

The Multifaceted Active Agent: Nature as a Living Entity in Indian Ocean Narratives

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In my thesis, I integrate interdisciplinary fields of study such as Indian Ocean studies, postcolonial studies, environmental humanities, blue humanities, and ecofeminism. Specifically, I analyze the portrayal of nature in the following works: Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Gun Island* (2019), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* (2013), and Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's *The Dragonfly Sea* (2019). I argue that in these novels, nature is depicted as a multifaceted active entity that operates simultaneously as a transformative agent, a destructive force, an ally, and as an arbitrary entity. Nature is represented through the aquatic spaces of the Sundarbans, Tollygunge, Rhode Island, and Pate Island. I argue that nature is embodied by the transformative chronotope of the aquatic space in which time (historical and climatic times) is inseparable from the aquatic environment. Moreover, nature is presented as an avenging monster that reacts to patriarchy and environmental exploitation, manifested in eco-catastrophes such as cyclones and tsunamis that have devastating consequences for human lives but that generate renewal, revolution, and love. Additionally, nature is portrayed as an ally that offers freedom and love to characters through the sea and that aids climate refugees in migration through the intervention of animals. Furthermore, through an ecofeminist lens, I contend that the female scientists depicted in these texts (Piya, Bela, and Ayaana) embody environmental hope and the ecological self, striking a harmonious balance between scientific inquiry and spiritual connection with the natural world. Nevertheless, nature can also assume an arbitrary role in these novels, merely existing parallel to the narrative without any discernible purpose. I merely contend that nature, embodied by aquatic imaginaries, Indian Ocean eco-disasters, female scientists, and marine creatures, is more than a material entity, it is a living, active, and spiritual entity. I have just finished writing the first chapter of my analysis, "Nature as Transformative Agent: Aquatic Imaginaries in the Sundarbans, Rhode Island, Tollygunge and Pate Island."

During my stay at Rachel Carson Center, I aim to do research on and write the second chapter of my thesis, which examines destructive responses to patriarchy through eco-catastrophes—cyclones, storms, tsunamis, tidal waves. It argues that these events embody nature's avenging agency, disrupting human dominance while reconfiguring social and ecological relations.