Anthropocentrism and Ecology: Intersections and Interactions in Shubhangi Swarup's *Latitudes of Longing*

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Abstract

The increased visibility of ecological concerns in contemporary literary and theoretical efforts has witnessed a widespread exploration of anthropocentrism which has often been considered as the biggest influence in intensifying the nature/culture binary. Recognizing this, several ecocritical scholars have attempted to expand the concept of anthropocentrism as they realize its growing relevance in the Anthropocene which has witnessed endless human-engineered catastrophes. Following this, there has been an urgent need to redirect *timely* warnings, dialogism and awareness regarding the impending Apocalypse. Keeping this in consideration, the article shall attempt to interrogate the concept of anthropocentrism throughout socio-environmental history and its theoretical emergence while engaging with Shubhangi Swarup's novel, *Latitude of Longing* (2018) to address issues like capitalism, urbanism, technology, cultivation, development, consumerism and overpopulation that have played an influential role in reinforcing the interventionist aspect of anthropocentrism. These factors have not only domesticated 'first nature' into 'second nature' but also increased tension between humans and nature. This 'postnaturality' in the Anthropocene further allowed scholars to locate the dismantling of the nature/culture binary as advocated by "new" anthropocentrism which emphasized on additional responsibility, solidarity, sustainability and stewardship for the nonhumans, thereby making it an emancipatory project of ethics.

Keywords: Anthropocene; Anthropocentrism; Ecocriticism; *Latitudes of Longing;* Modernism; Post-nature.

Anthropocentrism: An Introduction

As the contemporary period witnesses a heightened engagement with ecological concerns and considerations in the Anthropocene, literary and theoretical efforts have undergone a 'green' reorientation following the 1960s that visibly interrogated the ideological dimensions of anthropocentrism that had paralyzed our interactions and interpretations of nature through the nature/culture binary. In this effort, the celebration of the "human-centered elitism" attached 'intrinsic value' to humans while the nonhuman world was attached with secondary 'instrumental' value (Callicott and Frodeman58). This reductive orientation of anthropocentrism played a central role in misbalancing the eco-centric equation between humans and the ecology. Keeping to the idea of "human chauvinism", there has been a cultural and political contestation of bio-power arising from the nature/culture binary that intensified the fundamental tension in our society for the world beyond humans had been perpetually 'othered'. While this positioned human "as the central element of the universe", it also made him a claimant to "*superiority* and *mastery* of nature". In this regard, anthropocentrism became "a *priori* presence" that deeply conditioned our moral, political, economical, social, religious and ethical considerations towards nonhumans and the environment.

This, in fact, resulted in "the domination of [the] external world", that consequently led to the "domination of the inner nature of humans, which [led] in turn to the domination of humans over humans" (Boodice1 and 17;Krebber 322 and 324). Such an anthropocentric response in the Anthropocene intensified the sense of ecophobia that resulted in extreme fear, anxiety, anger, hatred, denialism and hostility and produced "a kind of ecological blindness" which was "driven by an irrational desire for *mastery and control*" of nature by humans (emphasis added) (Brennam and Lo 756-757; Deyo 195 and 202;Gorke 245). Such a biasedinternalization of humans against nature had systematically legitimized Man's commission to dominate, (ab)use, control, manage and transform nature for his singular benefits. This, thereafter justified human(ity)*invasive* manipulation and *dangerous* alteration of the ecological and geological imprints of the planet. Such a trend further ignited the increased capacity and intensity of the ongoing environmental genocide of the Anthropocenean which has substantially reduced the regenerative capacities of the environment. In fact, the Anthropocene has led to the realization of human(ity)'s failure to extend moral considerations and ethical responsibilities towards nature and the nonhumans. In fact, the anthropocentrically scaled attitudeof humans' appears to be an immediate outcome of Man's overarching egoism

that has not only alienated and detached us from nature but also resulted in a series of *unnatural*and unprecedented environmental catastrophes, largelyhuman-engineered. These calamities subsequently threaten Man's supremacy and invincibility that had been endorsed by liberal humanism, anthropocentrism and speciesism.

Realizing the condition of the 'dying' Earth in the postnatural period, both ecocriticism and Anthropocene in the recent decades have collaborated with an intention to understand the complex dynamics of the nature/culture and human/animal binaries that have destabilized the ecological balance. Within this framework, both nature and culture are considered as a political and cultural construction that largely catered to the motivated social dictum which polarized nature as a presence both *outside* and *opposite* to culture. This mechanical interpretation of nature furthered Man's dissociation with environment thereby making it difficult to recognize "nature as an *equal* partner" in existence (emphasis added) (Krebber 324). Subsequent to this, the previously maintained equation of reverence, worship and partnership between humans and nature changed into a destructive and invasive relationship whereinhumans became increasingly hostile towards the environment. This anthropocentrically scaled paralysis of the social and ecological symbiosis was pragmatically reviewed through the 1960s that acknowledged efforts engaged in non-anthropocentric studies. In this trend, ecocriticism gained visibility as the contemporary Anthropocenean society struggled with the challenges posed by environmental crisis. Additionally, the 1990s also witnessed an increased concern for the geological and planetary problems as the planet was aggressively getting altered and (ab)used for the singular benefits of humans who hadby now, become thegeological agentsin the ecosystem. In this regard, both the approaches to ecocriticism and Anthropocene studies appear to have merged to explore several ideas devised through anthropocentrism in an attempt to understand the politics of bio-power contestation in the nature-culture binary.

This effortsubsequently resulted in the expansion of the idea of anthropocentrism during the emergence of environmental humanities in the 1990s; as it was layered into a concept with "a new tone and urgency". In fact, its engagement with ecocriticism and Anthropocene studies has resulted in the relocation of dialogues, narrations and representations of ecological concerns from periphery to the centerof literary, cultural and theoretical efforts with an aim to interrogate the relationship between humans and the environment in literary discourses (Glotfeltyxviii). Such an exercise appears relevant in the contemporary Anthropocenean period as these

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approaches attempt to redirect the humanistic ideology in crossing of the rigid stereotyping of nature/culture dualism which would thereafter enable the rethinking and remapping of established categories. This expansive stance has been advocated by "new" anthropocentrism which has made the concept a complex and elusive idea; for itattempted to challenge and broaden its traditional framework. Against such considerations, the article shall attempt to trace the culture-nature binary as endorsed by anthropocentrism and its postmodern conceptualizations. In addition, the article shall also interrogate the idea of "new" anthropocentrism through the analysis ofShubhangi Swarup's *Latitudes of Longing* (2018). To this end, the initial aim of the article shall be to explore the social machinery and power politics of anthropocentrism along with its intended manifestations entangled in (re)shaping the culture/nature relationship. In this regard, the notion of anthropocentrism shall not be completely reduced as a "great evil" that should "be denounced and eliminated, but [would be considered as] the *great* problem to be embraced and directed" which has become a prerequisite in the posthumanist and postnatural period (emphasis added) (Sax 12). While engaging in this exercise, the article shall also attempt to blur the boundaries of the culture/nature binary through the conception of post-nature as advocated by ecocriticism and Anthropocene studies which appear to not only critique anthropocentrism but also provide an alternate approach to redefine and reimage the culture-nature discourse by stabilizing the Man-Nature tension. In challenging the nature/culture dichotomy, the article shall also investigate the ethical implications associated with ecological concerns and considerations as employed by environmentalism and deep ecologists that claim anthropocentrism as the fundamental attempt of a social siege of nature that justifies ecological degradation.

Anthropocentrism in *Latitudes of Longing*

Throughout human history, anthropocentrism as a social discourse has reduced our relationship, interaction and interpretation of nature into a mechanical outlook. This idea could be traced to the source of the term which was derived from the ancient Greek word *anthropos* that signified 'human beings' whose prefix in anthropocentrism indicated the perceived dominance of human(ity) when placed with the rest of the ecosystem (Sax 23;Tonutti 184; Xu 281). Through this attempt, the "[r]emaking [the image] of Man" as a superior presence was sanctioned. Furthering this idea, the "Great Chain of Being" used humanity as a yardstick to manage and transform the environment for the singular benefits of humans who were believed to have been commissioned the "benefit and rule" of

nature as it "insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends" with an aim "to subdue and control nature, not to preserve or sustain it" (Nichols 34; Singer 241;Steiner 112; Wall59). Explicitly romantic conceptions such aspristine, idyllic, divine, purifying, nurturing, resourcefulwere understood as embedded within this reductive overview of naturewhile "curative"attributewas attached to the environment in general for, "there is nothing in nature that nature itself cannot cure" to make it enriching,diverse, permanent, balanced and abundant. Additionally, nature was also adorned with religious and spiritual elements through myths and folklores which "flooded [it] with unrealized beings and forms... [that] took the place of deities at the altar (Swarup 51 and 260). This practice as expressed in the novel had been largely maintained by the indigenous communities who celebrated their regional naturescape through festivities like Thingyan as narrated by Thapa in *Latitudes of Longing*. The primary intention of this exercise was to not only pay homage to nature through local deities and spirits but also generate a sense of reverence, worship, stewardship and protection for nature. In this context, nature became a "relaxing", silent and a static *presence* of solitude which enabled the emotional and ethical rejuvenation of both Girija Prasad and Apo in the novel as they shared an intensely close proximity with nature which made them realize that nature was *always* eager to participate in the web of life that was essentially preoccupied with balance and interconnectedness. Acknowledging this, Swarup through Girija Prasad stated that "no island [is] an island either [as it] is part of a greater geological pattern that connects all the lands and oceans of the world". This idea not only makes us aware of the interdependence between all creations in the ecosystem but also recognizes the ecological need to appreciate all forces of being (Swarup 10 and 42).

Despite the interrelatedness, humans have predominantly maintained an anthropocentrically scaled perception and relationship with nature which had detached and alienated our imagination to grasp the beauty, knowledge and capacities of nature to its fuller appreciation. This has subsequently led to the marginalization of nature as "other" that *needs* to be managed, controlled and transformed. Consequently, nature has often been considered powerful, destructive, unpredictable, changing, hostility, uncontrollable, "infectious", threatening, "venomous", diabolic, chaotic, impulsive and a vulnerable category (Swarup 85-86). Reiterating such a stand, Swarup represented the "hellish" creek in the Middle Andaman as "a sinuous snake" that was atypical from the rest of creation (58-59 and 220). This haunting imagery echoed the "dark", sinful and dangerous description of the Congo River by Joseph Conrad in his work, *Heart of Dark-*

ness (Conrad 10). Such an exercise of negatively (mis)representing nature played a significant role in anthropocentrically scaling the *basic* human philosophies, ethics, perceptions and interactions with the environment which further limited our response towards nature. This reductive attitude emerging from the "prevailing philosophy of anti-nature and human omniscience" eventually made the "first nature" give way to "second nature" that was shaped with a "materialist appraisal of socionatural relations" of the natural world (Maldonado 89; Manes 23; Pepper108). In fact, the domestication of nature has been an ancient practice managed through activities like hunting, agriculture, deforestation, farming, grazing, mining, fishing, urbanism, overpopulation, industrialism, urbanism, wars, pollution, unplanned development, nuclear bombing and testing, globalization and migration, cross-breeding and mutilation of nature. While these anthropogenic activities have resulted in the formation of the "second nature" that has been seriously manhandled and paralyzed, it also altered the environment into the postnatural condition of the Anthropocenean as manifested through unnatural calamities, climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss and extinction; which have threatened and destabilized the equilibrium and sustenance of humans, nature and animals.

This has exposed the ecosystem to an endless and dangerous series of vulnerabilities, stress and exhaustion which has pushed the planet to its unprecedented ecological crisis. While this framework alienated humans from nature, it also normalized environmental and social genocide which subsequently altered the naturescape and planetary imprints of the Earth. In this sense, the ongoing environmental crisis of the Anthropocene appears to be a human-engineered destruction of the ecosystem which was initiated from Man's desire to "forever [keep] remolding" and artificially *improving* the natural ecosystem into a "second nature" for their singular benefits. In fact, the ecological disturbances of the Anthropocene resulted in ecophobia among the new generation who have become *more* defiant, aggressive and negligent towards ecological concerns and considerations leading to structural hostility, denialism and the emerging trend of ecocide among humans and the nonhumans in the Anthropocene. Such a response seems to have been an outcome of a complex engagement that had been authorized to enhance Man's powers, capacities and borders "to achieve new kinds and degrees and fulfillment" which made the Anthropocenean Man and nature appear as a *ready* site of study in Posthumanism (Josephson 341; Maldonado 34; Soper 124).

Addressing Ideological Tension

While the earlier sections of the article attempted to provide an introductory overview of anthropocentrism and its inherent scaling in Swarup's *Latitude of Longing*, this section shall attempt to investigate the fundamental tension and divorce between humans and the environment which has led to a series of unprecedented calamities that occurred as the aftermath of ideological tension in the nature/culture binary as structured by anthropocentrism. In fact, the unethical dominance and exploitation of nature in the Anthropocene by humans have resulted in irreparable and dangerous outcomes that threaten the natural functioning and security of the ecosystem. Understanding the challenges rising from the altered nature as designed by the strategies of capitalism, "global conquest, endless commodification, and relentless rationalization", it has been noted that such a mechanism had "dehumanise[d] man and pervert[ed] the natural world". Following this, there grew a general sense of ecophobia and ecocidethat seem to have prevailed in the postnatural period of the Anthropocene as Man continues to control and manage nature into 'humanized' ecology whose resilience and stability has been gradually eroding (Maldonado 2 and 8; Pepper 62;Xu 280). Keeping this in consideration, the Anthropocene claims that there is "no part of the earth left *untouched* by man" with humans becoming geological agent that have accelerated the natural process of the mass extinction of the planet (emphasis added) (Bates 171; Hamilton 15; McKibben xx; Moore 44; Sandford 18;Schwagerl 89; Sullivan 25).

Within the framework of the 'second' nature as devised by anthropocentrism, environment has become a site of *economy* that needs to be anthropocentrically measured, managed, controlled and (ab)used. In fact, the 'eco' of both economy and ecology has its origin in the "Greek word '*ecos*'referring to the household as an organized productive unit". In this sense, the western concept of nature's economy and human's economy could be seen as "conceptually parallel and functionally intertwined" (Norgaard763). Addressing this idea, Swarup through the political discussions between Thapa and Plato in her novel *Latitudes of Longing* highlighted the increased demand for illegal weapons, natural resources, opium and ivory of white elephants in the illegal market which have subsequently led to "their price [being] shot up [with a] single white elephant in the black-market cost[ing] more than the ivory from ten" (166). Such an orientation seem to be justified through the biases rising from the nature/culture binary that endorsed endless exploitation of ecology and its subsequent commodification that reduced nature to "raw materials" within

a growing carbon economy during the postindustrial period. Added to this, the increased influence of capitalistic aspirations structured by instincts of high modernism, cosmopolitanism, consumerism, imperialism and contemporary globalised capitalism ledto not only the decline in the health of the modern Man but also to his "spiritual death" which subsequently made him *more* intolerant and "alienated, empty, without purpose and direction". This inference was largely an outcome of techniques employed by corporations to shape our perceptions of the natural world with intended motives of commercialization, profit, mass consumption and 'in-indoor' lifestyle. Within this framework, everything in nature was commodified, packaged and priced which made the first nature "become second nature" resulting in a sudden increase of establishment of townships, factories, roads, electricity, shops and other modern infrastructures that not only reinforced the materialistic and mechanistic view of nature but also led to the heightened negligence of the needs of the local communities and the regional environment that existed in the periphery of social power and identities (Pepper 117). A detailed account of the emergence of 'urbanature' alteration of ecological spaces has been provided by Swarup through the different geological terrains in her novel, *Latitudes of Longing.* In fact, the territorial diversity in her narrative allowed her to explore the varied interactions and responses between culture and nature through the lens of regionalism.

Besides, this also helped her to interrogate the complex experiences of urban and rural encounters as manifested in the manner in which Swarup contrasted the seclusion of Andaman to Thamel, representing the latter as an over-busy place with humans crawling like termites, "tilting temples and sinking courtyards, the crumbling homes and crowded shops" with "choked alleyways" that were "waiting to suck you in" in emotions, morality and humanity. In addition, the dilapidated buildings of Thamelswayed "like seasoned drunks, with protruding bellies and an unreliable gait" that "was pushed aside by the ever-busy streets, stooped with ceilings threatening to cave in" with the entrances appearing as "snake holes" (197). Further, cities for Swarup as represented in *Latitudes of Longing* were a breeding place of poverty, slum, garbage, smuggling, crimes and addicts where under-aged prostitutes lived a fake and superficial life of material comforts with unsung loneliness and depression that was traced through Thapa and Bebo. Caught in such a situation, Thapa felt alienated and dejected like an outsider "in the land of his birth" (198). A similar experience was felt not only by Girija Prasad in his second innings in the Andamans where he witnessed increased encroachment of the jungles with the advancement of urbanism and modernism but also by the Mishmi chief's

daughter from Changthang who witnessed radical cultural and physical changes in her village as "cement structures fitted with proper toilets, ceiling fans, satellite televisions, satellite phones, sofas, gas stoves and other pollutants from an outside world" reached her homeland. In fact, these changes were "fuelled by opium money, not only did each home now possess a jeep, a phone and a TV, her cousins preferred smoking cigarettes and drinking whiskey to the tedious preparation of opium" (Swarup254-255). The "cross-cultural cartels of corrupt entrepreneurs" according to Buell also dealt "with drugs, arms, and erotica largely control economies and politics" which contributed to the accelerating endangerment of the environment and the nonhumans (290).

These factors aided by science and technology not only multiplied economic growth and development but also *dangerously* altered the physical and chemical configuration of the planet which thereafter exposed Earth to greater instabilities and insecurities. The fast changing environment, for Swarup was due to anthropogenic alterations that had polluted the planet by making it "poison for the weak" and which held "no distinction between ants, centipedes, snakes and humans" in their "primal struggle for survival" as "predator and prey lie hopelessly tangled" (Sandford 44; Swarup95, 123 and 164). To this end, nature appears to be 'exhausted' of its regenerative capacities as science, knowledge and progress have largely remained inefficient, disillusioned and ignorant to the dynamics, magnificence and omnipresence of nature which made the scientist, Girija Prasad feel "like an ant, shuffling around, tempted by the impossible" (Swarup 10). Recognizing our limited access to the environment, Swarupagreeing with Bayertz and Gorke, feels that humanshave destroyed nature which has consequently"destroyed the very roots of their existence" as managed by the "extensive cultural seasonalization and the pervasive presence of secondary nature" that often dispirited our efforts of conservation and companionship.

This unnatural alteration of the ecosystem has unfortunately made the planet "fragile as a seasonal moth" (Gorke 224; Masami 4; Swarup266). Commenting on this idea,Sax dwelled uponthe increased role of technology and science in the reformulation of the environment that hasreplaced the angels of the "Great Chain of Being" in the postmodern and posthumanist world with "computers", science, gadgets and other digital platforms that have subsequently merged humans with technological advances to widen man's identity, experiences and knowledge (33). This overarching influence of technology has materialized not only the social world but also the ecological world which was represented by Girija

Prasad through his scientific adventures and his position as the presiding administrative officer of the Andaman; under whose capacities, Girija Prasad leased the timber-rich jungles of the region for the unaccounted exploitation by the Calcutta-based exporter and businessman, in exchange of "bringing development to the jungles" through a well-planned township with advanced infrastructures and facilities (Swarup 56). Like Girija Prasad, his grandson Rana, a leading scientist of the Project Dhruva and Kalpavriksha investigated and managed the geographical and ecological functioning of Changthang wherein they soon marked their political and scientific dominance. In both the cases, the celebratory metaphor of development and progress has been used as agencies for "slow violence" against nature whose abuses largely remained 'invisible' for it "occur[ed] gradually and out of sight" with a "delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" against nature (Nixon 2). Keeping such perspectives in mind then, technology could be considered as a prominent instigator that widened the gap between nature and culture alongside the heightened engagement of anthropocentrism, capitalism, high modernism, globalization, urbanism and consumerism that have been considered as a "distraction" by Swarup; for it not only prejudiced our interaction and interpretation of the ecological world but also limited the representation of nature which subsequently led to the 'death of nature' (250). In this framework, nature had been reduced and marginalized into a passive category with limited capacities as the "absent [and silenced] *other*" (emphasis added) (Moore 55 and 63; Nimmo 77). This rigid fixation and domestication of nature was done with an aim to control its mysteries and unpredictability that resulted in ecophobia among humans.

Caught in this ecological vulnerability, the contemporary postnatural society has witnessed several human-engineered natural calamities like droughts, floods, forest fires, snowstorms, tornadoes and tsunamis that have not only led to the sacrifice of innumerable lives and livelihoods but also to the victims' physical, cultural, emotional and spiritual displacement. Addressing this social, environmental and geological concern, Swarup linked the changing pattern and functioning of the environment to the migration pattern structured by the instincts of high modernism, urbanism and development. It then becomes rather explicit that the frequent storms, cyclones and tsunamis in the Andaman accompanied by harsh and devastating snowstorms in the Changthang plateau not only emphasized the unpredictability and ferocity of nature but also marked the Age of the Anthropocene wherein humans felt "powerless in the face of nature" that appeared as an "unbounded and destructive" force that

instilled "troubling fears inside us" which subsequently made "the whole business [of ecophobia]... really unsettling". In fact, for Swarup, the human-engineered calamities have been "receding [the] paradise" to the brink of an ecocide in the Anthropocene (175). Discussing the issues of pollution and natural calamities, Swarup agreed with McKibben that "every spoton earth [has become] man-made and artificial" as commissioned by the interventionist trend within anthropocentrism that ushered the continual degeneration of the "permanence of nature" that subsequently made both humans and the planet stand "at the threshold of… the *end* of nature" (emphasis added) (McKibben 7; Singer245). This, according to Ellis and Hamilton caused the 'rupture' of the planet which also resulted in the irreparable 'death' of the ecosystem and its impendingApocalypse (Ellis 129-130; Hamilton 41).Following the reduction of nature into human(itarian) aspirations of materiality and economy, most of our deep commitments towards environmentalism havegot diluted which thereafter has blinded us of our invasive and damaging anthropogenic actions, causing invisible but irreparable harm to the ecosystem. This realizationhas resulted in several efforts by environmentalists to achieve potential success in conservation and restoration of the ecosystem through awareness, activism, policies and peaceful movements that have become increasingly challenging to the Anthropocene.

Conclusion: Is Crossing of Anthropocentrism possible?

Understanding the complex mechanism of the intense conditioning of anthropocentrism throughout our socio-environmental history that had polarized nature and culture while also alienating humans from the environment following the "material degeneration of the planet", this section shall attempt the locate the possibilities of deconstructing anthropocentrism (Bonneuiland Fressoz 41). This seems possible in the contemporary Anthropocenean period, with the realization of the 'dying' Earth that has led to a numbing sense of ecophobia among humans who despite their insecurities, fears, risks and threats continue to control, alter and manhandle the ecological world. This challenging equation has been interrogated by ecocriticism and Anthropocene studiesand they reorient the traditional idea of the anthropocentrism through a continual process of questioning, challenging and subverting human centrality. In this attempt, both the approaches have initiated concepts like 'natureculture', 'invironment', 'neo-nature', 'urbanature', 'postnature', 'second nature' and 'new anthropocentrism' to understand the complex relationship between human and nature following the dismantling of the conventional binary of nature/culture. Such a tendency emerged as Man realized that there is "no part

of the earth left untouched by man" in the Anthropoceneas we have been constantly "shap[ing] everything". This makes us realize the overlapping and interrelated dimension of culture, humans, nature and animals that "are *always* intra-actively engaged" with each other (Bates 171; Head 230; Maldonado 6; Purdy 3). Caught in this integrated engagement, not only have human experiences been shaped and conditioned by the naturalized dimensions but this has also led to a*tremendous* and *dangerous* alteration of the planet. In this regard, nature becomes both 'natural and cultural' as "our civilizationis living in an "invironment," anew nature that is strongly shaped by human needs and that has no outside" (89). This idea was investigated by ecocriticism and Anthropocene as it critiqued aggressive anthropocentrism that positioned nature and culture in polarity. Such an exercise in environmental humanities aided the emergence of "new" anthropocentrism endorsed by Anthropocene which has consequently opened the scope and mobility of the concept. In fact, the inclusive effort of ecologism attempts to redefine and negotiate rather than negate anthropocentrism with a proposition to transform it "from the "egological self" to the ecological self". For this purpose, ecocriticism in collaboration with Anthropocene hadattached *special* abilities and responsibilities for humans in their interaction with the environment following "a spirit of commitment to environmental praxis" (Boddice 3; Glotfelty xviii; Morton22). This has become thevantage point for defiance and resistance to anthropocentrism as nature and culture merge to become a unified concept which would thereafter not only redirect engagement for constructive cross-dialogism regarding the impending Apocalypse but also aid the crossing of borders from anthropocentrism in the pursuit of a new understanding of humanity's place on the planet.

With such intentions, both ecocriticism and Anthropocene studies have attempted to highlight the inherent 'naturalized' and 'animalized' traits in humans while also foregrounding the 'humanized' nature. This has consequently led to the centralization of non-anthropocentric presences in literary and cultural narrations that have made its readers experience ecological awareness and solidarity.In this regard, Swarup's narrative representation could be considered as an inclusive interaction between humans and nature that partially aimed inthe anthropocentric control, alteration, management and dominance of the natural environment as seen through the cases of the Andaman and Changthang. In fact,the respective terrains in *Latitudes of Longing* had become a site of "second nature" with excessive human interferences. This had "humans infiltrate[ing] nature, [while] nature also infiltrate[d] human systems" which could be seen through the frequent calamities of tsunami, flooding and snowstorms that

generated angry, fear and anxiety among the indigenous communities for the environment (Schwagerl 112). Following this, nature became a victim of ecocide that had not only curtailed its regenerative capacities but also hampered its equilibrium and sustainability.

Realizing the ecological crisis, ecocriticism in collaboration with Anthropocene studies attempts to relocate humans through the concept of "new" anthropocentrism which emphasized on the "interests and wellbeing of nonhumans" which forHamilton and Jonescould be a key player in combating the on-going environmental catastrophes (46). This increased Man'sresponsibility towards nature rather than fostering the lopsided attitude of ecophobia instilling fear, anxiety, sadness, hopelessness and helplessness in us for nature. Such an emancipatory project of ethics also amplified the role and scope of humans whichforNichols, while agreeing with Morton stated has resulted in a condition where "ecology may [now] be without nature. But it is not without us" (79 and 82). These conceptions expanded anthropocentrism which gained visibility in the Anthropocene for it faced new ecological situations and problems that needed new approaches to understand and redirect the ongoing environmental crisis triggered by the Great Acceleration. Such an effort included posthumanistic dimensions as ecocriticism and Anthropocene intend to remap critical thoughts, narrations and actions through increased non-anthropocentric representations with an aim to create a more stable and sustained future for mankind. For this purpose, ideas like co-evolution, co-existence and co-dependence seem to be crucial for Swarup who sees the possibilities of a healthy regeneration of the 'fragile' ecosystem represented through Chanda Devi, Apo and Devi in *Latitudes of Longing*.

In addition to them, the fundamental shift of Girija Prasad's temperament from being a man of science and intellect to becoming a specimen of eco-masculinism could be seen as a study of co-evolution and co-existence. In fact, these characters through their intimate relationship with nature not only became sensitive but also empathetic and compassionate towards all creations which made them rightfully acknowledge the presenceand power of nature. Besides, the constant dependence of nature for the survival of Chanda Devi, Girija Prasad, Devi and Apo in difficult ecological terrain made them experience the process of "in-becoming" while subsequently allowing them scope for adaptation, evolution, modification and transformation of the individual self within nature which eventually opened the site for the "post" in Posthumanism. While this maybe a desirable exercise, yet its often challenging to achieve and maintain ecological equilibrium in the postnatural period. This realization has openedway for

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"humble anthropocentrism" which seems to be an urgent need in the Anthropocene as it emphasized on our deep commitments to environmental ethics; to generate *timely* warning for humans to act responsibly which for Sandford is a "duty" of mankind (Hornborg44;Zylinska74; Sandfor 86). In this regard, the idea of "new" anthropocentrism has become significant for it challenged the traditional concept of anthropocentrism while articulating the need for, "a strong impulse of caring", responsibility and ethical commitment for nature. Acknowledging its importance, Swarup advocated for solidarity, holism, stewardship and partnership between humans and nature through her novel which would subsequently rearrange "the socionatural entanglement in a more enlightened, reflective way" while also redistributing ethics. Such anenlightened refinement in Man's interaction with the environment shall not only liberate nature but also "protect the remaining natural forms" of the ecosystem. In fact, the "strong moral sacrifices for the sake of the environment", according to Maldonado seem necessary to "counterbalance the most fiercely anthropocentric voices" that have perpetually blinded us of the nonhumans (33 and 123-124). Subsequent to these efforts, crossing of anthropocentrism in the postnatural period appears possible with the expansion of fixed boundaries in the nature/culture binary. In fact, the 'newness' in anthropocentrism as structured by ecocriticism and Anthropocene hass positioned humans as "stewards" with *special* roles, duties and responsibilities towards the ecological world. However, it is important to note that this partnership and co-existence between Man and nature would be possible only if humans are able to channelize their fears, anxiety and anger towards nature into positive perceptions and actions as reflected through the characters of Girija Prasad, Devi, Rana and Apo did in the novel, *Latitudes of Longing*; a narrative through which Swarup wished to generate constructive changes in her readers, to enable them to sensitively look up to the restoration and rehabilitation capacities of the planet.

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