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The Planetary Uncanny: Exploring Alternative Ontologies and Ecological Imagination in Shubhangi Swarup's *Latitudes of Longing*

Ankit Kumar Sharma & Vipan Pal Singh

Abstract

This paper examines an alternative aesthetic of the planet that goes beyond the socio-political and economic dimensions of the globe and globalisation. Building upon Amitav Ghosh's suggestion to find other ways in which literary texts can imagine the events of this era, this paper looks at Shubhangi Swarup's use of uncanny in the novel Latitudes of Longing as Planetary. Swarup intertwines various stories across multiple spatial and temporal zones to show a closed-offness and insecurity over distinguishing the subject from the object. This ingenuity in the narrative style mirrors the complexities of living and thinking about the Anthropocene. The uncanny, most noticeable in the geological and emotional faultlines, also serves as the source of 'longing' within the novel, symbolising the search for familiarity or 'the canny'. Through a close reading of the novel and uncanny theory, this paper demonstrates how the uncanny provides a creative framework for imagining the planetary.

Keywords: Anthropocene; Latitudes of Longing; Planetary; Postcolonial; Uncanny.

Introduction

Anthropocene is at the heart of our understanding of multiple ecological and humanitarian issues, including climate change, global warming, resource depletion, and social and environmental injustice. The view that humans have become a planetary force fundamentally shapes how we see our relationship with other entities. Dipesh Chakrabarty, one of the first scholars to open up the debate of Anthropocene in the humanities, highlights how the concept of the Anthropocene challenges the way we

think about time and history. He argues that the understanding of the Anthropocene as a new epoch, surpassing the existing Holocene, points to the fact that "we presently live in two different kinds of "now-time": the "now" of human history has become entangled with the long "now" of geological and biological timescale"(7), which means "telling the story of human empires- of colonial, racial, and gendered oppression- in tandem with the larger story of how a particular biological species, Homo Sapiens came to dominate the biosphere, lithosphere, and the atmosphere of this planet"(7–8). The Anthropocentric perspective challenges our perception of space-time and reshapes our relationships with both humans and more-than-human entities. The current crisis demands that we establish a novel subject-planet position that challenges the totalising tendencies of the global, and opens up new ways of thinking about our relationship with the planet. Thus, novels serve as a crucial medium for exploring and understanding the complexities of the Anthropocene, as Amitav Ghosh suggests, "It is only through stories that the universe can speak to us, and if we don't learn to listen you may be sure that we will be punished for it"(*Gun Island* 128). By bridging the gap between human history and deep geological time, they offer readers a nuanced perspective on our planet's past, present, and future.

Expanding on the repercussions of the Anthropocene, the concept of the planetary, originated in the writings of Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak, expands our understanding of Earth as a multi-species ecosystem, challenging human-centered narratives. In the book *Death of the Discipline* (2003), she uses the term 'planetarity' as a way of reimagining and re-conceptualising the planet that ruptures the smooth appearances and surfaces of neoliberal globalisation. While the "globe" allows us to think that we can aim to control it, the "planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan"(Spivak, Death of a Discipline 72). While Spivak suggests moving away from Eurocentrism and towards an ethical mode of knowing and doing, Elias and Moraru expanded the idea by proposing that planetary is "polemically subtended by an eco-logic", emphasising an eco-critical perspective. In this article, the core research objective is to propose that while Spivak's interpretation of the concept of "planetarity" is primarily focused on global economic dynamics, the Anthropocene era calls for broader consideration. This includes recognising the physical realities of planetary forces, the extensive timeframes of geological history, and the significance of non-human entities.

Shubhangi Swarup's debut novel, *Latitudes of Longing* (2018), provides an alternative reading of the Anthropocene by the intersection of the deep

time of the Earth with the "now" time of human lives(Chakrabarty ibid). The novel consists of four interconnected short stories: *Islands, Faultline, Valley and Snow Desert.* What unites these narratives are the emotional and geological faultlines, with Earth itself emerging as a central character. Swarup clarifies in a YouTube interview with the channel *Books on Toast* (Shubhangi Swarup, sc.28:00-29:03)that all four novellas in the novel have been named after their natural topography and take place on tectonically active faultlines—which also happen to bind the narrative thread. The "faultlines", as imagined by Swarup, bind the emotional and geological landscapes together, connecting humanity with the Earth. But, "faultlines" by their very nature are uncanny; the movements of the tectonic plates underneath the Earth and the ebb and flow of human emotions are at once "familiar and strange, safe and threatening, mine and not mine"(Nayar 89). In this paper, I argue that in *Latitudes of Longing*, Swarup appropriates the use of "uncanny" to propose a planetary inclusivity.

Uncanny, as theorised by Sigmund Freud (1919), is a mingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar. The word uncanny in Freud's native tongue is "unheimlich", which means not from the home. It's fascinating to note that the uncanny cannot be experienced in isolation from the familiar(-canny). As Tatar suggests, "What is canny can thus easily become uncanny"(171). Sigmund Freud's interest lies in knowing what makes the heimlich or the canny so uncanny. Freud suggests that the uncanny is the return of the repressed desire or beliefs. Siegbert Prawer puts it more nuancedly as "something familiar made strange by the repression of knowledge"(as cited in Tatar, 1981: 170). 'Knowledge', within the context of the novel, is the alternative ontologies in which one can think about our relationship with humans and more-than-humans. They are uncanny in the sense that they do not qualify the rational test of the Anthropos. In the novel, for instance, the Karen community of the Andaman Islands feels "at home" in their relationship with animals. Swarup writes, "That is how a Karen villager came to have a shark for a brother-in-law. It was also how malevolent creatures became benevolent ones…by feeding them relatives, they would turn into relatives. That was how a farmer became the father of a centipede"(2018: 60). In the colonial context, the cultural values of the Karens would seem *unheimlich* because of the "repressive workings of the cultural unconscious"(Bhabha 194). Bhabha describes this process as "surmounting", signifying a deliberate erasure and dismissal of indigenous knowledge systems within the broader cultural discourse. Bhabha's interpretation of the repressive elements in a cultural discourse opens up gates for thinking in diverse ways. In the novel, the Westernised technology and scientific-reliant culture fail to understand the indigenous

canniness of the Karens.

In her paper, Maria Tartar argues that the uncanny event "generates the hesitation that defines the fantastic"(1981: 169). The "hesitation" is the response of the observer or the subject towards the repressed knowledge. Pramod K Nayar, using the theoretical framework from Bhabha, argues that the emphasis on "hesitation" "shifts the uncanny out of the realm of purely psycho-sexual into a more worldly state of location, topoi, place and perception of place"(2010: 89). This moves the uncanny from purely psychic into a more geographical and cultural context. Swarup engages in an ecological fantasy by making the most familiar things look strange. A sense of local culture and place intertwined with a sense of the planet provides the ground for planetary inclusivity. In the story, the uncanny materialises at moments when the emotional and geological faultlines intersect with each other. It is perceived in the positioning of the geological metaphors over human relations. When the love between Girija Prasad and Chanda Devi is not consummated, Swarup writes, "intimacy and distance operate like the tide- high during the day, peaking at meantimes…. unconquerable land separates their beds"(Swarup, 2018: 32). The unknowable "knowledge" that defines the relationship between Girija Prasad and his wife Chanda Devi, and their affective positioning with two separated landscapes creates a sense of the uncanny.

Planetary Inclusivity and Alternative Ontologies

In *Latitudes of Longing*, Swarup appropriates the "condition" of the uncanny to propose an alternative ontology that challenges the existing mode of knowledge. The uncanny in the novel operates on a multitude of levels, including environmental awareness, land reclamation, indigenous wisdom, and global ethics, ultimately influencing a vision of planetary inclusivity. The novel presents a vision in which the ancient supercontinent "Pangea," which was separated into multiple landmasses over millions of years due to geological forces, is imagined as having an inherent desire or natural inclination to reunite and become a single, unified landmass once again. This metaphorical representation suggests a longing for wholeness and unity that transcends the divisions created by time and tectonic movements. It is a desire to bind humans, animals, and plants into a moving Earth. The interdependence of humans over the planet is suggested by Swarup's use of extended spatial and temporal zones to map the slow geological time of the earth to the shorter historical time of humans.

Swarup's Latitudes of Longing disrupts the conventional dichotomy be-

tween humanity and environment, subject and object, as well as the living and non-living. The following quote embodies her planetary vision:

> In different folklores, depending upon the tellers' longitude, latitudes, dreams, disposition and eating patterns, different creatures are forced to tie the knot- foxes, snails, monkeys, ravens, leopards, hyenas, bears, the devil too at times. (Swarup 21)

Such a perspective leads us toward a more emancipatory and inclusive planetary understanding. This quote suggests a literary worldmaking where seemingly non-sensical, irrational, mythical entities join in the song of the planet. Swarup's vision is in sync with Amitav Ghosh's imperative for the authors to think of the improbable and uncanny events. Ghosh notes, "If certain literary forms are unable to negotiate these waters, then they will have failed—and their failures will have to be counted as an aspect of the broader imaginative and cultural failure"("Writing the Unimaginable" 45). Authors, especially novelists (because it is the most popular genre since the eighteenth century), have the task in hand to "negotiate" the "unthinkable being and events of this era"("Writing the Unimaginable" 53). Ghosh later uses the term 'uncanny' for the climate change events. For an aesthetic representation of climatic events, novelists must reevaluate traditional ways of representation of setting, characters, plot, and time.

In *Latitudes of Longing*, the uncanny becomes a source of this inclusivity and is most visible in the theme of *knowledge*. The uncanny results from the contest between indigenous knowledge and Westernised knowledge. The novel suggests an imperative to reimagine our relationship with the planet, presenting the uncanny not as something to be feared but as a metaphorical "home" grounded in ethics and responsibility. Swarup's integration of myth, folklore, mysticism, and other forms of ungraspable knowledge embodies an indigenous canny, an intuitive connection to the natural world that contrasts with rationalist Western epistemologies. The novel is an imaginary attempt to connect four separate stories, spreading across different spatial and temporal zones, into one. It conjoins the story of the four protagonists, Girija Prasad, Mary, Plato, Thapa, and Apo, with different geographies that range from islands to hills, valleys, plains, plateaus, snow mountains, and deserts. A common subduction zone unifies the human and non-human spaces: the area where the continental plates diverge. Due to this phenomenon, there is not a single ending or an overreaching summary of the novel. Rather, it epitomises plurality, relationality, and what Spivak calls "freedom of contradiction without syn-

thesis"(335), which are the essence of planetary. The coming together and the separations of the plates directly influence how the story progresses. Every action in the novel attempts to understand the uncanniness of the earth, which I call geological and emotional faultlines.

"'Islands' is the epicentre of the novel, and the other sections can be read as their seismic waves"(Jayagopalan 170), writes a critique about the tsunami event that occurs in the Indian oceanic plates. The 'Island' part narrates the story of Girija Prasad and Chanda Devi. It spans across different time zones, bringing together the history of colonisation, post-colonisation, world wars and the modernisation of the Indian subcontinent post-independence. The novel focuses on the 'movements' of the subduction zones showing the importance of the "deep time" of the earth with the "historical time" frames of the humans. Girija Prasad is a scientist who researches the origin of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He struggles to construct a uniform map of the Island as the islands are constantly shifting. Reflecting on this phenomenon, he states that:

> For the land that he worshipped as terra firma- permanent and immovable- seems to be opposite in nature. The poles that guided ships and sailors through the millennia are prone to wandering….it is faultlines, not rigid continents, guiding poles or mighty oceans that hold it all together. The earth is as fidgety and temperamental as a senile old man. The ground that he took for granted is a superficial crust floating on top of a fluid interior. (Swarup 96, 107).

For Girija Prasad, the idea of the land as "stable" and "reliable" has been questioned by the planet's continuous wandering. It is, however, not an unreliable land for Chanda Devi. Instead, the distinction of what can be known characterises the eerie perception of the land in Girija Prasad and Chanda Devi's straightforward canniness. The "faultlines" that hold the part of the land together are beyond the knowable. They suggest uncertain knowledge, illusion and secrecy. According to Freud, the uncanny is closely tied to secrecy and uncertainty (1971 370, 373–75). The metaphors used in this paragraph, such as "superficial" and "fluid", highlight the secrecy of the landscape. The unreliability of the landscape is a recognition of the ways in which climate change events are taking place. The notion of "terra-firma", or solid ground, has long been critical to human conceptualisations of the world, symbolising reliability, security, and foundation. However, this perception is challenged by the acknowledgement that Earth is not as permanent or immovable as once believed. The description

of the poles as "prone to wandering" and focusing on faultlines rather than rigid continents or oceans reveals a dynamic and uncanny earth that is constantly shifting and evolving. This imagination of the earth as a dynamic, fluid entity aligns with the idea of planetary praxis, the view that humans and non-humans are constantly shaped by their environment.

Girija Prasad's limited understanding of the world juxtaposed with the revolutionary poet's idea of the Hindu nation and Chanda Devi's canniness. The poet states

> To accept the Silurian and Ordovician periods is to accept the empire's authority, the poet remarked. 'Who governs time? Why does the Meridian pass through England, shunning its colonies? He had chosen to call the ocean Kshirsagar, inspired by Hindu Mythology. (Swarup, 2018: 79)

The poet inspires an alternate ontology. He dreams of the mythic ocean and the Sanskrit language. The warden, reflecting on the worldview of the poet, states that "human interest in prehistory was limited to a handful of epochs and periods"(Swarup, 2018: 79). Girija Prasad, as well as the Warden, does not have the vision to perceive a world that is free from the trap of space and time. In this context, the Kshirsagar myth of the poet teaches the metropolitan humans, like the warden, an alternative belief system. There are local myths of the Karen community, the Drakpos nomads, that make the "uncanny" a home-like space. The poet narrates the myth of the Kshirsagar:

> The Kshirsagar wasn't just an ocean. It was the entire cosmos, with geography unlike any found in the Eastern and Western scriptures. The cosmos, in its depth, was an ocean of various realms. At the very top, was the sagar Natraj, or the realm of the octopus. A giant octopus, made of subtle energies, balanced the various islands, seas and celestial bodies on each tentacle in its ethereal dance. (Swarup, 2018: 80)

The myth of the Kshirsagar, known by the name of Tethys Ocean, is popular in the Hindu culture. According to the myth, the octopus holds the entire planet on its body. The Hindus also believe that the movement of the tentacle causes calamities like earthquakes and cyclones. Although the poet is captured and tortured in jail, his identification with this alternative vision keeps him moving. The myth encapsulates a planetary worldview, as the cosmos is the assimilation of the human, non-human and the earth.

We see that the non-human octopus is central to the idea of a Hindu cosmos. A strange mix of myths and stories complicates the unidirectional nature of space and time. Here, the uncanny applies to the local stories, myths and the belief system of the local people, which links the land and the narrative.

While the poet's mythical worldview "settles", Chanda Devi's clairvoyant gaze "unsettles" everything. Like the drifting continents of the planet, Girija Prasad strives to understand his wife. She tells her husband that she can talk with trees, animals and even the dead. For instance, she believes that "plants are the most sensitive spirits in the web of creation. They make life possible. Which is why they can see, feel, and hear more than their forms, especially humans"(Swarup 109). Her perception of non-human entities like trees are beyond the limits of the rationalist and scientific temperament of her husband Girija Prasad. The presence of Chanda Devi evokes the ghosts of the colonial past, Swarup writes,

> She made all those who called the bungalow their home, living and dead alike nervous. Like the bachelor Girija Prasad, the place was jittery on its stilts. Her presence confused the ghosts of freedom fighters, the perpetual starving snail-eaters, and Lord Goodenough himself who shuffled between the Pacific, the Andaman, and his ancestral manor, chasing warm currents…life as ghosts had been liberating until Chanda Devi's clairvoyant gaze reminded them of their tattered presence and uncouth ways. (Swarup, 2018: 19)

Swarup's uncanny enables us to critique the social and political institutions of the time. The clairvoyant gaze of Chanda Devi alters the sense of "home" to the *uncomfortable* uncanny. Chanda Devi acts as a foil to the idea of home for the Britishers. Her presence stirs the harmony of the house, including the ghosts of the present, past and future. In his work, Nicholas Rand reminds us that the phantom has "the potential to illuminate the genesis of *social institutions"*(as cited in 2010, p. 102 his emphasis). Swarup suggests that there cannot be a unilateral way of contemplating life. By rendering the colonial "homely" into an unfamiliar space, Swarup proposes a critique of colonial times.

Latitudes of Longing suggests that the ghosts represent people dealing with the aftermath of events like Independence. It also comments on the breakdown of the postcolonial project that was deeply motivated by the colonial agents. The obsession with a settlement is questioned by its ef-

ficacy and relevance. The British, for example, dubbed the creek that divides the South Andamans and the Middle Andamans Division Creek because of its geographical significance; for the longer, the Long Division Creek and the shorter Short Division Creek. Swarup argues for an alternative ontology: "Had they lived their lives naked, draped in nothing but colours of earth, interacting with their surroundings…they would have known that the Middle Andamans are a world apart from the South Andamans. The creek, like a sinuous snake, just happened to sleep between the two"(Swarup 58). The "naming" of a place is a political and subjective activity. What the British government didn't understand about a piece of land is that the humans and the non-humans share attachment with the land

In a post-colonial nation, what does it mean to be dispossessed? Or worse, what does it mean to be a refugee without a "home"? According to Leela Gandhi, there's doubt about nationalism being the "only legitimate end of decolonisation"(1999, p. 111). Gandhi's viewpoint encourages a broader consideration of "home" beyond the traditional idea of a nation. In the novel, when young Mary, a Karen from war-torn Myanmar, is brought to the Andamans, the Pastor proclaims that "she has turned this settlement into home"(Swarup 61). Here, the land is perceived as home because of the indigenous canny of the Karen community. They knew something about the land that the settlers did not know. Likewise, the island becomes familiar to the scientific gaze of Girija Prasad once he acknowledges the voices of the earth, water, trees, and the soul itself. He expresses it thus:

> Call it the influence of his wife, or the presentiment of his father, but Girija Prasad begins to wonder, if elements too, have souls… do their ghosts haunt the earth, like the sahibs of Ross Island? If a human is not reducible to mere bones and blood, how can an ocean be reduced to its geographical space, the element of water or the form it takes? Life is more than the sum of its breaths and tremors. (Swarup, 2018: 86)

Girija Prasad's perception of non-human entities has significantly changed after his marriage with Chanda Devi. Chanda Devi's life is closely linked to her surroundings. She believes that any movement of the islands causes significant changes in the couple's life. In the Andamans, an earthquake can ruin a Dal, or worse impact a woman's pregnancy. She shares a different relationship with the Andamans which, her husband, cannot understand. Once she expresses her opinion about the island "In the Andaman Sea, each island is a person and each person an island"(Swarup, 2018: 98).

This view of the land generates a sense of homely familiarity on one side, while on the other hand, it invites planetary thinking.

Postcolonial Dreams and Planetary Worldmaking

The novel is a critique of the postcolonial legacy. It deals with people who are displaced and seeking a "home". It envisions a planetary vision of the world based on relationality and ethics. The novel's second, third and fourth sections move from the neighbouring island of Myanmar to Nepal, ending with a village in the disputed Karakoram range between India and Pakistan. No way Swarup leaves the land out of the story. This is how Swarup describes Burma, a neighbouring country with a disturbed postcolonial history, through its hero Plato and the land: "Once a proud continent, Burma was crushed between India and Asia. India pushed it to the north with its drift, and Asia squeezed it to the east in defiance. A weeping eye was all that was left of the face buried under rubble"(Swarup, 2018: 139). Like the land, the country is disturbed by a civil war between the Junta army and the communists. Swarup effectively scaled up the events into this particular section. Plato's history is a long humanist history of communism, ethnicity, democracy, and so on, which Swarup positions over the deep timescale of the subduction plate of the Indian Subcontinent. It echoes what the visionary poet John Donne had to say in the 17th-century poem *No Man is an Island*: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main" (Donne 108-109). Swarup proposes this vision throughout the novel.

By mapping the short history of Plato over the long durée of the continental plates, Swarup foregrounds the limitation of humans in understanding the events around us. This part of the novel is a strong critique of the colonial rule. The "weeping eye" is symbolic of the colonial past of Burma and the ongoing civil violence because of this. For instance, the Rohingya crisis has its roots in the divisive policy of the Britishers since the independence in 1948. Plato's struggle gives a voice to what was suppressed. Plato, who calls himself a Naga-"the serpent dragon, it was here he belonged"(Swarup 131), connects to the land intimately. Swarup interconnects the history of the land to the history of Plato thus:

Like the scar on his body, his broken teeth and internal haemorrhages, the gemstones too are evidence of transformation at the core. Purged to the surface from faultlines far below, aren't they scars and clots from the land's deepest wounds? (Swarup 172)

The above quotation makes evident that there could be multiple ways of looking at the human and non-human relationship, including the planetary. "Broken teeth" and "haemorrhages" symbolise the land's brutal past. By interconnecting the deep time of the planet with the limited history of humans, Swarup envisions a planetary worldview that sets a counter-narrative to the dominance of the West and linear ontologies. Plato's indigenous "knowledge" renders the land more like "home". The land becomes harmonious when Plato meets his mother Mary, and friend Thapa. Thapa is a Gorkha man who meets Plato in the jail. Tere are many linkages between all the three characters. First, Plato, Mary and Thapa all share the same cultural and social heritage. They are nomads, the real inhabitants of the land who are "displaced" due to the suppressive policies of the postcolonial state. In their bonding, Swarup envision a larger bonding of the lands and seas. Swarup writes "to the nomads, these objects are family. Like him, they belong to a timeless world…"(Swarup 233–34). The Andaman Islands, Plateaus of Burma and the Himalayan range in Nepal all combines in imagining of the planet as one and all.

The fourth part of the novel, titled "Snow Desert", continues a long chain of criticism of the colonial and post-colonial periods. The novel gives much attention to the aspect of justice in the story of Chanda Devi, Plato and the septarian Apo in this part of the novel. When Apo is asked by the Indian army soldier Rana about the rise in earthquakes in the Himalayas, he responds:

> When human bloodshed seeps into the cracks of the land, the earth's scabs and wound cannot heal…your violence and war are like gangrene to the earth's flesh…we have hacked Hindustan into a hundred islands with borders, mutinies and wars. (Swarup, 2018: 298)

Apo comes from a nomadic family who believes in a close relationship with nature. Continuous war and violence in the border areas have disturbed the livelihood of the common folks. Tariq Ali, in the essay "The Story of Kashmir", writes about the ongoing violence in Kashmir between the Indian and Pakistani Armies as "murder tours the region in different guises, garbed sometimes in the uniform of the Indian army or in the form of bearded men, armed and infiltrated by Pakistan, speaking the language of jihad- Allah and Fate rolled into one"(2011, p. 7). The novel is a sharp commentary on the disturb geo-political relation of the neighbouring countries i.e. India and Pakistan. Such consistent violences not only disturb the daily lives of the people living there but also damage the

environment of the place. Himalaya, the only source of fresh water for both the countries has been facing tremendous load of human activities, which disturbs their workings. Swarup utilises affective geographies as a tool to visualise that the pain of the war affects not only humans but also the non-humans alike.

Another way the uncanny operates is by employing spectropoetics and confused narratives, which both generate familiarity and strangeness. Bagmati, beloved to Thapa, also a nomad. believe in this story about the creation of the continents. She writes, "one day a grain of sand had a dream… It was basking under the sun at the highest place on earth…the grain leaped up…with each leap, it reached higher and higher, and different lands were created"(Swarup 233). The nomads believe in a different ontology that we, as rational beings, fail to comprehend. The uncanny, according to Dolar, begins with the domain of sacred and religious, and later transversed to the scientific and rational, manifesting itself in the form of ghosts, absurd stories, vampires and the undead"(Dolar 7). Such a vision of the human and the non-human entities, as it can be seen through multiple stories in the novel, promotes eco-cosmopolitan thinking. Moreover, it shapes our view to think of this planet and human relations not of dominance and control but relational and ethical.

On one side, anthropocentrism suggests that humans are now the dominant geo-physical force on the planet, with the capacity to disturb the planetary systems, the novel projects "habitability" as a mode and means of living in co-relation with the others. The nomads believe that they are constantly being watched and guided by the ancient spirits, their family members and even animals. As Apo's grandmother tells them, "The ancestors are constantly watching…one day they will punish us for all the mischief we have committed"(Swarup 281). The novel envisions alternative ontologies; the "voices" of the ancient spirits, an embodiment of the uncanny, transform the land from an indifferent entity to a spirit itself. Swarup connects the spectropoetics to the subduction zones of the plates. She writes, "In the Andaman Islands, the force of the Indian plate being pushed under a heavier landmass increased the situational gravity. This, in turn, pull all forms of dense energy, including the ghosts, to it"(Swarup 311). Humans, non-humans, land, ghosts, and energies combine in the process of evolution. Swarup's novelistic world consists of the humans, the non-humans, ghosts of the past and future, and "energies" of the subduction zones into an inseparable thread. This is beautifully put by Plato thus: When Thapa asks Plato, "Who are they?", Plato responds, "Premonitions of our past…Ghosts of our future…They are us"(Swarup 251).

Conclusion

What we see in the reading of the novel is that the uncanny, while destroying any stable meaning of an event, at the same time creates an opportunity for the planetary worldview. The use of story, myth, and local beliefs renders the land "homely" for Chanda Devi, Plato, and Apo, respectively. With knowledge, argues Maria Tartar, "the intellectual uncertainty created by an uncanny event yield to conviction… the once hostile world becomes habitable again"(182). Once a rational and modern subject, Girija Prasad's ghost finally admits to his son Rana that "It took me decades to realise that we lived on a faultline and that gravity was a whimsical force there"(Swarup 310). He would never question Chanda Devi's knowledge because he sees the world in a new way. It is through the realisation of an interconnected world that Girija Prasad is able to successfully draw a map of the islands and guide his son through the depths of the Himalayas. Swarup's innovative narrative technique of intertwining multiple stories within geological space-time underscores that the current climate crisis is not the result of a single moment, individual, or event. Rather, it is the culmination of human activities embedded within the deep time of Earth's history, reflecting a complex interplay of actions over extended temporal scales.

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