

**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS OF STEWARDSHIP ROLE:  
AN ECO-CRITICAL READING OF THE HUNGRY TIDE AND GUN ISLAND**

By

Digonta Chambugong

ID: 21263011

A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in English

The Department of English and Humanities

BRAC University

October, 2024

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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that,

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing a degree of Masters of Arts in English at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material that has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

**Student's Full Name & Signature:**

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**Digonta Chambugong**

21263011

## **Approval**

The thesis titled **Environmental Awareness of Stewardship Role: An Eco-Critical Reading of The Hungry Tide and Gun Island** submitted by Digonta Chambugong, ID: 21263011 of Summer, 2024 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters in English on October 2024.

### **Examining Committee:**

Supervisor:

(Member)

-----

Mrs. Tabassum Zaman

Lecturer, Department of English and Humanities

BRAC University

Departmental Head:

(Chair)

-----

Professor Firdous Azim

Chairperson, Department of English and Humanities

BRAC University

## **Acknowledgments**

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude go to Mrs. Tabassum Zaman for being a wonderful teacher, mentor, guide, and instructor to me and for providing the necessary guidelines and instructions throughout the entire process of writing this thesis. I could not have completed this thesis without her guidance, instruction, cooperation, patience, concern, and assistance. I am forever grateful to her and pray for her good service in this teaching life to enlighten the students.

## **Dedication**

I want to dedicate this dissertation paper to my beloved parents who always showered their love and care and provided me with the best support, encouragement, and prayers. I am ever grateful to them for everything they render to get me here where I am today.

## Abstract

This thesis offers an ecocritical reading of *The Hungry Tide and Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh to revisit the environment and nature to bring awareness of relationships and the actions for positive impact on the environment for a better ecosystem and the world. By doing so, it examines the conflict between anthropocentrism vs. biocentrism, where environmentalists and eco-critics talk about biocentrism by criticizing the anthropocentrism that causes environmental degradation and imbalance for putting the universe in terms of human values and interests. Regarding it, several naturalists have come out with environmental ethics such as land ethics, and bioethics which mainly call for a biocentric view of the common good without excluding either anthropocentric or biocentric but the integration of both. It also discusses the conflict between the ecosystem and vs. ethical system by questioning which is responsible for the environmental crisis. Both texts show that errors in environmental issues are mostly due to ethical system errors. Therefore, it urges us to depart from moral degradation to moral goodness being an ethical steward of caring, loving, and protecting the creation with a positive impact on the environment. In this thesis, I will imply ecocriticism emphasizing the stewardship responsibility with ethics to re-establish the interdependent relationship between humans and non-humans amidst conflict to promote biocentrism going beyond anthropocentrism for the common good of all and the equilibrium of the ecosystem. Thus, this paper focuses on the personal conscious choice of stewardship actions, prioritization of the common good, and collaborative efforts to become a steward to bring positive environmental change to this common home earth for a better world.

**Key Words:** Ecocriticism, Biocentrism, Anthropocentrism, Nature, Bioethics, Environmental Ethics, Relationship, Stewardship Role, and Common Good.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes two renowned novels *The Hungry Tide and Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh from the perspective of ecocriticism to raise awareness of readers and the world about nature, creatures, humans, and their interdependence relationship and actions to establish the common good of all and the equilibrium of the ecosystem through the basic principles of love, care, tender and stewardship responsibility. Becoming a steward is a response to biocentrism to promote the common good against anthropocentrism which only looks for individual well-being, profits, and economic development. Both novels reflect the effects of anthropocentrism through capitalism, consumerism, industrialization, globalization, economic development, trade, migration, and tourism resulting in climate change, global warming, and natural disasters affecting humans and nonhumans severely. Therefore, our world has been suffering a lot and crying for pain from global ecological crises for prioritizing humans and their profits and well-being. For this reason, nature and creatures become the basis of humans' profits, interests, consumption, and convenience for their existence, growth, and development degrading their morality and ethics. This attitude of exploitation, dominion, control, and capitalism brings discrimination in the relationships where humans are superior and others are objects. Moreover, it destroys the unity and bond between humans, nature, and creatures increasing conflicts and tensions. Ghosh brings out those conflict and disharmony with the example of Chand Saudagar vs. Manasa Devi and humans vs. animals and nature in *The Hungry Tide and Gun Island* which move from Sundarbans to the U.S.A. to Venice to awaken the global readers with environmental awareness through eco-criticism to fight against it. Eco-criticism studies the significance of human beings and the physical environment creating a better world for the present and next generations. It also redefines our understanding of realities, nature, environment, animals, and stewardship



responsibilities to keep the ecosystem harmonious and balanced becoming a steward together. Therefore, this paper aims to focus on Ghosh's approach to ecology which is centered on biocentrism to discover or rediscover a sense of the cosmic common good as an ethical and loving steward. To achieve the goal of biocentrism, Ghosh emphasizes earth as a common home for all and the stewardship role of caring, loving, protecting, and conserving towards humans, nonhumans, and nature, especially through Piya, Nilima, and Fokir. No matter how small each action is, we know that together, our little ripples are making big waves and inspiring others today, rather than tomorrow. It encourages people to play their stewardship role to ignite a powerful collective movement towards a more sustainable and harmonious relationship with the Earth by sharing their passion, knowledge, experiences, love, care, and eco-friendly actions. We cannot control the world but we can control our actions, way of living, attitudes, and behavior. Therefore, the study of eco-criticism brings awareness among the readers about their relationship with nature and encourages them to make a conscious choice of eco-friendly actions, prioritization of the common good, and collaborative efforts to have a good and positive impact on the environment becoming a steward together for the common good, harmony and balanced relationship, equilibrium of the ecosystem and a better world now and the day coming in ahead.

## **I. ECO-CRITICISM**

Ecocriticism is a scholarly study of literature that gives special attention to the benefits of nature and also studies the relationship between literature and the physical environment. The word 'ecocriticism' first appeared in 1978 in the essay of Eco-critic William Ruckert entitled *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism* and was updated by Chyrrill Glotfelty in the 1990s. Ecocriticism advocates sustainable development for a better future for humankind in general. It considers that the ethical orientation of the text enables human accountability and

responsibility for the common good of all. The eco-critical theory emphasizes the significance of not just the human but also the non-human in literature and displays a growing awareness of environmental issues to take appropriate initiatives to face environmental crises. This theoretical approach uses literature as a pretext to study environmental issues and evaluates relevant texts according to their capacity to articulate ecological contexts, and crises and seek provable solutions. Ecology is concerned with the inexplicable relationship between living organisms and the natural environment. All organisms have the right to survive in their own way. The environmental issue-related literary works beautifully deal with human and nature interconnection as the keynote of literature and theoretical discourse. It expands the notion of the world to include the entire ecosphere where the conflict of Biocene vs. Anthropocene is present in both the novels that I have chosen to work on. This conflict shows the flaws of human beings from the compulsion to conquer, domesticate, harmonize, exploit, and violate every environmental aspect. The anthropocentric vision prioritizes human beings who dominate and exploit the environment whereas the biocentric visions remove humanities from the central point and study both humans and nonhumans and their wellbeing looking for the common good, harmonious and balanced relationship. Moreover, ecocriticism also studies several conflicts such as the conflict of ecosystems vs. ethical systems. It believes that the global crises that our world is facing today are not caused by the ecosystems. It is not because of how the ecosystem functions, rather it is mostly due to how our ethical systems function. If the person is rooted in ethical principles that will bring a positive impact on the ecosystem but a lack of ethical standards brings a negative and destructive impact on the environment. It urges us to revisit and realign our ethical principles in life to understand our impact on nature. It requires the understanding of such ethical systems of caring, loving, concern, and awareness for the welfare

of the environment, rather than the exploitation, dominion, control, and consumption to satisfy the individual interest. Naturalists and environmentalists have introduced environmental ethics such as Leopold's land ethic, and Potter's bioethics that call for an ethical change towards the whole biotic community for the common good of both the anthropocentric and biocentric sides and uphold a healthy ecosystem. Ecocriticism encourages people to think seriously about the relationship of humans with nature and animals and their stewardship responsibility. The anthropocentric mindset considers the world as something to control and the environment as a resource to gain more power and profit by exploiting it. If this continues then the world will continue to get worse day by day and will not last any longer. For this reason, I am willing to work on ecocriticism is that it is becoming an important step in bringing awareness to the environmental problems and their destructive impacts that the world is facing, and also needs the awareness of stewardship responsibility to protect it urgently. But the only way to work it out is by enlightening the people about it more and more. If people do not get to learn about it then it will remain in silence and become useless. The only way to bring a change in people's mindset is by educating the world about it which will bring change in values, attitudes, behavior, and way of living. Therefore, I want to contribute to this field of ecocriticism by working on *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* as ecocritical issues to redesign the world through conscious choice of actions, prioritization of the common good, and collaborative efforts in eco-friendly actions becoming stewards together. In my thesis, I will be focusing on Ghosh's approach to the ecocritical issues mainly on human-nature and human-animal relationship amid conflicts, and humans' stewardship responsibility towards creatures to promote biocentrism for the common good, good relationships, and the equilibrium of the ecosystem using the theory of bioethics, land ethics, and environmental ethics.

## II. UNDERSTANDING OF STEWARDS AND STEWARDSHIP ROLE

Stewardship is an acceptable way to describe our position or place concerning our role and responsibilities toward creation. Douglas John Hall, in an excellent book entitled *The Steward*, stresses the *stewardship* metaphor because it condenses the two sides of human connectedness, the relation to God on one hand and to nonhuman creatures of God on the other. If that is accepted, the steward metaphor might offer a corrective for the mistaken relationships that have triggered devastation. According to Hall, the human being as a steward of God is accountable to God and ethically responsible for his fellow creatures.” (Hall, 26). This concept of Hall gives the notion of biocentrism to work for the good of the creatures including humans and non-humans. Therefore, stewards and stewardship responsibility are very much connected and relevant to the creation story that we find in the sacred book of the Holy Bible. According to the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, a steward is a man who is ‘over a house’ (Gen. 43:19; 44:4; Is. 22:15, etc.) In the New Testament of the Bible, there are two words translated steward: epitropos (Mt. 20:8; Gal. 4:2), i.e. one has been entrusted; a curator or a guardian by his care and honor, and this could appropriately describe our role in the world. Another word is oikonomos (Lk. 16:2-3; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10), i.e. a manager, a superintendent. It derives from the word oikos means house and Nemomeans to ‘dispense’ or ‘to manage’. There is a reference to the relationship within the home and ownership with which this responsibility must be performed. However, the words are used to describe the function of delegated responsibility on behalf of the Creator. In this regard, human beings are the delegated stewards of God to take care of His creatures, to love, care, cultivate, and maintain them for the well-being of the entire ecosystem. To cultivate and maintain signifies that human stewardship of God’s creation includes both physical effort and wise management of what has been entrusted into one’s hands

to take care of it with love and tenderness rather than exploitation, dominion, and control. A key principle that comes out at this point is that stewardship goes with accountability to God and creatures both humans and non-humans. Therefore, human beings are the servants of creation, cherishing, protecting, and developing it for the development of the entire ecosystem. Douglas J. Hall made it clear that a steward is “A person charged with the management and service of another’s property, and his office presupposes a certain kind of trust on the part of the owner or master.” In short, a steward is a person who manages someone else’s property. A foundational idea of stewardship is the concept of the ‘owner’ and the ‘steward’. The Creator is the owner of everything and humans are stewards, managers, or administrators acting on his behalf. Therefore, stewardship can be viewed as a manifestation of human obedience in the stewardship action with accountability to perform what the Creator has placed under his control and guidance. The Creator owns everything and so humans are responsible for how he treats it and what he does with it. This means that authority derives from the Creator who has established the norms that should hold for human life. It means that humans must exercise all authority for the welfare of those subject to, not to exploit or dominate but to love, care, and development of the entire ecosystem. It must be to promote justice, respect, and dignity, ensure peace and tranquility, and protect the world. The Creator has called each one to serve what is rendered to him or her with responsibility and accountability for the well-being of the ecosystem. Therefore, it is the error in the personal choice of actions that leads to environmental degradation looking for individual profits, development, and well-being rather than the common good. For this reason, stewards should be sound in the ethical standards for choosing personal actions and prioritization of the actions to bring good to the entire world going beyond the individual wellbeing and profits.

According to the above discussion, a steward is called to be a servant of nature by caring for the creation with love, care, respect, dignity, and responsibility for the good of the environment, humans, and animals that are endangered and in extinction today. The intensity of environmental degradation such as climate change, and global warming and its effects are so obvious in *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* in various locations from Sundarbans to Los Angeles to Venice, Italy due to the anthropocentric attitudes, human intervention, economic profits, utilitarian usage, and individual well-being that lack the stewardship responsibility and accountability. In this regard, the study of eco-criticism helps to revisit the relationship between humans, nature, and animals and their actions to bring change in their relationship emphasizing the stewardship responsibility of caring, loving, and ethical principles to face the current environmental crisis and anthropocentric attitudes. This stewardship responsibility is explored through the various characters in the novels but most importantly through Piya, who is concerned with the endangered species both humans and non-humans to protect them from environmental catastrophe, climate change, global warming, and human atrocity. Piya not only works and tries to conserve and protect the dolphins, tigers, and other species but also works for the poor, widows, and displaced people in Lusibari to fulfill their needs and the balance in the ecosystem emphasizing the biotic community where humans and nonhumans are interconnected and complement each other amidst the conflict. Piya becomes the ethical and responsible steward of both to keep the ecosystem balanced and harmonious. It draws the attention of the readers and the world to be aware of individual stewardship responsibility to respond to the present environmental crises with the choice of eco-friendly action, prioritization of the common good, and collaborative efforts to become stewards together for a better future.

### **III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

We make the world a 'House' for ourselves but we are not at home in this world just nourished by the body's desire for temporal existence and the convenience of living. Therefore, the pivotal cause is the exclusiveness of the human heart that excludes many things from their lives but includes only whatever favors them for their existence, growth, development, and individual profits and well-being. As human hearts, minds, and attitudes (and of societies, and communities) get corrupt, and they lack the spiritual conviction to be ethical stewards of the Creator's creation thinking of themselves as the owners of the earth to fulfill their individual needs, desires, greed, and profits. Thus, they ignore that everything is given as a gift from the Creator and entrust the stewardship responsibility to take care of it with love and tenderness for the common good of all. Therefore, the statement of the problem of this paper is an error of personal choice of actions and prioritizations that negatively impact the environment ignoring the common good of all. Therefore, how can a human being become a steward of Mother Earth not going beyond the exclusiveness of the heart and anthropocentric attitudes to embrace all without discrimination and exclusion and not considering the world as a common home for all? How can a human being become a loving and ethical servant of Mother Earth without letting away the attitude to be served not to serve? How does a human being promote healthy and harmonious relationships with nature and fellow human beings in love, empathy, tenderness, and care than the absorber and exploiter for profits, economic development, and wellbeing?

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

This thesis is based on a qualitative approach and comparative analysis between two selected texts; *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* to bring awareness of stewardship in a person's life for the common good, good relationships, and a harmonious and balanced ecosystem. To analyze the chosen texts, I have used the theory of ecocriticism and several philosophers and naturalists like Aldo Leopold, and Van Rensselaer Potter, among all related to environmental ethics who talked about the necessity of environmental ethics and bioethics for the welfare of both land and every living being including the environment. I have explored specific issues such as the human vs. nature and human vs. animal relationship more extensively regarding climate change, global warming, migration, refugees, myth, legend folklore, etc. *The Hungry Tide* talks about the human-animal relationship and symbiosis amidst conflict, and *Gun Island* discusses the human-nature relationship globally from Sundarbans to Los Angeles to Venice, Italy for the wellbeing of the entire ecosystem. Moreover, to analyze the texts more elaborately, I have used secondary data like journals, articles, periodicals, etc. Further, the 'Close reading' strategy is used to bring out significant information from the text and to make it effective and fruitful.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many research projects connected to the topic of this research. Before going to the analysis this section will give a selected review of existing literature on the chosen topic. The review of the literature is divided into two sections. The first one is the selected review of the literary works of the theory of ecocriticism that will include a discussion on its history, conflicts, and environmental texts. The other part is the selected review of the literary works of the chosen two primary texts *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh. Thus, the literature review is formulated to develop the topic of the thesis.

### I. ECO-CRITICISM: HISTORY, CONFLICTS, AND ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTS

The theory of ecocriticism is a new literary movement that has arrived in the last few decades; studying how human beings relate to nonhuman nature and the surrounding environment in the literary context. Ecocriticism remained unorganized for a long time despite a consciousness concerning the welfare of nature and environmental issues that have been growing from the 1960s to the 970s. *Literature and Ecology; An Experiment in Eco-criticism* by William Rueckart published in the year 1978 is considered the birth of the word ecocriticism. In that article, he said, “Ecocriticism is an application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.” (Rueckart, 107). Afterward, ecocriticism was not active for a long time but developed rapidly mostly since the 1990s by many eco-critics like William Howarth, Lawrence Buell, Harold Fromm, Cheryll Glotfelty, etc. Furthermore, the study of literature relating to the environment started as a major critical theory in the 1990s, and the book titled *Eco-criticism Reader: Landmark in Literary Ecology* edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm has been

presented officially to the readers. In this literary work, both of them have encouraged and urged other literary critics to work and develop an ecological approach to literature, making the cultural dimensions of human being's relation to the environment a primary focus.

The history of ecocriticism theory includes two waves as follows. The first wave was discussed in Lawrence Buell's book titled *The Environmental Imagination* where he focused only on nature's writings as an object of study and took it as a meaningful practice, and the focus of ecocritics was mostly on the writings, nature poetry, and wilderness fiction. It emphasizes the care of the earth, aiming to preserve the biotic community including humans and non-humans rather than emphasizing humans only. On the other hand, the second wave of ecocriticism introduced both human and non-human concerns to all kinds of literary texts including wilderness, and urban to suburban environmental settings. This wave is also known as the newer revisionist wave as it has been often involved in environmental science, mostly life science. *The Song of the Earth* by Jonathan Bates presents the romantic notions of nature to be a metaphor for the self rather than merely a tribute to the biotic world. He states that civilized man admires nature as a painting piece and is inclined to undermine the real issues that concern the environment. He encourages the eco-critics not to bound their works to nature writings only but to focus on the environmental crises with which we already have been dealing with, and which are knocking at our door for the future entrance.

Furthermore, we find two major conflicts in ecocriticism. The conflict between anthropocentrism vs. biocentrism and ecosystem vs. ethical systems. The first conflict raises the question of whether people should be given priority to human interests or the interests of the biotic community. The debate remains constant but according to environmentalists and eco-critics, focus should be given to the interests of the biotic community rather than human interests. The

interests of the biotic community include both humans and nonhumans without emphasizing a particular community but for the common good of all with the reciprocal relationship. With this regard, naturalist Aldo Leopold in his essay *The Land Ethic* talks about the ethics of land, nature, environment, and the whole biotic community. He urges people not to concentrate on economic motives and not to use the land for economic purposes for individual purposes. He says “The economic determinists have tied around our collective neck, and which we now need to throw away, is the belief that economics governs all land use.” (Leopold, 225). Greed for economic profits leads the person to exploit land and nature. Furthermore, scholar Van Rensselaer Potter talks about bioethics and published an article *Real Bioethics: Biocentric or Anthropocentric?* where he talks about bioethics for the common good of both anthropocentrism and biocentrism. Therefore, he proposes people make a good relationship between biocentrism and anthropocentrism rather than a contest. (Potter, 179). On the other hand, the conflict between the ecosystem vs. ethical system is a debate about the system which one is an error and which one is right. Environmentalists and eco-critics think that it is the fault of the ethical system that causes damage to the ecosystem. Because the ecosystem functions according to the ethical system that we choose to use and behave with our environment. So, bioethics simply believes that for the common good of both sides; human beings and the environment must be integrated as symbiosis not putting them to any contest. Hence, we should not argue on whether we should be anthropocentric or biocentric, rather we should emphasize the bioethics that call for the common good of both sides without excluding anyone. In this concern, Ghosh explores the symbiosis of dolphins who help the fisherman to catch the fish to increase profits. Moreover, dolphins work as messengers of Bonbibi by giving alerts upcoming of the storms. On the other hand, crabs work as a keystone of the mangrove forest by clearing the litter and debris to keep

the mangrove forest alive and to protect it from the choke out. It also provides a livelihood for the people as it is edible. Furthermore, Ghosh explores Sundarbans as a storm breeder which protects the inhabitants of the forest from cyclonic storms and tidal erosions significantly. This interrelationship is studied through eco-criticism which helps to revisit the relationship between humans and non-human to bring transformation in the relationship being aware of the problems, conflict, and disharmony in the ecosystem. Therefore, it emphasizes the personal choice of actions, prioritization of the actions and intentions, and collaborative efforts to become stewards together for the well-being of the ecosystem, common good, and good relationships.

## **II. THE TWO CHOSEN TEXTS**

The novel, *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island* fits very well with the required criteria to be a part of environmental text due to its perfect settings, themes, characters, attitudes, lives, and experiences in the mangrove forest of Sundarbans, the Tide country and Los Angeles to Venice, Italy. Throughout the story, it beautifully illustrates the scenarios of the human-nature relationship, their interdependence and complementary bond, and survival conflict between humans-nature and creatures along with other eco-critical themes, but mainly emphasizes the mutual relationship for the common good of all through the stewardship responsibility that the Creator has entrusted to human beings.

Regarding eco-critical issues of this novel Dr. A. Anitha Sree has written an article titled *Eco-Critical Study of Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* where she brings out some ecocritical issues of Sundarbans emphasizing the relationship between nature, society, people, and the culture that is connected to the environment both affecting and affected by it. The novel deals with the danger of Sundarbans with the prowling tiger in the jungle and harmless looking but deadly crocodiles in the water, the fisherman islanders who struggle for a living, the study of Dolphins

by Piya, a cetologist, Kanai a translator, the central of the novel lies in the ruthless suppression and massacre of East Pakistan refugees who had run away from the Dandakaranya refugee camps to Morichjhapi as they felt that the latter region would provide them with familiar envisions and therefore a better life. The novel search for to connect the human stories with the broader story of the ecological and environmental forces that have acted on the region. Their relationship with that world is not defined by abstract concepts such as conservation but they live in mutual dependency, relationship, interactions, and defend when necessary. It considers not only the matter of environmental conservation and how it might be achieved but also the issue of how we might begin to understand the variety of the human not only as a readjustment between different types of human societies and values, the rich, the poor, the developed, the undeveloped, the articulate and the silenced. But also, as a readjustment of the idea of how the human is defined in itself and how this needs to reflect the broader categories of life across species and even across the idea of the whole interrelated form of living forces that constitute the planet. The article *Human vs. Nonhuman: Environmental Issues and Concerns in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* of Marie Josephine Aruna and E. Devabalane emphasizes the relationship between humans vs. animals and identifies the core environmental problems of Sundarbans along with its people, habitats, and animals, and also manmade calamities that portray the entire ecological systems. They say "The relationship between different disciplines such as literature and environmental studies has been well repaired by Ghosh...the author has taken great strides to help people understand and preserve life in the Sundarbans." (Aruna and Devabalane, 42). They focus on the moral responsibility and accountability on the part of every human to conserve our environment, as it is gradually becoming a threatened environment for each and all of its members, human or nonhuman, where each entails its own space. The need of the hour is to

build a future that emphasizes a balance between humans and their surroundings, to live in harmony with their environment. To achieve this goal environmental values, need to be inculcated in their minds along with the idea of the compulsory human responsibility to save the common home earth. In short, the well-being of our environment and Earth is in our hands and we must renegotiate and realign our relationship with it more importantly. Especially Ghosh highlights the character of Fokir who is closer to nature and feels the nature in his blood. His way of life doesn't threaten others but lives with harmony and unity. Because lack of closeness to nature brings exploitation, dominion, and control over nature thinking of nature as the source of gaining more power and profits. Therefore, Ghosh urges us to have a good relationship with nature for unity, harmony, and balance in the ecosystem.

Highlighting the relationship between Man and Nature in the novel, Swagata Lakshmi Basu has written the article titled *Exploring the Bond between Man and Nature in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* to emphasize a bridge between man and nature for their existence. She combines the art of nature and struggles between humans and nonhumans, both forming an integral part of nature, people, and habits, and the dolphins of Sundarbans represent the entire ecological systems of the archipelago. She said that human existence and development of everything is possible due to their relationship with nature rather than the anthropocentric attitude of man and their extreme domination over nature without realizing the destruction of nature is nothing but the destruction of mankind itself. She points out that the role of human beings towards nature in maintaining harmony between man and nature, the survival of humanity, and the conservation of nature in the era of globalization is necessary. Thus, she focused on the stewardship responsibility of taking care of nature with love and tenderness for the common good of all. Ursula Heise quoting from the article titled *Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental*

*Imagination of the Global (2008)* says that “It achieves what some environmental writers and philosophers call the ‘transhuman world; it reaches into the realm of non-human beings, but also into the interconnected networks of living and inanimate things that influence and respond.” (Heise, 87-88). She emphasized the integration of the human and non-human worlds as an interdependent relationship that affects and responds to their existence, growth, and development on this planet. Ghosh explored the relationship between Bonbibi, a forest goddess, and islanders as a mother-child relationship with mutual dependency, respect, faith, and understanding to create harmony, unity, and balance. Moreover, Dr. Pranav D. Khoche wrote an article *From the Sundarbans to Italy: Ecocritical Concerns in The Hungry Tide and Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh brings out the themes of environmental conservation, man-animal conflict, and the coexistence of humans with nature by alluding to both the novels. He felt the acute ecocritical concerns in an ecologically disastrous time. He makes a global appeal to fight worldwide catastrophe by shifting his narratives from Sundarbans to the USA to Italy by raising awareness of environmental crises among global readers.

Furthermore, Saba Pirzadeh writes an article *Persecution vs. Protection: Examining the Pernicious Politics of Environmental Conservation in The Hungry Tide* indicating the injurious impact of environmental protectionist policies, especially as seen in the context of Sundarbans Island, where Indigenous people were subjected to physical violence and enforced displacement, to empty the land for tigers in the name of protection and conservation. It makes us critically re-think the malicious politics of environmental protectionism, the power of knowledge production, and styles of narrative representation that not only direct our attention toward the environment but also govern our degrees of responsivity to issues of socio-environmental justice in the global South. Thus, it advocates a relational approach to the environment, thereby encouraging writers,

environmentalists, and policymakers to re-evaluate their understanding of the natural world from an eco-centric point of view to bring justice for both humans and non-humans. Re-evaluation brings conversion and transformation to the relationship and enhances ethical actions to establish justice. Dr. Panchal Dnyaneshwar Anantrao wrote an article entitled *Gun Island: Not a Fiction but a Prediction* where he said that many authors have started writing on this issue of global warming and destruction of the environment since it was not addressed and given a place in the literature. Amitav Ghosh has continuously raised his voice and has been writing about it in his novels to raise awareness of the environmental crises and to promote stewardship responsibility to fight against it. In his recent novel, *Gun Island*, he wrote and predicted the wildfire in Los Angeles, a sprawling Southern California city that not only shocked the world but also shocked Ghosh to see it, in reality, that destroyed the thousands of acres of land and forest affecting both humans and non-humans. His prediction in the novel became the reality now. He thinks of a writer who can only write or show readers what is happening and what will happen to draw the attention of readers to awareness of environmental catastrophe so that they can take proper steps to face it and be aware of their actions. Now it is the reader's responsibility to take the initiative and act wisely and accordingly to bring a better future. Hoping for a better tomorrow despite natural calamities, and degradation Francis in his article *Gun Island: A Tale of Myth, Migration, and Climate Change* focuses on the intertwined plot that links human and animal, past and present, natural and the supernatural. He explores how the notion of interconnectedness manifests itself in each of these elements. *Gun Island* projects unprecedented climatic conditions as the primary cause of these natural disasters. It is a climate-driven migration because it shows how well people, and all humans, are influenced by their land and how drastic changes there are in the migration patterns of different species due to changes in climate, temperature, and salt



water. The Chand Saudagar, Lubna Khala and her husband, Rafi, Tipu, Billal, Kabir, islanders, and others are migrating to other locations one hand, and the snakes, venomous spiders, shipworms, dolphins, crocodiles, fish, and tigers are changing their habitats on the other hand, due to climate change and global warming. *Gun Island* focuses on providing hope for a better future encouraging the readers and the world to perform their stewardship responsibility of care, love, and protection as Piya showed her concern for both humans and non-humans regarding studying dolphins, their behavioral patterns, other species, and also dedicated to the people of Lusibari who are displaced, widow and poor marginalized.

Moreover, emphasizes the common good of all creatures and its relationship Longbottom, SJ. writes an article *Redefining the Common Good: An Exploration of the Integral Ecology of Laudato Si and Its Interface with the Ecological Cosmology* by Thomas Berry and Leonard Boff highlights the relationship between humanity and the rest of creation which addresses issues of climate change; the destruction of biodiversity, and the impact of environmental degradation on the poor marginalized people. It focuses on the inherent worth of all creatures and seeks for the common good to include the interests of not merely humans, but all created entities. Furthermore, Jeane C. Peracullo writes on *Human and Its Critic* bringing out the cause of the broken relationship between humanity and nature due to economic interests by ignoring the value and respect of life and things. Authentic development depends on the proper use of agricultural and industrial technologies for the benefit of people and to enhance the land through technology rather than technological advancement. As a technological advancement, Ghosh showed that the motorboats, submarines, sonar equipment, and also the industry and refinery dump the oil and throw the disposals causing the death of fish, and dolphins and also the cause of changing the habitats of water pollution and dead zones. This negative use of technology and

greed for economic profits calls for an ethical life as stewardship towards humans towards nature, creatures, and humans for the common good and the equilibrium of the ecosystem. Emphasizing the call of caretakers and managers of God's creation with love, and care, Rowel Managan Centeno writes an article *Spirituality of Ecological Stewardship Reflections inspired by Laudato Si* that God has entrusted to take care, cultivate, maintain, and protect His creations. Lack of stewardship responsibility Environmental problems are happening all over the world which are similar everywhere such as pollution, mining activities, deforestation, land conversion, depletion of aquatic resources, climate change, global warming, and loss of biodiversity. Pope Francis calls on every person living on this earth for action to prevent global environmental catastrophe. He describes, "The urgent challenge to preserving our common home includes a concern to bring the entire human family together to seek sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us; he never disowns his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still can work together to build our common home earth. I would like to recognize, encourage, and thank those who work in countless ways to preserve our common home. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly look to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest. Young people call for change. They marvel how anyone can declare to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded." (Pope Francis, LS, 13). The pope is optimistic that the environmental problems have solutions if we work together, be aware of the degradation, and live his teaching about ecological stewardship. To preserve and care for the environment, people should exercise their role as stewards and caretakers of their environment, recognizing God as its absolute owner. Therefore, it focuses on the culture of care, love, tenderness, concern, and responsibility against the culture

of selfishness consumption, and exploitation. Thus, the aforementioned ideas and discussion promote my thesis to support the argument of stewards of humans and non-humans for the common good of all without letting away any entities of nature from a biocentric perspective. To achieve this goal, need to promote the personal choice of good and ecofriendly actions, prioritization of the common good, and collaborative efforts to become stewards together for a better and balanced world than the individual and anthropocentric world.

### **III. POINT OF DEPARTURE**

The existing literature on this literary theory and the relevant ideas have been certainly, supportive of my thesis to advance my arguments and stand in favor of biocentrism against anthropocentrism that emphasizes the common good of all including humans, and nonhumans through stewardship responsibility of love, care, tenderness and concern. They helped to understand this literary theory of ecocriticism in a better way along with understanding the aims and functions of this school of criticism, which I will be endeavoring in this thesis to analyze the two environmental texts *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island*. Moreover, most of the existing works on this literary theory of ecocriticism offer the definitions, set the goals, and attempt to make understand and aware the readers along with introducing texts or criteria of the novels to which this school of criticism can be applied appropriately.

Ecocritical studies of Ghosh's works are common, but a majority of these readings mostly just address the environmental issues affected by anthropocentric attitudes, human intervention, greed for economic profits, and utilitarian usage that are seen in the stories. By focusing on how Ghosh advances the environmental awareness of stewardship, I will discuss and apply the theory of ecocriticism and environmental ethics, bioethics, land ethics, and moral ethics to respond to the environmental crises to rethink nature, environment, and creatures independently. I believe

this thesis not only helps to contribute to the developing theoretical discourse of ecocriticism, but in its praxis too. It emphasizes a personal choice and prioritization of actions, and collaborative efforts of all becoming stewards together as accountable, responsible, loving, caring, and ethical to protect and conserve nature for a better world, common good, harmonious relationships, and the equilibrium of the ecosystem.

## CHAPTER THREE

### REVISITING MAN-ANIMAL AND NATURE RELATIONSHIP AND STEWARDSHIP ROLE IN *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

*The Hungry Tide* of Amitav Ghosh portrays the debates of anthropocentrism vs. biocentrism and ecosystems vs. ethical systems in a much broader way by emphasizing the man-animal and nature relationship throughout its story. It urges the readers to rethink nature, the environment, and animals to consider bioethics as Potter has proposed in his article *Real Bioethics: Biocentric or Anthropocentric?* not to think of these conflicts as any contests of one against another but the common good of all. Instead, it calls for an idealistic blend of both biocentrism and "... the kind of humanism that is concerned with the needs, interests, and welfare of human beings, or, in other words, an enlightened or realistic anthropocentrism" which recognizes the biosphere's vital role "... in the constant existence and common good of the human species as the welfare of the biotic community is intended for the welfare of human species too." (Potter, 177). Bioethics prioritizes Leopold's notions of land ethics and talks about biocentrism emphasizing harmony between both sides of the Anthropocene and Biocene, the biotic community by focusing on the need for environmental ethics as in bioethics. Its main goal is to make us think differently about nature and animals and make us question on happiness of life in materialistic and economic progress that destroys the environment, or it has to be just the opposite of it, or rather a combination of both. All these concerns are discussed in the novel to revisit nature, so we can get through the environmental issues that the world is going through today. The paper presents the importance of a harmonious relationship between humans and non-humans amidst conflict to promote biocentrism rather than anthropocentrism for the common good and the equilibrium of the ecosystem emphasizing the personal choice of ecofriendly

actions, prioritization of common good, collaborative efforts, and the stewardship responsibility of human beings with the basic principles of love, care, concern, and tender. To fulfill this goal, I will discuss the setting, folklore, myth, legend, culture, characters, cause and effect of climate change refugees, and migration side by side in the novel.

*The Hungry Tide* is set in the mangrove forest of Sundarbans (the beautiful forest) or Bhatirdesh (the tide country) where one-third of the mangrove forests belong to the West Bengal region of India. The first name is derived from the name of a common species of mangrove ‘the Sundari tree’ demonstrating the inherent land and language association from the very beginning. And the second is derived from the record book of the Mughal emperors which named the place after one particular tide ‘the ebb-tide (the bhata). It is considered to be a unique and broad archipelago home for thousands of species that include both human and nonhuman lives. Also, UNESCO has designated it as a world heritage site and biosphere reserve. The Sundarbans mangrove forests are supported by a complex network of tidal rivers, river channels, pools of fresh water and salt water, mohonas, small and large inhabited and uninhabited islands, and constant storms, floods, and cyclones. It supports a variety of life forms including different fish, snakes, reptiles, river dolphins, crabs, deer, crocodiles, and tigers. The landscape of the Sundarbans is unpredictable, where the tides create new land, overnight mangroves begin to gestate and the old land gets washed away in the tidal waves. The Sundarbans’ ecosystem of mangrove forested islands and mudflats, represents the constant transformation it undergoes, because of daily tidal waves, with sections of land submerged temporarily and seawater and freshwater intermingling.

Discussing the nature of the Sundarbans and the environmental problems they face, Girish Gopinath writes about Sagar Island in the Sundarbans “The Sundarbans are facing coastal erosion, vegetation degradation, and various disasters. Erosion is mainly due to clay mining,

wave action, and river and stream impacts of the Muri Ganga and Hugly rivers.” (Gopinath, 555). In addition to ecological modification, Gopinath notes that an increase in the human population is also adding to the degradation of the environment and habitat destruction (Gopinath, 555). Aside from the real ecological reasons that provide the setting with life and credibility, Ghosh’s literary approaches further render the landscape vivid and real. The tide country is a harsh landscape, filled with peril and death in many ways. It shows that the novel displays a kind of dialogue between the human habitat and the ecological circumstance that leads to a complex interaction and relationship between man and nature. Sometimes the man-nature relationship appears to be harmonious as in the case of dolphins showing the ways of fish to the fishermen and sometimes the relationship appears to be hostile as there is the constant threat of animals such as tigers, crocodiles, and also cyclones, and storms as well. The novel’s setting is in the very heart of nature, putting ecological perspective at the forefront. It would not be an exaggeration if nature were the chief protagonist of this work. *The Hungry Tide* is quite eloquent about the ecological concerns of Sundarbans, the Mangrove forest between the sea and plains of Bengal, which is slowly bare of its bio-diversity. Ghosh presents three major characters; Piyali Roy, Kanai, and Fokir whose lives are caught in the tide country, and through their journey we see the survival battle and conflict between the man and animal and also living together in the same environment as an interdependent relationship amid the destruction of the weather and the constant ebb and flow of tides.

Marie Josephine Aruna and E. Devabalane in their article *Human Vs. Nonhuman: Environmental Issues and Concerns in Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide* mentions, that the Sundarbans which means “beautiful forest” has derived its name from the predominant presence of the common species of mangrove- the Sundari trees whose spread protects the entire region from the fury of

cyclonic destructions at the whole region by preventing erosion due to tidal action (Aruna and Devabalane, 44). It shows how important Sundarbans is to protect people and the environment from any natural disasters and to maintain the ecosystems. The novel reveals issues that are related to the "... life and existence on this delta with its diverse ecosystems in which both man, animal and other beings strive to their own environment" and thus try to find their own way of survival (Ghosh, 44). Thus, the novel portrays the conflict of human vs. non-human and also the interdependent relationship simultaneously where both go through the difficulties of everyday life and constant threats from each other for their existence. The conflict happens due to loss of property, livelihood, territory, or even life, and interact with each other negatively and violently to survive in this world. Both species may eventually vanish due to defensive and vengeful killing of each other due to a lack of good relationships. The relationship deteriorates for the anthropocentric attitude of humans causing the merciless death of animals by humans and the exploitation of nature for monetary purposes. It also examines how the killing of local marginalized people by wild animals causes conflicts with each other. "Isn't that a horror too that we will sense the struggling of an animal, however now no longer of human beings." (Ghosh, 249). It increases a query as to which lifestyle is a vital human or beast. Ghosh answers that if there is horror in the scene of the man killing the tiger, then there is equal horror too in the scene of the tiger killing the man, and further adds that: If there were killings on that scale anywhere else on earth, it would be called genocide, and yet it goes almost unremarked: these killings were never published and were never written in the newspapers. This is because these people are too poor to do anything. We all know it, but we choose not to see it. (Ghosh, 325). Ghosh is aware of the reality of the Sundarbans where the weak are sufferers either humans or non-humans endangering their existence. Therefore, Ghosh showed his concern for a biocentric view of the



common good of both without neglecting anyone, especially the poor marginalized people, and endangered species.

Ghosh depicts nature not only as a setting of charming beauty alone but also as hungry for human blood as well. The tide and its surges stand for all the devastating facets of nature. It explores in the novel that “The mangrove forest is a unique universe. Mangrove leaves are tough and leathery, the branches are wavy, and the leaves are generally thick. Visibility is short and the air still smells bad. There is never a time when people can doubt the existence of a country that hates them, their cunning, and their ability to decide whether to destroy or expel them. Many people die every year in the embrace of these dense leaves, killed by tigers, snakes, and crocodiles.” (Ghosh, 7-8). The life of local people is hazardous in the mangrove forests of Sundarbans. People had been killed in dozens due to its hard and thick foliage. It is said that “People lived here once, however, they had been pushed away through tempest and tides, tigers and crocodiles.” (Ghosh, 43). Despite the hazardous life nature is the main source of daily needs and they depend on the collection of timber, fuel wood, fishing, farming, and collection of honey. Both human and non-human entities are valued in an ecological context and cannot be sacrificed at the expense of others. Therefore, the Sundarbans are important to protect humans and the environment from any natural disaster like cyclones and to the equilibrium of the ecosystem. The Sundarbans uncover several issues related to life and existence on this delta with its diverse ecosystem in which both man, animal, and other beings struggle for their own eco-space thereby trying to find their means of survival even through conflict. The relationship between man and nature appears to be less harmonious in the Sundarbans. Nature seems to be less generous but more hostile to the inhabitants. “There is no prettiness here to invite the stranger in.” (Ghosh, 8). There is always the threat of rivers, storms, cyclones, and tigers and

crocodiles. Thus, on the one hand, we are told of the everyday problems of living from the human point of view, on the other the nonhuman creatures of which the strongest species a tiger has encountered with humans even killed by them. Ghosh thus problematizes the tensions between humans and within human communities, and their relationship with the natural world. Ghosh brings out the reality of the world where they adapt and survive in the changing process of the entire ecosystem emphasizing the symbiosis between humans and nonhumans. Because everything in this world operates by reciprocity. You give something and you receive something. Especially we see in nature that trees breathe in carbon dioxide and they breathe out oxygen. They carry something for us and we carry something for them for existence. When we stop exchanging, we become stagnant and stagnation is where exploitation, dominion, and devastation begin to proliferate. So, it operates by an exchange with each other that Ghosh shows in his novels with a symbiosis between humans and nonhumans.

Piya shows that dolphins cooperate with humans in their cast-net fishing to increase the amount of fish to catch which supports humans economically. The net pushes a great number of fish to the floor of the river enabling the dolphins to have their fill while the fishermen their catch. Piya wonders: “Did there exist any more remarkable instance of symbiosis between human beings and a population of wild animals?” (Ghosh, 168). On the other hand, Fokir says that the dolphins act as the messengers of Bonbibi, a goddess of the forest whose story is heard by his mother. The bonbibi’s messenger, the Garjontola dolphins, brings news of floods and tides which shows how Mother Nature takes care of people who worship or conserve her. The Gangetic dolphins help Piya to understand a storm brewing with their peculiar behavior because of their nature of being very sensitive to atmospheric pressure. “Without thinking she’s able to know the approaching storm.” (Ghosh, 367). The dolphins mostly start reacting peculiarly as they are very sensitive to

atmospheric pressure. Ghosh's story thus highlights the biotic community which is built on cooperation between human and non-human creatures rather than not putting them in any contest. It proves that dolphins are involved in the ecosystems and biotic communities. Environmentalist Aldo Leopold points out that competition and cooperation exist simultaneously but are carefully balanced between humans and animals. Each has a worthy role to play in the larger canvas of the bio-network to keep the ecosystem balanced and the stability of the community. For example, the crabs played a vital role in the tide country ecosystem. They are the keystone species of the entire ecosystem of the Sundarbans. They are responsible for the sanitation department and a janitorial team to keep the mangroves alive by cleaning leaves and debris. The author states, "They keep the mangroves alive by clearing leaves and debris; otherwise the trees become waste. Didn't they constitute a small fraction of the biomass of the system? (Ghosh, 142). Therefore, a few ecologists stated that the "forests ought to be named after crabs in place of mangrove because it was, they certainly not the crocodile or the tiger or the dolphin who had been the keystone species of the entire ecosystem."(Ghosh, 149-50). Moreover, the crabs laundered the mud in which they lived scrubbing it grain by grain. Their appearance forms microscopic brushes and spoons. The crabs are also helpful for the livelihood of the fishermen as they are edible. Therefore, crabs are essential to building a biotic community by helping both humans and the environment for ecological balance. But the reality is that dolphins and crabs are in danger of global warming, climate change, water pollution, and environmental degradation due to the effects of anthropocentrism. They need to be protected from the endangerment and extinction. From this perspective, human beings have a vital role to play in keeping the ecosystem in balance and safe rather than exploitation, dominion, and control. Therefore, all have to play their role committedly and responsibly from their respective

places to keep the ecosystem harmonious and balanced as dolphins, crabs, and Sundarbans are doing in the novels. Therefore, at every point, Ghosh has made an effort to familiarize his readers with the incredible bio-diversity of the Sundarbans to preserve it for the well-being of humans and non-humans and the equilibrium of the ecosystem emphasizing the stewardship role of each one of us to choose the eco-friendly actions and prioritization of common good.

Ghosh emphasized the stewardship responsibility through Piya who is more concerned about the threatening and endangered species of the dolphins to protect them who are breathing differently than normal. Piya saw a group of seven orcaellas and noticed their behavioral pattern to be slightly unusual than what she had studied and seen before. Piya observes a calf "... coming to the surface in a 'corkscrew' pattern with its little head protruding out of the water- an indication that it still had to learn to breathe smoothly." (Ghosh, 77). She tries to study the behavioral patterns of dolphins and find the reason that water pollution is the cause of this problem. This water pollution occurs due to the dumping of industrial wastes, the refinery oil, and lack of awareness. They don't think about nature, the environment, and creatures but are more concerned about self-profit, well-being, and utilitarian usage by departing from moral goodness to degradation. But it is Piya who shows her love and concern for mammal animals and attempts to protect them as a steward going beyond economic profits and selfishness. As a steward Piya is worried about the dolphins who are going to suicide at a particular midnight or early in the morning due to some chemicals disposed from the refinery. This inhuman act of throwing the disposals and chemicals in rivers and oceans in an easy way destroys the land, water, and ecosystem causing damage to the humans and nonhumans. It is a matter of worry in the present time that the world has become a throw-away culture due to a lack of awareness, lack of responsibility, moral degradation, and gaining more profits. After usage, they throw it away and

destroy the nature. The attitude of throwing away culture needs to be stopped otherwise the entire world will be eventually destroyed. It might be stopped by either recycling and reusing it or changing the mindset of throw-away culture. In this regard, ethics and morality can bring change in a person's attitudes, behavior, and way of living to restrain from destroying nature by throwing away things. Ghosh presented Piya as an example of a good steward who is morally strong and fights against immoral things in society to establish justice and rights for endangered species by studying, showing concern, and taking care of them. Piya's concern for aquatic animals, her strong interest in studying the Gangetic dolphins, her insight into the rivers, and the incident of her saving the dolphin Rani from the nylon net and the latter expression of appreciation to Piya give the message that tenderness and care are the two principles that human beings should reflect in their thoughts and actions towards the nature. Therefore, if we want humans to flourish, to become truly empowered, then need to allow them to first love the earth before we ask them to save and protect it because love walks with concern, tenderness, care, and responsibility in any kind of relationship.

Moreover, Ghosh highlights the common good of all through Piya in the novel. After learning of the Morichjaphi tragedy, Piya shifts her thinking away from extreme conservationists to centrist ideology focusing on both animals and humans equally. Regarding it, Dr. Anitha Sree claims in her essay *Eco-critical Issue in The Hungry Tide* that "The natural world is one with which they live in mutual dependency, fishing it and whilst essential protecting themselves towards it." (Sree, 298). Here, she talks about the mutual dependency that needs to be maintained for survival but not for economic development. If this mutual dependency is ignored and disturbed by monetary purposes will bring conflicts, destruction, discrimination, and imbalance in the relationship. As a steward, putting equal concern, Piya creates a conservation program that

employs local Sundarbans fishers to provide additional income and simultaneously help to protect the vulnerable habits of the Sundarbans as well. She has given equal priority to promoting the common good of humans and non-humans and establishing social justice. Therefore, environmental protection cannot be achieved without the well-being of indigenous peoples in Sundarbans. It means that in the name of tiger preservation, the poor marginalized people cannot be exploited or the tiger cannot be exploited in the name of human sustainability. Both need to be preserved and protected for the balance and harmony of the ecosystem otherwise conflict will be increased. She has not only raised funds to build a new house for Moyna and Tutul but also attracted the attention of many conservatives and environmental groups for conducting a project in the Sundarbans under the sponsorship of the Badhabon Trust which will hugely benefit the trust.

Through Piya Ghosh is inviting the readers and the world to become stewards of endangered species both humans and non-humans being ethical, responsible, committed, caring, and loving going beyond economic purposes, self-interest, and well-being. Because hunger and looking for economic development and profits hinder the common good of all. Therefore, Leopold in his essay *Land Ethic* said that "... the economic determinists have tied around our collective neck, and which we now want to forge off, is the notion that economics determines all land use." (Leopold, 225). Economic development is echoing everywhere in daily life which makes them selfish and individualistic ignoring the common good and destroying the ecosystem. This development has cost humans a lot as pollution, ozone layer depletion, health degradation, agricultural challenges, depletion of natural resources, corruption, and exploitation in the rich diversity of aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna in Sundarbans. Aruna and Devabalane claim that "the rich biosphere of Sundarbans is in great danger of being exploited even more as a result

of anthropogenetic intervention in the form of globalization, economic development, and ecotourism (Aruna and Devabalane, 46). The region needs to be protected from all kinds of human interventions, violations, and exploitation. Piya and Fokir on one of their ventures into the Garjontola are shocked to find the corpse of the calf and on the other hand, they are happy to witness the first sight of a dolphin with its mother. Piya understood that the people of one of the fast-moving motorboats which could belong to the coastguards, the forest officials, or even the police, had hit one of the calves of the dolphins and got killed by a motorboat. She said, "Some had been ensnared by fisher some had been hit by motorboats and steamers." (Ghosh, 92). So, it shows that motorboats, man-made sounds of submarines, and sonar equipment are the causes of killing fish and dolphins and endangering their habitats. Ghosh mentioned in the novel that "even it is Piya who finds out that man-made sound from submarines and sonar equipment make the mass killings of fishes and dolphins and how they can navigate faster than humans in such hellish areas Marine animals use echolocation to navigate. If something messed with that, they could become disoriented and run aground" (Ghosh, 99). Therefore, technology is one of the main reasons that has negative effects on the environment and the creatures for greedy monetary purposes. Many recent discoveries have brought undeniable benefits and development to humanity and accelerated the way of living. Unfortunately, the negative application of these discoveries in the fields of industry, agriculture, or any other field has produced long-term harmful effects on the ecosystem because of using for anthropocentric consumption, development, and economic purposes without thinking of the common good.

Looking for profits brings conflicts with the relationship between humans and nonhumans causing discrimination and deprivation of rights. Ghosh explored the man-tiger clash of Sundarbans and created a strong representation of the interaction between humans and tigers of

the Tide country. The inhabitants of Sundarbans are living there every day with the threat of getting killed by the powerful tiger. We learn how Kusum's father gets killed by the tiger when he goes inside the deep forest to cut down some firewood. Sundarbans is the only mangrove forest in the world where tigers live and the largest number of tigers in the world are found in this tiger reserve. Several studies show that the conservation of this animal has been a privileged one over the poor marginalized people of the place. Becoming a world heritage site has put the tigers in the center and is considered an asset while at the same time marginalizing the peoples of the islands. The increase in tiger population raises the question of how much space has been earmarked for the movement of the growing numbers of the species. Because there is a danger for both sides; humans and tigers. There is the danger of tigers wandering into human space/habitation and ending up eating men, women, children, and cattle. Piya, Kanai, Fokir, and Horen witness the killing of a tiger by an excited mass. The tiger had already intruded upon human habitation having killed a buffalo and revisiting a second time caught by the furious mob waiting to kill it. Their faces had been contorted in this sort of manner that they appeared to be inside the grip of excessive worry and uncontrollable rage. Many of the women and children in the crowd had been shrieking Maar! Maar! Kill! Kill!" (Ghosh, 291- 292). Horrified by this killing of the tiger, Piya attempts to mark her resentment however is forcibly eliminated from sight with the aid of Fokir. For Piya, this very incident is the heart of darkness and both Kanai and Piya refer to this incident as 'the horror'. More than a hundred people are killed by tigers every year. According to Bonbibi, the balance between the human world and the environment is off-kilter. Tigers terrify the people of the Sundarbans, as they attack much more frequently than tigers usually do. Scientific reasoning for the increase in the number of tiger attacks exists and kills people at a much higher rate than expected. The explanation for the spike in killings in an



isolated location lies in the ecological processes of the swamplands. As Ghosh writes in *The Hungry Tide* “The theory (is that) this increases animals’ aggression for washing away their scent markings and puzzling their territorial instincts.” (Ghosh, 388). Scientists provide credible but partial, explanations for the increase in aggressive behavior in tigers. As mentioned before, the rare tide patterns in the Sundarbans are said to erase the scent marking of tigers, causing territorial confusion. Without a way of knowing which areas belong to each tiger, the animals must always be on the offensive, causing a spike in aggressive behaviors. Thus, tigers pose all kinds of threats to humans in Sundarbans.

In this human-tiger conflict, the government can play a vital role in making a policy that is in favor of both humans and nonhumans going beyond bias and discrimination. If the government fails to play the role will bring the conflict between humans and nonhumans. Ghosh explored that the government gives priority towards saving the tiger’s life over the poor lives of the inhabitants and it is simply because the tigers are assets for them as Sundarbans is becoming a world heritage site and the poor inhabitants’ lives value almost nothing to them. So, it does not matter to them if the inhabitants there live or die. The Morichjhapi incident (the Morichjhapi massacre) is the effect of the lack of a governmental role in the novel. The refugees from Bangladesh came to India and took shelter in a refugee center, but later they fled from there as they were getting inhumane treatment by the Left Front Government of West Bengal. The government goes against them saying they are violating the forest code by illegally entering reserved forest land that is part of the tiger recovery project and thus threatening the reservation of tigers. Therefore, the authorities took violent actions to eradicate the refugees from Morichjhapi even though many were allegedly killed by the authorities putting more priority on tigers for monetary purposes. It becomes more unethical that power and positions holding people

force the helpless poor people to take shelter in Morichjhapi along with other areas of the Tide country for tiger conservation. Kusum, Fokir's mother, who was a part of the Marichjhapi community, explains the situation "The worst thing was not the hunger or the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the policemen making their announcements, hearing them say that our lives and existence were worth less than dirt or dust. This island needs to be saved for its trees, and animals, it is part of a reserve forest, and it belongs to a mission to keep tigers, which is paid for via way of means of humans everywhere in the world ..... No human being assumes this a criminal offense besides they have forgotten that this is how humans have always lived by fishing, clearing land, and planting the soil." (Ghosh, 261-262). In this text, Ghosh makes a case for the Indigenous people who were considered a direct threat to the lands, forests, and reserve areas and therefore their homes are being looted to make room for the tigers. These people had to fight against not only the unstable and alarming natural environment, the cyclones, tigers, and crocodiles but also other powerful human beings who are unjust, biased, and unethical. However, underneath the protection, rare animals are killed and sold; the leather trade goes on and trees are chopped down and sold in a heavy amount to the traders coming from the cities. Islanders are not responsible for the bareness of the forest; but the timber merchants from the cities who destroy the forests in agreement with the Forest Department and ruin the wildlife and ecosystem. Therefore, Ghosh in this novel enlightens the reader that in the name of the development and preservation of wildlife all over the world, all the narrow and nasty deeds are done where the poor people always become victims (Tiwari, 95). He deeply regrets the death of the poor marginalized people as he cries "So this is just an index of the fact that the disadvantaged people dying are extremely poor and do not have a voice. They cannot make themselves heard and understood, and that is why we are not aware of their plight." (Ghosh,269).

This kind of immoral action and exploitation of nature has a direct effect on both humans and nonhumans. Therefore, Ghosh is concerned with the lives of dolphins, prawns, whales, dugongs, and poor marginalized people for the voice of the voiceless. He explored how the indifferent attitude of the government toward the poor, oppressed, and marginalized people causes miserable consequences in their lives. By describing this narrative, he raised his voice for the voiceless and looked for a better world where stewardship responsibility towards others either humans or nonhumans can bring good to others.

Moreover, monetary purposes corrupt politicians themselves and allow their men to breach the law. These politicians protect the area and punish the poor who try to enter these restricted areas to earn a living. The forest department is an important factor in representing the laws of the government because it recognizes the role of the state and its relationship to conservation practices. The same politicians for profits close their eyes when their own men exploit those conserved regions. Besides this, they also promote the production of products that are very harmful to the ecosystem because the ban on such products may hamper their income. For example, Moyna told Kanai that the new nylon nets which were used by the fishermen to catch the spawn of the tiger prawns, were so fine that the eggs of other fish also got caught in that net. Nevertheless, those nets could not be banned, “because there’s a lot of money in prawns and the traders had paid off the politicians. What do they care or the politicians for that matter? It’s people like us who’re going through suffering and we’re the ones who should think first.” (Ghosh, 134). So, politicians prioritize the economic purpose of pushing human beings in danger. Moreover, we see that Lusibari has been inhabited by poor marginalized people who are forced by political affairs to leave their homelands and search for their livelihood like the inhabitants of the Morichjhapi as well. So, these migrants are on the run from political

displacement. They are the people devoid of financial, commercial, social, and political power. In this way, Ghosh's narration is critical of the political brutality and injustice that hamper the lives and rights of poor and marginalized people for capitalism that affects mostly the lives of poor people and other species and environmental destruction too. The author argues that the diversity of social hierarchies and voices contradicts the violation of human rights committed in the name of conservation. *The Hungry Tide* takes the initiative to stimulate the subaltern experience. The story raises national and global awareness of the history of violence in the Sundarbans, throwing into relief the continuing exploitation of the place. As Lawrence Buell claims, eco-critics explore literary texts as "refractions of physical environments and human interactions with those environments, however the artifactual properties of textual representation and their mediation by ideological and other socio-historical factors." In this context, Ghosh's novel exposes the horror and hypocrisy evident in conservation efforts in the Sundarbans by revealing the interplay between the government vs. the poor, animals and plants, and the environment. More specifically, the construction of the Sundarbans waterscape in Ghosh's novel helps achieve this goal. In this context as reverse Ghosh presents Nilima Bose as just the opposite of the capitalist greedy politicians but the benevolent steward of the poor marginalized people in Lusibari. Through the Badhabon Trust an NGO, she stands for the poor, widows, and migrated people. She founded a Mahila Sangathan, the Women's Union, and ultimately the Badabon Trust in Lusibari and carries out welfare activities and provides services like medical, paramedical, agriculture, etc. She has established a hospital too. She expressed her purpose as follows "The challenge of doing small things in one place is enough for me is Lusibari. I've given it everything I can and yes, after all these years, it has amounted to something: it's helped people; it's made a few people's lives better." (Ghosh, 387). Through this text, Ghosh conveyed

the message that if we start the small thing in our respective places as Nilima Bose had done in Lusibari for the displaced people then together the world will be protected, cared and conserved. As a steward, Nilima brings hope and a better life to many people in this tide country. Kanai says “She is a real person on the island, and everyone calls her Mashima.” (Ghosh, 14). Sarika Pradiprao aptly calls her “the pragmatic builder of today.” (Pradiprao, 2). The middle-class educated Nilima did not think of herself but was dedicated to the service and care for the local people to cast out the social problems in Lusibari. Nilima’s concern for the survival crisis of the islanders, particularly the women who were helpless to all insecurities and dangers lurking in the place, features the interdependence between man and nature, the disturbance of which gives rise to several environmental and anthropogenic disorders harmfully affecting both man and nature. She values her trust more than her own life and protects like a mother. “...All these years, you’ve sat back and judged me. But now it’s there in front of you, in front of your eyes- this hospital. And if you ask me what I will do to protect it, let me tell you, I will fight for it like a mother fights to protect her children.” (Ghosh, 214). Nilima becomes a good example to the readers and the world as a steward who looks for the well-being of others in Lusibari. Thus, individual efforts and personal choices of doing good work like Nilima contribute to the larger collective effort to preserve our planet. Therefore, if everybody plays their stewardship role from their respective places will bring a positive impact on the environment with the mission together hand in hand and united by our love, care, tenderness, and actions for nature.

Ghosh emphasizes the personal choice of living eco-friendly with nature to keep the ecosystem balanced and harmonious. In this regard, Fokir plays a stewardship role in living an eco-friendly with nature in the novel. Fokir has a very good relationship with and understanding of nature and creatures without getting even schooling. He can recognize dolphins, their behavioral patterns,

sentiments, movements, the habitats of these marine mammals, and even their food habits. It is like a personal relationship that draws him closer to building a good relationship that inspires him to protect them as stewards. Essentially, he feels at home on the water and takes great pleasure in catching crabs, fishing, singing to Bonbibi the forest goddess, etc. as a child of nature. Thus, Fokir's lifestyle poses no threat to his surroundings and neither to the other species. To protect the environment, Ghosh emphasizes a personal good relationship with nature like Fokir against the world that takes the generation away from the basic understanding of nature and the man-nature relationship. This lack of understanding and closeness to nature is the cause of the exploitation of nature and creatures that bring disharmony and imbalance in the ecosystem. It shows that the relationship between humans and nonhumans is failing. Therefore, connectedness is the key factor in relationships that need to be promoted everywhere. In this regard, Ghosh focuses on the old way of lifestyle that is eco-friendly and connected to the environment. It is said that no one can prove that primitive ways of living can cause damage to the ecosystem, but those ways were always in harmony with nature. For example, the refugees settling in Morichjhapi were choosing ancient ways of living is expressed through the words of Kusum, "No human being could think this a crime unless they have forgotten that this is how humans have always lived through fishing, clearing lands and planting the soil." (Ghosh, 262). Their way of living is influenced and shaped by cultural values that are connected with nature, faith, and values and are very close to nature.

The cult of Bonbibi in the novel is one of the central metaphors around which the lives of the islanders are structured and organized. Ghosh combines ecological and cultural issues in the legend of Bonbibi, a forest goddess who safeguards the islanders from tigers. They believe Bonbibi is responsible for their prosperity and adversity and saves them from the tigers and tides

and provides them graces to get woodfire, honey, and other necessary things for their livelihood. This mutual understanding and relationship create great respect, devotion, fear, faith, and dependence that bound them with unity, fraternity, solidarity, harmony, love, and caring. Thus, culturally Bonbibi becomes the steward of the people who protect, save, provide, and care for the Sundarbans people. Moreover, she is called 'Ma' (Ghosh, 359). The embodiment of motherhood of Bonbibi, the soul of forgiveness, patience, endurance, optimism, love, service, concern, and care always becomes the armor of protection for her children the islanders as a mother-child relationship. Therefore, it is a call for the readers to treat nature as a mother who nurses and cares for her children unconditionally and abundantly. As a mother, she deserves respect, honor, love, and care from her children. But the present reality is just the opposite, she gets exploited, disrespected, neglected, and tortured in this modern world due to anthropocentric attitudes and considering nature as a commodity for consumption, usage, and economic development. This attitude and understanding lead human beings to exploit and controller over nature degrading their morality. When human beings are aware that their personal choice of actions is bad, inhumane, and destructive, then change and transformation will come to the environment and relationship. Therefore, ethics must be promoted for the realization of their unethical activities to bring radical change internally. If ethics doesn't bring internal change is worthless. As Leopold said, "No significant change in behavior can be achieved without an internal change in our thoughts, fidelity, love, and faith." (Leopold, 209-210). Thus, morality and ethics help a person to change their mind and inspire them to build a good relationship between humans and nature and creatures like the relationship between Bonbibi and People. The story of Bonbibi in the text reflects the necessity to appreciate the environment despite its inconsistency and scary nature. Ghosh's concern is to make the readers and the world aware to cherish good cultural beliefs,

values, and practices for harmony and bond between humans and nature rather than conflict and disharmony. Preserving native cultures and restoring native ecosystems is a priority in global environmental protection which Ghosh brings out through his novels through folklore, myth, and cultural beliefs and practices and indigenize the novel.

Now it is high time for human beings to become environmentally conscious, and closer, and shift the idea of nature just as a commodity and object that belongs to them for usage and consumption but should realize nature as a community to which they belong for their existence in this common home earth. A member of the same community urges mutual relationship, dependency, and loving and caring for each other for the common good, a harmonious and balanced world for the next generations. No matter how small each action is, together we build a better world for the next generations. Therefore, everybody needs to be aware of their personal choice of actions, prioritization of actions, and collaborative efforts to become stewards together for the good of the entire world by protecting it from global environmental catastrophe.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### GLOBAL ECOCRITICAL CONCERN: COMMON GOOD OF HUMANS AND NON-HUMANS IN *GUN ISLAND*

In many ways, *Gun Island* is a memoir and continuity of *The Hungry Tide*. The Sundarbans appears again in *Gun Island*, but this time with many other locations such as the Sundarbans, New York, Los Angeles, and most importantly, Venice contributing to the novel's global significance because climate change is a global concern now greater than before. Dinanath's journey in these locations is filled with cyclones and tornadoes as well as encounters with dolphins, poisonous snakes, shipworms, and venomous spiders as an effect of climate change. Ghosh's skillful use of the legend of Manasa Devi, which acts as the connective point in holding the different parts of Dinanath's voyage together, and addressing diverse issues such as climate change, mythology, legend, Venetian history, refugee, and animal and human migration are captured within the lively narrative and its colorful variety of characters. The narrator of the novel is a New York dealer of rare books with a Bengali background who comes to Calcutta to spend his winter vacation and visit the shrine in Sundarbans which changes his whole life. Ghosh creates Deen, in the place of Gun Merchant of the seventeenth century who follows the footsteps of the old hero and then finds out the connection between the past and the present condition of the migration. Ghosh explores a world in which every major character gets away from one calamity to fall into another calamity like the gun merchant of the seventeenth century who flees from the snare of Manasa Devi, the goddess of snakes. Besides presenting the severe plight of refugees like the earlier novel, it also echoes crucial ecocritical issues. Kanai's aunt Nilima is concerned about the environmental crisis of Sundarbans and tells the protagonist, Deen, to visit the temple of Manasa Devi. She said "The Sundarbans Islands have always been surrounded by

sea; They are disappearing before our eyes. That's why I feel that some record should be made of it; for all I know that temple might be an important historical monument.” (Ghosh, 18). Ghosh illustrates climate change as the new normal situation through Deen who explains climate change with arguments that global warming is happening due to excessive carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases present in the atmosphere and the change is natural (Ghosh, 214). In contrast, the humanist Cinta argues against Deen about where these gases come from and questions: “Do they not come from cars and planes and factories that make whistling kettles and electric toasters and espresso machines? Is it normal that we need things that no one needed a hundred years ago?” (Ghosh. 214). So, it is very clear that, in old times, the factors that changed the climate were geological factors along with the micro components that formed the world, while the biggest factor causing climate change in the Anthropocene era was humans. Ghosh points to the anthropocentric attitude and looking for a standard of life deteriorates the environment causing climate change and its devastating consequences affecting both humans and nonhumans globally. Therefore, I will analyze the global ecocritical concern from Sundarbans to Venice through the lens of myths, legends, climate change, refugees, and migration to fight against it for the common good and equilibrium of the ecosystem through stewardship responsibility of love, care, and concern for the nature. In particular, Ghosh focuses on the personal choice of actions that produce either a positive or negative impact on the environment required to revisit nature and realign the relationship in *Gun Island* through ecocriticism.

*Gun Island* is merged with the incorporation of climate change and ecocriticism. Amitav Ghosh interweaves complex patterns of narratives with so many genres in *Gun Island*. It is a voyage and intelligence to unravel certain mysterious, hidden, and uncanny issues and find out the truth that makes him a voyager from the marshy dark uncanny islands of Sundarbans to Venice. It bears a

fascinating tale of myth, and legends, the history of the Bangladesh Liberation Movement of 1971, the catastrophic nature of climate change, the refugee and migration crisis, the extinction of rare species, and the flora and fauna of Sundarbans, all these are intertwined so promisingly that it would transport any reader from the physical world to the world of imagination. The complex islands of Sundarbans possess deep forests, deadly tigers and the deadliest is the tide that rises and surges up and falls at the island leaving the entirety ruined and devastated. Kanai and Piya, are both heading toward the Sundarbans and meet the uncanny tide that makes them understand the hazardous lives of the settlers in Sundarbans. *Gun Island* is set in a magical realist style where Deen travels to the flood-prone region of the Sundarbans to discover the secret legend of gun merchant and snake goddess Manasa Devi. The vengeful nature of the snake in the novel draws a merchant from the Sundarbans to Venice feeling the loss of his life. He becomes a victim of the flood that had once hit the Sundarbans and is later sold as a slave and ultimately retires on the island of guns i.e. Venice which was once considered as the greatest manufacturer of ammunition. *Gun Island* incorporates the interrelationship between humans and nature that ‘everything is connected’ with each other amidst conflict. There is no way to exclude anyone from the relationship because human beings are part of nature and interdependent. Therefore, when this dependency is violated through human intervention and activities brings ecologically imbalance, destruction, and disharmony affecting both humans and non-humans. *Gun Island* foreshadows the alarming and deadly issue of climate change and gives a strong request for maintaining a proper interrelationship between man and nature. The novel presents problems like the bleaching of Irrawaddy dolphins, fish kill off, siltation of Sundarbans, the sinking of a city like Venice, oceanic dead zones, exploitation of rare species like Tarantula, pollution of the seas and rivers, a decrease of oxygen in the oceans, and various natural disasters. And at last, due to

all these degenerations of nature, it is both humans and non-humans who are the victims of their destruction and are forced to migrate to other countries. *Gun Island* draws a direct parallel between the migrants leaving their homes in quest of a better life and the dolphins and other animals being forced to evict their old and familiar places due to increasing temperature, global warming, climate change, and natural disasters. Humans indeed change the climate through their anthropocentric activities, economic profits, consumption, and self-interest. Amitav Ghosh `always felt the urgency to discuss the ongoing destruction and degradation of the environment for awareness and realization of their actions. Because the choice of destructive and anthropocentric actions brings environmental destruction and the choice of eco-friendly actions brings a positive impact on the environment. Therefore, Ghosh emphasizes the personal choice of good actions, prioritization of actions for the common good, and collaborative efforts to become stewards together with the basic principles of love, care, concern, and responsibility to build a better world.

Ghosh uses a familiar Bengali myth between the Bonduki Sadagar and Manasa Devi in *Gun Island* as a modern reflection of environmental change and migration and the relationship between humans and nonhumans. Manasa Devi in the Bengali myth symbolizes nature and the gun trader as a human being who exploits its wealth for profits and forces him to flee for its destructive effects. Like merchants, modern humans have nowhere to run from such an inescapable danger today for anthropocentric activities for profits, economic development, consumption, and individual well-being. It explored the human impact on ecology, such as the greenhouse effect, global warming, loss of biodiversity, rise in sea levels, increase in saline water levels, loss of habitat, forced migration of species, contamination of water resources, and so forth due to anthropocentric causes in the 21st century. In this situation, humankind must

appreciate and care for the environment to prevent an ecological catastrophe that would likely make its species extinct. A change in the ecological system becomes a global problem in later stages. The problem starts in the early stages as a local problem, however all together a problem starts to affect another one, and all together they develop into an ecological mishap that is enough to change the balance of the earth globally. In the novel, people who migrate to other countries with the loss of work and living space experience the effects of this global change in the countries wherever they go. Therefore, a greater climatic change will not only affect certain parts of the world and some certain types of life but the whole world and all the living things that it harbors, and there will be no escape for humans and other living things. In this perspective, Ghosh's imaginary scenario warns against a possible ecological change and its financial, psychological, and social consequences. Ghosh highlights how global warming is affecting the climatic patterns that are rapidly reshaping ecological and social futures in the Sundarbans Islands and around the world. Ecologically, the sea level rise in the Sundarbans has led to rapid change in land dynamics as "the islands of the Sundarbans are continuously being swallowed up through the sea; they're disappearing before our eyes." (Ghosh, 18). Even the dams of the shores are not easy as the tides are unpredictable and would always rise higher and pull them down again. These changes make the lives of people complex and force them to leave the place for their existence. Socially, the anthropogenically altered environment is now posing a threat to the survival of human life in Sundarbans. The land of Sundarbans is not suitable for cultivation as they are constantly intruded on by seawater and are turning salty causing unable to cultivate and produce crops. As a result, they are forced to leave the place to other locations for their survival. Therefore, a fictional warning in a novel can prompt a new form for humans in their relationship with the ecosystem, giving humanity the chance to revisit and think about their

relationship with the environment, so that their relationship with the earth would not be based on dominance, control, consumption, and exploitation but instead encourage an admiration, respect, love, concern, and care for the ecology as a steward. Because we cannot control the world but we can control our reactions, actions, and way of living to build a world in a better way. As long as people believe they are in control of nature and interrupt nature to fulfill endless desires of profits will bring an ecological change and damage that affects not just the animals and plants but also humanity as well. This human intervention and personal choice of anthropocentric actions entangle the life and species at the margins of marginalized countries that need to be realized to bring change for the betterment of the world.

Ghosh has a deep passion and concern for the poor marginalized people who are victims of suffering in so many ways such as being excluded from the region for political purposes, restricted region to their livelihood, refugee migration, a victim of politicians and Dalal, human trafficking, slavery, killing by animals, and affected by the climate change and natural disaster. In this context, Piya emphasizes the displacement of the inhabitants of the Sundarbans and denotes that the world has changed; we do not know where we belong anymore -neither humans (mostly marginalized section) nor animals (Ghosh, 97). Piya says that citizens must be aware of the changing environment and everything they know and are familiar with “The water, the currents, the earth itself – was rising against them.” (Ghosh, 97). It is marginalized people who face the consequences directly all over the world. He outlines the long-term effects of cyclone Aila in the novel that hit the Sundarbans in 2009 for the duration of which masses of miles of embankment and thousands of acres of land were damaged and destroyed; the sea waters had encroached in the hinterland along with getting into low-lying places; widespread fertile lands had been devastated through saltwater, making them uncultivable for a generation, if not forever:

millions of the inhabitants were struck by the cyclone and of which thousands were rendered homeless (Ghosh, 48-49 ). It is unbelievable and indescribable how much devastation took place after every cyclone, flood, and storm in the Sundarbans. The novel highlights that after the landfall of the cyclone, the land and water turned against the inhabitants. The land that had been providing food, water, and livelihood to them, became a ‘devourer’ as the water got poisoned by arsenic-laced brew (Ghosh,49). All these effects of nature are the result of anthropocentric activities, profits, economic development, consumption, and individual well-being. This crippled the development and stability of the people living in the Sundarbans, which wasn’t a safe place to live but forced them to migrate for survival and a better life.

In the time of migration to other locations causes severe suffering and deprivation of human dignity. As described in the novel, they borrow and steal money to pay agents to get work or slip into Bangladesh and join labor gangs that head for the Gulf. Sometimes they pay traffickers to take them by boat to Malaysia or Indonesia (Ghosh, 49). Simon Behrman and Avidan Kent of their book *Climate Refugees: Beyond the Legal Impasse? (2018)*, describes how people are forced to migrate illegally due to the circumstances. They, in the book, assert that poverty, lack of skill, and lack of infrastructure block their ability to adapt and migrate legally (Behrman & Kent 2018). Ghosh’s *Gun Island* focuses on the plight of immigrants from space, with its depiction of environmental destruction and its destabilizing effects driving people to flee. Tipu and Rafi, a pair of young Bengali boys in the novel, get trapped in the corrupt net of the traffickers to flee overseas. They are smuggled from Bangladesh to Turkey via India, Pakistan, and Iran in minibuses wherein they are stuffed like animals. Meanwhile, they are stopped at ‘connection houses’ near the borders. After arriving at these connection houses, they have to pay to go further (Ghosh, 182). Ghosh describes the merciless and inhumane treatment these people

have to face during the journey, they are beaten, slapped, and assaulted physically and sexually (Ghosh, 238). Therefore, human trafficking and climate change are discussed as two important issues in *Gun Island*. Climate change has worsened living conditions of humans leading them to human trafficking and also contributing to environmental degradation and natural disasters severely. Traffickers often take opportunities of environmental crises and chaos to defraud and blackmail victims. “A couple of nights after their arrival, a boy who worked as a servant in the connection house, had come running to a nearby village. He had a strange story to tell. Later that evening, the connection house was hit by a sudden storm, he said. A tornado had struck the house with such force that the building had collapsed, killing some of the traffickers and rendering the others helpless.” (Ghosh, 282). It describes the context of a sudden storm hitting a house where victims were imprisoned by human traffickers and disrupted the activities of human trafficking networks simultaneously. The author describes the connection between climate issues and human trafficking, making life more perilous for people in some places facing environmental instability and unable to adapt to it. Thus, Ghosh attributes the ecological alarm to fueling climate-induced migration and efforts to show that the disruptive local ecosystems drive internal and international human migration. Ghosh connects the global climate crisis and migration with the legend of the gun merchant and Manasa Devi of the seventeenth century to unravel the truth behind the myth. Manasa highlights the issue of multispecies justice, suggesting that humans’ hubristic tendency to dominate nonhumans, and the lack of communication between humans and other species, have led to today’s climate crisis and destruction.

Manasa Devi epitomizes the protective and possessive nature and acts as a steward in the novel. She safeguards nature from the evil hands of mankind represented by Chand Saudagar. Because human beings destroy the ‘Mother Earth’ through capitalism, trade, globalization,



industrialization, and utilitarian usage. The merchant Chand Saudagar upholds the symbol of capitalism and globalization who travels from one country to another looking for profit to fulfill his desire without thinking the nature and creatures but exploiting them creating conflict between humans and nature. Manasa Devi is the true epitome of power and her battle is against patriarchy i.e. divine Lord Shiva or the capitalist leader Chand Saudagar the worshiper of Lord Shiva who exploits and dominates over her. She has always stood up for her independence, dignity, and respect and fought for it. It is her wrath that made the merchant flee from the islands of Sundarbans and take shelter at Venice (the land of guns). The anger of Manasa Devi shows the anger of creatures because of injustices done to her by the human representative of gun merchants to gain profits by exploiting it day after day which endangered her life in this world. Therefore, Manasa Devi as the symbol of non-human beings and women's society is resisting and fighting against the immoral actions of human beings and patriarchal society to settle her existence and right to live peacefully. The unquenchable greed of humans for natural resources caused such disorder for nonhumans in this world. Gilson says "Ghosh's L.A. is metaphorically represented with the parable of the merchant, and the raging wildfires are signs of nature biting back: the revenge of the Manasa Devi." (Glinson, 272). Humans no longer show any devotion and respect to the natural world resulting from their excessive supremacy and greed is explored by the gun merchant. Human activities are principally responsible for the increasing alterations of climatic conditions. In this situation, humankind must appreciate and care for the environment to avert an ecological catastrophe that would likely wipe out the species on Earth. In this context, *Gun Island* serves as a fictional warning to human beings about the imminent perils to fall upon due to anthropocentric causes. If not, the approaches are reconsidered to restore our relationship

with the environment, and nonhuman world devoid of any dominance and control, but desiring to encourage an admiration for the ecology with love, care, and stewardship responsibility.

Therefore, it is a concern that creatures of the world will take revenge or give it back in their way to exist on this planet if any injustice, persecution, and exploitation has been done to them. It is the learning for humanity that if human beings do well to nature good will come in return but if they do harm and exploit nature will bring environmental crises and natural disasters to destroy humanity. Therefore, the destiny of human being is depending on the actions of human being. Particularly, he emphasizes the personal choice of doing good works through Piya, Fokir, and Nilima who built a good environment for good relationships and balance and harmony in the ecosystem by refraining from exploitation, dominion, and control.

Building a shrine by the gun merchant for the Manasa Devi invites human beings to move from the exploiter, destroyer, and profit seeker to steward, caretaker, lover, and protector. It emphasizes the relationship of love, care, and concern going beyond selfishness, greed, consumption, and individual profits and well-being. In this regard, Chand Saudagar played the role of the steward who built a shrine for the Manasa Devi where she finds the freedom to live independently, fearlessly, and easily without intervention. Building a shrine is building a good environment and atmosphere for the creatures and animals giving back justice to them and creating an opportunity to live with their rights. Chand Saudagar played an ethical role in giving the right to nonhumans and nature to flourish and exist independently though he was forced to do it. Here the stewardship responsibility of Chand Saudagar didn't come from inside but from an external force that obliged him to do it which is not a good sign for humans. Human should play their entrusted role of loving, caring, and protecting nature willingly and responsibly otherwise it pushes us to do it for the betterment of the world. In this regard, Leopold criticizes this kind of

obligation relating to the use of land in his article *Land Ethics*. He said that people should use the land for the good of the whole biotic community rather than for individual well-being and usage. If people are forced and obliged to use the land for the whole community without their conscience, love, and concern then it is meaningless. Leopold says in his article *Land Ethic* that “Obligations have no meaning without conscience, and the problem we face is the extension of the social conscience from people to land (Leopold, 209). People are encouraged to act on their entrusted stewardship role from within to bring harmony and balance to the ecosystem and the eco-friendly relationship between humans and nature. Chand Saudagar is the message to readers and the world that unless or until human beings build a proper environment, nature will not calm down from its wrath but will explore the natural disasters that we are facing today. Thus, re-reading the legend in the present times brings out the eco concerns of the goddess who wants to save the environment from human beings who are in the quest for profit, self-interest, and consumption rather than the common good of all. Thus, Ghosh awakens the conscience of the reader and the world through the story of myth. Human actions are primarily responsible for the increasing changes in climatic conditions all over the world. In this situation, humankind must appreciate and take care of the environment to prevent ecological devastation that causes extinction of the species on earth. *Gun Island* serves as a fictional warning to human beings about the forthcoming dangers due to anthropocentric causes and encourages us to re-establish a relationship with the environment with the basic principles of love, care, concern, tenderness, and stewardship responsibility. Therefore, human should be aware of their personal choice of actions to bring positive and eco-friendly impacts on the environment with collaborative efforts and emphasizing the common good of all in the larger canvas of biodiversity.

Besides Manasa Devi, Ghosh brings out another analogy of The Black Madonna of La Salute a sculpture who is worshipped as the savior goddess during the time of the plague, and the chapel was built in her name in the town during the seventeenth century when the environment was not stable. In that text, Cinta describes her as a mediator between humanity and Earth, with all of its blessings and despairs. The Black Madonna is often referred to by those who worship her as the mother of the Earth. These two beliefs go hand in hand with the Madonna acting as the mother of her two children, Humanity, and the Earth, who takes care of and protects them. Her placement in the novel centers heavily on climate change, climate disasters, and spiritual reasons for their coming into being was a very all-around and tactical one. She works as a bridge between the worlds of the merchant and today's migrants but also as a bridge between man and nature. Thus, The Black Madonna becomes a symbol of hope not just for the migrants tormented with uncertainties but also for the entire world with its human and nonhuman ecology. If Manasa Devi stands for the wrath of nature whereas the Madonna of Good Health symbolizes nature's capacity to show mercy. Ghosh demonstrates the dual images of nature as the ever-vengeful Manasa Devi and the ever-merciful Santa Maria della Salute. Nature will act or react according to the dealing with nature of human beings either merciful or vengeful. Everything depends on the actions and behavior of human beings towards nature. Good and eco-friendly actions open the door to a better world and destructive and anthropocentric activities destroy the world affecting both humans and non-humans. Therefore, the relationship and dealing with nature is important. Ghosh explored goddesses in the novel who work as stewards to save and protect the worshipers, the victims, and nature. Manasa, as a steward fought against the exploiter of nature, stood for the refugees, and saved the worshipers from snake bites. On the other hand, Black Madonna as a steward saved the people from the plague and saved her two children earth and

humanity from all the problems. Thus, Ghosh emphasized the stewardship responsibility of each one of us to save the world from environmental crisis, destruction, and climate change globally.

Due to global concern, Ghosh travels from the wild and tangled Sundarbans to Los Angeles parched by wildfires to slowly sinking Venice and other environmental catastrophes. He depicts the effects of the ecological disorder and destruction of ecosystems of Sundarbans is also happening across the world due to climate change and global warming for anthropocentric attitudes. Venice is a sinking city like the mangrove forests which sometimes undergo very harsh realities due to climate change. Venice is built mostly from wooden columns so with that being said, due to climate change affecting the lagoons' temperature, they get something called shipworms which destroy everything. Various studies show the ecological devastation of the city. Nicolas Whybrow explores in his essay *Losing Venice: Conversations in a Sinking City* that Venice submerged some 23 centimeters in the last century. The seasonal floods are increasing gradually with the inundation of the foundations of the city (Whybrow, 99). Ghosh understands that the city is being pushed to the edge of destruction and the gradual weakening of the building due to the rising water level. The floor of the lobby was often underwater, sometimes the water was knee-deep due to frequent floods (Ghosh, 164). Along with swamping the buildings, global warming also poses a threat to its bridges presenting the city of bridges on the edge of collapse. The woods are sturdy however shipworms had been hollowing them bit by bit as monsters since they have been rotting the wood of the bridges. He further says that these creatures are conquering Venice with the warming of the lagoon's water and damaging the city by not just eating up the wood from the inside but weakening the foundations of the city. Climate change is affecting more in Venice as an enemy, which not only affects the integrity of many structures in

Venice but also leaves locals homeless as well. This is dangerous for many obvious reasons, but it also causes depopulation from death or just wanting to get out of a dangerous place.

Ghosh shows that the flora and fauna in ecosystems are being reconstructed due to global warming in Venice. Deen witnesses a venomous spider, a brown recluse at Cinta's apartment that used to be found in relatively warm regions. Ghosh argues that rising temperatures across the globe caused by global warming are changing the habitats of various kinds of animals, such as spiders, shipworms, cobras, and snakes among others (Ghosh, 204). It shows a global interconnectedness among climate issues and how climate change impacts cities worldwide. Protagonist Deen experienced the effects of climate change everywhere and he cannot escape the influence of the environment in any part of the world. No matter where he travels experiences some disasters that threaten the species. An especially curious incident occurs on Deen's flight to California: he sees a fire in mid-air. Through the flames outside his window, Deen watches a bird gripping a writhing snake in its talons. His reaction is unexpected, "When I saw the creature flying through the air, a sound came from its throat - which I later heard was a scream" (Ghosh, 129). Thus, the effects of climate change are all over the world affecting humans and nonhumans severely due to anthropocentric attitudes. Witnessing all these events raises an eco-concern of Deen as a steward that also forms a feeling of inevitable anxiety for the readers as well.

As a steward, Piya had a deep concern for the ecosystem and species and recorded the varying patterns of dolphins that become increasingly erratic along with a rising number of beached whales and dolphins. She holds extending oceanic and riverine dead zones responsible for the expansion. "Have you heard of oceanic dead zones? No? Well, they are these vast stretches of water that have a very low oxygen content - to go for fish to survive. Those zones have been growing at an alarming rate, largely due to industrial fertilizer waste. When they are washed into

the sea, they set off a chain reaction that leads to all the oxygen being sucked out of the water. Only very specific organisms can survive under these conditions. Everything else dies, which is why these waters are known as ‘dead zones’ and those zones have now spread over tens of thousands of square miles of ocean -some of them as rock as middle-sized countries.” (Ghosh, 95). According to Pia, dead zones are mainly happening due to industrial fertilizer residues increasing at an alarming rate (Ghosh, 95). Robert Diaz and Rutgers Rosenberg argue that increased primary production and subsequent eutrophication of the world’s coastlines, fueled by industrial fertilizers from rivers and the burning of fossil fuels in the atmosphere, have increased the formation of dead zones. The increase in organic matter due to increased primary production promotes microbial oxidation and oxidation of dissolved oxygen in groundwater (Diaz and Rosenberg, 926). It brings changes in the composition of the waters of the Sundarbans, water contamination, and existing dead zones resulting in the death of fish, crabs, dolphins, and other marine life in both the river and sea. It crashes the lives of the poor who earn their livelihood by fishing or collecting crabs. Piya claims that with rising sea levels and diminishing flow of freshwater, water salinity has started to increase and intrude deeper upstream which is a threat to dolphins and the inhabitants of the Sundarbans. It is explored that “the flow of freshwater diminished; saltwater has begun to intrude deeper upstream making certain stretches too saline for the dolphin.” (Ghosh 92). That’s why they started avoiding that part of the water and gradually began to shift upwards. Thus, climate change is affecting migration patterns severely. As a steward, Pia keeps watch over the Irrawaddy dolphins in the Sundarbans, frequently visits the locations, and gathers knowledge about the terrain of the region. She discovered that the river water was polluted by toxic agriculture and chemicals dumped from factories and an industry run by an unstoppable group of powerful people who control the politicians and the police.

In this regard, she discussed the issues and freely offered her thoughts and concerns about rivers and dead zones and showed her worries about endangered nature, fish, dolphins, tigers, crocodiles, crabs, and climate change. Piya is very much aware of the endangered species both humans and non-humans and her concern for the Irrawaddy dolphins has been depicted as stronger and more intense. She showed anxiety over the whereabouts of one particular dolphin, Rani. When Piya learns that an Irrawaddy dolphin (Orcaella) has gone missing along with two other dolphins, it becomes the cause of her worries. Thus, she gives her efforts, love, concern, and care to save endangered species as a responsible steward. On the other hand, Nilima's concern for the 'dhaam' and her determined attempts to protect the symbol of heritage by pushing Deen to visit the shrine for once, with the underlying hope of some fruitful results from the visit. Her concern for the survival crisis of the inhabitants, especially the women who were vulnerable to all insecurities and dangers lurking in the place, features the interdependence between man and nature, the disturbance of which gives rise to several environmental and anthropogenic disorders adversely affecting both man and nature. An exception to this is neither endurable nor curable; ceaseless efforts to quench the insatiable thirst for unbound prosperity at the cost of the environment and the ecological system supporting life on earth will experience the repercussions of extinction on both living and non-living entities. The eco-concern of Piya and Nilima gives the message that tenderness, care, love, concern, and responsibility are the basic principles that human beings should reflect in their thoughts and actions toward nature. Therefore, the readers are encouraged to be stewards of endangered species both humans and non-humans to save them from the environmental crises all over the world. Ghosh explores how the harmful impacts of anthropogenic water pollution deteriorate the condition of poverty-indigenous people by destroying their livelihoods and causing them to leave their homes to



survive. This human exodus from the Sundarbans due to climate change is comparable to the Gun Merchant who fled his home country to avoid the destructive forces of climate change and the wrath and revenge of the Goddess Manasa whom he disobeyed. Cinta, an Italian historian provides a rational interpretation of the fabled tale of the Gun Merchant, “The parallel voyage of the climate-driven migrants of the past (the Gun Merchant) and the present (the underprivileged from the Sundarbans) clarifies that the legend is “an apocryphal record of a real journey to Venice.” (Ghosh, 138). The merchant set out from Bengal to escape the goddess Manasa Devi whose rage unleashed not only venomous snakes but also droughts and floods to punish him by making him suffer loss in his trade. According to Cinta, a merchant’s land in eastern India was hit by droughts, floods, and ice ages, and he eventually lost everything, including his family, and finally decided to go abroad to recover his fortune. The modern migrants too leave their homeland to flee the curses of nature that hindered their way of living. In both cases, the migration offers nothing but a precarious and meager life. Ghosh indicates that as the merchant’s plight came to an end only when he bowed down to the angry snake goddess who symbolizes the wrath of nature and built a shrine as compensation, similarly the plight of the modern man too will end only when he stops destroying and exploiting nature for economic profits, development, individual wellbeing, and consumption. Therefore, conservation is emphasized through stewardship responsibility to protect the world and the ecosystem for the common good of all rather than the individual economic development and profits.

Regarding the conservation of nature, cultural beliefs and practices played a vital role in *Gun Island*. Culture is the heart and soul of any society. It is the way of life of the people that shapes the lives of the people. The cultural beliefs and practices of the Sundarbans people in *Gun Island* include Manasa Devi, a goddess of snakes who worshiped her to save from snake bites and who

also protects nature and refugees as well. On the other hand, the Black Madonna is another cultural belief and is worshiped to save from the plague and to protect her two children humanity, and the earth from all kinds of catastrophe. The shrine of Manasa Devi became the center of cultural belief of Sundarbans people beyond the religion to build a good relationship along with reverence, faith, and unity. The Muslim boatman the caretaker of the shrine informs that it was “respected by all, regardless of religion: Hindus believed that it became Manasa Devi who guarded the shrine, even as Muslims believed that it was a place of jinns, protected by a Muslim pir (saint) by the name of Ilyas.” (Ghosh, 16). Thus, it serves as a tribute to the syncretism that characterizes the Indian subcontinent’s cultural history. All these cultural beliefs and practices make the way to establish a good relationship with the forest, animals, and nature as an interdependent relationship in the common home earth. Traditional cultures have lived in harmony with the environment for thousands of years in balance with the environment. Therefore, the Sundarbans people are the preservers of cultural beliefs that lead them to love, care, trust, and respect the forest and to establish good relationships and harmony. Cultural values include respect for the natural world, forests, and animals that dignified their inherent value. Regarding the value, Leopold also emphasizes the relationship with the land and its use must be ethical based on love, respect, and admiration rather than economic purposes. He says “I do not believe that the relationship between countries can exist without love, respect, and without valuing the country, without respecting its value. By value, I mean something broader than economic value; I mean value in the philosophical sense.” (Leopold, 223). Here focus on human values that need to be cherished rather than economic values as stewards of human and non-human beings. The fact is that human beings give economic value to everything for their usage, profits, and individual interest ignoring their inherent value that must be

respected and preserved. Thus, the economic value of the things is prioritized over the inherent value affecting humans and non-humans in the novel. In this context, Leopold criticizes the economic motives of the people who have an unquenchable appetite for profits in his essay *Land Ethics* “One basic weakness in a conservation system, which is based entirely on economic reasons, is that the majority of the country’s population has no economic value.” (Leopold, 210). Looking for profits, economic development, and consumption leads to anthropocentric activities destroying the world severely. Ghosh particularly emphasizes the native cultural practices and values that are eco-friendly to maintain harmony and balance in the ecosystem. Failing to preserve it brings climatic catastrophe and imbalance causing climate change, and environmental degradation, and forcing humans and non-humans to migrate to other places.

Amitav Ghosh talks about two types of migration: ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’. In *Gun Island*, Ghosh documented both human and nonhuman migration. Unlike in the animal world, the migration in the human world of the novel is mostly voluntary. From the Gun Merchant of the ancient world of folklore to the characters of present times, all of them are influenced by a ‘pull’ factor that draws them to migrate voluntarily to foreign countries for a better life. Tipu and Rafi try to find a route to Europe for a secured life, and a good job for a better living. They came to know through the internet and were fascinated by the allurements of a better life. Tipu thinks that “the internet is the magic carpet of the migrants; it’s their conveyor belt.” (Ghosh, 61). With the help of the Internet, they can gather information, knowledge, and a way to communicate and cross the border. On the other hand, Ghosh also showed the ‘pull’ factor of migration that draws people for a better life that becomes the basis on which ‘the multi-billion-dollar migration industry’ links organizations in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Ghosh does not pose man just as a

ruthless villain in the drama of environmental devastation but also as a hapless victim trying desperately to survive through migration and dislocation just like the other inferior animals. The promise of a better life in a better world pushed the gun merchants in those days and Tipu, Rafi, Billal, Kabir, and others were in the present time as well. In both cases, climate change plays a vital role in demolishing their teenage life. In particular, the lives of Rafi and Tipu in Sundarbans often damaged by heavy storms compel them to look for alternative jobs and search for illegal paths to cross the border for a better secured life. On the other hand, voluntary migration is also influenced by various 'push' factors of which the most prominent is the adversities rising from various natural calamities such as floods, drought, cyclones, storms, climate change, etc., and other reasons forcing them to migrate to other locations. In the life of Bilal and Kabir's situations, the problem starts between the families for the properties. Despite there are frequent floods that spoil more land areas causing unable to produce crops for their livelihood. Bilal's uncle threatens Bilal's family to move the boundaries with the help of political power and Kabir helps Bilal. To save his life Bilal along with Kabir leaves Bangladesh for a better life. Thus, the catastrophic effects of climate change result in frequent cyclones forcing humans and nonhumans to migrate. Climate change is a driving force for migration, making regions like the Sundarbans unsustainable in the future. Ghosh in *Gun Island* shows both pull factors and push factors of the migration that is happening all over the world with severe effects. Ghosh presents that helpless refugees and cross-border migrants are not always victims of political, ethno-religious, or racial conflicts, but also people devastated by environmental destruction which is explored through the story of Lubna Khala and her husband, immigrants from Bangladesh to Venice after the Bhola cyclone and other natural disasters in the novel. Moreover, varying numbers of refugees, from political and ethno-religious refugees in *The Hungry Tide* to environmental refugees and

economic migrants, are entering Europe illegally on *Gun Island*. The novel deals with the issues of voluntary economic migration and organized trafficking of young migrants from Bangladesh and Pakistan to Europe as refugees, via the Middle East and Egypt, across the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas. It shows how economic migrants from these countries were included in subgroups of refugees and unsettled young workers who entered Europe as refugees from the war-torn Middle East and poverty-stricken countries. The illegal migrants intentionally cross international boundaries to reach economically rich countries and earn money for a better life which they could not attain in their home countries. But such a brave yet illegal step is deadly for them since they undergo inhuman treatment and brutal torture during migration, losing their prior social identity, and human dignity and being only marked as refugees. Besides there are the loss of property, malnutrition subsequent deterioration of health, horrific deaths at the hands of traffickers, extreme fear, physical torture, and unemployment resulting in deep-rooted psychological agony among the refugees.

Thus, illegal immigrants become political refugees, social outcasts, homeless and nameless entities, and exploited resources. As illegal refugees, they suffered a lot “slapped or beaten; sometimes the jackals would hit with pistol butts. They end up in terrible situations like women are sent to distant brothels, and able-bodied men are sent to worksites in faraway cities or even abroad. Many of the folks who left have been in no way heard from again. Those people who can’t pay the ransom, experience worse than what they are, otherwise trying to escape, as they are operated, on “where an organ is removed.” (Ghosh, 174). It shows that human brutality towards his fellow creatures for trade, business, and economic purposes is ethically wrong and unjust lacking of love and concern. Ghosh describes the darkness of the human heart through the Blue Boat that “has become a symbol of everything that is wrong with global inequality, climate

change, capitalism, corruption, the arms trade, the oil industry. We hope this will be a historic moment. Maybe now, while there is still time to change, people will wake up and see what is happening.” (Ghosh, 199). It is the picture of the refugee migrants, slave trade, and human trafficking that are going through great suffering all over the world in the name of business and profits. They are not allowed to enter in Italy. However, despite all hazards, a huge number of illegal migrants reach their desired destination, except a few of them are forced to retreat when they are caught. The illegal border-crossing of people of the Sundarbans explains why “environmental migration is widely regarded as one of the most dramatic effects of climate change.” (Gemenne, 238). The novelist blends ancient myths and legends with the tales of the adventurous escapism of illegal migrants from various developing countries in the present to bring out the recurrent story of human migration resulting from global climate breakdown. The self-willed yet socio-politically or environmentally enforced illegal migrations from diverse developing countries in the time of globalization also indicate a kind of renunciation of the past domination of the colonial power that is controlling the human movement across countries. The social conflicts in Italy through the Blue Boat become symbolic of the world acknowledging the ever-present refugee crisis which swiftly increases in the era of anthropogenic climate change.

Amidst the refugee crisis’s inhuman situation, Ghosh created Manasa Devi’s character as a steward who helped refugees enter Italy and saved their lives through miracles. It describes that “transfixed by this miraculous spectacle: the storm of birds circling above, like a whirling funnel, and the graceful shadows of the leviathans in the glowing green water below.”(Ghosh, 309). Manasa Devi creates this display of nature to show the Admiral of the Italian Navy that she is on the refugee side. She exercises her omnipotence and convinces the Admiral that she is a force to be reckoned with. Thus, she becomes the savior of the refugees. On the other hand, Rafi plays

the role of steward of saving souls by making an extra effort to save Tipu from the danger he is facing and also from human trafficking. He lends money from other people even beaten by those people only to save Tipu. He is ready to spend the last of his earnings on Tipu. Furthermore, Billal also plays a stewardship role by standing for Kabir by sharing his 30 percent of income who cannot make money for his family. This concern of Billal to Kabir and Rafi to Tipu is a sign of humanity, love, support, and responsibility for his fellow creatures. This incident gives the message that there are so many people like Tipu and Kabir and refugees all over the world who somehow face threats, suffering, confinement, depression, uncertainty, insecurity, and danger in their lives because of climate change and anthropocentric attitudes. In this situation, tenderness, love, care, and stewardship responsibility are driving forces to save and protect them for a better life and a harmonious world that is entrusted to each human being must be awared.

Thus, exploring the multiple realities, such as climate change, environmental catastrophe, migration, refugees, and suffering from Sundarbans to New York, Los Angeles, and Venice, encourages the readers and the world to be aware of the global climate crises and to take the appropriate steps to protect the ecosystem as loving and ethical stewards. Ghosh emphasized the basic principles of love, care, tenderness, and stewardship responsibility to fight against anthropocentric attitudes, economic profits, utilitarian usage, individual well-being, and climate change to keep the ecosystem harmonious and balanced for the next generations. In this mission, one cannot be ignored, or neglected but needs a symbiosis of humans and nonhumans for the common good of all in this common home earth. Therefore, humans should be aware of their personal choice of actions, prioritization of the actions and intentions, and collaborative efforts to bring positive impacts on the environment for a better world by becoming stewards together.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have discussed the literary theory of ecocriticism along with reviewing the selected existing literary works on this theory and the two chosen novels, and the methods that I have used for analyzing the texts. Analyzing the two primary texts, I have included the discussion of rethinking nature and animals to bring awareness for better relationships and the world with the basic principles of love, care, tender, and stewardship responsibility. First of all, I have discussed *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh focusing on the human-nature and animal relationship amidst conflict, and then *Gun Island* focusing on the global ecocritical concern for the common good of humans and non-humans. By analyzing, I have shown a comparison of how both the novels portray environmental issues and encourage us to adapt bioethics and rethink nature and animals in the light of interdependent relationships, common good, and stewardship responsibility of care, love, and concern. Environmental ethics, especially bioethics talks about the need for harmony between anthropocentrism and biocentrism and talks about the environmental ethics and the integration of both biocentrism and anthropocentrism for the common good. It carries the objective of making us think in a new way about nature and animals for a harmonious and balanced world as the symbiosis between humans and dolphins and the Bonbibi and the islanders. Both the environmental ethics and the two novels bring out questions on the true happiness of life that lies in materialistic progress, economic development, and industrialization over the welfare of the environment or we are ruining nature and harming the environment globally. Humans have become geological agents, changing the most basic physical processes of the earth with the advancement of science and technology for their anthropocentric purposes, economic profits, utilitarian usage, and individual well-being neglecting the common good of all. Both texts show us that, errors in environmental systems happen mostly due to the



errors in ethical systems. It is our ethical systems that guide us to act according to how the ecosystems are functioning. Hence, both texts bring out these issues through different characters, incidents, and scenes including climate change, global warming, environmental degradation, pollution, and conflict, and the man-animal relationship through dolphins and tigers are seen throughout the stories. All these urge us to rethink nature, the environment, and animals in a new way to consider the environmental crises and their effects. To find happiness through the beauty, gifts, and blessings of nature, we have to nurture, cherish, and work for its welfare rather than exploitation, dominion, and control. If we continue to exploit nature like Chand Saudagar, politicians, the government, and owners of the industry, and factories then nature will stop showering her blessings on us, and react furiously like Manasa Devi and give back through natural disasters for the mistreatment and injustices have done to nature. But building a good relationship like the islanders and fokir with nature will positively impact the environment and we will receive the blessings of nature in many ways. Therefore, it is high time to adapt environmental ethics to rethink and renew the relationship between humans, nature, and animals for the well-being of the entire ecosystem before it gets too late. As we witness severe environmental degradation due to the man-made climate crisis, moral degradation, and personal choice of destructive actions, and prioritization of anthropocentric attitudes, we need to rethink our way of life, actions, attitudes, and consumption to prevent the malicious impressions of climate change. There must be a partnership ethic between nature and humanity that does not posit nature as a resource created specifically for human utility and consumption but rather as a community that represents coexistence between human life and biotic life with mutual dependency, support, reciprocity, harmony, and partnership with each other. To build this harmonious and balanced world, humans must be the servants of nature with care, love, respect,

dignity, and ethical responsibility, particularly as Piya, Nilima, Bonbibi, Fokir, Rafi, and Billal in the novels. As stewards, humans make the world a common home for all to live co-existent humans and nonhumans without exclusion and discrimination but with an inclusive relationship for the common good and the equilibrium of the ecosystem for the next generations. It is important to recognize that the power to protect the environment lies in the hands of individuals, communities, and societies that need to play responsibly. Therefore, Ghosh emphasizes the personal choice of good actions, prioritization of the common good, and collaborative efforts of individuals to become a steward together to bring a positive impact to the environment to fight against the global environmental catastrophe for a common good, equilibrium of the ecosystem, good relationship, and a better world for the next generations.

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