

## Postscript

The humans and the non-humans are made to sacrifice for one another in the Sundarbans. Without resolving this conflict, imagining a sustainable future can only be fictional as ‘notions of sustainability’ are rather vague because there’s considerable incoherence about what is to be sustained and for how long a time (Stoekl 2013). This clashing intellectual formation in the Anthropocene, as Giles (2014) writes, fails to bridge the gap between post-colonialism and environmentalism.



**Photo 1** Destined to flee? Even that involves balancing one’s weight and act. Ghoramara Island August 2014 © Aditya Ghosh

He urges for ‘new formations and idioms where the postcolonial sublime will no longer reify any metaphysical or anthropocentric pure reason, but will instead enable discovery of more nuanced interpenetration with the natural world’ (ibid: 242). The subaltern in the Sundarbans comprises both the humans and non-humans, surviving in a ‘land known as *bhatir desh* – the tide country – except that *bhati* is not just the tide but one tide in particular, the ebb-tide: it is only in falling that the water gives birth to the forest. To look upon this strange parturition, midwifed by the moon, is to know why the name *tide country* is not just right but necessary’ (Ghosh 2004: 4). It is time aesthetics leads to activism.

One can hope for the tides to turn and empower the postcolonial sublime to refute the baggage of ideologies from the past as well as emerging hegemonies of a new global order around sustainability. While most narratives including this one remain confined within the realms of polemics, daily poignant struggles continue in fatalism across the tide country in silence, intransigence and invisibility. As large chunks of earth make eerie, splashing sounds while hitting its predator – the cursed waters in the rivers and the sea – sleeping children, men and women like Sabitri Dandapat with whom the story started wake up, scramble and scamper to save a few bamboo poles, a few bricks, schoolbags, books and other motley possessions.

It is time to move again.

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