

ECO-CRITICAL STUDY OF THE HUNGRY TIDE

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Abstract

The objective of this research paper is an attempt to analysis the novel of Amitav Ghosh the Hungry Tide. The present study has been taken out with the main objective of exploring how far an eco critical perspective illuminates the novel of Amitav Ghosh. The author has traced the natural environmental and scenic beautiful of the area and has presented it through his innovative vision. The life style of different animals and their surroundings with the presentation of human environment in the context of this world is very unique. The process of perfect coordination of human being, animals and nature is lashed out by the writer of this novel. It is a story about adventure and unlikely love, identity and history, set in one of the most fascinating region on the earth. The Hungry Tide is a prophetic novel of remarkable insight, beauty and humanity. Ghosh has made tremendous research work and has presented the evolutionary system of creation in a unique way. He has been preoccupied with the presence of animistic creation and its ecological balance in that region. He imparts so much information about gigantic dolphin, and about flora and fauna of the locality. He also shows Sunderban is not only the confluence of rivers and the sea; the place is an amazing meeting point of different cultures, which seems impossible at any other place. It is also a strange love story of two lovers Piya and Fokir. They spent days and nights in the vast stretches of the river on the tree. Where both the lovers could not exchange words each other. Ghosh,s the Hungry Tide is set in the mangrove islands of Sunderbans, West Bengal. The Hungry Tide explores refugee resettlement in the forest reserves of Marichjhapi, Sunderban and the complex Man-Animal relationship in the archipelagos ecosystem. This novel focuses on the ongoing tension between humanity and the environment in the Sunderbans, the Tide country of West Bengal, India and Bangladesh. The purpose of this research paper is to prove that Amitav Ghosh has depicted the natural and different climatic society of his own country. This paper will give a new insight to the readers about the untouched parts of this novel.

Key Words: perspective, illuminate, ecological, humanity, resettlement, nature, environment, present, creation, gigantic, river, Sunderban, and region.

Introduction

Amitav Ghosh is one of the india,s best known writer in twenty first century. He was born in Calcutta in 1956. His books include *the Circle of Reason*, *the Shadow Lines*, *In an Antique Land*, *Dancing in Cambodia*, *the Calcutta Chromosome*, *the Glass Palace*, *Incendiary Circumstances*, and *the Hungry Tide*. The most recent novel of Amitav is *the Sea of Poppies* which is the first volume of his trilogy. He earned his doctorate at Oxford before he wrote his first novel, which was published in 1986. His novel *the Shadow Lines* won the Sahitya Academic Award. Amitav Ghosh has written for many publications including the Hindu, the New Yorker and the Granta. He has served on the juries of several international film festivals, including Locarno and Venice. He has taught many universities in India and in the USA. He is currently working on the Ibis Trilogy and other works as well. He won an international e-book Award at the Frankfurt book fair in 2001. His essays have been published in the New Yorker, the New Republic and the New Yorker Times. He is currently a visiting professor in the Department of English and American Literature at Harvard University.

The Hungry Tide

This is the sixth novel of Amitav Ghosh, which won the Hutch Crossword Book Prize in 2005 a major Indian award. His work has been translated into nineteen languages of the world. Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* focuses on the ongoing tension between humanity and the environment in the Sunderbans, the tide country of West Bengal, India and Bangladesh. The novel considers the conflicts between the environment and its tenacious residents, and between those groups intent on preserving the Sunderbans unique aquatic life and tiger population; sometime at the expense of its residents. The novel centre character is a scientist, the American Piyali Roy of India decent. So it is not surprising that technology appears with some frequency throughout *The Hungry Tide*. Ghosh offers both warnings and cautions of how it can mix with nature. Amitav Ghosh has discovered yet another new territory, summoning a singular place from its history, language and the myth and bringing it to life. Yet the achievement of *The Hungry Tide* is in its exploration of a far darker and more unknowable jungle, the human heart.

Ecological study of the Hungry Tide

Amitav Ghosh's fine novel *the Hungry Tide* made me feel I knew the man-eating tigers of India in this second, more intimate way. *The Tigers in India* is a short essay by William James in which he contrasted knowing that there were tigers in India by hearing about them from knowing that there were tigers in India by actually seeing and coming into contact with them. This novel is at its best when it describes the wild, untameable and fierce qualities of nature, which do not bend to human, will. This novel is full of vivid descriptions of tigers and their human prey, crocodiles, snakes, large forest of mangroves, storms and fatal typhoons. *The Hungry Tide* is set in a remote part of northeast India know as the Sunderbans which consists of thousands of small islands formed by the interflow of two rivers as they flow into the Bay of Bangal. Life is precarious with shifting islands, tigers and other predators, poor soil, and minimal contact with the outside world. Ghosh describes the people of the Sunderbans, their history, and their struggles with natural world. It is an amazing story of the land and the people of Sunderban. The struggle of the people is against nature, the tide, the storm, the tiger, and the fearful surroundings. There are so many interesting things for us in this novel. Sometimes a great writer

makes us look beyond what we don't see. Now after reading this book, the vast stretches of the rivers and its Mohona, the confluence of the rivers with the sea, innumerable small islands lined with special trees and mangroves are dancing before my eyes. My horizon has definitely got extended.

Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* is a story about the people of the Sundarbans, the tidal islands at the mouth of the Ganges and how they have survived the continual onslaughts of natural disasters and the equally violent shifting tides of post independence politics in an area, where such forces have had an ongoing and often destructive effect as peoples have been forced to move from their ancestral lands. The novel seeks to link the human stories with the broader story of the ecological and environmental forces that have acted on the region. Acknowledging the animals allows Nirmal to begin to listen to the voices of others, and find his humanity not in its exclusivity and permanence but in its continuity with the transience and transformative processes of the natural world.

Their relationship with that world is not defined by abstracted concepts such as conservation. The natural world is one with which they live in mutual dependency, fishing it and when necessary defending themselves against it. It is different but in a way more profound relationship with the natural that Piya has to accept when she is forced to realise that Fokir is not a projection of her ideal understanding and preserving nature. When she sees the villagers killing the tiger trapped in their animal pen she yells at Kanai: "I'm not going to run off like a coward ... If you're not going to do anything about this, then I will. And Fokir will...I know he will."²⁹⁴ When Fokir joins in the killing of the trapped tiger that has attacked the villagers she is shocked and disappointed since she has assumed that he would share her beliefs. When Fokir offers her his view of the event, that when a tiger comes into a human settlement it wants to die, she refuses to hear it and literally covers her ears. But in short order she realises that her rejection of the villagers viewpoint of the tiger places her in the same camp as the foresters, when she sees the same corrupt guard that she had encountered on her trip to Lusibari on his way to beat and bully and extort bribes from the village for its self-preservative action. The tiger killing leads to the most explicit discussion of the issue of conservation and its human effects in the novel. Kanai argues that perhaps these conflicts result from 'people like you who made a push to protect the wildlife here without regard for the human costs' and people like himself 'because people like me and Indians of my class that is why they have chosen to hide these costs, basically in order to carry favour with their Western patrons. It's not hard to ignore the people who are dying; after all they are the poorest of the poor'³⁰¹. Piya's counter that 'if we do not respect what was intended not by you or me but by nature, by the earth, by the planet that keeps us all alive' if we 'cross that imaginary line that prevents us from deciding that no other species matters except ourselves...

But while this is part of the resolution it seems to me that *The Hungry Tide* asks us to think in larger terms, to consider not only the issue of environmental conservation and how it might be achieved but the issue of how we might begin to understand the diversity of the human not only as a readjustment between different kinds of human societies and values, the rich, the poor, the developed, the undeveloped, the articulate and the silenced. But also as a readjustment of the idea of how the human is defined in itself and how this needs to reflect the broader categories of life across species and even across the idea of the whole interrelated pattern of living forces that constitute the planet.

Conclusion

In the conclusion we can say that the environment and culture of the creation presented by Ghosh in this novel has been dealt on the basis of ecological balance and the animistic situation. The *Hungry Tide* provides multiple optics on the Sunderbans ecosystem of mangrove forested islands and mudflats, representing the constant transformations it undergoes, because of daily tidal flows with sections of island being temporary submerged and with seawater. Ghosh's greatest gift as a writer may well be his sense of place. A landscape, a city, a village on the edge of a desert; it is these images that we summon from his novels when we are distanced from them in memory. The region is supposed to derive its name from the sunderi tree, as the mangrove is locally called in his book. Ghosh has presented the overall natural and environmental approach to his vision clear in his novel *The Hungry Tide*. The efforts have been made to prove that the novel of Amitav Ghosh is analysed on the ecological study. The presentation of this research paper is to give the new and a unique way of reading to the readers in the context of ecological study and approach.

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