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BIOPRECARITY, DISPOSABILITY, AND THE POETICS OF HOPE IN SWARGA

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Abstract: This article conceptualizes the everyday existential crisis of man, nature, including the planetary life as bioprecarity. It looks at the neoliberal capitalist economy that renders *bios* precarious. The *bios* includes humans, more-than-humans, and natural resources in the Global South, available for value-generation of a select few. The article argues that disposability of *bios* triggers and expands neoliberal economy, thus turning entire life forms on the planet precarious. This horrendous task of erasing life-sustaining conditions and strengthening value-generation process can be abundantly found in Ambikasutan Mangad’s novel, *Swarga* (2017), which narrates the precarious man-nature relationship as a result of the extractive forces of neoliberalism. In the last section of the article, I turn to Phillip E Wegner’s conceptualization of “close-critical reading” paradigm as a poetics of hope in these dark times, thus highlighting how hope nourishes the fight of Enmakaje people against the capital-state complex.

Keywords: bioprecarity, hope, neoliberalism, Global South, *Swarga*

On November 4, 2022, Elon Musk, Twitter’s new CEO, arbitrarily decided to lay off about 50 percent of its employees, accounting for 7500 of the global workforce. In the following week, the world witnessed another massive cut down of 11,000 jobs by Mark Zuckerberg, CEO Meta. Likewise, in March 2022, P&O (The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company), a very rich shipping and logistics company with a

reported annual turnover of more than 10 billion dollars, fired 800 employees to “replace them with cheaper agency staff.” (*Financial Times* online) These are global companies, and their decisions have impact in other parts of the world as well, which is why these firings also resulted in laying off employees who were on work-permit visas in the US and the UK. Further, the Twitter unit in India accounted for 90 percent of the cuts in personnel, while its only unit in Africa, based in Ghana, suffered a complete wipe out.

Yet, it would be naïve to have such a limited view on the ongoing capital accumulation. It moves beyond issues pertaining to employment, affecting other areas of our life, including the environmental catastrophe. As Jason W. Moore maintains that class relations are thorny and larger issues, not to be situated within the over simplified classifications of colonialism or industrialization. Rather, they also “foreground[s] the explanation of tipping points, transitions, crises and great civilizational expansions in their historical-geographical specificity.” (Moore 4) Evidently, Will Steffen highlights the condition of the “atmospheric concentrations of the three greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane – [which] are now well above the maximum observed at any time during the Holocene.” (Stefan 92) These recent planetary conditions expose the monstrosity of our much-eulogized global world, rendering instability, vulnerability a part of our daily life, a phenomenon I term ‘bioprecarity.’

The fact that these catastrophic outcomes happened without any government intervention points to our precarious condition. For this new emergent capital-state complex, humans and nature are assigned the status of waste, free to be disposed of as per the convenience and requirement of the economy, exposing them to what I see as an everyday existential crisis. Both humans and nature are at heightened risk in this new codification of the neoliberal regime. In such codification, driven by capitalist economy and profitability, risks and loss are always externalized while accumulation of wealth, self-expansion, and progress are internalized. Also, co-opted is the mechanism of law and state-machinery, as evident during the Covid-19 crisis as well as in the recent global events of job cuts. As Andreas Wansbrough and I have argued elsewhere, “while there is a rhetoric of ‘we’re all in this together,’ the reality tells multiple different tales, with clear differences in the vaccination rates between the Global South and Global North.” (149) To put it more simply, the Global South/Global North divide is not just to be looked at geographically, but also in terms of the

availability of cheap resources – both human and natural – for the financial players based in the Global North. The geographical determinism of Global South has more to do with the value that any region can add to the racist, accumulative, and exploitative projects (unending ones) of global powers. That is precisely the why “the Global South has been employed in a postnational sense to address spaces and peoples negatively impacted by contemporary capitalist globalization.” (Mahler) Similarly, Marko Juvan points to the expansionist nature of the neoliberal economy underlining the fact “that the capitalist economy is a world only if it is defined as an interstate system that does not encompass the entire earth, the system conquers the planet and all areas of humanity.” (Juvan 9) Juvan’s views on the capitalist economy and its impact on the entire planet is also viable to understand that Global South can also reside within the heart of the Global North.

Evidently, what matters for the neoliberal capitalists is a perennial source of value-generation even if it comes at the cost of disposing humans and natural resources, throwing them into a state of perpetual crisis. This article conceptualizes the everyday existential crisis of man and nature, including the planetary life as bioprecarity. It looks at the neoliberal capitalist economy that renders *bios* precarious. The *bios* includes humans, more-than-humans, and natural resources. The article argues that disposability of *bios* triggers and expands neoliberal economy, thus turning entire life forms on the planet precarious. This horrendous task of erasing life-sustaining conditions and strengthening value-generation can be abundantly found in Ambikasutan Mangad’s novel, *Swarga* (2017), which narrates the precarious man-nature relationship as a result of the extractive forces of neoliberalism. Yet, *Swarga* also happens to offer a poetics of hope for our precarious times, which the article examines in the last section.

Bioprecarity

The idea of *bios* that I foreground in this article marks a departure from Giorgio Agamben’s concept of *bios*. Hence, *bios* should not be seen in the light of Agamben’s dichotomy of *bios* and *zoēs*. Agamben’s examined *bios* against the *zoēs*, seeing the latter as unprotected life, while drawing his ideas from the Greek system. “The Greeks did not have a single term to express what we mean by the word life. They used two semantically and morphologically distinct terms, albeit reportable to a common great: *zoé*, which expressed the simple fact of living, common to all living beings (animals,

men or gods), and *bíos*, that indicated one's own way to live." (Agamben 11) Agamben situates the extreme life within the juris-political frameworks, making a claim that "a bios is only its own zoe." (59) While I agree with Agamben that contemporary life forms have been pushed into death zones, aided and abetted by political powers, my notion of *bios* here has to do with the economic scale on which our daily activities and productivity are measured, assigning value to natural resources, and converting both humans and natural resources into private profits, thus resulting in bioprecarity. Hence, this article identifies *bios* as all forms of life available on planet. In the light of the monstrosity of neoliberal capitalism, it would be too naïve to think of *bios* in singular terms, particularly when we have been witnessing its rampant assault on entangled life-forms on this planet. Rob Nixon makes us look at the dark and frightening scenes from our planet, "thawing cryosphere, toxic drift, biomagnification, deforestation, the radioactive aftermaths of wars, acidifying oceans, and a host of other slowly unfolding environmental catastrophes," (2) which only suggest that waste-making is deeply embedded within the value-accumulation practices of neoliberal capitalism. As one could see, it is the entire landscape of life that has been put to serve the unending self-expansion of capitalism. I term this ongoing self-expansion of capitalist economy as 'unsecular' since it is selective, cannibalistic, and compromises the entire planetary life (*bios*), while also dismantling social structures, eroding democratic ethos, expelling humans into informal grey zones, expropriating natural resources, confiscating others' assets (personal and public), thus weakening, even denying future habitability on earth. This unsecular character is the hidden abode of capitalist economy, which then leads to the creation of 'bioprecarity.' Therefore, I define bioprecarity as vulnerability, fragility, and expropriation of all life forms, driven, controlled and legitimized by market forces, protected and nourished by state machineries, not confined within any geographical domain.

Precarity as a theoretical framework has gained popularity ever since it was used by Judith Butler. In Butler's words, precarity denotes a "politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death" (Butler 25) The caveat that I want to draw here is that the notion of 'bioprecarity', presented in this article needs to be seen differently from Pramod Nayar's conceptualisation of 'ecoprecarity', which he defines as "intertwined set of discourses of fragility, vulnerability, power relations across species and imminent extinction is what I term

‘ecoprecarity.’ (6) While the article agrees that vulnerability and fragility constitute the core of ‘bioprecarity’, it extends Nayar’s conceptualisation of ‘ecoprecarity’ and thus identifying ‘bioprecarity’ within the realms of neoliberal capitalist economy, which ensures that humans and natural resources relentlessly contribute to their growth, thus depriving them of any sustainable measures. In doing so, I also add to the theoretical provenance of precarity in relation to economy where neoliberal codes ensure that rules of the game remain inclined to their favour, while rest of the world are in a state of permanent competition for their survival measures. Seen from this angle, bioprecarity is not about the survival of the fittest but survival of the capitalist accumulation. As Mendes and Lau assert, “[c]urrently, the most prevalent usage of the term “precarity” is still in relation to financial and labour markets, focusing on employment and economic insecurities.” (Mendes and Lau 2)

The fact is power relations have come to occupy an intrinsic feature of the new capitalist economy, legitimizing its accumulative practices, and deciding the fate of *bios* on the planet. ‘Bioprecarity’, then, is the blurring and dissolving of social, natural, and political boundaries, triggered and controlled by neoliberal regimes, and put to serve their self-expansionist agenda, destroying the entire ecosystem on the planet, and hence the very idea of *bios*. It leads to vulnerability, disability, fragility and an everyday existential crisis. Such causations appear to grip Swarga’s Enmakaje village, a *bioprecarious* site within the state of Kerala, where “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)

Swarga’s bioprecarious world is an outcome of value-based political economy forgetting the fact that what sustains life (*bios*) on the planet is the sustenance and maintenance of an order, creation and preservation of life conditions for future generations; however, the self-expansionist agenda of neoliberal capitalism knows and follows no order, be it social, political, worldly, even planetary for that matter. Such a mode of self-expansionist determinism eventually leads to a disorder for all species, including the Earth’s ecosystem, and renders the planet bioprecarious. Treating nature, social order, political establishments as commodities is erroneous; these are all non-commodity categories, central to maintain habitability of life on the planet. Seen from such perspective, ‘bioprecarity’ is rooted in the idea that humans, other species and environment are replaceable, hence, treated as waste to assign value to the neoliberal practices.

Mangad's novel, *Swarga*, forcefully presents the horrifying face of our new neoliberal order. The novel takes readers into an unusual journey of the two main characters, Neelakantan and Devyani, who decide to stay away from all humans and the urban life, seeking refuge in the Jadadhari hills. These characters have given up on everything that is linked with humans, even dissecting their reproductive organs. They are without names, with a promise to divorce themselves from other humans and society. In one of the passages, Neelakantan says "I am not human. Please don't call me that. I am an animal living in the forest. Have severed all ties with humankind."

Through these two characters, Mangad presents the absurdity of human life. Also, encountered in the novel are horrifying images of animals and the natural landscape of the Jadadhari hills. *Swarga*, which means 'heaven', therefore, turns out to be an ironical title, through which Mangad pleads for readers to recognize the present moment as a real emergency and to become aware of the interconnectedness of life.

Of course, this 'real emergency' is linked to bioprecarity. In the region also known as *Swarga*, we witness small kids with mysterious and incurable diseases. While Bhagyalakshmi appears "with a big tongue jutting out through her mouth" (70), unable to eat anything solid, we get to see other "Chil'ren with big heads." (71). Yet another girl child was found with "her head bigger than her body, her limbs were tiny." (71) Still two other kids were found mentally ill, "in chains." (71) There were strange children, neither human nor animal; human existence has become precarious. Neelakantan encounters an adult man, who resembled a child due to physical deformity, and whose fingers were "strangely long and thin... like octopus arms, all curled up. His eyes [were] all white...with no pupils." (74) The animals, too, led precarious life in that region. For example, we witness calves with three legs, and another one with "two heads." (92) The river water is bereft of "fish or frog or snake." (94) Even other species such as "bees are dea' now." Evidently, *Swarga* turns out to be a "living hell", where all forms of life breathe precarity.

Bioprecarity underlines the daily existential crisis of people living in the Jadadhari hills. The lands produce poison due to regular spray of the Endosulfan pesticide to increase the productivity of crops. The place that used to enjoy access to all natural resources, including fresh water, has been deprived of such resources now. The everyday existential crisis, an integral part of bioprecarity comes out vividly in this paragraph:

The abundance of water! Enmakjee has no wells. In *Swarga* – in Pedre village – alone ther’ are mor’ tha’ a thousan’ surangas! The water flows to you’ house... Tha’s why they called this place Swarga – Heaven.

This abundance of water whic’ made this place heaven is wha’s makin’ 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. Isn’ tha’ why this place is full of sick people.’... The plants are poisoned too... They don yield like befor’... they aren’ as healthy. (Mangad 126-27)

In *Swarga*, one can immediately witness the horrors of ecological damage rendered by the state-corporate nexus. “In a radius of four kilometer, such wide incidence of cancer, epilepsy, mental aberrations, low intelligence, deformed limbs, skin diseases...” (120), but there was no help from the government or any organisations. Swarga has turned out to be a gothic place, problematising the very presence of life. In one such moment in Swarga, Neelakantan feels that he is in a graveyard, with no life around. He thinks of digging the ground, “[B]ut the thought that not even a cockroach was to be seen was truly scary. Shall I dig the soil, he asked himself. There must be at least some earthworms left... But he quickly withdrew his fingers. What if he could not find even an earthworm?” (122-23)

The deformed and extinguished life that we see in *Swarga* is a result of a collusive consent between the government-corporate nexus, which has shifted from care mentality to generating harm, insecurity, and vulnerability in the neoliberal age. The fact that pesticide generates “crores of dollars through exports” (221) by exposing humans, other species and the entire ecosystem to risk constitutes all of them as value constitutive entities for capitalist system. Endosulfan was produced by Agrevo, a multinational company, and provided the legal immunity by local politicians and ministers. While the ecosystem of Enmakaje was being slowly decimated, the local leader has “[h]is business empire’s roots run all over Kerala – five star hotels and resorts and educational institutions.” (214) “The Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) claims that it will lose crores if the spraying doesn’t happen.” (153) “There are targets set for its sales, orders from above.” (190) Seeing the entire ecosystem, including humans, as means to reach financial targets is what triggers bioprecarity. Elsewhere, I have argued that neoliberal capitalism “is like 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.” (7)

And, that is exactly what we find in Enmakaje. The “endosulfan has been found even in breast milk!... Also, fish, eggs, vegetables...in many kinds of foodstuff. ... In short, this poison has spread everywhere – in air and water and soil.” (143-44) “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.” (192) Such horrific renderings have wide-reaching repercussions, disabling and killing the present life and poisoning and denying conditions for future of life on the planet. Bioprecarity thus marks its presence not just in the everyday life of our present generations, but it will continue to peril the way our future generations will breathe here. In short, it is a transgenerational phenomenon of vulnerability, disability, fragility and extinction of life forms on this planet. Thus, it can be argued that “susceptibility to harm” (Dimock) effected by the unending accumulative practices of neoliberalism shapes and defines bioprecarity.

Waste and Disposability

The rendering of bioprecarity is also linked to the treatment of humans, non-humans and natural resources as waste, and hence disposable. This is a new epistemic shift that social ontological order has witnessed under the neoliberal capitalist order. In the neoliberal age, perpetual thirst for self-expansion of capitalist societies has decimated our notion of social care. In *Swarga*, the character of Srirama, the journalist, reinforces this issue, questioning the government’s silence to all the atrocities being inflicted on the local population. While “everyone here was demanding support from the government...no one’s talking about what’s happening in this place.” (100) As I suggested earlier, this extractive condition of neoliberal capitalist system has been rendered legal protection from the government, which then gives them the licence to treat humans and other forms of life as waste and disposable. The process of accumulation forgets, even deliberately ignores, the notion of life. Under this new regime, humans and natural resources are devoid of normative and affective renderings, and hence considered as waste that is replaceable and disposable.

The treatment of humans and natural resources as waste is nothing new. Zygmunt Bauman highlighted this new condition in his book, *Wasted Lives*:

Modernity and Its Outcasts (2003). Bauman was well ahead of his time in highlighting the self-accumulation process under the new neoliberal set up. He posits, “things are declared useless and promptly thrown away because other, new and improved objects of desire beckon, and that they are bound to be thrown away to make room for such newer things.” (3-4) The replicability and update of both the product and labour is an intrinsic feature of capitalist accumulation in such a way that “[n]o sooner is the process of expropriation of the masses complete, however, than a new process begins, one whose ultimate end is the expropriation of the capitalist.” (Allen 481) Given the devouring nature of neoliberal capitalist economy, extraction and accumulation are accompanied with creation of waste and its disposability in a way that we encounter in the poisoned environment of Enmakaje in *Swarga*.

The neoliberal capitalist system remains committed to the old version of accumulative, albeit in ways that are more threatening and alarming, with far-reaching and transgenerational effect. Amy Allen points to this “self-reinforcing circle of capitalist accumulation” (Allen 472) contending that “capitalist production centered on the extraction and accumulation of surplus value serves as the enabling condition for the distinctively capitalist mode of commodity circulation, primitive accumulation serves as the enabling condition for capitalist production.” (Allen 476) This permanent “enabling condition”, I argue, leads to creation of new ways for accumulation and the subsequent dispossession of humans, other species and natural resources. The resultant dispossession is not restricted to land; it devours the entire ecosystem, including humans, rendering everything as disposable. In fact, as we see in *Swarga*, these practices have transgenerational impacts, rendering the entire land uninhabitable for future generations.

Under the neoliberal capitalist accumulation, while citizenship and natural resources may be seen in terms of geographical locations, much of the living conditions fall into the hands of corporatorial dictators. Thus, “[f]or the dispossessed, the costs of living are always greater because life and its guarantees are, by definition, the right and prerogative of the enfranchised.” (Tadiar 26) Considering Tadiar’s account of our new life condition, which she aptly terms “remaindered life,” I argue that we live in an age of global political economy, where global is both the system and the process for accumulation of wealth, a beneficiary of political immunity, enabling these forces to silently dispossess the waste (both humans and natural resources), thus making economy the ultimate tool to maintain their life. Citing Melinda Cooper that “[in]

return of value to value, capital speculates on its own future realization as something in excess of it” (Melinda 96), Tadiar highlights the limitlessness of capital’s “practice of speculation” (113), which generates more value “in excess of the present value for which it is exchanged.” (113) Tadiar aptly sees this accumulation and the subsequent creation of disposability as “the colonization of the future as a means of present realization.” (113) It is from this vantage point that Marco Armerio contends that each journey of capital accumulation seeks “creation of sacrifice zones [of] wasted people and places.” Armerio goes on to call this process “Wasteocene”. He contends, “[W]asteocene 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)

The haunting effects of wasteocene runs through *Swarga*. Life rendered bioprecarious, fragility and horrors embedded within the everyday life of the Enmakaje village people, the infinite extension of pain, neglect of duties by politicians, violation of basic rights, all go into the making of the landscape a waste and its people disposable. No wonder wasting is a process that constitutes Othering. Humans and the earth’s entire resources are seen as Other by the value-centred accumulative process. Gidwani sees the waste as “the origin and constitutive other of capitalist value.” Intensive creation and disposing off such waste, as Tadiar, contends is a recent phenomenon of “the intense capitalization” in which “waste and wasting of things, people, space and time – and their derivatives – is carried out.” (130)

The pervasiveness of value generation and subsequent creation of waste, according to Tadiar, is rooted in the idea of potentialities that humans, lands and other life forms hold for globalizing extractive forces. As such Tadiar views “all kinds of waste” as “a resource and means for ... new imperialism.” (32) She further adds that technology merged with economics is centrally embedded within the process of nourishing and energizing the new capitalist order. It is exactly such a rendition that has led to bioprecarity and disposability in *Swarga*. The economic benefits derived from value-based harvesting is to be seen in combination with the technological advancements of the pesticide production and its spray. The transformation of the heaven (*Swarga*) into hell (in terms of life conditions) in the novel is the neoliberal grammar of value generation, and waste and disposability are its Othering language. Seen together, they render life bioprecarious.

Such dystopic life views from *Swarga* do not account for a pessimistic approach to counter these hegemonic and utilitarian forces. Surprisingly, these dystopic conditions of bioprecarity elicit brave and unflinching responses from the characters in the novel, thus leaving readers with a ray of hope for better future, that is both collective and secular, which we will see in the next section of the article.

Poetics of Hope

Arguably, the dystopic scenes from *Swarga* raise several questions that not only concern our present moment but also problematize, even blur the future. At a moment when the global order is constrained by the divisions of private and public, and energized by capitalist cannibalism, maintaining “the systematic cultivation of capacities for value,” (Wegner 13) it must propel us to map cognitive exercises to regain the lost spaces, and to engender the repair of planetary health through resilience, care and solidarities. All is not lost yet, and writing, practising, even breathing humanity needs to be a continuous exercise such as the one Neelakantan stresses in his relentless fight against pesticides: “our struggle is not just against endosulfin, it is against all pesticides that lead to the earth’s destruction.” (177) The battle against the cannibal nature of capitalism is not a one-time revolt, rather a continuing war. Likewise, the battle to becoming human, in fact a planetary species, demonstrating care for other species and natural resources is also a permanent one. We can become planetary species only through our notion of shared affection, thus taking care of not just the present ones but also preserving life conditions for future ones.

Evidently, the poetics of hope that I foreground here is rooted in the present destructible moment, deriving its critical efficacy from Philip E. Wegner’s notion of utopia; Wegner rightly sees utopia “as the fundamental human principle of hope.” (18) Arising out of the present moment of crisis, hope is always aimed at a better future. As such, it is driven by resilience and care, in a relentless struggle to transform living conditions by combating evil forces. In the wake of the present “dark times,” Wegner formulates a new hermeneutics of hope, which he suggests lie in our “close/critical reading” of the forces around us. The paradigm of close/critical reading is to be seen in opposition to the “moralizing ethical criticism”, retaining and heightening the concept and practises of Othering, readily confirming the “predetermined decisions,” (4) which peril “political work of speaking truth to the actual powers that constrain our existences.” (8) Moralizing ethical criticism is thus akin to foreclosing any futurity for

those occupying the peripheries and also for those who retain their silence in the hope that the crisis is *not here, not now*.

Wegner cautions us against such suicidal tendencies, which are also symptomatic of our present-day problems, not to forget the planetary catastrophe as well. Rather, he advocates a turn to “creative reading” (14), an integral part of close/critical reading, which may open new avenues of hope, while identifying fertile spaces of rebellion. Creative reading is as much a process of creative collective existence as it is about challenging the present evil forces. In a way, Wegner suggests that the task of our future repair and care goes through the process of “close/critical reading,” thus encouraging us to engage with the present dark times, which he creatively identifies as a text, inviting readers/activists to read the present chaos in a way that is both creative and deconstructive. Wegner’s notion of close/critical reading is based on the *More’s* dictum: “If only this were some day possible! (5)” That is the hope we must derive from our present struggles, the very idea of a possible future amidst the rising assault of neoliberal extractive forces, authoritarian governments, and populist voices.

Wegner’s ideas of hope are vital if we wish to creatively engage with the idea of possibility as hope. In this collective battle against global powers of extraction and planetary violence, we must not forget that possibility is a double-edged sword. So, while the capitalist economy is always structured and strengthened by the possibility of extra labour, extra time and extra value, our resilience to such practices can be counted as “creative act” through practices of “close/critical reading” as mediums for future possibility, providing us with a ray of hope that there is a collective future ahead for everyone. Adding to Jameson’s formulation of “analysis” and “evaluation” as fundamental task to close reading, Wegner, maintains that such a critical paradigm makes us understand “the dialectical grasp at once of limitations and possibilities.” (12) Mangad also hints at such utopian spaces of hope when Jayarajan plans his protest march against the agricultural minister with a belief that “if we get this far, I assure you, we will take this empire apart, brick by brick.” (215)

What all this suggests is that creation and sustenance of creative forms must be rallied for in this very moment. After all, it is our horrendous presence that also questions the future of life on the planet. Hence, Wegner’s model of close/critical reading is also one “that every moment in a text becomes potentially significant and, equally significantly, must be taken into account when discussing the meaning of the whole.” (47) ‘Reading’ here is not to be mistaken as an act devoid of kinetic energy;

rather it is enabling, creating conditions for revolution, offering frameworks of resilience, with a hope for a collective future. It is a well-established fact that creation constantly requires supply of our unmediated engagements with a possibility “that everything is a figure of Hope is to offer an analytical tool for detecting the presence of some utopian content even within the most degraded and degrading type of commercial product.” (Jameson 58) From this angle, one can argue that every moment of disposability of humans and natural resources by neoliberal capitalist forces also carries within it a regenerative possibility for the victims, a firm hope that “a world that might someday be possible, which one wishes for but fears will never come about.” (84) Wegner’s paradigm of “close/critical reading” convincingly demonstrates the power of our collective movement against the present dark times, it makes us ask pressing questions, to speak up, to abstain from our silence since that is a violence. Close/critical readings provide us new frameworks of imagination, and one can only create through the power of imagination, as we find in Neelakantan’s idea that “[T]here are some things in life which are more important than the fear of death.” (212) Death will come, we all know, but is through our ideas of survival, livelihood, resilience, failures, that life is sustained and nourished. As Wegner maintains, “For we always fail; that is, we always fail, until we succeed. If we do succeed... even if for only the briefest of moments, we will be able at last triumphantly to proclaim” (96) the joy of our utopian hopes.

As we find in *Swarga*, it is through the combined efforts of Neelakantan, Devyani, Srirama (the freelance journalist), and the village doctor that they could muster courage to create life conditions for the future of Enmakaje and other parts of Kerala state, which were also being poisoned with pesticides. All of these characters have sacrificed their professional goals, they are victims of personal tragedies and yet they continue to imagine that “[L]ife is something that needs to continue.” (210) While Neelakantan has pledged to serve the public interest, Devyani is willing to care for abandoned kids, still the other character of Srirama stays away from media limelight, and yet still the character of doctor who we find at the end of novel a victim of the endosulfan pesticide, “[l]ook, in my blood too, there is endosulfan...Not in small quantities...very high,” and “there’s light in my mind, still. And the courage to face anything. Death is no solution.” (243) They may appear to be weak characters, but strength is needed most when we are weak, vulnerable, fragile. The embodied weakness of these characters is also a source of their energy and resilience against the

government and corporations, thus qualifying Wegner's call for "creative reading." One can argue that the dialectic of weakness and strength can lead to creation of hope, despite the vulnerable the condition, yet it seeks another opportunity to create, to be resilient, to bring forth enabling conditions. Likewise, we see the collective campaign of these brave characters against the corporate-state nexus throughout the novel.

Conclusion

Places like Enmakaje in the Global South are result of the cannibalistic neoliberal regime. However, to look at the bioprecarity of Enmakaje within a specific geographical domain can extend this existential crisis to other places, within the heart of the Global North. The capitalist game is all about wealth accumulation, depending upon the availability of labour and resources. The diminishing of resources at one place will not stop this self-expansion drive, rather it will only turn its focus to other parts of the world, as Justin Edwards rightly suggests, "irreparable ecological destruction in the Global South ... are now beginning to haunt also the Global North with a vengeance." (Edwards et al. x) The caveat that this article draws that while it is important to fight our present battle against the extractive forces of neoliberal in "the Southside or the underside of globalization," (Pavlov 147) we must not lose track of its future directions and mutations. Bioprecarity as a causation of the ever expanding value-generation game has planetary implications, which may annihilate all forms of life.

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