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"This was no Swarga": Negotiating 'Ecoprecarity' and Mythology in Ambikasutan Mangad's *Swarga: A Posthuman Tale*

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Abstract

In his seminal work, *Ecoprecarity: Vulnerable Lives in Literature and Culture* (2019), Pramod Nayar defines "ecoprecarity" as the representation of "the precarious lives humans lead in the event of ecological disaster" (7). This concept of ecoprecarity also brings to the surface the numerous ways the dialectics of the environment get "rendered precarious due to human intervention in the Anthropocene" (7). Ambikasutan Mangad's acclaimed Malayalam novel *Swarga: A Posthuman Tale* (2017), translated into English by the eminent historian Jayakumari Devika, canvasses the years-long battle against the devastating impacts of endosulfan usage in producing extensive cashew crops at Kasaragod district, Northern Kerala. Neelakantan and Devayani, outraged by the mechanisms of the capitalistic gig economy of the metropolitan space, decide to settle in the remote, peaceful, dense jungles of Swarga to live in a deep symbiotic relationship with non-human entities. The ruinous consequences of chemical pollution at this indigenous site prompt this couple to protest against the degradation of environmental resources in association with the brave, honest journalist Jayarajan. This article maps how the prevailing idea of "ecoprecarity" as an "intertwined set of discourses of fragility, vulnerability, power relations across species" (6) pinpoints the "vulnerability of *all* lifeforms, their attendant ecosystems and relations between and across lifeforms" (14) in Mangad's eco-narrative. By foregrounding Hindu mythology as a living ontological framework, this paper further interrogates how the climate catastrophe has become a peril of the rich Keralite culture and heritage as God's own country in this fiction.

Keywords: ecoprecarity, urban, power, climate, culture.

Introduction

> If we imagine ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us.
>
> — Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (72)

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Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's pertinent statement refers to the transformation of "the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it" (Leopold 240) within the corpus of green studies/eco-humanities. In postcolonial academic canon, the *locus classicus* is on the rising growth of environmental plunder that has led to severe forms of ecoprecarity in the Global South[1]due to "the rapid increase in atmospheric carbon; extreme weather events such as drought, flooding, fire, and hurricanes; cataclysmic species extinctions; sea-level rise; ocean acidification; and a warming planet" (DeLoughrey 2). The continuous neoliberal extractions and erosions of natural wealth diminish the habitability and sustainability of the earth in the form of climatic occurrences and human diseases. The Malayalam novelist Ambikasutan Mangad's fictional narrative *Swarga: A Posthuman Tale* (2017) delves deep into ecoprecarity in a dystopian society to unpack the aftermath of the horrible endosulfan tragedy. It engages with how the myopic policies of the imperial capitalist infrastructure transform the holy sites of God's land into *terra nullius* through the microcosmic portrayal of the *Oikos* of Enmakaje.[2] Mangad's detailed knowledge of the relationship between government agencies, politicians, private enterprises, and urbanism paints an alarming picture of what must be done to combat environmental criminality within this nation-state. The seemingly insignificant link between planetary aspects and the operation of imperialist intervention is essential in understanding the severity of environmental degradation in this text. In other words, the imposed order of the thriving capitalist technology signifies "the symbolic and conceptual structures with which 'we' are trying to make sense of the current Anthropocene condition" (Schulz 54). The perceptions of the Anthropocenic apocalyptic turn imply a cultural marker of the bitter indictment of Eurocentrism and a disdain for the combined functions of capitalism and imperialism in every nook and corner of the Third World.

Literature Review

The rhizomatic root of this article takes nourishment from numerous journal papers, book chapters, a book, and a dissertation on the discourse explanation of *Swarga: A Posthuman Tale*. Om Prakash Dwivedi's "Bioprecarity, Disposability, and the Poetics of Hope in *Swarga*" (2022) incites how Mangad's novel incorporates a poetics of optimism in the struggle of the Enmakaje populations to oppose the joint workings of the corporate capitalism and the nation-state. Sreejith Varma's monograph *Reading Contemporary Environmental Justice: Narratives from Kerala* (2023) compares this fiction with two other ecodisaster texts of Kerala, such as Balakrishnan Mangad's *Bhommiyude Kannu* (2004) and Sara Joseph's *Aathi* (2011), to advocate for our need to maintain the sustainability of our planet for generations to come**.** Sonalika Chaturvedi and Renu Bhadola Dangwal's chapter "Writing the Grotesque: Poisoned Bodies and Toxic Environment in Ambikasutan Mangad's *Swarga: A Posthuman Tale*" (2023) situates the Endosulfan tragedy within other ecodisasters in our homeland, such as the Bhopal Gas Disaster (1984) and the Green Revolution of Punjab (1966-1967).

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Tarik Ali's "Pesticide, Politics, and a Paradise Lost: Toxicity, Slow Violence, and Survival Environmentalism in Ambikasutan Mangad's *Swarga*" chronicles how the politics of denial seeks to obscure the unpleasant reality through the writer's delineation of distorted human bodies with congenital disabilities. Pooja Jana and Padmaja C. V.'s essay "Veins of Poison: Intersections of Green Criminology, Environmental Justice, and Toxicity in Ambikasutan Mangad's *Swarga" (2023)* spells out how Mangad's fiction talks about the convergence of green crime, ecological rights, toxic effects, and human consciousness. Ishan Mukhopadhyay's thesis *"*Ambikasutan Mangad's *Swarga* as a Performance and an Instance of Postcolonial Translation" (2024) argues how Mangad's text is a case study of postcolonial translation that embeds the politics of cultural and environmental plurality as a counteraction to imperialist extractivist agendas. Varna Venugopal and Swarnalatha Rangarajan's "'When the Black Half of the Kunni Seed Whitens': Plant-Lore and the Plantationocene in Ambikasuthan Mangad's *Swarga*" (2025) rethinks that Mangad's narrative is an essential illustration of modern plantation fiction via positioning its ecological politics at the crossroads of environmental and social justice movements.

While reviewing these works on the existing scholarship of *Swarga*, I have found that these critics have discussed the fictive representation of the Endosulfan tragedy by utilising the theoretical tool of White environmentalists. These articles have incorporated Lawrence Buell's idea of 'toxic discourse', Donna J. Haraway's design of 'capitalocene', 'plantationocene', and 'chthulucene', Phillip E. Wegner's thought of the 'close-critical reading' model, Rob Nixon's assessment of 'slow violence', and Stacy Alaimo's tool of 'transcorporeality'. Although these essays have talked about pertinent issues of this South Indian narrative, they have not given much attention to the Indian methodology of exploring the nuances of this eco-narrative as a living ontological framework. With this purpose in mind, this article intends to thoroughly investigate *Swarga* through the analytical lenses of the Indian ecologist Pramod Nayar's 'ecoprecarity' to make a scathing critique of the dominant hegemony of the totalitarian regime.

The Theoretical Premise of Ecoprecarity

The theoretical tool of 'ecoprecarity' has been the focal point of interest in the epistemologies of postcolonial ecocriticism in recent years to study humanity's relentless assault to degenerate Planet Earth into a pernicious ecology. Pramod K. Nayar, the UNESCO Chair Professor in Vulnerable Studies, popularises the emergent concept of 'ecoprecarity' or 'biocultural precarity' within the context of Indian ecocriticism. Broadly speaking, the word "ecoprecarity" is something "concerned with human survival and continuity on earth when its mode of continuity" exhibits "the very cause of alien reproduction and the simultaneous end of the human race" (Nayar 13). This disturbing, hurtful, unacceptable social practice of neoliberal ecoprecarity reflects precariousness from an ecosystemic viewpoint to examine the effects of the capitalist way of endangering human life and bionomic equilibrium. This hybrid term "ecoprecarity" has been defined as the

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ontological fragility of human and non-human creatures during environmental catastrophes (triggered by man-made agents) in the Anthropocene[3]. Any effort to negotiate forms of human precarity must consider the effect of an unhealthy environment that damages the interconnected relationship between human and non-human lives. The expansion of industrial capitalism is "the power held over life, and its constituents, from tissues to memories again, by corporate houses working with state laws and bioscience" (128). As the capitalocene[4] threatens the Anthropocentric order and climate change and constructs several tools of precarity, a pillaged ecology comes to the forefront to swallow humankind, even those highly benefitted from the ideology of the techno-capitalist model. In *Swarga*, the ever-encroaching system of the interstellar capitalist economy is considered "a virus finding its way into social infrastructures, controlling and dominating, to the extent of eroding them. One can claim that neoliberalism turns everything into a commodity, right down to the very health of things – of each of us, of plants and animals and rocks and water and sand and sky – everything" (Mangad 7).The perilous pattern of the natural world is glaringly evident at the moment the socially frail and politically powerless Keralite populations in this text encounter the prismatic embodiments of ecoprecarity and the complex dynamics of the human-induced intersections between the state machinery of capital and power politics.

Performing Ecoprecarity in Ambikasutan Mangad's *Swarga: A Posthuman Tale*

A cursory glance at this eco-text informs us that the poisonous endosulfan has undoubtedly caused significant harmful acts to the rich ecosystem of the Kasaragod district and makes it a collapsing wasteland strewn with the cultural remnants of a bygone era. Marine life has been eradicated; the Kodenkiri River water is bereft of fishes, frogs, and snakes; bees, birds, and insects have perished; plants have ceased blossoming with flowers, fruits, and honey. The organochlorine pesticide endosulfan remains in the air, water, and soil of this rural atmosphere, as well as in "breast milk[...] Also, fish, eggs, vegetables […] in many kinds of foodstuff" (143). However, the reactions and repercussions of this poisoning upon the indigenous space of this Keralite rural location happened "not with a single blow. Inch by inch. Or millilitre by millilitre" (163). This chemical pollution of organochlorides alters human and animal bodies at the molecular level, results in visible alterations over time, and gradually deteriorates the plight of children. It leads to a "wide incidence of cancer, epilepsy, mental aberrations, low intelligence, deformed limbs, skin diseases" (120) among the inhabitants of this spatio-temporal landscape of the Enmakaje village. Furthermore, the adverse effect of this pesticide "can mimic hormones. Women's menstrual cycles will be upset. Men's sexual organs will also be affected – sperm count will fall" (146). As the village doctor says to the patients, "Look, in my blood too, there is endosulfan […] Not in small qualities […] very high," and "there's light in my mind, still. And the courage to face anything. Death is no solution" (243). Therefore, the Kasaragod district becomes a microcosmic depiction of "an inversion of the biopolitical regime where mankind has ruled the

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earth and other lifeforms" (Nayar 77). This contagion narrative, which includes microorganisms, illnesses, and psychological damages, symbolises socio-cultural decay about capitalist modernity and globalisation due to ecoprecarious activities.

The conceptualisation of ecoprecarity focuses on precarious types of nature-culture (alias eco-apocalypse) that emerged in the field of bioeconomies and medical sciences at the end of the twentieth century. Since infectious disease "is the result of a precarious opening out of the body to other such forms of life" (43), this tale attempts to uncover the detrimental outcomes of a fertiliser on humans and explodes abnormalities in appearance. The employment of the fatal pesticide in the pictorial village breeds brisk genetic metamorphosis in human beings (chromosomes, genes, and DNA) and gives birth to "strange-looking infants and calves" (Mangad146). While Bhagyalakshmi has "a big tongue jutting out through her mouth" (69) and "a rosy red tongue" that "lay well below her chin" (69), another girl has a kind of strange appearance with "her head bigger than her body, her limbs were tiny" (71). Neelakantan comes across "two children, both mentally ill, in chains" (71), two children "old enough to be married" in a grotesque "house that stank badly" (72), and "prostitutes with venereal disease, sore-ridden beggars" (60).Furthermore, he confronts a physically deformed man (Anvar) whose fingers are "strangely long and thin […] like octopus' arms, all curled up" and whose eyes are "all white […] with no pupils" (74).While caring for these sick people (mostly lepers) in every possible way, Neelakantan utters, "These ugly-looking creatures are the children of our land […] the living martyrs of endosulfan spraying" (158).The deformed physical appearances of these children enact the horrific effects of the endosulfan tragedy on society, particularly the outcast and absolute 'other' on the fringes of society manipulated by the ruthless logic of the marketplace. The novelist describes human suffering thus, "Every house has five or six family members ill. There's no money even for medicines. Many houses are starving […] All of this caused by that poison – endosulfan" (116). The thought of ecoprecarity in this fiction becomes a rigid "transformation of the human into the monstrous, the grotesque and therefore the unrecognizable human body" (Nayar 28). As the environment has been made fragile in this part, it has been portrayed in terms of decaying bodies with unknown maladies to showcase how the gradual brutality of the capitalist Anthropocene model of development causes an erosion of the autonomy of subaltern bodies. In other words, the discourse of ecoprecarity is about more than just unhealthy environmental calamity; it also envisions numerous alternative future forms and various kinds of belonging in the vulnerable and unstable ecosystem.

It is only when the poverty-stricken couple, Neelakantan and Devayani, put themselves wholeheartedly into the struggle against endosulfan toxicity orchestrated by the local leader that the reader is genuinely pulled into this gripping eco-conscious narrative. As ecoprecarity "for many lifeforms is the direct result of human actions" (108), this political wendigo torments the ecological sustainability of Swarga in every possible manner to construct his mammon-worshipping

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kingdom and produces a precarisation of existence. This political mafia, the owner of the “five-star hotels and resorts and educational institutions” (Mangad214), makes false promises, whispering that “Endosulfan is no poison, it is medicine! If you are ill, go to the doctor […] take them all away […] all of these corpses!” (158). He paid or intimidated government officials, prioritised profit above human lives, and led to the ongoing spraying of endosulfan to nourish several cashew farms in this fertile land. It underlines how capitalist agricultural surpluses are synonymous with ecological imperialism through the entanglement of the neocolonial ‘care and control’ agenda and disrupt and dismantle the natural environment. Neelakantan and Devayani, the central characters of *Swarga*, fight against the menace of these corrupt leaders to prevent the implementation of endosulfan because it often provides a route to problems with health, deformed offspring, mental disorders, and even death in some cases. Nevertheless, they openly declare their modes of agentive resistance, “Our struggle is not just against endosulfan, it is against all pesticides that lead to the earth’s desertification!” (177).

The ruthless practitioners of synthetic chemical fertilisers embody “no humility before the vast forces with which they temper” (Carson 297) the poor and downtrodden sections of the village. While multiple species have disappeared from their natural habitat in the mysterious Jadahari Hill, many subalterns under twenty-five have passed away from drinking the polluted waterbodies in the Padre village due to the acidification of endosulfan. As Mangad underpins:

> This abundance of water whic’ made this place heaven is wha’smakin’ it hell now […] Twenty-five yea’s, the poison’s been sprayed on those waterbodies! If it wer’ a well, you could cover it. Bu’ the poison tha’ falls on the hill, it gets int’ the surangas an’ reaches you’ home. (126)

The process of government-owned cashew production in this eco-friendly space for capitalist and materialist impulses seems to trace “the reproduction of disease and reproduction as a disease” (Nayar 90) and propagates the new patterns of marginalisation. As Mangad writes:

> It’s about this terrible violence that the government’s inflicted – the terror that it has perpetrated. They set up these monoculture plantations, destroying pricelessly biodiverse forests. And not in a negligible area. Six hundred hectares in Enmakaje alone! […] This culture of monoculture is what a politics of diversity should end. (154–155)

The eco-conscious activists of this South Indian village erect the Endosulfan Spray Protest Action Committee (ESPAC) to launch a protest against the multiscalar complexities of toxic pesticides to protect the environment from scarcity. The cultural entropy of the new subaltern ghettoisation against the imposed ideological apparatus of the modern nation-state, according to Nayar, is one of the significant factors of an ecoprecarious text (Nayar 9). Neelakantan and Devayani engage in ecological campaigns to raise awareness of the aerial spraying of deleterious chemicals and lodge complaints against endosulfan spraying with

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their local political leaders. However, the Plantation Corporation of Kerala Ltd. (PCK) convinces the elected governmental representatives that "it will lose crores if the spraying doesn't happen" (Mangad 153) in this part of Kerala. After receiving several forms of disapproval from the public, the court fabricates a commission to investigate the situation to assess people's well-being and asks PCK to use synthetic pesticides safely. But the text cautions against the ecological afterlives of the spraying of the endosulfan pesticides, "Even if they stop the sprayin' it will be ther' contaminatin' the soil and other thin's for fifty years. The shockin' fact is thi': the changes to the DNA will appea' repeatedly over many generations" (Mangad192). Although Neelakantan and Devayani are active members of the Endosulfan Spray Protest Action Committee, their opposition to the entrenched politics of the spraying of pesticides is repressed by the social, historical, and political structures of the nation-state. The punishment of Neelakantan and Devayani by the police and political goons, as well as the death of their activist friend (Jayarajan), signal the pinnacle of these state-advocated violent atrocities.

Mythology as a Living Ontological Framework

The examination of the urgency and gravity of climate change issues[5] through the prism of folktales, legends, and myths within the fictive space enables postcolonial writers to manufacture a strategy to consider the past and envision the future simultaneously. *Swarga* asks the avid reader to "consider the complex interplay of environmental categories such as water, land, energy, habitat, migration with political or cultural categories" (Mukherjee 144). The images of the grotesque gothic gloom of the landscapes in Enmakaje village have been compared and contrasted with the pastoral history and mythology of this South Indian space. The cartography of this geo-political site is intricately intermingled with folktales and stories that influence how the indigenous people of this location relate to their surroundings and memories. As "a way of smuggling some serious topics into the consciousness of readers" (Evancien. p.), Mangad embodies the drastic transition of the Eden-like realm of this forest into a desolate desert. The writer unveils Kasaragod as a characterisation of "the Hiroshimas and Nagasakis" (Mangad193) that destroys life by providing a complex paradigm in which the interweaving tales of history and myth intersect. Srirama, the scientist, recalls the golden days of the most alluring and bountiful Swarga and explains to Neelakantan that Swarga was previously the country of the Jain groups. As this picturesque natural realm of Swarga has no wells, the spraying of lethal pesticides finds routes into the underground tunnels to cause death and sickness among the inhabitants. This formulates one of the many components of the pervading ecoprecarity, i.e. "the species death, with a concomitant attention to the 'wasting' of other lifeforms at the altar of human development and modernity" (Nayar 8). In opposition to a past marked by a robust ecocentric philosophy of harmony, Swarga now encapsulates a quiet cemetery terrain of planetary precarity and witnesses the destruction of numerous living forms.

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The literary genre of climate fiction (Cli-fi)[6] conceives "the stories that particular cultures tell about their own origins, history, modernization, and futures, as well as about their relation to a broader 'humanity'" (Heise 237). They provide various localised "micro-narratives that foreground community experiences of climate change" (Chattopadhyay 9) to pose a device of an active agency against natural destruction. Mangad incorporates pertinent elements from the classical tales of the *Mahabharata* and the *Panchatantra*, the mythology of King Mahabali, the Biblical story of Adam and Eve, and the indigenous folklore within the narratorial space of this novel. This novella opens with the prostitute Devayani carrying home an orphaned infant (Pareekshit) with grey hairs and developing rashes across the body as a result of endosulfan infection and compares the orphan with the unfortunate Aswatthama cursed with a hellish life for committing an unspeakable sin in the *Mahabharata*. This boy ponders how the working methods of xenophobic capitalism against the unleashed forces of nature transform "human bodies, no matter how or where these originate, in the uterus or the Petri dish, into patentable, possessable objects" (Nayar 130). As the demonic Putana rakshasi tries to kill the newborn Krishna by mixing her breast milk and poison in the *Purana*, Mangad maps how mother's milk, the safest food in the universe, has turned deadly in Kasaragod district. These pejorative conditions of the global ecoprecarious imaginary implicate "the rendering of some lives vulnerable to exploitation, disenfranchisement and exposed to harm" (126), most acutely from the environmental problems. Nevertheless, a sample of blood tests collected from a few villages of this region brings to the table a surprising range of endosulfan levels in their crumbling bodies and even their mothers' breast milk. As this novella records:

> Lalitamma of Kumbadaja – don't be shocked, they have found 22.4 ppm of endosulfan in her breast milk! Do you know, that even in water, only a maximum of 0.18 ppm is allowed? Do you know how much of it was found in this mother's blood? 176.9 ppm! (Mangad 174)

This environmental fiction also includes the myth and legend of the famous sage Balakhilyas, alias Valakhilyas, for undergoing penance constantly to maintain the historical truth about the topographical identity of this scenic South Indian locality. The Bhalakhilyas are humanoid manifestations of a shrub species found in profusion on Jadahari Hill that is on the verge of extinction due to the disastrous effects of the endosulfan contamination. To quote Neelakantan:

> In this vast expanse, he could not sense the presence of a single living creature. Not even a lizard or a chameleon or a frog or snake or mongoose […] but the thought that not even a cockroach was to be seen was truly scary. (22)

The literary portrait of the curious case of Pareekshit formulates an alternative vision of the plight of the polluted region populated by crippled bodies suffering from the mythic Jadahari's curse. Ancient legends, mythologies, and

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folktales have been utilised to convey the weird situation caused by the pesticide tragedy, showing how the death-dealing action maltreats the harmonious interaction between humans and non-humans in the region. Mangad employs the realism of the endosulfan tragedy by evoking the mythology of Enmakaje through the eyes of the medicine man (Panji) to denounce how the capitalist rhetoric is determined to subdue both the enriching indigenous land and culture. According to the indigenous myth, the Sivoli Brahmins implemented black magic to conquer the rulers of Enmakeje (Jain Ballalas), seized the lordship, and enraged Jadahari Bhoota (Teyyam). The Jadahari tale unfolds the biodiversity of the area and the wealth of natural resources by revealing Snake Hill and Snake Grove of Jadahari on one side and Kodanigri Hill and Stream on the other. As we read in this text:

> At the heart of serpent worship, there is a huge concern for nature. These groves protected species diversity and the water. They are sacred–no one enters them, or cuts the trees, or takes even a dry twig for firewood. That's how it is here. (134)

The curse of Jadahari is a remonstrance to the community for failing to preserve the eco-spiritual balance that was once part of everyday existence in this bioregion, particularly in their belief of the existence of the god Shiva in "every leaf, every flower." (185). The installation of the *Jadahari Bhoota* elucidates how the locals live in intimate symmetry with wildlife, as well as how their religious and cultural customs are intertwined. This tale carves out a place for agency and action in an enclosed present by drawing the indigenous people's power from the mythical imaginary to perpetuate them in the current planetary crises. Therefore, ecoprecarity constitutes a prominent theme in this fiction, where "tribes, lifeforms, and cultures are either in reality, or speculated to have been, existent once, and are now no more" (Nayar 97).

In the first half of this captivating novella, we see how Neelakantan and Devayani want to the secluded jungles of Swarga near the celestial Jadahari hill to get rid of the maladies and pains of the embeddedness of the patriarchal urban world systems of profit-seeking. Like the five Pāndava brothers, the couple has severed all the earthly ties with all their near and dear ones and their traumatic pasts and abandoned their identities to reside in a life of solitude at the old Speaking Cave, "a place where there are no human beings" (Mangad51). This transition is "the effect of a shift between the certainty of a recognizable cityscape/landscape and the ambiguity of its unrecognizable inhabitants, secret spaces and crypts" (Nayar 71). Their admission into the womb-like Speaking Cave in this book hinges upon the human transition into a state of oneness with natural objects on the verge of destruction and voices disagreements with the constricting ideologies of the autocratic structure. This Cave deviates dramatically from the proportional vision of time by claiming itself as a fundamental effect of past times and the source of a repertoire of tales of sages and legends (the mythology of King Mahabali). This reinvigoration of space is also a foreboding of the extinction of the human race

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since both the dismayed and disillusioned Neelakantan and Devayani are incapable of bearing children.

In *Swarga*, the South Indian metropolitan life is framed as a degenerate site in moral opposition to the spatio-temporal dynamics of the pristine forest on the myth-laden Jadahari hill. This sphere speaks for a "bioregion", i.e., "a unique region definable by natural (rather than political) boundaries with a geographic, climatic, hydrological, and ecological character capable of supporting unique human and nonhuman living communities" (Thayer 3). *Mahābhārata* coalesces around the consequential role of the picturesque milieu of the wild forest (Khāṇḍava) in nurturing the five Pāndavas during the formative years (twelve) of their exile lives. The Pāndavas shared an intimate relationship with the surreal forest after their elder brother Yudhiṣṭhira lost his kingdom in the rigged game of dice with his cousin Duryodhana in association with the villainous Shakuni uncle. It was during their twelve years of exile in the Khāṇḍava that the Pāndava brothers (along with their wife Draupadi) attained not only spiritual maturation but also gained an insight into their own Self. As we shed light on the diverse forest of Jadahari Hill, we are compelled to interrogate the nuanced spatial identity that underpins the fiction in the intricate balance woven between the civilised and the wild. For Neelakantan and Devayani, the uncharted wilderness[7] of the walled pastoral forest is conceptualised primarily as the site of exile and hermitage free from the madding crowd's ignoble strife. This "wilderness represents an irreversible, more or less global, state of precarious, disappearing Nature [...] a response to global species eco-precarity, a visual museum of disappearing lifeforms, even as it emphasizes the precariousness of all lifeforms" (Nayar 96). Therefore, the rhetoric of the human ecoprecarity/ biocultural precarity is "the erosion of forms of belonging that follow codes and registers [...] from cultural rather than genetic memories" (146).

Conclusion

The narrative framework of *Swarga* promotes eco-pedagogy by raising knowledge about suitable agriculture methods and environmental conservation tactics in the Wasteocene[8] of the South Indian village. The instantiation of the ecoprecarity theme in this book "contributes to the environmental imagination by pointing to the neo-imperial control over bodies, minds, and natural resources asserted by business corporations" (49). In other words, it accentuates the urgent necessity for peaceful coexistence between biological and technological sustainability in the hysterical capitalist axiomatic. The inhabitants of the region, enticed by their political leader's false promises of a hopeful future, forget their miseries and struggle against the ruling practices of authoritarian political forces. As the plot of this novella proceeds, the somatic capitalism-induced toxic ramifications of the severe pesticide anxiety shift from mythological moorings to rational beliefs, from government misrule to court trials. In reality, the people's modes of the counter-hegemonic strike against the manoeuvres of the virulent endosulfan in cashew farming succeeded after the Honourable High Court of Kerala banned the pesticide

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in 2005. However, the restriction proved ineffective since many mango plantation owners in the Palakkad district, another border district of Kerala, continued to wield this dangerous fertiliser extensively throughout the blooming season to control pests.[9]As a result, it is inevitable to conclude Mangad's eco-crip text with a note of warning sign, emphasising the victims' stupidity in forgetting their hazardous emplacement—an act that will take them to their untimely demise. It also plays "an important role in thinking through our representations of environmental change and gives tangible form to the imagination of different worlds outside of the constraints of the given present" (Yusoff and Gabrys 518).Furthermore, this article anticipates the potential for additional study by expanding upon the argument to investigate the intensified grips of ecoprecarity in contemporary Indian ecodisaster texts, such as Akkineni Kutumbarao's *Softly Dies a Lake* (2014), Varun Thomas Mathew's *The Black Dwarves of the Good Little Bay*(2019), and Perumal Murugan's *Rising Heat* (2020), among others.

Notes

1. According to Nour Dados and Raewyn Connell, the Global South is "one of a family of terms, including 'Third World' and 'Periphery', that denote regions outside Europe and North America, mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalized. The use of the phrase Global South marks a shift from a central focus on development or cultural difference toward an emphasis on geopolitical relations of power" (12).

2. As Ambikasutan Mangad demonstrates, "This was no Swarga—heaven—but hell—Naraka. The land must have yielded gold before endosulfan's entry. The soil was so rich, so well endowed with water sources maybe that is why it was named heaven" (112).

3. Donna Haraway et al. observe, "The term Anthropocene does not do, and cannot do, is to insist that it is a historically situated complex of metabolisms and assemblages. The people that I know who use Anthropocene tend to emphasize the history from the mid-eighteenth century forward, and tend to take the use of fossil fuel as the key historical moment" (21).

4. The term 'capitalocene' has been proposed as a more accurate description of the global scenario, given that most planetary problems can be linked to the capitalist system.

5. Adeline Johns-Putra captures how the nitty-gritty of the global geopolitics of climate change narratives implies "the adequacy of the paternal response to a climate-changed world" to offer "radical versions of posterity that might be fitter for purpose in such a world" (7).

6. Antonia Mehnert contends that climate fiction "gives insight into the ethical and social ramifications of this unparalleled environmental crisis, reflects on current political conditions that impede action on climate change, explores how risk materializes and affects society, and finally plays an active part in shaping our conception of climate change" (4). It serves as "a shared cognitive-emotional experience that connects readers regardless of various differences" and "an entry point for conversations about the future people want to pursue (Milkoreit 180).

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7. However, the environmentalist Deane W. Curtin puts it out, “The definition of wilderness in the Wilderness Act can be viewed as an astonishing act of cultural imperialism” (4).

8. The cultural critic Marco Armerio assumes that the idea of wasteocene is about “cleanliness and aseptic environments as much as it is about griminess and contamination because in its very essence, wasting implies sorting out what has value and what does not” (10).

9. As Indira Devi argues, “The government of Kerala has banned the sale/use of Endosulphan consequent to the controversies over the environmental and human health problems due to the aerial spraying of the chemical in cashew plantations in the state. […] The chemical is seen as prevalent among pineapple growers and they declined to reveal the source of purchase” (202).

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