

Unearthing Ecological Identities: An Exploration of Place/Self in Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's *Aranyak*

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Abstract

The notion of place-attachment establishes a place-based identity, forging connectivity between place, psychology, and ecology. Exploring this tripartite connection, the paper conducts a comprehensive analysis of the novel *Aranyak* (1939) by acclaimed Bengali writer Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay. The paper demonstrates how an individual manifests place attachment, sense of self, and identity in relation to the forestscape of Purnia, Bhagalpur, and Labtulia. Therefore, incorporating Lawrence Buell's idea of place attachment and Arne Naess's concept of ecological self, the paper attempts to unveil a sense of self-embeddedness shaped by an individual's lived experiences and attachments with the ecology of the forest. The essence of a place ecology retains its impression upon the subconscious of the central character, Satyacharan. His comprehension of Aranya or the forest stems from the mycelial attachment of his psyche with the psyche of the place. This cultivates a profound sense of belongingness, echoing the notion of *Dasein* or being in the world in relation to forest ecology, central to our ecocritical exploration.

Keywords

Place-attachment, ego-self, ecological self, place-based identity, terrapsychology

Introduction: Relationality between space, place/self, and ecology

A place encapsulates a distinct position, an area that resonates with the vast expanse of space or a specific physical location. A space is transformed into a place when "meaning has been ascribed" (Carter et al.) to it. Beyond geographical coordinates, factors that generate the spirit of a place include its ecology, its inhabitants and the attachments developed within its locale. This interactive

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relationality extends beyond the human realm, circumscribing the entire biome, its flora, and fauna, forging an intimate bond amongst the psyche of people, the terrain, and the environment. Therefore, the sense of a place triggers ecological thought that transcends mere human experience and incorporates the non-humans.

Jeff Malpas, an important scholar of place studies, asserts that “place is perhaps the key term for interdisciplinary research in the arts, humanities and social science in the twenty-first century” (Malpas 1). In ecocritical studies, place plays an important role in applying geographical, ecological and literary theories “by expanding preconceived understandings of the nonhuman environment as a dimension of personal and communal sense of place” (Buell 260). Place is infused with reflections from personal, spiritual, historical, and societal association with an existing space, or what eco-critic Lawrence Buell calls “place attachment” (68). The concept emerges as a pivotal lens to comprehend the profound connection between our conception of self/identity and place. Place-based literature promotes an ecosophical underpinning, prompting us to re-align with our interdependence with the natural world beyond humans, showcasing a “close connection between the self and the environment” (Fischer ix).

Harmonising specific landscapes with personal human encounters offers a compelling paradigm for unravelling the impact of literature within distinct locales. Place-based ecocriticism enables us to delve deep into the psyche of the characters and embark on a profound expedition into one’s consciousness or being and to immerse us in emotional encounters with the fictional environment. It helps us understand the psychical relation the characters share with the place, its myths, its stories, its symbols, and how humans interact with it. This psychical relation has been termed terrapsychology by Professor Craig Chalquist. He states: “Terrapsychological Inquiry (TI) explores... how terrain, place, element, and natural process show up in human psychology, endeavour, and story, including myth and folklore” (Chalquist 43). It focuses on the importance of place in relation to the being of humans, thereby exploring the transpersonal experience humans conceive with ecology, facilitating our comprehension of an expansive and all-encompassing sense of self with respect to the entanglement of humans with non-humans.

Place is an outcome of lived experiences involving concrete, practical, and cognitive aspects, and the idea of place attachment aims to fathom the emotional, psychological and “intangible phenomena such as feelings” (Norberg-Schulz 6). Such lived experience can be witnessed in the Bengali novel *Aranyak* (1939) by an eminent Bengali author Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (1894–1950). The novel has been translated by celebrated Indian English author Bhaskar Chattopadhyay as *Aranyak: Of the Forest* in 2022. The novel provides an interesting plot for scavenging such emotional, psychological, and ecological experiences. In

the novel, we sense how the *Aranya* or forest unravels an embedded ecological consciousness in the mind of the central human character, Satyacharan. He ventured into the dense wildered forest of Northern Bihar as an urbanite, but the wide-ranging ecology and enigmatic landscape forced him to shed his ego-self and discover an eco-self. Although the author claims it to be fiction, the narrative is woven in the form of diary entries where the psychological imprints of his own lived experiences for seven years in Bhagalpur get inked in the narrative. Having closer proximity to nature, Satyacharan ceases to look at *Aranya* as an object and is finally able to embrace the forest as a living entity that has evolved and co-evolved with humans, having a subjective identity of its own. Satyacharan is an egoist urban gentleman who is acquainted with the clamour and furor of city life. When he was sent to the forest area of Purnia district, he was gaged by the silence and solitariness of the place. However, in constant engagement with the elemental presences of the forest, which is “at once oddly familiar and uncannily other” (Abram vii), he finally exfoliates his self-centred ego-self, transitioning into an environmentally concerned eco-self.

In the context of this enchanting narration of transformation, our article aims to understand the influence of terrain or place on one’s identity and on the formation of ecological consciousness. Our analysis of *Aryanak: Of the Forest* helps us reflect on what agency non-human objects possess and how the subjectivity of the non-human actants is enmeshed with the bio-ontological being of Satyacharan.

Mapping placed-based literature and ecological connections

Place and literature have always been intertwined with the writers’ imagination for ages. Place not only works as an underlying motif behind all fictional narratives, but also writers use the trope of place as a tool for reflecting their nostalgia, memory, and attachments. Sometimes, the trope of place also helps the author to go back to their roots by means of imagination, as we see Kashmir and Bombay through the lens of Salman Rushdie in *Midnight’s Children* (1981) or we witness Dublin in *Ulysses* (1920) through the lens of James Joyce. Sometimes, authors create imaginary *topos* of their own to vent their innermost fantasies. Any careful exploration of Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* (1954) “has to return to Britain, to England. Before it was anything else, Middle-earth was an attempt to restore to England the mythology it had forgotten” (Garth). Mark Twain’s and William Faulkner’s upbringing in Missouri and Mississippi provided them with the setting of the fictional universe they created. Thomas Hardy’s childhood memories of Dorset also helped him create the ecologically evocative fictional literary landscape of Wessex in novels like *The Woodlanders* (1887) and *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874).

Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay created an ecotopia in *Aranyak*, a terrain that can repair the bruised heart and where the self of the character gets enmeshed with non-human actants of the universe. This surreal and corporal engagement of human and the non-human entities, though new in Bengali literature, can be traced back to the pastoral writings of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus in the Western tradition. Shakespeare's treatment of nature in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600) and *As You Like It* (1623) does not always spread the flavour of oneness; rather, it is controversial in *The Tempest* (1611). It was during the Romantic period that nature started to capture a good amount of space in mainstream English literature. In the USA, the idea that nature can be a part of human existence started to become popular during the transcendental movement. The publication of Henry Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) was a watershed moment in the history of nature writing. Though *Walden* was more of a philosophical experiment, it has inspired generations of writers. William Henry Hudson's *Green Mansion: Romance of the Tropical Forest* (1904) which is one of its kind in its description of nature and in its showcasing of deep entanglement between humans and nature, carries queer resemblance with the novel of our discussion, *Aranyak*.

In India, the genesis of literature itself can be traced back to the forest, as the composers of Indian literary epics were primarily forest dwellers, making the forest an inextricable part of their creation. Not only the various magnanimous Indian forests like Chandrakut, Dandakarnya, and Kamyaka were the primary settings for the epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, but also the deep philosophy of human-non-human assemblage inspired worship and celebration of spiritual deities such as the hybrid figure of Ganesha. Indian sacred scriptures like *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and *Puranas* also reflect a deep sense of ecological consciousness. *Harshacharit* (c. 7th century BC) by Banabhatta has some unmatched and unique descriptions of Indian men and women living in forests in a harmonious manner. Another classic Indian drama, *Abhijana Shakuntalam* (c. 4th century CE) by Kalidasa, is considered the pinnacle of ecological entanglement in how it "embraces the poetic aspects of the sun, moon, and stars, wind and rain, river and sea, hill and dale, tree and creeper, flower and fruit, birds and animals, fairies and spirits" (Krishnamoorthy 87). Indian Bengali Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, whose poems are enriched with green vitality, in his essay "The Message of Forest," writes: "[T]he past of India, is the forest, the memory of which permeates our classical literature and still hunts our minds" (386).

In Bengali literature, *A River Called Titas* (1956) by Advaita Mallabharman is a novel that centers around the river and its people; Manoj Basu's novel *The Forest Goddess* (1961) is the story of human aspiration set in the mangrove forest of Sundarbans delta. Novels of Mahasweta Devi, like *Chotti Munda and his Arrow*

(1979) and *Right to Forest* (1977), which were popularly translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak from Bengali to English, narrate the stories of *Adivasis* (aboriginal Indians) whose lives are perpetually intertwined with the ecology of the forest.

Ecological entanglements and place attachment in *Aranyak*

Forest, through its lush foliage, rustling leaves, and varied biodiversity, acts as a canvas upon which the intricate relationship between individuals and their environment is painted. But, humans, as Heidegger says, have always considered forests to be a resource that can be used, abused, and overused. He uses the term “enframing” to describe the use of technology to turn nature into a “standing-reserve” (302) of resources, which is the root of deforestation and ecological degradation. Forests having an existence of their own or having an identity outside human discourse has always been ruled out of the question. Therefore, developing a sense of place or, to be precise, an ecological sense of self is important to counter ecocide, climate change, and the onslaught of the Anthropocene. As Ursula K. Heise says: “[I]n order to reconnect with the natural world, individuals need to develop a ‘sense of place’ by getting to know the details of the ecosystems that immediately surround them” (28).

Attachment is not confined to tangible bonds; it is rather stretched to assimilate intangible elements that imbue into one’s transpersonal identity. In various literary texts, such attachments have been explored via numerous manifestations. In Rabindranath Tagore’s short story “Bolai,” we see how the eponymous protagonist feels a never-ending yearning for non-human entities. In the narrative, we witness a symbiosis of Bolai’s existence with that of a Shimul tree (*Salmalia malabarica*), the weeds of the lawn, and the insects in his garden, thereby merging his psyche with the psyche of the terrain where he lives:

It hurt him whenever someone plucked a flower from a plant. But he realised his concern meant nothing to anyone else.... His most troubling time was when the grass-cutter came. Every day he had walked among the grass, peering closely at it: here a green tendril, there an unknown purple-and-yellow flower... and all these would be weeded by the ruthless weeder. These weren’t the fancied plants of the garden, and there was no one to listen to their complaints. (Tagore 5)

This raises the question of what constitutes a place, particularly in the psychological terrain. Is it people? Is it the environment? Or are there some hidden aspects associated with the land?

Standing amidst the vast arena of greenery, we are often belittled by the loftiness of nature. Our existence is negligible in front of the vastness of the ecosphere. At the first moment when Satyacharan went to the forest for his job, it was torture for him. Leaving behind his friends and family, the library, and the

theatre were all difficult. His attachment to Kolkata made him uncomfortable in the loneliness and solitude of the forest. Although he was amazed by the beauty and charm of the forest, he was not convinced that he could survive that solitude. Instead, he was surprised by Goshtho Babu's deep attachment to the forest as he, too, was a city dweller like him. Goshtho Babu assures Satyacharan that he, too, will fall in love with the forest. He says, "[G]radually you'll stop liking any kind of sound or clamour, you'll abhor crowds, and you'll embrace the solitude" (Bandyopadhyay 10). As Malpas argues, humans are attached to a place in such a manner "that within and with respect to which subjectivity is itself established" (Malpas 35). Soon, love for forest ecology started percolating in his heart, which started affecting his subjective identity. Life amidst the lonely jungle seemed a punishment for Satyacharan, but the mysticism, mystery, and uncanniness of the woods soon enchanted him, cradling him in its lap.

The forest is mystical, and its mysteries attract one with a hypnotic call – the call of the trees, the hills, the spring, "ground covered with red earth and strewn with pebbles" (Bandyopadhyay 247). The essence evoked by the non-human agents permeates Satyacharan with a captivating sensation. His subjectivity gets enmeshed with "the uncanny aliveness of the locations" (Chalquist 9). The moonlit forest landscape reminds Satyacharan of the space-specific artwork of the Japanese painter Hokusai, which evokes a similar sense of awe and wonder. Life in the forest leads him to question the relationship between isolation and identity. Such incorporation of cross-cultural references generates symbolic resonance, projecting his thoughts and memories onto the physical location. Apart from Hokusai's inkings, he describes the book browsers of the fair in the jungle of Tintanga Karari, as that of the portrayal of Paris in the novels of Anatole France (1844-1924), showcasing how, irrespective of place, the nature of people remains the same everywhere. Again, being enchanted with the forestscape, his thoughts were directed towards the description of the basins of the Gila River in the book of Hodson. The picturesque *Aranya* appeared to him as a "picture of the South American deserts of Arizona or Navajo" (Bandyopadhyay 75). Such references flashing from literature, past experiences, and cherished memories provide an emotional anchor to the place, thereby developing a sense of psychological ownership, making the place an extension of Satyacharan's psyche. According to Proshansky, "place identity" involves

those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioral tendencies relevant to a specific environment. (Proshansky 155)

Satyacharan's subjective understanding of place results in his gradual identification with forest ecology. Traversing the alleyways of unconsciousness

terrain of his psyche, Satyacharan hunts for cross-cultural interpolations, which finally extrapolates his place consciousness from the local to the global and makes him realise humans as earthlings. Similar to the pages of the well-loved novel, the geography book, or the paintings he has witnessed, the ambience of the locale itself becomes a canvas upon which various literary passages and poignant quotes are painted.

Language possesses an inherent beauty, just like the forest itself, and this exquisite allure has the power to invoke poetry and poetic language. Forests impact our logos with a rhythm and a melodious tone, thus making the dialect of the region naturally adopt poetic qualities. Just like the characters in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* fell in love with the songs of Caliban, Satyacharan too found himself enamoured with the dialect of that region. He observes how such forest ecology can serve as a poetic muse that can ignite poetry: "If such vast forests, such blue hills, such rare flora were to be easily available everywhere, then would the entire country not have been infested with poets and madmen?" (Bandyopadhyay 132)

Places have myths and legends attached to them, and these allow us to understand symbols associated with a specific place. From the Arthurian legend of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (c. 14th Century CE) to the myth of cedar forest in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (c. 2100-2000 BC), it is interesting to observe how myths and legends are prevalent in the wilderness and places that are obscure. As discussed earlier, terrapsychology shows a relationship between place, terrain, and how human psychology conceives place, which thereby gets reflected in its mythology and folklore. In the novel, Bibhutibhushan describes many such myths associated with the place. The myth of the mystery dog or mystery woman is a tale of a jungle phantom. In the jungles of Bomaiburu, the forest dwellers claim that a shape-shifting creature has started to appear in the forest, which transforms from a woman into a dog and kills people. Although hard to believe, the eerie forest serves as a chilling backdrop, heightening the horror woven within these myths. Such enchanted forest as a place of magic and horror dominates the world of mythical narrative.

The fear of the unknown has haunted people throughout the ages, driving many to revere and associate with nature. As a result, spiritual myths are abundant in the forest. Forests teem with a wide variety of wild animals. In the narrative, the author vividly describes the jungles of Mohanpura and Dholbaja of the Purnea district, where a substantial population of wild buffaloes thrives. While encountering various legends and stories of the forest, Satyacharan also came across the myth of *Tyandbaro*, "the god of wild buffaloes," who "protects the beasts" (Bandyopadhyay 175). The forest dwellers recounted how once they strived to hunt wild buffaloes, but during their quest, they stumbled upon a mysterious figure, a tall and dark-skinned man, whose sudden appearance in the jungle captured the attention of the buffaloes and they "stopped on their tracks.

Then turned around and ran away into the jungle” (Bandyopadhyay 175). Tribal communities are closely connected to nature, and thus, their spiritual beliefs are interlaced with ecological thought. They believe in these forest gods, who save forest animals. The forest area of the Chota Nagpur plateau, including states of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha in India, is referred to as *Sarna* (grove) by the tribals, derived from the name of the *Sal* tree and deer, which are abundantly found in this plateau. Most of the tribal/indigenous population of India who live on this plateau believe in the *Sarna* religion. They:

are nature worshippers...and its (*Sarna*) followers pray to the trees and hills while believing in protecting the forest areas. Believers of *Sarna* faith do not practice idol worship, nor do they adhere to the concept of the Varna system, heaven-hell, etc. (Bhargava 2)

This hints at the interdependence and interconnections that these tribal indigenous people share with the non-human agents of the ecosystem. While the tribal princess Bhanumati was describing various trees to Satyacharan, moving swiftly among the bushes, having knowledge of the terrain, of all the forest trees, flowers, and fruits, she seemed to be a manifestation of the forest itself. He wonders “if she herself was a dark-skinned and breathtakingly beautiful deity of the forest” (Bandyopadhyay 335). This relationship between Bhanumati and the forest *oikos* is like an umbilical cord that nourishes and sustains her spirit from which an “abjection of self” (Kristeva 5) is impossible.

Their faith that worships *Jal* (water), *Jungle* (forest), and *Zameen* (land) reflects their rootedness in nature, which, even in this face of relentless development and change, remains resolute. Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, in his article “Self-Realisation: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World,” observes that “[i]f people are relocated, or rather, transplanted from a steep mountainous place to the plains below, they also realise (but too late) that their home-place was a part of themselves and that they identified with features of that place” (230). Here, Naess illustrates how, like a mycelium network, people in this area craft a sense of self and a sense of place within that locale. This communion with forest ecology alters one’s disposition, instilling humility, simplicity, and liberation from the clutches of civilisation and worldly confines, inducing an indomitable spirit in the characters. Satyacharan observes:

The women of this region – be it Bhanumati, or Manchi, or Venkateswar Prasad’s wife Rukma – were as free and open as the terrain itself. Perhaps, the forest had had some sort of influence on them, which led them to be frank and liberated in both body and spirit, without having to succumb to the meaningless urban traditions of ill-defined feminine courtesy and social taboo. (Bandyopadhyay 258)

Traversing from ego-self to eco-self

Maturity of self, in Arne Naess' diction, is developed in three stages: Ego self, Social Self and Metaphysical self. But this linear Journey does not provide one with the desired liberation of being. Arne Naess criticises our anthropocentric worldview that promotes alienation. Naess argues that "in this conception of the maturity of the self, [n]ature is largely left out. Our immediate environment, our home (where we belong as children), and the identification with nonhuman living beings, are largely ignored" (Naess 226). Therefore, Naess introduces the concept of "ecological self," which, he states, is a stage in the development of our being, when we have the capability of "deepening identification with all life forms and the greater units: the ecosystems and Gaia, the fabulous old planet of ours" (Naess 235). Ecological self, which is the optimum goal of Naess's ecosophy, can only be achieved through what Naess calls "self-realisation" (226), which can harbour in the human bosoms only when we embrace co-existence with other actants of the universe. Now, how can someone exfoliate an older egoistic self and disseminate and unify his self with all the other entities of the universe? In the same way, as an Eskimo cannot divide their existence from the Arctic, a mountain dweller cannot distinguish the self from the high altitude, or in the same way, Thomas Glahn in Knut Hamsun's *Pan* (1894) intermingles his being with Norwegian wilderness, Yaksha in Kalidas's poem *Meghadutam* (c. 4th-5th century CE) interflows his parting soul with the passing clouds overhead or the way in which Satyacharan from Bibhutibhushan's *Aranyak* feels an inseparable entanglement with the wilderness of deep forest, its people, and culture.

The journey of Satyacharan is one from the hustle and bustle of city life to the quietude of ununiformed greenery, from an ego-centric life to eco-centric life, from culture to nature, from the cooked to the raw. The author repetitively uses the trope of pictorial details of the changing landscape to delineate the dichotomy between nature and culture, which is marked by a shift in the terrain: "No more farms were to be seen, no habitation either; only woods and jungles of varying kinds—small and big, thin and dense" (Bandyopadhyay 7). Nature is the ultimate reality of our existence, and the world is what we construct out of it. Thus, the world is the human construct, and nature is the source. The author's description of the plants in the city space of Kolkata expands our vision of a cultured ecology, one that has been crafted for its utility value. Buell emphasises the importance of acknowledging the interplay between nature and human influence in shaping our surroundings, stating: "Not attending to this reciprocity of nature and culture, one misconstrues one's place in space and how it came to be" (66). The lawn of Satyacharan's employer, Aavinash's house, was "skirted by *Champa*, mango and *muchakunda* trees" (Bandyopadhyay 5), which have been cleverly and carefully selected to enhance the very look and the olfactory essence of the place. However, nature is all-inclusive, and thus, the forest ecology is filled with "wild tamarisks and tall catkins... shrubs, *gajari* trees, thorny babuls, groves

of wild bamboo, bushes of cane” (Bandyopadhyay 15), and all find scattered places in the *Aranya* or the forest.

Satyacharan, though irritated during the initial few days, was gradually enjoying his job in this forest as the estate manager, as this job gave him the opportunity to open up his being to the greater universe. The babu-Satyacharan was slowly having his long-desired redemption. This redemption was occurring through the slow and gradual intermingling of Satyacharan’s soul with nature. After redeeming his egoistic self, Satyacharan realises the greatest truth of life: “I was now an integral part of this land of me” (Bandyopadhyay 81). He again realises that he cannot return to his older egoistic self anymore: “Would I ever be able to return to Kolkata and remain caged in the humdrum of urban affairs? No. I wouldn’t trade this freedom with even the most precious treasures of the world” (Bandyopadhyay 81). While pasturing the deeper forests with the tribal princess Bhanumati, Satyacharan develops an attachment with her and feels the urge to settle with her forever in this wilderness. Bhanumati, for him, stands as an emblem of nature, an epitome of Gaia.

The concept of self-realisation and ecological self has its roots in philosophies of the old world. For example, the Indian school of Vedic philosophy propounds that *Jiva* is a manifestation of *Shiva* – meaning there is a very basic unity between the individual self (*Jiva*) and the greater cosmic consciousness (*Shiva*). Vandana Sharma opines that “the *Siva* consciousness has always been there in each *Jiva* and was never lost or transformed” (163). Therefore, Indian Vedic philosophy proposes an integration of the microcosmic individual self with the macrocosmic greater self. Quite similar to this, in his book *Ethics* (1677), Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-77), who is considered the first line of defence against anthropocentric worldview, introduces his concept of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. Spinoza argues that both constitute to form one true self, that is, the absolute infinite. Meena A. Kelkar, in her article “Man-Woman Relationship in Indian Philosophy,” argues that “Spinoza talks of two expressions of substance, ‘Natura Naturata’ and ‘Natura Naturans’. ‘Natura Naturata’ refers to whatever has been created. It refers to the passive state of [n]ature... Both are expressions of one single substance or God” (15). According to 20th-century British poet G. M. Hopkins, ‘inscape’ (individual self) and ‘instress’ (the moment of recognising the infinite cosmic self) are two moments similar to Naess’s concept of self-realisation. In the novel, Satyacharan, too, begins to perceive himself as one with the earth. His realisation transcends his mere individual existence, enveloping a more intimate and cosmic alliance with nature. Being enchanted with the encompassing beauty, he exclaims: “The more I stared at them, the more it seemed to me that I was and had always been an inseparable part of this unceremonious unison that the flora had so wondrously depicted” (Bandyopadhyay 116).

Conclusion

In pursuit of our understanding of self, we overlook our interconnectivity with nature and non-humans, placing an excessive emphasis on the aspect of reason and rationality, that is, the egoistic self. This ego-centric Cartesian rationality must succumb in order to create a broader exploration of the psyche where one's becoming and being relates to the greater all-encompassing understanding of the earth, the universe, and the cosmos. Satyacharan's transpersonal experience in the narrative of *Aranyak* builds an ecological awareness that transcends to incorporate the non-human, planetary, and even cosmic dimensions of self. This understanding of the entanglement and the intricate "mesh" (Morton 24) of existence – that we are all part of – aids us in unfolding our communitarianism with the biotic, abiotic aspects of the earth and beyond it to the greater comic realisation of self.

In a time when dystopias and apocalypses are no longer distant dreams but have rather hastened into our reality, these philosophies left behind the old Cartesian thinking that placed humans at the centre of the universe and gave vent to 21st-century worldviews like the Gaia Hypothesis, Actor-Network Theory, and Object-Oriented ontology. Central to these philosophies is the concept that all living and non-living entities are connected in an invisible knot, and together, they create a harmonious whole. The ocean, the desert, the trees, humans, cats, the sun, the moon, insects, rivers, and ponds – are all entangled in a relationship that is omnipresent and helps generate optimal conditions necessary for life to run.

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