Chapter III

Sense of Place: History, Place and Location in the Select Novels

I suggest we think about places in the context of two reciprocal movements which can be observed among most living forms: like breathing in and out, most life forms need a home and horizons of reach outward from that home. The lived reciprocity of rest and movement, territory and range, security and adventure, housekeeping and husbandry, community building and social organization - these experiences may be universal among the inhabitants of Planet Earth. (Buttimer - “Home, Reach, and the Sense of Place”, 170)

After all, in all the thousands of years of Indian history, there never was such a creature as a united India. Nobody ever managed to rule the whole place, not the Mughals, not the British. And then, that midnight, the thing that had never existed was suddenly ‘free’. But what on earth was it? On what common ground (if any) did it, does it, stand? (Imaginary Homelands, p.27)

Contemporary Indian novelists writing in English exhibit the smell of soil and local histories/cultural histories in their writings as much as their counterparts writing in regional languages do. As far as they are concerned, India is a “place - the word evokes geography and culture; it conjures up history and myth” (Macdonald). The sense of place becomes meaningful when one feels one with a particular terrain. It compels one’s body and mind to come to grips with one’s environment. It comprises a sense of community. It helps to acquire experience of solidarity with others who occupy same place. On the other hand, we might experience the people and animals and vegetation of our region as competitors in our effort to build a place for ourselves. The novelists’ presentation of characters’ responses to places change over time. They construct and deconstruct and reconstruct places. People seek security from the place where they are rooted. They would prefer their home – place superior to the present location because many
of them feel out of place in situations of exile or Diasporas. They are torn between one or more places.

Salman Rushdie’s focus on place in all of his novels is not merely as a physical location or place, but also as an idea, a mental construction which captures and directs the human relationship to the world. The novelists of post independence India try to find place as well as create one for them. The characters in select novels place themselves geographically, psychologically, socially, culturally, chronologically, historically and spiritually in order to build a place for their own. This chapter discusses how places are known, imagined, remembered, historicized, and struggled for, and their significance for orienting human lives. This chapter also attempts to show how the characters by inhabiting, visiting, and contemplating, conceive and construct places. Although all the select novels for the dissertation focus mostly on the above-mentioned themes, only three of them are dealt here in detail manner. They are Salman Rushdie’s The Moor’s Last Sigh (1995) and Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide (2004) and Sea of Poppies (2008). The select novels will be cited hereafter in the dissertation as Midnight’s Children - MC, The Moor’s Last Sigh - MLS, The Enchantress of Florence - EOF, Great Indian Novel - GIN, Red Earth and Pouring Rain - REPR, The Hungry Tide - HT, Sea of Poppies - SOP, and Chanykaya’s Chant - CC.

A place is generally meant to be a meaningful habitation which has been once raw environment or a space. Human beings have converted it to their good. Thus, a place is a physical location. The novelists present places, not mere physical location, spatial and temporal notion but portray places as poetic and aesthetic conception and historical and political strategy. Commenting on Burke’s quotation Raymond Williams says that

Perhaps rude, there, makes some slight difference, but what is most striking is the coexistence of that common idea, a state of nature, with the almost unnoticed because so habitual use of nature to indicate the inherent quality of the agreement. That sense of nature as the inherent and essential quality of any particular thing is, of course, much more than accidental. (Williams)

Salman Rushdie’s The Moor’s Last Sigh and The Enchantress of Florence and Ashwin Sanghi’s Chanakya’s Chant produce places as motherland where a unified whole is hoped for with existing differences and different diversity. On the other hand Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide and Sea of Poppies show the displaced people and how they yearn for home, home-places
where they may settle down as their own meaningful worlds and communities. As Allan Pred
has suggested, place is “a historically contingent process” which appropriates and transforms
space and nature.

   In Chanakya’s Chant sense of history, place and location have been predominant one
where the crux and key focus of the protagonists is rootedness and belonging as a whole. That is
the reason why the prominent characters Gangasagar and Chanakya strive for uniting India/
Bharat respectively. These characters’ single-minded aim is to have united India and to achieve
this goal they go to any extreme creating politics based on caste, religion, culture, and
geography. A historical monument inscribed in Sanskrit with some magical chant has been in the
historical place of Pataliputra or the present location of Patna, one of the states of India which
forms a moving force for Gangasagar to achieve his aim. Although Gangasagar strives for the
united India he does not feel the entire India his home but in the beginning of the novel we see
him in his deathbed longing to go to his birthplace. “He refused to bloody die in a hospital bed in
New Delhi or Mumbai. Kanpur was home and he would go meet his maker from his own abode
and on his own terms” (CC vii).

   During Chanakya’s period, the roof of Magadha’s great audience hall is represented/
described with rich furnishings. The historical markers/cues are “eight massive pillars”, “rich
furnishings and tapestries embellished the court of the world’s richest king”, “a Buddhist
monastery”, and “an ayurvedic hospital”, (CC 4) which give a good impression of the place of
ancient India. These cues show the religious, material and spiritual progress of Bharat and
increase the sense of place in the minds of readers at present. In contrast to this, Gangasagar is
surprised to look at the contemporary condition of the very same historical place.

   Chanakya is sent to Takshila University to be educated. The greatness of Takshila
University tops the historical significance and the great position once it dominated. It throws
light on India’s greatness with regard to education and tradition. The university is one of the
world’s first universities with thousands of students and more than sixty subjects. Today we go
abroad to have education but in ancient time students from all over the world have come to India
to have education. The Takshila University is situated in very natural and ecological
surroundings. It is “filled with smells of temple incense and sounds of morning recitations of the
Vedas. The well-planned streets were being swept and watered” (CC 34). The palace and streets
of the university are kept neat and tidy, appears holistic and peaceful. In contrast to this, the
kingdom of Dhananada, as Shaktar says is a place where “girls are routinely found on the banks
of the Ganges - raped, murdered, or both” (CC 5). The representation of place in historical narration in the novel comments on the present condition of place in India.

Time has changed everything. The location is not the same as we encountered in the earlier time. Chanakaya comes walking to his birthplace after the education in Takshila University. He finds a lot of changes in Pataliputra. The place has grown in size. It is also grown in size in “indulgence, licentiousness, corruption and debauchery” (CC 48). The city has become very worst in the eyes of Chanakya after ten years at the same time he observes that most of the cities seemed to be unchanged, “the streets, the houses and even the street corner oil fired lamps looked unchanged” (CC 49). Ancient India is fresh, green, described as being orderly, neat and tidy. In contrast to this, present India is full of dusty, dirty, noisy, and ecologically dangerous place. Modern Kanpur is described thus:

The dusty Birhana Road of Kanpur was a foodie’s delight at most times of the day. Little roadside shops served mouth – watering snacks – golpappas, aloo tikki, dahi kachori – sweet – and – sour savouries made from the unhealthiest ingredients that one could imagine: deep-fried potatoes, refined flour, sugar, and salt...Traffic clogged the street at all times of the day – auto rickshaws spewing thick black fumes, cars, scooters, handcarts, buffaloes, cows, and humans. The air was dirty but exciting nonetheless. Smells of sweat and urine mingled with carbon monoxide, fried food, and incense from the temples that surrounded the area. (CC 12)

When Gangasagar and Mohanlal visit Patna, (yester year’s name Patna); Gangasagar recognises the significance of the historical place. Time has consumed the place. He says, “Pataliputra was the capital of Chandragupta Maurya’s massive empire two thousand three hundred years ago. Difficult to imagine, given the pathetic state of Patna” (CC 28). Gangasagar allowing his passion for history to take over observes the ruins of Pataliputra. The description of Magadha’s great audience hall in the narrative of Chanakya’s history is juxtaposed by the pathetic condition of the same hall in the narrative of present time. The present condition of historical place is described as:

At centre of the Kumhrar site stood eighty massive pillars, probably once part of Magadha’s great audience hall. Of course, there was no roof, no polished floor, no tapestry, no rich furnishings, which would once have embellished the court of the world’s richest king. Some distance away stood the ruins of a Durakhi Devi temple, a Buddhist
monastery as well as an ayurvedic hospital. ‘This must have been one hell of a kingdom’. 
(CC 31)

Kanpur is the place where rich people lived in high sophisticated life contrasted by the poorest of the poor working in tanneries. “For the wealthy of Kanpur, slums like this one were embarrassing boils that needed to be lanced; for those who lived in them, the slum was their only source of sustenance – no matter how wretched” (CC 58). In the present time narrative England is described as a neat and tidy. Chandini is surprised of the maintenance of eight hundred years old architecture. The architectural grandeur and historical import of the university, the glorious buildings of the Bodlenian Library have been well kept in order to maintain “a heady mix of history, culture, liberated thought and intellectual freedom” (CC 101). Chandini finds England to be a God bestowed land where God blesses “all of nature’s abundance and splendour on a single city” (CC 101). The implication and description of ancient historical place in the present time narration show how poorly Indian political figures have maintained those great places of Chanakya’s time. The condition of Bihar is far away from civilization. Jitaura Musahar Tola is a village without roads, electricity, drinking water, schools or hospitals. Chandini wants to develop this area. (CC 390-91).

Akbar’s questions and mysteries about life are exhibited by the city, “Sikri in shadow seemed to embody the great mysteries of life” (EOF 386). According to Meenakshi Bharat, The Enchantress of Florence is the novel which has all the concerns of Salman Rushdie like magic realism, religion, power structures, globalization, colonization, history and exile. Bharat says that the act of storytelling dominates in this novel above all his techniques. The novel is narrated by several narrators employing story within a story which incorporate several histories covering places, cultures, religious ideas. In this connection, Bharat says that “somewhere along the narrational way, the act of storytelling takes over the storyteller” (313). His point is that the act of storytelling serves for the understanding of the self and the world; of the creator and his craft which Rushdie poses through story of coils. This extends the point of discussion further because Rushdie has always pointed out the importance of place. He reiterates the imaginary concept of place in the novel.

The novel leaves the narrative space where in all the narrative stories in the novel where the use of enchantment gives a space for mind. This is physically represented by the nine stars of Akbar’s court. They are memory compartments as Amor de Mugol says. As he loses one by one he also loses his power of imagination as the last one among the nine dies the whole land of Sikri
becomes barren without water. In the beginning of the novel, the aim of the traveller is described with the colonial motive that is “a portion of his treasure to be poured into a giant hollow in the earth to dazzle and awe his guests” (EOF 5). Thus, though the entire novel seems to represent the physical place, the fluidity of place is hinted. Rushdie has blatantly brought out the mental space of the East and the West. The concept of culture, religion, geographical and ideological space is acquired, imparted, shared, exchanged similarities, come to mutual understanding of place psychologically through imagination.

The imagined vision of Sikri is presented not in realist fictional physical location but through imagined location with magic realism heavily involved.

And here again with bright silks flying like banners from red palace windows was Sikri, shimmering in the heat like an opium vision. Here at last with its strutting peacocks and dancing girls was home. If the war torn world was a harsh truth then Sikri was a beautiful lie. (EOF 53)

The concept of imaginary place, location and world is realized by Uccello di Firenze as he tells the doctor in the ship about the insensate man that the man need not wake up because “in this loveless world it may be that it’s wiser to dream than to awake”. (EOF 25)

Rushdie describes the in-betweenes of place, in fact the fictional element of place. The cities of Akbar’s empire get “the impression of being eternal almost”, (EOF 33) as soon as they are captured. In the case of Sikri, it “would always look like a mirage” (33). The line between real and unreal, border and borderless of place, physical location and mental location merge as Amitav Ghosh says that no one can tell which water is pure in Sea of Poppies. Rushdie says about the climate of Sikri that the day’s heat of Sikri “deafening human ears to all sounds, making the air quiver like a frightened blackbuck, and weakening the border between sanity and delirium, between what was fanciful and what was real”. (33)

Akbar is a bundle of contradictions. He prefers Jodha to real wives. He prefers to address himself ‘we’ to ‘I’ with plurality and peaceful king to angry king. Later at the end of the novel he prefers Qara Koz to Jodha and his version of stories to what is said by the traveller. Rushdie builds up enthralling universe by weaving of spells with words that make up story. He presents not only an imaginary universe with historical places but also makes the audience conscious of story within the story by creating metatextual awareness of the power of the fabricated story, the formulated word. Like Sikri, the formulations of words seem mirage.
According to Bharat, the novel accords this kind of respectful space to “the act of storytelling as an important element in the exercise of identity building and in the investment of meaning” (317). Rushdie uses “Hell”, “Heaven”, “eternity” and “being” which create religious and metaphysical space. In the beginning of the novel the traveller wants to tell the story to the Great Akbar. Amor de Mogul has chosen his listener. He travels crossing continents, countries, cultures at the same time the stories also travel by growing itself. The story itself can be considered as a place which can take shapes, and influence the listener and his / her identity. Commenting on the story in the novel Bharat says the archetypal signifying implication of this motif of travel is growth. He says that travel is physically mirrored in the way in which a story itself grows. “As it travels, as the teller travels, the story grows, adding more volume to it. Moreover, the story teller too picks up more stories as he travels” (319). This can be seen in the narration of Amor de mogul, Qara Koz, and many others in the novel.

Responding to Mogor d’ Amor, Akbar says in tongue – in – cheek manner about the journey of Indian people with respect to religious motive. Akbar points out that the purpose of a traveller is to take on the impossible. He is experimenting with death, purification, and magnification of the soul and thus it becomes a journey towards God himself. About these travellers in search of God, Akbar says that “they have barely begun their labours, yet they have already collected one million names. Such a proliferation of divinity!” (EOF 175). Since India has multiple supernatural elements, gods, larger than people, are “happy to live in so magical a world” (175). This is the reason why Qara Koz’s presence as a presence in Akbar’s court has created restlessness in the Turani colony where the Persian and the Indian Muslims lived. On the other hand the non-Islamic polytheists from India have felt little change. The land and every nook and corner of region is filled with numerous gods- “everything contained gods, trees contained spirits, and so did rivers, and heaven alone knew what else” (EOF 410). They have little concern adding one more miraculous being Qara Koz into their list.

When Akbar orders Dashwanth to paint Qara Koz into the World he paints creating a place of characters, tales into shapes. In the process of painting “the hidden princess” Dashwanth submerges his self and loses his identity within the recess of the narrative. His pictorial place, rather imaginary place, has much power to create life and blood characters. Similarly Qara Koz has taken an imaginary identity of mental place where whoever comes to know her story, especially men, will be attracted. Her female shakthi would pull the men creating her a new identity.
This was the inevitable consequence of having chosen to step away from her natural world. The day she refused to return to Mughal court with her sister Khanzada she had learned not only that a woman could choose her own road, but such choices had consequences that could not be erased from the record. She had made her choice and what followed, followed, and she had no regrets, but she did, from time to time, suffer the black terror...Qara Koz had learned that her power over men would permit her to shape her life’s journey but she had also understood that that act of shaping would entail great loss. (EOF 323)

On the other hand Meenakshi Bharat limits the novel which displays motive, impulse, vision and aim. On the contrary, the novel expresses the concern for place in history which will always take metamorphosis through stories (histories). These histories formulate mental identity. They indulge with places, and characters that are to be historical. The narrative gives these cues in order to form imaginary homeland as fresh as possible.

Sense of place and recognition of place in the court of Akbar has been described in two ways. The fictional historical place of Akbar’s kingdom and the region and place represented in the stories are told by Amor de Mogul. On the other hand, the tales told by him have many places and regions which represent actual world, fictional world and the magical New World concept with different culture, life of people. After listening to stories after stories, though Akbar seems convinced in the beginning and middle of the novel, he doubts the authenticity of the incidents narrated by Amor de mogul. Akbar gives his version of the story which Amor disagrees to agree.

Amitav Ghosh is an internationally recognised Indian English novelist. He is concerned with Indian history-the people and places and the culture of the land. This is exhibited in his very first novel The Circle of Reason attempting to recover a continuing of cultural exchange for India. Commenting on this novel, Robert Dixon says that “the fact that Amitav Ghosh has been able to move freely in his writing between anthropology, history and fiction is symptomatic of the extent to which traditional boundaries between those disciplines have themselves broken down”. (13)

Sea of Poppies is the proposed trilogy novel by Ghosh divided into three parts- “land”, “river”, and “sea”. Similarly The Hungry Tide of Ghosh is a novel divided into two parts - “the ebb” and “the flood”. Ghosh’s division of the novels shows his concern with place. His engagement with place of water is more than the place of terrain. This gives enough cues of his
concern with fluidity of place. This water motif washes all the identity with respect to caste, language, religion, place and culture.

Most of Ghosh’s works blatantly display his concern for people as he is an anthropologist and for the porosity of cultural boundaries. The characters in his novels do not occupy discrete cultures, but “dwell in travel” in cultural spaces that flow across borders - the shadow lines drawn around modern nation states. Ghosh seems to portray the idea of universal humanity. This can be due to his appreciation and translation of Rabindranath Tagore’s works. Tagore has influenced him. Ghosh admits this in his prose work, The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces (2002). He says,

The next selection is my translation of Tagore’s classic short story, “Kshudito Pashan”, a work to which I am greatly attached. As an allegory of the colonial condition, it is a work of extraordinary suggestive power and atmospheric riches. I finished the translation shortly before writing The Calcutta Chromosome and it was to have a profound influence on that novel, as well as its successor, The Glass Palace. (xii)

His novels bear Tagorian undertone and the notions of universal humanity. However, Ghosh does not stop his venture in proclaiming the endless departure and arrival in human nature. He continues the same themes in his latest novels in different modules and different time perspectives.

Ghosh’s sense of place, history, location is accessed consistently in all of his novels. Commenting on In an Antique Land, Padmini Mongia says that the novel offers “alternate histories and does so by challenging not only the boundaries of travel writing, but also those of fiction, anthropology and academic history writing” (89). Anjali Gera observes Ghosh’s Shadow Lines that the novel “attempts to explore the disjuncture between multiple constructions of the nation in the Indian imaginary. Ghosh also confronts imperialist history, the chief instrument of the disruption of colonized place, with the prehistory of India”. (110)

In Sea of Poppies, Ghosh divides the novel in such a way that the place, people, culture, race, caste, and ethnicity lose their original identity blurring into new identity. In part one “Land” the place is described well where interpretation can be on the rigid, strict laws of society in the terrain. The chief characters in the novel depart from the terrain willingly and unwillingly as the time condition demand them to do so. One of the chief characters, Deeti flees from her hometown to unknown place because of the torture in her in-laws’ house by exchanging
impotent husband and from the *sati* the social evil. Kaluva is an ox cart driver belonging to *chamar* community, considered the low caste, who has saved Deeti from the Sati rite. He is ill-treated in the society. Other coolies, and runaway people suffer the societal pressure and laws.

Deeti and Kaluva meet in the river in the second part “river” which loosens the rigidity of place in the terrain. It is not that all characters do not like their hometown, regional place but the laws and societal commitments have made them depart. For some, they want to escape from the place and others want to seek livelihood in some other places. They seek freedom of individual identity.

The life in the ship, *the Ibis* is compelling people to get involved in close friendship as “jahai bhai and bahen”. The place in sea has washed all borders. Babu Nob Kissin has got dual religion and dual physical identity. Paulette has disguised herself like viola in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. Deeti and Kaluva change their names and Deeti goes one step further changing even her caste into a lower one. Notwithstanding the real identities of land the shipmates have indulged in fusion crossing across all barriers. Om Prakash Dwivedi has critiqued the sense of place in this respect:

Ghosh’s *Ibis*, thus, becomes a vessel where identities are lost and rediscovered. Deeti’s isolated and insignificant life gets galvanized during her stay on the *Ibis* where she becomes pregnant... The *Ibis* has also been responsible for engulfing the lives of three *girmityyas*...It may not be improper to state that Ghosh makes the *Ibis* a symbol of joint family (though here the family members are drawn from different castes). Deeti also thinks the same when she remarks that “they were all kins now”. (221)

Ghosh has offered the pathetic condition of Indians in the past and present, in the sense, the government of India has been changed but the plights / flights of people have never changed. Both the novels deal with people who are ‘out of place’ and seeking for ‘a home’. *Sea of Poppies* is set in colonial time. It offers stories of individual which form history of dispossessed during the British Empire. Similarly in *The Hungry Tide*, the novel is set in a postcolonial India, with its colonial past and unchanged condition of people such as: the Dalits, the minorities and farmers. There is not much difference between the two novels. In *The Hungry Tide*, the place is uncertain, uncanny. In *Sea of Poppies*, the people are uncertain, uncanny – including Raja. Ghosh has referred to the place, people and animals as ghosts. Since no one can see ghosts, the uncertainty and uncanny feeling about the place and people become ghost. Although the people are very much there in the place, they treated like ghosts in India.
The Hungry Tide is set in a north-eastern part of India and Bangladesh. This place called the Sundarbans which is “interposed between the sea and the plains of Bengal, lies in immense archipelago of islands” (HT 6). This watery forest archipelago is submerged and covered mostly with mangrove trees. No doubt one third of the Sundarbans is with India and the rest is with Bangladesh. The nature of sea and the relationship between water and land are ‘always mutating, always unpredictable” (HT 7). The condition of the islands which are the trailing threads of India’s fabric, the ragged fringe of her sari, the anchel that follows her, half wetted by the sea” have been washed the recorded history by water.

There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as far as three hundred kilometres inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater only to re-emerge hours later. The currents are so powerful as to reshape the islands almost daily – some days the water tears away entire promontories and peninsula; at other times it throws up new shelves and sandbanks where there were none before. (HT 7)

The entire novel presents ecosystem of fresh and salt water where the struggle between human beings and nature are in eternal fight to live side by side. The novel brings up many representations against this complex ecosystem.

The novel starts with one of the protagonists Kanai Dutt. He is a linguist who runs a translation office in Delhi. He helps Piya Roy in the manner of interpreting, translating and guiding. Piya Roy is an Americanized Indian who being a Cetologist wants to find and map the nature and behaviour of rare freshwater dolphins. They are called Orcaella. On the other hand Kanai’s aunt Nilima runs a hospital and an NGO for the people of the Sundarbans. The sub plot of the story is told through the writings (letters, diaries) of Nirmal. Nirmal is Kanai’s uncle and a former Marxist schoolteacher. The observations of actual historical events are recorded by Nirmal in his diary. The diary describes the eviction and massacre of Bengali refugees from the island of Marichjhapi by the Leftist government - the CPI (M) – of West Bengal in May 1979. The other vital point of the novel is the impossibility of translation and language. This is exhibited through the important character, Fokir. He is the son of Kusum. He is illiterate but knows how to navigate the waters and the intricacies of the channels in the Sundarbans. Thus the novel represents nature, history and language. Yet other vital aspect of the novel is about the poor people who are dispossessed and displaced in the democratic country. They do not have a
permanent place. They are seen as invisibles. Ghosh uses the imagery of ghosts in the novel right from the beginning till the end.

The issues of contemporary India are seeking boundary, wanting possession of land, demanding linguistic division of the already existing geographical division of the country. For instance, separate Telungana in Andhra Pradesh. A country like India concentrates on the issues that will secure vote bank for the political parties. Ghosh has juxtaposed invisible people, poor homeless people with the characters who are modern and powerful. They are treated as Ghosts and invisibles. Kanai says that we are aware that the government has ignored the death of these poor people. He says,

‘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 earth it would be called a genocide, and yet here it goes almost unmarked: 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. (HT 300)

Kanai feels for human deaths. On the contrary Piya feels for the death of the tigers. There is an uncanny on the part of human consciousness. Kanai raises a question if a tiger kills a person in America the government keeps in silent. In fact, “there are more tigers living in America, in captivity, than they are in all of India” (HT 301).

Ghosh has used some intertextual continuity of his own novels. He refers to Calcutta/Kolkata, Burma and Cambodia. He is at ease with English and Bengali. The Hungry Tide and Sea of Poppies continue in the line of Ghosh’s earlier work notably The Shadow Lines and The Glass Palace by drawing on his family history. The fictitious character Nirmal, the school teacher who is Kanai’s uncle in the novel is partly based on Ghosh’s actual uncle. Ghosh says in his “Author’s Note”, “My uncle, the late Shri Chandra Ghosh, was for more than a decade the headmaster of the Rural Reconstruction Institute founded by Sir Daniel Hamilton in Gosaba” (401).

The novel also presents culture where translation is involved. Fokir’s song contains the spirit of place and history which is very difficult for Kanai to translate. Land and Water, Government and People, Human and Nature, Culture and Language – there is confusion and fusion among all of these which are the very theme of Ghosh. One can understand through institution. It takes place
in the case of Piya and Fokir’s encounter. Kanai says to Piya, “I think you’ll be able to manage perfectly well without a translator” (HT 333).

Ghosh seems to make the whole events uncanny. The narration of the novel is in the form of storytelling. Kanai reads the writings of events by Nirmal which is oral narration. On the other hand the writings themselves are oral narration of Nirmal to Horen. Ghosh uses some devices of literary communication limited in its function. The reader of the novel is forced to imagine in Bengali though the author has written the events in English since they are supposed to be in Bengali. In connection with this Kevin Paul Smith says,

> The storyteller deconstructs the binary of speech and writing and shows that speech is already infected with writing. By depicting a traditional oral storytelling situation within a reified commodity, the novel, those authors who utilize the storyteller draw attention to the differences and similarities between speech and writing. (129)

Ghosh wants to show how the tug of war between written texts/orality, translator/interpreter, exist and there is no clear boundary to demark them. Nirmal uses oral tradition of storytelling in order to “highlight the fact that there is more than one way to make sense of self” (129).

Kanai indulges both in translation and orality. As an interpreter he has to speak about different angles of the written text. His function as a translator fails when he is asked to translate Fokir’s folk song. Similarly Kanai comes to terms with his past history through a written text, his uncle’s journal. Written text and Oral text are juxtaposed. Piya is on the side of her scientific written reports and data sheets. On the other hand, Fokir is illiterate. His illiteracy helps Piya more than anybody in the novel. Though the oral narration of Fokir fails, his institution succeeds in communicating with Piya. On the contrary the same illiteracy of Fokir causes tension between him and his upwardly mobile and literate wife, the nurse Moyona. This play of written text and oral text also finds place in *Sea of Poppies*. In fact the storytelling among the convicts and staves keep them moving in the Ibis. India is a country where a written text, literature strikes a balance with multiple oral traditions. All selected novels have involved the popular storytelling tradition. As mentioned above, though *The Hungry Tide* is a written text it has rich oral tradition.

Nirmal compares himself to “some misplaced, misguided Scheherazade, I am trying to stave the night off with a flying, fleeting pen...” (HT 148). Christopher Rollason observes “the oral narrative tradition is crucial: thus, Nirmal’s journal has an episode in which he converts material
from a book he is reading into oral form to make it accessible to his Villager companion, Horen, “Saar, what is that you’re reading? Are there any stories in it? Why not tell me too...” (HT 145). (HT 164). Ghosh also uses the tell-tale verb ‘Listen’ as Rushdie, Tharoor and Vikram Chandra in order to give cue of the storyteller.

“All right, then...Listen” (HT 145).

“Listen, sister, we’ll tell you; this is the story” (HT 164).

Ghosh seems to problematize the role of translator and interpreter. He shows the barrier of language and limitations of translation. Observing the novel’s devices of literary communication, Christopher Rollason says,

It is, if in the complex and multiple social universe bequeathed by colonization and traversed by globalization, even so basic a phenomenon as human communication has, more often than not, to be handled at one remove, indirectly, through a process of mediation that may also prove a distortion. Nonetheless, to translate is, necessarily, to communicate, however imperfectly, across human-made barriers. (165)

Ghosh brings this ‘distortion’, the difficult aspects of culture and gradually the government’s attitude towards the dispossessed. Ghosh has focused his attention on the neglected issue of government in the narration. He seems to question and problematise the relationship between human beings and nature. He speaks through the mouth of Piya that the lack of balance may lead to the dangerous condition of one species living in the Universe. Piya gives the answer to how to strike balance. She says there is a big difference between preserving and keeping the animals in their habitat. “The difference... is that it was what was intended – not by you or me, but by nature, by the earth, by the planet that keeps all alive” (HT 301). Ghosh says if people decide to kill other species except human beings, the Universe will be left with human beings. “And do you think it’ll stop at that? Once we decide we can kill off other species, it’ll be people with respect to habitat have started. Pramod K. Nayar says,

Postcolonial societies like India in their quest for development often create vast numbers of dispossessed and displaced. Modernization, set in motion from around the 1950s in the form of dams, industrial projects and economic planning, has also, concomitantly, shifted large numbers of people from their habitat, professions and cultural roots. The Narmada dam alone affected 120,000 people, while the arrival of multinational industries has
resulted in a water famine affecting 300,000 people in Karnataka ... Postcolonial modernization thus results in the loss of home and homelands. (85)

The prominent theme of *The Hungry Tide* is sense of place apart from limitation and distortion of language and concern for ecosystem. Ghosh displays the position of poor dispossessed people in both *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*. The novel deals with people who are “out of place” and seeking a “home” as Arundhati Roy puts it, “millions of displaced people in India are nothing but refugees in an unacknowledged war” (Roy 65). On the other hand the novel is about point of departure and point of arrival. Ghosh has preoccupied with travel motif which is evident in most of his novels. Kanai travels to Lusbari after a very long time. Piya travels, crossing continents, to just record the movements of the fresh water dolphin; Fokir travels everyday which is the standpoint of the cause of tension between him and his wife. One thing is evident that characters are fed up of routine life. Nirmal, the headmaster feels that “the true tragedy of a routinely spent life is that its wastefulness does not become apparent till it is too late” (HT 144). He says “To stay is to be nowhere and I was happy to accept” (HT 144). Somewhat fulfilled people like Kanai, Nirmal, Piya want to explore the other side of the dispossessed. On the contrary, the poor people who are chased out of place both by Indian government and Bangladesh want permanent settlement.

The key focus of the novel is the pictorial display of the struggle between human beings and nature and the survival of the fittest in their co-habitation. Pramod K. Nayar observes that Ghosh sketches the history of the Sundarbans as a history of failed colonization by humans: Europeans, other Asians (Khmer, Javanese) but also poor Indians, “so desperate for land that they were willing to sell themselves in exchange for a bigha or two” (2004, 51) (89).

The description of the Sundarbans and its nature denies permanent settlement in that place. Human habitat is impossible to flourish in the vicinity of the islands due to tigers and nature of the land. Ghosh has shown the impossibility of inhabiting the Sundarbans. The behaviour of channels in the islands could never really be “home” because home implies stability, security and freedom from fear. Ghosh describes the Sundarbans,

> Visibility is short and the air still and fetid. At no moment can human beings have doubt of the terrains’ utter hostility to their presence, of its cunning and resourcefulness, of its determination to destroy or expel them. Every year dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage, killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles. (HT 8)
There is a situation where Ghosh poses the strangeness and says that it is hard to understand our place in the universe. He has talked about the untranslatability of culture and language. Now he gives his opinion as Pramod K. Nayar observes of the novel that, “it is in a sense of the home and homelessness in the now-land, now-water Sundarbans that the postcolonial uncanny emerges” (89). According to Pramod K. Nayar The Hungry Tide appropriates the “condition” of the uncanny in order to speak of dispossession and of those who lose their sense of home. The uncanniness doubles when the dispossessed look for a new home, in fact their old home.

The refugees from Bangladesh encounter a very different sort of land in India. They are tide country people”, but the government transports them to “a dry emptiness”. He goes on to say that all they want to do is to “plunge their hands once again in our soft, yielding tide country mud”, to return to a place that recalls their home-land (164-165)”. He says,

In The Hungry Tide the uncanny becomes the source of Ghosh’s great polities of postcolonial dispossession a politics that derives its strength from a spectropoetics. It marks a particular politics of homes, homelessness and at-home-ness and emerges as the rendering - ghostly of the dispossessed in the “doubling” of land and water, but most of all in the theme of knowledge. (90)

The novel cannot be reduced to the uncanniness which is surely seen in the narration. On the contrary the novel appropriates the arbitrary and vexing nature of national borders. It is also obsessed with more personal divisions between men and women. It shows Ghosh’s concern for the individual against broader historical and geographical backdrop. The history of the refugees and their settlement in the Sundarbans, the tiger being an endangered species and government’s decision to preserve its natural environment are major issues that coupled through forked plots in the novel. The government’s confrontations with the local people and their struggle with nature are based on history. As Ghosh describes the Sundarbans where the tide comes twice a day causing (re)shapes of the land and uproots of anything permanent. In connection with this, John C. Hawley says that The Hungry Tide’s setting makes an apt symbol for the ebb and flow of history and the uprooting of populations, both of which have come to be seen as “Ghoshian themes” (132).

Ghosh has reminded the reader the imagined geography and imaginary border. Kusum tells Nirmal that they have just crossed the border between the realm of humans, protected by Bon
Bobi, and the realm of the evil Dokkhim Rai and his demons. As Nirmal listens to this, he suddenly recognises the “imagined” nature of all such borders.

I realized, with a sense of shock, that this chimerical line was, to her and to Horen, as real as a barbed-wire fence might be to me. To me, a townsman, the tide country’s jungle was an emptiness, a place where time stood still. I saw now that this was an illusion, that exactly the opposite was true. (HT 224)

Ghosh brings up the pathetic condition of the people when the policemen orders from the police boat through the loudspeaker telling the settlers to return to the land where they have come from, the people in the boat together shouted back despite the policemen’s gunshot. Nirmal too joined in the shouting, “Who are we? We are the dispossessed”. Ghosh feels for the people, but rather “a question being addressed to the very heavens, not just for themselves, but on behalf of bewildered humankind” (HT 254). Ghosh raises the problem of place, sense of place. The refugees ask several questions for which the government has to answer though not completely. The refugees cry,

Who, indeed, are we? Where do we belong? And as I listened to the sound of those syllables, it was as if I were hearing the deepest uncertainties of my heart being spoken to the rivers and the tides. Who was I? Where did I belong? In Kolkata or in the tide country? In India or across the border? In prose or in poetry? Where else could you belong, except in the place you refused to leave? I joined my feeble voice to theirs. (HT 254)

The police and forest guards want to evacuate people from the islands in order to save the rare endangered Bengal tiger. After the burning of the tiger, the news of the killing reaches the Forest Department. “In the past, similar incidents had led to riots, shootings and large-scale arrests” (HT 296). The pathetic condition of the dispossessed people does not move the police and the government of India. The same police have indulged in crimes and corruption. Piya and Fokir find carcass of dolphin. The shape of the injury suggests that the dolphin has been hit by the propeller of a fast-moving motor boat. “It is probably some kind of official boat, used by uniformed personnel – may be from the coastguard or the police or even the Forest Department” (HT 346).

The refugees are originally from Bangladesh. Some have come to India soon after partition, the rest later. The people are the poorest of the poor, “oppressed and exploited both by Muslim
Communalists and by Hindus of the upper castes” (HT 118). Before coming to Morichjhapi, the people are sent to a place called Dandakaranya in the forests of Madhya Pradesh. These people are surrounded by security forces and forbidden to leave. Since the land is dry, rocky, unknown languages of that area and the dread of the local people with bows, arrows and other weapons the people have preferred to struggle with animal and tide country. “Morichjhapi was the place they decided on” (HT 118). The Indian government has ordered the settlers to leave the islands because this place is a protected forest reserve.

The authorities had declared that Morichjhapi was a protected forest reserve and they had proved unbending in their determination to evict the settlers over a period of about a year there had been a series of confrontations between the settlers and government forces. (HT 119)

The novel is haunted by Ghosts. The ghost imagery is used in understanding of the language as mentioned above. The same imagery dominates in the Sundarban islands when the ‘real’ tiger does not appear to the reader rather the description of its marks, sounds, smells raise the horror of tiger. Even in the burning of the tiger, the event is reported to Piya and Kanai. Ghosh describes the great cats of the tide country “were like ghosts, never revealing their presence except through marks, sounds and smells. They were so rarely seen that to behold on, it was said, was to be as good as dead”... (HT 108). The tide washes not only human inhabitants but also all that are in the land there by creates ghosts. When Nirmal indulges in the issues of Morichjhapi, his wife Nilima tries to warn him off. She describes her relationship with him, “as we were like two ghosts living in the same house” (HT 120). The entire novel is peopled by ghosts. Pramod K. Nayar interprets “The Hungry Tide is, one could agree, a ghost story: about ghosts who seek a home or a place to haunt and about people who remain ghostly and invisible to structures of seeing” (104). In addition Kusum tells the whole story of refugees and the pathetic condition they are put in “a place, such a dry emptiness” (HT 165) and they have started moving from this place “like ghosts, covered in dust, strung out in a line, shuffling beside the rail tracks” (HT 164) to “a large empty island called Morichjhaphi” (164). These refugees are Dalits and the homeless and they are made ghosts. Ghosh says in the novel that “every generation creates its own population of ghosts” (HT 50). Several people died in the Morichjhapi massacre. The ghost of these refugees would haunt future generations.

On the other hand, people like Nilima, Kanai recognize these poor people as invisible. Nilima describes them as “squatters” (HT 213). She does not bother about their plight. She warns her
husband and breaks her relationship with him. She tells of Nirmal to Kanai that Nirmal has done nothing except writing about the refugees, which are washed now. Similarly Kanai says to Piya that the government has ignored the people’s existence. When the great cats kill human beings, “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” (HT 300).

Ghosh critiques the human condition in postcolonial India. The nature of the Sundarbans leaves a place of an excuse on the part of government to ignore them. The homeless people are treated merely the objects of ever changing waves and politics. Ghosh seems to ask questions about the land rights and the rights of refugees. The dispossessed are considered ghosts because they cannot ‘lead an embodied existence’ (106). Pramod K. Nayar says, “The tide country’s history is itself a history of ghosts and refugees seeking places to haunt and home in” (106).

Recognizing them as real and living people with some possession becomes the idea of Utopia. The idea of Utopia should be a perfect world better than the actual world. Hamilton and Nirmal want to bring up the concrete historical realities of people. Their vision is to attempt to give the dispossessed to possess something of their own:

There had been many additions, many improvements. Saltpans had been created, tubewells had been planned, and water had been dammed for the rearing of fish... It was an astonishing spectacle - as though an entire civilization had sprouted suddenly in the mud. (HT 191)

However, the vision of Utopia is washed by the forces of government and the tide of Sundarban. The result of this is death of Kusum along with many fighters. Nirmal loses his sanity by depression and dies.

The Economist reviewer observes that “it is its sense of place that dominates the novel”. Ghosh himself remarks such a view in his remark of 1998: “A novel...must always be set somewhere. It must have its setting, and within the evolution of the narrative this setting must, classically, play a part almost as important as those of the characters themselves”. He has stirred the minds of the reader to feel for the dispossessed and aware of the brutality of government. The novel creates a sense of place in our hearts.

Ghosh deals with place and the plight of poor people in *Sea of Poppies* like his previous novel *The Hungry Tide*. Unlike *The Hungry Tide*, the water is not predator but the British
government which exploit the farmers by indulging in illegal opium trade. History is a recurring theme in his writings. In connection to this Brinda Bose states: “Ghosh’s fiction takes upon itself the responsibility of re-assessing its troubled antecedents, using history as a tool by which we can begin to make sense of – or at least come to terms with – our troubling present” (235).

The relationship between an author and the public is a peculiar and complicated one. On the other hand, the public has many classifications such as: men and women of different classes, religions, varying interests, passions and several degrees of intelligence. The author takes his characters from this myriad humanity when history, place and culture are intertwined. In this connection, Ralph Fox classifies the purpose of an author and his knowledge of history.

History’s most picturesque tyrants, men who ruled in a god-like isolation, have always (in legend) mingled at night-time with their subjects, carefully disguised as common men. The author who cannot do the same is condemned from the start to impotence...a false view of life, to the contempt with which history regards the unsuccessful despot...the sympathy of the author must be informed by history, he must be able to use the cultural heritage of his nation, as the people itself is able to use the political heritage. (137)

Ghosh along with Rushdie, Tharoor, and Vikram Chandra is qualified as great authors of Indian writing in English who can interweave history with fiction. They are able to play with history without renouncing their cultural past. Ghosh presents the multilayered people and their language which are past ignored history in order to highlight the present condition of people in India.

Ghosh sets Sea of Poppies in colonial past when East India Company has enjoyed its favour of the British Empire in India and also the history behind opium wars and slave trade as backdrop. The story begins with Deeti wife of the impotent Hukam Singh who works in the Ghazipur Opium Factory. Her husband dies very soon of sickness. She is forced to undergo the traditional practice Sati from which Kalua, the low caste ex-man rescues her. They escape from their village as indentured servants on the Ibis, the slave ship. In the ship they find Jodu, the young Muslim fisherman and his childhood friend Paulette, Zachary Reid, an American who is born to a slave mother and a white father, Serang Ali, the head of the lascars, Neel Rattan Halder, a rich Zamindar of Rakshali, now a slave, Ah Falh, a half-chinese from Canton, coolies, slave labourers and run away girls. Ghosh presents history of every character. Though the inmates are aware of the uncertainty ahead of them they are forced to leave their home and possessions. In the ship
they find friendship and form as a community. On the other hand the torture and ill treatment of Mr. Crowle, Bhyro Singh have made them rebel. At the end of the novel, Kalua, Zeel, SAh Falh and Sarang Ali escape.

Gaiutre Bahadur views in the *New York Times Book Review*, “Ghosh’s plot focuses on one of these villagers: Deeti, a widow who assumes another name and the (lower) caste of a new love as they escape together on the Ibis”. Ghosh has once again experimented with language. The novel displays Ghosh’s recurring theme of language, culture, history and sense of place. Ghosh himself states in the *Sunday Hindustan Times* that “history can say things in great detail, even though it may say them in rather dull factual detail. The novel on the other hand can make links that history cannot”

Ghosh sketches historical novel which is not like the historical novel that Walter Scott and Georg Lukacs have defined. On the contrary, Ghosh pens down the inner/essence of place, culture, history and language which are uncanny sometimes to explain. He mixes freely Bengali with English in *The Hungry Tide*, similarly he does in *Sea of Poppies* collaging Bhogpuri with English and other dialects with English. In India, after the advent of the English, English is the favoured language which is considered to assure respect and dignity in society. Multi – tongued states like India where people speak, ‘Hinglish’, ‘Manglish’, ‘Tanglish’, and all dialects with English are forced to take up the English language knowingly or unknowingly. Zachary has to learn to say ‘resum’ instead of mate. They sound a bit like English yet not. If one does not know the ship language, it is difficult to follow the speech like that of Serang Ali.

‘Malum Zikir no hab got dam brain inside?’ demanded the serang, arms akimbo. ‘Hab got water topside, in he head? What for wanchi flower – girl? He not big pukka sahib now? Zachary was in no mood for a lecture. ‘Get knotted, Serang Ali! Can’t nobody turn a sailor from a snatchwarren’. (SOP 22)

speaker of India would find the language and culture of the place a wonder. Shirley Chew is right when she says:

With the colourful characters, another bedazzling aspect of *Sea of Poppies* is the clash and mingling of language. Bhojpuri, Bengali, Laskari, Hindustani, Anglo-Indian words and phrases and a fantastic spectrum of English...create a vivid sense of living voices as well as linguistic resourcefulness of people in Diaspora. (Chew)

Raja Neel Ratan is a learned man who is very confident in English and speaks on par with the Britishers. He feels proud of speaking English. When the sergeant uses bad words and touches the private part of Neel, Neel responds quickly, “Sir, ‘he said, ‘Can you not afford me the dignity of a reply? Or is it that you do not trust yourself to speak English?” (289). After getting beats and tortures, Neel could not think of nothing to say, “no words of his own would come to mind” (SOP 290).

According to Alessandro Monti, *Sea of Poppies* displays the survival of the postcolonial trading idiom which means something beyond the funny wit concealing exploitation and exile for the colonized. He goes on to observe how Ghosh impresses a flavour of authenticity to his historical novel by multiple uses of words and languages. The historical language has relevance today. He says that Hindi, Anglo-Indian and Anglicized Hindustani, are languages without power. “It is indissolubly linked with colonialism and its quaint rites of passage and growing into location” (204). He says of the novel:

Apparently the novel *Sea of Poppies* deploys an unchecked and unruly feast of languages. It is a medley of hybridized tongues, these including the mixture of pidgins, such as the Lascari spoken by eastern sailors, or the highly idiolectic prattle of the Anglo-Indian circle. However the colonial Babel should not be viewed in sheer terms of free intercourse among different cultures and connecting words. Neither the novel deals with the heroic romance of colonial trade and spices, one sorely regretted by Conrad. There are no spices or silk in *Sea of Poppies*, but the colonial lust after profit and the famishing hegemony of affirm. (194-95)

This language shows a cultural space that is vast. This space is “a borderless region with its own hybrid languages and practices which circulate without national or religious boundaries” (Robert Dixon 10). Ghosh continues to remind a sense of place and people’s uncertainty with place.
Ghosh has shown in *The Hungry Tide* how the tide uproots and constantly changes anything permanent. Similar approach /aspect of life is lingering in *Sea of Poppies* where Deeti is a simple, pious woman and mother to a daughter, Kabutri but she is forced to depart from her home town to a homeless place. Ghosh uses magic realism in the beginning of the novel as Deeti has the apparition of a ship “heading in her direction” (SOP 8). She can see the entire ship and has “a sense of distinctive and unfamiliar presence”. On the other hand she has never left the district, never spoken any language except Bhojpuri. The vision has terrified her. She makes a ship along with the familiar pantheon in the shrine room to pray which is accidental or intuitive.

The child could not understand why a ship should find a place in the family pantheon. But why? She said. I don’t know, said Deeti, for she too know that it must be there and not just the ship, but also many of those who are in it;....

But who are they? said the puzzled child.

I don’t know yet, Deeti told her. But I will when I see them” (SOP 9).

Deeti certainly meets them and recognises them but could not tell her daughter because the distance is widened between them. She is sketched as pathetic, struggling for existence, her life full of ups and downs. She is in the midst of an opium addict and impotent husband, Hukum Singh, the real father of Kabutri, Chandran Singh, and tyrant mother-in-law. She says in the first night scene observing opium smoke, opium addicted husband, that she “knew on the very night when her fate had been wedded to his: it was as if the shade of Saturn had passed over her face, to remind her of her destiny” (SOP 34). In the ship one of the women, Sarju hands over a pouch of poppy seeds to Deeti whispering “there is wealth beyond imagining; guard it like your life” (SOP 450). Deeti, taking a poppy seed, thinks that it is this seed all powerful, her Saturn governed her life. She gives it to her new husband in order to forget the sufferings of life. “When Kaluva asked what she was looking at she raised her fingers to his lips and slipped into his mouth. Here, she said, taste it. It is star that took us from our homes and put us on this ship. It is the planet that rules our destiny” (SOP 452). Ghosh is right that the poppy trade of the British India have decided the poor farmers’ condition at the cost of opium industry in the British India. The East India Company grows opium seeds in Indian fertile farm lands. They are fields originally meant for food. The colonial task master converted these fields in to growing and manufacturing opium and shipping them to china. As a result the farmers are left in poverty and hunger among the local communities. There is a doubling of destiny: one is because of poverty
caused by opium production and the other is destination where they are transported to the poppy plantation. In the conversation among women in the ship comes up how the whiteman’s troops destroy the villages by flames (SOP 246). The East India Company has made treaty with the Halders, the old Zamindar who has brought money but has left, “much of the new land proved to be uncultivable” (SOP 86). Shashi Tharoor is of same opinion. He says,

The year is 1838, and the setting British India, a country immiserated by colonial rule, as fertile agricultural lands are swamped by the flower of the novel’s title, grown to produce opium that the British are exporting to addicts in an increasingly resistant China. Hungry Indian peasants, meanwhile, are being driven off their land, and many are recruited to serve as plantation labourers in far-off British colonies like Mauritius. (The Washington Post Book World).

Even the Zamindar whose family enjoyed the fruit of opium has to leave the kingdom of Rakshali. The Zamindar Zeel Rattan has been falsely accused of forgery by their family partner and core person of the East India Company. Mr. Burnham says to Raja that “times change and those who don’t change with them, are swept away” (SOP 122). Ghosh has brought out the dispossessed plight of Raja when the judge says about the Indian property as their own. He speaks to Neel that forgery is a hanging offence – “a measure which played no small part in ensuring Britain’s present prosperity and in conferring upon her the stewardship of the world’s commerce” (SOP 235).

Ghosh heightens the tragedy of Neel by making him poor, dispossessed. Neel hugs his wife and son with his chest and tells them that he would return and would take them ‘away from this accused land and we will start new lives in some other place” (SOP 271). He also involuntarily says like Deeti about the destiny caused by stars/poppy seeds: “this is the excellent foppery of the world...to make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon and the stars” (SOP 290).

Ghosh inscribes great passion and sorrow for Neel as the Ibis moves in the river, Neel watches his palace, home town and estates. He is filled with ‘shards of recollection” (SOP 374), which is “to be transformed into artefacts of a shared imagining” (SOP 375). Ghosh wants to send his characters out of land into water. In Hungry Tide all the characters are drawn towards water and wrestling with tides for their survival. Similarly like Deeti, Neel Rattan, Kalua, Paulette – a French girl, out of torture in the land runs away with Judo her childhood friend to escape. The land disturbs their lives. Most of them observe, “that life ashore was far more attractive when you were at sea than when your feet were a trip on the stick turf of lubber-land” (SOP 184).
Ghosh pushes his characters to the sections of the River and the Sea in the second and third part of the novel where all the inmates feel transformation in their lives.

Everyone in the Ibis has their share of past. “As for stories, there was no end to them” (SOP 241). Two sisters, Ratna and Champa were married to a pair of brothers. Their lands are contracted to the opium factory. They have to starve because these land “could no longer support them” (SOP 241). Then, women are ready to face fate in future in the ship. These stories take the shape of history. Ghosh creates history. All the inmates of the ship tell so many times that “they all felt as though they had lived through it themselves” (SOP 242). The nature of water is described as the ship moves slowly away from land. The ship moves crossing an invisible boundary where language is incomprehensible, landscape changes into marshes, the water is mixed with salt so that its water cannot be drunk. As far as Deeti is concerned she is filled with affection for the Ibis, “in the midst of so much that was unfamiliar and intimidating, it seemed like a great ark of comfort” (SOP 277). Everyone of them is uncertain of their journey. “It perforates the veil of everyday expectation in such a way as to reveal the prodigious darkness of the unknown” (SOP 355). They realize that they are moving, floating towards the void of the Black water” (SOP 371).

Ghosh presents imagery of river movement where everything is mixed, one cannot demark between ‘river and sea, clear and dark, known and hidden’ (SOP 396) which serve the position and free mix of caste and religion in the Ibis. Paulette tells Deeti that “on a boat of pilgrims, no one can lose caste and everyone is the same: we will all be ship-siblings-jahaz-bhais and jahas-bahens-to each other. There’ll be no differences between us” (SOP 356).

The water erases the memory of the past and creates new histories. On the contrary Deeti fears hearing voices in her conscience that she has violated by marrying Kaluva, a low caste man for which she would suffer for ‘Kalpas and yugas, into eternity’. On the other hand she gathers strength and does not bother to share Heeru’s fate. She becomes a sort of New Woman. The culture and tradition which are forced partially on women are diluted by the sea water. The extra marital relationship of Heeru, Ecka Nack and Deeti would have been inconceivable at home/land, but on the island, in the sea “surely all the old ties were immaterial now that the sea had washed away their past” (SOP 431). Deeti recognises Ecka Nack who has more than one wife and feels happy, right and honourable.

Now that they were all cut off from home, there was nothing to present men and women from paring off in secret, as beasts, demons and pishaches were said to do: there was no
pressing reason for them to seek the sanction of anything other than their own desires. With no parents or elders to decide on these matters, who knew what was the right way to make a marriage? And wasn’t it herself who had said, at the start, that they were all kin now; that their rebirth in the ship’s womb had made them into a single family? But true as that might be, it was true also that they were not yet so much a family as to make decisions for one another. (SOP 431-432)

Ghosh exposes in the novel that the history and culture are heterogeneous which are valuable and utterly indispensable. He presents colonial India with multilevel of societies. He critiques on socio-cultural, religio-political and psycho-economic development of colonial India. The novel is a wrestle of such people who are poor and dispossessed. Although Ghosh has ventured into one of the ugly areas of Indian history, he exhibits the histories of the past. He creates histories of people and place in order to show they are indispensable to their existence. Leela Gandhi quoting Gandhi says of Ghosh,

Gahndhi once observed that it is impossible to find any record of the ‘silver –ore’ of Satyagraha or ‘passive resistance’ in the ‘tin – mine’ of history for the following reason: ‘History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world...How kings played, how they became enemies of each other, and how they murdered one another is found accurately recorded in history’. And yet, he adds with characteristic directness, since ‘there are so many men still alive in the world,’ History has clearly failed to account for all varieties of human relationality, specifically those founded ‘on...love’. (quoted in Khair 71)

Ghosh reflects in both The Hungry Tide and Sea of Poppies his concern of people with ‘the porosity of cultural boundaries’. As Renato Rosaldo argues, “In contrast with the classic view, which posits culture as a self contained whole made up of coherent patterns, culture can arguably be conceived as a more porous array of intersections where distinct processes cross from within and beyond its borders” (Rosaldo 20).

Ghosh makes his characters diluted as they start melting from discrete cultures, places. On the other hand they ‘dwell in travels’ in cultural spaces that flow across invisible borders. As the Australian anthropologist Nicholas Thomas argues, “Orientalist ... pre-occupations ... can be displaced, not by an interest in a plethora of differences that would crosscut ethnic-cultural totalities” (24).
Ghosh presents uncanny nature of language, culture and history in *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*. Raymond Williams says in his essay “Ideas of Nature” which displays as a concise explanation of the novelists’ attempt to record the sense of place.

Ideas of nature, but these are the projected ideas of men. And I think nothing much can be done, nothing much can even be said, until we are able to see the causes of this alienation of nature, this separation of nature from human activity, which I have been trying to describe. But these causes cannot be seen, in a practical way, by returning to any earlier stage of the idea. In reaction against our existing situation, many writers have created an idea of a rural past: perhaps innocent, as in the first mythology of the Golden Age; but even more organic, with man not separated from nature. The impulse is understandable, but quite apart from its element of fantasy – its placing of such a period can be shown to be continually recessive – it is a serious underestimate of the complexity of the problem. A separation between man and nature is not simply the product of modern industry or urbanism; it is a characteristic of many earlier kinds of organized labour, including rural labour. (Williams)

A different sense of place is represented in the novels of Salman Rushdie. He focuses on the histories of India. The diverse units of India as a nation and the problem of history in India find major place in most of the works of Rushdie. His internationally celebrated novel *Midnight’s Children* deals with Indian history and the birth of two other countries. By dealing with history he wants to preserve and emphasise the strangeness of history. On the other hand he focuses on the contemporary issues of place, caste, religion and communities in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* meticulously in order to question the very democratic, secularistic status that India claims.

The story begins with the protagonist, the first person narrator, Moraes Zogoiby. He is shown imprisoned and dying in a remote Spanish village. He writes the entire family history from there. The family history bears witness of forgotten Jewish and Christian heritages of India and how they have moved to Bombay from Goa. As far as Moraes Zogoiby is concerned he is born in 1975 who has the unusual attributes of being without fingers on his right hand. He also has another peculiar nature of having the body of 20-year-old at the age of 10. “I have aged twice as rapidly as the old earth everything and eveyone thereupon (MLS 144).

The protagonist narrates tracing back to past time even before his birth. The narration focuses on how the family responded to the British rule to its political changes. It covers including their involvement with the local and business politics of Bombay itself. On the other
hand, Aurora the mother of Moor Zogoiby paints on walls which represent Indian history and Moor’s future development in his life. Rushdie uses as usual magic realism, allegory, satire which heighten the theme of the novel. It has resonants of Anglo-Portuguese, hybrid growth, people of all sorts and Bombay itself.

According to Alexandra W. Schultheis, the novel examines the pretended purity of all sorts. She goes on to say that the novel displays how the love of country or the nation ex-family metaphor turns to be erotical, economic, religio-political corrupt one. In spite of all these the novel gives aesthetic pleasure. She says, “with the image of the palimpsest, which runs throughout the novel to characterize Bombay, markets, paintings, politics, characters, and the story itself… can reveal what usually remains hidden, that within their impurities lie other truths” (209). On the contrary, Someshwar Sati accuses Rushdie seeming to be “turning white” (Sati 478) but pretending to write history of India. She locates ‘Rushdie’s rhetoric of ‘lack’ and ‘failure’ within five distinct scenario (112). She views that the narrative represents the nation, democracy, secularism, civil society and individual liberty which are contradictory produced by the co-existences of paradoxical discourses, ‘the teleological narrative of progress and the narrative of the postcolonial degeneration’ (112). She says in a concluding remark.

The trope of modernity enables Rushdie to discursively constitute India through an orientalising lens that leaves the subcontinents’ transition into modernity grievously incomplete, legitimizing the West’s claims to authority over the ex-colonized and still disadvantaged terrains and also re-inscribing in the process colonial power relations in a new postcolonial context. (117)

The important thing as far as Might Night’s Children and The Moor’s Last Sigh are concerned is that they bear a vital significance on the problematic cultural scene of India. Rushdie’s engagement with the subcontinent is displayed in both the novels which deal with its history, culture and politics. These concern show a sense of place as well. Though Rushdie is considered as an outsider by others, he is more of an outside-insider. This makes a lot of difference between him and Naipaul. He himself acknowledges in a non-fictional work where he shows his solidarity with the people of Nicaragua by invoking his tries and involvement with the subcontinent; “I was myself the child of a successful revolt against a great power, my consciousness the product of the triumph of the Indian revolution” (1988, 12).

Dezzer’s criticism of the novel answers the notion of Someshwar sati. Rushdie creates fictional worlds which do not have imposed silence. Being a writer of literature he shows freedom of expression which functions as a signpost to the contemporary history. This dreamy
like expression finds place in fairy tale. As a result the novel is about multiple mixture of cultures, poly dimensional ‘Orientalist accounts of the East’. As Karl Kroeber rightly says that fairy tales can be classified as such, “are retold and meant to be retold – even though every retelling is a making anew. Story can thus preserve ideas, beliefs and convictions without permitting them to harden into abstract dogma. The narrative allows us to test our ethical principles in our imagination where we can engage them in the uncertainties and confusion of contingent circumstance”. (Kroeber 9)

The novel can not be seen as an allegory. Rushdie’s employment of metaphor and association with Islam are revealed in the novel. It studies interestingly taking useful direction sometimes even breaking the thinking that Islam and fundamentalism are two sides of the same coin. Rushdie does not have any muslim characters in the novel. Dohra Ahmad observes that the novel addresses “reductive, fundamentalist Islam through its portrayal of many other types of fundamentalism” (225). He says that Islam lingers in two ways in the novel. One is a literal way through the protagonists’ hidden ancestor and second is a symbolic way through other religious faiths that demonstrate its minority and majoritarian incarnations.

Since september 11, 2001, most of the renowned social organisation have quickly offered their interpretations of radical Islam as the ‘clash of civilizations’. The trend is to look at a caped and bearded-man as fanatic and tend to add him/her in the terrorist lists. No one has second thoughts about recognising humanism in him/her. The contemporary outlook of Islam is fear and death. People think of every muslim as a fundamentalist and every muslim is suspected to be behind any terrorist attack. In The Moor’s Last Sigh Rushdie responds to such problem. Regarding this, Dohra Ahmad says that the novel not only deals with the infected fundamentalist of Islam but also the fundamentalist mindsets infect Hinduism, Christianity, Marxism, modern art. He observes:

Rushdie’s interest is in how majority and minority faiths function differently and how in shifting contexts they often come to resemble each other. Within Flory’s tiny Cochin enclave, Judaism is a majority religion and accordingly has established its own set of lies and hypocrisies – for example, denying the illegitimate Muslim ancestor. Hinduism, on the other hand, while technically a majority religion, splinters into castes and regional deities. Appearing by turns rigid and fluid, minority Judaism and majority Hinduism take on each other’s characteristics. (229)

In other words, the novel exemplifies the presence of fundamentalist attitude in most of the faiths. Rushdie points out to the death of secularism in India which haunts the entire novel. Mona Narain views The Moor’s Last Sigh as re-imagined histories. Narain intends to interrogate
‘the epistemological problem of postcoloniality’s usage of the early modern as an alternative to colonial modernity as a subversive or oppositional historical moment’ while it remains indebted to western Enlightenment periodizations of time and its historiographical paradigms’ (65). Narain’s interpretation of Rushdie appears to stress the point of Someshwar Sati discussed above. In connection with this Dipesh Chakrabarty writes,

It is that in so far as the academic discourse of history [or knowledge in general] that is “history” as a discourse produced at the institutional site of the university - is concerned, “Europe” remains the sovereign theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call “Indian”, “Chinese”, “Kenyan” and so on. There is a peculiar way in which all these other histories tend to become variations on a master narrative that could be called “the history of Europe”. In this sense, “Indian history itself is in a position of subalternity; one can only articulate subaltern subject positions in the name of this history. (Chakrabarty, Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for " Indian" Pasts? 1)

On the other hand Rushdie treats “Europe” and “India” in hyper-real terms. The referential aspects of the imaginary geographical place remain indeterminate. Since Rushdie makes mythical and allegorical histories about “Europe” and “India” these imaginary countries can be rewritten and interpreted in so many ways as well.

However, the novel represents the early modern Moorish Spain which goes on dominating the world of everyday relationships of power and keeps on to surface Rushdie’s representation of history. Narain contends,

Given India’s history of colonization by Muslims and Europeans, as well as the fact that al-Andalus was a colony of the Moors and then taken over by the Spanish, this reification is problematic. It is problematic in the context of the novel because Rushdie uses this image of Europe as an early modern moment of allegory of Convivencia, a peaceful and productive co-existence between competing ethnicities, which he recommends for the modern Indian state. (65)

Taking into account most of the critics regarding the The Moor’s Last Sigh is about histories of both past and present. The chapter focuses specifically on its impression upon the sense of place and culture. Rushdie represents the heterogenous nature of India which is filled with people of multiculture, myriad languages and polyreligions. He seems to question India which claims herself to be secular, a place of all religion yet a place of no religion. In other words India is not supposed to give attention to a single monolithic religion. Rushdie expresses the death knell to India’s secular status.
Amartya Sen says that India is a country known for its secularism and freedom of expression. He says that the long history of heterodoxy has a strong bearing on the development and survival of democracy in India and to the emergence of secularism in India as well. He goes on to say that India has been a shared home “for Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Parsees, Sikhs, Baha’s and others. In other words India has been reflecting the tolerance of religious diversity for long time. The important point is that each religious communities have managed to retain its identity within India’s multi-religious spectrum. There have been clashes between them and mutual understanding as well. The toleration of diversity is settled by mutual co-existence and logical arguments. Amartya Sen says: “The toleration of diversity has also been explicitly defended by strong arguments in favour of the richness of variation, including fulsome praise of the need to interact with each other, in mutual respect, through dialogue” (17).

However, Secularism in contemporary India contains strong influences of Indian intellectual history, including the championing of intellectual pluralism. Secularism has received legislative formulation in the post-independence constitution of the Indian Republic. According to Sen there are two approaches to secularism. One is neutrality between different religions and the second is prohibition of religious associations in state activities. India belongs to the former category, in this sense India is seen somewhat different from the ‘more austere Western versions’ (19). Commenting on Ashoka, Sen says,“Concord, therefore, is meritorious, to wit, hearkening and hearkening willingly to the law of Piety as accepted by other people’. The form as well as the interpretation and understanding of secularism in India can be linked to the history of the acceptance of heterodoxy” (21).

India, with its long, rich, and strong secularism is claimed as one of greatest secular democratic countries in the world. The decline from its status has started in the 1980s and 1990s. Rushdie vividly brings out the decline and transformation of Bombay into a city dominated by Hindu nationalist party. The city used to be a place of cosmopolitan and hybridity. At present, On the contrary the majority community dominates and the non-hindu is forced to lead a life in their mercy. Rushdie refers to the decline of the Nehruvian secular concept of the Indian nation: “In Bombay, as the old, founding myth of the nation faded, the new god-and-mammon India was being born” (MLS 351). He also shows India’s direction towards the globalised form of capitalism: “It was the birth of a new age in India, when money, as well as religion, was breaking all the shackles on its desires” (MLS 343-4). The novel presents Nehruvian nation and the decline. This is reflected by the family history of the protagonist Moraes Zogoiby. He introduces his family history as a “sigh for a lost world”: 102
Now, therefore, it is meet to sing of endings, of what was, and may no longer; of what was right in it, and wrong. A Last sigh for a lost world, a tear for its passing. Also, however, a last hurrah, a final scandalous skein of shaggy-dog yarns [...] and a set of rowdy times for the wake. (MLS 4)

*The Moor’s Last Sigh* raises a sense of place in various level: it reminds that India has been a secular nation and has been recently directed towards religious fundamentalists, the notion of mother India is exhibited through Aurora. Rushdie shows his belonging in rootedness. Though he can be regarded for possessing multiple loyalties, multiple belongings to India, to Britain and to the world, his novels show his attachment to India at upper hand. He describes the sense of place:

Well, I think India is an assault on your senses. When you go to India, India is not a low key country. India is a country with a volume control turned up to maximum, with a smell control turned up to maximum. Everything is excess. It’s that thing that India overwhelms you… the sights of it, the sounds of it, the smells of it, the taste of it, the touch, the feel of it… (Reder 205)

In *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, Rushdie uses travel motif. He makes his characters travel to different locations even crossing continents as Ghosh does in *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea Of Poppies*. His attention turns to Malabar which is one of the earliest base of colonial India. Then his perception turns to Cochin, Bombay and finally to Andalusia. Ghosh’s characters travel towards water in both of the above mentioned novels. On the other hand Rushdie’s character moves from one location to another and finally from east to the west. This movement gives enough cues of Rushdie’s autobiographical tone as well as the diasporic tone. Rushdie himself has reported in several interviews regarding the hunting memories of Bombay. He captures changes and shifts taking place in this city. This novel also displays the lost identity of Bombay, including its name because “Bombay” is the Portuguese word meaning Bombai – “good bay”. This name is recently changed to its original and cultural identity – Mumbai named after Mumba – Devi. Aurora’s paintings in the novel display the landscape of Bombay touching into an Arabian Seascape, with “strange composite creatures slithererd to and fro across the frontier of the elements” (226). In the novel, Rushdie expresses his passion for the land/city as, “Bombay of my joys and arrows”. This city of his youth renders endless fascination and fusion of disparate elements. He recalls:

Bombay was central had been so from the moment of its creation. The bastard child of a Portuguese-English Wedding, and yet the most Indian of Indian cities. In Bombay, all India met and merged. In Bombay, all India met what-was-not India…Bombay was
central; all rivers flowed into its human sea. It was an ocean of stories; we were all its narrators, and everybody talked at once. (MLS 350)

Rushdie’s association with Bombay is so profound and severe that it looks as though it is a mother-child relationship. A sense of place is created through the entire family history. The novel is stretched over different geographical plane. First, the novel is set in Portuguese India which has a rich cultural heritage. In the course of the narration, the novel transits to Spain’s Andalusian mountain village of Benengeli. This village has the fortress of Vasco Miranda who has stolen and run away with Aurora’s ‘Moor’ paintings. On the other hand Aurora’s paintings portray the family historical Malabar Hill Home as the Moor’s fantastical palace, and the Alhambra in Granada. Aurora’s paintings display the intense passion for the historical and mythical association with India and its pluralism. She also wants her son to seek that India throughout his life.

V. S. Naipaul expresses his sense of place and sense of rootedness. He has the feeling of alienation when he has first come to India in 1962. His reference to his ancestoral and to the descendant of 19th century indentured Indian emigrants remind Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* where the dispossessed poor Indians are sent to work on plantations in various parts of the British Empire and even elsewhere. The British Empire has sent his ancestors to Trinidad. Like Rushdie, Naipaul also is so deep and intense as far as India is concerned. He says:

I grew up with two ideas of India... the India from which my ancestors had migrated to better themselves became in my imagination a most fearful place. There was a second India. It balanced the first. This second India was the India of the independence movement, the India of the great names. It was also the India of the great civilization and the great classical past. It was the India by which, in all the difficulties of our circumstances, we felt supported. It was an aspect of our identity, the community identity we had developed, which, in multi-racial Trinidad, had become more like a racial identity. (7-8)

Rushdie presents Naipaul’s notion of secular India. The perception of the diasporic authors seem to be ‘distant greener pasture’. Rushdie brings India ‘to light’ by letting the cats out of the bag that India is no more a secular place but a place of multi fundamentalists with respect to religion, caste, language and geographical belongings. The contemporary India shows the issues dealt in the novel as it is philosophical by Rushdie.

Rushdie and Ghosh have similarities in the perception of place despite multilayered differences. Rushdie describes the Sundarbans in his *Midnight’s Children* which he calls the descent into the ‘inferno’. The mangrove forest seems to be ‘hell’. As Ghosh says that the forest
is haunted by tide country people, the jungle externalizes the internal hell. This real place is
given by fictional renderings in his fiction. Similarly, Rushdie expresses the notion of place as
that of Ghosh in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*. He shows the borderless relationship between water and
land.

Aurora’s paintings focus on ‘the water’s edge’ which divide line between two worlds. She fills the sea with fish, drowned ships, mermaids and kinds. On the other hand, she describes pickpockets, pimps and whores in the land and also other ‘figures form history or fantasy or
current affairs or nowhere, crowded towards the water like the real life Bombayites on the beach,
taking their evening strokes’ (MLS 226). Her painting is done in such a way that the water line
and water world blends over the world of air. Thus it is impossible to be sure which is sea and
which is land. Ghosh has blended water with land in both *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies.*
As far as Ghosh is concerned the nature of water is unpredictable which changes everything.
Rushdie’s Aurora considers the nature of water as her vision of youth. She has got the vision
from Cochin where the opposition and intermingling on land and water has occurred, “Where the
land pretended to be a part of England, but was washed by an Indian sea” (MLS 227). Both
Rushdie and Ghosh visualise borderless and boundariless world. Their fictions harp on the
notion of imaginary borders and problematize the notion of border which the uncountable tides
change. The water teaches how to be borderless. Rushdie describes in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*.

Place where worlds collide, flow in and out of one another, and washofy away. Place
where an air-man can drowno in water, or else grow gills; where a water-creature can get
drunk, but also Chokeofy, on air. One universe, one dimension, one country, one dream,
bumping into another, or being under, or on top of. Call it Palimpstine. And above it all,
in the palace, you. (MLS 226)

However, the entire novel is about Rushdie’s notion of Mother India which is represented
by Aurora herself. The image of mother India can be seen in the beginning of the *The Moor’s
Last Sigh* where Aurora observes India like a prostitute setting herself to Vasco da Gama and the
“English and French sailed in the wake of that first-arrived Portugee” (MLS 4). Aurora herself is
not an ordinary woman. She is like QaraKoz of *The Enchantress of Florence*, the beautiful lady
of Moghul. She has many qualities, which enchant others. She is the ‘most illustrious of our
modern artists, a great beauty who was also the most sharp-tongued woman of her generation”
(MLS 5). She has painted all over the room after the death of her mother Belle, also called
Queen Isabella. The paintings display India’s history, culture and landscape at the same time her
‘inner self’ and her vision of the world. Commenting on the theme of Mother India Nicole Weickgenannt Thiara says that “the energetic, loving and destructive Mother India of Aurora’s painting is not entirely incompatible with the nationalist image of Mother India but there is a shift in emphasis towards her dark potential for annihilating her own children” (140).

Rushdie and Nehru share the same notion about Mother India. Rushdie views Mother India as secular in this novel. Rushdie views Mother India in the novel as secular. India, with multi religious and histories, shows unity in diversity. Nehru portrays his notion of India in *The Discovery of India* as:

She is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet real and present and pervasive. [...] Shameful and repellant she is occasionally, perverse and obstinate, sometimes even a little hysterical, this lady with past. But she is very lovable, and none of her children can forget her wherever they go or whatever strange as well as her failings, and they are mirrored in those deep eyes of hers that have seen so much of life’s passion and joy and folly, and looked down into wisdom’s well. Each one of them is drawn to her, though perhaps each has a different reason for that attraction or can point to no reason at all, and each sees some different aspect of her many-sided personality. (Nehru 563)

Rushdie builds the present time of India’s hybrid history out of world plays, satire, images and parodies. He constructs this through the nation – as – family metaphor which helps to build a united India as Chanakya expresses in Ashwin Sanghi’s *Chankya’s Chant*. This acceptance of pluralistic India positively expressed through the actress Nadia Wadia in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* as the Moor decides to move himself to Spain without facing the reality. When the city is bombed a bodyguard attacks Nadia Wadia on her face. She is humiliated. Despite this unable to bear her idle state, she reappears in the public, “when the scars across her face were still livid, the permanence of the disfigurement all too evident” (MLS 376). Though her image is torn and the attack has brought her fame to ruin, she exhibits a sense of hope which symbolically refers to India which is also torn because of the rise of multi fundamentalists and declined from her secular status. Nadia Wadia says directly to every viewer’s heart:

So I asked myself, Nadia Wadia, is it the end for you? Is it curtains? And for some time I thought, achha, yes, it’s all over, khalaas. But then I was asking myself, Nadia Wadia, what you talking, men? At twenty – three to say that whole of life is funtooth? What pagalpan, what nonsense, Nadia Wadia! Girl, get a grip, ok? The city will survive. New
towers will rise. Better days will come. Now I am saying it every day. Nadia Wadia, the future beckons. Hearken to its call. (MLS 376-77)

On the contrary, the Moor concludes that he might “hope to awaken, renewed and joyful, into a better time” (MLS 434). On the other hand Nadia draws the attention of her audience to face the present. Rushdie seems to portray the failure of the nation – as – family metaphor and the world of art and their political association. On the contrary, he offers popular culture as tool to rejuvenate the histories of nation. In this connection, Alexandra W. Schultheis says that this sort of “renewal must take place through the unveiling of memories and histories, of the horrific alongside the beautiful” (222).

It emerges from the preceding analysis that the writers have pictured how the sense of place and locale can be felt or understood in different ways. A locale can give a sense of identity and a new place can give a chance for creating a new identity. Sense of place thus provides an opportunity for the characters to connect the present and the past, compare them and feel happy or unhappy.

Post independence Indian Fiction in English focuses its attention on the ideological transition that is taking place at various levels such as: geographical, linguistically, historical and cultural. The writers cope up with the zeitgeist of contemporary issues of India which like the Sundarban tides of The Hungry Tide change the borders of history sometimes even uproots history leaving gaps to fill in. Ghosh and Rushdie’s recurring theme is sense of place as Eudora Welty argues that it is precisely place, “the named, identified, concrete, exact and exacting...gathering spot of all that has been felt” (254). She observes that, “A novel is essentially bound up in the local, the real, the present, and the day – to – day experience of life” (Welty 254). This is realized in all the select fictions for the study and especially in the fictions of Ghosh and Rushdie.

Both the authors highlight the marginal histories although the roots are from the mainstream or official history. Rushdie’s sense of place is towards minority community that Moraes Zogoiby belongs to. The same notion is also expressed in Enchantress of Florence where sense of place is a question for the Muslims at the end of the novel. Ghosh also foregrounds the forgotten, twisted history in his novels. But his focus is on the locale (my emphasis) and the crisis of the landless people. Ghosh seems to highlight the shattered people by colonization, slave trade and their sense of place as explained earlier. Both of them draw our attention to the history of place and people.