



A Study on the themes of Ecology and Culture in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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Abstract

This paper examines the themes of ecology and culture in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*. The novel is set in the Sundarbans. It is portrayed as a fragile landscape in which human life, animal life, myth, livelihood, and political power are closely connected. The conflict between conservation and livelihood is the main concern of the novel. Piya Roy represents the conservationist view and shows concern for endangered species such as the Irrawaddy dolphin. Fokir represents the local people whose lives depend on rivers, tides, fish, crabs, and forests. The novel presents the view that environmental protection becomes complicated when the survival of poor communities is affected by conservation policies. The history of the Morichjhāpi massacre highlights this problem by showing how refugees were displaced in the name of environmental preservation. Nature too, has cultural significance in the Sundarbans. The myths of Bon Bibi and Dokkhin Rai, rituals made for protection, people's fear of tigers, and the movement of the tides all show us the bond between the inhabitants and the environment. The paper stresses the idea that we cannot understand nature solely through scientific study or political control alone. We can understand it through local knowledge, cultural memory, and human survival.

Keywords: Culture, *The Hungry Tide*, Sundarbans, Endangered Species, Bon Bibi.

Introduction:

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* is set in a landscape of rivers, mangrove forests, tides, storms, tigers, dolphins, fishermen, and refugees. In this region, the Sundarbans, nature is part and parcel of everyday life. It provides food, work, shelter, movement, and cultural meaning. At the same time, it also brings danger in the form of floods, storms, tiger attacks, and unpredictable tides. Ghosh shows that environmental questions cannot be separated from human survival. The forests and rivers are important because they support rare species and fragile

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habitats. Equally, they are also necessary for the livelihood of the local people. The local people's daily routine is based on fishing, crab catching, honey collecting, and wood gathering. This creates a conflict between the need to protect nature and the need to protect human beings. This conflict is seen clearly in the contrast between scientific conservation and local experience. Piya's concern for the Irrawaddy dolphin represents the need for ecological protection. Fokir's life represents the dependence of local people on the same environment. Their relationship with the Sundarbans shows two different but important ways of knowing nature. The novel also connects this ecological debate with the history of Morichjhāpi, where displaced refugees faced violence in the name of environmental preservation. The cultural meaning of nature is also an important concern in the novel. The people of the Sundarbans understand the forest, tiger, river, and tide through myths, rituals, and inherited beliefs. The myths of Bon Bibi and Dokkhin Rai, the fear of the tiger, and the rhythm of the tides show the nature is part of the cultural identity. This paper studies the themes of ecology and culture in *The Hungry Tide* using Huggan and Tiffin's 'postcolonial ecocritical approach' (2010), Guha's idea of 'the environmentalism of the poor' (1989), Nixon's concept of 'slow violence' (2011), Plumwood's views on 'anthropocentrism' (1993) and Buell's views on cultural ecology (1995). It focuses on the conflict between conservation and livelihood and the cultural significance of nature in the Sundarbans.

1. Conservation vs. Livelihood

The conflict between conservation and livelihood is prevalent in the Sundarbans. Here ecological protection and human survival exist in constant tension. The Sundarbans is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most ecologically diverse regions in the world. It is home to a variety of endangered species, including the Royal Bengal tiger and the Irrawaddy dolphin (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.). The unique biodiversity of the region makes it ideal for conservation efforts which aim to protect the fragile ecosystems from human encroachment. However, for the local inhabitants of the Sundarbans, the land and water are more than that. They are the source of existence for the people. The people rely on the forests for wood, honey, and other resources. They use the rivers for fishing. To some extent, fishing is the backbone of their economy. Ghosh depicts the tension between these two factors: the need to protect endangered species and preserve the natural environment on the one hand, the necessity of human survival where resources are scarce and life is precarious on the other. The backdrop of the Morichjhāpi massacre clearly demonstrates this tension as the refugees were forcibly driven out from the Sundarbans by the government in the name of environmental preservation. (Kumar et al., 2020) This highlights the tragic consequences of prioritizing conservation over human survival. The refugees, who had fled famine and destitution, considered the Sundarbans as a place in which they could build new lives. But their presence was viewed incompatible with the plans of the government to protect the wildlife in the area. This demonstrates the conflict between the needs of the local people and the goals of conservationists.

Because it was people like you," said Kanai, "who made a push to protect the wildlife here, without regard for the human costs...There are more tigers living in America, in captivity, than there are in all of India - what do you think would happen if they started killing human beings? ...

'The difference, Kanai,' Piya said slowly and emphatically, 'is that it was what was intended - not by you or me, but by nature, by the earth, by the planet that keeps us all alive ... What'll be left then? Aren't we alone enough in the universe? And do you think it'll stop at that? Once we decide we can kill off other species, it'll be people next - just the kind of people you're thinking of, people who're poor and unnoticed.'

... If I thought giving up my life might make the rivers safe again for the Irrawaddy dolphin, the answer is yes, I would. But the trouble is that my life, your life, a thousand lives would make no difference. (261-262)

The long conversation between Piya and Kanai shows the complex discussion about

environmental protection. Kanai criticizes that animal conservation efforts mostly do not consider human costs. He emphasizes only the poor people are affected by the policies for preserving animals like tigers. Many tigers are confined in captivity in the western countries, but here in India, the efforts to preserve them affect only the local people while trying to save the tigers. This questions the very objectives of the conservation efforts. Piya contradicts this and emphasizes on the intrinsic value of preserving species in their natural habitats. She adds that the boundary between the nature and human should not be removed just for the sake of human needs. If done so, he will ignore the values of other species. Later, the same kind of disregard will turn to the marginalized people too. Her view stresses that biodiversity is essential for the health of the planet and for moral code of humanity. This conversation poses an important question 'how to save nature without harming the rights and survival of local human populations?'

Each of the characters in the novel, Piya, Fokir, Kanai, Kusum, Nirmal, and Nilima, puts forward a different view of conservation and livelihood. Their experiences portray the challenges involved in environmental protection from multiple perspectives.

Piya Roy represents the perspective of a conservationist. She is a cetologist and only her research brings her to the Sundarbans. She has true commitment to environmental science and conservation. Piya views the Sundarbans scientifically. At the same time, she has a deep concern towards to the creatures she studies. For her, the work is not just profession. She acts with the true spirits to protecting the Irrawaddy dolphins. Piya is trained in Western scientific methods. But she is ready to learn and accept the indigenous knowledge. The bond which develops between her and Fokir demonstrates this. She learns from him the value of local knowledge gained from lived experience. Piya realizes that scientific knowledge is strengthened when combined with local knowledge. Piya's life choices show her dedication to conservation. She focuses on her research and protection efforts by sacrificing her personal comfort and social relationships. She is very much aware of the conflicts between human populations and wildlife conservation efforts. She is also aware of the moral problems posed by conservation, especially the effect of protective measures on local communities. She struggles to find a balance that respects both human and ecological needs.

Through Piya, Ghosh emphasizes ecological responsibility. Piya opposes the anthropocentric view that human needs are important than that of other species. She puts forth the idea that biodiversity is essential not just for the survival of individual species like the Irrawaddy dolphin, but for the health of the whole planet: "... it was what was intended - not by you or me, but by nature, by the earth, by the planet that keeps us all alive." (261) Her character embodies a powerful voice representing the challenges, sacrifices, and moral imperatives of environmental stewardship.

Fokir is a fisherman born and brought up in the Sundarbans. He embodies the livelihood perspective. His relationship with the environment is based on his livelihood. His life is based on the experiential knowledge passed down through generations. Fokir's relationship with nature is different from that of Piya. Piya views environment as something to be researched and preserved. But, Fokir views it as a means of sustenance to his family. For him, waves and rivers are not just environment, they are the base for his life:

When the crab pot was full, Fokir covered its mouth with an aluminum plate... When she tipped the pot over, they tumbled out in a chain and disappeared into the hold with an angry outburst of clicking and clattering... To nature, in short - for who was it who had said that the definition of "nature" was that it included everything not formed by human intention? But it was not her own intention that had brought her here today; it was the crabs- because they were Fokir's livelihood and without them he would not have known to lead her to this pool where the Orcaella came. (125-126)

The crabs are the means of survival for Fokir. He runs his life as a fisherman who depends on the rivers and the resources of the Sundarbans to sustain his family. His focus is pragmatic. The crabs are needed to his daily existence. His relationship with the environment is made by the knowledge passed down through generations in his community.

His fishing expeditions are dictated by the rhythms of nature. His intimate knowledge

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of the region allows him to tackle its dangers with skill and caution. In one instance, Piya tries to follow Fokir into the mud but is caught off guard when her feet sink deeper than expected. Fokir moves effortlessly with his knowledge of the terrain. But, Piya struggles to move forward because of her unfamiliarity to the environment. After she regains her footing, Fokir humorously demonstrates how to navigate the mud:

...The mud parted under her weight, sucking her feet in with a wet slurping sound. She was taken completely by surprise for the mud hadn't seemed deep at all when Fokir was running up the bank...After she was on her feet again, he enacted a little pantomime to show her how to negotiate the bank: lifting up a foot, he curled his big toe like a crab's claw and dug it into the mud. (133-134)

This moment shows Fokir's innate connection to the land. It also stresses the means of survival in this environment. Fokir teaches Piya through simple, direct actions rather than words, and shows her the techniques that come naturally to him. His use of the crab's motion reinforces the idea of crabs as a crucial part of the ecosystem. This relationship with nature extends to how Fokir engages with the environment at large. He knows the terrain intimately i.e. how to move across the mudbanks, track fish, and understand the rhythms of the tides.

According to Fokir, nature is not a thing outside him, or a thing to be researched. It is a companion to him in his struggle to sustain his family. When cultivating the resources he needed, Fokir needs to maintain the fine balance between the nature that provides and the nature that takes away. But the conservation policies that limit access to the natural resources endangers his life. In this sense, his character embodies the challenges faced by local people. Many a times, the well-meaning external conservation efforts fail to consider the immediate needs of the people. These people depend on the same environment for survival. Fokir's death during a storm reminds us how easily human lives can be affected in the Sundarbans. It shows the powerlessness of human life before the great force of nature. The policies meant for preserving nature do not consider the people's life entangled with it. That is the plight of marginalized people like Fokir.

Kanai is a translator who is used to the city life. He returns to the Sundarbans to settle personal matters. At first, his views are based on intellectual detachment. He views the people and the environment as things of curiosity and reflection. He believes that his education and mastery of language will help him understand this complex landscape. But he reconsiders his perspective after encountering Piya, Fokir, and the harsh realities of the Sundarbans. His change shows the tension between the intellectual perspective on conservation and the ground reality of those who depend on the land for survival. When he traverses through the history of that region, he deeply understands the working of the social and political forces in the Sundarbans. An outsider's view is very limited. It needs to respect the local knowledge. The Sundarbans people have their own ways of understanding the land and water. Their survival depends on this close connection.

Kusum, Fokir's mother, is a more like a representative of the marginalized voices in the Sundarbans. Kusum was from Satjelia, near Lusibari. Her father had died while "foraging for firewood in a place that was off-limits to villagers. He had not been in possession of a permit at the time, so Kusum's mother had received no compensation" (90). After her father's death, her struggling mother accepted help from Dilip Choudhury, who promised to find her work in the city. Kusum was left with relatives while her mother travelled to Calcutta with him. Soon after, Dilip returned, claiming her mother had found work and would send for Kusum. When Dilip came back with a message from her mother, Horen Naskor, a distant relative, learned of Dilip's true intentions. He warned Kusum that Dilip was part of a trafficking ring and had likely trapped her mother in a brothel. Horen took Kusum to Lusibari to protect her. There, she was under the care of the Women's Union. And when Dilip came in search of Kusum there too, she left Lusibari. Kusum's life is filled with a profound sense of displacement. She is a refugee from East Pakistan during the Partition. She represents the people left their homes due to political and environmental factors. The refugees in the Sundarbans live in constant uncertainty. They do not have any land or any resources to call their own. Kusum's story portrays the life of the refugees who were ignored by the people in power. Her part in the

Morichjhāpi crisis shows the darker side of conservation. Kusum's story also describes the human cost of rigid conservation policies, which overlook those who depend on the land for their livelihoods. The eviction in Morichjhāpi is an example of how conservation can be weaponized against marginalized communities.

Kusum's suffering deepens the critique of such policies. Kusum once returned to Lusibari, hoping to persuade Nilima to send medical aid to the settlers of Morichjhāpi. But, Nilima, constrained by the government's determination to remove the refugees, refused to offer help. Though sympathetic, Nilima knew the government would stop at nothing to evict the settlers, and she chose not to risk her standing or the hospital she run:

... she was living in Morichjhāpi: she had come to Lusibari in the hope of persuading Nilima to send medical help for the settlers. Nilima was immediately on her guard. She told her that she would like to help, but it was impossible. The government had made it known that it would stop at nothing to evict the settlers... "She died in the massacre, Kanai," Nilima said. "The massacre at Morichjhāpi." (109)

This moment shows the harsh realities faced by those try to help but are restrained by the limits of power and authority. Kusum's death in the massacre at Morichjhāpi portrays the ultimate cost of marginalization and the failure to protect the most vulnerable. Throughout her life, Kusum faces exploitation from various figures of authority- landowners, bureaucrats, and even conservationists- who view her and her community as expendable. The poor in the Sundarbans are regarded as a nuisance or threat to wildlife conservation, even though they are integral to the ecosystem and have spent their life there for generations. Through Kusum's character, Ghosh emphasizes the importance of including marginalized voices in environmental debates.

Nirmal is Kanai's uncle and a Marxist intellectual. He is a representative of the ideological perspective of the environmental and social activism. He views nature with a romantic perspective. The Sundarbans is a place rich in spiritual meaning and at the same time mystical and enchanting. He believes that the industrial world is corrupt and morally degraded. He considers nature as a refuge from that world. He considers the value of the natural environment and supports the protection of the ecosystems. But his view conflicts with the actual experiences of the local people.

As an educator, Nirmal values knowledge and understanding. His Marxist background helps him see the socio-political conditions of the Sundarbans region more clearly. He criticizes the exploitation of nature and at the same time, criticizes the socio-economic inequalities faced by the local people. Nirmal has a moral responsibility towards the marginalized. The sufferings of the refugees and the poor affect him very much. He believes that education and awareness can bring in societal change. He realizes the urgent need to voice out for the silenced people and wants to challenge the injustices done to them. But the life in the Sundarbans challenges his idealistic beliefs. He struggles with the limits of his ideals. His position is made difficult by the human suffering and political realities. His reflections on the Morichjhāpi massacre show his guilt and helplessness. He begins to question his own beliefs and wonders whether they can lead to real action. Through him, Ghosh portrays the tension between the ideology and reality.

Nilima is Nirmal's wife and she is very practical concerning the problems in the Sundarbans. She is the founder of Badabon Trust and through health, education and economic opportunities she tries to fulfil the needs of people. She has understood that the lives of local people are dependent on identifying the ways to coexist with the natural environment. Her work reflects her efforts to reduce the gap between human lives and environment protection. She admits the need to maintain the delicate relationship between the government and her Trust:

Be that as it may," said Nilima, "I simply cannot allow the Trust to get involved in this. There's too much at stake for us. You're not involved in the day-to-day business of running the hospital, so you have no idea of how hard we've had to work to stay on the right side of the government. If the politicians turn against us, we're finished. I can't take that chance. (187)

This statement shows the difficulties in running an institution in a place where the political and administrative conditions are constantly changing. Nilima's character reflects the efforts and

compromises to be done to keep the trust running. Her this practical approach can be contrasted with Nirmal's idealism and Piya's conservationist zeal. Nilima believes that conservation efforts will only succeed if they are integrated with programs that support local livelihoods. Nilima criticizes Nirmal's idealistic approach to life:

Nirmal, you have no idea of what it takes to do anything practical. You live in a dream world- a haze of poetry and fuzzy ideas about revolution. To build something is not the same as dreaming of it. Building is always a matter of well-chosen compromises. (188)

Nilima accuses Nirmal that he is being disconnected from the realities of running an organization and achieving tangible goals like managing the Trust or the hospital. She believes Nirmal's world may be filled with of poetry, revolution, and abstract ideas. But that lacks the strategic thinking needed to create a lasting change. Through her character, Ghosh suggests that the progress lies in finding a balance between protecting the environment and ensuring the well-being of the people who depend on it. Through her, Ghosh presents the idea that advancement will occur only when there is a balance between the needs to conservation and the people whose survival is depend the same environment.

2. Cultural Significance of Nature

2.1 The Role of Myths, Rituals, and Beliefs in the Community's Interaction with Nature

In the Sundarbans the cultural importance of nature is reflected in its myths, rituals, and beliefs. These traditions have developed over time. They guide how the local people understand nature. They also help them to tackle the dangers of the environment. For the local community, nature is part of daily life and belief. Their stories and rituals give meaning to forests, rivers, animals, and storms.

Bon Bibi is one of the most important figures in this belief system. She is worshipped as the protector of the forest and its people. Bon Bibi is believed to be the guardian of the forest, a deity who protects the people from the dangers of the jungle, particularly the man-eating tigers that roam the mangroves. Unlike traditional Indian myths that start in local or sacred locations like the Ganga, this legend begins in Medina, in Arabia, with Ibrahim, a Sufi faqir. Through divine intervention, Ibrahim becomes the father of twins, Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli, who are sent by the archangel Gabriel to make the Sundarbans suitable for human habitation. At that time, the Sundarbans were ruled by the demon-king Dokkhin Rai, a malevolent force who preyed on both animals and humans. Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli enter Dokkhin Rai's realm and defeat him in battle. However, Bon Bibi shows some mercy towards Dokkhin Rai and does not banish him completely. She decides to divide the forest into two parts: one part remains wild and under the control of Dokkhin Rai. The other part is suitable for human habitation and under the control of Bon Bibi. Thus, a balance between wilderness and civilization is achieved. But, Dhona, a greedy man seeking wealth from the forest disturbs this balance. He prepares for an expedition with a fleet of ships into the jungle but is short of one crew member. Dukhey, a poor boy who has lived a life of misfortune, reluctantly joins the crew. Before he leaves, his mother advises him to call upon Bon Bibi if he ever finds himself in trouble. During their journey, Dhona's crew encounters mysterious occurrences in the jungle, orchestrated by Dokkhin Rai. In a dream, Dhona is offered a deal by the demon: in exchange for vast riches, Dhona must sacrifice Dukhey to satisfy the demon's hunger for human flesh. Dhona agrees to the deal. After loading honey and wax. Dhona abandons Dukhey on the shore to be eaten by Dokkhin Rai in Tiger-form. In desperation, Dukhey calls Bon Bibi for help. She comes immediately and saves him. She also punishes Dokkhin Rai. She heals Dukhey and sends him back to his mother with riches. This symbolizes the triumph of the poor and righteous over the greedy and powerful. (Sen & Mukherjee, 2020). The story shows Bon Bibi's role as a protector of the weak and an enforcer of justice. It stresses the need for the balance between the wild and human territories. This also shows what will happen when human greed disturbs the balance. The myth combines Islamic elements, Sufi mysticism, and

local folklore. The story of Bon Bibi passes down through oral tradition and appears in rituals and festivals. This gives the lesson that the balance between human and nature should be respected. Bon Bibi's role as a protector reflects that people's recognition that nature is dangerous and the need for pacifying natural forces. The rituals and offerings made to Bon Bibi is not just religious act, it is a practical response to the life in unpredictable and dangerous environment. Before going to collect honey or catch fish, local people pray for Bon Bibi's protection. This practice demonstrates the idea that life in the Sundarbans is dependent on skill, knowledge and the harmony from the spiritual forces ruling the natural world.

The image of the tiger demon, Dokkhin Rai, also has an important part in the cultural relationship between nature and the society. Tigers are integral to the Sundarbans. People are afraid of them. At the same time, they revered them. Dokkhin Rai's myth symbolizes the unpredictable nature of the environment, where people can be attacked anytime. The image also demonstrates that nature cannot be controlled or understood fully, but only should be respected and feared. The presence of tigers reminds how dangerous life in the Sundarbans is. People live near these powerful predators. Their rituals and beliefs help them manage the ever-present threat. The honey collectors might encounter a tiger in the forest. Acknowledging the tiger's dominance over the land and their own vulnerability, they make offerings to Bon Bibi and perform rituals to placate Dokkhin Rai. These rituals show the deep-rooted cultural belief in the power of words, specifically regarding the tiger in the Sundarbans. At one moment, a character stops another from saying the word *bÁgh* (meaning tiger) because people believe that uttering the name of the beast summons it: "that you saw a - ?" But before he could say the word *bÁgh*, tiger, she had slammed a hand over his mouth: "No, you can't use the word - to say it is to call it." (96) This belief is based on the fear and respect the inhabitants of the Sundarbans have for the tiger.

The rituals are passed down through generations and continue to be an integral part of life in the Sundarbans.

...in the tide country girls were brought up on the assumption that if they married, they would be widowed ... when the menfolk went fishing it was the custom for their wives to change into the garments of widowhood. They would put away their marital reds and dress in white saris; they would take off their bangles and wash the vermilion from their heads. It was as though they were trying to hold misfortune at bay by living through it over and over again. (74)

This passage depicts the reality of life for women in the tide country, where the ever-present dangers of the Sundarbans, particularly for fishermen, shape cultural practices and expectations. Women are raised with the assumption that their husbands will likely die young, due to the perilous nature of their work. This custom shows a cultural coping mechanism. By wearing white saris, removing their bangles, and washing off the vermilion that symbolizes marriage, these women enact a ritual of pre-emptive mourning. This practice may be viewed as a superstitious attempt to ward off misfortune, but, at the same time, it also serves as a form of emotional preparation, as the women mentally rehearse the loss they expect to face: "Don't you know, Saar?" she said. "He is a bauley. He knows the mantras that shut the mouths of the big cats. He knows how to keep them from attacking us." (214) This extract reflects a belief in the power of spiritual practices or rituals to control or ward off dangerous forces in the natural world. These beliefs give is kind of beliefs psychological comfort and a sense of control over the environment in the Sundarbans. The 'bauley' is regarded as a protector. People believe that his knowledge of these ancient mantras can ensure the safety of those around him. This emphasizes that life in the Sundarbans is a blend of spiritual beliefs and practical knowledge.

2.2 The Cultural Significance of the Tides

The tides also have cultural significance. The ebb and flow of the tides determine the daily life in the Sundarbans. The people have deeply understood the tides. Their cultural practices reflect this understanding. Gosh presents tides as forces that have cultural meaning: "The land was

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half submerged at high tide: it is only in falling that the water gives birth to the forest. To look upon this strange parturition, midwifed by the moon, is to know why the name 'tide country' is not just right but necessary." (11) This extract shows the cultural connection between the tides and the natural renewal of the Sundarbans. The local people speak about the tides with respect and awe. They know that the tides can both give and take away. They bring life to the Sundarbans, help the mangroves grow and also support fishing and provide food for the people. At the same time, the tides can be destructive. They can erode the land and flood the homes. This duality of the tides is reflected in the local cultural practices, which teach people to live harmoniously with the tides. They also show that man should adapt himself to the cycle of nature: "The tides reach as far as two hundred miles inland, and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater, only to re-emerge hours later. The currents are so powerful as to reshape the islands almost daily". (10) This shows the tides are integral to both the cultural and physical landscape of the region. The constant presence of the tides emphasizes the notion that man is vulnerable before the great force of nature. The Sundarbans people know that they can survive only when working in accordance with the tides. Their cultural practices have been created to live in this unpredictable environment. The tides remind that nature is always under certain control. The beliefs and rituals acknowledge and respect this fact.

Conclusion

The Hungry Tide shows that culture and ecology are inseparable in the Sundarbans. It presents nature as a powerful force that determines every part of human life. The rivers, forests, tides, animals, and storms influence work, movement, belief, fear, and survival. The Sundarbans is portrayed as a living world in which human beings must constantly adjust to the power of the environment. There is a prevalent conflict between livelihood and conservation. Ghosh shows the need to protect fragile ecosystems and endangered species. He also depicts the suffering of the local people whose lives are dependent on the same land and water. He suggests that conservation efforts will be incomplete if they ignore poverty, displacement, and human dignity. The history of Marichjhāpi stresses this point. The cultural practices also show the complicated connection between people and nature. The myths, rituals, fear of tigers, and respect for the tides show that nature is part of the cultural identity of the local people. These beliefs help them cope up with the uncertainty and danger in the landscape. The novel presents an ecological vision based on balance. It shows that the protection of nature must include respect for local knowledge, cultural memory, and human survival. Through *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh reminds us that social justice and environmental care should remain connected.

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