



Trans-Species Hauntology and Relational Being in Amitav Ghosh's *Ghost-Eye*: From Ecological Memory to Rights of Nature

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Abstract:

This article reads Amitav Ghosh's *Ghost-Eye* (2025) in the light of relationality, challenging and disrupting anthropocentric assumptions. Starting with the uncanny scene of a child remembering the taste of fish from a past life, the novel unfolds as a complex meditation on memory, reincarnation, environmental crisis, and multispecies entanglements, in which human identity is revealed as emergent through its relations with animals, environments, spirits, and histories. Through the intersection of postcolonial ecocriticism, hauntology, and Indian philosophical ideas such as ethical responsibility, reciprocity, and cosmic continuity, this article investigates how the novel challenges the binary distinctions of human and nonhuman, nature and culture, self and other, and past and present, by building a world where consciousness, matter, and memory are intermingled. Nature, here, is not passive but active: trees call forth snakes, rivers have memory, and ecological systems retaliate against human violence with ethical force, while spectrality and sensory memory show that the past haunts both bodies and landscapes. The novel's postcolonial dimension highlights how environmental harm is intertwined with the legacies of empire, inequality, and epistemic violence, thereby linking ecological crises to global injustice. Additionally, the novel integrates spiritual ontology with current legal and ethical discussions on nonhuman rights, advocating for an ecological-ethical approach that emphasises interdependence and responsibility. Ultimately, this article argues that *Ghost-Eye* does not merely represent interconnectedness of humans, nature, and ecological systems; it enacts it philosophically, inviting readers to understand reality as an interdependent network of life.

Keywords: relationality, trans-species hauntology, more-than-human, postcolonial ecocriticism, Indian metaphysics, ecological memory.

Introduction

Amitav Ghosh's *Ghost-Eye* (2025) begins with two childhood disturbances whose relation becomes legible only at the novel's end. In 1969, three-year-old Varsha Gupta, raised in a strictly vegetarian Calcutta household, demands fish and claims that she was once Isha, a girl from the village Lusibari in the Sundarban. At roughly the same age, Dinu Datta bites, scratches, and throws himself against the limits of his human body. His aunt, the psychologist Shoma Bose, shelters him at Tavoy, the Southern Avenue bungalow where she lives with her husband, Monty Bose. Dev Thapa—then an orphaned Burmese-Nepali teenager under their protection, later Monty's driver and eventually Shoma's principal caregiver—teaches Dinu a Burmese version of the Buddhist refuge mantra after receiving guidance from the Shindaw Nat. The episodes subside. Over the following decades, Dinu becomes a sceptical antiquarian in Brooklyn, while Varsha becomes the secretive investor Monsoon Abhayaputri. The novel gradually reveals these apparently anomalous childhood cases as elements of a relation spanning species, generations, and ecologies.

The disclosure is neither immediate nor singular. During Cyclone Amphan in May 2020, Shoma dies peacefully in her sleep at Tavoy while Dinu remains in pandemic-stricken Brooklyn. Her bequest includes the study containing Case J, her record of Varsha's childhood. After vaccination, illness, and travel have altered the conditions of the pandemic, Dinu returns to Calcutta, retrieves the file and photographs, and later works with Tarun to mount a Brooklyn exhibition, "*Magic of the Mangroves*" (Ghosh 253; original emphasis). The exhibition draws Varsha to Dinu, but recognition still proceeds by stages: archived testimony, sensory experiment, return to place, and finally Dev's oral account. In Charlottesville, the papers of Professor Cathy Booth—a senior University of Virginia scholar of psychology and neurology who had collaborated with Shoma on research into "cases of the reincarnation type"—classify Dinu's childhood as an unusual trans-species case (Ghosh 25).

Dev later explains by telephone that Dinu had formerly been an *udbiral*: an otter trained by the fisherman Benoy Mondal and devoted to his daughter, Isha. The novel closes not with empirical certainty or a conventional romantic consummation, but with Varsha sitting beside Dinu and placing their present bond within a succession of prior lives.

These corrections of sequence matter critically. If Dinu and Varsha are reduced to two humans who recover a shared romance, the novel's most radical proposition disappears. Dinu's former animal life is not an ornamental twist; it unsettles the human monopoly on memory, attachment, betrayal, and moral consequence. Varsha's past as Isha is likewise inseparable from a particular history of land seizure, social and Adivasi marginalisation, prawn aquaculture, ecological expertise, gendered violence, and devotion to Manasa Devi. The past that returns is therefore at once spiritual, corporeal, environmental, and political.

We call this form of return *trans-species hauntology*. The term designates the persistence of an interrupted more-than-human relationship through another body and another historical moment. It revises two familiar critical languages. Derridean hauntology addresses the present's non-contemporaneity with itself: what has been excluded or declared finished returns as an ethical demand (Derrida 10–11). Ecological hauntology extends that demand to damaged places, suppressed environmental histories, and lives made difficult to perceive (White 1–8). Reincarnation in *Ghost-Eye*, however, gives spectral inheritance a bodily carrier. It passes through taste, posture, craft, fear, and desire rather than through apparition alone. Conversely, the novel's accounts of karma, rebirth, spirits, and shared consciousness are not simply equivalents of Derrida's spectre. Hauntology depends upon interruption, absence, and an unsettled claim, whereas rebirth presumes some kind of continuity. Their tension is productive: continuity explains how relation survives death; haunting explains why that survival becomes an unfinished obligation rather than private consolation.

This argument also changes how the novel's other frameworks should be assembled. Relational and posthuman ecocriticism describe agency as distributed among bodies, matter, species, and environments (Oppermann 273–80). Hindu ecological thought offers vocabularies of continuity, reciprocity, and sacred presence, although Rita Sherma rightly presents these as internally diverse traditions rather than a single environmental doctrine. The novel further joins Manasa worship to Munda ecological expertise and Burmese Buddhist spirit practices; calling this composite world merely “Indian philosophy” would erase its regional and religious differences. Postcolonial ecocriticism, finally, exposes the power relations that convert a pond, forest, island, or human community into an exploitable resource (DeLoughrey 3–5). *Ghost-Eye* makes these approaches test one another. Spiritual continuity without political history could romanticise suffering; posthuman agency without justice could obscure who owns land and commands the police; secular law without relational ontology could reproduce the bounded individualism it seeks to correct.

Discussion

The discussion therefore follows the novel's movement from body to institution. First, it reads Dinu's and Varsha's returns as trans-species haunting. It then examines the fish episodes as a sensory archive, before turning to the novel's “hidden world” of trees, snakes, spirits, and irruptions. The final sections analyse rights of nature litigation and postcolonial history of ecological dispossession. This structure shows that the book does not progress from superstition to legal reason, or from private memory to public politics. Each register remains incomplete without the others.

Relational Ontologies and Multispecies Being in *Ghost-Eye*

The phrase “trans-species case of the reincarnation type” appears in Cathy Booth's 1966 correspondence about Dinu. Its placement near the end retroactively reorganises the narrative. Earlier, Dinu understands his childhood violence through the clinical vocabulary

available to his family: an abnormality to be controlled, forgotten, or outgrown. Booth's phrase neither proves reincarnation nor simply abolishes psychology. Instead, it changes the unit of analysis. The child is no longer an isolated human subject with inexplicable symptoms; his body becomes the belated site of another creature's attachments and conflicts. Dev's final account specifies those conflicts. Dinu's earlier form was an otter whom Benoy trained to drive fish into human nets. The otter remained because of its devotion to Isha, even though river creatures regarded it as a traitor because it "hunted them to please humans" (Ghosh 319). This is more than an anthropomorphic fable. The animal past places Dinu in a divided ethical field: kinship with other aquatic life, dependence upon a human trainer, and attachment to a human girl cannot be made fully compatible. The human/nonhuman boundary is crossed, but it is not dissolved into harmony. The otter's loyalty has victims. Reincarnation thus preserves not only affection but also ecological conflict.

That conflict distinguishes the novel's relationality from an easy celebration of interconnectedness. To be related is also to be implicated. Dinu inherits the otter's devotion, but also the moral cost of participating in capture. Varsha inherits Isha's knowledge and attachment, but also a history of failed protection. Even the cobra that kills Isha is ethically double: it saves her, according to the islanders, from rape and trafficking, yet salvation takes the form of death. Relation does not guarantee benevolence; it enlarges the field in which responsibility must be considered.

Hauntology clarifies why these former lives matter in the present. For Derrida, the spectre disturbs any belief that time is neatly divided into completed past and self-contained present. Justice begins by learning to live with what the present cannot fully absorb (xviii, 10). Laura White's "ecospectrality" similarly shows how environmental injustice returns through figures that make occluded harm perceptible (1–8). Ghosh innovates by locating the spectre within sensorimotor life. Dinu does not first see an otter ghost; he enacts an animal remainder

through biting, scratching, agitation, and a responsiveness that adult rationalism later represses. Varsha's return begins with appetite and identification. In both cases, the past is neither recollection voluntarily summoned by a stable self nor a disembodied visitor. It is an inheritance that helps constitute the self.

This embodiment also complicates the language of "essence." The novel challenges the notion that humans are in a different order of life than other living things. It is clear and forthright in this regard when the Burmese Buddhist monk Sayadaw tells Shoma about pre-existing consciousness, rebirth, and interconnectedness in the following lines:

'In their own world, spirits of many kinds can speak to each other—animals, trees, rocks, fish and even humans. We believe all living things are the same in essence; the differences between us are only in our outward shapes. For us, consciousness exists prior to the material world, and everything that we see around us is but a manifestation of that pre-existing consciousness in an infinite number of forms. That is why we are reborn in many different incarnations until at last it is granted to us to attain nibbana.' (Ghosh 119-20)

The passage proposes that living beings differ in outward form while sharing a prior consciousness and that spirits communicate across animals, trees, rocks, fish, and humans. If consciousness precedes material separation, then the rigid modern distinction between subject and world begins to falter. On its own, the passage might suggest that particular bodies are disposable shells. The plot resists that conclusion. Otter musculature, a child's palate, Isha's cooking technique, a cobra's wound, and a storm-breached embankment are not incidental vehicles for an abstract soul. They are the means through which relation becomes knowable. Form changes, but form matters.

Pronami Bhattacharyya's account of posthuman ecology is useful here because it treats the human as entangled with more-than-human worlds rather than as their sovereign observer (5).

Nevertheless, *Ghost-Eye* presses beyond an ontology of general entanglement by asking how a relation travels through death and how violence remains attached to that passage. “Trans-species hauntology” names this combination: it is posthuman because memory and moral agency cross species, hauntological because an unresolved history drives the return, and reincarnational because the return acquires bodily continuity. None of the three terms can substitute for the others.

The Burmese Buddhist mantra episode further prevents the novel’s metaphysics from being reduced to one national tradition. The Shindaw Nat tells the teenage Dev to teach Dinu a Burmese refuge formula, “Buddham Saranam Gacchami”, and Dinu’s agitation slowly abates (Ghosh 316). The act is pedagogical rather than magical in a narrow sense: it gives the child a repeated bodily practice through which unruly inheritance can be held. It also links an animal past in the Sundarban to Dev’s displaced life from Burma and to Shoma’s Calcutta household. The mantra does not collapse Buddhist spirit practice, Manasa devotion, and scientific investigation into a single framework. It makes their encounter part of the same transregional history.

Most importantly, the final disclosure refuses closure. Cathy’s file offers a research category; Dev offers an oral narrative authorised by the Shindaw Nat; Varsha offers recognition; Dinu remains the consciousness through which the reader receives these accounts. Evidence accumulates across incompatible epistemologies without one becoming a master key. The result is not an assertion that all knowledge systems say the same thing. It is a demand to judge what each can perceive and what each excludes. Shoma’s initial scepticism enables careful documentation, but it cannot explain the texture of Dinu’s experience. Dev’s spirit knowledge can explain the relation, but only Isha’s social history reveals why the relation returns as a claim upon land and justice.

The Sensory Archive: Fish, Skill, and Ecological Time

The novel gives Varsha's reincarnational memory its clearest form through two fish episodes separated by more than fifty years. They should be read together because the first establishes a controlled test and the second transforms testing into embodied participation. Neither episode occurs at the Brooklyn exhibition itself. The exhibition supplies visual and archival cues, but taste and embodied practice trigger the decisive recognition.

In 1969, Shoma investigates Varsha's insistence that she is Isha by turning a meal into an experiment. With Varsha in an Ambassador parked outside the Gupta compound, different preparations are presented without the child seeing their source. Varsha identifies fish and rice through taste, distinguishing a recently introduced tilapia from native *koi* and recognising differences that her vegetarian upbringing cannot readily explain. The scene is not merely a display of precocity. It stages a contest between abstract expectations about memory and the body's situated archive. Shoma is struck by the possibility that sensory impressions, normally considered fleeting, may have crossed "the gulf" between living and dead.

The kinds of knowledge at stake are ecological and social at once. Varsha remembers not a generic category called fish but distinctions produced by freshwater habitats, local species, methods of preparation, and the labour of cooks and fishers. Her palate carries Lusibari's pond and household into a wealthy vegetarian car in Calcutta. The sensory test therefore traverses class as well as death. It makes Isha's expertise present in a setting whose privilege would otherwise render her world distant.

After the pandemic, Dinu and Tarun create the Brooklyn exhibition "*Magic of the Mangroves*" using photographs by Abhay Gupta and Monty, in the hope of reaching the adult Varsha. When she visits, the exhibition gives public form to landscapes and lives that Shoma's case file had kept within a private archive (Ghosh 253). The images alone, however, do not secure her belief. At Dinu's apartment, Varsha challenges him to produce the dishes

associated with her childhood case. During the eventual meal, the sight of a *boti* and the handling of *rui*, *gojar*, and *magur* reactivate procedural knowledge. Varsha herself chops, grinds, and cooks; after eating, names and places—Lusibari, the pond, the Shindaw Nat, Dinu, and Dev—return to her.

This scene deepens rather than repeats the 1969 experiment. The child is made an object of observation; the adult becomes the agent of recall. The first scene asks whether she can identify food; the second shows knowledge moving through wrist, knife, spice, flesh, and flame. Remembering is thus not the retrieval of a picture stored in an interior mind. It is an ecological performance requiring species, implements, ingredients, gestures, and another person willing to receive it. The archive is distributed.

Such distribution helps distinguish ecological memory from a vague claim that “nature remembers.” A pond retains salinity and erosion; a photograph retains an arrangement of light; a body retains a skill; a community retains a story; a deity’s warning supplies a moral grammar for interpreting recurrence. These are different media, with different kinds of durability and authority. The novel connects them without making them identical. Its recurrent admonition— “Manasa Devi does not forget” —is therefore not proof that an ecosystem possesses a human mind (Ghosh 104). It condenses the ethical proposition that injury remains effective across human attempts to declare it past.

The fish scenes also recast what an archive can be. Shoma’s notes and Cathy’s letters belong to institutional forms of evidence: dates, interviews, correspondence, comparison. Isha’s archive consists of learned discriminations and techniques formed through household and ecosystem. The novel needs both. Documentary records preserve a chronology that oral memory might lose; embodied skill reveals a life that case notation can flatten. When the two archives meet, reincarnation becomes less a claim about a soul in isolation than about the survival of a relation among body, livelihood, habitat, and taste.

Ghosh's earlier novel, *The Hungry Tide*, similarly places specialist science beside local knowledge in the Sundarban, refusing a simple opposition between modern expertise and local tradition. Rajender Kaur argues that the novel's cross-cultural encounters produce a place-based environmental understanding rather than an abstract universalism, while Elisabetta Zurru shows how its language distributes agency across human and nonhuman participants (125–41; 191–231). *Ghost-Eye* extends that project through time. Knowledge marginalised in one life may return in another body, but the return becomes politically useful only when recognised, translated, and joined to collective action. Reincarnation is not a substitute for transmission or institutions; it dramatises the consequences of their failure.

The Hidden World and Irruptive Agency

Throughout *Ghost-Eye*, agency emerges as an event among beings rather than a possession lodged in a sovereign individual. A tree calls a snake; crows enforce a warning; cyclones disclose hidden patterns; spirits speak through dreams and intuition. These episodes invite a posthuman reading, but Ghosh's "hidden world" is more specific than the general claim that matter has agency. It includes intentional spirits, ritual obligations, animals acting in concert, and human interpreters whose explanations remain contestable.

Dev's account offers the clearest vocabulary. He tells Dinu that spirits of animals, trees, rocks, fishes, and humans can communicate, that outward forms do not exhaust what beings share, and that consciousness precedes the visible world. Serpil Oppermann's material and posthuman ecocriticism helps explain the resulting decentring of human agency: environments are storied assemblages in which causal and semiotic force is distributed (273–94). However, the novel does not merely translate spirit into matter. The Shindaw Nat and Manasa Devi possess histories, affinities, and demands that a materialist account may describe as cultural narratives but cannot fully encompass on the novel's own terms.

The tree-and-snake episode makes that excess visible. When a snake appears, the event is explained not as random intrusion but as a response to the tree's call. The claim reverses the usual hierarchy of perception. Humans do not grant meaning to inert nature; they struggle to interpret a conversation already underway. Still, interpretation is not infallible. Different characters understand the event through biology, spirit, coincidence, or omen. The novel preserves this plurality so that more-than-human agency does not become a new dogma.

The same pattern governs Cyclone Amphan. Shoma foresees the storm as an image and refuses to leave Tavoy. She dies during the cyclone, after which Dinu sees the ordinary beings and structures of Brooklyn—tree leaves, squirrels, birds, steel—as intensely alive and seemingly capable of returning his gaze. The sequence does not say that the cyclone kills Shoma as punishment, nor that her death gives Dinu supernatural mastery. Calamity breaks the habits that ordinarily make relations invisible. The “hidden” world is therefore not a separate supernatural zone; it is the surplus of connection that everyday perception filters out. Tipu calls the sudden emergence of that surplus an “irruption”: a moment when hidden potentialities break into the ordinary and familiar calculation fails. He illustrates the concept through a multispecies gathering around a refugee boat near Sicily that changes the conduct of the coastguards. In the Sundarban climax, irruption again requires conjunction. A threatened Manasa site, birds and aquatic animals, crowds, trained ghost-eyes, Varsha's apparition, media visibility, activists, and litigation converge. To attribute the event solely to Varsha's recovered powers would reproduce the individualism the episode contests. Tipu insists elsewhere that everyone aboard produced an earlier irruption, although Noor's capacities were crucial. Agency is differentiated but collective.

This collectivity also marks a tension between posthuman and spiritual explanation. Posthuman theory can describe the event as an assemblage of bodies, affects, media, law, and animal movement. The novel's characters, however, interpret the event as assistance from the

“other side” contingent upon changes in human conduct. The first account risks translating culturally specific spirits into an academic vocabulary; the second risks making political success depend upon extraordinary intervention. Ghosh avoids choosing between them. The irruption is effective because spiritual perception, more-than-human conduct, activist preparation, and institutional opportunity coincide. No element alone guarantees the outcome. Sladja Blazan describes ecological haunting as an entanglement through which repressed relations between human and nonhuman worlds become perceptible (1–19). In *Ghost-Eye*, irruption is the public form of such perceptibility. Haunting first appears privately—in a child’s body, an old case file, a remembered taste—but becomes political when hidden relation is collectively witnessed. The climactic spectacle is therefore not an escape from material struggle. It changes what can be seen and, for a short time, what can be done.

Relational Ontology under Legal Pressure

The campaign against a proposed coal-fired power plant in the Sundarban tests whether the novel’s spiritual ontology can operate within secular law. Tipu and his allies seek recognition for a threatened island that contains a ruined temple to Manasa Devi. Their strategy invokes rights of nature: the effort to treat ecosystems or natural entities as holders of legally cognisable interests rather than as objects owned, used, or damaged by humans. The narrative regards this move as necessary, but not as a transparent conversion of sacred relation into legal form.

Rights of nature law has practical and conceptual force. Erin O’Donnell and Julia Talbot-Jones show that legal rights for rivers can unsettle property-centred environmental governance. Their effectiveness, however, depends on representation, institutional design, and the relation between legal personality and local authority. Craig Kauffman and Pamela Martin likewise find that Ecuadorian rights-of-nature cases succeed unevenly: mobilisation, enforcement capacity, and political conditions matter alongside constitutional language (130–

42). These studies illuminate the novel's refusal of legal idealism. The activists do not win because a court simply apprehends the ecosystem's sacred essence. They build a case, attract attention, generate pressure, and obtain an emergency stay. A stay interrupts construction; it is not a permanent resolution.

At the same time, the legal strategy produces a philosophical problem. Law commonly recognises a bounded subject—a river, forest, island, or species—whose interests can be articulated by human guardians. The ontology voiced in the novel is not bounded in this way. The island exists through tidal water, fish, mangroves, sediment, storms, people, deities, histories, and animal routes. To extract “nature” as a single rights-bearing person may protect it, but may also reproduce the separation between human and environment that relational thought contests.

This is the paper's central tension between spiritual ontology and nonhuman rights. By denying that the human form monopolises value, spiritual continuity expands the moral community. Legal personhood widens standing by borrowing the juridical model of the human person. The two movements converge politically but diverge conceptually. One says that beings exist through relations and changing forms; the other often secures protection by stabilising an entity that can appear before a court. *Ghost-Eye* does not solve this contradiction. It treats rights discourse as a strategic translation: partial, institutionally necessary, and open to revision.

The Manasa apparition intensifies this point. The figure witnessed above the threatened site cannot be reduced to a legal claimant, and the court does not adjudicate the goddess's metaphysical reality. Nevertheless, the apparition helps make the island's relations publicly consequential. It reorganises attention around a site that development discourse had rendered available for sacrifice. Spectral presence and legal standing thus perform related but distinct work. The former alters perception and obligation; the latter alters procedure and delay.

Rita Sherma identifies strands of Hindu ecological thought in which nature is not external to sacred reality and ethical life is grounded in reciprocity rather than mastery. This vocabulary helps explain Manasa's role, but it must be used carefully. Isha's world is not a textbook expression of a unified Hindu ecology. Her father's devotion to Manasa is joined to her Munda mother Jhorna's forest and aquatic expertise, to fishing labour, and later to Dev's Burmese Buddhist spirit relations. The novel creates a coalition of situated practices. Its relational ontology is plural and narratively assembled.

The injunction of relation also differs from a claim of universal sameness. If every being participates in a shared consciousness, unequal histories do not vanish. Isha's family is vulnerable precisely because sacred value carries little institutional weight against a gangster, the Forest Department, and a development scheme. Spiritual ontology motivates resistance but cannot redistribute power. That is why litigation, media, organisers, and crowds are indispensable to the irruption. Conversely, law without the novel's expanded field of relation could protect an entity while leaving extractive habits intact. The two frameworks remain in critical dialogue: cosmology exposes law's narrow subject; law exposes cosmology's lack of enforceable protection.

The climax makes this mutual correction explicit. More-than-human beings gather, Varsha's role becomes visible, and the court issues an emergency stay against the plant. The sequence does not license the claim that nature automatically retaliates against wrongdoing. Nor does it celebrate a singular saviour. It models ecological politics as coordinated translation across registers—ritual, affective, biological, visual, activist, and juridical. "Irruption" is the name for their temporary alignment.

Postcolonial Ecological Ethics and Environmental Justice in *Ghost Eye*

The history of Isha Mondal turns relational ontology into a question of political economy. Her father, Benoy Mondal, is a snake catcher, fisher, otter trainer, and devotee of Manasa.

Her mother, Jhorna, belongs to the Munda Adivasi community and possesses extensive knowledge of forests, rivers, fish, crustaceans, and molluscs. Isha, seventeen, is already known for cooking at rituals, weddings, and tourist boat journeys. Their freshwater pond functions simultaneously as a source of livelihood, a habitat, a shrine, and a site of knowledge. Any analysis that treats it only as symbolic nature misses the material relations the family is trying to preserve.

The threat arrives through tiger-prawn aquaculture promoted by development experts. Capital requirements ensure that wealthier operators benefit, while a politically connected gangster, Chhoto Sardar, seeks to add the Mondals' land to his operation. Benoy refuses because converting the freshwater pond to saltwater would destroy the site. After being bribed, Forest Department guards arrest him for poaching, and he never returns. Jhorna and Isha continue to resist. Gang members kill Jhorna and assault Isha; a king cobra associated with Manasa attacks the men and, after being mortally wounded, bites Isha near the heart. Islanders understand the fatal bite as saving her from rape and trafficking. The gang acquires the land, but a cyclone breaches the embankment, salinises the pond, and repeatedly frustrates the prawn scheme; Chhoto Sardar later drowns in one of his ponds.

This sequence should not be rearranged into a timeless legend of divine revenge. It is a history of institutions and asymmetrical force: expert-led development, capital-intensive aquaculture, political patronage, carceral conservation, gendered violence, and hydrological change. Manasa's intervention gives the history a moral and spiritual interpretation, but does not undo the deaths or restore the land. Indeed, the same cobra both resists the attackers and kills the person it protects. The episode preserves tragedy within justice.

Postcolonial ecocriticism is necessary because it asks how environmental transformation is organised by histories of empire, development, and uneven vulnerability rather than by an undifferentiated humanity (DeLoughrey 3–5). Malcolm Sen's account of spatial justice

similarly connects ecological imperatives to the geographies produced by postcolonial development (365–77). The Mondals' dispossession demonstrates both points. The ecological knowledge most relevant to maintaining the pond belongs to those with the least influence over the state agencies and markets reshaping it. "Development" does not simply fail to include them; it converts their refusal into an obstacle.

Ghosh has explored this collision before. In *The Hungry Tide*, the Sundarban is a field where conservation, refugee history, scientific research, livelihood, and state violence cannot be separated. Jana María Giles and Rajender Kaur have shown, in different ways, that the novel's aesthetics and cross-cultural encounters make environmental judgement inseparable from postcolonial place (Giles 223–42; Kaur 125–41). *Ghost-Eye* returns to the region with an altered temporal mechanism. Where *The Hungry Tide* recovers suppressed history through testimony and encounter, *Ghost-Eye* makes dispossession recur in bodies and species. Reincarnation becomes a narrative answer to archival erasure: Isha's knowledge and claims survive the institutions that failed her.

However, survival is not automatic redemption. Varsha's later wealth as Monsoon Abhayaputri gives her resources unavailable to Isha, but wealth alone cannot restore her memory of the earlier life. Recognition requires the photographs, Shoma's notes, fish, Dev's account, and the ghost-eye network. Nor does Varsha personally command the entire campaign. Tipu, Rafi, Piya, local activists, lawyers, animals, crowds, and other ghost-eyes form the infrastructure through which memory can act. The contrast between Isha's isolation and the coalition around the threatened temple suggests the novel's political lesson: relational being must become organised relation.

Tipu's critique of a "war of extermination" places that organisation within global climate inequality (Ghosh 232). He links the exposure of poor Black and Brown people to the consumption of the affluent and attacks corporate 'solutions'. He also invokes the loss of

diverse rice varieties under the Green Revolution. This language risks becoming schematic if separated from the Mondals' story. Read together, however, the local case gives specificity to the global claim. Agricultural standardisation and prawn aquaculture are not identical processes, but both privilege scalable expertise and capital over situated diversity.

Ramachandra Guha and Joan Martínez-Alier's "environmentalism of the poor" describes struggles in which ecological defence is inseparable from livelihood and distributive justice (3–7). The concept clarifies the Mondals' resistance, while the novel complicates any romantic image of local community. Nirmal and Nilima cannot protect the family; hydrologists and islanders interpret the failed pond differently; poverty does not confer automatic solidarity or perfect knowledge. The point is not that a homogeneous community speaks for nature; rather, ecological decisions reflect unequal distributions of authority.

The Great Derangement argues that modern literary and political forms have often rendered climate events improbable, peripheral, or difficult to imagine (Ghosh 7–11). *Ghost-Eye* answers this problem formally by refusing a realism that excludes improbable agency in advance. Cyclones, apparitions, reincarnation, animal gatherings, and legal strategy occupy one narrative field. This expanded realism does not replace causal analysis with miracle. Rather, it makes visible how catastrophe, extraction, memory, and cosmology coexist in lives that secular developmental reason divides into separate domains.

The return of Isha and the otter is therefore political not because past lives provide secret information that solves a policy dispute, but because they reorganise obligation. Dinu's attachment to Varsha is inseparable from his implication in fishing; Varsha's power is inseparable from Isha's dispossession; the island's threatened present is inseparable from a pond already destroyed by profit and force. Trans-species hauntology binds these scales. It demands not reverence for an abstract Nature, but response to specific relations that violence has interrupted and institutions have failed to remember.

Conclusion

Ghost-Eye presents a groundbreaking perspective on relationships. It challenges the notion of human existence as separate from the nonhuman realm, memory, history, or spirituality. In the concluding telephone conversation, Dev Thapa describes the ‘cosmic continuity,’ linking Dinu and Varsha across lives. As Varsha sits beside him in Virginia, Dinu begins to accept an identity that exceeds the human. *Ghost-Eye* explores the continuity of radical relationships by crafting a fictional world where humans are inherently intertwined with fish, snakes, trees, rivers, spirits, ancestors, ecological forces, and systems of injustice. This creative endeavour fundamentally questions anthropocentrism.

This study argues that the novel’s greater accomplishment lies in making the interconnectedness of life central to both its form and ethics. *Ghost-Eye* challenges the dichotomies of human and nonhuman, nature and culture, individual and collective, present and past, showing that they are not separate worlds but are all part of the same world of existence. It suggests that imaginative stories can help develop a humble attitude towards the nonhuman world by offering the possibility of unlikely stories that can uncover ecological entanglements. The novel conceptualises this relational world through plural traditions of rebirth, karmic connection, reverence, and cosmic continuity, including Manasa worship, Munda ecological knowledge, and Burmese Buddhist spirit practice. Ecocriticism and postcolonial ecocriticism connect these concerns to contemporary crises of climate, colonial afterlives, unequal vulnerability, and ecological justice. Hauntology, meanwhile, frames memory as both warning and witness: suppressed relations return to make ethical claims upon the present. Taken together, these frameworks make it apparent that Ghosh’s ecological imagination is not decorative. It has a lofty architecture, morals and ideals.

Ghosh’s conclusion calls for a ‘ghost-eye’ approach: ecological wisdom from local memory. Dinu’s movement from sceptical antiquarian to a participant in Tipu’s planned intervention

marks a shift from detached observation towards relational responsibility. He opens himself up to the interdependence of all life. The Guardian critic envisions an “eternal ecological hive mind” among humans, animals, and plants in Ghosh’s work. In the final scene, Dinu’s life is complete: the natural world resonates to him, and he feels himself to be a part of a glowing living cosmos. Thus, the novel leaves us with a compelling truth: life does not exist in fragments. It exists in continuities. A child remembers the fish she never ate. A tree calls a snake. The goddess should not be forgotten. An otter’s life enters human understanding. Rivers ask for rights. Old knowledge rests on imperial arrogance. Hidden worlds reveal themselves when catastrophes approach one another. Taken together, these moments form not an escape from reality but a fuller reality—one in which ethical responsibility begins with the recognition that no life stands alone. This is why *Ghost-Eye* feels so urgent. It reminds us that to injure the world is to injure a shared field of existence, and to care for the world is to recover an older, deeper way of belonging within it.

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