



Slow Violence in *The Hungry Tide*: An Eco-Critical Analysis

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Abstract

An eco-critical analysis of the novel *The Hungry Tide* aligns with an important trend in the present literature, where the writers are playing a significant role in examining the interconnection between the environment and human beings. This emerging attention particularly focuses on the ecological crisis and encourages eco-critical readings, emphasizing the significance of environmental concerns in literary studies. In that way, the present paper tries to examine the critical crisis of slow violence in the time of climate crisis in the novel *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh through an eco-critical perspective. The setting of the novel is the Sundarbans, a large grandeur forest area, filled with the multifaceted difficulties of the ecosystem. With the intention to illustrate the refugees of Morichjhapi as a foreshadowing of the climate displacement indulging the people's lives of the tidal region called Sundarbans in South Asia, this paper tries to provide a historical account of the massacre of the Morichjhapi island and tries to unfold the forced eviction depicted in the novel through the diary of Nirmal. Within the novel, destabilization and environmentalism stand as dominant themes. Ghosh's depiction of the physical environment in the tidal region called Sundarbans serves as a depiction of an active force that is interconnecting the flora, fauna and the life of human beings either indirectly or directly. This connection underscores the dangers of each component to the changes and the actions existed within the ecosystem. Through an eco-critical analysis, this paper tries to examine how Ghosh intricately weaves together the threads of human life, ecology, and the environmental activism within the novel, by focusing on the impacts of human actions on the environment.

Keywords: Climate change, environment, refugees, migration, eco-criticism

1. Introduction

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) offers a compelling exploration of the complex interrelationship between human societies and fragile ecological systems within the context of postcolonial India. Set in the Sundarbans, a volatile tidal ecosystem marked by constant environmental transformation, the novel foregrounds the precarious existence of marginalized communities whose lives are shaped by both natural forces and socio-political structures. In recent years, literary studies have increasingly turned toward eco-criticism as a critical framework to examine how literature engages with environmental crises, climate change, and human vulnerability. Within this context, the present study situates *The Hungry Tide* as a significant eco-critical text that not only reflects ecological instability but also interrogates the socio-political mechanisms that exacerbate human suffering in environmentally fragile regions.

This paper specifically engages with Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence," understood as a gradual, often invisible form of violence that unfolds over extended temporal scales and disproportionately affects marginalized



populations. By applying this framework, the study examines how the novel represents environmental degradation, forced displacement, and systemic neglect as interconnected processes. Central to this analysis is the historical event of the Morichjhapi massacre of 1979, which the novel reimagines through Nirmal's journal. The paper argues that Ghosh's narrative not only reconstructs a neglected episode of postcolonial history but also anticipates contemporary concerns regarding climate-induced migration. By weaving together ecological, historical, and political dimensions, *The Hungry Tide* emerges as a text that challenges dominant narratives of development and conservation while foregrounding the lived realities of subaltern communities in the Global South.

2. Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to undertake a comprehensive eco-critical analysis of *The Hungry Tide* by examining how the novel articulates the concept of slow violence within the context of the climate crisis and environmental degradation. The study aims to explore the ways in which Ghosh represents the intersection of ecological instability and socio-political marginalization, particularly through the experiences of displaced communities in the Sundarbans. It also seeks to analyse the historical significance of the Morichjhapi massacre as a narrative device that exposes the contradictions inherent in state-led conservation and development policies. Furthermore, the paper intends to investigate how the novel anticipates contemporary issues such as climate-induced migration and environmental injustice, while also contributing to broader discussions within eco-critical and postcolonial literary studies.

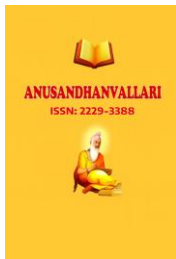
3. Scope and Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology grounded in eco-critical and postcolonial theoretical frameworks. The scope of the research is primarily focused on Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, with particular attention to its representation of environmental crisis, displacement, and marginalization. The analysis integrates close textual reading with historical contextualization, especially in relation to the Morichjhapi massacre, thereby enabling a nuanced understanding of the interplay between fiction and historical reality.

The methodological approach combines narratological analysis with theoretical insights drawn from scholars such as Rob Nixon, whose formulation of slow violence provides a critical lens for interpreting the novel's depiction of gradual environmental and social harm. Additionally, the study engages with postcolonial eco-critical perspectives, particularly those articulated by Huggan and Tiffin, to examine how narratives of development and conservation function as instruments of power. By synthesizing literary analysis with historical and theoretical frameworks, the study seeks to demonstrate how *The Hungry Tide* operates as a site of critical engagement with contemporary environmental and political concerns.

4. Literature Review

Scholarly engagement with *The Hungry Tide* has foregrounded its significance as a text that bridges environmental concerns with postcolonial discourse, yet there remains scope for a more integrated analysis of its ecological, political, and psychological dimensions. Rajorshi Das (2015) situates the novel within the historical context of the Morichjhapi massacre, emphasizing how Ghosh recuperates a largely marginalized episode in Indian history. This perspective is crucial in understanding the novel's engagement with historical erasure and narrative recovery. Similarly, S. Das (2006) explores themes of home and homelessness, arguing that the novel destabilizes conventional notions of belonging by presenting displacement as a defining condition of postcolonial existence.



Environmental historians such as Ramachandra Guha (1989) critique conservation initiatives like Project Tiger, highlighting how such programs often privilege elite interests while displacing indigenous and marginalized communities. This critique is further extended by Huggan and Tiffin (2015), who argue that postcolonial literature functions as a form of environmental advocacy by exposing the ideological underpinnings of development and conservation narratives. Their work provides a valuable framework for interpreting Ghosh's novel as a critique of neo-colonial environmental practices.

Jaising (2015) focuses on the novel's narrative structure and its ability to weave together multiple temporalities and perspectives, thereby reflecting the fluidity of both ecological and human systems. Nayar (2010) contributes to this discourse by examining the theme of invisibility, particularly how postcolonial subjects are rendered marginal within dominant socio-political frameworks. In a similar vein, Jones (2018) connects the novel to contemporary discussions on climate-induced migration, suggesting that Ghosh's narrative anticipates the realities of environmental displacement in the Anthropocene.

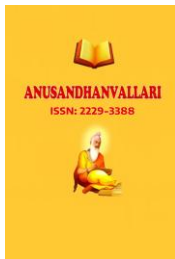
Central to the present study is Rob Nixon's (2011) concept of slow violence, which provides a critical vocabulary for understanding the gradual and often imperceptible forms of harm inflicted upon marginalized communities through environmental degradation and political neglect. While existing scholarship has addressed various aspects of *The Hungry Tide*, there remains a notable gap in synthesizing these perspectives to examine how ecological crisis, historical violence, and narrative representation intersect within the framework of slow violence. This study seeks to address this gap by offering a comprehensive eco-critical analysis that foregrounds both the material and affective dimensions of environmental injustice.

5. Results and Discussion

In the novel *The Hungry Tide* (2004), Amitav Ghosh examines the importance of place to the expression and formation of social and personal identities within postcolonial India, foregrounding narratives that portray the progression of events across time within the dynamic ecosystem of the Sundarbans. This paper tries to depict the difficulties of marginalized individuals in the phase of nature's power, significantly investigating the refugee community portrayed in Nirmal's journal, while also proposing an analysis of the novel's environmental themes in the wake of Rob Nixon's definition of "slow violence", which is instrumental in understanding the geological dimension of the novel. My interpretation emphasizes the figure of Nirmal and the portrayal of the dispossessed: from an eco-critical point of view, I will deeply examine the historical context that led to the 1979 Morichjhapi massacre, which is reinterpreted in the novel as one of its central plot lines.

This episode will enable me to concentrate on crises such as centralized control imposed by the implementation of Project Tiger's developmental rhetoric, neocolonial corporate power, masquerading as conservation narratives, and abuse towards the poor, who have historically suffered from the forced relocation in apparently barren 'empty' lands. Furthermore, through this paper, I wish to propose a reading of the novel *The Hungry Tide* that is sensitive to the unsettling presence of climate change: considering Nirmal as the foundational character in geological and political discussions, I will address the deep-time temporal aspect of *The Hungry Tide* and examine how the climate refugees portrayed in the novel may be said to have anticipated the demands of present climate migrations. To connect environmental and social history, the importance of slow violence will be underscored as a way to illustrate the difficulties of the subalterns and the moral obligation to address today's environmental devastation.

In the subsequent section, the historical dimension of the struggle is examined, and while outlining circumstances and facts, I aim to trace the convergence of history and fiction that revolves around the theme of violence and dispossession inflicted upon the Dalit community in the novel. In the third section, my primary focus will be on the characters of Nirmal and Kusum, both sufferers, on different levels due to the eruption of violence towards



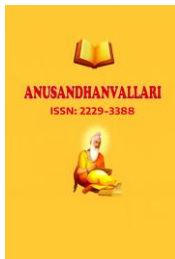
the community of refugees who have established in the Sundarbans in the 1970s. Seeking to investigate the political discourse that permeates Ghosh's narrative, I will refer to the contradictory notions of 'development' and 'belonging' as articulated by Huggan and Tiffin (2015), as imposed narratives of power that impact the marginalized. In the last part, the novel will be examined through the lenses of Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence, the presence of climate change, and its implications for the lives of those living at the margins in the Global South.

Following a narratological approach that Amitav Ghosh has consistently employed in many of his works, Amitav Ghosh intertwines different narratives in the novel, spanning across disparate temporal dimensions. Nirmal's account of the facts reveals itself as his nephew Kanai, a middle-class Indian entrepreneur from New Delhi, engages with reading his journal, thereby projecting the plot into the past. In addition to offering a comprehensive historical account of postcolonial and colonial settlements in the Sundarbans, Nirmal's journal also offers the viewpoint of an outsider among outsiders, whose perspective is surely destined to be overshadowed: "I am writing these words in a place that you will probably never have heard of" (Ghosh 2004, 67),

"He writes to introduce the island of Morichjhapi, theatre of a massacre conveniently marginalized in Indian history" (Das 2015, 40). Nirmal, a retired Marxist teacher who had previously been imprisoned for his beliefs and for the same reason forced to leave Calcutta, appears to be naively enthusiastic about the villagers: at the outset of his diary, he casually discovers the newly formed community and offers his assistance to the refugees, as he romantically believes he is witnessing the dawn of a utopian society in the tidal ecosystem. The newcomers have endured the plight of migration, as the reader soon learns, and are now trying to establish a permanent home in an ever-changing landscape that resists such endeavours both materially and discursively.

These migrants of post-colonialism reflect a narrative of immense dispossession and evictions. Following post-partition communal crises, immense Hindu East Bengalis initiated migrating to escape persecution in their native land. After initially being compelled to reside in hastily made resettlement camps, in 1978 a group of refugees from the Khulna district of East Bengal started marching to Morichjhapi, an uninhabited island in the Sundarbans, with an aspiration that the new communist government would fulfil its commitments to grant them a place to live, having previously supported their cause: "the political ascendancy of the Left is reported to have encouraged the refugees to seek shelter within Bengal as Morichjhapi, an island in the forests of the Sundarbans, had indeed been cleared in 1975, its mangrove vegetation replaced by a governmental programme to increase state revenue (Jalais 2005). Nevertheless, as Rajorshi Das clarifies, the government refused to consider their demands, initially imposing an economic blockade and later sinking the boats of the island's inhabitants. Many of the refugees continuously died of cholera and starvation, while others were brutally killed in police firing amidst the acts of the state-mandated.

The eviction of the refugees was justified on environmental grounds: "seeking to make room for a conservation enterprise called Project Tiger, Jyoti Basu, at that time Chief Minister of West Bengal, described the settlement of Morichjhapi as illegal trespassing on a State Forest Reserve and on land designated for Tiger Preservation" (Das 2015, 41). Ross Mallick estimates that as many as 17,000 refugees perished, and, despite the scarcity of substantial proof, Annu Jalais asserts that only one in four refugees survived. The refugees, having fled to India from Bangladesh in waves following the partition in 1947 and subsequently in increasing numbers, after the 1971 Bangladesh War of Independence, were predominantly Dalits who had tried to resettle from conditions of cultural and physical dislocation. According to Ramachandra Guha, Project Tiger was "a network of parks [...] managed primarily for the benefits of rich tourists", with its designation "made possible only by the physical displacement of existing villages and their inhabitants" (Guha 1989, 75): it was initially intended to create artificial segments of 'cleared' land accessible to a select few tourists, hence undermining long-term residents' livelihood conditions. While acknowledging the successful outcome of the conservation project sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund,



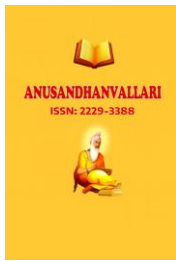
Weid admits that the Bengali Government must be held accountable for acts of killing and manslaughter while feigning to act on behalf of animals. Consequently, the rhetoric surrounding conservation served to legitimize the takeover of land and natural resources, as Jaising aptly points out. The settlers of Morichjhapi were not encroaching upon the resources of the human natives but rather those of the non-human entities, thus violating the Forest Acts by their unauthorized occupation of a section of the Sundarban Reserve Forest, according to the government. The Morichjhapi Massacre, although reported in the Calcutta press at the time, has long since faded from public memory: “at the time of Ghosh’s writing *The Hungry Tide*, only Ross Mallick’s 1999 scholarly account was available in English” (Fletcher 2011, 6). For this reason, we can say that the author gives an important contribution in advocacy of a socio-political context overlooked by the political debate, thus confirming what is well stated by Huggan and Tiffin about imaginative literature and its power to mediate functions of social and environmental advocacy while standing as a catalyst for action and engaged cultural critique” (Huggan, Tiffin 2015, 14).

The comprehensive account of the historical events of Morichjhapi Island in *The Hungry Tide* novel stands as a major example of a text that preserves its aesthetic purpose while drawing attention to its political and social relevance. It illustrates the experiences of a community involved in an ongoing difficulty with the political and natural environment; this offers the possibility to harmonize the connection between ecological questions and postcolonial criticism, advocating for a refreshed, unitary notion of social and environmental justice.

Nirmal, the character who clearly explains the fluidity of environmental and historical categories in the novel, is frequently interpreted by commentators as being in opposition to his wife Nilima, whose existence is “entirely rooted in her sociocultural milieu” (Das 2006, 180). As noted by S. Das, Nirmal fundamentally visible as a transgressor of the law established by Nilima’s dedication to Lusibari: pursuing the poetic abstractions of Rilke, “he seeks a romantic ideal across the margin of history” ultimately collapsing “in the illusory space between what the Bangladeshi refugees claim as home and what renders the, homeless” (Das 180-1). Unsettlement and poetry characterize his social consciousness, which slowly evolves into active dedication throughout the novel. Forced to escape to the tide country in the middle of his life, where one’s existence can be experienced, “on the margins of greater event”, he realizes that “no place was so remote as to escape the flood of history” (Ghosh 2005, 77). Initially, his involvement with the tide country is a forced construction in the wake of the post-war post-partition hideous political climate and the post-war conflicts, where opposition to revolutionary thinkers is pervasive in Indian culture. At the initial stage, he admits, in the Sundarbans, “nothing was familiar [...]. How was it possible that these islands were a mere ninety-seven kilometers from home and yet so little was known about them?” (Ghosh 79). Years later, after retiring from his position as headmaster of Lusibari school in 1979, he feels the need to advocate for the refugees of Morichjhapi, a matter that would deeply change his erratic spirit and lead to his mental breakdown, as per Nilima’s words (Ghosh 117). Despite his initial doubts about the religion and local mythology, he slowly started to form a unique bond with the land through his commitment to the refugees of Morichjhapi, not limiting himself to a static view of his identity but acknowledging that, in the tide country, “transformation is the rule of life” (Ghosh 224). An initial narrative made by his wife precisely outlines to her nephew Kanai the historical circumstances that led to the migration of refugees to the Morichjhapi island:

Morichjhapi, said Nilima, was a tide country island a couple of hours from Lusibari by boat. It fell within a part of the Sundarbans reserved for tiger conservation, but unlike many such islands, it was relatively easily accessible from the mainland. In 1978, a great number of people suddenly appeared on Morichjhapi. In this place where there had been no inhabitants before, there were now thousands, almost overnight [...].

“Most of them were Dalits, as we say now”, said Nilima. “Hari-jans, as we used to say then”.

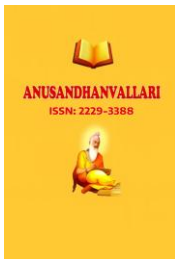


But it was not from Bangladesh that these refugees were fleeing when they came to Morichjhapi; it was from a government resettlement camp in central India. In the years after Partition, the authorities had removed the refugees to a place called Dandakaranya, deep in the forests of Madhya Pradesh, hundreds of miles from Bengal.

“They called it resettlement”, said Nilima, “but people say it was more like a concentration camp or a prison. The refugees were surrounded by security forces and forbidden to leave. Those who tried to get away were hunted down” (118).

The author provides the reader with all the essential information to examine the context of the episode. History is the primary source for Nilima’s reconstruction: She adequately positions her narrative with a post partition-narrative which involves acts of forced internment and eviction of the population of the peasants. The word resettlement is pivotal here, functioning as a linguistic euphemism that masks the violent actions executed by the government. As she elucidates, the refugees had decided to establish themselves in the Sundarbans, believing that they would not confront opposition from the State Government. Nilima’s attitude looks dismissive towards the refugees; she seems no eagerness to take part in the conflict between the government and the refugees, her depiction of the acts of violence committed in the Sundarbans is vague illustrated as a result of a “miscalculation” (119), and her husband’s obsession with this marginalized group is merely a form of idealism that will turn the couple from one another within their shared home. She is unable to experience an intimate connection with those people who have partially betrayed her sense of a fixed community, committing an act of transgression by crossing both mental and physical boundaries, thereby threatening the intimate stability of her newly established community-oriented initiative.

As soon as Kanai initiates to read Nirmal’s diary, a more nuanced point of view of the Morichjhapi history unfolds for the reader. His narrative commences with the admittance of a defeat: “the truth was that I had not written a single word in all my time in Lusibari; not just that, I had even abandoned my other great pleasure – reading” (144) partly due to “superannuation”, partly for the desire for following higher ideals of knowledge, he resolves, after retirement, to visit some other schools in the region. During one of his excursions with the boatsman Horen across the archipelago, he finds himself “picked up and shaken by huge waves” (160) while travelling, so the pair decides to take refuge on a nearby island. They make their way to a small shack – “of the usual kind, made with bamboo and palm – leaf thatch” (161). Inside this small abode, the chance of meeting with Kusum is recounted in a naive, quasi-romantic style: “I looked down and saw a young woman kneeling in front of me, touching my feet. That I could not identify her was no more a surprise than that she would know me [...]. As a school-teacher, this happens with almost everyone you meet. [...] new faces do not match the old” (162). As the rain continues to fall outside, the two men can learn to explore Kusum’s narrative, which constitutes one of the essential elements of the novel. Kusum’s words reach Nirmal with the force of a flooding torrent: Shakti Jaising Characterizes her character as a “network narrative” that “features the experiences of two generations of metropolitan and rural characters whose lives intersect in the Sundarbans” (Jaising 2015, 67). Hers is a profound narrative of grief and loss: “She recounts her travel to a mining town called Dhanbad in search of her mother, where she is saved by a food retailer named Rajen” and, thanks to him, she discovers that her mother, who was previously deceived by a snake oil salesman, now works “in a place where truck-drivers came [...] and buy women for the night” (163). Shortly after Kusum’s marriage to Rajen and the death of her mother, her bond with the tide country becomes evident: she initiates to understand that her individual sense of belonging cannot match with the iron and rails of her transient sojourn, envisioning a future of, “storm-tossed islands straining at their anchors, and of the rivers that bound them in golden fetters, [...] high tide [...] islands submerged like underwater clouds” (164). Following a railway incident that kills her husband, leaving her to care for their son Fokir, she becomes aware of the “great march to the East”. The narrative of the refugees displaced from Bangladesh in search of a stable home struggles with her unquiet spirit, as they appear like ghosts shrouded in dust, strung out in a line, shuffling along the railway tracks, with children perched on their shoulders and bundles strapped on their backs. Most importantly, this



assembly of dispossessed individuals who speak the Bangla language, the identical language spoken by other inhabitants and Kusum in the tidal country. Consequently, the refugees in the novel are depicted as a colony of ghosts who, nonetheless, can utilize language to articulate their condition deprived of their fundamental rights.

The novel stands as an exemplary ecological novel for its integration of different disciplines, including environmentalism, migration, travel, ethnography, anthropology, and landscape within the English fiction realm. Ghosh's adeptness at blending these different elements made a rich tapestry that draws readers into the difficulties of both natural and human environments. A significant element of the novel is its limited array of characters, which, paradoxically, enhances its attractiveness to readers. By focusing on a chosen group of characters, Ghosh allows for an in-depth analysis of their complexities, interactions, and motivations. This narrowed attention makes the readers have a close connection with the novel's characters, their experiences, and journeys, by fostering an immense bond with the narrative. Through its analysis of ecological crisis and the interconnection between human actions and natural ecosystems, the novel *The Hungry Tide* depicts nature as an entity that resists being an intellectually stimulating and captivating reading experience.

The novel also portrays the invisibility of those "living in the aftermath of emancipatory moments/projects such as Independence and postcoloniality" (Nayar 2010, 105). The scenario around the refugees' precipitates quite suddenly: Nirmal is shocked to discover that a wooden watchtower has been built in the island of Morichjhapi to enhance domination over the land, necessitating several men to patrol the shore of the island. However, inducements to persuade the settlers to leave, followed by crisis, are futile as they steadfastly adamant in their decision not to get rid of their land. The predominant measures taken by the government initiated with the banning of all movements in the island both within and outside under the Act of Forest Preservation, then subsequently outlawing gatherings, which are determined as a criminal offense. In the place of Lusibari, rumours circulate that immense police boats are surrounding the island of Morichjhapi, and with the use of conventional warfare and gas, they obstruct any attempt from bringing water or rice to the islanders. During one of their last journeys to Morichjhapi, Horen and Nirmal witnesses an incident of police violence against settlers attempting to enter the island with supplies, likely having slipping out in search of external assistance. A group of settlers find themselves encircled by policemen in their motorboat; Nirmal finds himself amidst of this tragedy, cannot help but express his emotional commitment to the cause. The refugees assert here their condition of dispossessed, a cry that reflects Nirmal's own feelings as a migrated urban subject living in the Sundarbans, who is now able to comprehending and identifying with their condition of the anxiety of settlers, "because of his lifelong struggle to find an effective political and artistic voice" (Jaising 2015, 71-2).

Ghosh's potential to seamlessly combine different thematic elements into an engaging narrative signifies the novel's importance in both environmental and literary discourse. The introductory passages of Ghosh's novel explain his analysis of the power dynamics between the natural world and humanity. The novel depicts a constant struggle taking place between the human beings and the nature, portrays scenario where human beings sometimes prevail over nature, while at some moments, nature asserts its authority over humanity. There's also a depiction of humanity's aspect of nature as merely a resource intended to satisfy the necessity of human beings, which results in extensive degradation and exploitation of natural resources, as reflected in the human actions of the Morichjhapi island within the novel. The inhabitants of the island are portrayed as exploiting the resources of nature in order to satisfy their immediate needs, which include shelter and sustenance, without realizing the long-term implications. This sort of overexploitation contributes to the climate change crisis and the depletion of natural resources, serving as a cautionary narrative regarding the perils of exploiting nature's wealth without thinking about future generations.

In the novel, Ghosh masterfully depicts nature as a force that resists being confined or rigidly dominated by the categorization of human beings. The portrayal of the Sundarbans depicts nature's intrinsic unpredictability, where



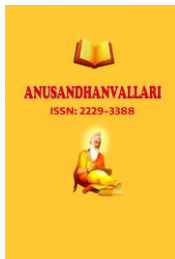
rivers merge and boundaries dissolve, showcasing a landscape that operates beyond human control. The novel deeply explores the theme of destabilization, most importantly connected to the impacts of globalization. Rooted in the real historical incident of the Morichjhapi island, the novel illuminates the environmental crisis, particularly the protection and conservation of the Sundarbans. Ghosh effectively captures the crisis taking place between the government and the refugee people. Ghosh skilfully explains the crisis taking place between the government and the refugee people by highlighting the difficulties of settlers facing hardships in a hostile place where they have no alternative refugee options. By combining the real historical incident with the crisis of societal conflicts and environmental protection, Ghosh highlights the struggles confronted by the marginalized people in the Sundarbans. The novel serves as a framework for readers to reflect on the intricate dynamics between nature, societal structures, and human beings, signifying the necessity for conservation and an immense compassionate approach towards those impacted by these worldwide transformations.

In Amitav Ghosh's novel, the effects of globalization on the marginalized and traditionally viewed uncivilized and backward communities are subtly suggested. Ghosh signifies how globalization, through the dissemination of advancements in communication and knowledge, has provided important advantages to these segments of society. The proliferation of communication and the transfer of knowledge have the ability to facilitate technological advancements and education, promoting development and the sharing of ideas among these communities. However, Ghosh also depicts the harsh side of globalization. He illustrates the negative perspective by explaining the discriminatory and inhumane attitudes of urban populations towards the settlers of Morichjhapi. In spite of the possible advancements of globalization, this negative portrayal signifies the biases, inequalities, and injustices that specific societal groups perpetuate against marginalized groups.

The novel depicts the contradictions and complexities present in a globalized world, explaining both its capacity for the challenges, advancements, and disparities it engenders, most significantly for vulnerable populations. The story also emphasizes the repercussions of such sort of exploitation, suggesting that when human beings neglect the balance of nature, it invites retribution in the form of environmental disasters, including cyclones, typhoons, earthquakes, hurricanes, and landslides. These natural calamities stand as a reminder that nature can retaliate when its delicate equilibrium is disturbed, as illustrated by the tragic death of Fokir at the time of the cyclone in the story. The novel encourages reflection on the need for a revised relationship between nature and humanity. It advocates for the recognition of the equality and interdependence between the natural world and human beings, stressing that neither is inherently dominant over the other. The story urges humanity to establish an immense, reverent, and harmonious relationship with nature to ensure the sustainability and safeguarding of both human beings and the natural world.

The novel, which blends the political and eco-critical dimensions that we have previously explained on a deeper level, is well rooted in discussions regarding the contemporary environmental and climate change crisis. Nirmal, whose trajectory in the novel has been outlined above, incorporates both geological aspects and historical dimensions throughout the novel, invokes the transformative agency of the tide country, and foreshadows this in certain ominous and lyrical parts of the novel. The history of the Morichjhapi massacre could be framed as a comparable narrative to those examined by Nixon in his comprehensive 2011 literary work, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. In this context, the reality of climate change will be depicted to explain the impacts of slow violence depicted in the novel. The novel stands as a great example for tackling the climate crisis by drawing much attention to the history of those climate refugees who are stuck in a tragic environment and may be presented as a foreshadowing of present climate migrations.

Through the journal of Nirmal, the readers come to know about the volatility of the region. In recent years, as Jones asserts, "the number and severity of cyclones have increased, tidal surges have become more extreme, and the erosion of island embankments has noticeably intensified due to sea levels rising faster than anywhere on



earth” (Jones, 645). Furthermore, it is asserted that the entire ecosystem will confront an extreme crisis of these rapid changes, since the changes will impact the local inhabitants, which includes Bengali Tigers, dense vegetation, all aquatic life, and approximately 4.3 million people. Nirmal’s interest in ecology is deeply illustrated by recognizing the rapid transformation being experienced in that place:

[...] It was as if I could see those signs everywhere, not just in myself but in this place that I had lived in for almost thirty years. The birds were vanishing; the fish were dwindling, and from day to day, the land was being reclaimed by the sea. What would it take to submerge the tide country? Not much – a minuscule change in the level of the sea would be enough” (Ghosh, 215).

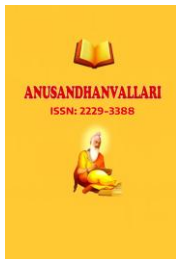
His words provide a description of nature through the ecological perspective. Nirmal’s diary combines with the short-sighted politics of dispossession with the geological rhythm of the environment, such that the trans-historical mutability of nature depicted in the novel trivializes the political struggles for oppressing the watery ecosystem of the tidal region. A contrasting perspective is proposed, transcending “narrow nationalistic, ethnic and racial binaries to embrace an ecological perspective that is compelled by the understanding that we live [...] in one world” (Kaur 2007, 127).

The refugees on the Morichjhapi island experienced migration on both environmental and political sides. Their newly emerged utopian community reflects on the past, considering their history of political dispossession, while at the same time advocating for the necessity of discovering a new paradigm of resistance from a deep temporal perspective, foreseeing the impending crisis confronted by climate refugees in South Asia. In a region that accelerates the process of slow violence, climate-induced refugees demand a redefinition of society that stands in opposition to the forced relocation processes, “whose vigorously unimagined condition becomes indispensable to maintaining a highly selective discourse of national development” (Nixon, 2011, 150).

Narratives of unitary national ascendancy impose both imaginative and physical migration. It is an imaginative work of expulsion that reminisces itself through police brutality, bulldozers, and lorries, but finds its resolution at an indirect bureaucratic level that initiates and sustains the condition for administered invisibility. The novel explains how the ghosted communities and surplus people are forcibly removed and relocated out of sight, frequently resettled in overcrowded conditions or on scarcely productive empty lands. They are developmental refugees and their journey, reflecting the processes of slow violence enacted by the interplay of environmental and political forces, which anticipates climate-induced migratory phenomena, by depicting their difficulties, and also deeply portrays how the eco-critical perspective to the climate issues provides new resources for critical thinking in the era of Anthropocene.

6. Findings

The study finds that *The Hungry Tide* effectively illustrates the concept of slow violence by demonstrating how environmental degradation and political marginalization operate in tandem to produce sustained forms of suffering. The novel reveals that conservation policies, while ostensibly aimed at protecting the environment, can function as mechanisms of exclusion that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. It also highlights the role of literature in uncovering suppressed histories and giving voice to those rendered invisible within dominant socio-political narratives. Furthermore, the text anticipates contemporary challenges related to climate change and migration, thereby positioning itself as a prescient commentary on the environmental crises of the present and future.



7. Research Gaps

Despite the growing body of scholarship on *The Hungry Tide*, there remains a significant gap in addressing the psychological and affective dimensions of environmental displacement, particularly in relation to concepts such as climate grief and ecological anxiety. Existing studies have largely focused on historical, political, and ecological aspects, often overlooking the emotional and experiential realities of affected communities. Additionally, there is a need for greater interdisciplinary engagement that integrates eco-criticism with subaltern studies, environmental humanities, and climate psychology. The absence of such integrative approaches limits a comprehensive understanding of how environmental crises are experienced and represented across different contexts. This study attempts to bridge these gaps by foregrounding the interconnectedness of ecological, political, and human dimensions within the framework of slow violence.

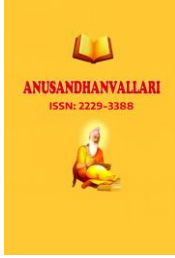
8. Conclusion

In conclusion, *The Hungry Tide* stands as a significant contribution to eco-critical and postcolonial literary discourse, offering a nuanced exploration of the intersections between environmental crisis, political power, and human vulnerability. By revisiting the Morichjhapi massacre and situating it within the broader context of climate change and ecological instability, Amitav Ghosh illuminates the enduring relevance of historical injustices in shaping contemporary realities. The novel's engagement with the concept of slow violence underscores the need to recognize and address the gradual yet devastating impacts of environmental degradation on marginalized communities.

Through its rich narrative and complex characterization, the text challenges dominant paradigms of development and conservation, advocating for a more inclusive and ethical approach to environmental governance. It also highlights the transformative potential of literature as a medium for raising awareness, fostering empathy, and inspiring critical engagement with pressing global issues. As the world continues to grapple with the consequences of climate change, *The Hungry Tide* serves as a powerful reminder of the need to reimagine our relationship with the natural world and to prioritize justice and sustainability in the face of ecological uncertainty.

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