

**Boundaries of Human and Conservancy of Nature in
The Hungry Tide and *Gift in Green***

Linju. M., M.Phil. Research Scholar

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

linju95@gmail.com

Ph No: 9567206729

Dr. Sreeja Balakrishnan M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

sreejabalakrishnanadu@gmail.com

Ph No: 8637402761

Abstract

Natural world is an important factor that inspires literature a lot. Literature can depict anything through words to reach the readers. The negatives and positives can be easily brought to light and writers now-a-days focus more on realities. The threats made by human beings to nature are disclosed by eco critical writers, thus, to condemn human actions. *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh and *Gift in Green* by Sarah Joseph are two novels which focus on ecology related ideas and the destruction of eco system. Both the novels make the readers aware of the after-effects when we do wrong to mother earth. They also reveal that there is a limit for every action and if it goes beyond, the earth can also react severely, sometimes even without a warning.

Keywords: Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide*, Sarah Joseph, *Gift in Green*, Nature, Eco literature, Conservation, Human, conflict

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin” – These are the celebrated words of Shakespeare, which reflect the importance and purity of nature. Our world is an incredible wonder which inspires all and protects us to survive and succeed. Nature thus provides every need of human beings without any grievance. Nature stands before us like a foundation which provides the elixir of life. Many civilizations developed with the help of resources such as rivers and lands which supplied the needs for sustainability. Shakespeare advocated nature makes the whole world and organisms into one family, with its humble touch.

Writers also make use of nature by considering it as a source of their words. Writers of all ages admired nature and praised its extraordinary beauty which pours blessings to the eyes of humans. The source, in the time travel, slowly met its depletion and degradation by the actions of human beings. Literature is gifted with all the freedom to show off the goodness and deformities in

society without any hesitation, so that nature can also be depicted in literature which enhance the minds of readers, and even to understand the changes that happens frequently. This article concentrates on two novels which highlight nature and make readers aware about the destruction of ecosystem.

The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh and *Gift in Green* by Sarah Joseph are the novels which remind us the reactions of the outcome of human actions. Both the novels provide innumerable ideas of conservation and destruction which happen in our day-to-day life. Mangroves are something very special which our mother earth offered for the defence from sea waters. Still these hold outstanding beauty by accommodating many rare species including rare flora and fauna.

The Hungry Tide is an Eco fiction set on splendid landscape where Ganges, Meghna and Brahmaputra meet. It covers an area of thousand square kilometres spread across India and Bangladesh. It includes mangrove forests, agricultural lands, mud rivers and barren lands. These areas are actually reserved for Royal Bengal Tigers, crocodiles, snakes and so many reptile varieties. It is also crowned as one of world heritage sites by UNESCO. The archipelago of islands in this area is called as Sundarbans. Ghosh describes mangrove forest as “A universe unto itself, utterly unlike other woodlands or jungles.” (7) He claims mangrove leaves are ‘tough and leathery’. The foliage of mangrove seems highly dense. People who enter the forest were killed by tigers and crocodiles. Ghosh also reminds us that “water gives birth to forest”. (8)

The novel *Gift in Green* by Sarah Joseph also reminds us that humans, when they mingle with money, forget the value of relations and value of nature. The work introduces us to a beautiful village called Aathi, which is fictitious, but it gives us a lively picture. The inner beauty and elements of pleasant atmosphere are visible through the words of the author. The mangroves encircle Aathi, but it is like an extra world. The water will be cool and serene and there prevails an impregnable silence which is untouched by the noise of human beings and machines. The harmony and soothing sweetness cannot be replaced by anything in the entire world. The leaves will fall silently into the water and float to the shore. People can even listen to the sounds of flowers blossoming, dancing of the moss, and glow worms entering from their houses. In such a situation the wounds will heal instantly, and the mind will rejoice with pleasure and this is exactly what poets call as rejuvenation.

‘Greenbangle’ or green forest is something special in Aathi because forests will usually be green and dark. It is special that in Aathi the crabs, frogs, butterflies, grasshoppers and the snakes will be in green color which can be called as wonders in Aathi. Even the wind that blows seems green, so the green forest which stands encircled is affectionately called as Greenbangle.

In the novel *The Hungry Tide* the land in Sundarbans was occupied by refugees from Bangladesh and other countries by clearing forests and killing the animals which stood as a hindrance. They were a community which cleared the land to survive. Settlers are not revolutionaries, but they are mere helpless people who want small pieces of lands for their own survival. They pleaded for help to meet their basic needs and requirements, but the government

refused to provide help. Politicians always act as if they are conserving nature, but their true colour is revealed when the deal of money comes.

Nylon nets which are used to catch tiger prawns could even capture the eggs of all fishes. Nilima tried to ban it but couldn't achieve it, because it was a deal between politicians who were always after money. The Irrawaddy dolphins, which are of unique characteristics, are being hunted for dolphin oil to reduce the use of petroleum. "These dolphins were hunted with rifles and explosives and their carcasses were hung up in the sun so that their fat would drip into buckets. This oil was then used to run boats and motorcycles" (305). The results of these actions will become severe, for if the situation continues total aquatic system will face a disaster. The changes in Sundarbans are notable because "the birds were vanishing; the fish were dwindling and from day to day the land was being reclaimed by the sea" (215).

The novel *Gift in Green* also reveals the greediness for exploitation and the carelessness in saving something for the future generations. To harvest more prawns and fishes, the cruel minded Komban Joy who was friend of Kumaran mixed poison in the water. Some of the greedy villagers used kerosene which restricted oxygen to fishes, and they were raised to the top to breathe. Even the small fingerlings died miserably. By this time, they used endosulfan. Although pouring endosulfan may kill the microbes, no other poison can make so many deadly outcomes.

Water and land are the important concerns for the people of Aathi but the land and water which are polluted and reshaped can't be restored further. The litter that is deposited in water created a lot of issues including diseases. Plastic carry-bags, a common litter, floats lavishly in water. The flies and mosquitoes circle it with greed. The mosquitoes make the body itchy causing rashes and spread epidemic diseases.

Women are usually related with the goodness of mercy. The protagonist in the novel *The Hungry Tide*, Piyali Roy had intense intention to preserve nature and she felt very bad when a tiger was burned in front of her. Piya was different from others; she had concern for nature even when nature was betraying humans. She spoke for the man-eating tiger which killed two people; she even cried by seeing the miserable animal set on fire. When the villagers gathered around the tiger to kill it, Piya, the naturalist, defended the tiger strongly. Though Kanai explained to her about the damages it had created to people by killing them and also devoured their cattle, she said, "This is an animal Kanai, You can't take revenge on an animal" (294).

The same scenario is repeated in *Gift in Green* also. Readers can understand how women who work in soil are attached to Mother Nature and her gifts. Kumaran had erected a strong granite wall to restrict the tide water which arise in high tide. The changes in the land were out bursting and Kunjmathu felt like drained because once along with her companions, she stood in water up to the neck. She cried with all the memories in her heart and she heard the water thrashing in the walls with a sound.

Kunjimathu stood in water without any response, and her friend Devaki explained that Kunjimathu was worried about tide, which was restricted to arrive. She was not ready to return from there. Dinakaran could also feel the water sobbing in the granite bund, but everyone stood helpless. “If the high tide and low tide are walled out, can we ever farm fish or Pokkali rice?” (204). What Kunjimathu stated is absolutely right and all the others who surrounded her also felt same.

Both the novels give us the conclusion that preserving nature is important to survive on earth. If we destroy the nature it will be like cutting the branch on which we sit. The conservancy of nature should be value-based without any confrontations and the solution must not be derived for profit. The developments should be sustainable, by making no harm to ecology as well as humans. The hunting may be sometimes allowed to maintain the balance of eco system, for example, if in one area the wild wolves are numerous, then the amount of deer will automatically lack its balance. At the end, it is important that the limit should be maintained at any cost.

The outcomes are really worse when we destroy the world of animals and birds. If humans cross their limit, nature will react severely and then nothing can save the humans. These statements are clearly evident from both the novels and people of all ages should learn to protect nature as well as to use the resources appropriately, provided by the nature. Many disasters have proved that the root cause for it was created by humans. The floods, global warming, land sliding, deep depressions which are followed by cyclones are all human-made and we can't blame nature for the reactions which are outcomes of our actions. The need to use resources properly without any greed should be our aim at least hereafter.

Works Cited

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide*. Harper Collins, 2004.
Joseph, Sarah. *Gift in Green*. New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2011.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sundarbans>