

Exploring Interaction Between Humans And Physical Environment In The Fiction Of Amitav Ghosh's Hungry Tide

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Abstract: Literature and nature have close intimacy. It is evidenced in the works of writers, poets in the culture of globe. The word Eco criticism is a semi-neologism. Eco is short of Ecology, which is concentrated with the relationship between living organisms in their natural environment as well as their relationship with their Environment. So it can be said that these are obviously interdisciplinary studies which combine natural science and a humanistic discipline.

I. INTRODUCTION

Eco-criticism is not only the application of ecology and ecological principles but also the study of literature and theoretical approach to the interrelations of nature, culture and sometimes even supernatural elements in nature. It attempts to explore the expressions of environment in literary texts and theoretical discourse. It is also a study of language through which literature is expressed. Literature renowned for imitating the contemporary problems could not have remained untouched from this concept. Eco criticism emerged as a separate discipline although it is a fact that the relationship between man and his physical environment had always been interesting to literary critics (Volkman p.370). Eco criticism is a branch of literary criticism which is being discussed as an interdisciplinary approach throughout the world. It is the study of literature and environment. Subjects like literature, anthropology, science, sociology and psychology are covered under eco critical study.

A large number of writing works show that attempt is made to study attitude of mankind towards nature. Writers prefer to create awareness of consequences of human deeds which damages the planet's life support system. This concept attracted many writers, poets, researchers and scholars since early 60s and 70s. But finally two historic publications in the mid 90s as '*The Eco Criticism Reader*' by Glotfelty and Harold Fromm and '*The Environmental Imagination*' by Buell marked the authorized recognition of the concept named Eco criticism.

II. ECO-CRITICISM & AMITAV GHOSH'S HUNGRY TIDE

"Eco-criticism is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyze the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation".

Amitav Ghosh is a contemporary Indian writer, and most of his works deals with historical narratives, mingling with geography, voyages, trade adventure, magic, memory and multiple points of view in the contexts of Indian Ocean world (cited in Sabar 2014). In the fiction *Hungry Tide*, Ghosh has beautifully described ecological concerns as well as portrayed human predicaments in the middle of threatening nature. *Hungry Tide* (2005) is one of the first Indian novels which strongly rose ecological issues in Indian fiction. In *Hungry Tide*, Ghosh represents nature by using interweaving legends, experience, myths and history to show interaction of human and non human world. It is an attempt to investigate his conscious engagement with natural world that draws attention of humans towards impending calamity of world

environment. Tide country is a far forgotten world in the north east of India. Ganges after merging with Brahmaputra makes a vast delta in this land which later dissolves into the Bay of Bengal. Ghosh in this fiction presented interaction between the state the fauna and flora, the physical environment that were inherent in the 'Sunderbans'.

In the fiction *Hungry Tide*, two main characters Piya and Kanai are leading the story by bringing other very important characters like Fokir, Nirmal, Nilima, Moyna and Kusum and Horen. Ghosh took three main characters in writing this narrative. In the character of Piya who is a young one doing research on the rare species of Orcella dolphin, Ghosh goes deep into the details of each and every technicality which was required. Sometimes these details become very tough for ordinary person but at the end it's all satisfying to go through it.

Another character named, Nirmal, Kanai's uncle, with a poetic style. Nirmal is an idealist; poetry flows in his nerves but seldom had it come out in his life, left a notebook for Kanai of his final encounters with the exact life that he wanted to live but was suppressed by his wife Nilima, who is a very practical lady. Other characters like Kanai, Fokir, Moyna, Kusum and Horen are being dealt with a social observer kind of style. Fokir and Kusum are also very interesting characters. Fokir is a fisherman.

The friction between land and sea in the 'sunderbans' creates tension between elements of nature. 'Sunderbans' is a saga of Indo-American marine biologist Piya Roy. She has been to the Tide country for studying river dolphins. One of a character Fokir, a fisherman helped her to locate dolphins in 'Garjontola' pool, another character named Kanai Dutta, a Delhi based business man who meets her on his way to visit his aunt named Nilima. A person named Nirmal had a mission for helping the refugees at *Sunderbans*. Nirmal is the husband of Nilima. He was committed to his work and helps therefugees. He falls in love with Kusum, mother of Fokir. Though this fiction Ghosh conveys that Kanai visits the tidy country to get the lost journal which was written by the character named Nirmal. A sudden cyclone kills fokir when he is helping to piya. Finally priya decides to make dream of Fokir true and seeks help from Nilima and Kanai.

The fiction presents the picture of human suffering and wild life. The fiction explores the plight of displaced people, struggle for land in endangered ecosystem. Through this Ghosh presents two provinces- an endangered ecosystem where men live and fight with animals and tides, and a region in human being heart. *Hungry Tide* is a fiction of identity adventure love and history. In *Hungry Tide* – The Ghosh accurately arranged tigers, river dolphin, crocodiles, lunar rainbows and the tides which go against the settlers. The fiction tells about bearing conflict between animals and Human civilization. It presents about a man's place in physical environment or the landscape which appears itself as a changing character in the fiction.

Ghosh said:

"The Hungry Tide is at bottom a story about a relationship between a girl and two men... one of the major characters in the book actually, is the landscape in which it's set." (Ghosh says in Writer's festival (2004), Australia. Cited in readersvoive.com, 2007)

Ghosh presents historic tragedy in 1970 refugee settler on the island of *Morichjhapi* in *Sunderbans* and represents post colonial political conflict between demands of wildlife conservation and needs of *Sunderban* residential through rediscovered diary as primary source. Amitav Ghosh pinpointed that the residents of the tide country are the part of the local ecology. Condition of residential living in fragile ecosystem tells that the present's generation can take up necessary steps for the improvement of Tide country situation. In the section "S" Daniel", a discussion between Nirmal and Kanai on 'S' Danial tells about hazards and risks to the lives of that regions. It represents not only pity matters that the tidal surroundings bring but also fear psychosis as:

"Think of what it was like: think of tigers, crocodiles and snakes that lived in the creeks and nalas that covered the islands. This was a feast for them. They killed hundreds of people." (Ibid52)

CONCLUSION

Eco criticism studies the interdependence of men and nature. It is the warning to human being that destruction of nature over a period of time will lead to outburst of nature. In this fiction, nature imageries have been used by the Ghosh to express shortcomings and emotions of their characters. Interests in redefining humans' relationship to other species with critical animal studies are shared under the title 'Eco criticism'. An Eco critic tries to focus on systematic and often unintentional damages to other species including both animals and plants.

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