



Myth and Nature in 'The Hungry Tide': An Ecocritical Exploration of Amitav Ghosh's Novel

Dr. M. Nivedita,

Assistant Professor, Department of English, and Head, Department of Languages, University College of Science, Saifabad, Hyderabad, Telangana, India

Abstract

The Sundarbans, designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is not only an important area of high biodiversity but also a location rich in cultural and mythological stories. These misconceptions, which are sometimes overlooked due to the imminent danger of environmental deterioration, have a crucial impact on the development of the ecological awareness of the people living in the region. Ghosh, with his exceptional storytelling skills, enhances the significance of these regional legends for a worldwide audience, emphasising their capacity to cultivate a more profound understanding and admiration for the environment. This article explores the interdependent connection between myth and ecology in *The Hungry Tide*, analysing how Ghosh utilises indigenous myths and folklore to contextualise intricate ecological concerns. The study seeks to reveal the interconnectedness between human existence and the pressing environmental issues of our day by incorporating ecocritical philosophy. Ghosh's book portrays the Sundarbans' battle for existence against both natural and human-induced challenges. Additionally, it offers a deeper analysis of the worldwide ecological issues, prompting us to reconsider our beliefs and their influence on our environmental ethics.

This article aims to emphasise the contribution of *The Hungry Tide* to environmental literature and its urgent plea for an ethically oriented approach to understanding and safeguarding our natural world. It does so by examining the interconnections between mythological narratives and ecological insights in the novel. In this novel, readers can engage in a perceptive examination of how Amitav Ghosh skillfully combines the complicated web of mythology with the urgent environmental issues in the Sundarbans, a complex archipelago of mangrove islands extending across the Bay of Bengal. Ghosh's story provides a rich narrative setting where human existence intertwines extensively with the non-human, offering a compelling subject for ecocritical examination.

The paper aims to conduct an ecocritical analysis of the myths and tales that are integrated throughout Amitav Ghosh's novel, *The Hungry Tide*. By delving into the ecological possibilities presented by ancient Hindu myths and the legend of Bonbibi, this study suggests that some myths and legends might serve as a valuable resource for developing environmental ethics and sustainable ways of living. When analysed within an ecocultural framework, the myth of Bon Bibi seems to embody the potential to be interpreted as a 'green text' that has facilitated the establishment of ties between the people and the environment. The ongoing narration of the story through theatrical productions and musical performances throughout the islands of the coastal region has facilitated the transmission of the region's unique environmental culture across generations. The narrative of Bonbibi holds eco-pedagogical significance as it aims to inspire environmentalists to develop a conservation policy that is rooted in specific geographical locations. The myth is just one of several sub-texts that the work contains.

Keywords: Myth, Ecocentrism, Ecology, Conservation, Sundarbans, climatic catastrophe, postcolonial development etc.

Myths are essential constructs, for example, narratives that assist our species in comprehending its position in the world. Myths persist as long as they serve a useful purpose. *The Hungry Tide*, published in 2004, is set in the Sundarbans, a vast mangrove forest spanning around ten thousand square kilometres along the border of India and Bangladesh. The Sundarbans is one of the largest mangrove forests in the world and is situated in a peripheral place on India's geographical map. In contrast to the previous novels, *The Hungry Tide* primarily unfolds within the Sundarbans, with a significant amount of action occurring in this particular setting. The archipelago, comprising numerous islands, some of which are very small, is recognised as one of the most vulnerable ecosystems that is being severely impacted by climatic catastrophe and postcolonial development under the framework of neoliberal economic policies.

In 1987, UNESCO designated the Sundarbans as a World Heritage Site with the main goal of garnering both local and international support to enhance conservation efforts in the area. The Sundarbans National Park encompasses a Tiger Reserve, which serves the purpose of safeguarding the critically endangered Royal Bengal Tiger species, as well as a Biosphere Reserve that was established in the year 2001. The mangrove forests located between the rivers and the Bay of Bengal have long served as a natural barrier, protecting the Indian coastline, particularly the city of Kolkata, from the frequent cyclones and stormy tidal waves that strike the region.

Ghosh utilises religious literature and vernacular sources to portray the natural phenomena of the Sundarbans. The novel challenges the tendency of ecocriticism to separate nature from culture and instead demonstrates the inseparable connection between nature and civilization.

A myth is a traditional sacred story that is typical of anonymous authorship and has universal significance. It is often shared within a specific community and is associated with a ritual. Myths narrate the extraordinary deeds of superhuman beings such as gods, demigods, heroes, spirits, or ghosts. They are usually set in a non-historical or supernatural realm and may involve interactions between this realm and the world of human history. These superhuman beings are often depicted in human-like forms, although their powers exceed those of humans. The storytelling in myths is not naturalistic and may have the illogical structure of dreams. A people's mythology as a whole tends to be lengthy, extravagant, and filled with apparent inconsistencies. Ultimately, the purpose of myths is to explain, reconcile, guide action, or provide legitimacy. Myth-making is a fundamental and widespread cognitive process in which the human mind strives to create a cohesive understanding of the structure of the universe, the organisation of society, and the purpose of individual existence. Both for society as a whole and for each individual, this role that generates stories appears to be vital. An individual derives purpose in their life by constructing their existence as a narrative embedded within a broader societal and universal narrative. (Laurence Coupe 2009, p.6.)

Coupe argues that while fertility, creation, and many hero myths occur outside of historical time, deliverance myths combine myth and history, and certain hero myths, such as the story of Odysseus, are based on historical events like the Trojan War. The range of values is between 6 and 7. The novel implies that specific myths and tales associated with particular locations can restore and revive the environment. Ghosh views myths, legends, and traditional stories as cultures that have the potential to alter our perspective and attitude towards nature and non-human entities. This transformation can lead humans to develop a greater sense of responsibility towards their natural environment and the existence of non-human beings. He firmly asserts that the environmental issue, such as the climate crisis, that we are currently facing is not just a crisis of the environment, but also a crisis of culture and imagination. He argues that by rediscovering the power of spoken language in literature, we might bring about a transformation in the cultural norms of our modern day.

The novel comprises two primary categories of myths: old Hindu Brahmanical tales and the myth of a local god associated with the subaltern inhabitants of the Sundarbans. The viewers are presented with a legendary account of how the Sundarbans were formed through the convergence of two powerful rivers that flow into the sea. Kanai peruses a collection of photocopies of Nirmal's notebook

According to old tales, it is believed that if Lord Shiva had not restrained the powerful flow of the goddess Ganga's fall from the skies by tying it into his ash-covered hair, the world would have been torn apart. Listening to this narrative allows one to perceive the river in a specific manner:

as a celestial intertwining, like an enormous water rope, unfolding across a vast and arid expanse. ... there is a moment when the braid unravels; where Lord Shiva's tangled hair is separated into a large, knotted mess. After surpassing that particular location, the river liberates itself from its constraints and divides into numerous, possibly innumerable, intricately intertwined strands. (6)

In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh emphasises that the old stories serve as a valuable source of historical and geological knowledge. Nirmal Bose, the deceased uncle of Kanai, was drawn to Hindu stories of creation due to their ability to facilitate the reconnection of individuals with their natural surroundings. Nirmal, upon discovering the strong connections between old Hindu mythology and natural sciences, decided to educate the children of refugees who had recently relocated to Marichjhapi island in this scientific aspect of the myths. Nirmal and Horen sought refuge in Kusum's residence on Marichjhapi island due to an approaching storm. The following morning, he encountered the leader of the displaced individuals to extend assistance towards their mission. As an educator, Nirmal suggested that his contribution could be to provide instruction to the children residing on the island. When Horen inquired about Nirmal's plans for educating the youngsters of Marichjhapi, Nirmal stated that he intended to commence by exploring the interconnectedness of stories and geology.

Think about it," I would say, "and you'll see. It's not just the goddesses — there's a lot more in common between myth and geology. Look at the size of their heroes, how immense they are — heavenly deities on the one hand, and on the other the titanic stirrings of the earth itself — both equally otherworldly, equally remote from us. Then there is how the plots go round and round in both kinds of story so that every episode is both a beginning and an end and every outcome leads to others. And then, of course, there is the scale of time — yugas and epochs, Kaliyuga and the Quaternary. And yet — mind this! — in both, these vast durations are telescoped in such a way as to permit the telling of a story.

How, Saar, how? Tell us one of these stories.

Therefore, I would commence.

Perhaps I would commence by recounting the tale of Vishnu, who assumed the form of a celestial dwarf and proceeded to measure the vast expanse of the universe with three colossal steps. I would inform them about the deity's mistake and how an accidental toenail on one of his feet caused a minuscule blemish in the fabric of existence. I would inform them that it was this small opening in the ground that gave rise to the immortal and everlasting Ganga, which traverses the celestial realms and purifies the sins of the entire universe. This sacred river would eventually become the most magnificent among all the rivers on Earth.

Look, comrades, look," I would say. "This map shows that in geology, as in myth, there is a visible Ganga and a hidden Ganga: one flows on land and one beneath the water. Put them together and you have what is by far the greatest of the earth's rivers. (126)

Ghosh, through the character of Nirmal, prompts us to reconsider the epistemological differentiation between myth and science. He demonstrates that mythic patterns are not necessarily incompatible with geological explanations; rather, they can enhance one's understanding of natural phenomena. Piya's early fascination with the sciences was also influenced by the mythology of exploration. Nevertheless, Nirmal's aspiration to educate the children of displaced refugees, who had undertaken perilous journeys from the concentration camps of Dandakaranya to the island of Marichjhapi, seems inconsequential when confronted with the imminent dangers of being forcefully evicted by the communist state government. The head of the recently established refugee community expressed disapproval towards Nirmal's suggestion. Nirmal documented his response in his journal.

"Our children here have no time to waste," he said. "Most of them have to help their families find food to eat." Then, after a little more thought, he added, "However, if you can find students who're

willing, then why should I prevent you? It's up to you: teach all you want." I went back to Kusum triumphantly and told her what had transpired. In evident alarm, she said,

"But whom will you teach, Saar?"

"Why?" I said. "There's your son, Fokir. There must be others like him. Mustn't be there?" A look of reluctance had come into her face, so I added, almost pleading, "It wouldn't be every day. Maybe just for a little while each week. I'll come over from Lusibari." (128)

Kusum was underwhelmed and disheartened by Nirmal's offer, which held little significance given the unpredictable nature of life at Marichjhapi. Nirmal required a legitimate justification to be near Kusum, who had become his cherished source of inspiration. Before his retirement as a school headmaster, Nirmal dedicated himself to the socialist cause of Marichjhapi refugees and expressed deep care and sympathy towards Kusum, whom he had loved since her visit to his wife Nilima seeking assistance with the Marichjhapi crisis. Nevertheless, Nirmal's understanding of Marxist principles proved to be shallow, since he was unable to fully comprehend the consequences of the communist-led government's stated opposition to the refugees from East Pakistan. In addition, he maintained a social and cultural distance from the immigrants by choosing to educate the children about Hindu Brahmanical beliefs instead of educating them about the myths, legends, and folklore that were unique to their homeland. Coming from the Bhadralka, a society of privileged upper-caste intellectuals, Nirmal has always taken pride in upholding the ancient Hindu myths as scientifically and rationally sound. However, he considers the local myths and customs of the hair desh (the coastal region) such as the myth and legend of Bon Bibi to be irrational and superstitious.

Similar to how the novel advocates for a middle ground between biocentrism and anthropocentrism, the myth of Bonbibi also promotes the idea of using the forest in an environmentally beneficial way. Myths provide explanations for why certain areas are chosen for food collection while others are routinely avoided, and why humans use specific technologies to process particular resources. For the myths to serve their purpose, they must contain essential environmental knowledge specific to the culture. The legend or myth of Bonbibi, when placed inside a particular setting and culture, can create a unique form of environmental imagination that is sensitive to the needs of the environment and the marginalised people of the BhatirDesh. The ecological role of the myth can be observed through the effects it has on individuals who believe in Bonbibi. The writer himself admits that,

The Bon Bibi fable fundamentally conveys a parable highlighting the detrimental effects of human greed. It emphasises that achieving a balance between the forest and cultivated land is only possible by imposing restrictions on human desires. For the followers of Bon Bibi, the parables convey the concept that the forest should only be entered when there is a clear and proven necessity. The Bon Bibi tale employs the efficacy of fiction to establish and delineate a connection between individuals and the environment. The legend of Bon Bibi does not explicitly use a term equivalent to 'Nature', but the awareness of it is always present. The Bon Bibi mythology is distinct in its specificities, however, it is not necessarily exclusive in its perception of the connection between humans and the environment. Comparable notions of equilibrium, respect, and the restraint of avarice can be observed in various geographical locations.

When analysed within an ecocultural framework, the myth of Bon Bibi can be interpreted as a 'green text' that has facilitated the establishment of strong links between the people and the environment. The narrative of Bonbibi holds eco-pedagogical significance as it aims to inspire environmentalists to develop a conservation policy that is rooted in specific geographical locations. The myth is just one of several sub-texts that make up the novel. In the novel, there is a chapter called "The Glory of Bonbibi" which is entirely devoted to the mythology of Bonbibi, who is credited with giving life to this area (THT 292). This part conveys a powerful environmental message that encompasses a wider ecological agenda, acknowledging the interdependence between human and nonhuman beings in the specific bio-space of the Sundarbans (Kaur 2007, p.128). The religion of Bonbibi serves as a means for local figures such as Fokir, Kusum, and Horen to establish a connection with the land. The myth serves as a location where nature and culture are intricately intertwined. The novel incorporates Bonbibi's tale along with a few ancient Hindu myths to demonstrate how myths, folktales, local legends, and oral narratives can serve as alternative

sources of "counter-history," a term coined by Mitchell Foucault. These narratives can also be utilised for ecological "inhabitation" and to challenge the Eurocentric nature of the European novel form, in addition to their decolonial significance.

Kaur (2007) highlights the capacity of old Hindu religious traditions to address the current ecological concerns. Through her anthropological investigation of Indian tales, she concludes that the tales and visuals convey the importance of collaboration and environmental harmony among distinct components of the ecosystem, rather than only between them. The understanding of the mythological language does not rely on logical thinking or arguments, but rather on direct experience and active involvement. The concept advocates the practice of self-restraint, care, and regulation of urges aimed at indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources for personal gain. The objective is to generate abundance without causing scarcity, achieve fullness without causing emptiness, and promote prosperity without causing depletion.

The worship of Bon Bibi can be classified as both a myth and a legend, as it exists in a space that is not clearly defined by cultural boundaries. The narrative often merges verisimilar particulars with paranormal and eerie aspects. The fabled legend of Bon Bibi is mentioned in two instances throughout the novel. The initial rendition of the story is narrated in the chapter titled "The Glory of Bon Bibi," which depicts the dramatic enactment of the legend by a group of itinerant performers while Kanai, still a schoolboy, visits the Sundarbans for the first time. Kusum and Kanai observed the performances jointly, which took place in the open maidan of Lusibari during the nighttime. In this chapter, there is an analysis of Kanai's response to the performance of the Bon Bibi story.

Kanai's most significant astonishment occurred at the beginning of the novel. The reason for this was that the origin of the tiger goddess story did not take place in the celestial realm or on the shores of the Ganga River, unlike the mythical narratives that he was acquainted with. However, the initial scene took place in an Arabian metropolis, with the background adorned with mosques and minarets. (THT 102). Kanai presented Piya with a translation of the tale as a symbol of affection. Kanai presented Piya with an enclosed letter that featured the translated version of Bon Bibi's story. Kanai commenced by articulating his sentiments towards Piya:

"What is the significance when a man desires to bestow upon a woman something invaluable - a present that she, and possibly exclusively she, will genuinely appreciate?" (103)

According to the legend, Dokkhin Rai was a Brahmin sage who resided in the wilderness. Eventually, he developed the ability to consume human flesh in the guise of a tiger, thanks to his acquisition of magical powers. His craving for human blood continued to increase and he started murdering impoverished peasants on the pretext of a 'tax' in return for forest resources. He coerced them into facing starvation by obstructing the provision of resources from the forest. After assuming complete control of the forest, he metamorphosed into a malevolent being, subjugating all the creatures and spirits within the forest, thereby instilling a state of fear and oppression across the entire region.

The tale states that Bon Bibi and his brother Shah Jongoli travelled from Medina to the "county of eighteen tides" to secure the area for human habitation, as commanded by the archangel. She engaged in a conflict with the reigning sovereign of the woodland, Dokkhin Rai. Bon Bibi consented to designate half of the coastal region as 'wilderness' under the jurisdiction of Dokkhin Rai while asserting her ownership over the remaining portion. With her guardianship, the latter area became a secure habitat for human settlements. Legend has it that the Tide Country was once in a state of order, with humans and animals coexisting harmoniously. However, this peace was disrupted when human greed interfered with the ruling principles of the land. (THT 103).

The legend of Bon Bibi's miracles originates from this point, as documented by the Muslim author Abdur-Rahim in his work titled *Bon BibirKaramoti* or *Bon Bibi Johuranama* (*The Miracles of Bon Bibi or The Narrative of Her Glory*) (THT 247). Nirmal, accompanied by Kusum, her child, Fokir, and Horen, visited the shrine of Bon Bibi at Garjontola. The shrine was constructed by Kusum's father, whose life was previously rescued by Bon Bibi during a severe storm when he was on his way back home. Nirmal

documented his encounters and reflections during the expedition with the Bon Bibi booklet. Upon examination, he discovered that the text was composed in a hybrid format and was astounded to observe that the pages were oriented to the right, similar to Arabic, rather than to the left, as is customary in Bangla.

However, the prosody of the Bangla folklore resembled that of the legend being told. The legend was narrated in a poem form known as *dwipodipoyar*, consisting of rhymed couplets. Each line in the couplet contained approximately twelve syllables, with a pause, or caesura, occurring around the middle of each line. (THT 247). Nirmal perceived the hybrid form of the poem as harmonious with the cultural geography of the Sundarbans. He questioned, "Could it be any different?" Through numerous observations, I have consistently witnessed that the mudbanks in the tidal regions are not only formed by sediment-carrying rivers, but also by linguistic influences from Bengali, English, Arabic, Hindi, Arakanese, and potentially other languages. Intermingling, they generate a multitude of little realms that remain suspended within the current. It suddenly became clear to me that the faith of the Tide country is similar to one of its large mahonias, which serves as a meeting point for multiple rivers. Similarly, people can utilise this meeting point to travel in various directions, both between different countries and even between different faiths and religions.

The tale of Bon Bibi is accompanied by the "narrative of Dukhey's salvation," which highlights his social and economic circumstances, making him the primary figure of identification for the impoverished and landless inhabitants of the Sundarbans. Dukhey's predicament strongly parallels that of the fishermen, loggers, beekeepers, and landless workers. The narrative follows Dhona, a regional entrepreneur, who decides to embark on an expedition to Kedokhali island, which is under the control of the demon king, Dokkhin Rai. Dhona's objective is to gather honey and wax from the island. Dhona embarked on a voyage with a group of seven ships and local workers, among them a young boy named Dukhey. Dukhey's father had been fatally attacked by a tiger, and he and his mother lived in extreme poverty. Dhona successfully persuaded Dukhey's mother of his secure homecoming. Dukhey's mother, a devout follower of Bon Bibi, instructed her son to invoke the divine presence of Mother Bon Bibi, the deity associated with the forest, in case he encountered and felt endangered by the tigerdemon.

Upon reaching the island, the demon king entices Dhona to give up Dukhey to him in return for abundant quantities of honey and wax. Consumed by avarice for the riches of the forest, Dhona succumbed to Dokkhin Rai's craving for human flesh. The following day, he departed the forest island with his fleet of ships and people, abandoning Dukhey. Witnessing Dukhey's alone and vulnerable state, the king underwent a metamorphosis into a tiger and aggressively attacked him. As the tiger loomed above him, Dukhey fervently beseeched the mothergoddess for assistance before losing consciousness. The narrative recounts that despite being situated deep within the forest, Mother Bon Bibi promptly materialised at the location and successfully saved Dukhey by compelling Dokkhin Rai to retreat even further into the dense wilderness, with the assistance of her brother Shah Jangoli. (THT 102) After Dukhey's body became still, Bon Bibi carried him to her dwelling and "restored his well-being through care and treatment." (103) Upon the designated time for his departure, she dispatched him to his mother's abode, bearing a bountiful collection of honey and wax. Thus, Bon Bibi demonstrated the universal principle of the forest, wherein the affluent and avaricious face retribution while the impoverished and virtuous receive their just rewards.

The story validates the local community's claim to the forest. The narrative of Bonbibi delves into issues about both ecological and societal equity. Bonbibi is revered as the progenitor of all living entities inhabiting the Sundarbans. When viewed through the lens of environmental justice, the legend of Bonbibi appears to be influenced by a postcolonial concept of a harmonious and sustainable natural environment. The narrative implicitly criticises the instrumentalist perspective of nature by warning humanity that engaging in excessively exploitative and damaging actions towards the forest and non-human creatures will result in ecological imbalance and conflicts between humans and tigers.

The central theme of the novel revolves around the importance of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between humans and non-human creatures, as well as between local communities and their natural surroundings. The cult of Bonbibi promotes environmental ethics by establishing

guidelines for the behaviour of forest communities in the Sundarbans as they engage in activities such as gathering wood, honey, herbs, and crabs.

Once, Nirmal got the chance to observe the Bon Bibi rite, which the forest dwellers would regularly do before entering the forest. This ritual was done to seek the deity's protection and to prevent any confrontations with tigers. Horen escorts Kusum, Fokir, and Nirmal to the sacred site of Bon Bibi, which was constructed by Kusum's deceased father within the forest near the coastal area known as Garjontola. Kusum transported the clay sculptures of Bon Bibi and Shah Jangoli to be put in the shrine, and they respectfully paid homage to Mother Bon Bibi. Throughout his entire life, Nirmal consistently promoted logical behaviour and saw the rituals and performances associated with Bon Bibi's story as irrational and superstitious. Nevertheless, at this particular moment when Nirmal found himself in such proximity to the forest, he started to experience a strong feeling or intuition about his demise resulting from a tiger assault. He expressed his concern by stating, "I was positioned at the back, and throughout that time, I couldn't help but constantly think that if a tiger were to pounce on me in those dense mangrove thickets, I would be practically motionless and defenceless, like a trapped meal."(108)

Immersed in the spatial setting of Bon Bibi's ritual, Nirmal reconsidered his previous views on the worship of Bon Bibi and the creation of a sequence of theatrical shows depicting the myth and story of Bon Bibi throughout the yearly festival. The ceremony and the performer both appeared logically persuasive to him. Upon reaching a distance of approximately fifty feet from the shore, Horen ceased rowing and stowed his oars. With his eyes closed, he commenced murmuring and gesticulating with his hands. His demeanour did not resemble that of a magician enchanting with a spell; rather, he resembled a mechanic, tightening a wrench to ensure no task was left unfinished. This provided me with a sense of comfort and confidence.

Myths provide substantial discursive worth since they maintain enduring rules and patterns of action and conduct that generate an "aesthetics of earth." The sources cited include Glissant's work from 1997 and the collaborative work by DeLoughrey and Handley from 2011.

Past Callaghan (2015) suggests that myths, when analysed from an ecocritical perspective, can help counteract the anthropocentrism that contributes to the ecological crises of our time. By giving agency, identity, and complexity to the natural world, myths encourage us to consider the spaces surrounding the protagonist. This ecological approach to reading ancient stories can serve as a remedy for the anthropocentric mindset that fuels and worsens our current environmental problems.

Fokir cultivated his affinity with the natural world during his childhood under the guidance of Bon Bibi, who consistently led him around the forest and waterways. The shrine of Bon Bibi in Garjontola served as a meeting location where the user's deceased mother would summon him. His mother learned about the miraculous deeds of Bon Bibi from her father, and she sang these stories to Fokir when she was pregnant with him. Fakir brought his son Tultul to the Bon Bibi shrine to pass on the ancestral knowledge gained from his mother and his mother's father. The novel demonstrates that the myth has bestowed onto the impoverished inhabitants of the Sundarbans a distinct identity tied to their natural environment, and has fostered a sense of unity among them, transcending religious and social differences. Callaghan contends that mythological narratives have the potential to encourage humans to perceive their connection to, rather than their opposition with, the nonhuman natural world, so challenging anthropocentrism (81-82). Regarding the statement mentioned above, it can be stated that the mythical story of Bon Bibi promotes a mild form of anthropocentrism, which highlights the strong connection between humans and other living species. It also promotes the idea of human behaviour that values harmony with nature. At the same time, it recognises the inherent worth of natural objects and the non-human world.

In conclusion, an ecocritical analysis of myths, tales, and legends suggests that to address the current "crisis of culture" about environmental protection and consideration for non-human beings, mankind should embrace oral traditions and literature. In an interview, Ghosh praised the syncretism and ecologism found in the everlasting legend of 'The Lady of the Forest', Bon Bibi. He emphasised that it is impossible and unimportant to determine whose faith the narrative belongs to. In the Sundarbans region, which spans West Bengal and Bangladesh, the vast majority of forest inhabitants, regardless of their

religious affiliation (Hindu, Muslim, or Christian), are followers of Bon Bibi. The fable of Bon Bibi highlights the significance of maintaining a harmonious equilibrium between the requirements of humans and non-human entities. These stories convey to the modern world a message that it has failed to recognise, resulting in significant consequences. It is important to consider all the narratives that communicate ideas such as 'Strive for greatness', 'Boundaries do not exist', or 'Take action without hesitation'. Conversely, there are only a limited number of messages that encourage individuals to find satisfaction in their current possessions and to acknowledge that without adhering to certain boundaries, all living creatures cannot peacefully coexist on our limited earth. (Interview with Ghosh conducted by Shahnaz Sigantoria) Ghosh incorporates traditional storytelling techniques and local mythology into the narrative, thereby emphasising the need for a location-specific environmental imagination.

Works Cited

Callaghan, Patsy. "Myth as a Site of Ecocritical Inquiry: Disrupting Anthropocentrism". *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, Volume 22, Issue 1, Winter 2015, pp. 80-97, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/isu127>

Coupe, Lawrence. *Myth*. 2ed. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Ghosh, Amitav. "Wild Fictions". Published originally in *Outlook*, October 22 2008. <https://www.amitavghosh.com/docs/Wild%20Fictions.pdf>

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide*. Ravi Dayal: New Delhi, 2004.

Kaur, Rajender. "'Home Is Where the Oracella Are': Toward a New Paradigm of Transcultural Ecocritical Engagement in Amitav Ghosh's 'The Hungry Tide.'" *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2007, pp. 125–41. JSTOR,