



**Ecocritical Post Colonialism and Plantationocene: A Comparative Study of
Sky Is My Father by Easterine Kire and *Aranyak* by Bibhutibhushan
Bandyopadhyay**

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Abstract

Sky Is My Father is a historical novel by Easterine Kire who writes about the life of Naga indigenous people living amidst naturally rich mountain scape and forced recruitment of Naga tribesmen as bonded labourers by the British which tribal warriors of the Angami tribe try to resist against. Their fight is the collective fight of their community to save the land which they are deeply connected to from British invasion and subjugation. Britain's colonization of the third world countries have always brought with it deforestation and disruption of habitat of indigenous people and native plant species. Similarly, Bibhutibhushan's *Aranyak* is a novel on Satyacharan's predicament in the pristine jungles of Bhagalpur where he is posted. His guilt comes from the job he is sent there to do which is to cut down the forest that is not only important to the native community there but to him as well. Capitalocene and Plantationocene as Donna Haraway defines is a contemporary epoch which has its roots in European Imperialism. This imperial legacy of rampant exploitation and destruction of environment which is singlehandedly a contribution of Britain's colonial rule includes subjugation of indigenous people into forced labour along with destruction of forest spaces for resource extraction. What entails as a result is postcolonial trauma within native psyche. Post colonial literatures coming out of South Asia like *Sky Is My Father* and *Aranyak* essentially discusses Britain's expansion, coercive policies and their after effect on the native people of India in relation to the ecological disruption around them.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, Easterine Kire, Plantationocene, Ecocriticism.

If one of Ecocriticism's purposes is to ask questions regarding how we treat Earth's resources it also accompanies the inquisition of how we treat our people, particularly our tribal communities. Tribal communities are known to be the closest to nature and live a natural way of life. When an outsider comes and causes deforestation or labour exploitation it wrecks the whole ecosystem of the area concerned. Because of activities like deforestation or landscape modification both micro and macro climate is affected. Such climate change disrupts the way tribals live. For tribal communities, the forest and its way determine their collective identity. If the source of their identity is taken away, an identity crisis descends for the sake of "development" they never asked for. Who is this development for? When do we know development is complete? How relevant is the concept of sustainable development? How can we know to what extent is cutting down trees or burning fossil fuels permitted so that we are abiding by the concept of sustainable development? These questions may be concrete but the

answers are not. There is no way to determine how much forest can be cleared that it doesn't change the ecosystem around the site of deforestation. As a postcolonial reflection on England's treatment of everything Indian, we are bound to notice the ideology of dehumanization that the British government in India employed at every step of its way to colonize the country. England was neither compassionate about Nature nor the people living around it. People living around forest spaces are heavily dependent on them for their day-to-day life and income. Indigenous tribal communities, for instance, are largely dependent on the resources that they derive from forests and mountains. A colony is a controversial word of special relevance because of its pre-attributed impression of slavery and subjugation. The word is inherently related to Britain and its expansion globally. Therefore, we cannot think about Britain's rule in South Asian countries without its conscious policies of subjugation and dehumanization. If dehumanization is to rip off the humanized environment from a human being to subjugate them, ripping off one's natural environment leading to disruption in their psyche and identity is also England's contribution towards dehumanization of the inhabitants of its colony. We cannot forget that we exist because of Nature and not allowing a symbiotic relationship with it is a part of dehumanization. For the Naga Tribes in North-east India or the Santhal tribe in Eastern India, their idea of the self revolves around indigenous faith created by performing a symbiotic relationship with Nature. Naga indigenous beliefs which have come to be through cultural repetition for ages saw sudden disruption after the entry of the British force into the Assam valley and then slowly taking over the Naga hills. The Battle of Khonoma was the first Naga resistance against the British government. After the battle ended, Christianity made advent into the hills taking over the whole indigenous faith of the Naga tribes. Colonization couldn't possibly expand without otherization taking place. When the British came to India with hopes of colonizing the country, they would have to imagine Indians as racially inferior to preach that their race was superior. This process of otherization is an essential element of survival and domination. The West has its own beliefs and ideas of what it thinks of the word development, contrary to what might be the idea of development in any other Global South country.

The Nagas had no contact with the outside world apart from with the people of its neighbouring state, Assam. With the British invasion, Nagas came into contact with the rest of the country. In 1828 the British annexed Assam however the fierce nature of the Naga tribes compelled British forces to sign a non-aggression pact with the tribe chiefs. However, the Nagas continued to raid the borders of Assam. In 1878 the Angami Nagas raided British camps and as a result, the British forces retaliated by burning Naga villages, attempting to crush such Naga resistance. Nagaland is resided by several tribes distinct in culture and tradition. However, contemporarily the people of Nagaland have been unified under the name of Naga meaning people belonging to Nagaland. Nagaland consists of the sixteen tribes namely Angami, Ao, Chang, Chakhesang, Dimasa Kachari, Konyak, Khamniungan, Kuki, Lotha, Pochury, Phom, Rengma, Sangtam, Sumi, Yimchunger, and Zeliang. Easterine Kire's *Walking The Roadless Road: Exploring The Tribes of Nagaland* is her compilation of everything that is to know about the tribal, social-cultural, and political history of Nagaland. Her book thoroughly describes Naga tribes and their migration from Mongolia and how different tribes today live with diverse practices:

Land gives a Naga his identity. The Naga farmer lives very close to the natural world, using its rhythm to dictate the periods of his cultivation. He feels bonded to the forests and the valleys where he lives. The forest yields timber for his house and food in form of herbs and fish and wildlife. (Kire, 2019, p. 45)

The Naga tribes worship land that gives them food. Therefore, they must abide by its taboos as a symbol of respect for the soil that provides nourishment. Kire writes land disputes are settled

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between tribes by taking oaths. For example, while taking oaths regarding land disputes they swallow a lump of the earth while the oath ceremony. Mostly engrossed in farming work, the Nagas have rarely faced starvation due to bad agricultural management. Governed by the idea of equitable cultivation and distribution the Nagas believed in sustainable development true to its spirit. When the British entered the Naga tribal territories it marked the introduction of a time of chaos. To the British, it was another quest of expansion that would add to their identity of being the colonizer of the “savage” people but to the Nagas it was a matter of existence, survival, and threat to their identity. Forcible labour impressments and taxation after the Battle of Khonoma changed the ways Nagas tribes would come to live.

Sky Is My Father (2018) written by Easterine Kire opens with a meeting taking place for an upcoming expedition of Khonoma warriors against their neighbouring Garipheju, one of the northern Angami Villages. Garipheju was also popular for their valiant tribal warriors because of which Khonoma warriors decided to attack the village for sport. However, the Khonoma warriors lost. The meeting talks about possible war tactics to be employed for avenging their loss to Garipheju in the next Khonoma expedition. The rest of the novel’s narrative is set in the lives of Levi and Lato the two brothers and the rest of the Angami Village of Khonoma. These people live in sync with nature and believe firmly in indigenous rituals. They observe *genna* day which means a day off from working in the field. *Genna* is observed to protect the crops from animals and pests. They observe *Terhunyi* which is a harvest day like other Indian communities. After *Terhunyi* they worship the Creator for abundance. *Terhase* is also performed in the novel which is an Angami indigenous ritual of sacrificing a chicken to the spirits that the Angami tribe believes in. No one but only the priests of the Thepa and Thepo clan performing the ritual can witness it. It is considered taboo to see the ritual except for the priests and the whole village abides by it.

Kire’s novel is historical fiction because *Sky Is My Father* combines history and fiction to narrate the simple life of Khonoma resided by the Angami tribe which is later lost after the Battle of Khonoma. After the Angami Nagas lose the battle to the British army, they are slowly devoured by Christianity and with it, they bid away from their indigenous rituals and customs which are so minutely described in the novel and are the essence of belonging to a Naga tribe. This battle also marks the Naga’s contact with the outside world.

“Khonoma nestles amid mountains that are as high as 7,000 feet; a little village on a small hillock cradled by gaunt mountains that form a natural fortress.” (Kire, 2018, p. vii).

However after the Treaty of Yandabo with the King of Ava the British Government conducts expedition into the Naga Hills. Their basic objective was to build roads through Nagaland to connect their colony in Assam and Manipur. In the process, they were resisted by the Nagas. Levi for example is a tribal warrior and joins an expedition with his group against the British army. He is later captured and imprisoned at Tezpur jail. Eventually, the whole village joins the cause of Naga’s resistance against the “white man” meaning the British army. Some cause of the battle was Naga detest against coolie or *dobashi* work for which often they were hired by the British government without prior consent. The Political Agent at Khonoma viewed Naga raids as a symbolic defiance of the Government. The novel describes instances of forcible tax collection often met with resistance. In a letter this agent writes:

The forcible collection of taxes he had undertaken had been met with strong resistance. It angered him enough to make him write: I would demand revenue from Khonoma and Jotsoma in the coming cold weather and in case of refusal realise it by force of arms; I believe the struggle must come sooner or later and it is to the interest of the whole

district that the matter should not be deferred. (Kire, 2018, p.88)

To extract revenue Mr. Damant and his troop was sent by the British administration to India. Easterine Kire writes in her introduction to the novel about Verrier Elwin's documentation of Damant who was given the prime responsibility on behalf of the British government to prevent "inter-tribal massacre" and "enforcement of fines and penalties on those villages which had been guilty of raiding in disobedience to his orders" along with a collection of tax (Kire, 2018, p. xi). It was resisted by the Naga warriors as a result of which Government official Damant was killed. This led to the Battle of Khonoma. The colonizer's attempt to "civilize" the Nagas by cutting roads through the Naga Hills, and coerce these tribal people to work in road-making or the tea gardens of Assam ultimately led to the birth of Plantationocene culture in Nagaland. Donna Haraway criticizes through the idea of Plantationocene the practice of labour coercion for resource extraction. During the Battle of Khonoma, the whole of Khonoma was burnt down by the British army. This led the Angami tribe to disperse away from what they called their ancestral land; their home. After the war, the houses were rebuilt. The cost of rebuilding Naga villages was collected by forcibly imposing a tax on the Naga tribes. Some were even hired as labourers as part of labour impressments. Labour impressments are a part of Plantationocene which justifies labour coercion to facilitate capitalism's demand. "Coolie" labour was the most important form of labour in demand. Dzuwichu writes elaborately about the circulating hill coolies in the eastern borderlands of the "British Raj", a discussion of which has been neglected. The colonizer in this case the British administration in India required a large amount of labour to build roads and port materials.

In the process, colonial officials relied heavily on coercion to recruit "coolie" labour for "public works" and to provide various support services in the region. "Treaties" with defeated chiefs and the subsequent population enumeration and taxation were strongly oriented to the mobilization of labour for road building and portage. (Dzuwichu, 2014, p. 91)

The coolies were also used for carrying luggage during visits by frontier political officials. The colonial officials largely employed means of coercion to submit the indigenous people to labour work. When clan or tribe chiefs would lose tribesmen would have to do labour work as compensation for the British officials as coolies or plantation workers in Assam. Dzuwichu's article explains the devices employed by the British government to bait Naga tribes into labour work which they disliked. Initially, labour requirements in the Naga Hills were substituted by importing the Nepali coolies from Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri in Bengal due to the reluctance of the hill tribes to work as labourers. Alexander Mackenzie the Junior Secretary in the Government of India during 1873 employed these Nepali coolies for hill road work as he thought them fit for "mountain work". Dzuwichu also cites a remark by Colonel James Johnstone who was the Officiating Political Agent of Naga Hills. Johnstone in a letter wrote criticizing the fact that the government had to bring up the labourers from the plains such as the Nepali or Punjabi labourers "when local labours was at hand" and comments on the administration's failure as "we were afraid to make the lazy hillmen perform their share of necessary work" (Dzuwichu, 2014, p. 95). G.H Damant also mentioned in *Sky Is My Father* was the Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills who demanded the Angami villages to pay revenue to the government along with providing labour. The Angamis declined to comply with Damant's demand and he proceeded to attack Khonoma primarily an Angami village. What took place was the Battle of Khonoma around which Easterine Kire has written her novel *Sky Is My Father: A Naga Village Remembered*.

After the Battle of Khonoma, a peace treaty was signed between the Angami Nagas and the British Government in India. An annual tax of two rupees and an obligation to provide

labour to the government were imposed as law upon the tribe. However, an excess demand for coolie labour wasn't met as easily as one would think. Police would have to be sent to the village to capture the headmen and confine them at Kohima so that coolie labour would eventually be supplied to the officer who required it. This sort of coercive practice was rampant during Britain's process of colonization and they have always thought of it as a method to introduce "savage" men to what they thought was a "civilized" way of life. Major William Ewbank Chambers had remarked that 'no rate of pay will induce any man to work as coolly and the only means was by impressments of labour' (Dzuvichu, 2014). If impressments of labour were the only way a British official in the Naga Hills could make a Naga do coolie work for him it only meant levying force to recruit a person to do work despite their unwillingness. Labour impressments created a rebellion in the plains of Assam therefore such labour coercion could no longer be directly imposed upon Naga hill tribes but was deceptively smuggled through the imposition of tax. As agricultural and housing tax was increased the Nagas had to divulge in labour work; sometimes to pay tax and some time to simply earn more. Housing tax was legitimized as tax collected for road building near the houses.

Postcolonial Ecocriticism exposes the tangled, invisible web of the western grand narrative of the word "development" which the West boastfully tries to preach in the East. Environmental Racism is defined by Deane Curtin as 'the connection, in theory, and practice, of race and the environment so that the oppression of one is connected to, and supported by, the oppression of the other' (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010). This form of racism can simply be understood as the injustices taking place concerning one's environment, particularly because of belonging to a certain race. For example, the British officials often refer to the Nagas as savage and their practices as barbaric which they as omnipotent figures think needs to be stopped. The Battle of Khonoma for instance displaces the Angami tribe from the village because their village is wholly burnt by the British troops. The Angami Nagas who had previously not been open to the outside world are forcibly displaced after the battle. How they perceive themselves and their culture comes from their connection to the land and their surroundings. It is possible that as a preconceived notion of the "self" belonging to the superior race, the British government hurt the "other" or what we may perceive as its colonial subjects. Destructing the other's environment is to achieve dominance over the other's geographical territory.

The West, in this chapter, is represented by Britain who invented the steam engine running on steam created by burning coal and thus began the advent of Britain's desire to colonize the world. Today the West uses "technocratic apparatus" (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010) as a whole set of discourse to disperse the idea of development in the East or the Global South which in return will help the West to expand both in terms of economy and geopolitical power. This shrewd use of technology and its promotion as the absolute best is not only propaganda of the West or the Global North to subjugate its counterpart through the display of such technology but is also something they firmly believe to be superior. The technocratic apparatus like Edward Said's analysis of knowledge is a colonial discourse (contemporarily neo-colonial) that Britain used to colonize the countries in the third world. Ironically what today is considered the Global South are the countries Britain had once colonized. The steam engine, for example, was a feather on the empire's hat, making it feel "enlightened" which boosted the need to expand its notion of enlightenment in the countries of the "savage". Plantationocene emerged out of Capitalism as an epoch dispersed by the colonizer in its colony through employing the discourse of technological superiority. To manipulate its colonies into thinking that technology-driven mass production or infrastructure building was the only way of development was England's attempt at expanding the idea of development within third world countries. It boldened England's superiority that came from its status of inventing and owning technology.

In contemporary times such apparatus employment can be seen in the division of the world into the Global North and the Global South. This is the active employment of neo-colonialism at work. Global South is composed of those countries that act as warehouses for the Global North meaning Global South countries such as South America, India, or China are countries that create products for the countries of the Global North such as America, Canada, or England. Cash crops like coffee or rubber which are grown through the plantations damage the environment of the countries that grow them. But the countries that import these products in the Global North don't share the burden of the environmental degradation that follows. The question may arise as to why Global South countries associate themselves with the production of crops or goods which damage their environment. They participate in production for the Global North to uplift their economy. This, in other words, means to "develop" their economy. The western concept of development is questionable at its source because the idea first came to the West as an apparatus. Development in the West couldn't have been similar in the East. Technological advancement in the West and its expansion in the East is the "technocratic apparatus" which Huggan and Tiffin refer to and development as Escobar writes is a "historically produced discourse" (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010).

Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay's *Aranyak* was published in 1976. Although the novel was out for its readers after India got independence since it was composed around the 1930s the text is largely about a pre-independent India. The novel revolves around Satyacharan and his development from a city boy into a forest lover. He is posted as the estate manager of Bhagalpur and Purnea forests. Initially, he misses the urban life he used to spend in his hometown Calcutta before being posted in this Northern Bihar district. However, as he continues to observe the meager living of the poor people of Bhagalpur who are largely dependent on forest resources for food, lodging, and shelter, he starts to develop an inexplicable bond with the forest. Unfortunately, his work is to lease the forest land to be tilled. Nomadic tribes such as the Gangotas move from place to place and cut down forests to till the land. As a result of which by the time the novel comes to an end, the whole of Lobtulia, Nara Baihar, Bhagalpur, or Purnea's forests have been deforested. Satyacharan's guilt has no limit and he feels that these forests which had been allowed to be struck down at his orders will never forgive him for the deforestation that occurred. Bibhutibhushan's approach towards an everyday Indian village life and its numerous residents in those Bihar villages is with an attitude of simplicity and compassion. His protagonist Satyacharan in *Aranyak* is not without compassion but at the beginning shows signs of surprise on witnessing how the peasants, landless brahmins, and the Santhals live. As we proceed through the novel, Satyacharan's character develops to the extent that he feels akin to the poverty struck villagers of Bhagalpur. *Aranyak*'s plot majorly revolves around a flabbergasted Satyacharan's appreciation of the enchanting forest of Lobtulia Baihar and its surrounding areas. However, the ecocritical postcolonial element of the text remains in the mention of Dobru Panna, who is an aboriginal king of the Santhal tribe. He led a Santhal revolt against the British East India Company. However, his powers were seized after independence. The reference to the character of Dobru Panna brings my attention to the Santhal Rebellion which took place between 1855 to 1856 led by Sidhu Murmu and Kanho Murmu. This tribal revolt was mainly triggered as means of protest against the British Revenue system enforced forcibly through the help of local Zamindars. Both Santhal tribal people and other nomadic tribes mentioned in *Aranyak* are people dependent on the forest for the resource. In comparison to the Naga tribes such as the Angami Tribe of *Sky Is My Father* the tribal people of *Aranyak* are poor beyond imagination such as characters like Dhaotal Sahu and Kunta. Kunta waits for Satyacharan to finish his dinner, the leftovers of which she would take back to her family to feed. Kunta also picks berries from the forest which is a major source of everyday food not only for her but many tribal people living around Lobtulia Baihar. Dhaotal Sahu although a money-lender had invested poorly because of which he had lost most of his money. When Satya first sees him, Sahu is having a meal of barley

packed in a dirty piece of cloth because he is too poor to afford a plate. The forest of Bhagalpur in totality is the tribal community and the other poor people of the region's means of survival. Most of them have not eaten rice for a long time and rice is almost like a dream to them.

The British Government with the help of the local Zamindars dreamt of expanding their power in governing Indian territories. However, they weren't compassionate to the locals, dependent on these forests. The British never thought how the locals would survive without such forests. The problem isn't restricted to the resource availability for life sustenance but also calls into question the ambiguity of identity. When these tribes are displaced because of deforestation, they no longer know what to think of themselves. The forest is a source from which they derived identity and thus the designation of belonging to a tribe. As Dobru Panna comments, tilling land is not their way of living, but hunting is. Hunting also comes with certain tribal customs of its own. Hunting an animal is more honourable than tilling the land, and killing also comes with the method of killing with a spear than killing with arrows. The Angami Nagas too have the ritual of tiger killing with a spear, and therefore hunting is an important tradition of the tribal communities. When forests are gone, animals are gone too.

Once while returning to his office from Lobtulia Satyacharan hears voices speaking in Bengali. He stops in surprise because no one would speak his mother tongue in this remote forest of Bihar. He finds a group of ten sitting by the lakeside. The senior-most of the group was a retired deputy magistrate who had come with the group to the forest resided by wild boar and snakes to picnic. Satya was eventually asked by the group to accompany them to their feast. During his short stay with the group, Satya's narrative on what he observes of them is interesting. Neither of them is interested in appreciating or even observing the exquisite forest, the distant hills, or the golden sunset and instead loiters around shouting and screaming midst the otherwise quietude forest. They even complain about the coarse rice available in the area because of which their plan to prepare a perfect meal of *pulao* is hindered. Satya contemplates to himself "They left behind some empty cans and jars on the bank of the Kundi. It looked like a black smudge on the painting-like landscape of my pristine Lobtulia" after the group leaves the forest in the evening to return to the city (Bandyopādhyāya, 2017, p. 263). These lines and their visitors draw an uncanny parallel with Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing*. *Surfacing*'s unnamed narrator like Satyacharan appreciates the beauty which is left of the wilderness in northern Quebec. She pangs at the sight of the natural landscape destroyed by American tourists. Likewise, Satya also pangs at the oddity of the civilized urban who came to these exotic sites and ruined them for bad.

Haraway writes in *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* "The Capitalocene was relationally made, and not by a secular godlike anthropos, a law of history, the machine itself, or a demon called Modernity," relating it our enslavement to the term "Progress" which is an "evil twin" of "Modernization" (Haraway, 2016, p. 50). Her criticism of the all enslaving "progress" is the same as Huggan and Tiffin's idea of "development". When Donna Haraway mentions the word Plantationocene she uses it simultaneously with the words Anthropocene and Capitalocene because Plantationocene as a concept is a part of both Anthropocene and Capitalocene. Neither can come without the other. Capitalism as an epoch turned into the era of Capitalocene because we started perceiving the world anthropologically. Capitalism invented methods to extract natural resources as fast as possible for a quick profit and in the process justified its unethical environmental treatment of natural resources as a tool in the quest for "progress" or "development". Eventually, Plantationocene became a part of the whole capitalistic way of manufacturing crops or exploiting labour. The initial idea of mass development and modernization has its root in Imperialism. Both science and the dispersal of knowledge were taken up as a great responsibility by Britain. Before the British started expanding its reach across the world so much so that the sun never set upon the empire, the

world had never before seen geographic expansion of a single nation's rule of this magnitude. Likewise progress particularly related to the notion of modernity as a primordial British concept was imposed on civilizations that the British considered "savage" and this justifies Haraway's claim that Capitalocene an epoch of mass production, mass consumption leading to environmental degradation was not made by people who were "secular". These not so "secular godlike anthropos" got to choose who made and who consumed and in the process who would come to be affected by the consequent environmental degradation the most. Haraway's question "When do changes in degree become changes in kind?" relates it to the process of identifying the issues that are primary to Anthropocene, Plantationocene, or Capitalocene (Haraway, 2016, p. 99). The scale, rate, speed, or complexity associated with the changes made through the above-mentioned concepts are the main concern of today's epoch and trend of "modernization". Although these concepts have started to be theorized and discussed by contemporary scholars but the idea of natural resources extraction which ultimately depletes the environment is not new. This kind of Nature and landscape modification started in the Global South countries; of which India is a part at the initiation of the British government in India. India's rich natural resource was Britain's need of the hour therefore colonizing India would be highly profitable for Britain. To extract these resources they required labour which when not easily available would be deceptively devised through forcefully taxation such as in *Sky Is My Father*. In *Aranyak* labour is not the major concern but land encroachment is. When Satyacharan joins as the estate manager he doesn't realize that when it will be time for him to leave Bhagalpur he will have destroyed the forest and the surrounding ecosystem through land leasing to the locals who would then cut the trees to till the land. The deforestation in *Aranyak* resonates with Haraway's extraordinary question "When do changes in degree become changes in kind?" When Satya first starts to lease the land it is "changes" taking place in "degree" but by the end of the novel, the change has become a change in "kind". The forest of Bhagalpur no longer remains the way it used to be. The whole ecosystem around the forest is destroyed because a change of such magnitude that a complete forest is wiped out changes the way humans and animals live forming a symbiotic relationship with nature. To understand better the beauty or the spatial intensity of Bhagalpur's forest in Satya's own words he opines:

In any other country such an area would have been conserved as a national asset. Examples galore: The Yosemite National Park of the US, The Kruger National Park of South Africa or the Park National Albert of Belgian-Congo, to name a few. Our Indian zemindars do not have the eyes to appreciate the landscape (Bandyopādhyāya, 2017, p. 295)

Saraswati Kundi is both Jugal Prasad and Satya's beloved space of the forest. Land leasing had swept clean most of the greenery of Lobtulia. Only two bighas of Nara Boihar forest have survived. When Satya exclaims that he would have to give away Saraswati Kundi Jugal Prasad exclaims with disappointment that he had created it with his hand but now if it would be leased to the Gangotas by the Zamindar it meant the Kundi would be destroyed almost immediately. Prasad also resents how it is a chain of affairs that zamindars need to make money to pay taxes to the government. The sole reason why people in both *Sky Is My Father* and *Aranyak* are driven to cutting down forests, leave their habitat and become labour coolies is because of the tax system heavily imposed upon its colony by the British Government in India. *Sky Is My Father* by Easterine Kire and *Aranyak* by Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, both make a direct or cursory reference to Tribal Revolts in their respective geographical area against the British Empire in India which occurred roughly around the same time. Santhal Rebellion began in 1855 in Jharkhand- Bihar area led by the Santhal tribe and the Battle of Khonoma began in 1879 led by the Angami tribe wholly as a Naga resistance against the British. Santhal Revolt as embodied through the character of Dorbu Panna is cursorily mentioned in *Aranyak* and this reference brings attention to the revolution of the Santhal tribe against the subjugation of the

Zamindari system and the British government whereas *Sky Is My Father* is completely about the revolution against the British Empire led by the Angami tribe.

Postcolonial ecocriticism has taken upon itself the responsibility to unfold the facets of colonization by the empire on its colonies which had drastically altered the environment which affected the indigenous communities the most. Identity and geographical displacement no longer remained the issue about landscape modification for natural resource extraction. The West's propagation of the idea of "sustainable development" is questionably unsettling. Sustainability and development are two antithetical ideas that although forcibly fit together into an environmentally-conscious sounding word cannot go hand in hand. How does one know when to stop development or how much development is ok that resources are not depleted? How can we know how much development comes within the realm of sustainability? This problem is the same as Haraway's question "When do changes in degree become changes in kind?" Haraway's "degree" is "sustainable" and her "kind" is "development" in absence of ethical environmental laws. This paper is largely about critically thinking about both texts through Plantationocene. Murphy and Schroering opine that to think about Plantationocene is to think of plantation culture as a legacy of the white going hand in hand "with racialism, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism as intermeshing features of the modern world-system" (Murphy and Schroering, 2020, p. 402). The Bihar districts which dominate the whole of *Aranyak*'s plot are drought struck in summer. At times water is unimaginably scarce but such drought-like condition is never proactively solved by the Zamindars instead they discriminate and deprive the Santhals or the other poor communities residing within the jungle. The Zamindar's compulsion to pay tax to the British Government in India links the colonizer's government to take up both liability of solving the water crisis during the summer months at Bhagalpur and the accountability of failing to do so. The unbearable summer heat of Bihar and dearth of rainfall make the forest all the more important. What remains of such dispersed or dislocated communities away from their natural habitat or even of Satyacharan, an oblivious colonial subject is guilt and dislocation of identity. Plantationocene as an individual concept is not explained in detail by Haraway in her book *Staying with the Trouble* but is better understood through Anna Tsing and Donna Haraway's conversational exchange on the same. Anna Tsing explains the word "enlightenment" as a concept created by the white Christian man who considers man as homogenous and development as universal, both of which are carried forward as a legacy of the white man although this legacy doesn't fit indigenous community and their belief. These communities as Tsing notes aren't concerned about concepts like enlightenment or development contrary to the "white" omnipotent "legacy" and this justifies the question, of why "landscape modification projects" have been conducted without taking into the consideration the indigenous communities who live in them (Tsing, 2019, as cited in Mitman, 2019). That is why the Naga dispersal after the Battle of Khonoma or the deforestation at the forest of Bhagalpur is both conclusively related to landscape modification without prior consideration which changes the way how indigenous communities around these modified landscapes will live or perceive themselves. Thinking ecocritically about the text that has been taken up in this chapter exposes the world of colonized literature that makes it extremely difficult to locate the post-colonial eco-critical perspectives within these texts. The essential question of what we read as a text and how we read it is addressed by Sumana Roy. She asks "How else to explain why Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's novels, particularly *Aranyak*, are not taught?" in her article about the problem with our Indian postcolonial syllabus. *Aranyak*'s ecological appreciation, for instance, has been addressed sufficiently but not many have talked about the Santhal movement, the Zamindari system, or the British Government's meandering contribution to the deforestation of Bhagalpur in the text. England's colonization of India changed the way an Indian perceives her relationship with the environment. Because South-Asian post-colonial literature is so abundant with fiction that talks about the political reminiscence of the South-Asian as a colonized subject, the environmental

dislocation, and ruptured identity through rupture Nature are conveniently forgotten. The same concern is appropriately fitting for Kire's *Sky Is My Father* which brings up the matter of labour impressments and the Naga resistance against the British administration in India but is not read as a postcolonial text.

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Bio-note

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