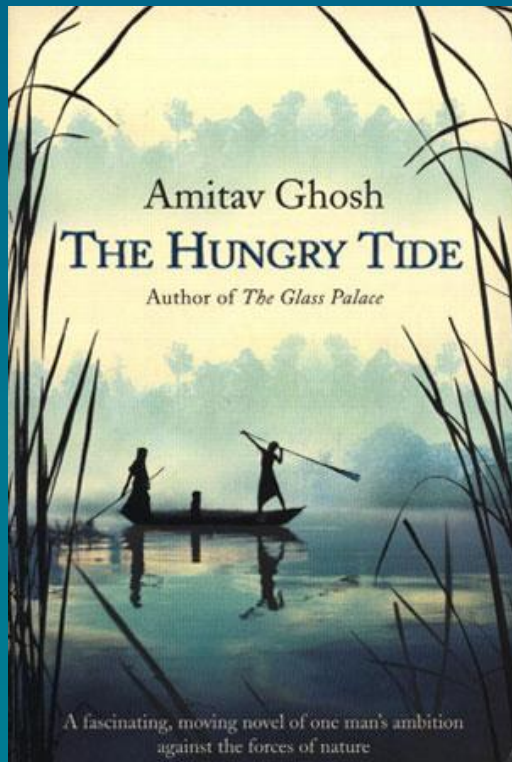




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‘Intercultural Citizenship’ in Teaching Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* in Thai Higher Education



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Overview

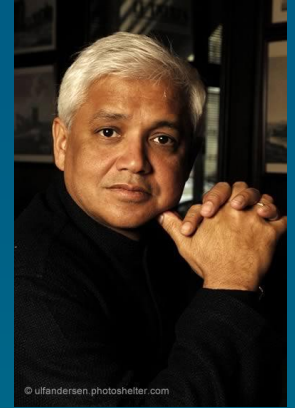
- Context of my Case Study
- Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*
- Michael Byram's 'Intercultural Citizenship'
- Teacher's Presentation of the Text
- Students' Responses
- Conclusion

My Study

- What :** Teacher's & Students' Responses to Representation of Nature
- Text :** Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004)
- Module :** *Environmental Literature and Criticism*
- Level :** Postgraduate Elective (English)
- Where :** Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
- Why :** Examine Intercultural Dimensions of Teaching & Learning

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

- Postcolonial text
- American biologist Piya (Indian parents) travels to the Sundarbans, India, to conduct research on endangered dolphins
- Piya meets Indian translator, Kanai, who helps her communicate with local fishermen
- Both learn problems of nature conservation projects
- Indigenous people are homeless & become internal refugees



www.amitavghosh.com



The Hungry Tide: Postcolonial Literary Criticism

- **Ecocriticism:** Problems of nature conservation projects in postcolonial India (Alexa Weik: 2006)
- **Marxism:** Struggle of the indigenous people in the Sundarbans (Terri Tomsy: 2009)
- **Psychoanalysis:** Impact of displacement on different groups of Indians (Pramod Nayar: 2010)
- **Indigenous Cultures:** Indian myth & belief in the forest goddess (Christopher Rollason: 2010)
- **My Study:** Teacher's & students' responses in Thai educational context

Michael Byram's Intercultural Citizenship

Teaching foreign literature with ‘a response to ubiquitous intercultural experience within and beyond societal boundaries, and to the political opportunities for co-operation and the pursuit of agreed goals.’

1. Comparative Orientation
2. Multiple Identities
3. Variety in Beliefs
4. Social Collaboration
5. Shared Attitude & Knowledge
6. Commitment to Values

(Byram 2008: 188)

These features are implicit in the teaching & learning of *The Hungry Tide*.

Teaching Approach: Comparative Orientation

Mark Dowie's
'Conservation Refugees'
(2008) in Thailand & India



www.freeforallblog.org

Teacher's Introduction to *HT*:

People like Paganyaw, the hill tribe, argue that their agricultural style that they call the 'crop rotation' would work very well with the conservation efforts. However, the government would like them to move away what they call the 'community forest'.

These natives and some organisations in the North are trying to argue for the existence of the community forest meaning that this is the forest, you can conserve it, you can keep it as the preservation area. But, at the same time, you should allow the natives to coexist with the natural world.

Teacher's Highlighted Scene: Western vs. non-Western Environmentalism

“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.” Every day, sitting here, with hunger gnawing at our bellies, we would listen to these words, over and over again. Who are these people, I wondered, who love animals so much that they are willing to kill us for them?

(Ghosh 261-2)



www.thecitizen.in



www.thehindubusinessline.com

Teacher's Highlighted Scene: Social Collaboration

It was surprising enough that their jobs had not proved to be utterly incompatible—especially considering that one of the tasks required the input of geostationary satellites while the other depends on bits of shark-bone and broken tile. But that it had proved possible for two such different people to pursue their own ends simultaneously.

(Ghosh 141)



<https://en.wikipedia.org>



<http://relivearth.com>

Teaching Approach: Model of Postcoloniality

Now we have talked about how Amitav Ghosh is looking for like alternative model of postcoloniality. It is possible that he is imagining the utopian place or some kinds of utopian existence where you will get to see not only the coming together of Piya—the elite, the scientist, but Fokir—the subaltern, the native how they could work together. How they use their expertise in order to enhance each other's works.

(Lecture 6)



Student's vs. Teacher's Responses

Student's Opinion:

The author tries to present that the subaltern—they don't have like the opportunity to, just to take care of themselves is hard enough. So you can see that these environmental issues are made not applicable for the poor people because they have to just live to survive—it's hard enough.

Teacher's Challenge:

I am questioning that assertion. Is it possible for the farmers, the grassroots of the society to have that kind of environmental concern. I think in many ways their lifestyle, if they are doing like self-sufficient agriculture.

In contrast, people like us, the privileged born living in the city seems to be so far away from the actual act—environmentalism. We, here, are going to shopping mall, we would say like, oh, eco-friendly shopping—what does it mean by that?

Student's Response: Intercultural Citizenship

We see how people in the Third World country think about some issues that also raised by white writers, but they think differently, right? So, by emerging ourselves with the texts form different cultures, we see that, actually I tend to question myself, my concept or my ideas about things around me, whether it is real or it's just a social construct. (Class Presentation)

Conclusion

Teaching Features: Intercultural Citizenship

- Compare problems of nature conservation projects in India & Thailand
- Focus on clashing values: Western vs. non-Western ecological thinking
- Emphasise social collaboration

Students' Responses

- Socio-cultural background: limited view of rural country
- Intercultural citizenship

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