

# Amitav Ghosh And The Environmental Crisis: Examining Nature In The Hungry Tide

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## Abstract

*Amid the environmental crisis that looms ever larger over the planet, the place of literature in shaping our sense of human connections to the non-human world acquires monumental importance. The relationships between human actions and environmental well-being have never been clearer, as climate change, biodiversity loss and habitat destruction escalate on a global level. From every angle, literature is a potent mirror of these multiple crises, forcing readers to think critically about their complicity in and ability to counteract environmental degradation.*

*Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* is a weighty examination of these issues, delivered through a colourful story of the Sundarbans, an endangered, deltaic ecosystem in the Bay of Bengal. The novel moves between the intersecting lives of Piya, a marine biologist, and other characters whose stories emphasize the thin line between human survival and the health of the natural world. The Sundarbans is uncannily used by Ghosh to depict how fragile ecology can be and how disastrous ignorance related to it can become, at the same time lending emphasis to marginalized people who live on the land, and depend on its resources.*

*This article contributes to ecocritical readings of *The Hungry Tide* by considering the ways in which Ghosh deals with the environmental crisis in this novel by presenting the Sundarbans as a literal as well as metaphoric figure of eco-susceptibility. Ghosh, in an exploration of social and political dimensions of deforestation, condemns the use of nature, in particular that of indigenous peoples for whom this process involves a territory displacement. In this unpredictable tale that speaks to environmental and moral urgencies, Ghosh seeks to confront the horror of the past and their implications through the novel's unique form, urging contemporary and future generations to reconsider their views on diminishing natural resources and catastrophic climate policies.*

**Keywords:** *Environmental degradation, biodiversity, deforestation, indigenous peoples*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, fiction writers have increasingly examined the previously sidelined relationship between humans and the natural environment while the increasing recognition of interconnectedness has led to heightened interest in ecology and eco-criticism, as contemporary authors engross with emerging environmental issues to illuminate the challenges confronting our ecosystems. Amitav Ghosh is notable for his concentrated exploration of environmental themes among these authors. The novel *The Hungry Tide* is situated in the Sundarbans, an area covering over ten thousand square kilometres, noted for its "beautiful forest" (Chapter 6). The novel recounts the forced eviction of refugees from the island of Morichjhapi within a dynamic context. This study addresses themes of environmentalism and destabilisation, depicting the physical environment as a significant, interconnected entity that unites plant, animal, and human life. Ghosh emphasises that various life forms coexist within the same ecosystem and are interconnected through intricate interactions. This study provides an ecocritical reading and ecological analysis of *The Hungry Tide*, emphasising how Ghosh complicates the relationship between human existence and the environment.

Amitav Ghosh known as the voice of the modern Indian literature in English, has been equally honoured as someone who has contributed significantly to the narrative tradition. *The Hungry Tide* carefully melds two interlinked stories. The first is the misery and dislocation experienced by a community of refugees from Bangladesh, the second the relationships, complex and dangerous, between the people and the creatures that live in the myriad-armed ecosystem of the Sundarbans. At the eastern tip of India, where

the sea meets the plains of the vast Ganges delta, the Sundarbans mangrove forest grows. A few are wide and accommodating, but others are essentially vines of sand; some have been present for centuries, others for serious strips of time. The land of contrasts, is often described by the natural beauties. Freshwater mingles with salt, rivers effortlessly become seas and the divisions between land and water disintegrate into liquid certainty. The tides push more than 200 miles inland, and every day, large areas of mangrove forest slip beneath the waves, only to reappear hours later.

For centuries it has been the devoured and the desperate, whenever there is nothing more to lose, and the most radical of futurists who have occupied this world, grappling with its man-devouring crocodiles, and begging upon their knees for the sun to even temporarily illuminate their harsh existence in this wasteland no man should inhabit by choice. (Harper Collins, 2004).

Conservation is a fragile balance between man and nature, but despite more than a century of advocacy, it crawls along. Progress tends to become locked in to formal commitment and linguistic battles, meanwhile the substantive progress keeps getting stalled. As Leopold (1968) describes despairingly, "we lose ground in aggradation at the ratio of two steps backwards for every step forward". (207) Man has, throughout history, been in conquest of the natural world, creating all types of environmental problems, so much so that this irreversible catastrophe is now affecting their own existence! Lack of attention and ecosystem degradation have turned environmental issues into a global disaster. Notwithstanding the efforts made from the days of Aldo Leopold, Wangari Maathai, and Rachel Carson, we still have an uphill battle to fight.

In *The Hungry Tide* (2007), Amitav Ghosh offers a moving tale of the urgency of environmental protection amidst the backdrop of the Sundarbans. While set in one community, this novel is a global story. Ghosh entwines themes of furious nature and colonial cruelty, and evokes the ravishment of the land and its human and non-human residents. The novel presents a complex and intimate portrait of human and environmental relationships, both historical disaster and that caused by human. In the process, Ghosh highlights the urgency of preservation, writing impatiently to help the readers understand the fragility of the Sundarbans and the importance of preserving it for posterity. The novel seeks to interpret the environmental crises presented, specifically, the link between human and ecological survival, and to highlight Ghosh's urgent plea at a time when environmental threats persist. The environment comprises the intricate interplay of physical, chemical, and biological factors that influence an organism or ecological community, ultimately shaping its structure and viability.

Humanity and nature are two joined together sides of one and the same whole. From our earliest days on earth, human beings have had a deep emotional and physical relationship with the natural world. Ancient seers, spiritual scriptures and even modern-day scientific inquiry have one thing in common; we exist because of nature and our life is dependent on natural elements and the various ecosystems in which we are embedded. Human civilization, whose cornerstone has historically been agriculture, has maintained an enduring relationship with the environment. It is desire for a standardized way of examining this relationship that Ecology has tried to piece out by analysing the way living organisms interact with the surroundings in which they exist.

Ecology is the word used by the German scientist Ernst Haeckel in 1866. The Greek root of the word ecology is oikos, or "house," combined with logos, or "study." Ecologists study living organisms in their natural habitat. It is essentially the study of intricate biological connections and systems among species with respect to air, water, soil, and other environmental conditions. Eco-criticism and green studies are terms that refer to literature in the context of environment. Developed in the United States in the 1980s and gaining popularity in the UK during the 1990s, eco-criticism was canonised by Cheryll Glotfelty, with co-editor Harold Fromm, in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Milestones in the Study of Literary Ecology*. In this work, Glotfelty describes eco-criticism as, studies that focus on the relationship between literature and the environment. The term eco-criticism was first introduced in the late 1970s, during a meeting of the Western Literature Association, a society that studies the Written Language of America's West. Especially in American literature there are three key figures which had expressed eco-critique in their works, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). All three are considered transcendentalists, those who celebrate the relation of all creation, including humanity, to the natural world and the belief in the world as a realm of spirit and soul. With their work, these writers set the stage for eco-critical thought by developing the inextricable bond between human experience and environment.

The world that humans, plants, and animals live in includes the whole natural world that surrounds us. It is made up of biotic (living) and abiotic (non-living) components, all having a great impact on human health. Biotic factors are animals, whether terrestrial or aquatic, plants, trees, and birds, while abiotic factors are water, land, sunlight, rocks and air. The context is characterized with human and natural ecosystems' complex interrelations. It supports the source of important renewable and non-renewable resources and contributes to human well-being and by controlling waste storage and aesthetic value. As the Ecological Society of America (2021) puts it, ecology is the science of relationships between living organisms, including humans, and their environment. The goal is to know how the fundamental relationships between plants, animals and the environment shape those intricate, mutually dependent strands that weave life.

Eco-criticism as a branch of literary study attempts to establish effective links between the environment and literature. Environmental problems are one of the most important matters of the current world and eco-criticism has been a response to this crisis. This second category, this field, can be broken down into two separate phases: the first (nature writing, nature poetry, and wilderness fiction) and the second (Revisionist eco-criticism which opens on eco-criticism the preoccupation for environmental justice, mainly related to social and urban issues). The first aim of eco-criticism is to explore the role that literature written by writers who are concerned with environmental issues can play in highlighting, and ultimately solving, today's most important environmental issues.

A notable Eco-critical work is *The Hungry Tide* (2004), written by Amitav Ghosh. This novel explores disjunctions, dislocations, and destabilizations in a modern era, and has proven itself already as a work that is noteworthy in ecological and eco-critical literature. The 'ecological' novel has attracted some influential attention, and *The Hungry Tide* (2004) can be read as a representative of these trends: it incorporates anthropology, ecology, migration, travel, ethnography, and landscape into the formal aspects of English fiction. The small cast of the novel lends for a focused yet deep examination of how we as humans, interact with our environment. In the Sundarbans, the backdrop of Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide*, the lines between fresh water and salt water, river and sea, become porously intermingled.

The tides stretch up to three hundred kilometres inland, causing the daily submersion of vast areas of forest, which reemerge hours later. The forces at work in this dynamic landscape are so powerful that they can alter the geography of the islands on a near-daily basis. On some days, the water erodes entire promontories and peninsulas, while at other times, it deposits new shelves and sandbanks in previously barren areas. (7)

As Ghosh eloquently describes, this constant ebb and flow shapes the environment in profound and unpredictable ways, highlighting the delicate balance of nature within the region. For so long, humans have been exploiting natural resources to their advantage, but such a self-centred approach has made us so oblivious to the fact that we do exist on this planet. This kind of gap has furthered the severity of a great variety of environmental problems, whose natural catastrophes come closer and closer to human life. Increasing environmental challenges even in the number of catastrophic events present huge threats. Healthy ecosystems are critical to reducing the damaging effects of flooding, of severe wind storms, of extended periods of very dry weather and of rising carbon dioxide levels. Meanwhile, human greed and apathy had lead us a string of catastrophic events like world pandemics, rising sea levels, increase in temperatures causing global warming, habitat loss, massive forest fires, and other ecological disasters. Glavovic et al. (2022) poignantly characterize this tragic paradox as follows:

The situation in climate change science is marked by a paradox: as compelling evidence accumulates, new warnings are issued, and innovative methodologies are developed, the indicators of detrimental global change continue to increase annually (p. 1).

Given this, it is important to embrace a nature-friendly lifestyle and reinforce efforts to protect and manage ecosystems, which act as a crucial buffer against the impact of natural disasters. As Ismail Hosen said in a study from Panpottry, Galachipa, Patuakhali (2018),

Living near the Bay of Bengal, we are at high risk from cyclones like Sidr, Aila, Nargis, and Mahasen. In this situation, mangroves play a crucial role in protecting us. They help reduce the damage from cyclones, provide safe spaces for fish to grow and feed, trap carbon, and prevent land erosion. These ecosystems also help maintain biodiversity. Though it is hard to measure their value in money, their importance is clear. Mangroves protect, support life, and stop land erosion. (para. 11).

Disasters can generally be classified into two categories, natural and man-made. Natural disasters are things like famine, drought, floods, and earthquakes, although a little bit further back in history, and

man-made disasters, such as nuclear wars are the end result of human attention. Environmental disasters have particular significance because they are not only major changes in nature, but often they are of our own making. Such disasters can inflict death, destruction, and long-term injury to people, animals and plants. In some instances, entire towns are forced to relocate because of the destruction. Everywhere, people are realizing the need to defend nature. Proactive environmentalist movements are working to increase awareness, and legislation is being enacted to curb additional damage to our ecosystems. In the face of an escalating environmental crisis, we need to protect wildlife, use natural resources wisely and address climate change.

One good example of an environmentally focused policy is the United States' National Environmental Policy Act (2021), which requires federal agencies to take into account the environmental effects of their actions. This includes consideration of the societal, cultural, and economic impacts relevant to such effects, all of which highlight the holistic nature of environmental responsibility (p. 4). In the United Kingdom, the Environment Agency which was founded in 1966 is the competent body for the enforcement of environmental conservation and its efficiency helps build the background for a wider policy of sustainable development. There are already significant benefits to be gained from ecosystem-based adaptation, and these actions should be upscaled worldwide. A good example is offered by Colombia, where land conservation measures have been successfully established against external pressures thanks to advanced farming technologies. According to Zoila Guerra (2020), one of the local farmers:

I possess an assortment of guavas, lemons, oranges, tangerines, coconuts, passion fruits, chillies, eggplants, yuccas, yams, and rice. We elevate the cultivated regions to prevent flooding. Alternatively, we create circular gardens by excavating ring-shaped ditches. The cultivated area is situated centrally, elevated, and shielded from water exposure. This method allows the soil to retain moisture throughout the arid season (para. 16).

This example highlights how practical, ecosystem-based solutions can enhance resilience to climate change and contribute to sustainable agricultural practices. The deterioration of the environment is accelerating at an alarming rate, signalling the onset of significant and irreversible climate change consequences. The escalating environmental challenges now present a profound threat to human existence, underscoring the urgent need for viable solutions to prevent further damage. As Aldo Leopold (1968) poignantly stated: "We abuse the land because we perceive it as a commodity that is ours. When we perceive land as a collective entity to which we are intrinsically connected, we may begin to use it with affection and reverence" (p. viii).

This perspective calls for a transformative shift in our relationship with the land, one grounded in respect and recognition of the interconnectedness between humanity and the natural world. The Green Belt Movement, which has attracted international attention through the efforts of Wangari Maathai, an environmentalist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was established in 1977 to help reverse the rapid deforestation occurring in Kenya and the rest of Africa. The emphasis of the campaign was planting trees, saving the environment and empowering women through sustainable development. What guided the work of Maathai was an understanding that environmental preservation and human welfare are inextricably linked. She understood that deforestation, soil erosion and biodiversity loss were ecological but also social and economic challenges with real implications for the lives of the people living in each forest. Through the participation of local women in tree planting, the Green Belt Movement also tapped into water retention, food security, and soil fertility, while offering bolster to women's empowerment and ability to be involved. Maathai's work made it clear that we need environmental conservation coupled with social justice, and that healthy ecosystems are fundamental for vibrant communities. Her name lives on as an inspiration to sustainable development the world over and to the responsible care of the environment. As Maathai eloquently stated, "In ensuring the survival of other species, we simultaneously safeguard our own existence" (para. 1). This statement underscores the fundamental interdependence between humanity and the natural world, highlighting that the conservation of nature is inseparable from the survival of human society.

Sasha Lilley (2012) in her *Catastrophism: The Apocalyptic Politics of Collapse and Rebirth* suggests that catastrophism presumes that society is on the path to some inevitable collapse of one sort or another, whether as catastrophe economy, catastrophe environment or catastrophe society. As a society, this is symbolic of how we increasingly feel like a disaster is just around the corner when it comes to something going down worldwide. In *The Politics of Failure Have Failed: The Environmental Movement and Catastrophism*, Eddie Yuen (2012) focuses on hitherto confusions with environmentalism, and states

that ecosystem collapse requires immediate action to avoid further societal and environmental collapse (15).

Literature can play a fundamental role in raising consciousness and stimulating radical change in the face of global disaster. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), a defining classic of environmental literature paints the decimation of natural ecology as a result of reckless pesticide use, specifically DDT. In her report on the biodynamic farmers' reports, Carson highlights the many effects of spraying, long-term ecological changes like destruction of habitats and global warming that have come to pass (177). David Wallace-Wells paints a dire portrait of the man-made climate crisis in *The Uninhabitable Earth* (2019). His book spares no scrutiny to the extreme consequences of the crisis, at times comparing the atrocity to the horrors of nuclear war. Wallace-Wells discusses climate-change denialism and argues for the necessity of swift action, including a carbon tax, a phased out use of fossil fuels and reformation of food production and consumption, along with massive investments in renewable energy and carbon capture.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement* (2016) explores the cultural and political aspects of climate change, highlighting that the crisis is not just an environmental one, but also an imaginative failure. Ghosh argues for a new cultural narrative, which in the face of climate denials, turns its focus toward environmental protection and a whole new mindset and approach to policy concerning climate change. *Silent Spring* (1962) and *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) by Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold, are writings that are pivotal in environmental integrity. Although not explicitly articulated as environmental ethics, these readings highlight the moral responsibility humans owe to nature. They emphasize the degree to which human being damaged at and engaged with the environment and implicitly call for reconsideration of our ethical relationship to nature.

Climate change and ecological destruction are central to a number of recent literary pieces. Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) describes a world after bioengineered disasters and environmental collapse. Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior* (2012) has at its centre a woman's discovery of a disrupted butterfly migration as a symbol of the environmental crisis that more generally shifts focus. Richard Powers' *The Overstory* (2018) is rich in stories, interweaving multiple strands, each about the connection between people and trees, and, more broadly, our reliance on the natural world to resist the devastation wrought upon it by climate destruction. *Clade* (2015) by James Bradley treats of several generations of a family, set against a background of a world coming apart at the seams facing a host of environmental challenges.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) is really concerned with the humans encountering an ecology in the Sundarbans, the ecological destruction, the effects of climate change, and the way it all impacts on the poorest.

According to Luebering (2021), "Ghosh's ambitious novels used complex narrative structures to investigate the nature of national and personal identity, in particular among people of India and Southeast Asia" (para. 1). Ghosh has written numerous volumes that touch on environmental issues, including *The Shadow Lines*, which came out in 1988, *The Glass Palace*, which reached the public in 2000, *The Hungry Tide*, published in 2004, as well as the *Ibis Trilogy*, *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015) and *Gun Island* (2019), to name a few, and *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016). In *Gun Island* (2019), Ghosh treats the topic of global warming and the risk that the chemicals of the synthetic world pose to the aquatic life of the Sundarbans just seawards of Kolkata.

Yet as a participant in climate talk, Ghosh has expressed doubt about the literature that has been published around global warming, the kind of literature that tends to be filed under the categories eco-fiction, climate fiction and cli-fi. He says that such works do serve to distract us from very real cataclysms that are, in fact, already taking place. To demonstrate this point, Ghosh cites the destruction Hurricane Sandy caused in New York City in 2012. Though the city has inspired a tidal wave of literature that imagined New York being submerged in water, few literary works have dealt with the actual calamity of the Superstorm. Ghosh wonders if this comes from a kind of communal guilt in facing experiential truth. In an interview published by Scroll in on May 3, 2025., Ghosh discusses the global climate crisis, emphasizing the disbelief and astonishment expressed by individuals in Germany regarding the unfolding environmental realities. He critiques this incredulity, asserting that the situation is not just a matter of disbelief but a present and undeniable reality.

“Today, it is abundantly clear that this represents a profound reality, particularly for individuals in Germany, for instance. They continually express their astonishment, unable to comprehend it; such an occurrence has never transpired previously”.

He continues,

“And that is precisely the crux of the matter. The crux of the matter is that it transcends mere incredulity: It is indeed a reality, unfolding before us. We are currently experiencing this phenomenon” (paras 9-12). Ghosh’s commentary highlights the pressing need to recognize and address the immediate, tangible effects of climate change rather than merely speculating on future possibilities.

In *Reverence, ownership and responsibility: Amitav Ghosh's The Living Mountain: A Fable of Our Times* (2022), Warriar states that Amitav Ghosh grapples with these issues, and how the concepts condition our relationship with nature. Despite its short length, the book has a wide-reaching, international influence and challenges readers to question humanity’s relationship with the environment (para. 2). Ghosh’s story is an allegory, following in the footsteps of Ernest Hemingway in *The Old Man and the Sea*, John Steinbeck in *The Pearl* and Richard Bach in *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, tracking the history of environmental engagements from animism to colonialism and globalization to the contemporary crisis of climate change (Warriar, 2022, para. 5).

Ghosh rails against man’s ability to look past the truth behind environmental issues in his work. He underlines the need for tackling the growing environmental emergency as climate change and natural disasters increasingly impact communities worldwide. But it’s the South Asian region that particularly troubles Ghosh, where large ecological features such as the Sunderbans are at risk of being lost to global warming. The Sunderbans’ mangrove forests, mentioned in multiple novels, such as *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), and *Jungle Nama* (2021), act as an emblem for the tenuous balance between nature and manmade devastation. *Sea of Poppies* also explores environmental destruction wrought by the opium trade. The book raises the social, cultural and ecological crises set off by poppy farming to show how adapting the environment to satisfy human requirements results in unchangeable ecological harm. Ghosh uses this story to speculate on the consequences of artificially exploiting the environment for economic and cultural benefit, and stresses actuality in that process towards the destruction of not only natural ecosystems, but human societies.

Cheryll Glotfelty, a father of eco-criticism, emphasizes on the role of literature in the environmental study. She maintains that nature and the human culture are intimately connected, a theme that Ghosh examines closely in *The Glass Palace*. The book spans a number of important history events, such as, British colonising in Burma, The First World War, Japanese invasion of Russia, and the world change in the post World War Two. Ghosh shows how colonial politics was about more than just moving borders and changing cultures; it was also about trashing ecosystems. *History of Amazonia*, by Nelson Brazão, is a deeply metaphorical meditation on the despoliation of the environment and the destructive romanticism of the Amazon. The work compares the situation to “*Animal Farm*,” with nature personified by various animals that represent the convoluted dynamics at play. The bereaved butterflies lamenting the pigs’ death signal the loss of natural beauty and diversity, while the forked eagles chasing the blue elephants suggest the forces of dislocation and disorder taking control over wildlife and the ecosystem. The old monkey knows that at root, the source of this destruction is “disposal and profit,” and thus, the environmental commodification and exploitation.

The tigers find themselves in a perverse maze, unable to tell if they confront pirates, dead men, rum, or endless days, a metaphor of the disorder and doubt the human heart can sow in the world. The jackals’ victory is a chilling allegory for according to the bitter, opportunistic logic of men who prosper from plundering the earth. In the meantime, the camel appears watching the baggage come back on and there are no cups for offering, which indicates lack of culture and respect for the land. These studies do not show the critical, underlying circumstances of the land and its people. And although figurative cats and wolves are tasty throughout (there’s a cat in the mirror at story’s end, implying reflection or realization, and a wolf named Chief Leech, implying exploitation and parasitism), the battle between conformism and individual expression, or repression and liberation, simply doesn’t convince. It is the industrial and unsustainable model of exploitation of the land that pushes square forests. The bird of paradise that waits for the bulldozer embodies the paradox of beauty and destruction. The rats that direct history represent the corrupt powers who are causing the “gilded palace” to crumble, the formerly pristine Amazon.

Ghosh uses these works to make a powerful commentary on the way that humanity relates to the environment and the need to be more acutely aware of how our conduct may impact the natural order

over time. His work highlights the importance of addressing the human animal responsibility and the imperative of collective measures to respond to the environmental emergencies which the world faces. Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee (2010) reflects in *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture, and the Contemporary Indian Novel in English* that:

"Undoubtedly, any discipline aiming to theorize the overarching circumstances of colonialism and imperialism must engage with the intricate interactions between environmental factors like water, land, energy, habitat, and migration alongside political or cultural elements such as the state, society, conflict, literature, theatre, and visual arts" (144).

The work of Amitav Ghosh has, specifically in *The Hungry Tide*, investigated the environmental evolution wrought by conquest, and the lucidity of these concerns within the framework of current disasters. Authors such as Alfred Crosby, Ramachandra Guha, Richard Grove, and David Arnold have pointed to the ecological impact that European colonisation had on the environment. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin discuss in *Postcolonial Eco-Criticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (2015), the term "greening postcolonialism" is emblematic of the eco-narratives propagated by Ghosh which provide alternative readings of worldwide environmental issues. Such narratives are distinct from other forms of relation such as those found in eco-tourism or environmental activism, in which human relations with the environment are part of a literary investigation of human nature.

Ghosh is placed within postcolonial eco-criticism, while focusing on biodiversity in postcolonial locations. His novels provide an insight into the environmental destruction by human and *The Hungry Tide* (2004), which is based in the Sundarbans is no exception. Winner of the Crossword Book Prize, the novel explores the delicate balance between nature and human existence, arguing for the protection of vulnerable ecosystems. In 2004 Ghosh also wrote an essay "Folly in the Sundarbans", against plans to convert the area into a tourist destination. He emphasized the risk to the environment in the Sundarbans, a complex of habitats including tigers and dolphins. The book shows how human-induced disasters in this region have global consequences and the urgent requirement for protecting its unique ecosystems. The Sundarbans, named for the 'sundari tree', provides a vivid setting for Ghosh's exploration of humanity's dominance over nature. Ghosh critiques how human exploitation has led to environmental degradation, raising concerns about the planet's future. He suggests that nature's increasing retribution, through events like typhoons and cyclones demands a re-evaluation of our relationship with the natural world, stressing that humanity and nature must be seen as integral, with neither holding supremacy.

In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh illustrates the depletion of natural resources by the inhabitants of Morichjhapi, linking this exploitation to climate change and resource depletion. The narrative shows how such actions provoke nature's retribution, exemplified by the destructive cyclone that kills Fokir. Through this, Ghosh emphasizes that humanity must redefine its relationship with nature, recognizing the importance of balance and sustainability. The novel also highlights the impact of human activities, like the use of nylon nets for tiger prawn fishing, on the biodiversity of the Sundarbans.

"These nylon nets, designed for the capture of chingrimeen, the offspring of tiger prawns, are so delicate that they also ensnare the eggs of various other fish species. Mahima had hoped to see the nets banned, but such a feat remained unachievable." (134)

Ghosh questions the negative impacts of human interferences on the fragile environment of Sundarbans, showing the intricate impacts of whatever little action in a wider environmental spectrum. These very well expose the flip side of technological progress, which is not only advantageous for mankind but also represents a serious threat for the biodiversity. On the one hand, the rich varied natural resources wealthy Sundarbans in West Bengal, India, are being threatened by the poor, illiterate people inhabiting the island. Some residents consider these resources as their only entitlement and want to use them with impunity. In order to conserve the biodiversity cycle, as well as the natural resources of the Sundarbans, the government must take bold steps, up to and including evacuating these people from the island. Some refugees have found refuge within the forest. The rebels and refugees engage in a violent tussle with the police, government forces trying to force the refugees back to their resettlement camp in Central India. They are abducted in a large numbers in trucks and buses (Ghosh, 2007: 26).

And in this novel, Ghosh wants us to understand the rules that guide our natural world. His criticism of human self-belief in intellectual superiority stands in contrast to the logic that humans will favour natural law until it threatens their immediate survival. For in nature, excepting the Imperfection, all goes like clockwork. According to Piya, one study found that the Sundarbans has more fish species than the entire continent of Europe. This profusion of aquatic life is due to the unusually diversified character of the

water in this district and unlike elsewhere in the delta, where river and sea waters flow and collide seamlessly as they meander to the end, here they overlap, inviting a variety of ecological habitats. Freshwater streams run through the base of some channels, causing salinity and turbidity changes (Ghosh 2007, p. 125).

The Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, are an extensive low-lying, swamped and forested archipelago Island, a haven for a diverse range of wildlife. The moving tides of this region symbolize the everlasting spirit of life in this diversity tapestry. Ghosh managed to seamlessly unravel the lives of the central protagonists pitted in the web of life and the changing equations between the humans and the other inhabitants of the place to ensure their survival. The novel luxuriates in the pull of the Sundarbans, a region, where fresh water and salt merge with river and sea, one blithely morphing into the other. The tides reach up to 300 kilometers (186 miles) in-shore, regularly submerging vast swathes of forest as the advancing waters lurch forward and recede on a daily basis. As the tide creates new land forms, mangrove forest as grow very fast and, under favourable conditions, in a few years can cover a young island completely (Ghosh, 2007, p. 7-8).

A mangrove forest is a vibrant ecosystem, filled with life and also very dangerous. Each year many of them come face-to-face with death in the dense forests, becoming prey to wild jumps of tigers, snakes and crocodiles. The Sundarbans are characterized by an abundance of mangrove trees, which play a vital role in protecting the region from soil erosion and the devastating effects of cyclonic events. The landscape features expansive mudflats and a network of rivers, vividly and accurately portrayed in Ghosh's writing. These islands, ranging from large expanses to small sandbars, have varying ages, some enduring through recorded history while others have only emerged recently, sculpted by the forces of nature. The channels of the rivers extend across the landscape like a delicate net, creating a terrain where the distinctions between land and water are always shifting, often elusive. Some channels are so wide that one bank cannot be seen from the other, while others are narrow, only a few kilometers long and a few hundred meters in width (Ghosh, 2007, pp. 6-7).

In Ghosh's novel, the Sundarbans is a liminal space, one that medley reality and the imaginative narrative. The novel is centered on the tragedy of Bengal partition, and also on the expulsion of displaced immigrants from the island of Morichjhapi in the Sundarbans in 1979. This past event which was engineered by the Left Front Government of West Bengal, is very significant as the book uncovers the nitty gritty of the social and ecological complexities of the region. Drawing from real life into the lush, verdant world of the Sundarbans, in which the man-eating tiger and such species as the Gangetic and Irrawaddy dolphins, communicate with each other and the crocodiles and deer, even tales of the woodsmen and the she-devil feed the legends of the deadly forests where the danger is never far.

Piya, a young Indian-American cetologist, emerges as a central figure in Ghosh's lyrical foray into this territory. She begins research on the highly endangered Irrawaddy dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*) and is assisted by Fokir, a local guide. Through Piya's eyes, Ghosh depicts in vivid detail the way human and natural worlds interact. Piya observes a group of seven *Orcaella* which she documents; focusing on a calf, the writer describes the calf surfacing as a "corkscrew form, suggesting [the calf] has not yet learned to breathe easily" (114). Piya notes the relevance of knowing adaptive responses of these dolphins to tidal ecology, it is such information that can much contribute towards conservation of the fascinating animal. A memorable scene in the novel is when Piya muses on an extraordinary symbiosis between human beings and wild animals, especially the dolphins:

"Was there ever a more extraordinary example of symbiosis between humanity and a community of wild animals?" (169).

This reciprocal arrangement is underscored by the knowledge that Fokir imparted to Piya and Kanai, knowledge gleaned from his mother, Kusum. Fokir tells you how the dolphins in Garjontola can predict the flood, and how they have insulated themselves above their usual level of sensitivity to the environment to alert to an approaching disaster. Piya's deeper exploration uncovers the Gangetic dolphin (she calls it *Platanista gangetica*), which, with its extraordinarily sensitive dorsal eye, detects changes in atmospheric pressure, allowing them to predict storms, showing once again the pan-equilibrium between human and the nonhuman.

The novel reflects on an active interpenetrated relationship between species in the war and peace between humans and animals as well as humans and the environment. Piya also meets with estuarine crocodiles and several small creatures that flourish in the special water of the Sundarbans. This fertile and rich ecosystem harbours an extensive variety of aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals, among them many

fish species. Ghosh's portrayal of the waters of the Sundarbans emphasizes their distinct ecological character.

The waters of the river and sea do not mix uniformly in this region; instead, they interpenetrate, creating a multitude of ecological niches. Freshwater streams flow along certain channels, altering the salinity and turbidity of the water. These variations create micro-environments, which Ghosh compares to balloons delicately suspended within the water. Each of these "balloons" serves as a unique ecosystem, teeming with native species of both animals and plants. This diverse array of environments fosters the emergence and persistence of an astonishing variety of aquatic life, ranging from the enormous crocodile to the smallest fish (Ghosh, 2007, p. 125).

Through his detailed depiction of the Sundarbans, Ghosh underscores the interconnectedness of all life forms in this unique ecosystem, highlighting the delicate balance that sustains both human and animal populations. His narrative calls attention to the ecological importance of the region and the need for preservation in the face of mounting environmental challenges.

Yet even as environmentalists and writers raise a greater awareness, globalization, economic development and eco-tourism are further irrigating the biosphere. Such activities continue to exploit vulnerable ecosystems such as the Sundarbans along the India-Bangladesh border. The development of this area for commercial purposes as if it were anywhere else as only served to highlight the need to preserve this area as yet another region of human real estate takes over the landscape. Ghosh's story highlights the necessity of this urgency in an episode where Piya and Fokir, while out on a trip to Garjantola, come upon the carcass of a calf they had once gleefully admired. There, the baby calf is struck by a motorboat as she is shuttle between a ferry boat and an artificial fence that keeps her theme park under control, a heartbreaking event that serves to underscore the need for conservation and protection, as Fokir notes. It is the world's largest single block of tidal halophytic mangrove forest. It is also the largest such forest in the world. The Sundarbans are a network of marine streams, mud shores and mangrove forests. The salinity level is higher in the mangroves than in the freshwater swamp forests located further inland. The Sundarbans contain the world's largest coastal mangrove forest and one of the largest reserves for the Bengal tiger. But Ghosh notes the intensifying conflict of the tigers into human habitats which causes deaths on both sides. One of the most striking examples takes place when Piya, Kanai, Fokir, and Horen have the misfortune to see a tiger bludgeoned to death by a group of furious villagers. On the summit of a rise, they come on a large imprint in the dust, the place where the tiger, Black Tiger of the Hills, was gazing watching at the village before it picked its way. They spot a small hut a few hundred meters away with a crowd of more than a hundred around it. They have sharpened bamboo poles and are ramming them into the hut in a fury of fear and anger. In the mob women and children scream 'Maar! Maar! Kill! Kill!' (Ghosh, 2007, pp. 291-292). The heart-melting scene shows the grim implications of a growing confrontation between humans and tigers.

An editorial in *The Hindu* (2021) discusses this topic and opines that the solution to human-tiger conflict is in "strong conservation science and practices of coexistence of humans and carnivores at the landscape level. The article argues that larger, uninterrupted habitats would be better, not just for people, but also for nature (par. 1-2). The man-eater tiger was lynched by public in Kilehabommur village in self-defence as it had attacked the humans earlier. Media response There was media coverage in the aftermath of the incident, during which meanwhile several wildlife authorities were calling for guidelines regarding this type of mob action. Chakrabarti (2009) also discusses the struggle of local populations with the global tiger, calling for serious rethinking of the man animal relationship behind the man tiger conflict. He points out about the difficulties of handling a tiger reserve in the unique mangrove swamps of the Sundarbans. He explains,

"The establishment of a tiger reserve and its ongoing management within this distinctive mangrove swamp necessitated navigating a myriad of uncertainties. It was essential to seek solutions to several inquiries ... how to guarantee the sustenance of the tigers' natural prey while preserving the integrity of the biodiversity within this distinctive region, among other considerations" (p. 87-88).

Ghosh sketches the complex interplay of humans and nature, asserting the necessity for management practices that benefit biodiversity along with humans. He stresses that it is important to re-evaluate the interactions between humans and wildlife and sustainable solutions that contribute to both people and the land. Man-tiger conflicts are exacerbated by various environmental problems such as the loss of mangrove forests that jeopardizes the endangered tiger population. Global warming, cyclones and human development have caused the destruction of the coastal vegetation, threatens the wildlife and disrupting

human-animal lines. Ghosh censures the removal of indigenous populations to make way for conservation zones and highlights the invaluable knowledge of such communities, juxtaposing it with the state's policies. He reminds readers to urgently respect and cherish the environment, even in its busted-gut forms.

Notwithstanding its efforts at conservation, the ecosystem of the Sundarbans has been in decline due to climate change, global warming, and extensive coastal erosion. If it appears that this is a fight between man and beast, it's a fight that is equally shared between all living creatures where natural disasters are concerned. As an environmental jewel the Sundarbans needs to be preserved in terms of the challenges that it has posed. Ghosh's protagonists, Piya and Kanai, opt to reside in the Sundarbans, not just at the service of the local community, but at the service of the environment, thus demonstrating an engagement with environmental conservation. The increasing environmental crises, including climatic variations and natural calamities, affirm the reaction of nature to man's exploitation. Eco-catastrophism sounds the alarm about imminent environmental doom, as it were. Ghosh cleverly combines social, political, cultural and environmental matters in *The Hungry Tide*, stressing that the need to preserve our planet for the next generation is of paramount importance.

Natural disasters such as cyclones and earthquakes can no longer be viewed as pure acts of nature but rather as nature's revenge against humans for abusing the natural environment. In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh continues to revisit these themes, deploying disasters to pose larger ecological and ethical questions. Though the book features a love story, it also focuses on the connection among the characters and the ecological concerns, ending with a catastrophic cyclone that kills Fokir. Climate change is a major part of the novel, how it affects the Sundarbans, where rare species like dolphins are ailing, and the tiger population is falling. Ghosh cites, as an example of the instability of the region's ecologies, the submersion of islands, showing how the smallest imbalances can generate huge imbalances in the ecological chain. In his work of fiction, Ghosh stresses the urgency of environmental protection and the welfare of endangered habitats such as the Sundarbans.

One of the novel's clearest ecological observations comes when Piya shares with Fokir a behaviour seen in some crabs that are known as "laundering" their home. These crabs work carefully to scour the mud, grain by grain, with the tiny brushes and spoons made by the hairs of their feet and sides. They clean diatoms and other detritus stuck to the sand grains, acting as the mangrove's cleaning crew and janitors of the mangrove environment. Without the crabs, the mangrove trees would be smothered by their own waste. Piya poses the thought-provoking question:

"Did they not constitute a significantly large proportion of the system's biomass? Did they not surpass even the trees and the leaves in weight?" (142).

This unassuming discovery flies in the face of the notion of keystone species, which tends to conjure up images of crocodiles, tigers and dolphins rather than a humble crab. It is in this context that Ghosh suggests that intertidal forests be called crab forests because of the crabs' importance in maintaining the health of the mangrove system. With vivid ecological description, Ghosh holds out the rarely acknowledged ecologically vital aspects of biodiversity and ecosystem health for consideration of nature's interrelatedness. *The Hungry Tide* is a brilliant example of the fine balance that exists in nature, every tiny life form has an important part to play in the wider ecology. Nature is depicted as a motherly figure since it is that which is obligatory to human existence. Ghosh demonstrates this connection through Kusum's own experience of witnessing her father returning from a good fishing trip, where he offers the family food and money based on what had been procured from the earth, alluding to the fact that nature provides for human wants. But needs have over the years, degenerated into greed, paving the way for unabated plundering of nature's bounty. Ghosh unsnarls this transformation through what might appear an innocuous accident, Kusum's unable-to-find-firewood father fatally ensnarled in gathering more. This is a moment when tiny, impulsive acts, committed for the sake of greed or impatience, can reverberate with monstrous consequences.

Ghosh's story focuses on the contradiction of human and animal power. In the past, humans have not only dominated in the animal kingdom but this very kind of domination has also brought about losses for all. For all its brain power, Ghosh reminds us, humanity is a smart animal and animals, no less so, are a smart emotional product of their environment. The real trouble here, of course, is when people who know better, people who know the consequences, act in pure disregard of the fine equilibrium of nature. Kusum's father paid no heed to the situation as he left to collect firewood in a disturbed condition. Ghosh describes the tragic turn of events:

The animal was positioned in the trees along the shore, and from the direction of its movement, she inferred that it had observed the boat as it traversed the river. Upon Kusum's initial scream, her mother and several others from the hamlet rushed to the embankment. However, her father, the intended recipient of the warning shout, did not hear it due to the wind blowing in the opposite direction. In a short period, numerous individuals gathered on the embankment, all witnessing the same event, the animal was pursuing her father (108).

Ghosh adds that this teetering seesaw of our existence between the destruction of global extinction is in direct proportion with the trajectory of our own nature predicting the kind of desolation that awaits us in only a few billion years. India's leading novelist, Amitav Ghosh argues that animals have a range of emotions similar to those of humans whatever their politics, and our human selfishness, ruthlessness and greed has an extreme cumulative effect on them. Animals in the wild would rather avoid conflict than want it just as we do within our own domains. Animals, too, long to live in their natural environments and have what they need for survival. But overpopulation and human-interference, such as cutting down forests for development disrupt the animal's habitats and affects their emotional health. Forests and caves are vital places in which to hide or hibernate for many kinds of animals, and animals can and do often appear to be terrified or angry when their homes are destroyed. Animals, faced with humans (who are seen as predators), may tend to become defensive and attack back or flee out of fear for their lives.

Ghosh adeptly illustrates the emotional depth and survival instincts of animals in *The Hungry Tide*. He writes, "The animal was upwind of its prey and they could see its coal flashing as it closed in; because of the distinctiveness of its own odour, it was skilled in dealing with the wind and it knew that the people on the other bank were powerless against these gusts" (108). This exemplifies the keen instincts of the animal, which uses its sensory abilities to track its prey and remain undetected. It also reflects the animal's awareness of its surroundings and the limitations of humans in that environment. Ghosh highlights how animals are driven by instincts and emotions, responding to perceived threats or disruptions to their territories. Ghosh also addresses the cyclical patterns of nature, drawing parallels between past and present environmental crises. He references the significant cyclone of 1970 and compares it to a similar cyclone currently wreaking havoc in the Sundarbans, impacting Fokir, Piya, and other residents of the island. Ghosh uses these recurring natural disasters to underscore the relentless power of nature and the consequences of human negligence. He cautions that without a change in our lifestyles, nature will continue to retaliate, presenting future generations with increasingly severe environmental challenges.

Ghosh's fiction emphasises the point that calamities of natural disaster do not come by chance, they are part of a cycle in which human action is complicit. He alludes to a historical incident of 1737, which occurred after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb that had thrown India into great turmoil. Calcutta (now Kolkata) became during this time a great centre for trade, but the English took advantage of this fact to make it the principal port of the East. This context of colonial control serves to underscore Ghosh's consistent theme of humanity's influence upon nature. Through outrageously novel analogies, Ghosh links the dots between past annals, calamitous acts of God and our current climate change dire straits, for showing the effects of our foolishness, and prompting a rethink of our relationship with Nature to avert disaster.

Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* takes place in the month of October, which has long had a notorious reputation, considering that cyclones are at their worst in those months, October and November. The estuary is hit by a large wave of up to twelve meters, before the storm makes landfall.

Ghosh uses a character's dialogue to emphasize the sheer magnitude of this wave:

Can you comprehend the height of that, my friend? It would have submerged all entities on both your island and ours. Even those of us on this roof would have been submerged (204-205).

The character acknowledges the severity of the event by relating it to a true story documented in the British Museum, the same place where Marx wrote *Das Kapital*, thereby connecting history with the environmental crisis. Despite the acknowledgement of the past disaster, there is an underlying forewarning in *The Hungry Tide*:

Not only could it occur again, it will occur again. A storm is imminent, the waters will increase, and it will be overwhelmed, either partially or entirely. It is merely a question of time (204-205).

This underscores the inevitability of environmental disasters, highlighting the cyclical nature of such events and the urgent need to address the forces that perpetuate them. Ghosh, very adeptly, has woven Indian mythology with the ecological truths of the Sundarbans, especially in the character of Bon Bibi, the goddess of forest. In the novel, the people of Lusibari worship Bon Bibi as the priestess of the forest

who rules over all the animals, tigers and crocodiles included, of the region. Lusibari's residents stage dramas exalting the Glory of Bon Bibi, portraying her as a benign spirit who shelters people in natural disasters. This is illustrated in the mythic episode when Dokkhin Rai, pursued by a tiger, calls out: "O mother of mercy, Bon Bibi, assist me, come to my aid!" (105).

Bon Bibi arrives, traversing the waters, and saves Dokkhin Rai's life, embodying the maternal figure who shields the vulnerable from harm. The myth illustrates a moral principle: greed is met with punishment, while the impoverished and the humble are rewarded with protection.

However, Ghosh subtly critiques the limitations of these myths through the character of Kusum, who shares a poignant moment with Kanai:

"I called her too, but she never came, Bon Bibi. The day my father passed away. I witnessed the entire event as it unfolded before me, and I repeatedly attempted to contact her" (Ghosh, 2007, p. 107).

Here, Ghosh adds another layer of inference to the myth, highlighting the disjunction between feeling and truth. Kusum's example also contradicts the stereotype of divine intercession, whereby Bon Bibi would not be there in her moment of utmost distress. This is one of those moments where the reader is left to ponder the juxtaposition of myth with lived experience, and the place of religious faith in times of tragedy. In *Bon Bibi*, Ghosh brings together myth, ecology and the human experience. The goddess contrasts with the rigours of nature and the limitations of human power to control it. At the same time however, Ghosh encourages readers to examine the cultural backdrop against which these myths have arisen and, in a subtle way, gently pokes fun at the naïve acceptance of such beliefs. He also refers to these scenes to illustrate the ingenuousness of the rural population, who, in their native gullibility or acceptance, take these truths for granted. Against the backdrop of myth and ecological disaster the author replaces received orthodoxies with an ecologically heterodox sensibility rooted in an unusual vision of the human relationship to the environment, encouraging readers to re-think human nature, faith, and the forces shaped world.

The marine mammals of the Sundarbans are studied in much detail by Piyali Roy in *The Hungry Tide*, especially the Gangetic and Irrawaddy dolphins. Piya's research aims at understanding these dolphins, what they mean for the place they occupy, and the threats they are subjected to. Whilst Piya does live in Lusibari for some time before a dangerous encounter threatens her life and the town and she leaves it temporarily. A month later she revisits to carry on working with the Badabon Trust, where she opts to get the trust to concentrate on protecting the Ganges River dolphins with the consultation of the fishermen in Lusibari. Also, Piya helps the society by partly funding for Moyna's house and for Tatal's college education. She also asks Nilima to take the first-floor lease of her house as she wants to start a guesthouse. Piya expresses her deep connection to the place, stating to Nilima,

"For me, home is where the Orcaella are, so there's no reason why this couldn't be it" (400).

This reflects her commitment to the region and her dedication to the conservation project. Kanai, meanwhile, has started to record his memories from Nirmal's diary. Ghosh is working toward a calming resolution, one that gives us hope after a precarious journey. The violent storm is one of the most important natural disasters confronting the inhabitants of Lusibari. Its natural history is faithfully and authentically documented in *Armadale*, thanks to newspaper and journal articles as well as to the writing that demonstrates that Ghosh studied at Delhi and Oxford and has a degree in social anthropology. While the novel is not a remarkable one for its depiction of natural history, there is a move toward a final vision that is particularly important.

Piya's dawning awareness, especially after the storm and Fokir's death is a pivotal moment in the novel. She leaves and returns with some money and an offer for a research project. This project, which is supported by local fishers, seeks to avoid putting a heavy cost of conservation on those with limited options. The project will come courtesy of the Badabon Trust, and while it may sound like a drop in the ocean, it is a huge dedication to a more democratic model of conservation. Piya fully appreciates the importance of grassroots local individuals such as Fokir for conservation efforts, pointing out that without Fokir's home-turf knowledge the world would not even have heard about the river dolphins living in the tide country. (Thakur, 70-71).

The novel is located in the Sundarbans, or "beautiful forest," which occupies more than 10,000 sq km located near the Gulf of Bengal. Climate change has a huge impact in the Sundarbans, it affects both the human population and the wildlife. With the expanding population and deforestation and mangrove destruction, the biodiversity of the region has become heavily imbalanced. These problems are intensified by sudden increases in water level, resulting in an increased threat of flooding and tsunamis. This

ecological disequilibrium is also due to the fact that villagers are poorly educated and poorly informed. Ghosh extrapolates from the actual Morichjhapi massacre of 1979, which serves as an example about the exploitation and suffering of the Bangaldeshi refugees. The Indian government has taken initiative to conserve natural resources including its naturally occurring flora and fauna, and has introduced several restrictions to prevent animals being hunted to extinction such as the Bengal tiger, the one-horned Indian rhinoceros, the Indian Elephant as well as the Gangetic Dolphin or tiger of rivers and the Ganges River dolphin. Conservation efforts have triggered confrontations with residents, though. In 1978, a large number of refugees were driven to migrate from Bangladesh to settle on lands in the Sundarbans, and suffered exploitation from the Muslim communists and upper-caste Hindus. In 1979, the government declared the forest as a reserve and said that the settlers were to be evicted. This signalled the start of around a year of severe strife between the government and the population. The last showdown occurred in 1979 and his exact role in the altercation is known less. The Morichjhapi story unfolds in the documents that Nirmal has left to Kanai, unveiling to him this complex aspect of the Sundarbans' history. The historical and ecological and social are interwoven, and the ordeals that the denizens of the region human as well as animal endure powerfully reflect the larger environmental crisis of the Sundarbans. Through the pursuit of figures like Piya and Kanai, the book draws attention to the imperative of sustainable mitigating action that takes into account the ecological value of the place and the socio-economic circumstances of its people. With *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh masterfully spins a magical narrative of the extremes of both environmentalism and the cultural ecology of man's own world, with the sense of the place of the supernatural an essential part of the story, all set in the physical, human and supernatural world of The Sundarbans. The natural elements of the Sundarbans aren't just a setting but they function as an active presence, connecting animal, plant and human life, each affecting the other in profound, often unpredictable ways. The configuration of the land and habitats in this coastal area influence the formation of its communities, emphasizing the lasting connection between the people and the land. Ghosh draws a lively picture of the coexisting people who share same problems of survive in a homely space where dense forests, rivers, snakes, crocodiles, tigers and the like in the middle of regular appearance of natural calamities of cyclones and big storms.

Nature is a significant contributor to the narrative and by emphasizing this there is a better understanding of the mystery and fate of a person's life against the danger and beauty of the natural environment. For the people of Sundarbans, their connection with the natural realm is intrinsically linked to stories, legends, myths, superstitions etc. One such myth is the story of Bon Bibi, the jungle goddess, who plays an important role in laying down discursive hegemony in the subject positions of the people of the region. These myths, practices and rituals have a profound effect on their lives, aiding them in their daily struggle to survive in an unkind but fascinating environment. The Jungle as conveyed by the myth signifies the enduring contrast between "civilized" versus so-called "uncivilized" societies.

Ghosh probes deeper into nature's resistance to regimentation and neat categorization. In the Sundarbans, the distinction between land and water, and between freshwater and saltwater, are hazy, as rivers branch and converge to capture the uncertainty and constant change of the place. Nature adheres to principles over any human influence; it has its own rhythm and flow. This vivid portrayal disrupts the human desire to organize and control the natural world, illustrating how certain parts of the natural world cannot be regulated by human control. The novel's focal point is, after all, destabilization, de facto, one driving by the forces of globalization. The story is about a real historical fact about Morichjhapi massacre of 1979 refugees that were evicted from the island of Morichjhanpi in the Sundarbans by the government. With this incident, Ghosh takes up the challenge of discussing some of the environmental concerns facing the region, including the preservation and protection of its ecosystem. He depicts the ongoing struggle between the refugees and officials, the absurdity of life for settlers in an alien, untenable place where there are no viable chances of escape.

According to Ghosh, the macroscopics' impact on peoples deemed to be "backward" or "uncivilized" is considerable. On one hand, as a result of globalization these groups have enjoyed the exchange of information, communication and knowledge, the opportunity for education and technology. This exchange fosters the development of ideas and technologies, with the possibility of growth and progress. On the flipside, Ghosh also represents the darkness of globalization. This is evident from the cruel and clear consciousness of city-based people about Morichjhapi's settlers. Their smug attitude towards the refugees being 'uncivilized' is a problem with the wider social and political results of globalization – in a neoliberal market of winners and losers, everyone else is left behind.

In the *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh integrates these environmental, social, and political threads and tells a story that does not only chart the intricate relations of human life in and with a vulnerable nesting site but that in its look at the power of globalization, layers critical views on the effects of these global forces for people who are deeply rooted in local ways. The novel also invites readers to reflect on harmonious nature, culture and the aftermath of human intervention, in a life cycle or in a world scale.

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