



Deep Dialogues: Exploring the Waterscape as Interlocutor in *The Hungry Tide* and *Latitudes of Longing*

Priya Roy

Research Scholar, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Central University of Haryana, India

Abstract

The seas and streams of water have long captivated human imagination; the calm breeze and the blend of land and water have created a magical atmosphere, though it can be dangerous at times. The picturesque beauty awakens the creative minds, resulting in beautiful poetry and narratives around the waterscape. For a long time, literary attention have been focused on the territorial aspect of the environment; recent explorations have shifted to less explored areas, such as waterscapes, primarily revolving around rivers, seas, and oceans. This research paper examines *The Hungry Tide* (2004) by Amitav Ghosh and *Latitudes of Longing* (2018) by Subhangi Swarup, both of which centre around the water bodies and coastal environments. It employs the theoretical frameworks of Ecocriticism and Blue Humanities to investigate the ocean as an interlocutor that continuously communicates with both living and non-living entities. The objectives are to analyse the ocean as a cultural and ecological partner that challenges human-centred (anthropocentric) hierarchies; to interpret ecological rhetoric through symbols and metaphors; and to make a comparative analysis that strengthens understanding on multiple dimensions. This study aims to portray how maritime environments challenge human-centred perspectives, suggesting that these novels promote a literary perspective to respond to the ecological challenges of the Anthropocene and contribute to a broader conceptual horizon.

Keywords: Waterscape, Blue Humanities, Ecocriticism, Ecology and Ocean Studies.

Introduction

We with our lives are like islands in the sea, or like trees in the forest. The maple and the pine may whisper to each other with their leaves...But the trees also commingle their roots in the darkness underground, and the islands also hang together through the

Article History: Received: 10 June 2026. Revised: 20 June 2026. Accepted: 10 August 2026. First published: 31st August, 2026.

Copyright: © 2026 by the author/s.

License: Distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Published by: Adrija Press, India.

Citation: Roy, Priya. (2026). Deep Dialogues: Exploring the Waterscape as Interlocutor in *The Hungry Tide* and *Latitudes of Longing*. *Newliteraria Journal* 9:1, 223-232. <https://dx.doi.org/10.48189/nl.2026.v09i1.021>

ocean's bottom. Just so there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea. (William James, *Essays in Psychological Research*, 1986, pp.374)

1. Introduction

The natural entities in the world exist in great coordination, follows the natural rhythm, tuning with each other and depending on one another for survival. The occurrence of events in the environment leaves a lasting impression that is imprinted as natural history. The waterscape taking along the rivers, seas and oceans has long occupied a complex place in literary imagination. But now it has broken the shackles and serves as a path for movement and erasure, a means of connection, and a force of disruption. For a long time, critical studies focused mainly on land as the primary source of meaning, but in the recent few decades there came remarkable shifts in theory, especially within Blue Humanities that have aimed to look beyond land and explore a vast space ruled by water. The research paper critically analyses the role of the waterscape in *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh and *Latitudes of Longing* by Subhangi Swarup. Both novels focus deeply on the mechanisms of water and the ocean. The ocean stands as a natural force that swings, maintains balance, resurfaces buried histories, and restores peace. This realm of Ocean studies also inspires intense research focused on its history, culture, and ecology, primarily tied to territory and fixed borders. Oppermann states, “the sea is now recognized as an active agentic force that has always been elemental to human life, and as a shaping presence of global cultural imaginary” (Oppermann, 2023, p. 17). The field encompasses maritime history and analyses the world-system surrounded by water. An important concept that emerged is “New Thalassology,” which was originally coined by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell. Later, Markus Vink and others popularised, explored and extended it in terms of the Indian Ocean.

The first work is by Amitav Ghosh, a well-known writer to have authored nearly eighteen successful works. His famous work *The Hungry Tide* is set in the Sundarbans, a delta region in the Bay of Bengal, which is surrounded by the mangrove forests that define its ecosystem and how the people around make their living while understanding the waters and by learning the survival tactics. The work follows the major characters Piya, Kanai and Fokir who belong to different geographies and possess different types of knowledge and thus how all of them come to one stop and experience life in reality. The second work is by Subhangi Swarup, an Indian author, journalist, filmmaker and producer. Her work, *Latitudes of Longing* is set in the Andaman Islands, a marvellous, beautiful location on the periphery of Indian Ocean. The work depicts how the native population live in harmony with the nature of the water while understanding and communicating with nature. It deals with overall understanding of the great histories of formation of the world and how the oceans and the lands are connected and are continuously shaping each other using the characters Girija Prasad, Chanda Devi and Devi.

The works have Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea connected with the Indian Ocean in their backdrop which from a very long time has been an important route for trade, commerce, and migration, leading to ecological disturbances. With the help of Blue Humanities and Environmental Humanities, both coastal landscapes are critically studied in the time of the Anthropocene, amidst global warming and climate change. Steve Mentz, in his work *An Introduction to the Blue Humanities* introduces Blue Humanities as a study that explores everything in relation to water and in all the very forms, and most importantly focusing on human relationship with water. (2024, 17)

2. Literature Review

Not many studies have been conducted on the ocean as an interlocutor, establishing

communication between humans and the ocean, or on the ocean giving messages and having conversations within itself. Kostyanov Gonsalvis, in his article “Oceanic Literature and the Blue Humanities: Narratives of the Sea in Literature and Culture”, studies how maritime narratives reveal alternative histories of empires, migration, and the environment. It discusses how the ocean emerges as an archive, a metaphor, and an ecological frontier, offering new frameworks for understanding global interconnectedness. The article uses examples from Ancient, Romantic, and Modern and Postmodern works to provide a broad overview. The article provides a limited understanding of the area. Some other research is based on field studies and data analysis, which do not bring up the literature or critical literary understanding. The present paper aims for an in-depth understanding through the works *The Hungry Tide* and *Latitudes of Longing*, which read instances and the waters as a whole.

3. Ecocritical Reorientation: A Blue Humanities Perspective

3.1. *The Hungry Tide*

The opening chapter describes “The Tide Country”, the Sundarbans,

There are no borders here to divide fresh water from sea. 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 – some days the water tears away entire promontories and peninsulas; at the other times it throws up new shelves and sandbanks where there were none before. (Ghosh, 2004, p. 7)

The emphasis is on water that reaches the banks of the coastal areas establish the ecological foundation of the narrative. Mentz mentions about the contrast between wet swirl and dry structure operates as a fundamental division that animates blue humanities thinking. In context to understand the whole, both the dry and the wet are to be taken together, where entities are connected and leave an interesting conclusion. The Sundarbans are shaped and reshaped by the waters; the ecology, surrounded by the mangroves, with half its bodies under water, is symbolic. The natives, without the ebb and tides, are helpless, as their livelihood depends on the movement of water and, hence, they live surrounded by water. Mentz offers a practical analogy about the “bodies” that remain full of water amid the ecological crisis of droughts and floods. It is the water that moistens and rejuvenates body cells, similarly moistening and bringing life to the earth’s surface. Blue Humanities studies the forms and acts of water in its dampness, flow, currents, floods, and frozen form. The working of the water is magical as the tides playfully create and dangerously destroy. “When the tides create new land, overnight mangroves begin to gestate, and if the conditions are right, they can spread so fast as to cover a new island within a few short years” (Ghosh 2004) the waters also create a mechanism to guard its creation. Through Ecocritical lenses in the Anthropocene era, the novel presents the results of anthropogenic activities in contrast to the “clear waters” and the “silted water,” which raise the primary concern of environmental destruction. Blue Humanities raises a concern about the transparency of water, signalling in the post-industrial era that opaque water is a concerning sign: the water cries and calls out, interlocuting as it changes colour. It becomes important to understand the plight of water and address it immediately.

Interlocution is a two-way process that is evident in the novel through the characters. One of the defining characters in *The Hungry Tide* is Fokir, who communicates with the water, understands the tides and possesses extensive knowledge of both the landscape as well as the waterscape acquired through lifelong experience. He is familiar with the “currents flowing”, “ripples and eddies”, “underwater blow”, “swift currents of high tide” and “cyclonic winds, waves and tidal surges”. All these depict conversation between water and his actions serving as responses. In contrast, Piya and Kanai, who come from urban spaces, are literate in good

institutions but lack experiential understanding. Piya, the marine biologist, has strong technical proficiency with equipment and knowledge of dolphins, but her institutional knowledge proves insufficient in situations where practical experience is essential. Fokir had no formal education was educated by nature itself. His skills in communicating with water and aquatic beings (dolphins) helped Piya accomplish her research objectives. Fokir remains reticent throughout the novel; his voice is rarely heard, but his presence is conveyed through his actions. He consistently converses with the water in a language unknown to those detached from nature, which helps him serve as a bridge between the animate and inanimate worlds, and thus he emerges as an important character in the text.

It is not only that the animate and inanimate communicate with each other there are several other means by which the communication is established. The folktales, legends and myths hold great importance in speaking about a particular place and it shows the how the environment and people embrace each other with rituals and the narratives. The oral narratives help to critically understand how the functioning of a place and the strong belief make the society function smoothly. The staging of “The Glory of Bon Bibi” brings forth an important aspect of protection of the environment, as She (Bon Bibi) “rules over the jungle, that the tigers, crocodiles and other animals” (p. 102). The rituals and practices are designed for the protection of the environment with rules and regulations embedded in the story, especially in context to the law of nature. Depiction of Dokkhin Rai is symbolic to the danger and a devouring force. The ethical interpretation of the folktale describes how one must not cross one’s boundaries, which can bring fatal consequences, with deaths the villagers were warned not to cross their limits, thus it implicates to the Anthropocene era when humans have taken the centre space. Dipesh Chakrabarty brings to attention how humans have finally become geological agents and started to change the working of the natural world that have led therefore face grave consequences. And thus a decayed world is consequence of altering the existing one. The death of Kusum’s father was another alarm for deforestation. Thus the worshipping of idols Bon Bibi for the well-being of the villagers, from the dark times and deadly creatures, was a way to teach environmental awareness to the villagers.

3.2. Latitudes of Longing

The novel opens with a serene and sensual description:

SILENCE ON A TROPICAL ISLAND is the relentless sound of water. The waves like your own breaths, never leave you. For a fortnight now, the gurgle and thunder of clouds has drowned out the waves. Rains drum on the roof and skid over the edge, losing themselves in splashes...Seeded in the sounds is an elemental silence. The quietness of mist and the stillness of ice. (Swarup, 2021, p. 3)

The narration romanticises the reader, describing the wonders of water in various forms, such as rain and waves. Swarup uses ecological rhetoric to describe the opening that is paradoxical in nature. The text proclaims “SILENCE” in capital letters, which invites attention, but the place is not all silent; rather, it has continuous sounds like drum, skid, gurgle, thunder, splash, “simmer, whip, thum and slip” (Swarup, 2021, p.3). It is the nature that makes a constant sound, which is never chaotic, but rather feels, harmonious and satisfying. The simile “waves like own breaths” compares humans to waves, blurring the boundary between humans and the non-human entity and depicting how the living are all in rhythm and symphony. Here, the sea functions as an interlocutor that observes, listens, feels, and finally responds to its surroundings. The succeeding phrase “never leave you” becomes comforting and satisfying; suggesting that even when far and distant, returning and staying in contact is inescapable. This calls for the transition in the Blue Humanities to expand its reach beyond oceans and seas to snow, ice,

clouds, fog, and mist, and celebrates all entities composed of water in any form.

The novel subtly explores the build of animate and non-animate bodies, emphasising that all the entities are made of matter. Girija Prasad's words touch senses when he utters, "In the Andaman Sea, each island is a person and each person an island. Tremors and quakes are common, eager to exact their inch of land and pound of flesh. Everything here, including the sea belongs to the ocean and will be claimed in due course" (Swarup, 2021, p. 88), it depicts how all the entities are connected to each other. The narrative hints at the materialistic pleasures derived at the cost of environmental exploitation, which suggests that every possession in the mortal world is futile and will finally be left behind once dead. Swarup beautifully uses the motif of water to explain that the hunger for more and desires lead to mortality, and, after death, that mortal bodies are mixed with water, which connects with Hindu cremation rites: once dead, the ashes are immersed and merged with water. It suggests the inseparability of humanity and nature. This demonstrates that everything always returns to our beginnings. Mentz here draws attention to how "blue humanities scholarship tends to oscillate between rigorous materiality and attention to detail and more expansive or poetic ideas. For literary writers and scholars, the ocean seems especially attractive because of its metaphorical vastness" (Mentz, 2024, p. 3). The ocean is not only vast in its physical terms but also offers a metaphysical expanse that invites further exploration by the writers.

The presence of the "coral reefs" set in the sea bed adds an important ecological dimension, fragile, most diverse living structures, vibrant underwater ecosystems often called as rainforests of the sea, built by tiny marine organisms called coral polyps. Coral functions as an image of relational existence, where countless organisms are interdependent within a delicate architecture. The existence of coral reefs is somewhat similar to the condition of the coastal population, which is always at risk of losing their lives. In the Anthropocene, climate change driven by global warming is disrupting the ecological balance, creating problems for these tiny beings. In *Blue Humanities*, along with water, aquatic beings, and the marine ecosystem are also taken under study. It emphasises interconnectedness: with a slight imbalance in the environment, the delicate conditions of both coral reefs and the human settlements along the coast are disturbed. When the tsunami strikes, the high tides bring saline water that infiltrates the soil, uprooting plants and trees many times over, demonstrating that the ocean's effects persist long after the calamity. In the times of the Anthropocene, where water is polluted by various means, it also leaves behind chemicals and traces that permanently transform and pollute the land. Thus, to ensure a comprehensive understanding and protection, it is essential to grant legal status to the ocean, seas, rivers, and all other water bodies, so they can voice against the environmental harm.

4. Interlocution

4.1. The Material Archive

The ocean is a living material archive, also known as fluid archive, a beholder of the past, with histories preserved in layers. It holds unwritten memories right from the formation of the planet, through the development of living organisms across epochs and eras, to the rise of unknown civilisations and the violence of the Anthropocene era. The ocean is not a static metaphor but a beholder of great mysteries that foster conversation between the water and humanity. In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh evokes the painful incident of the Morichjhapi Massacre through the waters of the Bay of Bengal. The story depicts the atrocities humans commit against each other. The sea connects the characters Nirmal Bose, Kusum, Horen, and others, linking the past to the present and uncovering the history of tide country. Similarly, it holds memories of empires, stories of colonial violence, migration, displacement and environmental violence. The recent sea level rise is a pressing concern due to global warming, which has caused glaciers to melt. The ocean physically captures and archives the data of human industry as "wet data", a result

of climate change and global capitalism. Along with being a material archive, it has some limitations: as the chief characteristic of water and the ocean is to absorb, not all information and data are easily available; only the ones the ocean wants us to know are presented to us. Therefore, it can also be called an “archive of absence”.

4.2. Multispecies Communication

The aquatic shift in multispecies communication is evident in Blue Humanities. The population under water plays a great role in understanding the underwater life. This shift in recognising marine life as subjects of agency, society formation, and communication establishment is immensely interesting and somewhat new development. The marine population, like the dolphins and coral in the texts, helps us understand how species establish communication and adapt to their environments. In *The Hungry Tide*, the dolphins' movement from their usual habitat was an indication of the approaching cyclone, which prompted them to move to a safer place. It was difficult for humans to predict beforehand, but the dolphins could sense it. Subhangi Swarup's *Latitudes of Longing*, the mention of the coral population brings to mind how the seabed is active and balanced as the corals are in bloom. When the ecosystem is in balance, it becomes easier for all species to connect and adapt to their surroundings. In the Anthropocene, the balance is dismantled. Especially underwater mining and bottom trawling have become very common, creating noise and disrupting the environment's harmony; also, enormous amounts of carbon dioxide in water make it more acidic, damaging coral reefs and other marine species. It impacts communication between species while polluting and disrupting the ecosystem's balance.

4.3. Indigenous and Traditional Water Epistemologies

Elizabeth DeLoughrey, in her work *Allegories of the Anthropocene*, discusses Stefan Helmreich, the westerners are of the opinion that the sea is alien and wilderness, “an extraterritorial space outside human orbits” (2019, 134). Also brings in Roland Barthes, who identifies the ocean as a non-signifier that conveys no message. She refutes by bringing in Philip E. Steinberg's arguments on how the ocean is not alien but consists of “variety of elements” (2019, 135). Unlike the Western understanding of water, the indigenous and traditional water epistemologies treat water as an active living force. There is continuous understanding and interaction with water. Knowledge of water is purely localised, as understanding and adaptability develop over centuries by observing the water and the environment. For example, the rise and fall of sea levels and other ecological indicators help indigenous people co-adapt to their surroundings. Taking instance from *The Hungry Tide*, it can be easily understood by the character Fokir when Horen remarks, “Fokir knows these *khals* better than anyone else” (Ghosh 2004)

5. Symbolic and Ecocritical Interpretations of the Titles

The literary works are often adorned with suitable titles that enhance their importance and relevance. Both selected works hold considerable significance in the field of Environmental Humanities, particularly Blue Humanities. In *The Hungry Tide*, “tide” is suggestive of cyclical movement, instability and returning to the former state. In the Sundarbans, the tides are important for survival as the land alternately appears and disappears. The tides symbolise ecological flux, political and moral instability, and the impermanence of human settlement. “Hungry” implies the devouring active force as the tide consumes land, animals and humans, highlighting natural predation and human vulnerability. In the context, it is both ecological and political. The title also hints at the Royal Bengal tigers present in the Sundarbans, listed as endangered by IUCN, which prey on humans in the forests and occasionally enter the coastal villages in search of food. Thus, “Hungry Tide” becomes a metaphor for history that devours

memory and nature that exceeds human control. Both terms represent active forces; the tides speak through cyclones and disrupt human plans, transforming the delta into a dialogic space where humans and tides are mutually connected as one acts and the other responds.

In *Latitudes of Longing*, the “Latitudes” stands for the horizontal expansiveness, spread across different geographies while remaining interconnected. “Longing” has emotional connotations, such as absence, desire, distance and a feeling of belonging. In the novel, longing is intricately connected to migration and the constant desire to return and this desire is so strong that it is not static but moves like the flow of currents. In whole of the text, the ocean becomes a medium through which the longing travels. The opening line, “the relentless sound of water,” suggests that silence and chaos are governed by the sea, the ocean is in constant conversation with itself and the other. The ocean here becomes an interlocutor, responding on its surface and along its depths. In the context of character Girija’s longing, his passion for research to understand the history of Earth’s formation is portrayed. And the other is the character Devi, whose firm rootedness to the islands always brings her back to her origins. The ocean does not leave anyone behind unknown; it always remembers in some form or another. The water might change its state, but it remains with everyone, making sure that connection and memory are never lost.

6. Critical Comparison between *The Hungry Tide* and *Latitudes of Longing*

The selected texts have an ecological backdrop; the water bodies are not simply passive but lively and active forces. Both the ocean and the sea play an important role in shaping the narrative’s foundation. In the novels, we see how water connects the characters’ lives and how they have moulded themselves to the surroundings in which they reside. It is wonderful to see how living in harmony with nature, while understanding each other’s needs, makes living so simple. These works appeal to eco-centrism, where nature is brought to the forefront, and they show how the living and non-living entities are part of the environment, moving beyond the idea of anthropocentrism, where all natural resources exist for human needs. In the works, the river and the ocean are the interlocutors, listening, speaking, and responding, which is interesting. Even if some things are similar, many things are different in these works, which encourages comparative analysis.

Firstly, in *The Hungry Tide*, waters communicate through ebb (bhata), tides, storms, floods (jowar), and cyclones. At times, it requires immediate action; at other times, just go with the flow. It happens on a local scale. For instance, when Kanai and Horen were aboard the vessel Megha, they had to make a prompt decision to reach land as the tropical cyclone approached; if they had waited for Piya and Fokir, the cyclone could have devoured them all. It was Horen’s knowledge that he could understand the voice of the sea and the urgent movement that saved both of them. It depicts, “the sea is always compounded of textuality and materiality; it is both factual and metaphorical” (Oppermann, 2023, p. 18), and there is just a need to understand it. In contrast, *Latitudes of Longing*, events scale up to the global or cosmic level; communication is very slow and smooth; enquiries about tectonic movement, erosion, and the shaping of habitats are time-consuming. Girija Prasad and Chanda Devi’s understanding of the landscape develops slowly. Both are scientists, trying to understand the landscape and the waterscape from a cultural and native lens, but their thirst for knowledge also arises from formal education, which made them curious to gain more wisdom. Thus, the communication here is slow and patient rather than dramatic. It draws attention to how “...the sea is a fact. The sea is also a mystery” (Oppermann, 2023, p. 18).

Secondly, the demise in Ghosh’s novel is sudden and relational; it is evident that the tiger’s death and Fokir’s death are inevitable. It is the food cycle that the tiger follows by preying on humans. When it was in the clutches of the villagers, they were so enraged that they burned the tiger alive. This raises a question about the intrinsic value that Arne Naess terms “Deep Ecology”. All entities possess value of their own; therefore, when following ecocentric

Deep Dialogues: Exploring the Waterscape as Interlocutor in *The Hungry Tide* and *Latitudes of Longing*

values, all entities must be equally valued, but when it comes to saving oneself, the value seems contradictory. In the village, the tiger was not of any economic value but a threat to multiple lives. Likewise, Fokir's death, the sea takes his life without intention, caused by direct engagement with the water world; in both cases, death comes as an encounter. In Swarup's work, death is unmarked. When Chanda Devi dies, Girija Prasad brings "urn of ashes strewn across all the corners of the Andamans" (Swarup, 2021, p. 93), showing how he wants her to be all around him after her death, but the oceans seem uninterested and absorb it all. In Girija Prasad's death, he stands "face-to-face with a tsunami" (Swarup, 2021, p. 113) instead of running away; he submits to the ocean, and the water carries him away. The bodies are lost to the sea and the names are dissolved in water, making death unmarked and absorbed.

Thirdly, specifically observing both texts from the angle of Blue Humanities is to dig into the material and historical agents. Both works show the water as an interlocutor that speaks, listens, and responds. In *The Hungry Tide*, the tidal waters are the hydrological agents that are considered as wet ontology, which considers that the world is a fluid space; it holds its histories of long past, and everything in and around is interconnected in some way or the other, and it is not limited to the political boundaries that are human-made. The ocean speaks through eventful materiality, like the cyclones, tides, and the animal (dolphin) encounters those that remain true to the instinct of their nature. However, Fokir's tidal knowledge is connected to ocean understanding, as he is not literate like Piya in theories and experimentation, but he understands the clouds, waters, tides and the intensity of the air, which is more valuable than learning theories without any experience in closed rooms. The Morichjhapi incident, which was a great loss to the humans and the environment in the text, is a political disturbance which is preserved as a liquid archive; the waters of the Bay of Bengal hold the stories of grave violence and expose them time and again with each passing generation. Opperman rightly states, "what flows beneath the lithic stories of the Anthropocene in the liquid habitats is exceedingly dark and demoralizing, with the ongoing exploitation of all waterscapes" (2023, p. 11), suggesting that the histories are not lost but preserved in layers.

In contrast, *Latitudes of Longing* calls for Blue Humanities attention to deep-sea permanence and oceanic duration. Swarup's sea not only speaks through chaos or catastrophe but also develops an understanding of the geologic time scale. DeLoughrey describes it as the oceanic deep time that exceeds the human narrative scale for understanding the formation of Mother Earth. In human history, a micro part of the cosmic history is known, for instance, how the atmosphere, land and sea changed over time and are still undergoing changes; erosion and the recent tsunami and post-tsunami silence. One instance is when Girija says, "the ocean bed had jumped up, spewing layers of sediment, coral, and sand in the air" (Swarup, 2021, p. 77). It is a reference to how the living world undergoes changes with jerks, yawns, and coughs. Thus, the novel spans a vast circumference in which the human-centred plot dissolves and remains in the periphery, at the edge of the ocean and the living forms within a continuous network that is ever changing and ever evolving, which remains the law of nature. Herein, the physical boundaries, human-made culture and state differences are fragile before the continuous flux or water's fluid nature. Better understood as Oppermann quotes Françoise Besson's words, "We simply have to listen to the world's rhythms, to pay more attention to what most of us regard as non-words, and thus maybe will we come to realise that the world has always expressed itself in an enchanting language guiding us onto the path to awareness" (2023, p. 19)

Studying just about oceanography gives a narrow perspective, but when viewed from a broader angle, the focus shifts to thalassalogy, derived from the Greek word *thalassa*, meaning sea, which specifically focuses on the overall historical, political and cultural understanding of the sea. In *The Hungry Tide*, the mention of folklores relating to Bon Bibi (the protector) and Dokkhin Rai (the tiger spirit) of the forest and the sea world, these myths hold cultural value

and are functional in understanding the ecology and the coastal society. The worship of Bon Bibi through the show is a practice of passing stories down through generations, which includes praising and preserving nature. In the Anthropocene, when the world has turned mechanical, spiritual understanding and connection with nature are lost. In that place, these stories, myths and oral narratives help soften hearts and develop a protective mechanism for living amidst nature without harming one another. Another incident occurs during the storm: Kanai, an urban elite, literate man, cannot stay calm and is afraid, finally losing his composure before the tidal violence. He fails to understand the call of the sea, and therefore, the communication is not established. In *Latitudes of Longing*, Swarup mentions the Jarawa community, natives of the Andaman Islands; they do not find a special place in the work, but their presence is of great significance. The Jarawa presence challenges the mainland idea of sovereignty and territorial ownership; their belonging in these islands is much older than the formation of nations or any colonial boundaries. Their presence at the periphery of the novel cannot be ignored, as Jarawa existence shows an oceanic continuity and their ecological belonging. Subsequently, Devi's movement through different geographies helps shape her identity, her relationships, and her memories; attachments are all fluid and evolving, like the tides and the movement of ocean currents. "In moments of pain, she escapes to the islands" (Swarup, 2021, p. 94) shows that the island doesn't become a stable space for her; instead, it becomes one of the transient spaces that continuously shape her at different moments in her life. Devi's movement to the mainland, amidst different terrains, shows how individuals, or specifically personal identity, are often formed through transition. Lately, the ocean surrounding her reflects the inner emotional landscape, suggesting that longing itself is not static but migratory.

7. Conclusion

In both the novels, *The Hungry Tide* and *Latitudes of Longing*, the waterscape plays an active role, reshaping the literary imagination. These narratives reposition the sea from the margins of the narrative to its structural and symbolic centre, foregrounding water as both agent and interlocutor. The ocean preserves history and memory in layers, gradually, with time revealing them through waves, tides, storms, and cyclones. Both works depict the sea as intricately linked to physical, social and cultural contexts. While foregrounding littoral spaces such as the delta (Sundarbans) and the islands (Andaman Islands), the texts highlight the interplay between mobility and rootedness. The comparative study of the works helped to explore multiple dimensions of the seas and oceans through the theoretical framework of Ecocriticism and Blue Humanities.

References

- DeLoughrey, E. (2019). *Allegories of the Anthropocene*. USA: Duke University Press.
- Ghosh, A. (2004). *The Hungry Tide*. India: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Gonsalvis, K. (2025) "Oceanic Literature and the Blue Humanities: Narratives of the Sea in Literature and Culture, International Journal of Research in English, Vol. 7(2), 448-450. <https://doi.org/10.33545/26648717.2025.v7.i2g.499>
- Mentz, S. (2024). *An Introduction to the Blue Humanities*. New York: Routledge.
- Oppermann, S. (2023). *Blue Humanities: Storied Waterscapes in the Anthropocene*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Swarup, S. (2021). *Latitudes of Longing*. Great Britain: riverrun.

Bio-note

Priya Roy completed her Masters in English from Central University of Haryana, India and is currently pursuing PhD in the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Central University of Haryana. She is working in the field of Environmental Humanities. She takes

Deep Dialogues: Exploring the Waterscape as Interlocutor in *The Hungry Tide* and *Latitudes of Longing*

great interest in researching new dimension in the specific area.

Email Id: priyaroy9724@gmail.com

