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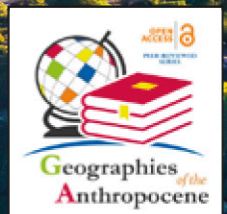
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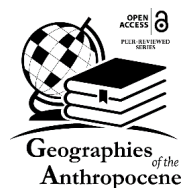
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Geographies of the Anthropocene

Human Mobility, Migration and Tourism in the Anthropocene

Gian Luigi Corinto, Glen Farrugia
Editors

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Geographies of the Anthropocene

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The book series "Geographies of the Anthropocene" edited by the Scientific International Publisher "Il Sileno" (Il Sileno Edizioni) will discuss the new processes of the Anthropocene epoch through the various worldviews of geoscientists and humanists, intersecting disciplines of Geosciences, Geography, Geoethics, Philosophy, Socio-Anthropology, Sociology of Environment and Territory, Psychology, Economics, Environmental Humanities and cognate disciplines.

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2. Runaway in and out as a Compulsive Migration in Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth:* Exploring the Multi-layered Cultural Geography of the Himalayan North

Tohidur Rahaman[1]

Abstract

Despite being in the global south, diverse landscapes and existing cultural divides create a unique geographic mapping of India. Reflecting on the motif of "runaway", my research aims to explore the issues of migration through the literary analysis of Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth*. Travel to the Himalayas works more as a form of escape, a tourist destination, or a place of adventure. The novel primarily elucidates the Himalayan north as a circle where people travel in or out. Thus, my paper aims to engage in cultural geography as a theoretical model, where it will incorporate elements of gender, post-anthropocentrism, and exclusion politics. Here, the patriarchal system frequently leads to this "runaway" state, since many women fear having to deal with the issues of forced marriage. This further leads people to become cultural or familial outcasts. In contrast, the novel also opens up the scope of travelling to the realms of a more-than-human world. Here, the theme of runaway works within the topography of the Himalayas. The microcosmic sketching of the Himalayan hill station also brings out the psychological dimension of runaway where the exclusive ideals of right-wing politics find it queer to accommodate spaces for minority values in the diverse cultural mapping of India. These things, in turn, reflect a unique aspect of socio-economic and environmental issues in the Anthropocene. Further, it is to see how Roy's sketching of events works on both personal and collective layers.

Keywords:
Anthropocene, runaway, cultural geography, gender, exclusion politics

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1. Introduction

The concept of migration is frequently employed as a cliché in a variety of fields of social science and humanities to allude to the relocation of people from the formerly inhabited geographic places. This type of movement has happened throughout history as a result of compulsion or a desire to change locations. Thus, this very instance of human mobility often becomes a quintessence of human existence. In agricultural communities, the movement was mainly focused on fertile areas with good farming potential. India, in that respect, being rich in agricultural prospects, has attracted migrants down the ages. However, during this capitalist epoch of the Anthropocene[1], the migration happens from the regions of the global south like India to the more economically and technologically advanced regions of the global north and many other places. Here, my research focuses mostly on using literary analysis of Anuradha Roy's *The Folded Earth* to investigate the problem of migration within India on a new scale. This is actually the author's 'ability to infuse hard bits of social and political reality into a narrative that would otherwise have assumed the soft tinctures of light reading' (Khair, 2011). Thus, instead of extrapolating these concerns to a global scale, my goal is to discuss the cultural geography of the Himalayas in an Indian context. Even though India is regarded as being a part of the global south, the country's diverse landscapes and cultures make it a continent that deserves its own special geographic mapping. The Himalayas, a region with a variety of flora and cultures, do occupy a distinctive position on the northern side of the Indian map, sharing its territories with other nations like Nepal, Bhutan, and others. Since the Himalayas have a significant impact on the landscapes and climates of India, my goal is to combine the disciplines of literature and geography, and provide a geo-critical reading of this chosen text by Anuradha Roy to see if any symbolic connotation of the Himalayas can be inferred here.

While employing the cultural geography of the global south as a theoretical model, my study intends to include numerous concerns of gender, post-anthropocentrism[2], and exclusion politics. Thus, as we read the novel, we can perceive how things revolve around the landscapes of the Himalayas. Maya, an important character, runs in and settles down in the village of Ranikhet to

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[1] This term is used to mean a temporality of human civilizations that largely have a negative impact on nature from various perspectives. For more details, see, Parikka, J., 2018, "Anthropocene", In: Braidotti, R., Hlavajova, M. (Eds.), *Posthuman Glossary*, Bloomsbury, London, 51-53.
[2] Post-anthropocentrism in many ways challenges the ideas and approaches of the Anthropocene. For more details, see, Ferrando, F., 2019, Philosophical Posthumanism, Bloomsbury, New York, 103-108.

overcome the trauma of her dead husband. Her travel, here, encompasses the physical and psychological domain of trans-spatiality. In contrast, Charu, another important character, chooses the path of runaway out of the Himalayas in order to have better life prospects. Here, Ranikhet serves as a microcosmic illustration of the rough reality of how spaces are constricted for those who cannot fit their differences into both the right-wing politics and the established social standards. However, there are characters that resist all cultural constraints and venture into the regions of the more-than-human world, while being socially conditioned and labelled as invalid. How the concepts of sane and insanity are often perceived in the Anthropocene, when people's view of the "order of things"[3] is determined by their unrelenting need for financial gain, is one of this book's central questions.

"Roy prefers to keep the heights of her story, like those mountaintops shrouded in mystery," writes Andrea Thomson for *The New York Times* (Thompson, 2012). Robin Leggett comments on the 'power of the natural world there' (Leggett, 2011). However, it is intriguing to notice that neither Leggett nor Thompson have made an effort to connect this book specifically to the cultural geography of India, where the Himalayan village functions as a type of microcosmic level of spatiality and brings out many societal difficulties of India, both of the present and of the past, in order to offer a prediction of the future. In that regard, the central argument of the novel can be structured around four different subtopics. These are as follows: a) runaway, tourism and the quest for peace in the Himalayas; b) runaway, better economic life and travelling out of the Himalayas; c) runaway and travel to the more-than-human world; d) politics of exclusion, the cultural mapping and the runaway from existent problem. Following that, the novel's central idea can be understood through a multi-layered lens. Thus, my goal in writing this essay is to demonstrate how a literary work might express the concerns of cultural geography by using a certain narrative approach. Patricia L. Price specifically highlights the value of "a narrative method to comprehend culture and by extension to perform cultural geography" (2010, p. 203). While dealing with the stance of cultural geography, my work aims to offer a post-human[4] break-down of some of the issues of human culture that divide and

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[3] Every society in a historical period is governed by certain norms. The detailed idea comes from Michel Foucault's book, The Order of Things (1966). See, Foucault, Michel., 1994, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, Vintage Books, New York.

[4] This is a field of studies that question the status of humans with or without relation to the non-human world from various perspectives. See, Braidotti, R., 2013, *The Posthuman*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

differentiate non-human agency and some humans as categorized "others"[1] from a more powerful, hegemonic human agency in the Anthropocene. Different facets of social and cultural isolation are highlighted in the book. Maya risks being excluded from her family due to her failure to fit the expectations of gendered and cultural norms. Because of his porosity and assimilation with the non-human world, Puran is at risk of social isolation. In addition to these issues, certain minorities in India experience many tiers of social exclusion as a result of the dominant right-wing political ideology that emphasizes the division of India along the lines of ethnic and religious purity and impurity.

2. Runaway, tourism and the quest for peace in the Himalayas

The Himalayan landscapes and vegetation attract tourists from all over India and abroad due to their scenic grandeur. From a number of angles, this has got a boosting impact on the Indian economy. Indeed, some claim that 'tourism has been seen as the panacea for depressed economies in both developed and lesser developed countries' (Meyer-Arendt & Wall, 1990, p. 01). Here, the obsession for travelling to the Himalayas is well captured in Anuradha Roy's book. In fact, in one of the places, the narrator says 'we could not afford more than an annual trek for him in the mountain and that one trek was what he lived for all year' (Roy, 2011, p. 06). The adventurous and uneven terrain of the Himalayas frequently serves as a hub for risky hiking. As we read the book, it becomes clearly evident that the narrator's husband's life is fatally cut short on this exciting adventure over the Himalayas. This thing, alone, could have easily shaped a version of the terrifying image of the Himalayas for the narrator to the extent that she would refrain herself from going there. However, in this story, the narrator travels with the memories of her deceased spouse, and it seems that the Himalayas are the only location that could ease the trauma and bring her close to her husband's presence. In the Himalayan village of Ranikhet, 'Maya settles into a routine: teaching at a Christian school; spending time with her landlord, Diwan Sahib; and observing the sometimes comic rhythms of the village and its army garrison' (Thompson, 2012). Thus, her arrival in this village and taking a position as a school teacher at St. Hilda works as a psychological level of travel as she strives to overcome the trauma of her husband's passing. The character of Maya might readily represent the theme of runaway. She runs away from her home to marry her lover, Michael, when she comes to the realization that

[1] This is used in the fields of gender studies, postcolonialism, disability studies, Posthumanism, Ecocriticism, etc.

her father will never agree to the inter-religious marriage. Thus, for Maya, the runaway motif actually serves two purposes: first, she runs away from her paternal family, and secondly, from her home in the Deccan she and her husband shared. The village serves as a means of escape for this character as she embarks on a new chapter of her life, engaging with Himalayan terrain and the various sorts of things that occupy it. Maya's engagement with this Himalayan village is transpatial[2] as her travels are multi-dimensional.

The runaway motif actually opens up a different level of situation that involves the predicament of making certain choices in life. This notion is well supported in Maya's case, as her choice to be a runaway not only makes spaces constricted for her but also creates problems for other characters, like her mother. This motif of being a runaway may easily have been interpreted as a form of foreshadowing of her emotional conflict with her father. However, her mother is the one who is affected by this the most. Soon after this event, it is observed that she has herself confined to a room. Consequently, it is also implied that she has stopped sharing her bed with her husband. However, having a large knife under the pillow in her bedroom makes us see things through a complicated lens. It can be assumed that Maya's mother does not intend to conceive a second child for her father so that he can develop his goals and forget about her runaway daughter. The issue of gender, reflected through the emotional struggle between Maya and her father, brings out the exclusive ideals of patriarchy, where certain people are rejected from the mapping of family and culture if they deviate from its norms. The theme of runaway also plays a significant role in the writings of authors outside of India as well. Alice Munroe, a renowned novelist from Canada, has invested a whole book as a collection of short stories with the theme of runaways. In fact, her work deals with 'the exclusion of people from the society because of social inferiority or because of certain human experience such as marriage, love, divorce or aging' (Keshk, 2019, p. 11). Here, too, the premise of the runaway comes out as an outcome of gendered roles in society. A direct upshot of power relations, it regulates 'life in negative terms—that is through the limitation, prohibition, regulation, control, and even "protection" of individuals related to that political structure through the contingent and retractable operation of choice' (Butler, 1990, p. 04). As she struggles with how to live through her husband's memory and get past the tragedy of his passing, Maya's desire for peace in the troubled Himalayan village occasionally runs against her interests. Things seemed quite favourable at the onset of her refuge in the Himalayas. In fact, along with her students, she gets engaged in the pickle business, where she

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[2] The idea extends and foregrounds the boundaries of both psychological and physical spaces.

finds great success. These lines aptly bring out this: 'May and June were our months: all the soft fruit of summer-plums, peaches, apricots-arrived from distant villages, baskets and crates of them together, and they had to be dealt with at once. Some days, neither Charu nor I get home from the factory till after dark' (Roy, 2011, p. 118). It soon turns out that the location turns into an alternative space where she attempts to escape her husband's demise by engaging in sexual intimacy with Veer, an important character in this novel. This physical intimacy, however, goes on to weave intricacies around the central theme of the text.

3. Runaway, better economic life and travelling out of the Himalayas

Although the Himalayas in India are a popular tourist destination, the steep and uneven mountains make life difficult for its inhabitants. The author here, as in this story, does not conceal the harsh reality of the Himalayas. The sole reason why tourists continue to be fascinated by this area is because they visit mostly during the pleasant months of the year to unwind for a few days. However, when individuals attempt to support themselves in this environment, they are forced to engage in a gruelling battle for survival. Thus, travelling out of the Himalayas to more lucrative locations for earning money becomes a necessity for a better economic existence. Here, in this section, I want to bring out how this novel validates this condition through the characters Kundan Singh and Charu. Kundan's travel out of the Himalayas to Delhi and then to Singapore justifies this situation. In that connection, it highlights the fact that 'international migration constitutes one of the central issues of contemporary society' (Canales, 2020, p. 01). While Charu's perception of a better life is aligned with her eventual union with Kundan, it is for Kundan a compulsive venture as he has family debts that need to be repaid. Ranikhet is likely to limit his opportunities in terms of earning that sum of money. The novel clearly reflects the extremities of the Himalayas, with its inhabitants aiming to create opportunities out of it. In addition, because the town has yet to become a popular tourist destination, a lack of prospects is a common occurrence. Political leaders like Umed Singh want to develop Ranikhet as a tourist spot, not just because of its scenic beauty but also on the basis of creating a promising space for pilgrimage. Actually, this sort of endeavour to turn a place into a spot of pilgrimage has become a common alternative to boosting tourism in a place. Citing the case of Santiago, Fabio Carbone, Gian Corinto, and Anahita Malek argue that the 'phenomenon of religious pilgrimage has thus assumed

other connotations and meanings, including that of the management of these circuits in order to boost the cultural and economic benefits they bring to the affected territories' (2016, p. 153). In that connection, the novel brings out the issue of the beautification of this Himalayan town where a character like Mr. Chauhan comes out with the 'promise to turn Ranikhet into a Switzerland' (Roy, 2011, p. 102). Here, 'Roy manages to capture both the absurd and the sinister in even minor characters, like a corrupt local official who embarks on a beautification plan that includes posting exhortatory signs around town' (Thompson, 2012). Despite having the tough task of forcing cattle to graze through the forests and meadows of the Himalayas, Charu appears to like her life since it gives her the chance to meet her boyfriend, Kundan, in locations that are less frequented by regular people. This also increases the possibility of a runaway within the Himalayan topography, as pre-marital love affairs are still frequently seen as taboo in India. The unique aspect of this book is the way the author portrays this unrivalled emotional connection and how it helps both characters deal with the stress of hard labour. This pattern of Charu's relationship with Kundan stands out as 'touching and sweet' (Leggett, 2011). However, as Kundan moves to a different location to try his luck at finding work, her life descends into a dragging monotony. The physical distance created by the departure of Kundan is often smudged as the letter written by him reaches Charu. This creates a kind of emotional bond between these two characters. Soon, these letters become emotional constraints when Charu comes to know that Kundan is leaving for Singapore and she is being repeatedly approached by her family to have an arranged marriage. Charu's only choice becomes to be a runaway. She knows that her family is not going to wait for long. However, this also turns out to be an interesting and dangerous choice for this character, as she does not have any preconceived knowledge about the outside world of the Himalayas beforehand. Her travel to Delhi could have been a painful end to her adventurous journey as she happened to encounter people who had the intention of molesting her. This situation actually brings out the concern regarding the safety of women in metro cities in India. However, through a lucky coincidence, she gets to save herself from harassment and finally gets to be with her lover, Kundan. Though the option of runaway is carried out by Maya and Charu for the same purposes, there are certain differences. Maya and Charu belong to two different socio-economic backgrounds. For Maya, it is two-layered, as she substantially chooses this path twice. However, for Charu, it becomes a compulsion to travel within the extreme topography and out of the Himalayas. While a sort of reunion happens between Charu and her family, this aspect of the runaway becomes com-

plicated for Maya as the unfathomable spatial fissure is created in the way of the reunion between Maya and her parents. In fact, this 'is a book about love, losses and long standing personal conflicts' (Leggett, 2011).

4. Runaway and travel to the more-than-human world

Although the primary objective of this paper is to analyze the cultural geography of the Himalayas through the literary analysis of Anuradha Roy's novel, it is important to add that the version of cultural geography represented here actually works both within human society and outside of human society in the woods of the Himalayan landscapes, along with its diverse wildlife. While it is primarily conceived that the scope of cultural geography must be limited to the understanding of people's ways of living in a designated landscape, Roy's story seems to foreground and extend this scope; and it, further, goes beyond the archetypes of the nature/culture binary. Thus, it can be put in the context that 'Nature is perhaps the most complex word in the language. It is relatively easy to distinguish three areas of meaning: (i) the essential quality and character of something; (ii) the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both; (iii) the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings' (Williams, 2008, p. 208). In reality, just like anywhere else, it is exceedingly challenging to separate Nature from culture as it shapes, moulds, and is itself moulded by the things that constitute its spatiality. Here, we can bring in the idea of "trans-corporeality" that suggests that the 'the figure/ground relation between the human and the environment dissolves as the outline of the human is traversed by substantial material interchanges' (Alaimo, 2018, p. 435). The personalities of Puran and Diwan Sahib best capture this notion of porosity or fusion. Despite being projected as a social invalid and an outcast, Puran ends up becoming one of the most important characters in the novel. In addition to Puran's entanglement with Nature, the novel hints at the suggestive culture that may be created realizing how closely Nature and culture are intertwined. Undoubtedly, the author does not designate Puran that kind of agency from which he might have philosophically disseminated this idea, but his utter state might well counsel the reader to be responsive to the differences that have cropped up between human culture and Nature. Thus, this calls for an environmental concern that is supposed to create a link between these two ostensibly disparate axes both through the realization and praxis of the state of interdependence. Indeed, readers may be surprised to consider the non-separability of consciousness

and behaviour between Puran and animals. This brings post-anthropocentric philosophy in the context. While this does not itself become a matter of concern, things start to fall apart when people try to civilize him as per humanizing ideals. As a result of this, this character gets subjected to animalization through ruthless torture. Here, this process of animalization is a system of power relations that often originates from violence inflicted upon people who belong to the margins. Hence, this is not to be confused with becoming mutually identical with animals in terms of motives and behaviour. On the same line, it is seen that the 'historical process of humanizing has emerged through, not only, the exclusions of the humans who were considered inferior, but also, a strict dichotomy with nonhuman animals and planet Earth' (Ferrando, 2019, p. 103). The tragedy that lies behind Puran's life is that nobody understands him to the fullest extent. On the contrary, he is the one who understands the more-than-human world better than anyone else. In return, he receives the same sort of benevolent treatment from them. Thus, in one of the places, Diwan Sahib puts this in the context: 'Puran's affinity to animals was a lost treasure. Puran was the sanest of us all, because animals knew whom to trust. They were imbeciles themselves who called Puran half witted' (Roy, 2011, 74). All these lines actually make us sceptical of how the notion of sanity/ insanity is understood in the Anthropocene. Actually, insane people, usually, have been subjected to "confinement" and segregation from society many times in history. Michel Foucault's comprehension of this concept could be helpful here as he suggests how, during the period of enlightenment, 'madmen were subjected to the regime of this confinement for a century and a half' (1988, p. 38). The notion of Nature/culture binary, directly resulting from the enlightenment, influences many things in the Anthropocene, where a human is recognized as sane when he/she can achieve inexorable economic growth for personal benefit without giving much heed to the understanding of the interdependence between various living and non-living things. In this case, Puran's personality does not perfectly fit into this anthropocentric "sane" world. Thus, harm inflicted on the more-than-human world for monetary gain is often normalized. However, 'the study of relationships between culture and environment is not just academic, it is vital, not simply because it offers understanding and possible solutions to important contemporary problems' (Anderson & Sutton, 2010, p. 04).

The one who comprehends Puran and all of his ramifications the best is Diwan Sahib. However, it is important to note that Diwan's travel to the more-than-human world is not physical, as the same applies quite effectively to Puran's case. Diwan does so either through writing the travel stories of Jim

Corbett or by mimicking bird sounds at the annual conference in school. In the context of the novel, Diwan Sahib's importance lies in many ways. If the Himalayas act as a circle where people travel in or out, Diwan Sahib is the epicentre of that circle upon which all the events of the past and present traverse, and the prediction of the future is calculated. In addition to his special attention to Puran and wildlife, his objectives call for environmental ethics. In fact, Diwan's last visit to St. Hilda for the annual conference explicitly advocates for a sustainable future that focuses deeply on the more-than-human world. Here, he talks of the "Himalayan Golden Eagles", which were once so common in these Himalayan woods. He asserts that these 'are rare majestic birds and have not seen here in living memory' (Roy, 2011, p. 177). The exploitation of the Himalayan natural environment is well reflected in Diwan's speech, as he argues that there 'are trucks that come and go, the entrance to the spur is piled high with logs from trees that have been cut from the forests all around' (Roy, 2011, p. 177). The concerns expressed in this novel bring out the abuses of nature in contemporary India. 'It is a landscape in which the natural world is continually being replaced by a world of artefacts: where trees, shrubs and grasses are giving way to plantations and crop fields, roads and buildings' (Gadgil & Guha, 1995, p. 01).

5. Politics of exclusion, the cultural mapping and the runaway from existent problems

One of the most important aspects of India is its diversity of languages, religions, and ethnicities that shape the cultural consciousness of its people in distinctive ways. Here, in this novel, Ranikhet gets a special representation with respect to how it acts as the totality[1] of India at a microcosmic level. In reality, given Ranikhet's distinctive demographics, it is safe to assume that this hill station holds many immigrants who have moved into this place from various parts of India. These migrations, in fact, hint at various levels of implications. While some of the characters have come for job opportunities, others have come to spend the remaining days of their lives in the lap of the Himalayan landscape. Put in geographical context, the mountains in the Himalayas control the climates and lifestyles of the entire country. This has led many people to call India the "gift of the Himalayas" as much as Egypt is of the Nile. Thus, the question arises whether this supposedly "blessed" landscape can stand as a safe and inclusive heaven for the diverse demographic

[1] Here, I want to mean the collective layers of cultural spaces that define the multi and mixed cultural status of India.

entities of India. However, it is very often observed that a 'sedate world exists only to be shaken, and soon enough the town is disturbed from all sides' (Thompson, 2012). The problem, here, does not lie in the Himalayas. It lies in the politics of right-wing ideals fuelled by the radical version of "Hindutva"[2] idealism that very often takes a fascist turn. With the creation of an imaginary 'golden past that existed prior to the Mughal Empire and the British Raj[3], Hindutva attempts to write a historiographical account that contradicts the "shame" of foreign invasion' (Leidig, 2020, p. 224). Thus, this historical sense propels a situation where spaces become constricted for minor religious groups like Christians and Muslims, as both Christianity and Islam owe their origins to outside of India.

Here, in this novel, we learn that an important Christian character, Miss Wilson, has arrived in this concerned location in charge of overseeing a missionary school. While it is interesting to note that there is an urge among people in India to get their children admitted to Christian missionary schools, the idea of Christians being an essential part of India has not yet been fully integrated into the diverse mapping of India. Thus, when Maya, a Hindu character, decides to settle her life with a Christian character, Michael, it becomes too difficult for Maya's father to accept that. This further prompts Maya to be a runaway. The ambivalent attitude of Maya's father towards Christians could easily be replicated in these lines: 'Michael's parents were second-generation Christians and my father was contemptuous of all Christians—even though he was happy enough to send me to St. George's Grammar School for Girls on the first rung of his grand plan to turn me into an industrial magnate' (Roy, 2011, p. 123). It can be well perceived that things related to Christianity are only a matter of necessity, where not many people want to allow this aspect to be porous with the diverse consciousness of Indianness. This continues in the Himalayan setting as well. The sense of separateness can be reflected in the psychological terrain of the ordinary people as well. In that connection, Muslims also fall under this psychological spatiality of non-acceptance. Thus, whenever there is an attempt to de-territorialize this hegemonic structure, an atmosphere of disdain can, unmistakably, be perceived in various spheres of Indian society. Though this does not always become referential to violence, it calls for our attention to be concerned about the differentiation. Characters like Ama, the grandmother of Charu, are not free from such prejudices as well. Thus, she reveals: "Doesn't care that everyone knows she's carrying on with that boy at Liaquat's medicine shop. He's not just a different caste, no—

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[2] This is not to be confused with Hinduism, which is more of a religious philosophy and practice.
[3] Raj refers to rule. Hence, British Raj refers to British colonial period in India.

he's a *Muslim*' (Roy, 2011, p. 123)! However, it is astonishing to note that this idea of differentiation mixed with detestation is not just limited to this occasion alone. This becomes a heated political subject as characters like Umed Singh utilize it to garner favour in the impending election. Here, he 'is about to muddy the waters- or, more precisely, singe the clean mountain air' (Khair, 2011). Thus, on an occasion, we see that his speech reflects this sentiment: 'Why doesn't the government subsidise pilgrimages to Deo Bhoomi to help the hill economy? These hills are the abode of Hindu gods, and India is the Hindus' last refuge in a new world order dominated by Islamic terrorism and Christian missionaries. There is soft war and there is hard war' (Roy, 2011, p. 229). Clearly reflected in these lines, territorializing the Himalayas and symbolically the entire regions of India with "Hindutva" ideals, Umed Singh here wants to act as a "saviour" where he intentionally ignores many social and environmental problems in India. This is a case of psychological runaway that has been transformed into a question of political compulsion. Additionally, several issues related to Islamic terrorism and Christian missionaries are generalized to the point where they form a misleading portrayal of Muslim and Christian minorities in India, excluding them from the country's diverse cultural landscape.

6. Conclusion

The microcosmic representation of Ranikhet gives us somewhat of a clear cartographic description of the existent political turmoil in India. Although this book contains both individual and collective layers, the individual experiences serve as models for the cultural mapping of India in terms of what is left out and what needs to be added to produce a more varied consciousness of India. As a result, it calls for the elimination of existing disparities that cause differences in acceptability and recognition, and frequently act as barriers to the concept of "unity in diversity". Rosi Braidotti's understanding of the term "difference", pertaining to the posthuman condition, becomes so vital here as she argues that 'difference spells inferiority, it acquires both essentialist and lethal connotations for people who get branded as "others". These are the sexualized, racialized, and naturalized others, who are reduced to the less than human status of disposable bodies' (Braidotti, 2013, p. 15). The inter-religious marriage of the main character, Maya, and her desire for a place where her identity does not become fixed on a single signifier set off the intricacy of the narrative. Diwan Sahib's home becomes a space where the stories of the

past and present intersect. Not only people from India but also from abroad run to this place in quest of supposedly hidden sensitive documents such as letters. The letters, allegedly, contain the exchange of a love affair between Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, and Edwina Mountbatten, the wife of the last Viceroy of colonial India. Diwan Sahib does not want to provide anything since doing so may compromise the integrity of Indian pride. Anuradha Roy's talent in this area lies in diluting history with fiction. Put it in the domain of speculations, nevertheless, this could seriously spark a sentiment of anger, not necessarily because the relationship was illicit, but it was one of those inter-religious, inter-ethnic relationships between two people coming from two very dissimilar backgrounds: one who was active in the anti-colonial movement in support of an independent India, and the other who belonged to the ruling class of colonizers. In this fictional story, Diwan Sahib knows the implication that it could be a queer thing for many people to accept that some spaces go beyond the binary marker of the colonized/colonizer. Thus, Anuradha Roy's engagement with the British Raj brings to light the intriguing tales of India in all of their complexities. The plot, here, 'serves to symbolize India's uneasy passage from tradition to modernity' (Thompson, 2012). In reality, it aptly conveys how Christians hold the status of minorities in India along with other minority groups. Thus, the Himalayan town, with its misty woods and colonial tombs, offers a unique sketch of the cultural geography of India in its totality. Despite the fact that Tabish Khair, as a reviewer, dislikes literary works 'imbued with Raj nostalgia', he claims to have been 'captivated by *The Folded Earth*' (Khair, 2011). The Raj nostalgia in this book, in my opinion, takes an alternative approach to consider how people should be critical of many pressing issues of present day India while also ruminating on the grotesque atrocities of the British colonial past. It is crucial for Indians to think about the increasing destruction of India's natural environment in addition to the political marginalisation of religious minorities and the gendered social exclusion of some individuals. In fact, the exploitation of natural resources and the environment is invariably linked to climate change, which does not exempt 'consequences on agriculture, water resources and exposure to geo-hydrological risk with damages to population and properties' (De Pascale et al., 2020, p.1). In that sense, I believe that Anuradha Roy uses Diwan Sahib as a point of view character to share her anxieties and doubts about the sustainable future of India.

Acknowledgment

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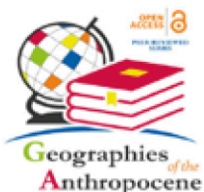
This book offers a comprehensive examination of the dynamic interplay between human mobility, migration, and tourism in the context of the Anthropocene era. The collection of eight chapters delves into various aspects of this complex relationship, shedding light on crucial issues, challenges, and opportunities in today's rapidly evolving global landscape. The concept of responsible tourism is a transversal element in this publication, exploring its significance in promoting sustainable practices and mitigating the environmental and socio-cultural impacts of movement of people. Another topic which is addressed here is the post-Covid regeneration of tourism-dependent island economies. The authors analyze the challenges faced by these regions and explore innovative approaches to sustainable recovery. The discussions here revolve around the importance of community engagement, diversification, and resilience in building a robust and sustainable tourism industry. Sustainability also takes a center stage in this edition. The discourse presented in various chapters examines the pressing environmental issues associated with the movement of people. It also delves into the transformation of the hotel industry and explores tourism opportunities in isolated geographical exclave, shedding light on unique destinations that face challenges related to accessibility and connectivity. Important analysis is also presented on cultural landscapes, heritage sites, and local traditions and how cultural authenticity and meaningful interactions between tourists and local communities can shape the tourist experience.

This book will be of great interest to scholars, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to understand and navigate the challenges and opportunities that arise in this rapidly changing global landscape.

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Geographies
of the
Anthropocene

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