

**ECOCRITICISM AND HUMAN ECOLOGY IN AMITAV GHOSH'S
*THE HUNGRY TIDE***

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Abstract

Ecocriticism and Human Ecology have become important terms in today's literary expressions. Ecocriticism can be described as a branch of literary study that aims to find a fundamental relation between physical environment and literature. The term Ecocriticism was first coined in 1978 by *William Rueckert*.

Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies (*The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology xviii*).

Human Ecology, on the other side, can be defined as the study of the relation between people and their environment, and it takes a human-centered approach to literature in relation to nature.

Ecology is the science of relationships between living organisms and their environment. Human Ecology is about relationships between people and their environment. (*Human Ecology: Basic Concepts for Sustainable Development 01*).

This paper describes the important role of nature in human communities. It also throws deeper insights on the withering relationship of mankind and ecology because of mankind's greedy exploitation of nature. Through the characters from the novel *The Hungry Tide*, the common perceptions of mankind towards nature are highlighted. It is then concluded by suggesting that mankind has to review, reassess his relationship with nature.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Human Ecology, Canning, Morchijhapi

Introduction

The concept of nature and its relationship to the past, present, and future societies are contents of significant concern, interest, and debate at the present moment. If the growth of relation between nature and man is taken into consideration, it would be an effortless task to spot-entangled knots that bind nature and humankind.

Nature is undoubtedly the most amazing and unexplainably the most beautiful part of our world. It is God's gift to mankind. The man is constantly aware of the fact that he has to rely on nature for the water he drinks, the air he breaths, the food he eats, and other principal and fundamental necessities to be able to survive.

But, because of Science and technology, human beings, all the time, search exclusively for pleasure and prosperity, fight vigorously for achieving materialistic goals, and utilize everything in abundance. To obtain this, and to secure the dominating spot, the human race has exploited nature without any moral or ethical values to such an extent that the growth and development of nature are stunted.

Nature and its valuable resources like plants, animals, soil, water, and air have been polluted intensively by the greedy actions of mankind. These men dig deep holes in the ground and destroy mountains for a few ounces of impure gold. They cut down entire forests so a few cows can graze on small bushes and grass. They concrete and asphalt cultivating lands and call them hi-tech cities. They dump thousands of gallons of crude oil in water and call it an accident.

Even though the situation is very dangerous and alarming, there are few people who are still failing to notice the damage being done to nature while rest of the others are trying to repair the damaged nature. Therefore, many environmentalists have described mankind as protector and destroyer of nature.

Mankind as Protector and Destructor:

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* is also one such novel, which focuses on the relations and tensions between the mankind and the natural world. Throughout the novel, many characters play the roles of protectors and destroyers of nature.

The character of Nilima Bose is a very good example of humankind being a protector and destroyer of nature. By uplifting the lives of indigenous people of Canning, Nilima Bose, plays the role of protector of nature and by her actions of not lending helping hand to dying people of *Morchijhapi*; she plays the role of destructor of nature (*The Hungry Tide* 81, 213, 214).

Fokir, who can be considered as the son of the soil is the other character who plays the role of humankind as protector and destroyer of nature. By sacrificing his own life for the sake of a foreigner, Fokir plays the role of a protector of nature and by supporting the armed crowd gathered around the pen to kill the tiger; Fokir plays the role of a destructor of nature (*The Hungry Tide* 392, 294).

Summation:

Chaos is the law of nature,
Order is the dream of man.

- Henry Adams

Men for centuries dominated the mother earth and strictly believed in the concept that nature existed for the purpose of his sole utilization. On that account, like a beast, he endeavored upon its exploitation. But nature agitated with man's endless exploitation, started paying him back in the worst manner. In order to stop the destruction and phenomenon of climatic changes

those were thrown by nature, mankind should start contributing more to protect the nature rather than destroying it.

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