

The Hive and the Pod: Ecocritical Subversions in Laline Paull's Two Interspecies Narratives

Pavithra R

Department of English and Foreign Languages, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu 603203, India

S. Mahadevan

Department of English and Foreign Languages, Faculty of Engineering and Technology, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu 603203, India

Abstract—This ecocritical analysis of Laline Paull's *The Bees* (2014) and *Pod* (2022) employs Greg Garrard's framework of environmental dualisms and Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence (Nixon, 2011) to interrogate how nonhuman narrators expose the entangled ecological, social, and spiritual crises of the Anthropocene. Through close reading and interdisciplinary synthesis, the study demonstrates how Paull's fiction reframes industrial agriculture and marine exploitation as systemic failures rooted in anthropocentric hierarchies. In *The Bees*, the queen monopolizes the reproductive rights of the bees in the hive; the queen's act, critiques patriarchal control over labor and ecology, paralleling ecofeminist critiques of nature's commodification. In *Pod*, the spinner dolphin Ea navigates oceans ravaged by seismic blasting (termed the Thunder) and plastic waste, her echolocation disrupted by anthropogenic acoustic smog (Duarte et al., 2021). The Tursiops dolphins' exploitation of remoras and reliance on pufferfish toxins mirror capitalism's extractive logic, their eventual collapse underscoring the fragility of such systems. Paull's narrative strategies reject anthropomorphic simplification. By employing biomimicry, such as scent-driven communication in *The Bees* and echolocation syntax in *Pod*, she centers nonhuman cognition, fostering empathy without erasing alterity. Rituals like the Waggle Dance and humpback whale songs reclaim spiritual ecology, positioning nonhumans as custodians of planetary memory. Ultimately, the novels advocate interspecies solidarity, urging readers to heed Flora's realization of hive-world symbiosis (Paull, 2014) and Ea's declaration of collective tidal agency (Paull, 2022). Paull's work transcends climate fatalism, offering a radical reimagining of environmental justice through collective, multispecies survival.

Index Terms—ecocriticism, nonhuman narratives, multispecies empathy, anthropocentrism, environmental activism

I. INTRODUCTION

Reimagining Ecocriticism Through Nonhuman Voices

Ecocriticism, as Garrard (2012) argues, interrogates hierarchical divisions between humans and ecological systems, a theoretical mission that Laline Paull advances through narratives merging biological accuracy with speculative storytelling. Her novels function not as abstract allegories but as scientifically grounded narratives (Paull, 2023), compelling readers to reckon with the destructive legacies of industrial modernity. The increasing realisation of climate change is inspiring fresh ideas that result in completely novel allegorical forms to handle the changing nature of our earth, according to De Loughrey (2019). The critical concerns of ecocritical novels are considered by contemporary researchers. The climate disasters have led to oversimplifications; Ghosh (2016) reveals that historical fiction of contemporary reinstates intricate global narrative with many contradictory and counterintuitive factors. Considering the real world, according to Whyte (2017), anthropogenic global warming impacts native population more acutely and prematurely than other demographics.

Paull's work resonates with Haraway's (2016) advocacy for multispecies kinship networks, which rejects anthropocentric ideologies accelerating planetary degradation. Similarly, Val Plumwood's (2002) critique of the fallacy of human exceptionalism, the assumption that humanity exists outside ecological interdependence; echoes in Paull's depiction of bees and dolphins as sentient actors within shared habitats. By anchoring her fiction in entomological and marine biology research, Paull sidesteps reductive anthropomorphism, instead modeling what Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) describes as reciprocal communication between species.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecocritical scholarship has increasingly turned to nonhuman narratives to interrogate the Anthropocene's entangled crises. Greg Garrard's foundational work *Ecocriticism* (2012) established the field's focus on dismantling nature-culture dualisms, while Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence* (Nixon, 2011) redefined ecological harm as a deferred, attritional process disproportionately affecting marginalized communities. Donna Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble* (2016) expanded this

discourse, advocating for “sympoietic” multispecies alliances to counter capitalist extraction. However, these frameworks have rarely been applied to contemporary climate fiction (cli-fi) centering nonhuman protagonists, leaving a critical gap this research addresses through Laline Paull’s *The Bees* (2014) and *Pod* (2022). Previous studies on nonhuman perspectives, such as Ursula K. Heise’s analysis of *The Overstory* (2020), focus on arboreal narratives that humanize trees through mythic archetypes. In contrast, Paull employs ‘biomimicry’ narratives grounded in biological accuracy, to depict insect and cetacean cognition, avoiding anthropocentric projection. Charlotte McConaghy’s *Migrations* (2020) fictionalizes avian extinction as a manifestation of human sorrow, whereas Paull’s *The Bees* distinctly associates pollinator decline with reproductive regulation, challenging patriarchal biopolitics through the hive’s authoritarian decree, just the Queen may reproduce.

Ecofeminist study, particularly Carolyn Merchant’s *The Death of Nature* (1980) and Val Plumwood’s *Environmental Culture* (2002), has consistently associated the subjugation of women and nature within patriarchal frameworks. Paull’s hive hierarchy, in which sterile worker bees cleanse the detritus of others, aligns with Stacy Alaimo’s trans-corporeality theory (2010), which examines how toxins permeate marginalized bodies. Yet Alaimo’s (2016) work centers human experiences, whereas Paull’s nonhuman focus, such as Flora 717’s illicit motherhood in *The Bees*, offers a novel lens to critique ‘interspecies labor exploitation’. Similarly, marine ecocriticism remains underexplored compared to terrestrial studies. While David Farrier’s *Anthropocene Poetics* (2019) addresses oceanic plastic waste, and Jessica Leigh Hester’s *Plastic Legacies* (2021) examines pollution’s cultural imprint, *Pod* uniquely dramatizes *acoustic pollution* (seismic blasting) and cetacean social fragmentation. Recent marine biology studies, such as Parsons et al.’s (2022) analysis of naval sonar impacts, validate Paull’s portrayal of the “Thunder” as a driver of interspecies trauma, bridging literary and scientific discourse. Parikka (2015) argues; although rare earth minerals and other components are necessary for the running of our digital media gadgets, he points out that obsolete and thrown-away media technology return to the earth and produce accumulations of toxic waste that hinders archaeologists to consider.

Empirical research on pollinator decline (Potts et al., 2016; Goulson, 2021) and marine degradation (Duarte et al., 2021) provides critical context for Paull’s fiction. The Xerces Society’s *Pollinators in Peril* (2023) report, which cites a 40% decline in insect pollinator populations, mirrors *The Bees*’ depiction of pesticide-driven colony collapse. Simultaneously, UNEP’s *Plastic Pollution in the Mediterranean* (2023) highlights the urgency of *Pod*, as 1.2 million tons of plastic being introduced into the water each year. This research addresses a vacuum in literary studies by examining Paull’s sensory-driven prose to challenge ‘narrative form as activism.’ For instance, her application of olfactory dominance in *The Bees*, characterized by the Queen’s perfume, dense as honey, and the echolocation language in *Pod*, where clicks delineate the shark’s form, exemplifies biomimetic narrative that cultivates empathy while preserving nonhuman alterity.

This study’s uniqueness lies in its ‘tripartite framework’ linking natural collapse (e.g., CCD, marine pollution), social hierarchies (e.g., caste systems, interspecies slavery), and spiritual erosion (e.g., ritual disintegration). While prior works analyze these themes in isolation, Paull’s novels synthesize them: the hive’s corrupted Waggle Dance in *The Bees*; symbolizes lost ecological literacy, and *Pod*’s humpback whale songs reclaim oceanic memory as a counter to human apathy. This research enhances ecocriticism’s ability to conceptualize ‘post-anthropocentric futures’ by integrating ecofeminist theory, marine biology, and cli-fi criticism, as exemplified by Flora 717’s assertion in *The Bees* that she belongs to the swarm (Paull, 2014), and Ea’s proclamation in *Pod* that Everyone were the tide (Paull, 2022).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology that integrates literary ecocriticism, close textual analysis, and empirical data synthesis to interrogate Laline Paull’s *The Bees* (2015) and *Pod* (2023). Grounded in Garrard’s (2012) ecocritical framework, which dismantles nature-culture dualisms, and Nixon’s (2011) concept of ‘slow violence’, the analysis centers on how Paull’s nonhuman protagonists expose systemic ecological collapse. The research adopts a tripartite lens, examining ‘natural degradation’ (e.g., pollinator decline, marine pollution), ‘social hierarchies’ (e.g., caste systems, interspecies exploitation), and ‘spiritual erosion’ (e.g., ritual disintegration), to critique the interconnected crises of the Anthropocene.

Primary texts were selected for their innovative use of biomimetic narrative strategies, which prioritize biological accuracy over anthropomorphic projection. *The Bees* and *Pod* were analyzed alongside interdisciplinary secondary sources, including entomological studies on Colony Collapse Disorder (Potts et al., 2016), marine biology research on acoustic pollution (Parsons et al., 2022), and ecofeminist critiques of patriarchal environmental exploitation (Merchant, 1980; Plumwood, 2002). Empirical data from institutions like the Xerces Society (2023) and UNEP (2023) provided real-world context, ensuring the literary analysis remained anchored in scientific realities. For instance, the 40% decline in global insect pollinator populations directly informed the interpretation of Flora 717’s struggle against pesticide-laden landscapes in *The Bees*.

Close textual analysis focused on Paull’s sensory-driven prose, such as scent-based communication in *The Bees* “He let his scent flow... raised their own pheromones in banners of lust” (Paull, 2014, p. 338) and echolocation syntax in *Pod* (“co-wives began to chatter in shock, their clicks incoherent. The water clung thick with grief” (Paull, 2022, p. 34). Key scenes; including Flora’s discovery of neurotoxic ‘amber drops’ and Ea’s encounter with a sperm whale killed by plastic ingestion, were dissected for their symbolic and ecological resonance. These passages were juxtaposed with scientific

data to assess narrative fidelity; for example, marine studies confirming that seismic blasting disrupts cetacean migration (Duarte et al., 2021) validated *Pod*'s portrayal of the "Thunder" as acoustic trauma.

Theoretical frameworks were applied to deepen the critique: Nixon's *Slow Violence* elucidated the incremental destruction of the hive and ocean ecosystems, while Donna Haraway's concept of "kin-making" (Haraway, 2016, p. 99) informed the analysis of interspecies alliances, such as Ea's coalition with sperm whales. Ecofeminist theory, particularly Val Plumwood's (2002) critique of dualisms, revealed the hive's mantra "Accept, Obey, Serve" (Paull, 2014, p. 103) mirrors patriarchal control over female labor and reproduction.

Ethical considerations included rigorous cross-referencing of scientific data to avoid misrepresentation and acknowledgment of the researcher's bias toward biomimicry as an activist narrative strategy. Limitations arose from the study's narrow focus on two novels, which restricts broader cli-fi comparisons, and the inherent anthropocentric bias of human-led interpretation. Nevertheless, by bridging literary analysis with empirical ecology, this methodology positions Paull's work as a transformative lens for reimagining environmental justice, demonstrating how fiction can catalyze multispecies empathy and activism.

IV. ECOCRITICAL SUBVERSIONS IN *THE BEES* AND *POD*

A. Chemical and Acoustic Pollution

Laline Paull's *The Bees* (2014) allegorizes the insidious infiltration of neonicotinoid pesticides through Flora 717's discovery of neurotoxic "amber drops" in pollen reserves, a narrative mechanism that parallels the biological cascades of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). The hive's collapse, marked by disoriented foragers with impaired physiology, reflects the sublethal yet cumulative consequences of agrochemical pollutants (Paull, 2014). Paull (2014) further critiques anthropogenic climate disruption through the symbolic "Brightness," an atmospheric aberration that erodes pollinators' navigational precision. These ecological critiques align with Nixon's (2011) framework of "slow violence," which theorizes environmental harm as a deferred consequence of industrial practices.

Paull's later work *Pod* (2022) interrogates marine ecological crises through seismic blasting ("the Thunder"), a narrative device embodying anthropogenic acoustic violence. Cetacean communities, destabilized by the Thunder's sonic intrusions, exemplify interspecies vulnerability, particularly in the death of a sperm whale from plastic ingestion is a direct allusion to Moore's (2023) documentation of oceanic plastic proliferation. The Thunder's disruption of cetacean echolocation mirrors military sonar's capacity to induce mass strandings (Jepson et al., 2021), framing anthropogenic noise pollution as a form of sensory imperialism (Paull, 2022).

B. Natural Ecological Crisis: Systems on the Brink

Paull's *The Bees* offers a harrowing portrayal of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a real-world phenomenon linked to neonicotinoid pesticides and habitat loss. Flora 717, a low-caste sanitation bee, discovers neurotoxic "amber drops" in pollen, a direct reference to imidacloprid, a pesticide implicated in 40% of global bee die-offs since 2006 (Potts et al., 2016). The hive's mantra, "Accept, Obey, Serve," collapses as environmental chaos ensues: "she clawed the poisoned pollen from her panniers and hurled it as far as she could. Her intestines burned and her limbs shook as the toxic nectar seeped through her body, weakening her by the second" (Paull, 2014, p. 117). Paull's depiction of agriculture landscapes "There were fields – she described the pattern of the crops – the heavy waving heads of grain, the great west current of air ... more fields" (Paull, 2014, p. 88); mirrors the UK's loss of 97% of wildflower meadows since 1945 (UKCEH, 2021), a statistic that underscores industrial agriculture's role in biodiversity collapse.

The "dullness," a toxic atmospheric haze, symbolizes climate change's indiscriminate violence. Described as "when will this rain desist? It is dull beyond describing in our chambers" (Paull, 2014, p. 134), it disrupts the hive's navigation systems, paralleling studies on climate-induced pollinator disorientation (Rader et al., 2016). Flora's survival hinges on adapting to this new reality: "Her wing-beats slowed and the swarm moved on without her" (Paull, 2014, p. 340), a declaration that reframes resilience as collective, interspecies duty. Recent reports from the Xerces Society (2023) reveal that 40% of insect pollinators now face extinction, a crisis mirrored in Paull's fictional hive. By dramatizing CCD, Paull challenges readers to confront the "invisible apocalypse" (Goulson, 2021) unfolding in their backyards.

C. Oceanic Apocalypse in *Pod*: Sonic Pollution and Plastic Seas

In *Pod*, Paull shifts to marine ecosystems, where spinner dolphin Ea navigates oceans ravaged by seismic blasting and plastic waste. The "Thunder," a metaphor for industrial sonar, disrupts cetacean communication: "Let everyone think she was still trying to hear the music of the ocean, let them pity her" (Paull, 2022, p. 60). This acoustic violence parallels findings that naval sonar causes mass strandings, with 121 cetaceans beached in the Mediterranean in 2022 alone (Parsons et al., 2022). Ea's pod struggles to interpret distorted echolocation clicks; a phenomenon marine biologists' term "acoustic smog" (Duarte et al., 2021).

Paull's visceral portrayal of plastic pollution, a dolphin found difficult within the polluted environment "swam on through the bumping drifts of plastic...here were hundreds of swaying corpses in the nets" (Paull, 2022, p. 196), echoes the 1.2 million tons of plastic entering the Mediterranean annually (UNEP, 2023). Fugu, personifies ocean acidification: "the coral turned nauseous colors, ... she assumed that there would be lesser reefs nearby... she saw that they were too dying" (Paull, 2022, p. 125), a bleached coral reef, reflects the 50% decline in global coral cover since 1950 (Hughes et

al., 2017). Throughout Ea's journey, Paull emphasizes the ocean's function as the breathing system of the planet, currently suffocating under human-induced pressure. Real-world efforts like the Pelagos Sanctuary, a marine protected area in the Mediterranean, highlight the urgency of Paull's narrative, as only 7% of oceans are currently safeguarded (IUCN, 2023). To bring about the claim of Colebrook (2014), post-human future that is devoid of redemption is impossible. This would improve a leap in future research and its effect that is disastrous. Haraway (2015) contends that modern art reflects local environmental difficulties, as exemplified by Western Flag, which illustrates that even uninhabited environments are depleted or confront various ecological challenges.

D. Ecofeminism and Reproductive Control in *The Bees*

The Bees critiques patriarchal domination through its hive hierarchy, where the Queen's fertility is fetishized, and worker bees are sterilized. The Sage Sisters, a priestly caste, enforce religious dogma "Only the Queen may breed" (Paull, 2014, p. 32), mirroring how patriarchal systems control female reproduction. Flora's illicit motherhood "a tiny second heart pumped inside it. She hugged herself in silent joy... it was her connection to her living egg, growing stronger with every pulse of her blood." (Paull, 2014, p. 290) subverts this regime, aligning with ecofeminist critiques of nature's commodification (Estés, 1992). The hive's exploitation of "low-caste" bees mirrors global labor inequities: Flora's sanitation role "sanitation workers would arrive to remove the waste and scrub the floor," (Paull, 2014, p. 22) symbolizes marginalized workers in extractive economies, from Amazonian miners to Bangladeshi garment laborers.

Bennett (2010) contends that the active involvement of nonhuman forces in events needs to be better acknowledged in political theory. She theorizes a "vital materiality" that permeates and transcends both human and nonhuman bodies in order to achieve this. With Bennett's view of vital materiality, we can transcend the confusions of authoritarianism. Paull critiques authoritarianism through the hive's surveillance state. The blessed scouts monitor for dissenters, reflecting Michel Foucault's concept of the panopticon: Each bee was monitored (Paull, 2014). Flora's rebellion; nurturing her larvae in secret, becomes an act of eco-resistance, reclaiming agency over her body and environment. Her struggle parallels the Green Belt Movement, where Kenyan activist Wangari Maathai linked women's empowerment to reforestation, stating, "You cannot protect the environment unless you empower women" (Maathai, 2004, p. 112).

E. Interspecies Colonialism in *Pod: Cetacean Capitalism*

Pod expands this critique to marine hierarchies, wherein bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops) subjugate other species. The alliance between Tursiops and remoras, providing assistance in exchange for survival, mirrors capitalist exploitation, while their use of pufferfish toxins to "get high" (Paull, 2022) reflects escapism amid ecological despair. Paull's dolphins weaponize echolocation to dominate prey, echoing humanity's technological subjugation of nature.

Rorqual whale, came to realization, conveyed deeper meaning through collective lyrics: "sanctuary for my people" (Paull, 2022, p. 261). Their coalition with sperm whales and octopuses' models multispecies solidarity, repudiating neoliberal individualism. The eventual defeat of the Tursiops, whose sonar was compromised by contaminated seas, serves as a warning tale: one cannot govern a fractured world (Paull, 2022). This reflects postcolonial critiques of extractivism, as argued by Michael Parenti in *Against Empire*. The objective of capitalism is to transform nature into commodities and commodities into capital (Parenti, 1995).

F. Ritual and Disenchantment in *The Bees*

The hive's spiritual collapse parallels humanity's disconnection from nature. The Waggle Dance, a sacred communication ritual, degenerates into chaos as environmental stress fractures communal bonds: "'The Visitation!' some screamed. 'The end of the world!'" (Paull, 2014, p. 179). This mirrors Max Weber's "disenchantment of the world," where industrialization erodes ecological reverence. Flora's reexamination of the Waltz of the pure Queen (Paull, 2014), a rite honoring fertility and regeneration, transforms into an act of re-enchantment, reinstating interspecies connection.

Paull contrasts this with the hive's mechanized rituals. The "Feeding Chant," once a harmonious chorus, becomes a "low, coarse, desperate weeds... nor may she ever forage for she has no taste" (Paull, 2014, p. 167), symbolizing humanity's transactional relationship with nature. Flora's final sacrifice is guiding the swarm to a new hive, reinstates spiritual ecology: "you danced well. You have served your hive" (Paull, 2014, p. 340).

G. Cetacean Cosmologies and Human Apathy in *Pod*

Neimanis (2017) argues in *Bodies of Water* that our bodies are neither unique from or privileged above the natural surroundings; rather, they are naturally integral to them. This realization of nature and body as one, is relevant when applied in *Pod*. *Pod* laments humanity's spiritual alienation through Ea's awe for humpback whale songs: "This was the sound that Ea had heard, sweeping the ocean with pain and love and yearning" (Paull, 2022, p. 95). These songs, which develop annually across oceans (Garland et al., 2011), contest human exceptionalism in cultural creation. Paull juxtaposes this with human apathy, noting the construction of barriers, abattoirs, and corruption (Paull, 2022). The dolphins' myth of the "Great Mother" "No more pain! The matriarch called out... we live as family, let us die that way (Paull, 2022, p. 167), a primordial whale, critiques humanity's abandonment of ecological stewardship.

Viveiros de Castro (2014) justifies that a common manifestation of human nature is its rejection of its own universality, which is relatable in the examined fiction, Ea is alienated by its clan, similarly Flora for its unique physique is rejected by its clan. Yusoff (2018), discusses about Anthropocene; that is distinguished by contemporary racial inequities and

historically driven with the alienation of Black and brown populations. This helps considering inequities as a problem of the Anthropocene era. Ea's transformation from outcast to leader "the safety of one was the safety of all" (Paull, 2022, p. 261) models a spiritual reconnection with nature. Her pod's decision to rescue enslaved pilot whales, despite the risk, embodies Donna Haraway's "kin-making" (Haraway, 2016): "come now, while it is safe, my people" (Paull, 2022, p. 260).

H. Narrative Form as Ecological Activism

Paull's narrative strategies disrupt anthropocentric storytelling through "biomimicry" is a faithful representation of nonhuman cognition, rather than zoomorphic projection. As she explains, "long live the Queen" (Paull, 2022, p. 341). In *The Bees*, the hive's collective consciousness "I am a scout" (Paull, 2015, p. 321) challenges individualist narratives, while *Pod's* shifting cetacean perspectives emulate oceanic interconnectedness.

Paull's prose mirrors nonhuman sensory worlds. In *The Bees*, scent dominates: "The Queen's perfume... the acrid tang of fear" (Paull, 2015, p. 56). In *Pod*, soundscapes prevail: "With clicks of sympathy and apology, everyone swam away" (Paull, 2022, p. 55). This sensory immersion fosters empathy, aligning with ecocriticism's goal to make the invisible visible (Heise, 2016). Unlike Richard Powers' *The Overstory*, which humanizes trees through archetypal narratives, Paull preserves the alterity of her protagonists, asserting readers that animals, human or otherwise, are sentient and intelligent entities possessing agency in their existence (Dooren, 2014).

I. Reception and Criticism: The Limits of Empathy

Critics praise Paull's "revolutionary empathy" (Rustin, 2023) but debate whether nonhuman narrators can inspire real-world change. Biologist Hal Whitehead commends *Pod's* scientifically rigorous depiction of cetacean societies (Whitehead, 2023), however literary scholar Ursula Heise contends that nonhuman perspectives may depoliticize climate action into just artistic reflection (Heise, 2020). The Atlantic challenges Paull's method as "apolitical escapism," contending that dolphin protagonists divert attention from human accountability (Smith, 2023).

Paull argues that if we can mourn for a dolphin, we may still have the potential to save ourselves (Paull, 2022). Her position reflects Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence*, which refers to the gradual, imperceptible devastation that necessitates narrative acknowledgment (Nixon, 2011). By personifying ecological degradation, Paull's stories close the "empathy gap" that perpetuates environmental indifference.

V. CONCLUSION

To Unbecome Human

Paull's novels reject anthropocentric solipsism, urging readers to heed Flora 717's realization that "Our hive... world was come to life again" (Paull, 2014, p. 321) and Ea's assertion of being the tide (Paull, 2022). By embedding ecocrisis within nonhuman narratives, Paull reimagines environmental justice as interspecies solidarity is a call to "unbecome human," in Haraway's terms, and embrace a "chthonic" kinship with all life (Haraway, 2016, p. 101). Similar to the "speculative fabulation" in Haraway's *Staying With the Trouble*, Paull's work anticipates a future in which the flourishing of humans and nonhumans is interconnected (Haraway, 2016). As climate fiction progresses, *The Bees* and *Pod* exemplify literature's capacity to deconstruct hierarchies, one hive and one pod at a time. The Sage Sisters, a sacerdotal order, uphold the hive's stringent reproductive regulations, permitting breeding solely by the Queen (Paull, 2014).

Flora's clandestine motherhood, secretly nursing her larvae, undermines the eco-patriarchal structure. By rejecting the motto "Accept, Obey, Serve" to nourish her progeny, Paull opposes what ecofeminist Carolyn Merchant describes as the "death of nature" under capitalist-patriarchal dominance (Merchant, 1980). Flora's rebellion, which she will endure and nurture, reclaims reproductive autonomy as a kind of ecological resistance (Paull, 2014).

The god-aboves or the human that perform in the MMA (Military) expedition in *Pod* enslave other species, especially the dolphin named Google. It is used as a tool to attack the other ship; while setting up the limpet mine to destroy the ship. "Google came up to the surface into a huge slick of burning fuel" (Paull, 2022, p. 89). Their supremacy reflects colonial exploitation, which we termed alliance; they recognized it as bondage (Paull, 2023). Paull draws analogies between this and historical human actions, such as the transatlantic slave trade, reinterpreted through an ecocritical perspective. The Tursiops' utilization of pufferfish toxins to mock the dying sea (Paull, 2023) condemns escapism in the face of ecological catastrophe, paralleling humanity's climate denial.

The waggle dance, a ritual that encodes flight trajectories and flower locations, exemplifies the hive's ecological knowledge, with Flora's body serving as the map and her dance as the melody (Paull, 2014). Their disintegration under environmental stress; drones faltered, their movements disrupted (Paull, 2014) indicates the erosion of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). Paull's depiction corresponds with anthropologist Anna Tsing's concept of "rhizomatic" multispecies survival (Tsing, 2015), wherein Flora's reawakening of the dance of the pure Queen reinstates communal resilience.

Ea's interaction with humpback whales, whose songs resonate across oceans, connecting the pod to the rhythm of the deep (Paull, 2022), questions the notion of human exceptionalism. Paull references scientist Roger Payne's (2020) studies on whale songs as cultural objects, framing cetaceans as stewards of marine history. When Ea's pod collaborates with sperm whales to deconstruct the dictatorship of Tursiops; as they represent the tide, which cannot be restrained (Paull,

2022), Paull endorses Donna Haraway's concept of "sympoiesis," or collective, cross-species creation (Haraway, 2016, p. 58).

The hive's rituals, such as the "Feeding Chant," fundamentally represent a spiritual symbiosis: Their voices unified the hive into a singular, living entity (Paull, 2014). Their degeneration into a discordant symphony of necessity (Paull, 2014) reflects humanity's monetization of nature. Flora's sacrificial conclusion, directing the swarm to a new hive while proclaiming her identity as the swarm (Paull, 2014), resonates with Indigenous cosmologies that perceive sacrifice as regenerative, similar to Robin Wall Kimmerer's "Braiding Sweetgrass" (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 124).

There were molted species exhibiting mobility with incisions on their skin. Numerous species were deteriorating as a result of ocean acidification (Paull, 2022), mirroring the funeral customs of the Yolngu people, who regard marine life as ancestral relatives (Neale, 2020). Ea's commitment to recall the music of the bones (Paull, 2023, p. 301) recontextualizes ecological mourning as a stimulus for action.

Paull's writing emulates inhuman sensory experiences. In *The Bees*, to convey olfactory supremacy with the Queen's scent that smells as honey (Paull, 2014) undermines anthropocentric visual perception. In *Pod*, the grammar of echolocation; clicks delineate the form of the shark (Paull, 2022) undermines human language. This biomimetic approach, similar to biologist E.O. Wilson's concept of "consilience" (Wilson, 1998), compels readers to engage with unfamiliar perspectives, thereby achieving ecocriticism's objective of deconstructing the perceiving 'I' (Morton, 2016).

REFERENCES

- [1] Alaimo, Stacy. (2010). *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- [2] Alaimo, Stacy. (2016). *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Retrieved March 29, 2025 from <https://doi.org/10.5749/minnesota/9780816621958.001.0001>
- [3] Bennett, Jane. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- [4] Colebrook, Claire. (2014). *Death of the Post Human: Essays on Extinction*, (Vol. 1). London: Open Humanities Press.
- [5] De Loughrey, Elizabeth. (2019). *Allegories of the Anthropocene*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- [6] Duarte, Carlos M. et al. (2021). "The Soundscape of the Anthropocene Ocean." *Science* 371, no. 6529: eaba4658. Retrieved March 18, 2025 from <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aba4658>.
- [7] Farrier, David. (2019). *Anthropocene Poetics: Deep Time, Sacrifice Zones, and Extinction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- [8] Garrard, Greg. (2012). *Ecocriticism*. (2nd ed). New York: Routledge.
- [9] Ghosh, Amitav. (2016). *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [10] Goulson, Dave. (2021). *Silent Earth: Averting the Insect Apocalypse*. New York: HarperCollins.
- [11] Haraway, Donna J. (2016). *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- [12] Haraway, Donna J., and Martha Kenney. (2015). "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene: Donna Haraway in Conversation with Martha Kenney." *Art in the Anthropocene*, edited by Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin, 255–270. London: Open Humanities Press.
- [13] Heise, Ursula K. (2016). *Imagining Extinction: The Cultural Meanings of Endangered Species*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [14] Heise, Ursula K. (2020). "The Polyphonic Novel: Richard Powers' *The Overstory* and the Plantationocene." *Environmental Humanities*, (12), no. 2, 434–449. Retrieved March 30, 2025 from <https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-8623184>.
- [15] Hester, Jessica Leigh. (2021). *Plastic Legacies: Pollution, Persistence, and Politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- [16] Merchant, Carolyn. (1980). *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: HarperCollins.
- [17] Morton, Timothy. (2016). *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- [18] Neimanis, Astrida. (2017). *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- [19] Nixon, Rob. (2011). *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- [20] Parikka, Jussi. (2015). *A Geology of Media*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- [21] Parsons, E. C. M. et al. (2022). "Naval Sonar and Cetacean Displacements: A Meta-Analysis." *Marine Policy* 136: 104902. Retrieved March 7, 2025 from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104902>.
- [22] Paull, Laline. (2014). *The Bees*. New York: HarperCollins.
- [23] Paull, Laline. (2022). *Pod*. UK: Corsair.
- [24] Plumwood, Val. (2002). *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. New York: Routledge.
- [25] Potts, Simon G. et al. (2016). "Safeguarding Pollinators and Their Values to Human Well-Being." *Nature* 540: 220–229. Retrieved February 27, 2025 from <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature20588>.
- [26] Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. (2015). *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- [27] United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). (2023). *Plastic Pollution in the Mediterranean Sea: A Review of Current Research*. Nairobi: UNEP. Retrieved February 26, 2025 from <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/plastic-pollution-mediterranean-sea-review-current-research>.
- [28] Van Dooren, Thom. (2014). *Flight Ways: Life and Loss at the Edge of Extinction*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- [29] Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. (2014). *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology*. Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing.
- [30] Whyte, Kyle Powys. (2017). "Indigenous Climate Change Studies: Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene." *English Language Notes* 55, (no. 1–2): 153–162.
- [31] Xerces Society. (2023). *Pollinators in Peril: A Status Report on North American Bees and Butterflies*. Portland, OR: Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Retrieved March 23, 2025 from <https://www.xerces.org/publications/reports/pollinators-in-peril-a-status-report>.

- [32] Yusoff, Kathryn. (2018). *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Retrieved March 28, 2025 from <https://doi.org/10.5749/9781452962054>.



Pavithra R born in Chennai, Tamil Nadu on May 8, 1993, currently hails from Kattankulathur, Tamil Nadu, India. She earned her bachelor's in English literature from Meenakshi College for Women, Kodambakkam, in the year 2013. She then pursued a Bachelor of Education at N.K.T. College, Triplicane, in 2014. This experience was followed by pursuing her Master of Arts in English Literature from Anna Adarsh College for Women, Annanagar, in the year 2016. In 2018, she completed her Master of Philosophy in English Literature, researching Albert Camus's motif of existentialism.

She cleared the State Level Eligibility Test conducted by the Tamil Nadu government in the year 2017. She did not stop with that; to add credit, she cleared the National Eligibility Test conducted by the CBSE UGC in 2017. She worked as an assistant professor in English at Soka Ikeda College of Arts and Science for Women, Madhanangkuppam, from the 2018 to 2019 academic year. During her teaching career, she successfully passed the Junior Research Fellowship exam, which is known to be one of the toughest competitive exams in India. With this JRF, she began her Doctor of Philosophy funded by UGC body, in the year 2020 at the SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, under the guidance of Dr S. Mahadevan, Assistant Professor, English and Foreign Languages. She upgraded her fellowship from Junior Research Fellowship to Senior Research Fellowship and is doing her research on the ecocritical approach in animal fiction.



S. Mahadevan was born and brought up in Cuddalore. Presently, he is residing in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Periyar Arts College in Cuddalore in the year 2001. Further, he completed his Master of Arts in English Literature in 2004 from Annamalai University, Chidambaram. Then, he completed his Master of Philosophy from Annamalai University, Chidambaram in 2006. He researched Gandhian Ideology in Chamman Nahal's works. In the year 2015, he received his Doctorate from Bharathiar University in Coimbatore. His area of specialization is English Language Teaching.

He has worked as an Assistant Professor at various engineering colleges in and around Chennai. He has 18 years of experience in teaching students of various levels. His strength is always connecting with the students to actively take part in the classroom activity. In 2015, Panimalar Institute of Technology, Chennai, awarded him the Best Teacher Award for his academic excellence. Presently, he is working as an Assistant Professor, Department of English and Foreign Languages, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Chengalpeta. Currently, He is guiding four Ph.D. Scholars. His teaching and research areas of interest is English Language Teaching (ELT), Indian Writing in English, American Literature, Cultural Studies, and Disability Studies. He has published research papers in various journals. Some of the publications are:

[1] Dr. S. Mahadevan (2024), "Healing the Self: Mental Health and Existential Recovery in the Select Works of Don DeLillo", *South Eastern European Journal of Public Health* (Volume XXV), pp. 1293-1299.

[2] Dr. S. Mahadevan (2024), "Psychological Trauma: An Existential Analysis in the Select Works of Don DeLillo", *Library Progress International*, (Volume 44), No 3, pp. 707-709.

[3] Dr. S. Mahadevan (2024), "Bad Faith: An Existential Analysis in Don DeLillo's *Players*", *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, (Volume XXXI), No.2, pp. 86-92.