two districts and the middle course of Ganges became the boundary between Malda and Murshidabad. The method, in which the boundary was determined, introduced a paradigm shift regarding one's territorial identification in connection with the colonial government. Since the census count in India had already been initiated by the colonial administration from the year 1871, one's affiliation with certain British territory was attributed to their physical presence within a defined boundary. According to the colonial notion,

whoever decided to migrate from one area to another crossing over the boundary to permanently settle in the new area were counted as a part of the new territory and their numerical count from the previous territory had to be omitted.

Modern governance will not allow the subject (population) to be counted twice. However, for a region where the territorial existence through its demarcated administrative boundary was fragile, the colonial administration had to be defensive to overcome the dispute. But that defensiveness again intensified further disputes. The colonial administration became resolute to settle the boundary dispute and thus decided to declare the middle course of the Ganges as the administrative boundary for the two neighbouring districts. While taking this decision the colonial administration ignored the fact that the middle course of any river, including the Ganges, could change every year. The people living in such areas would fall under administrative lacuna where theoretically their territorial affiliation would be transferred from one to the other without any physical or practical effect on the subject group. In the same manner, one's administrative affiliation would change every year along with the movement of the river course even if the population never moved from their settlement.

A similar kind of problem had been revealed by Lambourn's account in his District Gazetteers of Malda of 1918. He wrote,

> *"...the emigration is mainly attributable to the constant changes of jurisdiction caused by variation in the course of the Ganges and to the settlement of the surplus diara population in the vacant chars..."* (Lambourn 28).

From his account, it is understandable that the territorial boundary of the district of Malda was yet to be settled when he wrote the gazette in 1918, though the boundary commission had tried to resolve the dispute in 1874. It also indicated that the changing course of the Ganges has created more complex situations and the then boundary of the district became questionable. The people who inhabited this region had a good understanding of the ideas of living and resettling along with t h e changes in the river course and thus they were not bothered with the modern concept of a boundary. This also shows that the role of the colonial state mediated through society barely existed for them. After the colonial administrative boundary came into existence, the settlers of Murshidabad and *Santhal* Parganas were referred to as 'emigrants' to the district, as they left one territory and settled in anotherterritory. After the census of 1911, when Lambourn had written his gazette, he quite obviously referredto these people as 'emigrants' to the district of Malda.

Earlier in 1876, W. W. Hunter had mentioned the problem regarding inter-district boundary dispute due to the changing course of the Ganges and the colonial administration then decided that the mainstream of the Ganges would be the boundary between Malda and Murshidabad. As per the decision of the Boundary Commission of 1874, Malda had received a large portion of land. It was certain that the river course would constantly change, and create a dispute over district boundary, thus the British government thought it to be better to settle the disputed boundary of two districts along the mainstream of the Ganges.

Transfer of *Bhutni Diara* to the District of Malda

Continuing with the idea of boundary disputes, the example of *Bhutni Diara* further enhances the complexities associated with recognizing borders and territories. The absorption of *Bhutni Diara* to the district of Malda took place in 1929. This incident showed that the district boundary of Malda was yet to be finalized. Thus the colonial administration had to reconsider its decision regarding the district boundary of Malda. River boundaries became inadmissible to those cases where the course of the river constantly changed. The present paper has already elaborated the logic behind the idea of the colonial administration in choosing the middle course of the river as the boundary for two neighbouring districts. As the colonial administration introduced such an idea by the 1870s, it was expected that fluidlands would no longer create any administrative disputes between two neighbouring districts. Nonetheless, this wasn't the reality as pictured by the colonial bureaucrats, which is clear from the inclusion of *Bhutni diara* into the district map of Malda in 1929. Boundary demarcation on fluid land was not an easy task and the inexperience of the colonizers became evident regarding the river system of South Asia, where the change in course and land rise from the river bed was a constant occurrence and boundary disputes were inevitable. Rivers of England do not have the same nature as those of South Asia, and their manner was unknown to the colonial state. Thus the decision to maintain the middle course of the river as the boundary of two contesting administrative units ignored the probable repercussions. The incorporation of *Bhutni Diara* nullified such a decision.

Colonial administration undoubtedly had more interest in demarcating the district boundary properly, rather than for the people who had to migrate to the other districts due to river encroachment. At that time the district was divided into many estates and the British government received specific revenue from each one of them. In many cases when a land accreted near an estate, it became a major issue between two contesting estates to take control of the accreted land. In some cases, the colonial government took control of such lands and they were termed as '*khas mahal*' (*khas*-estate) of the government.

Conclusion

In case of fluid land the concept of colonial boundaries becomes questionable. The nature of Gangetic erosion in Bengal province jeopardizes the concept of boundaries as determined by the colonial state. The colonial government had to constantly re-adjust its administrative boundaries.

For the natives, these boundaries were not formal. The example of *Shersabadiyas* of Murshidabad and the *Santhals* of *Santhal* Parganas migrating to Malda district showed that natives migrated to different colonial administrative territories when hit by erosion. The natives didn't have the orientation to understand the concept of colonial boundaries, and thus they migrated in search of livelihood in the *diara* lands of Malda. The colonial administrators lacked the ability to demarcate an established boundary on un-static land and thus didn't interfere in the migration process even when a considerable number of natives traveled to the *char*-lands of Malda. Another argument in this regard is that the colonial administrators allowed many of these migrants to settle in *char*-lands as they were credible agriculturalists and maximum revenue for the colonial rule was generated through these lands. Due to erosion as land decreased from Murshidabad and *Santhal* Parganas, and increased in Malda, it required greater preparation before cultivation. For the colonial rulers, these migrating natives prepared the land for their interests. They cultivated the land which in turn generated revenue for the colonial administration. On one hand, as the existence of its volatile nature is predominant, the *diara* lands were kept outside of Permanent Settlement. On the other hand, a separate survey was needed to bring all

those unsettled land under proper mapping and records. However, that was not easy, neither was it cost-effective.

In the fluid land, the surface of the *diara* has been changing very quickly. The land accretion and diluvion is a continuous process and to keep the track of that accretion and diluvion, *diara* survey was required within a very short interval. The colonial government was unable to conduct that because of two reasons. One is the ecological factors that created a lot of hindrances for them to conduct a proper survey on a fluid land. The records showed few attempts of *diara* survey in the district which in turn resulted in uncompleted *diara* resumption. So when the colonial government was finally able to conduct a full-fledged *diara* survey in the district of Malda in the 1920s-1930s, it had been a prolongedtime since the Permanent Settlement took place. The survey result was beneficial for the colonial state as they had been able to create as many as 80 new *khas* estates in the district. So if the colonial government had conducted the *diara* resumption more frequently, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that they would be more beneficial. However, they lacked the understanding of the nature of fluidlands of South Asia, which in turn didn't allow them to obtain control over the lands they conquered. The constant failure to resolve the inter district or inter-state boundary disputes were those kinds of instances that exemplify the failure of colonial government by the ecological enmity of South Asia.

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The Industrial Revolution, Climate Change and the Working Class Under Capitalism

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Abstract

The industrial revolution's effect is hard to comprehend. It is an event of titanic proportion, affecting every facet of our planet. This period would sometimes be referred to asthe starting point of the "Anthropocene" era, where the effects of humanity or capitalism would alter the planet in such a way that it could be categorized as a new geographical epoch.It would start somewhere around 1760 and remain till 1840. The era brought ground-breakingtechnological innovations, but what was the cost? The Industrial Revolution would bring about the crisis of Climate change, where the weather patterns and temperatures throughout the environment would alter, resulting in extreme damages to the wildlife. Further, the feudalsociety labour would transport into the factory setting. The working-class people would movefrom slavery under the feudal system to slavery under the capitalist system. This paper seeks to explore the effects of the Industrial revolution. To understand the effects of the Industrial revolution, I will look to the general consumption of resources of the period, I will look towards the effects of the Industrial revolution on the society I will look towards the literatureof Oliver Goldsmith and Charles Dickens to understand the state of the working-class people of the period. With this paper, I seek to understand and explicate the damages that would come with the industrial revolution. The way it was a double-edged sword. I will try to show how while the industrial revolution brought multiple technical and sociological advancements, there were equal damages.

Keywords- *Industrial revolution, Working-class, climate change.*

The industrial revolution would be one of the most important events that would occurin the history of humankind. It is a difficult task to ascertain a definite starting and end of theindustrial revolution. Fredrich Engles believed - "the history of the proletariat begins with thesecond half of the last century, with the invention of the steam-engine and of machinery for working cotton. These inventions gave rise, as is well known, to an industrial revolution, a revolution which altered the whole civil society; one, the historical importance of which is only now beginning to be recognized" (Engels).

I believe that the industrial revolution starts earlier, from the period of the agriculturalrevolution. Around the period of the early 16th century, the Norfolk four-field rotation system, additionally the introduction of the dutch improvements of the Chinese fallow woulddrastically increase the harvest. The introduction of these, and more, would result in the opening up of labour. This un-utilized labour would move into the industrial section, therebybeing the fuel to the fire of the industrial revolution. The Putting-out system would develop into the factory and workshop setting. The discovery of new lands would result in increased demands which necessitated increased production, which would, in turn, allow for smaller private industries to emerge. The industrial revolution would witness the first transnational companies, issuing shares. We see during this period the rise of Richard Arknight, an inventor and entrepreneur who would patent multiple inventions including the rotary cardingengine which would convert raw cotton to cotton lap before it was spun. During this period, we would see the introduction of the revolutionary Spinning Jenny (R. Ray Gehani, 1998).

The steam engine would not only allow having a reciprocating relationship with the coal industry, as the improvement of one would allow the better extraction of the other. Industriessuch as the blast-

furnace industry required the steam engine to perform the more demandingand harsher task, as such better steam engines would be at the heart of the iron industry."By 1700, coal use corresponded to nearly 50 percent of total energy consumption. In the 1750s,that proportion had risen to 60 percent, and in 1800 –1809 it stood at 79 percent. " (Albritton Jonsson, Fredrik 679-96).

Coal had become one of the most important resources during this period. Coal would be utilized from all sectors of the industry from transport to the iron industry. From fuel to the generation of steam, coal would be of paramount interest.

"In Britain, by 1800 an estimated 10,000 horsepower was being supplied by steam. By1815 steam power had grown to 210,000 hp" (Landes, David S. 1969) Steam power had grown increasingly important as the industrial revolution would slowly start chugging along. Though some debate the importance of the steam engine in the industrial revolution. According to Peter Mathias, the engine's importance has been over-emphasized. He claims that the engines were expensive pieces of material that were available only to factories with extensive opportunities to invest. Still, he contends that it is unwise to underestimate the importance of steam power.

Critics like Mokyr stresses the idea of the "enlightened economy" and the importance of entrepreneurship as an important aspect of the industrial revolution. They stress that the true revolution emerged due to both the important macro-inventions that drastically improvedsome important facet of the production cycle, as much as liberal policies that allowed the free movement of capital, and the least restrictions to Trade- which Mokyr interprets as a product of the enlightenment ideals- took hold. -

 "The statue of Artificers was abolished in 1814, the enumeration causes (that forced British colonial goods to be shipped to third markets through Britian) ...trade liberalization slowly advanced, beginning in the early 1820s and culminating in theabolition of the corn laws in 1846" -(Mokyr, 2012).

I would like to however point that among these laws was passed also the Unlawful Combinations act 1811 which restricted trade unions. These decisions would be inspired by rising anti-industrial activities that were taking place during this period. The Luddites are a striking example of this.

One can argue that the invention of the Spinning Jenny and the steam engine can be considered a sort of landmark in the age-old progression of automation and machinery. In linewith the capitalist desire for profit, the factories had a clear incentive to move away from older technologies and move towards the ever-increasing world of new technology.

"Many texts speak of a loss of political agency: the working class were liberated from the shackles of rural labor for landowners, only to become victims of new forms of exploitation by industrial elites "-(Goodbody, Axel.2018, 53–58,)

One such group that can be used as an example is the Luddites. Increasing automation would lower the socially required labour for production, the resultant of this was that wages were driven lower and unskilled labour would be preferred. The socially necessary labour time would be drastically lowered as fewer people could produce substantially more. The Napoleonic war would push down the British industries into even worse positions. The strain of the economy would result in militant textile workers rebelling and destroying automated textile machines, as an act of rebellion. As time would

progress machines would increase inefficiency and industries would value machines far more than any individual man.

"[We] built a cotton economy for three hundred years as slaves on which the nationgrew powerful We, too, realize that when human values are subordinated to blind economic forces, human beings can become human scrap." - —Martin LutherKing Jr., Speech to the United Automobile Workers.

The industrial revolution would result in harsh working hours, now under the factories,rapid ruining of the old society and the rise of a materialistic capitalist society. Not only did this devalue mankind, but it also caused environmental damages beyond comprehension. Theindustrial revolution would move the working class from the fields into the factories. From enslavements under Fiefs into enslavement under the manufacturing middle class, rising to meet the explosion of demand from the discovery of new land (Marx, Communist Manifesto,1848).

Here is the period from where we can see the start of what many theorists deem the Anthropocene, where humanity would have a tremendous amount of effect around theirenvironment. The ozone layer would deplete, the global average temperature and the sea levelswould rise at an alarming rate. Man's relation to the world around him and the relationship between themselves would equally change. The industrial revolution would result in the man being defined by the nature of their participation in the capitalist system (Labourer or Capital owner).

With the age of discovery, explorers would discover new trade routes that would be introduced expediency into the international trading system. The increased demand, driven bythe new demand from colonies and empires would necessitate greater extraction of resources."The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with thecolonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development."(Marx, 1848).

With the discovery of new lands and new markets, there would be increased globalization. The new trade markets would result in an increased impetus to technologies that would allow for greater extraction of materials, it would further the hyper fixation on the search of new lands and new resource reservoirs. Most importantly, this would encourage greater utilization of slavery and violence to gain access to trade resources.

To combine all this, it is not a stretch to make this claim- Industrial revolution gave impetus to exploratory attempts, Exploration resulted in the increase in globalization, Globalization resulted in increased demand, increased demand required greater resource discovery and extraction, this led to an increase of not only an explosion of pollution and abusive institutions like slavery.

"Owing to the extensive use of machinery, and to the division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the simplest, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him." (Marx ,1848).

The discontent of this period is not merely connected with that of low wages, it is of analienation of the worker and the labour.

"The externalization of the worker in his product means not only that his work becomes an object, an external existence, but also that it exists outside him, independently, alien, an autonomous power, opposed to him. The life he has given to the object confronts him as hostile and alien."- (Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844. Karl Marx) (Marx, 1844).

And "When, under conditions of alienated labour, workers must produce objects over which they have no control (because the objects belong to the employers) and which are used against those who produced them (by increasing the wealth and power of the employers) the workers are alienated from their essential humanity"- (Singer, 1980, page 49).

It is not merely a question of the workers increasingly losing their wages and work.The workers were increasingly alienated from their labour. They were told what to make and they would gain a meagre wage rather than gaining any meaningful portion of the profits generated. To Marx, man gained their identity through their own labour (Singer,1980, page-48).

Additionally, I would like to focus on the environmental damages too-

"The furnaces of the world are now burning about 2,000,000,000 tons of coal a year. When this is burned, uniting with oxygen, it adds about 7,000,000,000 tons of carbon dioxideto the atmosphere yearly."- (Hone, 2020)

It would do good to remember the existence of "Black country". Black Country refers to an area in the United Kingdom encompassing most of Dudley, Sandwell. It was a heavily industrial area and considered one of the main centers of the industrial revolution. The area also possessed rich coal mines, iron foundries and steel mills which would produce incomprehensible levels of pollution. The result would be that the morning sky would be nearly black. Charles Dickens would write in The Old Curiosity shop of this place as –

"Poured out their plague of smoke, obscured the light, and made foul the melancholy air"-

Here is the period from where we can see the start of what many theorists deem the Anthropocene, where humanity would have a tremendous amount of effect around theirenvironment. The ozone layer would deplete, the global average temperature and the sea levelswould rise at an alarming rate. Man's relation to the world around him and the relationship between themselves would equally change. The industrial revolution would result in the man being defined by the nature of their participation in the capitalist system (Labourer or Capital owner).

Literature of the period seems to reflect the anxieties of this period. The publication of Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations and the publication of Oliver Goldsmith's The deserted village would mark the key problem during this period, the loss of old society and the rise of an increasingly materialistic existence of enlightenment. Oliver goldsmith would write-

"With sweet succession, taught even toil to please; These round thy bowers theirchearful influence shed, these were thy charms—But all these charms are fled." (Goldsmith, 1770)

 He reflects the concern with the slow degeneration of old village life and its simplicity. Whereas under the older systems even "toil" to "please", the new system would change theworld into a system of

poverty, servitude and degeneration. It is striking when he states- "Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:" (Goldmsith, 1770)

With the capitalist system, we encounter the rise of wealth inequality. This is not to say that wealth inequality did not exist in the pre-industrial system. Yet it could be said that thedifference between the two periods is-"His best companions, innocence and health; and his best riches, ignorance of wealth." (Goldsmith, 1770)

It could be argued that according to these lines, what the industrial revolution and the capitalist system would bring about is the awareness, the lost innocence. Goldsmith's poem would go on to describe multiple visual, heart-wrenching examples of loss of innocence and poverty, all his examples have a running theme of starting from extreme optimism and endingwith catastrophe, as the capitalist promise of self-determination and independence dissolves into an awareness of the new servitude under a new system. When Samual Johnson states-

"Prepare for Death, if here at Night you roam,
And sign your Will before you sup from Home." (Johnson)

Johnson reflects a new wave of depravity that would overwhelm the society of this period. The work of Dickens and other authors would be one where the new concerns with wealth inequality, the loss of identity and corruption would be at their most explicit. The working class would become more and more alien. In the work of Dickens, for example, HardTimes, we can find in the description of Coketowna reflection of the dead-sameness of the industrial society. " vast piles of buildings full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam engine worked monotonously up and down." (Dickens).

Critic Paricia E Johnson would write of this deadening repetition-
"This unique emphasis by Dickens on the repetition of the factory structure in every aspect of Coketown's life has often been read as Dickens's recognition of the deadening sameness of factory work and the alienated nature of its system of production" (Johnson 128-37). The industrial revolution had, in this case, utterly destroyed what remained of the individual life of the older system. Here we see the capitalistic loss of individuality being reflected into the very structure and construction of the buildings in the narratives. It would not be a stretch to say that this metonymic framing of the buildings was quite intentional by Dickens. Further, in Dickens's "On strike", Dickens shows a level of astonishment towards the workers who don't rebel and are quite amicable in their behaviour. They ignore Dickens's standing among them, though Dickens would be visually an alien to them. Dickens is aware that quite possibly he would be viewed as a sort of alien infiltrator among the worker gatherings, yet he is not the least harassed regardless of the anger and density of the crowd he stands with. Quite the opposite, he is utterly ignored by the people around him.

"Thus the expectation that the workers will be a violent, unthinking mob is based explicitly on their contiguity with the violent, unthinking machines. That the workers are peaceful and reflective astonishes Dickens the observer."- (Spector, 1984, 365-84) Dickens here makes the same mistake that would identify the world of the industrial revolution. The man would become identified, if not subsumed, by the machine. That there can be existence outside of the machine, that there can be an identity that would be alien from the machines would. Dickens too, in chapter 11 of hard times states of the workers- "there is an unfathomable mystery in the meanest of them, forever". It is an awareness of the individual, incomprehensible, indissoluble identity of the worker that can never be truly dissolved

into the capitalist system. Certainly, Spector states- "Dickens' recognition that the workers' selves can never be known completely is, in context, directed at the purveyors of "facts"-compilers of Blue Books, utilitarians, laissez faire economists, etc" (Spector 365-84).

Dickens' work shows indignation towards the subjugation of the working class towards the machines. Dickens' "unfathomable mystery" is the humanity that the machines paradoxically rely upon. I say this relationship is paradoxical because whereas under the capitalist system the machines generate greater value than any single human, the machine fundamentally depends upon the machines to function.

Conclusion

The industrial revolution would incomprehensibly change human relations. Nature itself would be poisoned as the man would tear apart the earth in search of coal and newer fuel sources. In this paper, I explored the way the industrial revolution affected climate change and the social relations of humanity. I explored the way the industrial revolution heralded the forces of capitalism as it would overwhelm all. Man's relation would cease to be that of holistic naturalism, it would be turned into a sort of cash-nexus, where all relations would be determined by their monetary connections. Humanity would be divided between the wealthy and the working class. The working class would be denied their identity, rather they would be identified through their work. I looked at multiple literary sources such as the work of Dickens, Frances Trollope, Oliver Goldsmith and Samual Johnson to gain a general understanding of the working class and their status in the world. I additionally looked at the effect of the industrial revolution upon the environment, the way in which temperature has risen and the amount of pollution caused by the revolution.

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