

ECO-CRITICAL ANALYSIS: AMITAV GHOSH'S "THE HUNGRY TIDE" AND ANITA DESAI'S "FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN"

Kumari Baveja Devi^{a*}, Geeta Sharma^a

^aDepartment of English and Communication Studies, Eternal University, Baru Sahib, Himachal Pradesh, India-173101

Corresponding author: Kumari Baveja Devi

(Email - tegtabobby01@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT: In Ghosh's novels *"The Hungry Tide"* and Desai's *"Fire on the Mountain"* eco-critical analysis reveals a compelling exploration of the intricate interdependence of human-nature relationships, urging readers to reflect on the urgency of environmental stewardship in the complex relationship between humanity and nature. In *"The Hungry Tide"* Ghosh intricately weaves a narrative set in the Sundarbans, exploring the complex relationship between humans and the fragile ecosystem of this unique delta. The study illuminates the ecological impact of human interventions, confronting themes of climate change and biodiversity loss. In Anita Desai's *"Fire on the Mountain"* takes us to the isolated Himalayan region, separating the details of human-nature interactions within the domestic sphere. The study examines Desai's portrayal of the mountains as both a refuge and a formidable force, reflecting the broader implications of environmental degradation. Through an ecocritical lens, this exploration seeks to unveil how these novels contribute to the broader discourse on environmental consciousness and the consequences of human actions on diverse landscapes.

KEYWORDS: Eco-critical study, Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide*, Anita Desai, *Fire on the Mountain*

INTRODUCTION

In ecocritical study, the focus is on analyzing the intricate environmental narratives within two interconnected literary works: Amitav Ghosh's *"The Hungry Tide"* and Anita Desai's *"Fire on the Mountain"*. These novels, rather than conforming to conventional storytelling, serve as captivating explorations that immerse readers in the dynamic relationship between human lives and the natural world. Ghosh's narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the Sundarbans, a region with a distinctive ecosystem. The chosen surroundings cease to be mere backdrops; they become integral elements of the storytelling, shaping and being shaped by the characters and events within the narratives. Employing an eco-critical lens, the study seeks to go beyond a conventional literary analysis, aiming to uncover the nuanced reflections of the novelists on ecological themes. Ghosh and Desai use their narratives as mediums to offer insights into the far-reaching consequences of human actions on diverse landscapes and ecosystems. The study, therefore, becomes a journey into the environmental consciousness embedded in these literary studies. This exploration extends beyond the immediate narratives, inviting readers to reflect on the broader discourse surrounding humanity's relationship with the environment.

These novels, viewed through an eco-critical lens, serve as contributions to a larger conversation about the impact of human behaviours on the natural world. By delving into the consequences of industrialization, cultural shifts, and societal impositions within the contexts of the Sundarbans and the Himalayas, the study aims to unravel the novelists' intentions in conveying these ecological messages. Ultimately, the eco-critical study encourages readers to recognize and contemplate the profound connections between literature and environmental awareness. Through the evocative prose of Ghosh and Desai, the study emphasizes the role of literature in fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate relationships between humanity and the environment. By unravelling the coatings of ecological consciousness within these works, readers are prompted to consider their roles in environmental stewardship and the urgent need for ecological awareness in contemporary society. In the selected novel each of the characters in "*The Hungry Tide*," written by Amitav Ghosh, plays a significant part in the ecologically crucial study of the Sundarbans. Piya Roy, a marine biologist, is a representation of scientific curiosity and environmental consciousness because she navigates the sensitive ecosystem. Kanai Dutt, a translator, struggles with the conflict that arises from the collision of modernity and the traditional way of life in the Sundarbans. This conflict exemplifies the larger conflict that exists between advancement and the preservation of the environment. Fokir, a local fisherman, exemplifies the profound link that exists between the indigenous communities and the tidal landscape. The complicated ties that exist between human lives and the natural environment are brought to light by their intertwined storylines, which serve as the central driving force behind the novel's eco-critical narrative. "*Fire on the Mountain*" written by Anita Desai, features characters who each have their unique point of view of the Himalayan landscape. An elderly widow named Nanda Kaul has a profound connection with the mountains, which mirrors themes of loneliness and introspection. Ila Das, who is Nanda's granddaughter, is a representation of passing generations and the influence of modernity on the traditional way of life in the Himalayas. As Raka, a child who has lost both of his parents, makes his way through the forest, he serves as a metaphor for the wild and unrestrained qualities of nature. The protagonists participate in an eco-critical study, which helps them to understand the complexity of their relationship with the Himalayan region and reflects bigger environmental themes that are present within the story of the novel (Ghosh, 2005; Bordoloi, 2020; Singh, 2018; Shyamala, 2011; Mishra, 2016; D'Cunha, 2020; Sharma, 2017; Luo, 2014; Mukherjee, 2006; Sumati, 2015; Maharajan, 2017; Vincent, 2018; Silviya and Immanuel, 2019; Vincent, 2020; Dhar, 2020).

The main aim of the eco-critical analysis of Amitav Ghosh's "*The Hungry Tide*" and Anita Desai's "*Fire on the Mountain*" is to examine the intricate depiction of human-nature relations, unveiling the environmental implications and highlighting the imperative for ecological consciousness.

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF *THE HUNGRY TIDE*:

TIDAL ECOLOGY, CULTURAL VARIABILITY, AND MANGROVE METAPHORS FOR RESILIENCE

The study explores the ecological and cultural significance of tidal dynamics in "*The Hungry Tide*" unraveling how the ebb and flow of tides symbolize both environmental processes and the cultural interactions within the Sundarbans. It investigates the symbolic representation of mangrove ecosystems as metaphors for resilience, delving into how these coastal habitats reflect both the adaptability of nature and the human communities dwelling in the region.

ISLAND NARRATIVES AND ECOLOGICAL INTERDEPENDENCE

It reveals the narrative nuances of island life, emphasizing how the interconnected lives of characters mirror the intricate relationships within the Sundarbans ecosystems, highlighting themes of ecological interdependence.

CLIMATE CHANGE, HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT, AND BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION

This study explained the narrative flow of climate change, examining how Amitav Ghosh integrates this global concern into the storyline, portraying its tangible effects on the environment and shaping the characters' destinies. Scrutinize the theme of human-wildlife conflict, exploring the ethical dilemmas faced by characters in their endeavors to preserve biodiversity, offering insights into the broader implications of human interventions in fragile ecosystems (Ghosh, 2005; Maharajan, 2017; Jha, 2020; Bhushan, 2021; Basu, 2020).

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE *FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN*:

MOUNTAIN AS CHARACTER, DOMESTICITY IN THE WILDERNESS, ALTITUDE, AND ISOLATION

This study explores the mountain as a dynamic character, influencing both the narrative and characters in "*Fire on the Mountain*," reflecting the broader theme of nature's agency. Investigate the intersection of domestic life with the untamed Himalayan landscape, unraveling the eco-critical theme of how the domestic sphere is shaped by and shapes the surrounding natural environment. Examine the portrayal of high-altitude settings as spaces of isolation, shedding light on how the character's interactions with the environment are impacted by the unique challenges posed by mountainous terrains.

FLORA AND FAUNA IN FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REFLECTIONS IN SILENCE

The novel's depiction of Himalayan flora and fauna, explores how the delicate ecosystems are portrayed and the implications of human actions on the biodiversity of these high-altitude regions. Analyze the

thematic use of silence in the narrative, discerning how moments of quiet contemplation and reflection serve as conduits for conveying environmental consciousness and the impact of human actions on the mountain environment (Shyamala, 2011; Desai, 2012; Mishra, 2016; Bordoloi, 2020).

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