

# On Reading Transformation in Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*

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Originally published in 1998, Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* deals with the life of a young man, Sampath who seeks solace from the clamour of incomprehensible existence in a guava orchard. He does so after being bored of his frustrated attempts to make a mark in the commercial and familial world.

Through a close reading of the text, I will attempt to unravel how the metamorphic imaginations at work in and within the text functions as the exponents of existential and personal navigation for the protagonist. Sampath's metamorphosis into a guava offers a radical reading and understanding of our entangled existence, and how such metamorphosis allows us to examine our lives so as to re-assess our existence in the face of capitalism, its impact on the flora and fauna and how a possible Buddhist approach may help curb our materialism so as to ensure a sustainable and green future. I will place the novel in conversation with Sumana Roy's part memoir, part literary fiction *How I Became a Tree* published in 2017 to accentuate my claims, and highlight the commonalities that bind the metamorphic (and Buddhist) imaginings in the two texts.

**Keywords:** boredom, violence, capitalism, leisure, ecosystem, metamorphosis.

## Introduction

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The essay will focus on Kiran Desai's *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* where Sampath Chawla, the protagonist metamorphosizes into a guava because he wishes to escape from the tumultuous 'ambition industry' of humans, into a world of leisure, one that in Sumana Roy's understanding is not being bulldozed by time. 'Ambition industry' is suggestive of the human strife in the capitalist world, an attempt to extract maximum productivity out of one's ability and capability. Sampath is the remarkable son of a remarkable mother, Kulfi Chawla. In the final months that coincided his birth, Shahkot and its people were in the violent clutches of drought. As the conditions became severe, Kulfi 'grew bigger', 'claiming all the earth's energy for herself, sapping it dry' (1998: 3-4). Her pregnant stomach seemed to 'extend improbably before her like a huge growth upon a slender tree' (1998: 4). Kulfi's comparison to a tree foreshadows the future of Sampath, the 'fruit' of her womb, and his subsequent transformation to a fruit. His birth is a metaphoric rendition of a tree blooming, for in the final moments leading to his birth, rains strike Shahkot, and Kulfi 'stretched out farther still....until the rain took up all the space inside her head' (1998: 10), and births him.

I will read Sumana Roy's part memoir *How I Became a Tree* in close tandem with the primary text so as to pronounce the common traits between Sampath who, even before his birth bears resemblance to an ancillary of a tree, much like Roy whose eponymous title suggests her eventual becoming of a tree. These arboreal transformations offer a new way of looking at our entangled existence with the nonhuman world, one that has been exploited by the steady march of capitalism.

### Why A Metamorphosis

Before embarking on an insightful investigation of how she became a tree, Sumana Roy (2017: 1) quotes Czelaw Milosz, 'not that I want to be a god or a hero. Just change into a tree, grow for ages, not hurt anyone' to highlight that her desire to become a tree is not singularly hers to claim. Like the epigraph, Roy (2017) distinctly signposts two reasons that had invoked arboreal fantasies within her – to escape from 'being bulldozed by time' (3), and because it lacks the 'spectre of violence' (2017: 3) that haunts her in the human world to speak nothing of its impact on the nonhuman entities. Her arboreal transformation is an escape from the everyday violence of existence, one that finds a ready reason in Lars Svendsen's (2005) thesis on boredom. Taking from Simone Weil's idea that time is nothing

but a ‘symbol of cruel sameness’ (2005: 40), Svendsen extends his thesis by linking boredom and time in adamant chains – time is confining, in that it gives birth to the finitude of boredom. He elaborates on the various typologies of boredom but the one that I would reference in my paper is his typology of ‘existential boredom’.

A product of modernity, and by extension capitalism and its stringent work ethic, ‘existential boredom’ according to Svendsen integrates closely with Gustave Flaubert’s ‘modern boredom’. In this particular typology of boredom that Svendsen associates with Flaubert, the soul is discontent and can only find peace ‘via behaviour that is radical and breaks new ground, negatively indicating boredom as its prerequisite’ (45). I locate this radical breakthrough in the act of metamorphosis or change. It is by attempting to break free from the human form that Roy and Desai’s Sampath seek escape from the experiences of violence of the march of time, of existence, and of boredom. Moreover, their transformations may also be understood in the wider context of extending solidarity to the nonhuman counterparts who have to silently bear the onslaught of the ills of capitalism. I shall elaborate on this discussion

### **The Enigma of Entangled Existence**

In Part VII of her reflections, Roy’s nephew, in all his juvenile innocence offers a new interpretation of forest – a place ‘for rest’ (2017: 151). Amazed, Roy realizes that she had never associated forest with ‘for rest’, and attempts to grasp the significance of this new interpretation. Upon deeper reflection, she realizes that it was her ‘disenchantment with the ambition industry and the violence of professional success’ (2017: 151), her tiredness with the world, and the ‘tricks and subterfuges necessary to succeed’ (2017: 16) that had propelled her into the woods. Clearly, she sought the forests to wrest herself from the intensity of the material world.

Despite being chastised for her rather ‘juvenile desire to live like a tree’ because it seemed nothing short as a form of ‘escapism’ (2017: 16) from the humdrum and toil of the human world, Roy is unfazed and unperturbed. One of the ‘most urgent’ reasons that she cites to live like a tree is to escape from noise. In stark contrast to the ‘noise of humans’ is the ‘vocabulary of silence of the active life of trees’ (2017: 23). With humans, Roy associates a regime of work that adheres to a dogmatic formula of success, perseverance, and consequently stress. She postulates a ‘tree time’ (2017: 6) that is in opposition to the industriousness of ‘human time’, a ‘slow time’ against the necessity of speeding things up, one that favours a ‘go

with the flow' attitude as opposed to the ambitious project of race against time, and is 'reminiscent of the uncomplicated life of our ancestors' (2017: 159). Hence, the aura of the forests 'makes it analogous to a dream' (2017: 153), for it is only in dreams that time passes slowly, if at all, and one may forget the cares, and worries of the material world.

Like Roy, Sampath too seeks an escape from the 'noise of humans'. By the time we are introduced to the grown-up 'not very threatening' Sampath, he is trying his 'best to suppress his irritation' at the 'noise' generated by the fan, and the snores of his family who 'lay all around him' (1998: 14). Not only is he 'irritated' by noise, he is also prone to 'spending many blissful hours dreaming in the tea stalls and singing to himself in public gardens' (1998: 23). He cuts an 'idle' figure, 'sitting, sitting there as usual, with no raise in pay or promotion anywhere in sight' (1998: 23). Sampath does not share in the same ambitions and professional ethic as his father, Mr. Chawla who is keen on making 'firm progress in the direction of cleanliness and order' (1998: 6). Unlike his father, who is 'full of promise and efficiency' (1998: 24), Sampath brims with passivity, an existence so vegetative to his father that he labels him a 'cross between potatoes and human beings' (1998: 26). This comparison addresses the split between passivity, inactivity or dullness of existence that is the usually regarded domain of the vegetative world, and activity that is the essence of hu/mankind. Sampath attempts to contribute actively to his chores at the workplace in the post office, but only half-heartedly. The gap between his passivity at the workplace, his 'capacity for quiet observation' is contrasted with his colleague, Mr. Gupta who 'seized his chance for active involvement' (1998: 31) to counsel Miss Jyotsna on what shades to refrain from wearing. It is quite evident that he has no particular proclivity for work when he fails to finish any of the works assigned to him during the day. Let off with a 'warning of dire consequences to follow' (1998: 34) if he does not come before everybody else the following day to complete the pending work, Sampath cannot stop himself from feeling 'tormented' (1998: 34). The workspace constricts him, and he wishes to be 'left to his own devices' (1998: 34).

Sampath's escape into the forest is triggered by the helplessness and hopelessness that engulf him right after he is dismissed from his meagre job at the post office, exacerbated by the onslaught of whys and hows of his family, and former colleagues. Feeling entrapped, as if he had been 'trussed up' in a deliberate 'net' (1998: 43) built about him by his family, an epiphany dawns upon him. He realizes that his life 'was a never-ending flow of misery. It was a prison he had been born into' (1998: 43). The formulaic existence that his family wants him to adhere by disgusts him as much as math lessons in school, where 'full marks' could only be

earned by ‘showing all steps’ (1998: 43). All he wants is ‘open spaces in large swathes, in days that were clear stretches he could fill with as little as he wished’ (1998: 43) away from all the hullabaloo of the noisy ‘ambition industry’ of the humans.

Roy and Sampath share arboreal affinities because they are frustrated in their efforts to keep up with the fast paced world that seems to consume them. Grasping for space, Sampath climbs to the roof again for some clarity of thought. His perturbed constitution is offered some respite when Kulfi offers him a guava, the fruit he will eventually metamorphosize into. As if by osmosis, he wishes to ‘absorb all its coolness, all its quiet and stillness into him’ (1998:46). Sampath’s ‘body fills with a cool greenness, his heart swells with a mysterious wild sweetness. He felt an awake clear sap flowing through him...and then he began to smile’, while the guava, in its extraction of perturbed energy from Sampath explodes ‘in a vast Boom! (1998: 46).

This incident induces a definite quest for freedom in Sampath, and with a ‘buoyancy of feeling’ (1998: 48) as if the coolness of guava is still alive in his veins, Sampath decides to leave Shahkot. His thoughts are preoccupied with creatures that undergo metamorphosis – snakes shedding their skins, silkworms in the ‘warm blindness of silk and membrane’ (1998: 48). These thoughts of metamorphosing creatures are juxtaposed with his thoughts of the futility of the world, a ‘world that made its endless revolution towards nothing’ (1998: 48). This ‘endless revolution towards nothing’ can be understood as a metaphor for the cog in the wheel existence, where humans trudge on and on, in their prosaic drudgery towards nothing. His thoughts are again smothered by the endless prompting of the milkwoman who wishes to engage with him in small talk, draining him off the ‘marvellous emotion’ (1998: 49). Unable to take it any longer, he makes the final leap of faith – he escapes into the forest and climbs up a magnificent guava tree.

Both Roy and Sampath are victims of the claustrophobic human kingdom which is brash. I understand, and locate their desire to escape into the forests for rest, in the matrix of leisure as opposed to a strict work ethic. Monika Fludernik (2020) traces the origins of otium (leisure) native to India, and its gradual disintegration due to the contemporary work conditions that prioritize the ‘Western work ethic’ (15). She writes:

Early post-Independence examples of the otium motif link the perceived lack of leisure to colonialism and to imposed British habits of industry, thus adding a clear framework of (post)coloniality to the topic..... the idealization of indigenous Indian leisure should be interpreted as a reaction to globalization and its effects on the Indian (upper) middle classes (2020: 15).

Attempting to locate a close synonym for otium, Fludernik proposes a formal description of the word that is primarily ‘determined by a freedom from imposed constraints (e.g. deadlines, schedules, immediate tasks) and a freedom for a particular otium activity, or project’ (2020: 7). Characterized by the slowing of time, or time coming to a still (since people who indulge in otium dissociate themselves from the preoccupations of their everyday life, thereby evoking Roy’s concept of ‘tree time’), its spirit is exemplified by the nawabs and rajas of India. This spirit is contrary to the colonial enterprise of hurry and industry. Broadly put, her thesis can be condensed to the central argument that otium can be read as a nostalgic response, and an ‘indigenous tradition that needs to be preserved against the ravages of (Western) neoliberal capitalism and globalization’ (2020: 20). It is a mode of resistance against the onslaught of a work ethic that is an absolute requisite of the Western neoliberal project.

This radical reading of otium as a mode of resistance against the neoliberal design contextualizes Sampath’s (and Roy’s) condition. The ‘active passivity’ (2020:17) peculiar to Sampath has already been discussed above with respect to his unsuccessful stint at the post office, and his diametrically opposite personality to his father who ensures to spit out the ‘last remnants of sleep and inertia’ every morning, who seeks to ignite ‘promise and activity’ in his family (1998: 19-20) and who, ‘as a young man himself, had been so full of promises and efficiency. He had been smart, nimble, and quick, the opposite of his son’ (1998: 24).

If the difference between the work ethic of the father and the son provides leverage to Fludernik’s claim, a host of examples exist in abundance to further corroborate her claim about Indian otium being a native tradition, made glaringly visible during the times of nawabs and the rajas as well as it being a mode of resistance to the assail of Western neoliberal capitalism. I will glean out certain examples from the text to make my point.

The reason Sampath is fired from his job is because he retreats from his assigned task of serving water to the guests at his boss, Mr. D.P.S’s daughter’s wedding into a ‘scented world’ (1998:37) of his fantasies, away from the memories of poring over books for examinations. His fantasies are conjured up in an extravagant fashion, with faint allusions to the Mughal rule in India; there are ‘ruffles of peacock silk’, ‘fabric run through with threads of gold’, ‘a bottle of rosewater and its fragrance escaped to mingle with the rich mutton biryani smells rising from cauldrons outside’, ‘scents of musk’, ‘sandalwood oil’ (1998: 37-38). His fantasies end with a request to ‘meet me under the plantain tree, and there will be no more heartbreak’ 1998: 41). This reference to ‘meet under the tree’ can be understood in the

familiarity of Roy's discernment that standing under trees is as much a literal as a metaphorical term for our times. She locates 'the shunning of ambition', and 'time without structure' (2017: 182) amongst other things as familiar indicators of people who seek refuge under trees, again leading us back to Fludernik's classification of Indian otium as a protest against the 'ambition industry', capitalism, and race against time.

Fludernik's claims gain firmer grounding as we delve deeper into the text. The grandeur of the nawabs and rajas is again mentioned in detail after Sampath is introduced to the world as 'Monkey Baba' (1998: 169) (baba is the colloquial term for a revered man, and here, it specifically assigns some sacred attributes to Sampath because of his close camaraderie with the monkeys which in Hinduism are closely associated with the monkey god, Hanuman). Up on his tree, he cuts a lovely picture as he 'reclines upon his cot at a slight angle to the world (he is not on straight terms with the world)', and tucks up in 'glamorous satin quilt covered with leopard-skin spots'. When he wishes to 'enjoy his leisure', he would wave at his nosy family 'as if he were a raja wishing to be left alone' (1998: 70-71), summoning them again whenever he required him. This picture of leisure is associated not only with the regality of the nawabs and the rajas, but also allies itself with the glamour of 'government services'. A product of postcolonial hangover, any association with 'government service' summons images of leisure – 'afternoon siestas', 'of free medicines at dispensary and pensions', 'of government offices closed' (1998: 23) for each of the gazetted holidays. However, even 'government service' offers no leisure as it did in the colonial era – Sampath hated it, and the new District Collector contrasts the 'worst governmental tragedy' (1998: 170), the tragedy of not being able to control the monkeys on the loose in Shahkot to his carefree and blissful vacationing in Mussoorie.

The latent references to the Raj are not devoid of its consequence, capitalism which extended its tentacles deep into the fabric of Indian society during the British annexation of India. Fludernik's claims of linking capitalism, industry, and native leisure are corroborated when a newspaper announces the arrival of Sampath as 'Monkey Baba' and the 'rumour' that Coca-Cola will soon make its way in India (1998: 67). Sampath and Coca-Cola are the two faces of the same coin – encroaching capitalism. Erin Fehskens has highlighted the connection between the multinational company Coca-Cola and capitalism in her paper in her paper titled *Desai's Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard as Global Literature*. She writes:

Desai contextualizes subtly Sampath's flight to the orchard as contemporaneous with Coca-Cola's return to India in 1993. The beverage giant's presence in India was marketed as part of the country's move towards economic liberalization. Since then, environmental activists have drawn repeated attention to the extreme draining of water resources by Coke's bottling plants located in rural and semi-urban regions in the country. Like Kulfi and then like Sampath, Coca-Cola symbolizes a new beginning for the village — rains and a guru — and like the multinational corporation, they also draw all local resources into themselves thus impoverishing the areas around them. The orchard space signifies allegorically the inevitable resource crisis imposed on nations in the global south by multinationals (2013: 3).

While an elaborate discussion on the repercussions of the return of Coca-Cola to India is outside the purview of this paper, Fehskens' scholarship provides corroborative evidence of the notorious exploitation of capitalism on ecological resources as well as people. While the arrival of Coca-Cola promises a picture of neoliberal abundance, Sampath shirks from the demands of neoliberalism and its associated asphyxiating work ethic. Mr. Chawla, who unlike his son is a devotee of the Western work ethic, makes a 'business' of Sampath, marketing him as a spiritual guru, his head always teeming and flitting 'from scheme to enchanting scheme' (1998: 92).

### **Thus Spake the Buddha**

Disgusted by the material manifestation of the horrors of capitalism in the sleepy town of Shahkot, Sampath finds himself embroiled in the same net that he had initially sought to escape. His peace in the forest is broken, becoming 'more and more like he hoped he had left behind for ever. Ugly advertisements defaced the neighbouring trees; a smelly garbage heap.... The buzz of angry noises and the claustrophobia that he had associated with life in the middle of town were creeping up upon him again' (1998: 181). The final straw that triggers his metamorphosis is the plan of half the population of Shahkot to 'get rid of his favourite company in the orchard' (1998: 181) – the monkeys.

'Caught up in the enigmatic rituals of *another* species' (1998: 65), Sampath distances himself from the human world as it continues to befuddle him, and disturb him. Refusing to shift from the tree to a proposed hermitage, Sampath finds 'mutual satisfaction' (1998: 107) among the monkeys, so much so that Sampath and the Cinema Monkey (the monkey who had wreaked havoc outside the cinema hall) take to sharing the same cot. The peaceful co-existence between the monkeys and Sampath surprises the town, and elevates Sampath's divine status. Sampath and the monkeys warm up to each other in 'perfect placid

companionship' (1998: 142). However, when the inebriated monkeys begin to aggrieve the town with their antics, deliberate plans are made to drive them away from the forests of Shahkot. Disturbed by the prospect of losing his only companions, Sampath realizes that he 'would never be able to do without them' (1998: 142). He reflects at the calm offered by the trees to him, his own guava tree has been such 'such a good home' (1998: 142). Away from all the terrible weight of existing among the humans, he feels 'weightless' (1998: 143) among the trees and the monkeys. The 'strangeness', the sublimity of the trees intrigues him, consumes him so much so that he wishes for them to 'reach out and claim him' (1998: 143).

In attaching sublimity to the trees, Sampath anticipates Roy. Roy expresses a similar sentiment when she locates the beauty of forests in the 'lack of superintendence' and the 'associated freedom' (2017: 164). This peaceful beauty of an 'unbroken quiet' is again linked to the 'beauty of no sign of a human being' (2017: 163-164). The world has been too much with Sampath and Roy. The charm of solitude is broken for Sampath when the exercise to drive away the monkeys gains a full swing. While his sister Pinky proffers to rescue him, he resolutely declines the offer. The violent human life that he had left behind – of securing a job, of excelling, of competition, of being consumed by the capitalist ethos, of the endless sustained living in closed spaces had come back to haunt him. The violent plot to drive the monkeys away by using nets (hinting at feelings of entrapment), and guns in their natural domain, and by extension, his domain nauseates him. The rigid divide between the human and the nonhuman world blurs for Sampath. The 'ugly sea of humanity' (1998: 184), and its violent plots and plans disgust him as he realizes that 'this was nothing good for him, or for the monkeys, or the orchard, the birds and insects...or even grass that was being so thoughtlessly trampled underfoot' (1998: 166). This realization is his moment of 'catharticulation' (I coin this term by blending catharsis and articulation. By witnessing the pain of the monkeys entrapped in nets, and by refusing to participate in the violent plan of the people of Shahkot to drive the monkeys away, Sampath is able to articulate his feelings by closely empathizing with his nonhuman animal companions) – he is 'close to tears' with tremors running through his body, assimilating the pain of the green world for his own – 'people were trampling on him. They were invading him, claiming him, polluting the air about him. They were dirtying him' (1998: 166).

The catharticulation initiates a sudden urge in him to 'break free' (1998: 201) from all the troubles of the intrusive human world. His stay in the tree had awakened his senses to the undiluted, natural world around him not only in his private mental landscape but also

corporeally. His initial, however brief interaction with the vegetal world where he absorbs the coolness of a guava into his body undergoes sustained transfigurations as he sits on his guava tree, and interacts with the monkeys. His skin resembles mahogany, the lines on his perturbed forehead resembles 'jungle vines', and his body is like a 'trunk' (1998: 201-203). This corporeal alliance with the arboreal world runs so deep that Sampath 'could hear water gurgling' (1998: 203) underground. This growing awareness sets the ground for his transformation into a guava of a 'Perfect Buddha shape' (1998: 204). The reference to Buddha is significant as it summons to one's mind the nonviolent heritage of the Buddhist tradition.

In a section devoted to the association between Buddha and trees (Buddha achieved enlightenment under the Bodhi tree), Roy draws our attention to Buddha's teachings. In his sermons (that also brings to mind Sampath's sermons in the guava tree), Buddha asked men to restrain from the vices of greed and desire, and 'everything that caused suffering' (2017: 191). Roy takes Buddha's teachings as a hint to 'turn tree-like', for 'it is only plant life that is neither a glutton nor ascetic' (2017: 191). A tree also does not distinguish between people on the basis of class, caste, creed, sex, occupation, or species. Sampath's transformation into a guava that closely resembles a 'Perfect Buddha shape' (1998: 204) also links us to Buddha's teachings that proclaim greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) as the root causes of suffering (*dukkha*) (resonating with Roy's understanding of Buddhism as mentioned earlier). Padmasiri De Silva (1990) contextualizes Buddhist teachings as an environmental ethic for the contemporary times. He states that by curbing the aforementioned causes of suffering, humans can achieve a pacifist understanding with the environment, thereby reducing suffering and violence in the world. This theme steadily leads us to another similarity – that of the absence of a hierarchy.

Absence of greed, delusion, and hatred necessitate an envisioning of a future that is not based on ranks or hierarchies. This idea is iterated by Roy (2017: 165-166) when she quotes plant philosopher, Michael Marder and his idea of 'vegetal politics'. Marder's most important take-away from the world of plants is that they do not believe in hierarchies. Devoid of conflicts, plants 'flourish within a mutually supportive environment' (2017, 166). Marder's claims sit well with Sampath who feels nauseated when he realises the vile plans of the Shahkot people to drive away the monkeys. In an upsetting of hierarchy which revolves around the myth of Homo Dominatus (the race of dominating humans), Sampath declares that he cares more for the monkeys, and 'little' for men (Desai 1998: 181). This awareness of

empathy with the nonhuman world, and disgust for the human world leads to the final similarity that I wish to highlight, that of the importance of silence in the text.

Marder (2016) dwells on the importance of silence in human life. Listing it as a primary requisite for peaceful co-existence, he writes that maintaining a regime of silence inevitably leads to listening which awakens us to ‘the uniqueness of another existence, and considering its irreducibility’ (55-56) with respect to one’s existence. Sampath is always on the run for silence. He wishes for the people to ‘take away their noise and dirt’ and leave him to his ‘beloved monkeys’ (1998, 182).

With ‘tree-like’ attributes already distilled in Sampath, he metamorphosizes into the fruit of the tree that he had climbed on, the fruit that had first provoked him to foray into the forest by providing him with greenness, with coolness, the fruit that in the shape of a perfect Buddha is ‘unconcerned with the world’, away from the interruptions of the clamorous human existence.

Sampath’s metamorphosis may thus be understood as an allegory for our times – we need to adopt an eco-friendly attitude to the planet that we inhabit. Capitalism with its demands of being productive and extractive induce in humans the hubris that all the resources are for us to dispense. There is no dearth of scholarship that has not linked colonialism as one of the projects of capitalism, thereby endangering the lives of the indigenous and their resources. Buddhist philosophy with its emphasis on curbing greed, hatred and delusion helps put Sampath’s predicament in perspective. It is by dwelling amidst the trees and the monkeys that Sampath achieves true happiness – an emotion conveyed by Roy herself, thereby also diminishing the boundary between fiction and life. Sampath’s metamorphosis may have been his final way of escape but this transformation allows us as readers to open our eyes to the horrors of capitalism around us and our own participation in the same.

## **Conclusion**

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A close reading of Desai’s text with Roy’s mediation on trees offers us an intense glimpse into the intimate human existence of Sampath and his eventual arboreal metamorphosis is a lesson to adopt a nurturing rather than an exploitative attitude towards the nonhuman agents in the ecosystem. Sampath seeks to escape from the violence of the capitalist ‘ambition industry’ as much as Roy. Their attempts at metamorphoses are their radical acts of breaking free from the adamant chains of the violence of capitalism and the

alienation and the sense of fragmentation that comes with it. The acts of metamorphosis assure freedom from the grasp of human cruelty and by transforming into non-human beings, both Sampath as well as Roy seek to establish a kinship with the nonhuman agents who are no longer serve as ends to their means but are rather their companions.

The envisaged metamorphic world of the texts provokes us, as readers, to reflect on the possibility of a world that offers a respite from the ‘freight of doubt, and weight of hope’ (Roy 2017: 172), a respite from the inanities of modern life dictated by capitalism, a respite that allows us to reflect on the weight of our exploitative existence on the other inhabitants of the planet. A respite that allows us to ponder over the importance of making the world a sustainable place by rethinking our relationship with nonhuman animals, plants, and the lands.

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