



Of the ‘Disposable’: (De)colonialising Climate Coloniality in Climate Bildungsroman Fiction

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Abstract

This article undertakes a comparative study of two climate Bildungsromans: the Indian author Prayaag Akbar’s *Leila* (2017) and the Australian writer James Bradley’s *Clade* (2017). The paper explores the multiple layers of climate injustices through Bildungsroman, analysing how the colonial power structure perpetuates climate coloniality. The Bildungsroman narrative in the novels offers an opportunity to examine how climate coloniality in developed nations of the Global North differs from that in developing countries of the Global South. An attempt will be made to discuss that the nation-state as a political institution not only fails to address climate change properly but also reinforces its disproportionate effects on the marginalised populations. A comparative analysis of Bradley’s depiction of the South Asian climate immigrants in Australia and Akbar’s portrayal of the marginalised Slummers provides a critical understanding of how a climate border—established between developed nations of the Global North and developing nations of the Global South, on the one hand, and between the rich and the poor within developing countries, on the other—renders the disadvantaged people disposable. Finally, the paper will argue that developing a decolonial, anti-capitalist scholarship of climate change involves examining multiple social categories, such as race, class, and gender, that intersect to generate a form of climate coloniality.

Keywords: Climate Bildungsroman, Climate Crisis, Climate Fiction, Disposable People, Global North/South Binary, Slow Violence

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Introduction:

The comparative study of James Bradley's *Clade* and Prayaag Akbar's *Leila*, both published in 2017, offers a scope to explore the relevance of the Bildungsroman narrative in revealing how climate injustice is interlinked with other political and socio-economic factors. Bradley's *Clade* is a climate story set in Antarctica, Australia, and England and Akbar's *Leila* centres on a fictional Indian city that remains nameless throughout the text. Bradley's depiction of two relationships—one between Adam Leith, a climatologist and Ellie, an artist, and the other between Ellie and Amir, a Bangladeshi climate immigrant in Australia—lends readers insights into the future of climate change and its inequitable impacts on the marginalised people of the low-lying developing countries of the Global South. In *Leila*, the fictional city is a microcosm of India as a postcolonial nation-state. Akbar's depiction of an interfaith love story of Shalini and Rizwan narrativises the evolution of India in the post-independence era. These texts have been traditionally interpreted as climate dystopia, whereas the current study focuses solely on Bildungsroman aspects to pursue a new direction of inquiry that relates to the realities of the climate crisis, especially the Global North/South divide.

Through textual analysis of *Clade* and *Leila*, it shall be possible to note that both of these novels represent the Global North/South divide. The categorisation of the Global North and Global South is determined by not only geographical differences but also by the “political and socio-economic differences between the richer, more developed regions, and the poorer, less developed regions of the world” (Gruenbaum 23). According to Annette Trefzer et al., the geopolitical paradigms of the Global North and the Global South are “mutually reinforcing and inextricably linked, and can exist within the same geographic space” (4). In this study, the Global South and the Global North are conceived as a framework that focuses on caste, class,

gender, and race-based injustices prevalent in both developed and developing nations worldwide. Although the Bildungsroman is a Western literary phenomenon, the article conceives the multicultural variations of the genre in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The article, divided into four sections, begins with the history of the Bildungsroman as a genre and then relates it to the climate crisis, drawing from the novels portrayal of the climate crisis as human failure and then as failure of the nation(s), which becomes instrumental in redrawing the Global North/South binary. This entails an inquiry into the decolonising potential in the texts, towards redefining the climate crisis beyond the oppressive discourses of national development and national security, which generates a form of resistance to climate injustice.

Bildungsroman: The History of the Genre and Its Ecological Configurations

As this study investigates the role of the Bildungsroman narrative in the climate crisis, a brief history of the genre is necessary. This shall help us understand how the Bildungsroman functions as a literary device for representing various social realities, including climate change in fiction. The term “Bildungsroman” was coined by the scholar of rhetoric Karl Morgenstern in an 1819 lecture to denote “romans” or novels focused on the “bildung,” or the “spiritual and intellectual maturation” of the protagonist (Boes 1). Although the term gained formal currency in literary criticism in the nineteenth century, it originated in the eighteenth century’s literary works, such as Wieland’s Agathon (1767) and Blanckenburg’s Versuch über den Roman, or “Essay on the Novel,” published in 1774 (Swales 13). The growth of the genre in English literature surged in the nineteenth century with Thackeray, Brontë, and Dickens and continued to flourish in the twentieth century in Joyce’s modernist experimental fiction.

Gradually, a dissociation of the genre from the specifically Eurocentric ideals was actualised; the social-political-moral concerns of the world as a cultural space gained relevance, leading to the inclusion of post-colonial and post-modern tendencies in the narrative theme, mode and structure. By drawing attention to the relationship between aesthetics and ideology, and between rhetoric and reality, the genre emerged as a significant site for articulating the concerns and perspectives of historically marginalised identities in the works of Alice Walker, Margaret Atwood, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Notably, in postcolonial literature, rethinking the colonial past is often characterised by an intensive emphasis on the coloniser's violence against both the colonised peoples and places. The postcolonial writers' literary endeavour to reimagine the colonial history of environmental exploitation leads to the formulation of what Gayathri Goel has called "environmental Bildungsroman" (42). Goel argues that the environmental Bildungsroman creates an imaginary landscape in which the development of the protagonist and the "natural world he inhabits are co-constituted" (43). This, evidently, can be construed as the praxis of decontextualising the Bildungsroman, widening the genre's scope.

Remarkably, since the 1970s, the world has undergone numerous extreme climate events, such as the 1970 Bhola Cyclone in Bangladesh, the long-term droughts in Western Europe in 1975-76, the 1995 heatwaves in India and the US and so on. These climate catastrophes garnered significant global literary attention. Although several writers adopted the Bildungsroman as a narrative technique to address the realities of the climate crisis in fiction even before the new millennium, critical analysis of the Bildungsroman genre in climate fiction has emerged only after 2020. Indeed, in her 2025 essay on Jenni Fagan's *The Sunlight Pilgrim*, Nandita Mahajan coined the term "Climate Bildungsroman", which she defines as "a form of storytelling that narrativises the process of moving beyond the

shock and mourning that follows large-scale death or planetary devastation; of transforming these affective states into meaningful action; and, ultimately, of adapting to a changed world” (53). Mahajan argues that the climate Bildungsroman creates a narrative space for grief, enhancing human capacity to adapt to the climate crisis.

In her article, “From Elegy to Climate Bildungsroman: Jenni Fagan’s *The Sunlight Pilgrims*”, Mahajan argues that the climate Bildungsroman depicts not only ecological grief but also enhances human capability to adapt to the climate crisis (52). Again, in “Coming of Age in Crisis: The Bildungsroman and Resilience in Climate Fiction”, Karoline Huber reflects on the significance of the Bildungsroman narrative in portraying children’s resilience to the climate crisis. Huber focuses on how the transformation of the Bildungsroman as a genre aligns with ongoing ecological degradation. Unlike the traditional Bildungsroman, the climate Bildungsroman, she argues, depicts children’s resilience not through reconciliation with socio-cultural systems but through the restructuring of the conventional nature-culture binary (174-79).

While both Mahajan and Huber primarily highlight the Bildungsroman’s propensity to depict climate adaptation strategies, the analysis of its representation of human failure to combat the climate crisis remains unexplored. This lacuna in the climate Bildungsroman discourse offers an opportunity for the present research to examine the connection between the Bildungsroman narrative and the representation of the human inability to respond effectively to the climate crisis, in both the Global North and the Global South.

Bildungsroman and the Slowness of Climate Change

In this section, the paper highlights the significance of the Bildungsroman narrative in depicting why and how humanity

fails to envisage climate change as an existential threat in both developed countries of the Global North and least developed or developing nations of the Global South. This section of the article examines the connection between the Bildungsroman and climate change as “slow violence.” The most common feature that characterises a Bildungsroman narrative is that it “follows the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity” (Baldick 27). However, in *Ecocriticism and the Idea of Culture: Biology and the Bildungsroman* (2014), Helena Feder’s definition of the genre resonates with the contemporary environmental crisis. The Bildungsroman concentrates not only on the protagonist’s transition from childhood to adulthood but also on humanity’s gradual separation from nature.

In *Clade*, the notion of climate change as slow violence—“a violence of delayed destruction”—is poignantly represented through Bradley’s Bildungsroman narrative structure (Nixon 2). The novel centres on a relationship between Ellie, an artist, and Adam, a climate scientist, and their ultimate separation. Although the story opens in Ellie’s adulthood, the flashback narrative technique offers a glimpse into the ecological abundance of Bondi Beach during her late childhood. After Ellie’s mother dies, her father, Tom, marries a woman named Maddie. After their marriage, Tom and Maddie settled in Bondi, which seemed to be a biodiversity hotspot. As the narrator says,

When she [Maddie] and Tom bought the house, it was impossible to sleep past sunrise, especially in summer, daybreak bringing kookaburras and cuckoos and swooping flocks of cockatoos, their crazed laughter and screeching clamour echoing through the trees like a memory of the primordial forest. The diversity and profligacy of the birdlife was a big part of what Tom loved about being here. (Bradley 54)

Later, when Ellie visits the place on her father's death, she witnesses a different view of Bondi's natural landscape. The majority of the birds have now disappeared from this coastal region. However, Maddie is "not sure when they [birds] began to disappear" (Bradley 55). The disappearance of birds in Bondi without Maddie realising it elucidates ecological transformation as "slow violence that occurs gradually and out of sight" (Nixon 2). Humanity fails to recognise the existential challenge it poses for the future. Maddie's indifference to the disappearance of the birds suggests that "at some level people do not understand the scale of transformation that is overtaking them" (Bradley 102). Moreover, the absence of political action against "huge die-offs" of birds illustrates how the slow effects of climate change that trigger ecological transformations remain invisible to global political discourse.

Similarly, in *Leila*, Akbar employs a Bildungsroman structure to trace the gradual ecological alteration brought about by human dominance over non-human nature. In the novel, he portrays a female protagonist, Shalini, whose childhood memories showcase the verdurous urban ecosystem of a fictional postcolonial Indian city. She says,

The treetops are different, lustrous green, gently swaying and leaning into one another. Even Ma is surprised by how many trees there are. I press my nose to the chilled glass. A toy city, overgrown with broccoli. Through the leaves, [anyone can] see houses, white or yellow, with small rooms on their roofs. It is the sight of the trees that stays with me. A trembling canopy over the city. (Akbar 30)

This articulates the synchronisation of the city's urban development and ecological exuberance during Shalini's childhood.

Notably, the Bildungsroman is more than “the story of the origin and development of the individual” (Feder 18). Instead, it elucidates the gradual transformation of a particular society or nation. In Akbar’s *Leila*, the fictional urban cityscape serves as a microcosm of postcolonial India, characterised by sociopolitical turmoil and rapid industrial expansion. The integration of Bildungsroman elements into the narrative structure of Akbar’s climate fiction shows how a nation perpetuates the exploitation of the natural environment through the rhetoric of economic growth, exacerbating the climate crisis that disrupts social harmony and disproportionately impacts marginalised populations. As the climate crisis continues to escalate, the Council, a totalitarian political regime, takes over the city. The Council divides the city into several sectors, each cordoned off from the others by sector walls. The Council’s construction of the walls causes irreparable ecological damage in the city. Shalini recounts that “[s]ome forty years after Purity One [first sector wall] was erected, there are no trees. The stunning canopy is gone” (Akbar 31). The Bildungsroman genre as a novel of formation shapes Shalini’s idea that the colonial power dynamics inherent in the Council’s ideology of constructing sector walls accelerate human “separation from and opposition to nature” (Feder 18). Shalini’s transition from childhood to maturity parallels the city’s ecological transformation. Hence, it is possible to contend that the Bildungsroman is a literary tool that, by focusing on the protagonist’s personal growth, represents the social, political, and ecological changes of a postcolonial cityscape.

In *Leila*, Akbar revisits the colonial past to examine how postcolonial nations follow the colonial practice of indiscriminate, unplanned urbanisation, which disrupts people’s harmonious coexistence with the natural environment. The narrator states, “a hundred years ago, the city’s first wealth settled on Lakshmi Hill. Rice merchants, factory owners, or, like my great-grandfather, builders for the British, raising the new

city” (Akbar 31). The hill states in India witnessed considerable urban development under British colonial rule, benefiting the colonial rulers and the Indian elite class (Sharma and Pathak 3). The colonial enterprise of urbanisation in India had adversely impacted the country’s ecological equilibrium. Akbar’s representation of the Council’s dominance over the natural landscape historicises India’s ecological degradation under colonial rule. It also offers a critique of the colonial legacy of environmental exploitation in postcolonial India.

Notably, Sarah Graham argues that the postcolonial writers employ the Bildungsroman to “respond to the trauma of colonialism and neo-colonialism” (7). It is to be noted that the postcolonial subjects’ traumatic experiences result not only from revisiting the physical violence inflicted on them by the colonial masters, but also from remembering their ecological loss. Like Akbar, Bradley rethinks the ecological repercussions of European colonialism through an intergenerational Bildungsroman that speculates on how the political and personal approaches of the present generation to natural resources shape the climate for future generations.

However, in *Clade*, it is not the former colonies but England, a former colonial power, that undergoes a massive ecological transformation as a consequence of its dominance over nature. On his way to Norfolk, Adam notices that what was once a land of ecological diversity has been degraded into a place of ecological desolation. The narrator says,

. . .these fields were once wetlands, a vast interconnected maze of low pools and streams and marshes stretching from Cambridge to the sea. Then, two hundred years ago, humans drained the land, constructing embankments and pumping the water out to sea to create space for farms and roads and forests. With the water gone, the land changed. Fishing and

fowling gave way to farming, farms to factories. Even the birds that congregated here began to disappear, some dying, others finding new breeding grounds, altering their migratory routes. And in their place the land itself took on new shapes. (Bradley 101)

Bradley's depiction of England's ecological transformation from a vibrant landscape to an industrial wasteland serves as a reversal of colonial exploitation in the former colonies. It also implies that the environmental exploitation by the former colonial powers has not ended but continues in the postcolonial era. In fact, the developed nations' imperial ideology of modern development dominates the natural world and perpetuates climate change as a form of slow violence. Bradley explores the interplay of climate change as a slow violence and the human inability to take effective action against it through the metaphor of "boiling the frog" (102). If a frog is placed in a pan of boiling water, it instantly leaps out of the pot. However, if the water is gradually warmed from cold to hot, the frog fails to recognise the threat and eventually dies.

Nonetheless, it is not the slow impacts of climate change that make people fail "to galvanise effective action" (Bradley 102). Rather, it is their inability to link the climate crisis to the lived experiences of day-to-day life. In both novels, children are disproportionately affected by climate change. For example, in *Leila*, the eponymous character, Leila, Shalini's daughter, "began to get dizzy spells. She seemed tired all the time, pale. Her doctor said it was sun exhaustion" (Akbar 65). The doctor advised her parents to "make sure she got lots of water" (65). Similarly, in *Clade*, Noah—Summer's son or Adam's grandson—suffers from anxiety disorder. He is always "on the spectrum" and obsessed with the reports of extreme climate events, such as floods and storms (Bradley 111). In both novels, the lived experiences of the mental and physical impacts of climate change do not find any significant voice in international

politics. Humanity's inability to link existential crises to climate change demystifies how this planetary crisis is understood as slow violence.

Bildungsroman, Nation, and Disposability: Investigating “Climate Border” through Climate Coloniality

In this section of the paper, the focus shifts to examining the nuances of climate coloniality in the Global North and the Global South. Farhana Sultana delineates climate coloniality as a “means demonstrating how legacies of imperial violence insidiously live on, not only in exacerbating environmental degradations, but in increased climate-induced disasters experienced by variously marginalised populations globally, who are disproportionately made vulnerable and disposable in the process” (“Urgency” 3). Prayaag Akbar's *Leila* problematises the concept of climate coloniality by linking it to the discourse of national development and the ideology of purity. In the novel, the Council's rationale for dividing the city into different sectors is to protect it from the impurity of inter-caste and interreligious social relations, as depicted through an interfaith marriage between Shalini, a Hindu woman and Rizwan, a Muslim man.

In *Leila*, the Bildungsroman narrative device helps to explore the interconnection of the violence of societal division and climate coloniality. To resist the violence of religious dogmatism and patriarchal exploitation, Shalini, along with her husband, moves to the East End, the only sector in the city that is not “bothered with the Council's indices of purity” (Akbar 64). Shalini's movement from the sector of her in-laws to the East End uncovers the hidden truth of the Council's development ideology. While living in the East End, Shalini notices one day that the Repeaters, a band of armed young men who work for the Council, have intruded into this sector. They ransack the house of an anonymous climate activist couple who

oppose the Council's capitalist ideology of development. The Repeaters call the activists "traitors" because they claim that the activists' climate campaign impedes "the work that will make this city rich" (Akbar 79). This illustrates that postcolonial nations exercise the rhetoric of national development to justify environmental exploitation, portraying the climate activists as anti-nationalists.

Notably, the postcolonial countries' discourse on national growth caters only to the capitalist greed of political elites and industrialists. In *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin contend that development ideology in the postcolonial nations is "a disguised form of neocolonialism, a vast technocratic apparatus designed to serve the economic and political interests of the [privileged]" (29). The unequal economic growth within postcolonial nations creates an internal neocolonial system, in which a "climate border" is established between the powerful and the powerless, and between the privileged and the marginalised. The climate border is a hegemonic sociopolitical system wilfully created by those in power to deprive the people, who are least responsible for anthropogenic climate change, of their fundamental needs during climate disasters. In *Leila*, while ordinary people lack access to sufficient water, corporate capitalists flourish in their "factories that took the groundwater almost to zero" (Akbar 67). This demonstrates that the Council's discourse of building a financially strong nation works as a "financial apparatus" that "merely increased the gap between rich and poor" (Huggan and Tiffin 31). Hence, Shalini's move to the East End is construed as a spatial-temporal dimension of the *Bildungsroman*. It familiarises her with the Council's climate coloniality that both institutionalises dominance over the natural environment and perpetuates a climate border that renders the marginalised populations disposable.

Similarly, in *Clade*, the spatial-temporal dimension of the Bildungsroman is crucial for comprehending the interplay between the political ideology of neocolonial domination and ecological transformation. In the novel, Bradley's Australian protagonist, Adam, spends a summer in England during his student years. At that time, England was a country where "the flat fields and rows of hedges and houses always seemed like a reminder of another age, unaltered by the passage of time" (Bradley 99). However, on his second visit to the same country, almost two decades later, Adam observes that the coloniality of nature has brought about a massive ecological transformation of the English landscape. As the narrator says,

The most visible of the various organisms developed in the last decade or so to consume and store carbon dioxide, [are what] came to be known as triffids, a name that captures the unsettlingly alien blurring of plant and flesh. (Bradley 99-100)

This vivid description of the triffids manifests that the dominant ideology embedded in contemporary environmental activities of developed nations in the twenty-first century repeats the violence of colonial exploitation of natural resources in former colonies. Bradley's representation of "genetically engineered trees" articulates how the developed nations of the Global North, such as England, establish climate coloniality in the name of decarbonisation. In *Ecocide: Kill the Corporation before It Kills Us* (2020), David Whyte succinctly captures the neo-colonial ideology inherent in the environmental politics of Western nations. Whyte argues that "in colonial history, civilisation is the precept on which colonial violence was so often based. In the colonial present, environmental sustainability is the precept on which environmental violence is so often based" (68). The depiction of the triffids in *Clade* illustrates that the Western nations' promise of economic growth and environmental sustainability emerges as a neocolonial strategy. The claims of

creating an economy without harming the ecology act as “a microcosm of the model of European colonial development” (68). Thus, Bradley’s description of the triffids is a critique of climate coloniality embedded in the sustainable strategies of the developed nations.

Notably, climate coloniality is not confined to the exploitation of the environment by human societies. Rather, it entails a critique of the intricate dichotomy of the developed nations’ contribution to climate change and their inadequate climate financing for the least developed nations, which are disproportionately affected by climate change. Farhana Sultana reflects on this dichotomy by identifying “racial capitalism” and “uneven consumption” as two significant factors of climate coloniality (“Urgency” 3).

In *Clade*, James Bradley’s portrayal of the protagonist, Adam, elucidates the climate coloniality of developed nations. Despite his awareness that “the planet was on a collision course with disaster,” Adam, an Australian climate scientist, believes that the “technological change and economic restructuring” will not save Earth from meeting an apocalyptic climate catastrophe (Bradley 18). His sceptical view that economic and technological changes are unable to deliver an effective climate solution reveals developed nations’ reluctance to provide climate financing to climate-vulnerable countries.

Moreover, the major economies of the Global North, especially the U.S.A., are reluctant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to enhance climate sustainability, explaining it as a threat to their economies. For instance, George W. Bush, the former president of the United States, did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol. He said that he opposed the protocol because it “would cause serious harm to the US economy” (Jehl). In Bradley’s *Clade*, climatological perspective of Adam—who represents Australia, another developed state of the Global North—aligns

with President Bush's political ideology. Adam's perception that "to consume less" is not a way to address humanity's impact on the atmosphere resonates with the developed nations' denial of reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a solution to global warming (Bradley 18). Thus, this climate change denialist approach of the developed nations establishes a new form of coloniality—climate coloniality—exacerbates the precarity of the peoples of the Global South.

Noticeably, the impacts of climate change in the Global South are not only environmental but also economic and geopolitical. In *Clade*, the author sketches how the changes in the patterns of the South Asian monsoon trigger crop failures, famine, and food shortage, ultimately leading to economic collapse and "widespread unemployment" (Bradley 30). The intersectional crises of climate change and economic collapse disrupt the social and political order, causing riots in central Indian metropolitan cities such as Mumbai and Calcutta (30). The depiction of the connection between climate change and its devastating impacts on the subcontinent's sociopolitical and economic systems articulates the exigencies of climate financing for strengthening climate adaptations in postcolonial developing nations.

However, it is not only the developing and least-developed countries of the Global South but also the developed states of the Global North that experience the devastating impacts of climate change. Like the South Asian countries of India and Bangladesh, Australia has also experienced food crises and 'crop failures' due to climate change (Bradley 55). This global aspect of the detrimental impacts of climate change destabilises the geopolitical North/South boundaries.

Still, the disproportionate burden of the crisis falls "on the formerly colonised and brutalised racialised communities in the developing world" (Sultana, "Unbearable" 2). In *Clade*, the

extreme climate events in the Indian subcontinent, such as drought, heavy rainfall and severe flooding, led to over a million deaths and “left another hundred million people homeless” (Bradley 30). Although countries in both the Global North and Global South are adversely affected by climate change, differences persist between these geopolitically divided regions. Unlike in the South Asian developing nation-states, socio-political order and economic stability in developed nations are not disrupted by the climate crisis. While the citizens in the developed nations do not have to be displaced to survive the climate cataclysm, marginalised people in the developing nations are left with no option but to migrate to a safe place.

In Clade, migration is a complex concept that reveals the multilayered injustices of climate coloniality pitted against postcolonial developing nations. In the novel, the vulnerable people of the Global South adopt migration as the only viable means of survival. However, it renders them disposable in Australia, their destination country. The notion of “disposable people” refers to communities whose (eco)precarious conditions remain invisible to mainstream global climate politics, and who are treated as expendable (Nixon 4, 278). In Bradley’s Clade, the disposability of climate refugees from developing nations is articulated through a Bildungsroman narrative technique that builds a relationship between Amir and Ellie, who are from Bangladesh and Australia, respectively. Through her conversation with Amir, Ellie learns that the combined effects of political turbulence and climate disasters have prompted Amir and other South Asian climate refugees, such as Mishkat and his family, to migrate to Australia.

However, in Australia, South Asian immigrants encounter a climate border that denies them access to climate safety. Instead of formulating protection policies for climate immigrants, the Australian government, in the name of securing national safety, employs the oppressive practices that lead to the “random

harassment . . . the detention and forced expulsion of anyone the government deems undesirable” (Bradley 167). The denial of climate safety for Amir and other climate-induced immigrants is associated with the “policy aspects of climate coloniality” (Sultana, “Unbearable” 2). Farhana Sultana argues that the contemporary climate crisis reveals colonial practices that were prevalent not only in the past but also influence and control institutions, laws, and policies in the current geopolitical context (2). The developed nations’ political strategies in using the idea of nationalism to deny immigrants access to safety establish a form of double coloniality. The marginalised people in developing countries are not only disproportionately affected by climate change but are also made disposable when they migrate to developed nations, where they confront coloniality in the form of existential denialism. In the novel, when Nisha—the daughter of Amir’s friend, Mishkat—becomes sick, her parents do not dare to take her to the hospital because they are “afraid of being arrested” (Bradley 172). Hence, the Global North’s climate coloniality not only continues the legacy of colonial violence in accelerating the climate crisis but also in deepening the disposability of the disempowered communities of the Global South.

Nonetheless, the issue of climate coloniality goes beyond the Global North/South binary. The interconnectedness of climate coloniality and the disposability of marginalised people is also prevalent within the boundaries of developing nations of the Global South. In Akbar’s *Leila*, to survive the adverse climate, the Council initiates the Skydome project, a climate-controlled dome engineered to purify the air and maintain a moderate temperature. This becomes a prototype for the infrastructure of the other sectors also as “all the high sectors have begun to look like this” (Akbar 127). People living outside the high sectors are denied access to the climate-dome and are unjustly exposed to health hazards accelerated by the combined effects of the harmful substances released from the Skydome and

air particulates coming from “the factories [and] cars” (123). This further aggravates the disposability of impoverished communities, consolidating the climate border between the high and low sectors.

Remarkably, the Skydome serves as a paradox of national growth. While the Skydome enhances climate adaptability for the rich, it deprives the poor of a livable environment. This exemplifies what Homi K. Bhabha explains as ‘ambivalence’ of the modern nation-state. In Leila, the city’s uneven development “inscribes both progression and regression” (Bhabha 2). Akbar’s depiction of the disparity between the high sector and the Slummers articulates that people in postcolonial third-world nations “are still colonised, this time through climate change, the development industry, and globalisation” (Sultana, “Unbearable” 2). It elucidates that the development discourse of the Global South exacerbates the precarity of the socio-politically and economically backward people. Hence, it can be argued that colonial violence has not yet ended; instead, it has altered its mode of exploitation.

Decolonising the Climate Coloniality

In *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, Rob Nixon observes that the “conjoined ecological and human disposability . . . [leads to] a resurgent environmentalism of the poor” (4). The existential crisis that the South Asian immigrants in Clade and the Slummers in Leila encounter gives them an impetus to resist the violence of climate coloniality. In Clade, upon hearing that Ellie could have arranged faster treatment for Nisha if Amir had informed her of Nisha’s health condition earlier, Amir says:

Could you? How? We don’t just need access to hospitals, we need medicine, schools, jobs, not to be frightened all the time. To be able to buy food without

being terrified somebody will become suspicious because we're using cash, or report us to the police because they don't recognise us. (Bradley 174)

Similarly, in Akbar's *Leila*, the exclusion of the Slummers from access to fundamental needs like water breaks the silence against the political and ecological injustices perpetuated by the Council. The young Slummers' question of "why their families had been ignored so long" is an attempt to decolonise the Council's oppressive, discriminatory system (Akbar 67).

Both Amir's furious response to Ellie in *Clade* and the Slummers' question in *Leila* accentuate that resistance comes from "lived experiences that were/are devalued in Eurocentric modernity and climate coloniality" (Sultana, "Urgency" 3). In *Clade*, the climate immigrants' "lived experiences" of inaccessibility to the fundamental requirements are "legitimate sites of geopolitical knowledge" (12). The challenges they encounter in developed nations provide solid grounds for decolonising the climate coloniality by exposing the "racialised colonial practices" embedded in the contemporary global politics of climate change (13). In the novels, the disproportionate impacts of climate change on the impoverished communities demonstrate the urgency of integrating "more decolonial, anti-colonial, . . . anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and ecosocialist critiques and struggles into mainstream climate discourses and practices to redress ongoing oppressions and marginalisations" (6). Hence, decolonising the climate necessitates addressing this planetary crisis at the intersection of race, class, and caste.

Moreover, Ellie's relationship with Amir provides her with an opportunity for self-realisation. Her familiarity with him gives her an insight into how the marginalised communities of the Global South confront the violence of climate coloniality.

Ellie's epiphany of the violence of developed countries' climate coloniality drives her to raise an ethical question:

Where, after all, are those who have sought refuge here meant to go? The islands of the Pacific are disappearing, Bangladesh is gone, as is much of Burma and coastal India; hundreds of millions have been displaced and are in need of assistance. Yet in the face of their suffering, politicians do little more than posture and parrot slogans. (Bradley 167)

The dichotomy between the developed nations' contribution to global warming and the unequal impacts of climate change on the least developed countries motivates Ellie to interrogate the political dynamics of the West. This also evokes in her a sense of ethics, care and love for the vulnerable climate immigrants, which acts as a powerful force for decolonising the climate (Sultana, "Urgency" 9). In Bradley's *Clade*, Ellie's love and empathy for South Asian climate immigrants demonstrate that the principles of care for the vulnerable communities motivate resistance against the oppressive colonial matrix.

Moreover, decolonial scholarship on climate change requires an in-depth analysis of the man/woman binary, rooted in "ecological superiority of humans and the cultural superiority of men" (Mallory 309). In Leila, Akbar's *Bildungsroman* narrative accentuates multiple layers of violence that women experience in a patriarchal, authoritarian political system. The Council interprets the climate crisis as a punishment for the sin of disobeying the tradition of heteronormativity and the intracaste, class and religious relationship. However, it is only the women who are taken for penance to the Tower, where the Council treats them badly.

Again, in James Bradley's *Clade*, gendered violence against women is indirectly represented through climate injustice. In the

novel, all the primary female characters bear the unequal burden of human-induced climate change. In the novel, Ellie's repeated "failure to conceive" without any apparent cause offers an opportunity to analyse how climate change affects women's reproductive system (Bradley 14). The ecofeminist scholar, Mary Mellor, argues that "ecological impacts and consequences are experienced through human bodies" and one of the significant disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis that women endure is "failed pregnancies" (2). Besides Ellie's difficulty in pregnancy, Bradley's depiction of Nisha's appendicitis illustrates the inequitable impacts of climate change imposed on women by capitalist patriarchy.

The representation of disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalised people in both the novel challenges the capitalist patriarchal and racialised Eurocentric discourse that believes that "people are free to exploit nature" (Merchant 1). In both novels, the depiction of modern technological dominance over nature and its detrimental impacts on the disposable people is a clarion call for a decolonial, anti-capitalist perspective on the climate crisis. Both Bradley's and Akbar's apocalyptic visions of ecological transformation and the precarious conditions of marginalised people advocate "a new ethic of the nurture of nature and the nurture of people" (1). Hence, the decolonisation of the environment hinges on decolonising the disposable people from violence based on caste, class, race and gender.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Bildungsroman narrative technique in both Akbar's *Leila* and Bradley's *Clade* accentuates that the failure to take effective measures to address climate change stems from the human inability to relate it to their lived experience. The Bildungsroman elements in both novels emphasise that people around the world fail to develop practical frameworks to combat

climate change because they lack an understanding of the spatial-temporal dimension of the crisis. Bildungsroman also proves crucial for exploring how the fetishisation of the notion of nation perpetuates climate coloniality, which disproportionately impacts impoverished communities. The Bildungsroman narrative in *Leila* is not only the protagonist's transition from childhood to adulthood but also the transformation of a postcolonial nation from an egalitarian, secular democracy to a caste- and class-stratified autocracy. Similarly, in *Clade*, the self-proclaimed climate resilience of countries in the Global North is called into question through Bradley's depiction of children's vulnerabilities in these developed nations. The interconnections in the Bildungsroman between nationalist development and climate injustice highlight the paradoxes within nationhood. Instead of enhancing climate adaptation for the marginalised, the nation often exacerbates their disposability by excluding them from the opportunities of national development. The reading of the Bildungsroman narrative in both novels encapsulates the globality of the climate crisis, decentring the so-called Global North/South divide during climate emergencies. In reading the two texts around the bildungsroman pattern, the Global North/South binary loses its geographical fixity and becomes a geopolitical factor.

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