*Postcolonial Text* Vol 4 No 3 (2008)

# Imagining the Global and the Rural: Rural Cosmopolitanism in Sharon Butala's *The Garden of Eden* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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Rural cosmopolitanism sounds like an oxymoron. The rural is popularly understood as and often appears to be resolutely non-cosmopolitan or even parochial. Cosmopolitan world views suggest commitments to multiple and simultaneous local and global places, but the rural, according to popular definitions, suggests a strong identification with distinct local places at the expense of larger, global connections. The cosmopolitan is often, then, believed to stand in for the urban—as urbanites are frequently presumed (incorrectly or not) to be less connected to a specific place. As Raymond Williams suggests, this perceived binary between urban and rural has accumulated many conflicting connotations that have been at work for a long time:

> On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light . . . the city as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation. A contrast between country and city, as fundamental ways of life, reaches back into classical times. (3)[1]

This contrast is evident despite there being "no longer any clear dividing line between town and countryside for individual settlements or their inhabitants: indeed, many people reside in one but work in the other" (Champion and Hugo 3). However, the symbolic meanings attached to the "rural" and the "urban" continue to frame how many academics talk about cosmopolitanism. These attitudes about the rural are reflected in the over-

[1] Both positive and negative connotations for the rural that Williams identifies posit the rural as naturally occurring—with little to no shaping by humans. The city is the site of human action. This assumption repeats a distinction between being and becoming that will be central to my definition of cosmopolitanism. If becoming is central to cosmopolitanism *and* the city, then the city is the natural site for the development of cosmopolitan world views. This view of the country-city split is repeated by Ian Adam when, in an attempt to suggest the two-way influence of the city and the country, he argues that "if the land provides emotional and spiritual renewal it is the city, with its cosmopolitan resources including centres of higher education, that provides an intellectual one" (Adam par.22). I want to suggest, however, that rural places are similarly in a state of becoming and therefore equally amenable to prompting cosmopolitan world views—just in a different way than occurs in the city.

riding assumption in cosmopolitan theory about the rural: that it is unequivocally non-cosmopolitan. Yet this offers a myopic view of cosmopolitanism as it can then only be worked out in very specific types of places.

Examining cosmopolitanism in rural places, however, demands a re-thinking of colloquial definitions of cosmopolitanism: resisting, in other words, the temptation to urbanize the rural in an attempt to include it in broader concepts. As a result, we must think through how cosmopolitanism is inflected by rural places; we must consider how members of rural communities imagine their affiliations to the globe and how their location in rural places shapes their framing of cosmopolitan ethical and political responsibilities. Postcolonial novels set in rural places can help to expand how we think about both the rural and the cosmopolitan. This paper will examine two novels set in rural places in different parts of the world: Sharon Butala's *The Garden of Eden*, set in rural Saskatchewan and rural Ethiopia, and Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, set in rural West Bengal. While each novel is written out of a distinct national context, both raise overlapping questions about the rural and the cosmopolitan. Each novel suggests ways of looking at physical places through the lens of cosmopolitanism to create what I will call a *territorialized cosmopolitanism*[2] —cosmopolitanism located in specific, though often multiple, places.

Both novels resist, however, an unquestioning validation of cosmopolitanism as they differentiate between a territorialized cosmopolitanism and a superficial cosmopolitanism shaped by the competing agendas of transnational capital and humanitarianism. These rural novels problematize a teleological superficial cosmopolitanism, particularly when cosmopolitanism is understood as a sophistication characterized, even defined, by eating at ethnic restaurants and travelling to exotic destinations. This latter sense of cosmopolitanism is defined by Ghassan Hage as "cosmo-multiculturalism" (204) where "the cosmopolite is an essentially 'mega-urban' figure: one detached from strong affiliation with roots and consequently open to all forms of otherness" (201). Superficial cosmopolitanism demands a troubling disavowal of responsibility to specific places. In contrast, the rural cosmopolitanism depicted in these novels is carefully differentiated from this model and, in fact, shows the destructive results produced in rural communities from cosmopolitanisms applied from above with little consideration of the specificity of rural places.

[2] I use "territorialized" rather than "rooted"—a phrase coined by Mitchell Cohen and taken up by, most prominently, K. Anthony Appiah but also by Bonnie Honig and Domna Stanton—to suggest a more material engagement with location. These discussions of "rooted cosmopolitanism" typically root cosmopolitanism in something more ephemeral than physical place—patriotism in Appiah's case or democracy in Honig's case. What I am more interested in, however, is how cosmopolitan world views are based on questions of material place.

As I define it, people who exhibit cosmopolitan world views see themselves as having ethical and moral responsibilities to the world *and* a specific local place—or even places. This definition emphasizes the ethical and political trajectory of cosmopolitanism that predominates in the postcolonial-inflected vernacular cosmopolitanism, and reaches back to Kant and, earlier, to the Stoics who posited cosmopolitanism as both an ethical and political project—though in ways and under circumstances far different from our own—suggesting the importance of re-thinking what a responsible cosmopolitanism might look like today. Thus, cosmopolitan world views develop out of actual engagement with people and cultures different from oneself rather than just exposure to them. A cosmopolitan sensibility is constantly in a state of *becoming*, rather than being. The ethical and political responsibilities that develop in *The Garden of Eden* and *The Hungry Tide* are central to the productive kind of cosmopolitanism I wish to articulate. A cosmopolitan world view, by my definition, is one that is affiliated simultaneously with the local and the global—and with the places in-between. This definition emerges out of the middle ground between the two most prominent models of cosmopolitanism: one developed out of liberal-bourgeois concepts of autonomy, mobility, and ethics—elucidated by Kant and, more recently, Martha Nussbaum, Seyla Benhabib, and K. Anthony Appiah; and one developed out of postcolonial criticism's emphasis on the legacy of colonial violence, forcible displacement, and social justice—a model expounded upon by Homi Bhabha, Sheldon Pollack, Dipesh Charkrabarty, Carol Breckenridge, Timothy Brennan, James Clifford, and Bruce Robbins.

What constitutes rural places? Paul Cloke (2006) and Keith Halfacree (2004), among others, suggest that defining the rural is never straightforward, especially at a time where traditional rural places are ceasing to be sites of resource extraction and agricultural industries that once defined them as rural. Nonetheless, Cloke identifies three key features of the rural that characterize the kinds of places depicted in these novels: the "dominat[ion] (either currently or recently) by extensive land uses, notably agriculture and forestry; small, lower-order settlements which demonstrate a strong relationship between buildings and extensive landscape, and which are thought of as rural by most of their residents"; and those that "engender a way of life which is characterized by a cohesive identity based on respect for the environmental and behavioural qualities of living as part of an extensive landscape" (20). Cloke's broad descriptions helpfully acknowledge human settlement—the rural is not synonymous with wilderness, for instance—and the particular culture of the rural, which is not simply a small-scale version of the urban. At the same time, Cloke does point to the way the contemporary rural exists on a continuum with the urban rather than in a binary opposition—echoing Champion's and Hugo's argument about the continued existence of the rural where rural inhabitants are increasingly urban workers.

Nevertheless, it is also important to remain cognizant of the way that rural communities are often explicitly constructed by their inhabitants and municipal administrators in opposition to urban centres. While these self-presentations can frequently ignore (wilfully or unconsciously) the actual composition of a particular community, this self-imagination has implications for a consideration of rural cosmopolitanism. Small rural communities often emphasize a particular ethnic heritage in the face of the community's actual ethnic diversity—a diversity that does not seem to offer the same cachet to small municipalities as to larger urban centres that explicitly construct themselves as cosmopolitan.[3] Therefore, a rural cosmopolitanism that is not merely a reiteration or re-placing of a hegemonic metropolitan cosmopolitanism can only develop in the gaps and fissures of official conceptions of the rural.

Despite the different ways in which the rural connects with the global—a connection presumed in cosmopolitan theory to promote increased engagement with difference—many rural inhabitants express an understandable hostility to difference, especially in the face of economic depression, further reinforcing the notion that the rural is intrinsically parochial and anti-cosmopolitan. This community self-promotion as homogeneous may only suggest that the development or recognition of cosmopolitan subjectivities requires more active and explicit work on the part of those who wish to claim them for themselves, or to access cosmopolitan values for specific local political projects. Unlike metropolitan centres, where municipal governments quite frequently promote their city's cosmopolitan makeup, small rural communities, for instance, often emphasize a particular ethnic heritage in the face of the community's actual ethnic diversity. In a settler society such as Canada, this celebration of a specific ethnicity can also act to cover up the community's historical role in driving Aboriginal groups off their traditionally-held land. Rural cosmopolitanism, then, can be seen to mark a source of anxiety in rural places. These places often feel dependent upon a mythic homogeneity in order to promote tourism, yet this self-imposed homogeneity not only requires ignoring the difference that makes up any contemporary community, but also makes it difficult for rural municipalities to be taken seriously as anything other than tourist destinations on a global or even regional scale. Rural cosmopolitanism, then, requires considering rural communities in different ways than their Chambers of Commerce might promote them.

An examination of rural cosmopolitanism might be one way to address the relegation of the rural to the parochial and the provincial; a way of acknowledging the rural outside of stereotype, both positive (the

[3] Much of diversity's cachet seems to emerge out of the attention given to Richard Florida's notions of the creative class. As Roger Epp notes, Florida's ideas give "a social-scientific gloss to the idea that thinkers, artists, creators—engines of the new knowledge economy—will flock to the most tolerant and progressive of big cities, determining which of them flourishes into the future; rural communities are nowhere on his map" (Epp 190).

pastoral rural) and negative (the exclusionary rural). The Western rural in particular occupies an uneasy place in postcolonial studies as it seems to be the bastion—indeed, one of the few remaining ones—of overemphasized "whiteness." The predominance of metropolitan-centred fiction in the North American publishing industry does little to displace this notion of the rural as a cultural backwater.[4] It is difficult to find in a Canadian book store novels set in *contemporary* rural settings.[5] In a critique of Cheryl Lousley's article on Sharon Butala, Pamela Banting argues that Lousley "overlooks or dismisses—certainly she discredits—the possibility that, like gays and lesbians, people of colour, and others whom she herself reportedly champions . . . 'rural' might also be a denigrated or marginalized category of people" (249). While critics may be able to sympathize with those who inhabit rural places, this sympathy seems to be predicated on the suggestion that actually *living* in the rural is highly undesirable. As Jay Anselm, one of the characters in Butala's *The Garden of Eden*, tells Iris, the novel's protagonist, after she asks him about his decision to live in rural Saskatchewan, "I didn't say I was coming *here* to live" (102)—his emphasis, and implied scorn, on "here" reveals his attitudes about the rural.

This academic condescension regarding the rural is one reason why Anna Tsing is reticent to consider the rural Indonesian subjects of her ethnography "cosmopolitan" in their syncretic mixture of local, regional and national, ethnic and religious subjectivities: "This 'postmodernism' does not rest easily with the work of theorists who think in terms of evolutionary cultural steps. It is not an effect of . . . urban cosmopolitanism . . . nor is it the signal for a new era of thought in South Kalimantan" (*In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* 254). Understanding rural cosmopolitanism as a "new era of thought" for rural people or as a necessary evolutionary step is something I wish to avoid—and which the novels under discussion problematize—particularly when cosmopolitanism is understood as a sophistication which develops out of eating at ethnic restaurants and travelling to exotic destinations. The transposition into the rural of this kind of cosmopolitanism based on consumption, while not only being an attempt to urbanize the rural, only prompts a superficial engagement with difference. A cosmopolitanism based on the consumption of commodified cultural products is not one that

[4] Stephen Henighan's *When Words Deny the World* (2002) develops this argument further in the context of Canadian publishing.

[5] It is difficult to posit why this avoidance of contemporary rural fiction exists. In part, it reflects the increasing urbanization of Canadians—fewer and fewer people live in the rural areas of North America. It also suggests the larger attitude towards the rural as inherently parochial and, therefore, less "sexy" for contemporary readers. Perhaps historical rural settings allow readers to place the rural in the past, on an evolutionary continuum: it is either a romanticized symbol representing an Eden lost through the increased presence of dehumanizing technology or the invasion of European colonial forces; or a site of hardship that humans have evolved beyond, or need to evolve beyond. Both ways of reading the historical rural clearly shape how we continue to understand the contemporary rural.

works toward a more just world but only a more homogeneous one. The rural territorialized cosmopolitanism depicted in the two novels discussed in this paper is carefully differentiated from this model based on consumption.

Doreen Massey has posited a "progressive sense of place": a notion that "what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus" (66). This notion suggests that a place is made up of various different, often competing, trajectories and histories. Massey's conceptualization of place is cosmopolitan in its recognition of the global element of place; specifically, the relations that make up any place are never only local. This is true in all places, of course. Because of the rural's limited architecture and more dispersed population in comparison to the urban, however, the global links of place are often missed or ignored. Common stereotypes about the rural as backwards mean that the connections to the global in these places are similarly missed or ignored. *The Garden of Eden* and *The Hungry Tide* both articulate this "progressive sense of place" by drawing attention to the particular constellation of social relations in the places they depict but also by highlighting the global dimension to this constellation—suggesting a territorialized cosmopolitan understanding of place. Therefore, these novels consistently challenge assumptions about the rural as homogeneous and the essentialized site of a relatively unchanging cultural imaginary. Both texts demonstrate how rural places are the locus of many different and often simultaneous representations of space—and their recognition of such is shown to be a mark of the characters' cosmopolitanism. In the physical settings of these novels, these imaginations of space stem from the colonial past and neo-colonial present. However, both novels also point to representations of space shaped by gender and class. Rural places as depicted in these two novels are the location, then, not only of many different ways of living in place but also of many representations of place. This depiction suggests, then, a truly territorialized cosmopolitanism. Territorialized cosmopolitanism takes different forms in both novels. In Butala, the recognition of the cosmopolitanism of place is centred on Iris's recognition of the possibility of distinct histories and distinct representations of space relating to land use. In Ghosh, there is a similar sense of the multiple historical representations of place that shape how place is understood and related to; however, Ghosh's text is also particularly attentive to the larger bioregional multiplicity—highlighting the animals and weather patterns which inhabit and characterize a place.

In *The Garden of Eden*, Iris's choice to return her land to indigenous prairie seems on the surface to be an anti-cosmopolitan one, yet Butala suggests the opposite. Not only does this pattern of land use limit environmental damage and its global impact, but, as the text repeatedly suggests, it is also a cosmopolitan way of reading the land itself as it points to the ways that the rural Saskatchewan landscape has developed

out of various and competing histories. Despite the seeming "naturalness" of agriculture as it is practiced in the rural west, Iris grows to recognize the various discrepant views of the land—along both ethnic and gender lines. These views suggest a "deep map" of the Great Plains landscape of *The Garden of Eden* which "function[s] in some ways as [a corrective] to dominant cultural narratives in [its] repetition of the complexities of time and space and in [its] insistence on recognizing the many landmarks, cultural and natural, of the Great Plains" (Calder, "The Wilderness Plot," par.3). Butala's description of the coulee on Iris's property and its still visible markers of Aboriginal presence demonstrates just one way in which the land, in its physicality, marks difference. Iris goes to the stone circles, somewhat reductively, as a site of mythic power and comfort, prompting her recognition of the multiple pasts of the land, human and otherwise: "The coulee was filling with purple shadows, a chasm opening to swallow them, dropping down to its bottom more than a hundred feet below, passing through time incarnated as layers of earth, to those millions of years earlier. And hidden in the grip of the soil and rocks, the fossilized bones of monsters" (74).[6] Iris's memory of the coulee and its stone circles echoes throughout her trip to find Lannie. Indeed, like her trip to Ethiopia, the coulee offers another way for Iris to envision herself as having a connection with the larger world: after dreaming of the coulee, she wonders that "how she once conceived of the world had spread apart to reveal a dimension she'd never guessed at—whole, perfect, transcendently beautiful" (159).

Similarly, Iris's emotional and spiritual connection with the coulee connects her to her female relatives who have fought to keep the few remaining stone circles. Iris's grandfather and father both favoured getting rid of the circles as well as the falling-down barn near the coulee in order to plough more land, making the farm more economically profitable. Her mother and grandmother, on the other hand, were both insistent on the importance of these spaces, and it is these women Iris remembers the most clearly in connection with the coulee (73, 100). While this association echoes a binary that suggests that women are more intuitive and "connected" to the land in comparison to rational and pragmatic men, the attitude is also shared by the most cosmopolitan characters in the novel—

[6] See, for instance, Cheryl Lousley's "Home on the Prairie? A Feminist and Postcolonial Reading of Sharon Butala, Di Brandt and Joy Kogawa" and Warren Cariou's "Haunted Prairie: Aboriginal 'Ghosts' and the Spectres of Settlement" for a discussion of Butala's similarly essentializing treatment of stone cairns and other markers of Aboriginal presence in her memoir, *The Perfection of the Morning*. Alison Calder, however, suggests in "The Wilderness Plot, The Deep Map and Sharon Butala's Changing Prairie" that Butala's follow-up memoir, *Wild Stone Heart*, demonstrates a transition away from a problematic and essentializing view of Native culture to a more complex and nuanced view. I would suggest that *The Garden of Eden* takes part in this transition. While this novel is not thoroughly unproblematic, Butala does depict the Saskatchewan landscape in a far less homogenizing way.

not all of whom are women. Iris and Lannie, and Ramona and Vance emphasize the importance of maintaining the historical markers of difference on the land as integral to a territorialized cosmopolitanism; these signs mark a resistance to the homogenizing forces of corporate cosmopolitanism. Jay Anselm, a writer from Toronto in Chinook to do research for his next novel, expresses a similar emphasis on preserving these historical markers. As Iris shows Jay the coulee and the circles, he asks, "don't you care . . . that all that history got lost when people turned up the land?" (101). He is seemingly oblivious to Iris's protestations about her role in preventing the remaining circles from being ploughed under. While Jay's superficial cosmopolitanism is ultimately rejected by the novel through a romantic subplot between him and Iris, at this stage in the narrative his reiteration of and approbation for Iris's view of the land points to her developing cosmopolitan world view. Butala suggests, then, that the recognition of the multiple representations of space articulated around a particular location is in and of itself a cosmopolitan act.

Jay, in fact, acts as an important foil to Iris. Unlike Iris, he arrives in the novel already presumed to be cosmopolitan. Yet his cosmopolitanism is one centred in the metropolis. He says that he is in Chinook to learn about small rural communities which he has previously presumed to know much about: "I don't know enough about small-town life. I thought I did, but I realize I don't . . . I thought that country people were basically the same as city people, that they were motivated by the same drives. Well, in the end I suppose they are. But the other night I saw that it's all nuanced differently, that the life *I thought was so simple is really surprisingly complex*" (102-03; emphasis added). During this first period of time he spends with Iris, then, Jay expresses similarly cosmopolitan views of the land and rural life that Iris and the novel's narration endorse. Yet when this conversation ends with a failed sexual encounter, Jay reveals the lack of commitment he actually feels towards Iris, and by extension Chinook and the rural: "I just thought it was something I needed to try for—for my writing" (106). Experiencing the rural, for Jay, is just another experience to add to his list of cosmopolitan accomplishments. When Iris encounters him again in Toronto, Jay's superficially cosmopolitan "checklist" becomes more visible: "he's wearing a black T-shirt today, under the same worn black sportscoat, and jeans and his cowboy boots, which she notices he has cleaned. What looked odd in Chinook is exactly right in this setting. He looked at ease, *sophisticated*, rakish" (194; emphasis added). He then takes Iris for dinner at an Indian restaurant he frequents. Jay's cowboy boots, a symbol of rural Canadian culture in addition to their importance in the labour of farming and ranching, here become superficial markers of seemingly cosmopolitan style—similar to the Indian restaurant. Both are emblems of the exotic to Jay. Yet they are symbols that are deterritorialized to Jay—he is uninterested in them beyond how they work to suggest his apparent global ease. Unlike Iris's cosmopolitanism, then, Jay's is primarily about aesthetics and urbane sophistication. Jay's shallow and callous treatment of Iris in Toronto—the two have sex in her hotel

room and he then departs while she is still asleep—reflects his own lack of commitment to anything outside of the accumulation of experiences. Iris's developing cosmopolitanism is clearly of a different register as it prompts an even deeper affiliation on her part with both the place where she is most at home—her family farm—and with the world as a whole as is shown through her cosmopolitan sense of land.

When she arrives in Ethiopia, Iris's cosmopolitan readings of land are further developed as the competing colonial and neo-colonial claims being made on African land are made clear to her. On her drive to Labilela, Iris is informed that they are traveling on "the Chinese Road": "'The Chinese build it,' [Giyorgis, her guide] says. 'When Mengistu was here. I admire them for it. Chinese died building it. It is a good road'" (239). Similarly, Lannie is informed by Dr. Abubech of the American presence in Ethiopia through its involvement with and promotion of the so-called Green Revolution and the Global 2000 project (170-71).[7] These neocolonial and globalizing projects change the Ethiopian landscape and its land use. As Abubech describes the intentions behind the Global 2000 program: "It is an American initiative, with the backing of the World Bank. Introducing hybrid seeds and high technology, high input farming techniques like the ones you use in North America, here in Africa, because they get such high yields, as an answer to the problem of food shortages and famine" (170-71). As Vandana Shiva and others have suggested, these kinds of programs often wreak havoc on an ecosystem's biodiversity, thus changing the land itself through eco-systemic change. Those who farm the land are encouraged to see the land as only productive rather than something that they dwell with—changing the cultural value of the land. These programs encourage the development of monocultural agriculture which is much more precarious than multi-cultural agriculture because one pest can destroy an entire industry rather than only a portion: "the destruction of diversity and the creation of uniformity simultaneously involves the destruction of stability and the creation of vulnerability" (Shiva 48). As Anna Tsing notes in relation to the Indonesian forestry industry, the change to a focus on monocultures (like those engendered by the Green Revolution and the Global 2000 project) "also emptied the forest, conceptually, of human residents, since the fruit orchards, rattans, and other human-tended plants of forest dwellers were now mere waste" (*Friction* 16). These monocultural projects create representations of space that see place only in terms of production. While the territorialized cosmopolitanism located in the Saskatchewan landscape, as described by Butala, is focused on its diachronic history, in the descriptions of Ethiopian landscapes, the emphasis switches to the synchronic. Reading

[7] Both projects encourage third-world farmers to increase their crop-yield through a promotion of chemical fertilizers and hybrid seed strains, among other things. The projects promote the export of North American-style industrialized agricultural practices to Africa and other third-world countries. For more information on the Carter Center's Global 2000 project, see: http://www.cartercenter.org/health/agriculture/index.html.

rural places as cosmopolitan, then, not only requires thinking historically but also thinking critically about the present. While this is not surprising, the popular emphasis on rural homogeneity very much extends to the contemporary landscape, which is seen to be both overly-determined by a singular industrialized agriculture and emptied—of people and animals. Butala shows the multiple ways of imagining the land through multiple imaginations of agriculture.

As in *The Garden of Eden*, cosmopolitan ways of reading the landscape—thus with an eye to the reader's responsibilities to that place—are made explicit in *The Hungry Tide*. Nirmal's suggestion "that in a way a landscape is not unlike a book—a compilation of pages that overlap without any two ever being the same" (186) is a more metaphorical observation of the way that multiple histories and affiliations overlap in the rural places of the Sundarbans. Nirmal's observation stems from his changing perception of the tide countries: "To me, a townsman, the tide country's jungle was an emptiness . . . I saw now that this was an illusion, that exactly the opposite was true . . . here in the tide country, transformation is the rule of life: rivers stray from week to week, and islands are made and unmade in days" (186)—a parallel observation to Jay Anselm's in *The Garden of Eden*. The juxtaposition of Nirmal's "urban" perceptions and his "rural" ones is key here. His inclination, like that of so many others, is to view the rural as empty and homogeneous. Instead, he grows to recognize that that apparent blankness is full of change and life. Rural places, as depicted by Ghosh, are not, then, static backdrops to the "proper" action of the novel but are in constant motion themselves—as are the characters of the novel.

The names of the small towns of the Sundarbans, for example, are shown to be unstable signifiers which have been applied extraterritorially. Lusibari has been so named by a British army officer, after one of his relatives. Its translation, of sorts, into the vernacular language shows its ongoing transformation. While this process of colonial naming is hardly unique to the rural and was a common colonial practice as "the renaming of colonized territories . . . played an important part in the domination of these territories" (Bohata 11), nevertheless it is one way of marking how transformation is as constant in rural places as in other places. Similarly, it rejects a reified and essentialized notion of rural places as static and ahistoric. By emphasizing the contingent and arbitrary nature of the naming of these places, Ghosh attempts to demonstrate, by echoing an actual phenomenon of place naming in the formerly-colonized world, the way that the communities of the Sundarbans have been constantly involved in the developments of metropolitan modernity. Rather than relegate the rural to an ahistorical premodern hinterland, Ghosh draws the reader's attention to the way that the rural has always been connected to, if often at the mercy of, the metropolitan.

The description of the settlement of Canning and its role in the tide country's weather and ports further demonstrates the way that the land has been shaped quite literally by British colonialism. Canning was founded

by Lord Canning for the British as "they needed a new port, a capital for Bengal" (235). Ghosh describes the incursion of British surveyors and planners into the thinly-populated area: "Here on the banks of the smiling river the work continued: an embankment arose, foundations were dug, a strand laid out, a railway line built" (235). Like so many places colonized by European powers, colonial infrastructure shapes the layout and appearance of the land. Here, in Canning, this new infrastructure requires the deforestation of the mangroves from the island on which Canning is situated and which "were Bengal's defense against the bay . . . it was the mangroves which kept the hinterland alive" (236). Mr. Piddington, a scientific soothsayer, warns that, with this environmental destruction, there is an increased chance of destruction by larger storms and waves. In 1867, the town is more or less destroyed by a giant wave.

This interruption of the novel's primary narrative to tell about Canning serves two purposes: it demonstrates the way that the tide country, and India more generally, have been physically shaped by its colonial legacy, teaching readers how to read landscape through a territorialized cosmopolitan lens—seeing its global and local trajectories; and it foreshadows the large storm and wave that wreaks so much destruction during the siege at Morichjhãpi and at the end of the novel, further indicating the ongoing legacy of the colonial past. Ghosh thus resists a strictly linear view of the history of the Sundarbans. The circularity of these storms parallels the cycle of various colonialisms to which the Sundarbans are subjected. In the first storm, it is the British, in the second, the Indian government's attempt to colonize and manage the rural refugees (who became refugees at the time of Partition and the India-Pakistan war in East Pakistan in 1971), and in the third storm, the implication is of another colonial power, the U.S. or the West more broadly. This emphasis on cyclical weather patterns further challenges notions of a straightforward progress towards a supposed modernity. For, just as the rural here is caught in repeating patterns, so too are the metropolitan powers. At the same time, this focus on meteorology resists a view of place that acknowledges only the human inhabitants. While the weather is connected in the narrative to human events, it still suggests that human residents of a place must live with the natural world.

*The Hungry Tide*, then, through its invocation of these various storms and their impact on the past and the present suggests that the rural is never a place of unceasing stability which emerged, nearly fully-formed, in a distant past. Likewise, in his description of the settlement of the Sundarbans—both in the past and more contemporarily in Morichjhãpi—Ghosh resists a view of rural community that places migration almost solely in the past and a romanticized view of rural places as organic and "natural" communities. As well, the suggestion that the settlement of the Sundarbans was planned and encouraged by a colonial power further points to the impossibility of viewing these places as though they represent a "natural" settlement in contrast to the planned environment of the city.

Despite the cosmopolitan readings of place and the generally positive stance towards characters' territorialized cosmopolitan development, the authors of *The Garden of Eden* and *The Hungry Tide* remain highly cognizant of the potential problems of a non-territorialized cosmopolitanism for rural places. Both novels depict the way that colonial powers—whether past or contemporary, national governments or multinational corporations—attempt to impose a universalizing vision of the global onto the rural where the values and practices of the metropolis are applied to the rural without attending to its cultural and historical specificity. Both texts show the slippage that occurs when universalizing projects attempt to include the rural without actually considering the specificity of a non-stereotyped rural and the rural's interaction with the global more generally. Universalizing projects are shown to run roughshod over rural autonomy and places, the voices of whose inhabitants are often disregarded or unheard. Therefore, while these texts *do* generate a model of a more responsible territorialized cosmopolitanism, they remain highly critical of models of the global that are applied from outside these places and that assume that rural places are waiting to become metropolitan rather than having cultures of their own. In *The Garden of Eden*, for instance, Iris's growing cosmopolitanism is depicted positively by the text. The text validates her increasing awareness of and sense of ethical and political responsibility to the world outside of her farm and small rural community and is particularly positive about her decision to turn her farm over to prairie reclamation.[8] Similarly, Iris's changing cosmopolitan perception of the land she lives on and the Ethiopian land she visits is posited as a parallel moment of global self-awareness and of amelioration. Butala is openly critical, however, of a neoliberal global project that is reflected in free-trade agreements and the promotion of production at the cost of sustainability. Butala draws the reader's attention repeatedly to the costs of this kind of global interaction to communities, to nations and to the land. *The Garden of Eden*'s narrative focus on the Ethiopian famine of the mid-1980s and on the North American farm crisis of the late 1980s/ early 1990s (though ongoing) is particularly attentive to the ways that neoliberal economic agreements like NAFTA and the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement impact the rural throughout the world.

While the text never explicitly connects these two crises to specific political negotiations or agreements, the setting of the novel and the historical context of the novel's writing and publication point to the importance of this geo-political manoeuvring. Further, the text is also written within the context of the ever-increasing corporatization of agriculture, further endorsed by trade agreements like NAFTA, as large-

[8] This attitude towards Iris's decision is not surprising since Butala and her late husband undertook a similar reclamation project with their own ranch—something Butala documents in *The Perfection of the Morning* (1997), *Wild Stone Heart* (2000) and *Old Man on his Back* (2002).

scale agribusiness makes the small family farm less and less sustainable. Iris's neighbour, Vance, who agrees to farm her land while she looks for Lannie, argues that "Farmers like Barney [Iris's husband who practiced industrialized farming] ruined this country . . . They drove away the wildlife and they poisoned the land with their chemicals. Never could get enough. Just kept breaking more land and breaking more land till there's hardly no grass left. Old farmsteads, the road allowances that don't even belong to them" (122). Later, when Iris drives him around the farm itself, Vance examines the soil and says: "'It looks like ashes. It ain't even soil any more. It's got no fibre, it won't even stick together.' He spreads his fingers and the dirt slides easily between them to drift, pale and powdery, onto the land. 'Got no nutrients left. When the soil's got no nutrients left it can't grow wheat with good protein'" (126). The cost to the land, to say nothing of the livelihoods of those who farm and are dependent upon it, is clear. The adoption of farming practices that fall in line with the global capitalist imperatives of agricultural corporations like Monsanto and Cargill—which have an implicit cosmopolitan agenda as they seek to create universal norms and practices but yet are actually only superficially cosmopolitan as they lack any sense of responsibility to either local inhabitants or the global environment—not only makes it increasingly difficult to maintain more traditional agricultural practices but also makes agriculture itself progressively less tenable.

The possibility that farming will become unviable suffuses this book and is shown to have an impact on more than just individual farmers. Iris feels pressured to cave in to the demand of the land developers as they plan to build a feedlot and, as she recognizes, "a feedlot means a slaughterhouse and a packing plant and that means jobs" (96). The economic importance of this (potentially) international investment in an economically depressed community makes it difficult for Iris to resist a proposal that would benefit her and the community financially yet would have destructive environmental and cultural effects. This tension between the global interests of major investors and corporations, and rural communities which wish to maintain local autonomy is one that is familiar throughout the North Atlantic rural where "the countryside . . . is coming to serve two new and very different purposes—playground and dumping ground—as the traditional rural economy declines" (Epp and Whitson xv). As Alison Calder suggests, at the heart of these conflicts between developers and rural communities "are questions of power: whose land is the prairie, and whose interests should be protected? Who is seen to have the right to prairie space?" and "whether a specific place is a working landscape or a recreational one" ("Why Shoot the Gopher?" par.2). At a town meeting in Chinook to consider the possible land development, one speaker criticizes Iris and the conservationists who are there, saying:

> It's no skin off your nose when we get shoved out of our jobs or off our land and can't look after our own families any more. You don't have to live with the shame of being on welfare. Or all the bad things that happen when a family falls apart—

> drinking, wife abuse, kids going delinquent because they can't see a life that makes any sense any more. When they got no future and no place to call home. When you think about it, that's what happened to the Indians when we came—only a thousand times worse. (345)

It is not only the land, then, that suffers from agribusiness's vision of cosmopolitanism but also the culture of small rural communities.[9] Ironically, though, this speaker (echoing many actual members of rural communities) argues in favour of development because of the damage already wrought by environmental degradation. While the speaker's hyperbolic parallel between the displacement of Aboriginals and rural farmers minimizes the violence done to Aboriginals and their systemic marginalization, this statement does point to the colonial echoes of a cosmopolitanism imposed from above.

Similarly in *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh's constant attention to class privilege suffuses the novel, most particularly in conjunction with ideas about the conservation of nature, and raises questions about the motives of those who make plans for communities but who refuse to include these communities in the making of these plans. Like so many other moments in *The Hungry Tide*, an encounter with the landscape and its inhabitants prompts a realization of the complex interactions between class, nationality, gender, and power. On their more extended surveying trip in search of the Orcaella, Piya, Kanai and Fokir encounter a community that has managed to trap a tiger that has killed at least two of its inhabitants. The tiger is trapped inside a small hut where people stab at it with sharpened sticks. Fokir joins in enthusiastically, and Kanai joins in more slowly and less enthusiastically. Piya, on the other hand, is horrified and attempts to convince Kanai that this must be stopped. As a result, the community members turn on the group, who must make a quick departure. Later, Piya remains traumatized by the scene and Kanai questions how she can want to protect a tiger that has already killed two people and, if left alive, would no doubt kill more. Kanai argues that conservation is the domain of the wealthy and, often, the extraterritorial. Piya can afford to demand conservation areas in the Sundarbans because she does not (at this point) live there and, if she did, she could afford proper housing. She can be sympathetic to the suffering of the tiger because she does not know or identify with those who have lost family and fellow community members to the tiger: "people in cities do not have the same relation to wildlife as those in agricultural communities because the land base is treated fundamentally differently . . . virtually every battle over treatment of animals or preservation of land eventually is also expressed as a conflict between 'city people' (environmentalists) and 'country people' (those who live on and work the land)" (Calder, "Why Shoot the Gopher?" par.14). Kanai shares many of these points of identification with Piya yet does not fully share her outrage at the death of the tiger. The text suggests that this

[9] Bharati Mukherjee depicts similar consequences to the farm crisis in *Jasmine* (1989).

is, in part, a gendered response.[10] Kanai feels he *must* join in with the other men to demonstrate his masculinity—suggesting a greater ability to actually deploy multiple (and sometimes conflicting) affiliations for men. Ghosh clearly aligns sympathy with the tiger and conservation projects with the explicitly cosmopolitan characters, Piya and Kanai. This sympathy can be understood as an expression—though clearly limited—of their cosmopolitan ethical commitment to fellow inhabitants (here, non-human) of a particular place. While this sympathy and these projects might seem to be positive and worthy of support, Ghosh is much more reticent and cautious in his endorsement. In his dramatization of the Morichjhãpi uprising, Ghosh makes this caution quite explicit. The Indian government physically enforced the eviction of the refugees on this island because the island was designated a nature preserve. Ghosh, as articulated through Nirmal's diary, is highly critical of the preservation of natural spaces at the expense of the most unprotected humans. Conservation movements, often global in their focus, are thus depicted as insufficiently attentive to local, human concerns—not all political expressions of cosmopolitan ethical commitments, then, are worthy of support. As Morichjhãpi demonstrates here, the rural local is at the mercy of the urban national (and, implicitly, global). This tension between local lives and national and global environmental concerns echoes those of Thomas Dunk in his discussion of logging in Northern Ontario:

> The potential for the creation of a subject position in which both workers [in the context of the novel, this could be understood to refer, more broadly, to both paid and non-paid work] and environmentalists find common cause is overdetermined by pre-existing narrative structures which refract environmentalist critiques of forestry practices onto long-standing concerns about external domination. (2)

Ghosh dramatizes an instance where this anxiety comes to a head and the more ideological external domination Dunk refers to becomes literal, physical expressions of domination. This dramatization of the Morichjhãpi uprising, then, demonstrates some of the very real dangers of un-territorialized cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan ideals about environmental and humanitarian protection have the potential to threaten rural places; these are cosmopolitan ethical and political commitments that do not take enough responsibility for their articulations in particular places. Unlike in *The Garden of Eden*, where cosmopolitan corporate business poses a threat to the rural, here the threat is from extra-territorial cosmopolitan

[10] Catriona Sandilands argues that "early ecofeminism relied on woman's essential difference from man in order to highlight the ways in which a woman's standpoint on nature could produce less exploitative, more nurturant, and more harmonious human relations with nonhuman and (human) nature" (111); however, Sandilands suggests that "the ecofeminist category 'woman' . . . was challenged by a variety of differently situated women because of its Western and white, middle-class and (eventually) heterosexual bias and because of its overtones of biological determinism" (111). Piya, as characterized in *The Hungry Tide*, positions herself within the earlier paradigm Sandilands identifies—a position which Ghosh challenges.

environmentalism, though Butala and Ghosh depict the encroachment of these forces as comparable. Notably, there seems to be some possibility of resisting cosmopolitan corporatism whereas national humanitarian efforts (unlike in *The Garden of Eden*, these efforts in *The Hungry Tide* are not those of non-profit organizations but of the Indian state) seem relatively unstoppable and, ironically, have the potential to use violent repression in their support—reflecting the state's sovereign power of exclusion.

Both *The Garden of Eden* and *The Hungry Tide* suggest the possibility of a responsible and territorialized rural cosmopolitanism. This possibility exists, however, within the novels' repudiation of globalizing projects that seek only to reproduce themselves away from the metropolis with little attention to the attendant cultural and territorial differences of the rural. Therefore, both novels point to rural anxieties about cosmopolitanism and what that might mean to these places and communities which, as Cloke suggests, are identified as rural by their inhabitants. They ask questions about what the contemporary rural looks like, about its position in national and global economies, and about its future. Thus these novels disrupt widely circulating narratives about the rural; they posit the rural as heterogeneous, the site of multiple and contesting trajectories, while simultaneously remaining attentive to the homogenizing impulse that runs throughout the cultural self-construction of these communities. They point to gaps in theoretical understandings of the rural *and* the cosmopolitan by themselves theorizing a rural territorialized cosmopolitanism.

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