

humans who have been diminished to objecthood and have come together in order to reclaim their power.³

This declaration of objecthood can be seen in the passage from the *Hungry Tide* where Kusum is explaining to Nirimal the dehumanizing ways they are being treated by the police, she says “The worst part was not the hunger or thirst. It was to sit there, helpless, and listen to the policemen making their announcements, hearing them say that our lives, our existence, were worth less than dirt of dust.”

In the novel, the refugees are being forced away from their land in the name of conserving the animals of the forest. The inhabitants of Morichapi are being harassed by other people and by their environment as well. By doubling the reversal of power in the novel by focusing on both the battle between humans and other humans and between humans and nature, he is complicating our expectations about who or what has power and in this way, leaves us with loose ended ideas about postcolonialism and environmentalism that cannot be neatly tied up at the end of the novel.

Notebook 2:

of building on top of an already existing history and the past resurfacing despite human and nonhuman efforts to cover it up.

A second way in which the past can be seen or felt in the present is Nirimal's recollection of the shipwrecks that littered the tide country channels with their hefty gray bodies only to be, with time "ground to fine silt, becom[ing] something else." About 160 pages earlier, in the passage where Kanai is just arriving to the Matla river, he describes silt in a way that almost implies sentience, "The freshly laid silt that bored the water glistened in the sun like dunes of melted chocolate. From time to time, bubbles of air rose from the depths and burst to the top...The sounds they made seemed almost to form articulate patterns, as if to suggest they were giving voice to the depths of the earth itself."

Marshall McLuhan once said that "Every new technology creates a new environment," so what if that new environment started to garner as much power as that of its origin?⁶ Material giving life to new material ad infinitum is another motif of the novel and is increasingly relevant towards the end of the book when the elements come together to create a natural disaster.

If there is anything Amitav Ghosh is trying to communicate with the *Hungry Tide*, it's that we must problematize our history in order to understand it, this includes embracing ambiguities of subject/object, colonialism/postcolonialism and human/inhuman.

Notebook 3: The Flamethrowers & Futurism

Futurism plays an integral role in *The Flamethrowers*, specifically in the way it deals with technology and violence - two of the main tenets of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's

Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism. Rachel Kushner incorporates elements of futurism in her novel not only as a critique of the hypermasculinity and fascistic tendencies of the movement, but also to appropriate the aforementioned qualities and casting the problematic ideas in a new, contemporary light.

The first way the novel references the Futurist manifesto is through Reno's first crush and speed racer Flip Farmer. Flip's race car is painted a glossy lavender (a color often associated with softness and femininity) and is named *Victory of Samothrace*, which is cited in the manifesto where Marinetti declares "A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath - a roaring that seems to ride on grapeshot [ammunition] is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*."⁷ It seems appropriate then that that race car, a symbol for femininity and whose namesake is an ancient Hellenistic sculpture, should end up wrecked at the bottom of a ditch towards the end of the chapter. This also connects to the manifesto where, racing through the city at a deadly speed, Marinetti crashes his car into a ditch full of black sludge only to emerge a new man who has left behind the car's "heavy framework of good sense and its soft upholstery of comfort."⁸

The Italian futurists felt suffocated by the classical art surrounding them in the great museums and architecture of Rome, and vehemently believed that the only way to break out of such a time-tested traditional mold was through violence and progress catalyzed through speed and technology.⁹ We can see this in the way Valera and his friends behave and think, decrying any word or act that might be associated with the past, such as when Valera uses the word
