Fokir, the illiterate fisherman and protege of Kanai's aunt who serves as her guide. Ghosh's novel takes as its task the exploration of a vast field of human communication, testing both its possibilities and its limits as the characters seek to cross multiple barriers - the barriers of language, religion and social class, those between human beings and nature, between traditional and cosmopolitan India, between urban and rural, between India and the wider world. The tension between global and local is articulated through the characters. The hungry tide has claimed its sacrificial victim in Fokir. In the end, Piya plans a memorial to him and even begins to speak of the Sundarbans as "home". The utopian goal of mutual understanding, implicit in this novel's recurrent theme of translation, begins to appear as something actually possible. As both Piya and Kanai seem to morph into a new kind of cosmopolitan who can actually feel at home in a place like the tide country, one can find that Ghosh's fiction opens up new and unexpected perspectives: the postcolonial text, product and reflection of a translated world.

In fact, Ghosh has used history, fantasy and fiction effectively in all his ouevres. As he is a social anthropologist, in all his ouevres he makes use of history and anthropology. He blends fact and fiction. He makes the personal history a history of a nation, science as counter-science and personal / private story as a public history. His world of art is filled with people from pure imagination and history. His is a world of history, fantasy and fiction.

References


