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► **To cite this version:**

Suhasini Vincent. NARRATING, NAMING AND LABELLING THE ENVIRONMENT IN AMITAV GHOSH'S THE HUNGRY TIDE. *Ecocriticism and Environment - Rethinking Literature and Culture*, pp.173-185, 2018. hal-03915839

**HAL Id: hal-03915839**

**<https://hal.sorbonne-universite.fr/hal-03915839>**

Submitted on 29 Dec 2022

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## CHAPTER NUMBER

# NARRATING, NAMING AND LABELLING THE ENVIRONMENT IN AMITAV GHOSH'S THE HUNGRY TIDE

SUHASINI VINCENT

In *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh's eco-narrative reveals a quest to discover, identify, protect and conserve threatened inter-connected ecosystems in the so-called 'Tide Country' of the Sundarbans in West Bengal. The novel's diegesis takes the eco-tourist reader on a trail of ebbs and flows of tides to reveal the precarious existence of the interconnected bionetwork of 'classified' and 'un-classified' human, feline, cetacean and crustacean eco-systems in the mangrove forests and waterscapes of the Sundarbans. In this paper, we shall see how Ghosh explores the themes of 'man' versus 'nature', 'global' and 'local' realities, 'survival' and 'endurance', 'ecosystems' and 'ecotourism' in the postcolonial context in India where 'self-styled' political decision-makers categorize, take possession, and transnationalize territory in the 'name' of eco-governance. We shall study how Ghosh's fictional enterprise falls within the sphere of postcolonial ecocriticism that explores the problems of conserving biodiversity, distrusts political decisions that crush impoverished tribal folk, and highlights the attempts of the corporate world to transform a threatened ecosystem into a lucrative eco-touristic venture by varying 'classification', 'labelling' and 'nomenclature'. I shall consider the portrayal of the political backdrop in the novel's fictional space like the notoriety gained after the Morichjhapi refugee settlement, the belonging to Conservation Wildlife policies like Project Tiger, and the outcome of being categorized as a World Heritage Site to analyse the eco-narrative in *The Hungry Tide*. I intend to explore how in the process of 'narrating' and 'naming' the environment through a literary journey and the 'quest' voyage of the protagonists, Amitav Ghosh's eco-narrative portrays what Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin describe as 'greening postcolonialism' in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, whereby he offers a new perspective of concerns and debates that affect the world at large and the way these

issues can be highlighted through eco-narrative versus ecotourism, eco-critical activism, environmental advocacy and aesthetics.

### **Narrating the Environment**

*The Hungry Tide* is set in the fickle tidal landscape or *bhatir desh* of the Sundarbans where the passage of the ebb tide leaves an ever-mutating and unpredictable terrain with “no borders to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea as “the water tears away entire promontories and peninsulas; at other times it throws up new shelves and sandbars where there were none before” (Ghosh 2004, 7). In this indeterminate fluid fictional space of the Sundarbans, narrated from an outsider’s perspective, Amitav Ghosh takes the reader-voyager on a literary journey across the Gangetic delta that reveals the varied quests, travels, expeditions and voyages of the protagonists in the eco-narrative. The mighty River Hooghly dictates the literary journey in the novel as it meanders, changes course, reshapes land before sunrise and reconfigures them with new paths before sunset. During its ever-shifting course, the River Hooghly intertwines with the River Meghna, thus setting the theme of transformation for the human and animal inhabitants who adapt to the capricious river trajectories and deal with the challenging task of ‘naming’ new, fresh, ever-emerging islands each day. The whims of tides and seasons prompt the Sundarbans *Orcaella*, the cetacean dolphin protagonists in the novel, to adapt their seasonal behaviour to tidal ecology, fit them into the daily cycle of tides, swimming back and forth to the quiet Hooghly-Meghna river pools at day with the dawn ebb, and racing back to the stormy Bay of Bengal at night fall. While cetologist Piyali Roy dares to explore the watery labyrinth to keep track of the rare river dolphins, uncover the new trail of a breed of freshwater dolphin called the *Orcaella brevirostris*, and explore “new ground, uncharted terrain” and “encounters with platanista” (Ghosh 2004, 365); the translator-interpreter Kanai Dutt launches on a quest to unearth the diary of his uncle Nirmal, a Marxist school teacher who pens in detail the shifting ghettos of refugees in the Sundarbans. In a region where the tides dictate the flow of the river, fisher folk like Fokir, the fisherman protagonist in the novel, row their boats in unison with the forces of nature and silently navigate with their instincts intact in rivers of fellow-voyagers of predators ranging from crocodiles, snakes, leopards, sharks and tigers. As for those refugees in the fictional space who braved journeys into this shifting ground, from the Dandakaranya camp in Madhya Pradesh to the island of Morichjhapi in the Sundarbans, the reader-voyager discovers how their flight towards freedom to eke out a

living in the mangrove forests was guided by a search for a utopian settlement where race, class and religion did not exist, and where they could create “a new future for themselves, of their determination to create a new land in which to live” (Ghosh 2004,189).

While surfing through the ecological and cultural layers of the tidal land of the Sunderbans, the reader encounters travelling tide country stories of the fishermen who cast their nets in murky waters to listen to the myth of Bon Bibi related by the designated dolphin messengers of the mythical tiger goddess. In *The Hungry Tide*, Fokir, the fisherman recites the “legend passed on from mouth to mouth, and remembered only in memory” (Ghosh 2004, 246). The myth of Bon Bibi features the relationship between the human settlers and the tiger predators in the Sunderbans and eulogises an epoch when Bon Bibi performed the divine task of rendering the country of the ebb tide fit for human inhabitation, thus transforming a region under the sway of the demon-king Dokhin Rai to a land called the beautiful forest. In a battle between ‘good’ and ‘evil’, Bon Bibi emerges triumphant, divides the country of eighteen tides into two inhabitable zones for ‘humans’ and for ‘demon-tiger’ hordes of Dokhin Rai, thus changing the time-set laws of the ‘survival of the fittest’ to a new-named ‘law of the forest’, whereby the rich and greedy are declared punished while the poor and righteous are rewarded. In Fokir’s river song, Dokhin Rai takes the form of the Ganges tiger with an insatiable craving for human flesh, and the fearsome tiger stalks Dhukey a fisher boy, thus chanting an ever-living myth to affirm the hostilities between ‘death-bearing’, ‘demon’ tigers versus ‘precious’, ‘precarious’ humans. Through the inclusion of the myth of Bon Bibi, Ghosh sets his novel in a twofold time zone of the present and the past that are influenced by a mythical time of incessant mutiny between ‘humans’ and ‘animals’, both species being constantly threatened by the vagaries of the river and the sea tide. Interestingly, in a typical Ghosh cast of religious syncretism, the myth of Bon Bibi is replete with both Hindu and Islamic tradition rites. In Hindu mythology, the heavenly braid of the Ganges is Lord Shiva’s matted hair that unfurls like an immense rope of water on a parched, thirsty land, but as knots mesh in its hasty descent, the river “throws off its bindings and separates into hundreds, maybe thousands, of tangled strands” (Ghosh 2004, 6). Bon Bibi in the fictional space of the novel appears to be of Islamic origin descending from the deserts of the Middle East, and is prompted by the archangel Gabriel to be a protectress of the Sunderban forests in the Gangetic plain. The ritualistic worship of the shrine of Bon Bibi is performed in the fictional space according to typical Hindu sacred

rites in the presence of mud idols shaped like statuette-figurines, but the refrain of the *Bon Bibi* chant bears clear reference to Allah. Ghosh also alludes to a hybrid *mélange* of languages in the chant with the suggestion that the mud banks of the tide country hold deposits of polyglot silt from Bengali, English, Arabic, Hindi, Arakenese and he highlights how the Hooghly-Meghna rivers by merging with other cultures create clusters of small worlds or small communities that hang suspended in time with the flow and ebb of the tide. In an entry in his diary, Nirmal, the Marxist teacher, the note-keeping protagonist in the novel records: “And so it dawned on me: the tide country’s faith is something like one of its great mohonas, a meeting not just of many rivers, but a circular roundabout people can use to pass in many directions – from country to country and even between faiths and religions” (Ghosh 2004, 247). It is also interesting to note that the Bon Bibi myth can be traced to the *bot-tola* legends of Southern Kolkata in the Kalighat region where folklore and local tales of *Bon Bibir Johuranama* still exist and relate the complex beliefs of the river folk who worship mud figurines which they believe are capable of transforming into super-human beings capable of protecting humans from tiger attacks and demons in the land of the ebb tide. Through the recurring chant of the Bon Bibi song, Ghosh highlights how myth influences and affects people’s existence in the Sunderbans. To portray a country riot with change, Ghosh constantly evokes poetry from Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Dunion Elegies*, and aptly uses a phrase from the seventh Elegy, namely, “life is lived in transformation” (Ghosh 2004, 225) to highlight the fact that with rivers straying routinely, islands being taken over by mangroves in a space of weeks, the only force capable of keeping at bay the travelling tide is the effect of myth that has the capacity to give hope to precarious humanity. Through the inclusion of the myth of Bon Bibi, Ghosh portrays the Sunderbans as a living entity endowed with the capacity to nurture ‘human’ and ‘animal’ protagonists who claim equal land, space and territory thanks to an entitlement that can be traced back to roots in myth.

### **Naming the Environment**

In *The Hungry Tide*, naming, identifying, designating, specifying, locating and re-naming is typical of what Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin claim to be “the rereading and the rewriting of the European historical and fictional record” that “is a vital and inescapable task at the heart of the postcolonial enterprise” (*The Empire Writes Back* 196). As in the naming of the ‘Sunderbans’, Ghosh speculates on the origin of the name of the mangrove

forests and the anthropological, botanical, geo-tidal and historical influences in the bearing of its name.

“There is no prettiness here to invite the stranger in: yet, to the world at large this archipelago is known as “the Sundarban”, which means, “the beautiful forest”. There are some who believe the word to be derived from the name of a common species of mangrove – the *sundari* tree, *Heritiera minor*. But the word’s origin is no easier to account for than is its present prevalence, for in the record books of the Mughal emperors this region is named not in reference to a tree but to a tide – *bhati*. And to the inhabitants of the islands this land is known as *bhatir desh* – the tide country – except that *bhati* is not just the “tide” but one tide in particular, the ebb-tide, the *bhata*: it is only in falling that the water gives birth to the forest. To look upon this strange parturition, midwived by the moon, is to know why the name “tide country” is not just right but necessary.” (Ghosh 2004, 8)

‘Naming’ the tidal country as ‘beautiful’ strikes the reader as both ironical and pertinent with the coincidental botanical and semantic reference to the *sundari* tree that bequeaths the name of the Sundarbans to the tidal mangrove forests in the Bengal basin. But pinpointing the etymological route proves elusive in spite of Mughal attempts at documentation as tidal history of the web tide since ‘unrecorded’ and ‘undocumented’ time designates the ebb-tide as the force that sustains existence and rebirth in a world that depended on the waxing and the waning of the moon’s lunar cycle. Like the *sundari* tree that lends its name to the Sunderbans, the garjon tree named and referred to in the novel, offers its botanical tag to the settlement of Garjontola, thus highlighting the fact that onomatopoeic references are often absent in the tidal country as the word signifying ‘garjon’ or roar of a tiger’s cry hold no meaning in the etymological lay of the fictional land. Ghosh also puts forward the idea that the re-naming of places is often confusing as in Kanai Dutt’s occasional slip regarding the references to Calcutta as Kolkata. By sorting ideas and reserving the use of “Calcutta” for references to the past, and “Kolkata” for references to the present, the reader-voyager also does a simultaneous categorising of references to the past and the present during the literary journey. The reader discovers that it is to this newly-brought land of intangible naming that the Scottish colonizer Sir Daniel Hamilton bequeathed the Scottish names of his ancestors and relatives like Andrewpur, Jamespur, Annpur, Emilybari and Lusibari in the beginning of the twentieth century. Certain Scottish names even mingled with the local Bengali dialect to sprout hybrid colonized settlements, “one village became “Shobnomoskar”, “welcome to all”, and another became “Rajat Jubilee”, to mark the Silver

Jubilee of some king or the other” (Ghosh 2004, 51). An issue that comes to light in this process and the act of naming by the colonial centre, that serves as a means of conveying a sense of ownership. Seen in this light, the act of ‘naming’ in *The Hungry Tide*, is in a colonial sense what Edward Saïd describes in *Orientalism* as a text that “can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe” (Saïd 1998, 877). The postcolonial enterprise in countering what Saïd describes as “the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority” (*Orientalism* 881) is evident in Ghosh’s postcolonial textual response in *The Hungry Tide* where the margins write back and re-name colonial representations and interpretations by re-naming the other.

“Like so many other places in the tide country, Canning was named by an *Ingrej*. And in this case it was no ordinary Englishman who gave it his name – not only was he a Lord, he was a *laat*, nothing less than a Viceroy, Lord Canning. This *laat* and his *ledi* were as generous in sprinkling their names around the country as a later generation of politicians were to be in scattering their ashes: you came across them in the most unexpected places – a road here, a gaol there, an occasional asylum. No matter that Ledi Canning was tall, thin, and peppery – a Calcutta sweet-maker took it into his head to name a new confection after her. The sweet was black, round and sugary – in other words, it was everything its namesake was not, which was lucky for the sweet-maker because it meant his creation quickly became a success. People gobbled up the new sweets at such a rate that they could not take the time to say ‘Lady Canning.’ The name was soon shortened to *ledigeni*.” (Ghosh 2004, 284)

Here, the coloniser is re-named by the colonized, who counter the honorary ‘viceroy’ naming of settlement, roads, prisons and asylums with their own indigenised version of re-naming and designating local confectionaries and sweet savouries. By peppering the names with the local dialect terms of ‘*laat*’ and his ‘*ledi*’, sprinkling the tidal country with names that would turn to ash after their departure, and attempting to acquaint the naming of the Other through familiarisation as in the ingestion of the sweetmeat of Lady Canning and in the simultaneous gobbling and shortening of her name to ‘*ledigeni*’ and ironic representation of a confection that was at antipodes with its namesake, result in a status where the representations of the centre become the accepted reality of the margins. The bazaars of Canning also sell native and home-grown medicines and remedies with hybrid ‘local-allopathic’ medicinal names as seen in the “selling patent medicines for neuralgia and dyspepsia – concoctions with names like ‘Hajmozyne’ and ‘Dardocytin’”

(Ghosh 2004, 24). Furthermore the process of naming is a ritual in the fictional space to pin down the 'unknown' and familiarise the 'known'.

"... she had been somewhat intrigued by this so far shown little interest in pointing to things and telling her their Bengal names. She had been somewhat intrigued by this for, in her experience, people almost automatically went through a ritual of naming when they were with a stranger of another language." (Ghosh 2004, 93)

To Piya, the American-born Indian cetologist, 'naming' becomes a ritual of familiarisation, though peculiarly transient and ephemeral in nature as in the tidal country, transitory land and scarce human belonging are subject to daily immersions and systematic re-naming. In the novel, the processes of 'naming' and 're-naming' are accompanied by a dual attempt to 'classify', 'categorize' and 'label' cetacean aquatic life and different ecological niches of varying degrees of salinity and turbidity that had escaped the microscopic lens of avid botanists and zoologists the world over due to the nature of the dense, impenetrable forests. Piya's attempts to distinguish the patterns of behaviour of the *Orcaella brevirostris* and its cousin, *Orcaella fluminalis* lead to a fascinating discovery of undiscovered local species from gargantuan crocodiles to microscopic fish existing in floating biodomes filled with endemic, rare and botanically unclassified flora and fauna in the marshy estuarine areas of the Sundarbans. While recording the teeming marine ecology, Piya highlights the eco-sensitive existence of micro-environments with their own patterns of life, floating midstream and wafting back to shore or retreating into deep islands only to re-emerge with new aquatic forms of life that baffled human attempts at scientific and systematic 'naming' and 'labelling'. Piya's nomadic expedition highlights detailed water depth, underwater concavities, tides, currents of the so-far un-named Sundarbans aquatic ecology and focuses on how these variables speak for the dynamic, unstable interrelation between numerous "microenvironments" of floating biodomes of endemic aquatic life forms. Ghosh lays stress on the interconnected nature of different life forms and Piya's quest to name un-named species can be considered as a creative endeavor to consider how these ecologically connected groups can be creatively transformed.

### **Labelling the Environment**

In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh highlights how human lives are valued less than those of their tiger inhabitants in the Sunderbans. In the name of



preservation, environmental injustice favours the existence of man-eating tigers, leaving humans at the mercy of governmental efforts to implement Project Tiger

“‘That tiger had killed two people, Piya,’ Kanai said. ‘And that was just in one village. It happens every week that people are killed by tigers. How about the horror of that? If there were killings on that scale anywhere else on the earth it would be called a genocide, and yet here it goes almost unremarked: these killings are never reported, never written about in the papers. And the reason is just that these people are too poor to matter. We all know it, but we choose not to see it. Isn’t that a horror too – that we can feel the suffering of an animal, but not of human beings?’” (Ghosh 2004, 300-301)

The episode in the novel seeks to highlight the imbalance which exists between tigers that maul and consume helpless humans who are defenseless prey as they dare not retaliate. Governmental efforts to protect the tiger species result in large-scale killings that Kanai labels as “genocide”. Through metaphors of blindness to human suffering and the consequent numbing of senses and feeling, the incident in the novel serves to show how in the name of common good, governments have unthinkingly rendered the UNESCO heritage site of the Sundarbans, ‘inhabitable’ for man, but ‘hospitable’, ‘reserved’ and ‘protected’ for the tiger species. In the novel, Ghosh also highlights that the protection of tiger species take precedence over other forms of nature, as in the case of the spawn of tiger prawns, where commercial fishing with fine-threaded nylon nets result in a consequent ensnaring of the eggs of other rare fish, leaving the environment fragile to a depletion of fish species that sustain the existence of river dolphins in the Sundarbans. In this context, it should be remembered that the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve was created in 1973 to save the dwindling numbers of the fast-disappearing species and the reserve was declared a World Heritage site in 1997 to preserve the mangrove habitat and vegetation essential for its survival. But efforts at ecological protection to save tigers and protect forests often disadvantage indigenous people who farm, forage, fish, subsist on nature, and struggle to preserve their village lifestyle from external intrusion. In *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literature of the Environment*, Deloughrey and Handley point out how “international pressure on postcolonial states to conserve charismatic megafauna has catalyzed human alienation from the land” (Deloughrey and Handley 2011, 21). This eco-critical stance is evident in *The Hungry Tide*, in the mutiny between ecologists who wish to prioritize the environment over all human needs, and social justice proponents who

argue that human equity must precede green conservation and preservation.

In *The Hungry Tide*, this debate throws light on the plight of indigenous populations who have been displaced to make way for the conservation of animal habitats like Project Tiger. Here, humans are victims of environmental devastation caused by red-tape bureaucrat decision makers, ecology managers and eco-tourism operators. Similarly in *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel seeks to highlight the imbalance which exists between humans who indulge in consumption depleting natural resources as opposed to the animal world that has to subsist on available resources and are victims of environmental devastation caused by governmental decisions, ecology managers and eco-tourism operators. It is interesting to note that the tiger Richard Parker thrives in the carnivorous island and this may be attributed to the island's resemblance to the littoral forest in the Sunderbans in West Bengal which is the ideal ecological habitat for the Indian tiger. In the novel, Ghosh also seeks to show how governmental proposals to create an eco-tourist haven in the Sundarbans at the expense of rare species, is typical of the selfish human decision to survive at the expense of animal deterioration and "exploiting nature while minimizing non-human claims to a shared earth" (*Postcolonial Ecocriticism* 5). In their work entitled *Postcolonial Green: Environmental Politics and World Narratives*, Bonnie Roos and Alex Hunt also criticize the policies and government strategies of postcolonial governments where dispossessed land is transformed into protected natural reserves in the name of common good by appropriating eco-friendly labelling. Their assessment of the present trends of postcolonial governments as "racially insensitive and culturally oblivious reveals a host of issues that challenge us to be more conscious of the implications of asserting a green paradigm without engaging social and racial injustices" (Roos and Hunt 2010, 4). In the perpetually mutating topography of the ecological lay of the land in *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh rekindles stories that had lapsed into oblivion, accounts of the perpetual plight of refugees in the settlement of Morichjhapi that were never penned nor publicized in the press. The dalit refugees who fled to India from Bangladesh after Partition and the 1971 Bangladesh war of Independence, sought refuge in Dandakaranya camp in Madhya Pradesh, and resettled later in the Sundarbans forest reserves, but their hopes of creating 'home' in the mangrove islands turned into a flight for survival in 1979 when the Left Front government under the leadership of the Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, decided to call the police to scuttle the boats of the refugees and to evict the four million refugees from tiger protected land. Thousands of

lives were lost in the name of ecological justice, and Ghosh in an article entitled “A Crocodile in the Swamplands”, criticizes the Left Front government’s decision to hand over a substantial part of the eco-reserve to an industrial house that planned to transform the marshy land into virgin beaches and tourism sites. He describes the plans of the Sahara Parivar company to create an eco-village with five star amenities in the biosphere reserve for an estimated \$155 million. Even though the proposed project based on a utopian vision of island tourism failed due to severe criticism, Ghosh in his novel seeks to show imaginary geographies of islanders and outsiders clash while each group strives to preserve its claim to a common Earth. Through Nirmal’s diary entries in the *The Hungry Tide*, the reader encounters the mood of helplessness of the refugees who are dislocated from their socio-cultural space.

“‘This island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals, it is a part of a reserve forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers, which is paid for by people from all around the world.’ ... people, I wondered, who love animals so much that they are willing to kill us for them? Do they know what is being done in their names?” (Ghosh 2004, 262)

Humans are considered worthless and less than dirt or dust in the fight for ecological preservation. The price for saving tigers is the loss of people who are easy prey to hungry tigers and ‘Save the Tiger’ campaigns ironically seem to insist on the need for animal conservation. Protecting tigers seems to outweigh the desire to protect humans. Thus, Nilima’s activist files in the novel also provide this alternative view on the preservation of nature and biotic species raising a debatable question on whether human lives should be valued less than the biological, botanical and animal species in the tide country. The activist-protagonist in the novel endeavours to offer a theory for the inexplicable takeover of human territory by tigers in the Sundarbans and contends that tigers venturing into the settlements might have a possible relationship with the tidal ecological setup where forest area was subjected to daily submersions and renewal. According to her theory, tigers reacted negatively and exhibited a raised “threshold of aggression by washing away their scent markings and confusing their territorial instincts” (Ghosh 2004, 241). Here, Ghosh presents a subaltern perspective with Nilima’s account of the human-animal dynamics and shows how indigenous communities are fighting to preserve their traditional way of being and cultures against external invasion. The interrogative tone of “Do they know what is being done in their names?” captures the helplessness of settlers who are open to mass killing strategies of governments who wipe out map and memory spaces of

indigenous culture leaving gaps and spaces for the reader-voyager to fill in with alternative and constructive versions of reality.

“That is the trouble with an infinitely reproducible space; since it does not refer to actual places it cannot be left behind... Eventually the place and the realities that accompany it vanish from the memory and... the place, India, becomes in fact an empty space, mapped purely by words.” (Ghosh 2002, 248-9)

Ghosh seeks to portray how the island of Morichjhapi becomes the site for mapping out a charter of rights, but viewed from differing perspectives, like the Western influenced gaze of Piya and Kanai that is influenced by texts, data and equipment; and the indigenous perspective of Fokir, the fisherman whose inherited knowledge of myth and apocryphal stories enable a sensitive comprehension of the forces of nature in a land that is completely under the spell of nature's whims and fancies. As for the reader, *The Hungry Tide* is alive with converging memories and desires, “a compilation of pages that overlap without any two ever being the same” (Ghosh 2004, 224). The entries in the diary sum up the reader's perception of the fictional landscape.

“People open the book according to their taste and training, their memories and desires: for a geologist the compilation opens at one page, for a boatman at another and still another for a ship's pilot, a painter and so on. On occasion these pages are ruled with lines that are invisible to some people, while being for others, as real, as charged and as volatile as high-voltage cables.” (Ghosh 2004, 224)

### **Postcolonial Green**

Ghosh's literary enterprise with its hidden agenda of social and environmental advocacy is imaginative and serves as “a catalyst for social action and exploratory literary analysis into a full-fledged form of engaged cultural critique” (Huggan and Tiffin 2010, 12). By creating a fictional space whose history is partly known and partly guessed, a tide country that has constant accumulation of silt to cover its past, Ghosh seeks to illuminate how displaced communities have to deal with hostile forces of natural environment and insensitive governments that ignore human attempts of survival in the name of protecting broader ecological concerns of the planet. Through the representation of the Sundarbans as an eco-sensitive region, he brings forth the idea that it is difficult to address the ecological concerns of the planet without a close appraisal of the human and cultural issues entwined with natural ecosystems. In *the Hungry Tide*, Ghosh focuses on

human-animal relations from a rather different perspective of revealing the interdependence of animals to humans as well as humans to animals, and the challenges faced by both groups in adapting to shifting social, cultural, political, ecological and environmental forces. The reader encounters a multiplicity of voices that express the problems that the world faces today and discovers a plethora of issues that speak of the need to assert a 'green' paradigm free of social and racial injustices. This attempt to unite fictional aesthetics and advocacy is typical of postcolonial ecocriticism that seeks to advocate social and environmental justice in today's postcolonial world. The fictional enterprise of underlining the need for social and political change speaks of Ghosh's envisioning of a 'postcolonial green' that campaigns for the transference from 'red' to 'green' politics and the need to dwell as responsible inhabitants who believe in global justice and sustainability on our planet Earth.

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