

**THE CURTAILMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
IN AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE HUNGRY TIDE***

**PAPER**

*Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement to obtain the Strata One (S1)  
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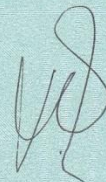
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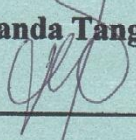
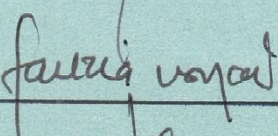
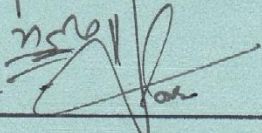
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## ABSTRAK

**Amelya, Ade.** 2013. The Curtailment of Human Rights in Amitav Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide". *Makalah*. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

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Setiap individu memiliki hak asasi yang sama. Namun, di beberapa tempat masih saja ditemui permasalahan yang berhubungan dengan hak asasi, salah satunya adalah pembatasan terhadap hak asasi manusia. Novel *The Hungry Tide* (2005) yang ditulis oleh Amitav Ghosh memperlihatkan bagaimana pembatasan hak yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah terhadap para pengungsi sebagai kaum minoritas di daerah tersebut. Penganalisaan terhadap teks novel ini menggunakan *text-based* dan *context-based interpretation*. Karakter dalam teks ini memperlihatkan adanya sebuah perbedaan perlakuan yang mereka terima dari pemerintah setempat yang berujung terhadap pembatasan hak asasi mereka. Konflik yang terjadi juga menunjukkan bahwa pembatasan tersebut menyulitkan mereka untuk memperoleh hak secara utuh. Sedangkan, seting dapat terlihat dari beberapa perlakuan yang mereka terima dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Selain itu, penganalisaan unsur-unsur sastra tersebut juga dikaitkan dengan konsep *subaltern* oleh Marxist Antonio Gramsci dan Ranajit Guha yang mengemukakan bahwa *subaltern* merupakan kelompok minoritas yang tidak memiliki wewenang di lingkungan tempat tinggalnya. Pembahasan ini juga didukung dengan konsep hak asasi manusia yang dikemukakan oleh Mark Goodale dan Sally Engle Merry, dan Kristine Bellisle dan Elizabeth Sullivan yang menyebutkan bahwa setiap orang memiliki hak asasinya masing-masing. Penganalisaan terhadap novel yang berjudul *The Hungry Tide* (2005) ini menunjukkan bahwa pembatasan hak asasi manusia itu terjadi dan dilakukan dalam tiga aspek kehidupan: pendidikan, pelayanan kesehatan, dan tempat tinggal.

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In finishing this paper, first and foremost the writer offers her sincerest gratitude to her academic advisor, Muhammad Al Hafizh, S.S., M.A. for the time, patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge during the accomplishment of this paper. Besides an advisor, the writer would like to express the appreciation to Dr. Kusni, M.Pd. as her academic advisor who was helping her during the study. Then, the writer would like to thank to the examiners in the paper comprehension test, Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A., and Delvi Wahyuni, S.S, M.A. for their beneficial time, contributions of thoughtful and ideas toward the development of this paper. Her sincere thank also goes to Dr. Kurnia Ningsih, M.A. as the chairperson of the English Department, and Dra. An Fauzia Rozani Syafei, M.A. as the secretary, for their kindness and helps. Moreover, collective and individual acknowledgements are also aimed to all lecturers and administration staff of English Department.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Human rights are the most crucial thing for human beings. According to Belisle and Sullivan (2007), human rights are the basic standards of human being to live with freedom and dignity. Then, they said that human rights include fundamental civil and political rights, such as the right to free speech, freedom of religion, and the right to participate in government. Human rights also include essential economic, social and cultural rights, such as the right to education, work, and healthcare.

Belisle and Sullivan (2007) stated that human rights have existed since man was born, but they have not always been recognized. The importance of independent institution appears since the extermination during World War II toward Jews, Sinti and Romani (gypsies), homosexuals and person with disabilities. It will work to prevent an atrocity occurring again. Then, the United Nations (U.N) established which is purposed to promote the international peace. The founders of the United Nations, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, recognized that protecting individual's rights to live, freedom, basic necessities, and nationality would be critical to fulfill the organization's mission to maintain peace.

The United Nation commission on human rights subsequently issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Further, it was declared on December 10, 1948 in Paris, by Eleanor Roosevelt as a president of the United Nation commission on human rights. The universal declaration of human rights

provides a comprehensive framework and vision for how human dignity and freedom should be protected. It embodies the same principles that president of United States of America described when he spoke about the four freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

Furthermore, according to Humphrey (1998), there are 30 articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It covers six different categories of human rights: political rights, civil rights, equality rights, economic rights, social rights, and cultural rights. Thus, the right to get an education and medical service belong to the social rights, and the right to get a decent domicile belongs to the civil rights.

All of those rights are possessed by all the human being in the worldwide.

They also have the same chance to use those rights. As Nowak (2005), says:

Human rights are universal because they are based on every human being's dignity, irrespective of race, color, sex, ethnic or social origin, religion, language, nationality, age, sexual orientation, disability or any other distinguishing characteristic. Since they are accepted by all states and peoples, they apply equally and indiscriminately to every person and are the same for everyone everywhere.

The quotation above reflects that the principle of human rights is universal. Even though, they are living in the different countries, there is no different right that they received. But, it is not entirely applied in the real life. Some people are still getting a curtailment towards their rights. It is conducted by the government toward the refugee in three aspects of their life; to get an education, medical service, and decent domicile.

According to Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts Project (2012), refugees are defined by three basic characteristics; they are outside their country of origin or outside the country of their former habitual residence, they are unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted, and the persecution feared is based on at least one of five grounds: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. Further, Volunteer Refugee Tutoring and Community Support (2012) stated that refugees have the same human rights as any other person. Human rights particularly relevant to refugees include: the right not to be returned to their country of origin if their safety cannot be assured; the right to the same treatment as the citizens of the country in which they are given refuge; the right to life, liberty and security; the right to freedom from torture or cruel or inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to freedom of movement and residence; the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of the person and their family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services; the right to education; and freedom from discrimination.

Moreover, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1999) stated the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a non political, humanitarian agency, was created by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1950 and began operations on 1 January 1951. Its mandate is to provide international protection to refugees and promote durable solutions to their problems. It does so by working with governments and subject to the approval of the governments concerned with private organizations. But, in reality the refugee's rights are still curtailed by the government in some places.



Furthermore, curtailment means the action or fact of reducing or restricting something. The factor that can restrict the human rights is not only a human itself, but also the environment. Adeola (2001), mentions:

Seizure of communal lands, displacement of indigenous communities, natural resource exploitation, and toxic waste dumping connote environmental injustice and human rights abuse. In recent years, assaults on the environmental and human rights have escalated to an unprecedented level in human history.

It reflects that environmental conditions and the possessor, such a government and the majority group are intimately associated with a curtailment of human rights. It happens because of the majority group feel that they are a dominant in a society, so that they have a right to curtail the minority group's right. Furthermore, Schaefer (1993) said that minority group is a group that experiences a narrowing of opportunities (success, education, wealth, etc) that is disproportionately low compared to their numbers in the society.

One of the examples of the curtailment of human rights happened in Myanmar (Burma) toward the Rohingya people. The Rohingya people originally come from Rakhine (Arakan), West Myanmar. According to Ahmad (2012), Rohingyas are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. They practice Sunni Islam, because the government restricts educational opportunities for them, so that they only pursue basic Islamic studies. He also mentioned that Rohingya people are not allowed to renovate their mosques or schools without permission from the government. If anyone caught renovation these buildings, they would be sent to jail. Then, they cannot get a benefit from the social services that provided by the state, including health services and they do not have a right to work in

government offices. Those treatments that received by Rohingya people as a minority group in Burma is included as a kind of curtailment of human rights.

The phenomenon of curtailment of human rights is not only found in reality, but also appeared in literary works. It is narrated in the novel entitled *The Hungry Tide* (2005) by Amitav Ghosh. This novel is interesting to analyze since the character shows the curtailment of human rights through the treatment that they get as a minority group in society.

### **1.1.1 The Curtailment of Human Rights**

There are two terms that need to be explained in this analysis. There are curtailment and human rights. Curtailment refers to restrain, abridgment, shorten or limit something. According to An Encyclopedia Britannica Company (2012), curtailment means to make less by or as if by cutting off or away some part. Then, Zimmer (2012) stated that to curtail something is put restrictions on it, or stop it entirely. It means that the word curtailment figures out the condition that limits people to get a complete thing.

The second term is human rights. Human rights mean rights as freedom from unlawful imprisonment, torture and execution regarded as belonging fundamentally to all persons. According to Simmons in Beitz (2009), human rights are those natural rights that are innate and cannot be lost. It has the properties of universality, independence, naturalness, and inalienability. Furthermore, Humphreys (2009) stated that human right refers to a specific set of claims about the entitlements of all human beings regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political, national, social origin, property, birth or other status.

The curtailment of human rights in this analysis means the describing of government's representative that limit of human rights toward the minority group. It arises in three aspects, education, medical service, and to get a decent domicile.

### **1.1.2 A Brief of Amitav Ghosh**

Amitav Ghosh is a Bengali Indian author and best known for his work in the English language. He was born in Calcutta, India, on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1956. His father was a lieutenant colonel. Hence, he spent much of his childhood by travelling around the world, from India, to Sri Lanka, to Iran, Egypt, United Kingdom and Bangladesh. He received his early education in Doon school in Uttarakhand, and completed his graduation in Delhi University. Then, he moved to England and in 1982, he received his doctorate degree in social anthropology from St. Edmund Hall, Oxford.

Even though he graduated from social anthropology, Ghosh followed his passion for writing by taking a job in a print media company. He started his first career in the Indian Express. Then, he has written for many publications including *The Hindu*, *The New Yorker*, and *Granta*.

He is a writer who concerned with India's place in larger international cultural networks. His writing deals in the epic themes of travel and diaspora, history and memory, political struggle and communal violence, love and loss, geographical and social boundaries. He also proposes a very particular non western form of humanism, a belief in commonalities that exist across race, class, and culture.



In 1986, he published his first book, *The Circle of Reason*. Over the years, he wrote several books, fiction and non-fiction, such as *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *In an Antique Land* (1992), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *Dancing in Cambodia* (1998), *At Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), *The Hungry Tide* (2005), *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil of Our Times* (2005), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), and *River of Smoke* (2011).

He also received several awards for his work, such as *The Shadow Lines* won two prestigious Indian prizes, the Sahitya Academy award and the Ananda Puraskar. *The Calcutta Chromosome* won the Arthur C. Clarke award in 1997. *The Glass Palace* won the International e-Book award at the Frankfurt book fair in 2001. In January 2005, *The Hungry Tide* was awarded the Crossword Book Prize. Then, in 2008, *Sea of Poppies* was awarded the Crossword Book Prize and the India Plaza Golden Quill award.

*The Hungry Tide*, which is used in this analysis talk about human emotion, matchless love, discovery of the past and continuous quest for survival. It also captures every human emotion from love and sympathy to rage and jealousy with right amount of sensitivity. Then, it exposes an exotic experience about life and its trails.

Ghosh's work has been translated into more than twenty languages. He also has served on the Jury of the Locarno Film Festival and the Venice Film Festival. Furthermore, he has taught in many universities in India and the United States, including Delhi University, Columbia, Queens College and Harvard.

### 1.1.3 The Hungry Tide

*The Hungry Tide* (2005), a novel written by Amitav Ghosh, depicts the curtailment of human rights. The term curtailment refers cut short or reduce. In other words, the term curtailment also means put restriction on it, or stop it entirely. It is done by the government toward the refugee in the Morichjhapi land. Those refugees who come to India are from Bangladesh. As a minority group, they are getting oppression and exploited by Hindu people with the high caste in their native land. Then, in India, they also get a bad treatment from the government. They are relegated from the society to the Morichjhapi land and their rights as a human are curtailed. The curtailment of human rights occurred in three aspects; education, medical service and domicile.

The first is the curtailment to get an education. In Morichjhapi, there is an inhibition to build a school, so that the people who live in that place are never got an opportunity to study and do learning activities at school. Especially for children, their activity is only helping their parents to work every day. This condition make the children are not capable to write and read something. It is because they are never obtained a chance to get an education, even to learn the basic things.

The second is the curtailment to get a medical service. Medical service is one of the human needs. But, in Morichjhapi there is a restriction to build a hospital. Even, people who want to be a volunteer to give a medical service are restricted to visit that place.

The third is the curtailment to get a decent domicile. The people are exiled in one place that far away from the hustle and downtown. They have to clean mangroves to build their home for living. It may be dangerous for them, because they should face an attack from any kinds of beast such as tigers, crocodiles, and snakes that covered the place. The condition of their place also would make the people difficult to get information and to fulfill their daily needs.

## **1.2 Problem of Study**

*The Hungry Tide* (2005) enclose many cases, but the curtailment of human rights appears as the central issue in this analysis. In order to reveal the meaning in this novel, research questions are needed. Those research questions are:

1. What are the fictional devices that strongly reveal the curtailment of human rights in *The Hungry Tide* novel?
2. How do those elements elaborate the idea of the curtailment of human rights?

## **1.3 Purpose of Study**

The intention of this analysis is to reveal how far Amitav Ghosh's novel, *The Hungry Tide*, exposes the curtailment of human rights. Also, the analysis is aimed to find out how character, plot (conflict), and setting contribute to explore the curtailment of human rights.



#### 1.4 Previous Study

The analysis about this novel which focuses on the curtailment of human rights has not been found yet. However, there are several studies in journal that can give contribution and inspiration in analyzing this novel.

The first study that gives contribution to this analysis is written by Sushil Sarkar (2012) entitled *Subaltern Perspectives in Amitav Ghosh's Novel, The Hungry Tide*. This analysis focuses on the concept of subaltern by Marxist Antonio Gramsci. He defines the term subaltern as an allusion which refers to any person or group of inferior rank and status, whether because of race, class, gender, ethnicity, caste or religion. Novel *The Hungry Tide* depicted the subaltern as well as the marginalized people's predicament. Refugees in India are the subaltern classes who were forced by government. Then, the most contemporary issues that emerge are existential crisis, problems of alienation, problems of restless, rootless and unsettled, and problems of marginalization.

Another study that gives contribution in this analysis is done by O.P. Dwivedi (2010) entitled *The Subaltern and The Text: Reading Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things*. The study is related to the unfair and destructive binary divisions, maltreatment of the subaltern, and caste conversions. The term subaltern in this study is applied to the woman who is represented by Ammu and the untouchable who is represented by Velutha. Then, it also highlights the various ways in which the rights and privileges of both these classes are generally ignored or cancelled out even in the present era of post colonialism.

In Indian society, women are declined to get an education, and they also being suppressed in the domestic spheres and outside it. Furthermore, the untouchables should make conversions in order to get some food, money, and even a job. But their conversions to be the same with the majority do not efface their problems and they keep occupy the lower position in the society. In other words, they are never measured in an equal scale of humanity. They are also not allowed to walk on public roads, forbidden to carry umbrella so that they are sun burnt, and they are required to cover their mouth with hands while speaking so that their polluted breath does not contact the high caste persons.

Those two analyses have contributed to deliver the issue of the curtailment of human rights. They also enriched the knowledge about the issue. Unlike the studies above, this analysis focuses on how far the novel reflects the curtailment of human rights through the treatment that received by characters in some aspects of their life.

### **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

The concept of subaltern studies by Marxist Antoni Gramsci and Ranajit Guha, and concept of human rights by Mark Goodale and Sally Engle Merry, then Kristine Bellisle and Elizabeth Sullivan are employed in the analysis of this novel. The subaltern studies began in the beginning of 1980s. It is aimed at promoting, as the preface declared, the study and discussion of the subalternist themes in South Asian Studies. Subaltern refers to people who have no agency or power of their own due to their status of being outsiders. Further, Gramsci in Sarkar (2012) stated that subaltern is a broad category which attempts to emphasize individual

whose voice and actions have been muted, drastically reinterpreted, lost, or consciously swept away. On the other hand, he also defines subaltern as a synonymous with women, children, colonial subjects, the poor, the illiterate, the proletariat or the religious ethnic minority.

Furthermore, Gramsci in Louai (2012) stated that subaltern classes refer to any “low rank” person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individual of the same nation. Gramsci’s intentions when he first used the concept of the subaltern are clear enough to be given any other far-fetched interpretations. The only groups Gramsci had in mind at that time were the workers and peasants who were oppressed and discriminated by the leader of the National Fascist Party, Benito Mussolini and his agents. Gramsci became interested in the study of the subaltern classes of consciousness and culture as one possible way to make their voice heard instead of relying on the historical narrative of the state which is by the end, the history of the ruling and dominant classes.

In addition, Guha defined the subaltern studies as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office in any other way. Guha in Louai (2012) stated that the distinct difference between the elite and the subaltern is evident when we conceived it through the notion of political mobilization. The elite political mobilization is fulfilled through appropriation of or adjustment to the British parliamentary institutions and laws whereas the subaltern political

mobilization is founded on classical forms of social organization such as: blood relationships and kinship, territoriality, traditional and tribal affiliations where popular mobilization take the form of peasant insurgencies and regional demonstrations.

Moreover, human rights are equal and universal rights. It refers to the body of international law that emerged in the wake of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Brysk in Goodale and Merry (2007) stated that human rights are a set of universal claims to safeguard human dignity from illegitimate coercion, typically enacted by stated agents. The idea of human rights in its dominant register assumes the most global of facts that all human being are essentially the same, and this essential sameness entails a set of rights which might correctly enumerated in the main body of international human rights law. Then, he also added the fact that there is a distinctive difference between the subaltern groups and dominant indigenous groups at the local levels.

On the other hand, Bellisle and Sullivan (2007) define the human rights as the rights that all people have simply because they are human beings. Each of these rights is inalienable, indivisible, interdependent, and it cannot be denied or taken away from any individual. Furthermore, Bellisle and Sullivan also emphasize that environment has a connection with the human rights. Having healthy and clean environments is necessary to fulfill people's rights to life, health, water, culture, development, information and participation. Human rights also cover all the basic needs in human life. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees that:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself/herself and of his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his/her control.

Moreover, in 1989 the General assembly of the United Nations ratified the conventions on the rights of the child, promising children around the world the right to life, liberty, education and healthcare. It is also provided protection from discrimination, torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, protection within the justice system, and protection from economic exploitation.

In this analysis, the representative characters are refugees who suffer curtailment towards their human rights. As a minority group, their rights are curtailed by the government, as the majority group in a society. The curtailment of their rights ensues in some aspects: education, medical service and domicile.

The analysis of this novel is supported by text-based and context-based interpretation. Guerin (2005) explains that text-based interpretation focuses merely on literary works itself, and everything outside the text is ignored. It indicates that the meaning of the whole story which is uncovered from the text by observing the interrelationship of the elements of a text; theme, setting, plot, point of view, and characterization. Then, Guerin (2005) stated that context-based interpretation is conducted to see reflection of the author's life or the character's life which is existed in the work. By paying attention to the context of the whole story, it will be easy to reveal the meaning.

In analyzing this novel, fictional devices such as characters, plot (conflict), and setting are crucial to be examined. According to Roberts (1999), character



may be defined as a verbal representation of a human being. Then, Kirsznner and Mandell (2000) explained that character as a fictional representation of a person. It is usually a psychologically realistic depiction. Then, characterization is the way writers develop characters and reveal those characters' traits to readers. Writers may portray characters through their actions, reactions to situations or to other characters, physical appearance, speech, gestures, expressions, and even through their names.

The second device that is going to be used in this analysis is plot. It is focused on conflict. Kirsznner and Mandell (2000) stated that conflict is a clash between the protagonist, a story's principal character, and an antagonist, something or someone presented in opposition to the protagonist. On the other hand, Roberts (1999) added that conflict is the major element of plot because opposing forces arouse curiosity, cause doubt, create tension, and produce interest.

Another important device that will be used in this analysis is setting. According to Kirsznner and Mandell (2000), setting is a work of fiction establishes its historical, geographical, and physical location. Setting, however, is more than just the approximate time and place in which the work is set; setting also encompasses a wide variety of physical and cultural elements. Further, Roberts (1999) stated that setting is a work's natural, manufactured, political, cultural, and temporal environment, including everything that characters know and own.

## **1.6 Methodology**

The analysis of this novel is done through text-based and context-based interpretation. Furthermore, it is also done by analyzing fictional devices. Fictional devices are character, plot (conflict), and setting. Those fictional devices are inseparable because they are interrelated each other. Characters are used to reveal the curtailment of human rights by analyzing through character's behavior and dialogue. While plot (conflict) plays important role in extend the meaning of this novel. Then, setting gives contribution in the process of analysis by giving help in expose the meaning. In addition, these elements are analyzed based on the concept of subaltern studies by Marxist Antonio Gramsci and Ranajit Guha, and human rights by Mark Goodale and Sally Engle Merry, then Kristine Belisle and Elizabeth Sullivan.