Posthumanism in Contemporary Indian English Literature and Films: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Rakesh Roshan's *Krrish* Series (2006–2013)

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	This study investigates posthumanism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and Rakesh Roshan's *Krrish* series (2006–2013), analyzing how these works contest anthropocentric narratives in modern Indian literature and cinema. Posthumanism, highlighting human-nonhuman interconnections, offers a framework for examining ecological and techno-cultural aspects in these writings. Ghosh's story emphasizes human-nonhuman interactions in the Sundarbans, exposing colonial and environmental injustices, whereas the *Krrish* trilogy examines superhuman hybridity and bioethics in a globalized context. This study contends that both works redefine identity, agency, and ethics through particular literary and cinematic instances, presenting posthuman viewpoints on postcolonial and technological issues. The analysis utilizes theories from Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, and N. Katherine Hayles, in conjunction with postcolonial ecocriticism, to underscore the texts' contributions to Indian cultural discourse.

1.Introduction

Posthumanism reconceptualizes the human as a relational being interconnected with animals, habitats, and technologies, contesting the anthropocentric hierarchies of conventional humanism (Braidotti, 2013). In Indian contexts, posthumanism converges with postcolonialism and ecocriticism, examining colonial legacies, environmental problems, and technological transformations within a globalized framework. Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Rakesh Roshan's *Krrish* series, despite their differences in medium and subject, address posthuman themes to challenge anthropocentrism and

suggest alternative ontologies. Ghosh's novel, situated in the ecologically vulnerable Sundarbans, investigates human-nonhuman interconnections and subaltern dispossession, whereas the *Krrish* series, a superhero narrative, analyzes posthuman subjectivity via genetic hybridity and technological enhancement. This dissertation examines how these writings employ narrative and cinematic techniques to contest human exceptionalism, utilizing particular examples to demonstrate their ecological and techno-cultural posthumanism. The study juxtaposes literature and film to underscore the diversity of posthumanism in Indian cultural creation, thereby adding to global discourses on identity, ethics, and agency.

2.Conceptual Framework

Posthumanism, as defined by Donna Haraway (1991) and Rosi Braidotti (2013), underscores hybridity, relationality, and the collapse of barriers between human and nonhuman entities. Haraway's "cyborg" metaphor emphasizes the amalgamation of human, animal, and machine, whereas Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity accentuates the fluidity of identities within a networked environment. N. Katherine Hayles (1999) expands posthumanism to encompass technoculture, contending that embodiment surpasses human constraints via technology. In postcolonial circumstances, Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin (2010) amalgamate posthumanism with ecocriticism, challenging anthropocentric colonial narratives that exploit both human subalterns and nonhuman phenomena. Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee (2010) further contextualizes postcolonial ecocriticism within South Asian frameworks, highlighting environmental justice in literature. These theories facilitate the examination of *The Hungry Tide*'s ecological posthumanism and the *Krrish* series' techno-cultural posthumanism, emphasizing their navigation of postcolonial power dynamics and ethical dilemmas.

3. Posthumanism in *The Hungry Tide*

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) is situated in the Sundarbans, a delta abundant in mangroves, which is jointly inhabited by India and Bangladesh, recognized for its ecological vulnerability and cultural intricacy. The narrative centers on Piya Roy, an Indian-American cetologist researching Irrawaddy dolphins, and her encounters with Fokir, a local fisherman, and Kanai, a translator. Ghosh examines human-nonhuman interconnections through these characters, contesting anthropocentric myths and colonial legacies.

Ecological Posthumanism and Nonhuman Agency: The Sundarbans functions not merely as a passive setting but as an active force influencing human existence. Ghosh characterizes the region's tides as "a force so powerful, it could obliterate entire island populations in a single day" (Ghosh, 2004, p. 78). This depiction corresponds with material ecocriticism, wherein habitats demonstrate agency (Iovino & Oppermann, 2014). Piya's research on dolphins illustrates a posthuman endeavor to comprehend animal subjectivity. In a pivotal scene, Piya witnesses a dolphin pod traversing the river, remarking on their "uncanny intelligence" (Ghosh, 2004, p. 142). Her scientific perspective, however, is insufficient without Fokir's cultural understanding, which navigates her through the waters. This partnership attacks Western scientific dominance, reflecting Huggan and Tiffin's (2010) assertion that postcolonial posthumanism undermines colonial epistemologies.

The novel's portrayal of the 1979 Morichjhapi massacre, in which Bengali refugees were expelled from the Sundarbans for environmental conservation, underscores the conflict between human rights and ecological preservation. Nirmal's diary, read by Kanai, characterizes the migrants as "ghosts" exiled by governmental policy (Ghosh, 2004, p. 191). Pramod Nayar (2013) refers to this phenomenon as the "postcolonial uncanny," in which oppressed individuals are rendered spectral by anthropocentric environmentalism. The slaughter exposes colonial and postcolonial policies that favor nonhuman nature over marginalized lives, harmonizing with Mukherjee's (2010) advocacy for environmental justice in South Asian literature.

Mythology and Relational Ethics: The Bon Bibi narrative, a syncretic story esteemed in the Sundarbans, further obscures the distinctions between human and nonhuman entities. Fokir's veneration for Bon Bibi, a forest deity safeguarding both humanity and wildlife, exemplifies a cosmology of coexistence (Ghosh, 2004, p. 254). In a crucial sequence, Fokir performs a Bon Bibi song while traversing a storm, highlighting spiritual connectivity with the environment.

This juxtaposes Piya's scientific rationality, indicating a posthuman ethics wherein humans adjust to nonhuman agency. Fokir's demise during a hurricane, while he protects Piya from falling debris, highlights shared fragility and reinforces Braidotti's (2013) concept of nomadic subjectivity, wherein identities are dynamic and interdependent. Ghosh's tale employs the ecological and historical intricacies of the Sundarbans to promote a posthuman ethics of coexistence, challenging anthropocentric and colonial exploitation while emphasizing nonhuman agency and subaltern perspectives.

4. Posthumanism in the *Krrish* Franchise

Rakesh Roshan's *Krrish* (2006) and *Krrish 3* (2013) constitute a superhero narrative focused on Krishna Mehra (Krrish), whose superhuman powers arise from extraterrestrial influence and genetic alteration. The series examines techno-cultural posthumanism, investigating hybrid identity, bioethics, and agency within a worldwide context.

Hybrid Identity in Krrish (2006):

In *Krrish*, Krishna acquires superhuman abilities—superior strength, velocity, and agility—from his father, Rohit, who was upgraded by extraterrestrial technology in *Koi… Mil Gaya* (2003). A pivotal scene illustrates Krishna vaulting over rooftops in Singapore to rescue a toddler from a conflagration, his physique surpassing human constraints (Roshan, 2006, 1:12:45). This corresponds with Hayles' (1999) concept of posthuman embodiment, wherein the body serves as a locus of technological enhancement. Krishna's dual identities as a rural Indian and a global superhero exemplifies Haraway's (1991) cyborg metaphor, merging tradition with modernity. His endeavor to reconcile personal aspirations with society obligations, demonstrated by his refusal of a circus position to safeguard his individuality (Roshan, 2006, 0:45:20), underscores posthuman agency maneuvering through international cultural contexts.

Bioethics and Mutants in *Krrish 3* (2013): *Krrish 3* broadens the posthuman paradigm via genetic engineering. Kaal, a paraplegic scientist and antagonist, engineers mutants by amalgamating human and animal DNA with the objective of subjugating humanity. Kaal's laboratory presents a disturbing tableau of imprisoned mutants, including a frog-human hybrid, epitomizing the commodification of life (Roshan, 2013, 1:25:30). This concerns the excessive reach of biotechnology, aligning with Haraway's (1991) cautions regarding capitalist exploitation of hybrid entities. Krishna's confrontation with Kaal, especially in a pivotal clash where he annihilates Kaal's mutant forces (Roshan, 2013, 2:10:15), underscores the importance of ethical duty in contrast to unbridled scientific desire. Kaal's hybridity—his body supported by technology—contrasts with Krishna's organic talents, emphasizing the conflicts between dystopian and utopian posthumanism.

The *Krrish* series positions its posthuman tale within a postcolonial framework. Krishna's Indian identity, grounded in cultural values like as familial bonds and obligation, stands in stark contrast to Kaal's Westernized, capitalist-driven malevolence. Depictions of Krishna worshiping at a temple prior to his missions (Roshan, 2006, 0:30:10) anchor his posthumanity in Indian spirituality, countering global standardization. The series' urban locales—Mumbai and Singapore—epitomize a globalized India,

wherein posthuman identities navigate cultural hybridity. In contrast to the ecological emphasis of *The Hungry Tide,* the *Krrish* series promotes techno-cultural posthumanism, utilizing visual effects to highlight bodily transcendence and ethical quandaries.

5. Comparative Examination

The Hungry Tide and the *Krrish* series intersect in their critique of anthropocentrism yet differ in their methodologies. Ghosh's story underscores ecological posthumanism, portraying the tides of the Sundarbans and dolphins as crucial forces in influencing human narratives. Particular moments, such as Fokir's traversal of tidal channels (Ghosh, 2004, p. 130), highlight environmental agency, resonating with material ecocriticism. Conversely, the *Krrish* series emphasizes techno-cultural posthumanism, as evidenced by Krishna's superhuman leaps (Roshan, 2006, 1:12:45) and Kaal's mutant experiments (Roshan, 2013, 1:25:30), which underscore technological enhancement.

Both texts employ postcolonial critiques. The Morichjhapi massacre in *The Hungry Tide* reveals colonial and state-induced marginalization, whereas Kaal's biotechnological empire in *Krrish 3* reflects capitalist exploitation reminiscent of colonial resource extraction. Ghosh's story is historically anchored, employing Nirmal's diary to chronicle subaltern dispossession (Ghosh, 2004, p. 191), but the *Krrish* series utilizes speculative fiction, with Kaal's laboratory serving as a dystopian metaphor (Roshan, 2013, 1:25:30).

Ethically, *The Hungry Tide* promotes coexistence, exemplified by Piya's partnership with Fokir and the Bon Bibi myth (Ghosh, 2004, p. 254), but *Krrish* underscores individual agency, illustrated by Krishna's moral decisions against Kaal (Roshan, 2013, 2:10:15). Both texts contest human exceptionalism by advocating for relational ontologies—ecological in Ghosh and technocultural in Roshan—that reconceptualize human identity within a postcolonial, globalized context.

6. Conclusion

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Rakesh Roshan's *Krrish series* exemplify the profundity of posthumanism in modern Indian literature and cinema. The stories challenge anthropocentrism, colonial legacies, and technological determinism through concrete examples: Piya's dolphin study, Fokir's death, Krishna's superhuman abilities, and Kaal's mutants. Ghosh's ecological posthumanism emphasizes human-nonhuman interconnections, whereas Roshan's technocultural posthumanism investigates hybrid embodiment. Collectively, they provide ethical frameworks for addressing environmental and technical

concerns within a postcolonial context. Subsequent study may investigate additional Indian works, including science fiction films such as *Robot* (2010) or books like *The White Tiger* (2008), to further analyze the role of posthumanism in Indian cultural discourse.

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