SCIENTIFIC CULTURE

www.sci-cult.com

MEMORY STUDIES AND INDIAN ENGLISH WRITING — ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN AMITAV GHOSH'S THE HUNGRY TIDE

Naghma Yunus[1]*, Vanya Srivastava[2]

[1] *Research Scholar, Department of Languages, FOHSS, Integral University, Lucknow.*
[2] *Assistant Professor (Supervisor), Department of Languages, FOHSS, Integral University, Lucknow.*

ABSTRACT

The present paper examines the interrelationship between environmental consciousness, cultural memory, and postcolonial ecology in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide (2004). Drawing upon interdisciplinary frameworks from Memory Studies and Environmental Humanities—particularly Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory, Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory, Marianne Hirsch's notion of postmemory, and Rob Nixon's theory of slow violence—the study argues that Ghosh constructs the Sundarbans as a mnemonic landscape where ecological instability and historical erasure intersect. The novel represents environmental trauma not merely as physical destruction but as a process of cultural forgetting that silences marginalized histories, most notably the Morichjhapi massacre. Through close textual analysis, the paper explores how narrative, landscape, and interspecies relationships function as modes of remembrance and ethical resistance. By foregrounding memory as central to ecological consciousness, the study contributes to contemporary debates in Indian English eco-literature and demonstrates how literature can reconstruct suppressed environmental histories and challenge postcolonial models of conservation and development.

1. INTRODUCTION

A. *Opening Context*

In the twenty-first century, environmental degradation has emerged as one of the most urgent global crises, closely linked to issues of displacement, ecological injustice, and cultural erasure. Climate change, deforestation, rising sea levels, and forced migration have transformed not only physical landscapes but also the cultural memories attached to them. Increasingly, scholars have recognized that environmental destruction is accompanied by a crisis of memory, wherein histories of marginalized communities and ecological knowledge systems are systematically forgotten or erased.

Within this context, **memory has gained critical importance as an analytical tool in ecological discourse**. Memory enables scholars to examine how landscapes store histories of trauma, survival, and resistance. Environmental Humanities and Memory Studies together emphasize that ecological spaces are not neutral terrains but culturally inscribed sites shaped by power, history, and remembrance.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) stands as a seminal text within Indian English literature that addresses these concerns. Set in the Sundarbans—a fragile tidal ecosystem constantly reshaped by rivers and seas—the novel explores the intersections of environment, memory, displacement, and ethics. Ghosh presents the Sundarbans not merely as a natural setting but as a living archive that bears witness to human suffering, ecological violence, and historical amnesia.

B. *Problem Statement*

Despite extensive critical attention to *The Hungry Tide* within ecocritical and postcolonial frameworks, the interconnection between memory and environmental trauma remains underexplored in Indian English fiction. Existing studies often emphasize wildlife conservation, human–animal conflict, or ecological ethics without sufficiently addressing how environmental narratives function as sites of cultural memory.

There exists a significant gap in understanding how ecological texts preserve marginalized histories and collective identities, particularly in postcolonial contexts where state narratives frequently suppress uncomfortable pasts. This gap necessitates a memory-based approach to environmental consciousness—one that recognizes landscape as a repository of historical experience and trauma.

C. *Research Questions*

This study seeks to address the following questions:

1. How does *The Hungry Tide* represent the environment as a repository of memory and collective identity?
2. In what ways does environmental degradation function as a form of cultural and historical forgetting?
3. How do Ghosh's characters negotiate identity through memory, displacement, and ecological belonging?
4. How does the novel's narrative structure itself operate as a form of cultural and ecological remembrance?

D. *Thesis Statement*

This paper argues that Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* illustrates how environmental trauma operates as a form of collective and cultural forgetting, while acts of remembrance—mediated through narrative, landscape, and interspecies connection—function as modes of ecological resistance and moral renewal.

E. *Significance and Scope*

By integrating Memory Studies with Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Environmental Humanities, this paper contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship on Indian English literature. It highlights the relevance of *The Hungry Tide* in discussions of environmental ethics, displacement, and cultural sustainability, and demonstrates how literary narratives can counter ecological amnesia by reconstructing suppressed environmental histories.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Memory Studies Foundations*

1. *Collective Memory Theory*

Memory Studies, as a critical field, emphasizes that memory is not merely an individual psychological phenomenon but a socially constructed process shaped by collective frameworks. Maurice Halbwachs' foundational theory of **collective memory** argues that individual remembrance is always mediated by social groups, institutions, and spatial environments (Halbwachs 38). Memory, therefore, is anchored in shared contexts rather than isolated consciousness.

In *The Hungry Tide*, the Sundarbans function as precisely such a collective framework. The lives of island inhabitants are structured around tides, rivers, and forests, which serve as living repositories of shared experience. The instability of the landscape—where islands appear and disappear—renders memory fragile, emphasizing Halbwachs' claim that memory depends upon spatial continuity. When space itself is unstable, remembrance becomes vulnerable to erasure.

2. Environment as a Spatial Memory Structure

Halbwachs further asserts that **space stabilizes memory**, enabling communities to preserve shared histories (Halbwachs 156). However, *The Hungry Tide* complicates this assertion by situating memory in a geography that resists permanence. The Sundarbans' mutable terrain undermines conventional spatial anchors such as monuments, archives, or stable settlements.

This instability transforms memory into a **fluid process**, much like the tides themselves. Ghosh's representation of rivers and islands foregrounds the difficulty of sustaining historical continuity in an environment subject to constant transformation. As a result, memory in the novel survives not through fixed structures but through narrative, oral transmission, and embodied knowledge.

3. Community Remembrance Through Place

Despite environmental instability, the Sundarbans remain a site of communal remembrance. Fishing routes, tidal rhythms, and sacred sites associated with Bon Bibi function as mnemonic markers that structure collective identity. These practices demonstrate how communities adapt memory preservation strategies to ecological conditions, reinforcing the idea that remembrance is context-sensitive rather than universal.

4. Cultural Memory and Postmemory

4.1. Assmann's Communicative and Cultural Memory

Jan Assmann distinguishes between **communicative memory**, which is transmitted orally and sustained through lived experience, and **cultural memory**, which is preserved through texts, rituals, and institutions (Assmann 27). This distinction is central to understanding the memory dynamics in *The Hungry Tide*.

Fokir embodies communicative memory. His knowledge of tides, dolphins, and forest routes is experiential, inherited through practice rather than documentation. In contrast, Nirmal's notebooks represent cultural memory—an attempt to preserve history through writing and archival means. Ghosh juxtaposes these modes to expose their vulnerabilities: communicative memory risks disappearance with the death of its carriers, while cultural memory risks suppression by political authority.

4.2. Postmemory and Inherited Trauma

Marianne Hirsch's concept of **postmemory** describes how trauma is transmitted to subsequent generations through stories, images, and narratives rather than direct experience (Hirsch 5). Kanai's engagement with Nirmal's writings exemplifies postmemory in action. Although Kanai did not witness the Morichjhapi massacre, the inherited narrative implicates him ethically.

Kanai's transformation throughout the novel demonstrates how postmemory can destabilize privileged detachment. His initial cosmopolitan distance gradually gives way to moral unease, illustrating Hirsch's claim that postmemory carries affective force capable of reshaping identity.

4.5. Archives and Storytelling as Memory Preservation

In the absence of official recognition, storytelling becomes an alternative archive. Nirmal's writings, oral testimonies, and ecological knowledge together form a counter-archive that resists state-sponsored forgetting. The novel thus foregrounds narrative as a tool of historical survival.

5. Contemporary Memory Studies

5.1. Mediated Memories

José van Dijck's concept of **mediated memory** emphasizes the role of cultural texts in shaping collective remembrance (van Dijck 21). *The Hungry Tide* itself functions as a mediating artifact, transforming suppressed history into literary memory accessible to a wider audience.

5.2. Archives of Feeling

Ann Cvetkovich's idea of **archives of feeling** highlights how trauma is preserved through emotional and cultural expression rather than official documentation (Cvetkovich 7). The grief, anxiety, and silence surrounding Morichjhapi exemplify this form of archival memory. Emotional residues persist even when historical records are absent.

5.3. Cultural Expression as Mnemonic Activism

By narrativizing ecological trauma, Ghosh engages in what can be termed **mnemonic activism**—the deliberate recovery of silenced histories through cultural production. Literature becomes an ethical intervention against forgetting.

B. Environmental Memory

1. Environment as Memory Repository

Environmental memory theory asserts that landscapes store traces of human interaction, trauma, and survival. In *The Hungry Tide*, rivers, tides, and forests function as mnemonic agents, silently bearing witness to historical violence.

Ursula Heise's concept of **eco-cosmopolitanism** situates local ecological memory within global environmental discourse (Heise 60). Ghosh's depiction of the Sundarbans resonates beyond regional specificity, connecting local displacement to planetary ecological crises.

2. Slow Violence and Ecological Forgetting

Rob Nixon's theory of **slow violence** describes environmental harm that unfolds gradually and invisibly, escaping immediate recognition (Nixon 2). The erosion of islands and the erasure of Morichjhapi exemplify this process. Ecological degradation and historical forgetting operate in tandem, reinforcing one another.

3. Climate Change and Memorial Crisis

Rising sea levels and environmental displacement generate what may be termed a **memorial crisis**, wherein communities lose not only land but also the cultural memories attached to it. *The Hungry Tide* anticipates this crisis, depicting a world where memory is as endangered as the environment itself.

4. Ecological Memory in Indian Contexts

Indian cultural traditions emphasize harmony between humans and nature, often transmitted through oral narratives and folklore. The worship of Bon Bibi represents an indigenous ecological ethic that encodes survival knowledge and moral regulation. Such traditions function as ecological memory archives resistant to colonial and postcolonial exploitation.

C. Amitav Ghosh's Literary Context

1. Ghosh's Place in Indian English Writing

Amitav Ghosh is widely recognized for integrating history, memory, and displacement in his fiction. Works such as *The Shadow Lines* and *The Glass Palace* explore transnational memory and colonial trauma. *The Hungry Tide* extends this project into ecological territory.

2. Critical Reception of the Hungry Tide

Scholars have examined the novel through ecocritical, postcolonial, and animal studies perspectives. However, most readings treat memory as a secondary concern rather than a central framework.

3. Gaps in Current Scholarship

There remains limited engagement with **environmental memory** as a unifying concept. The landscape is rarely analyzed as an archive, and interdisciplinary approaches combining memory studies and environmental humanities are scarce. This paper addresses these gaps.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates **Memory Studies**, **Environmental Humanities**, and **Postcolonial Ecocriticism** in order to examine how *The Hungry Tide* constructs environmental consciousness through remembrance, loss, and resistance. Rather than treating theory as a detachable tool applied to the text, this framework establishes a **dialogic relationship** between theory and narrative, where each illuminates the other.

A. Collective and Cultural Memory Theory

1. Halbwachs' Concept of Spatial Remembrance

Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory emphasizes that memory is not preserved in isolation but is always embedded within social and spatial frameworks (Halbwachs 38). According to Halbwachs, places serve as mnemonic anchors that stabilize collective identity by providing continuity between past and present. However, *The Hungry Tide* radically complicates this premise by situating memory in the Sundarbans—an environment defined by instability, erosion, and constant transformation.

In the Sundarbans, land is repeatedly claimed and reclaimed by water. Islands disappear, re-emerge, and shift boundaries, making the preservation of spatial continuity nearly impossible. This ecological instability directly impacts collective memory: when physical markers vanish, so do the histories attached to them. Ghosh thus exposes a crucial limitation within Halbwachs' model by demonstrating that memory becomes endangered when spatial frameworks themselves are fragile. The novel suggests that in such environments, memory must find alternative modes of survival beyond physical permanence—namely, through narrative, oral tradition, and embodied ecological practice.

2. Assmann's Cultural Memory and Transmission

Jan Assmann's concept of **cultural memory** further clarifies how remembrance is sustained beyond living generations. Cultural memory relies on symbolic forms—texts, rituals, and narratives—that transmit meaning across time (Assmann 29). In *The Hungry Tide*, Nirmal's notebooks function as fragile cultural artifacts attempting to preserve the history of Morichjhapi against institutional erasure.

However, Ghosh problematizes the authority of written archives by revealing their vulnerability. Nirmal's writings remain marginal, unpublished, and ultimately powerless against state narratives. This underscores a central tension in the novel: while cultural memory aspires to permanence, it is often

subordinated to political power. Ghosh thus critiques the assumption that textual preservation guarantees historical survival, highlighting the necessity of ethical readership and narrative circulation.

3. Hirsch's Postmemory and Inherited Environmental Trauma

Marianne Hirsch's theory of **postmemory** describes the relationship that later generations have with traumatic events they did not directly experience but nonetheless inherit through narratives, images, and silences (Hirsch 5). In *The Hungry Tide*, Kanai exemplifies postmemory as he encounters Morichjhapi through Nirmal's notebooks.

Kanai's engagement with this inherited trauma transforms him from a detached cosmopolitan intellectual into an ethically implicated subject. The trauma of Morichjhapi becomes not merely historical knowledge but an affective force that unsettles his identity. Hirsch's framework is particularly useful here because it reveals how environmental trauma — like political violence — can be transmitted intergenerationally, shaping moral responsibility long after the event itself has been erased from public discourse.

B. Environmental Humanities and Slow Violence

1. Rob Nixon's Concept of Slow Violence

Rob Nixon's theory of **slow violence** describes environmental destruction as a form of violence that is gradual, invisible, and often ignored because it lacks immediacy and spectacle (Nixon 2). This concept is central to understanding both ecological degradation and historical erasure in *The Hungry Tide*.

The erosion of islands, the encroachment of saline water, and the displacement of communities occur incrementally in the Sundarbans. Similarly, the memory of the Morichjhapi massacre is not violently erased in a single act but gradually silenced through bureaucratic neglect, censorship, and absence from official records. Ghosh aligns environmental destruction with historical forgetting, demonstrating that both operate through slow, accumulative processes that evade accountability.

2. Environmental Degradation as Cultural Erasure

Environmental Humanities emphasize that ecological destruction often entails the loss of cultural memory. In *The Hungry Tide*, displacement does not merely remove people from land; it severs the relationship between memory and place. When land disappears, so do fishing routes, sacred spaces, and oral histories embedded in the landscape.

Ghosh's narrative reveals that environmental degradation functions as a mechanism of cultural erasure, particularly for marginalized communities whose histories are not institutionally archived. Literature, therefore, assumes the role of ethical witness, preserving what ecological and political processes seek to erase.

3. Ethical Responsibility of Literature

By narrating slow violence, *The Hungry Tide* fulfills what Nixon identifies as the ethical responsibility of representation — making invisible suffering visible (Nixon 15). Ghosh's novel refuses sensationalism, instead insisting on sustained attention to gradual loss. In doing so, it transforms literary memory into a form of ecological advocacy.

C. Postcolonial Ecocriticism

1. Colonial Exploitation and Ecological Displacement

Postcolonial ecocriticism examines how colonial and postcolonial power structures exploit both land and marginalized populations. The Sundarbans, historically treated as expendable terrain, exemplify how ecological zones inhabited by subaltern communities are subjected to environmental risk under the guise of development or conservation.

The eviction of Morichjhapi settlers exposes the violence embedded in postcolonial environmental governance. Conservation policies prioritize wildlife preservation over human survival, revealing a hierarchy that devalues subaltern lives. Ghosh critiques this logic by foregrounding the ethical contradictions of state-sponsored environmentalism.

2. Subaltern Ecologies and Environmental Justice

The Hungry Tide foregrounds what may be termed **subaltern ecologies** — knowledge systems and survival practices developed by marginalized communities in response to ecological precarity. Fokir's intimate understanding of tides and dolphins represents an alternative ecological epistemology that resists scientific abstraction.

Postcolonial ecocriticism allows us to read these knowledge systems not as primitive but as sophisticated forms of environmental intelligence shaped by lived experience. Ghosh challenges dominant narratives of expertise, emphasizing the ethical necessity of recognizing subaltern ecological knowledge.

3. Interconnectedness of Human and Non-Human Memory

Finally, postcolonial ecocriticism in *The Hungry Tide* extends beyond human concerns to include non-human agency. Animals, rivers, and tides participate in the production of memory, challenging

anthropocentric frameworks. The novel suggests that environmental memory is inherently interspecies, reinforcing an ethics of coexistence rather than domination.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE HUNGRY TIDE

A. *Environmental Trauma Representation*

1. **The Sundarbans as an Ecological and Mnemonic Landscape**

In *The Hungry Tide*, the Sundarbans emerge as a space where environmental precarity and historical trauma are inseparably intertwined. The region's unstable geography—defined by shifting islands, unpredictable tides, and constant erosion—creates a landscape that resists permanence. Ghosh represents this instability not merely as a natural condition but as a metaphor for historical vulnerability. The disappearance of land parallels the disappearance of memory, rendering both ecological and cultural survival uncertain.

From a memory studies perspective, the Sundarbans function as a **mnemonic landscape**, a site where memory is embedded in environmental processes rather than monuments or archives. Rivers, tides, and forests silently register violence, displacement, and survival. This aligns with Halbwachs' assertion that memory depends on spatial frameworks, while simultaneously exposing the fragility of such frameworks in ecologically unstable regions (Halbwachs 156). The landscape remembers even when human institutions refuse to acknowledge what has occurred.

2. *The Morichjhapi Massacre as Collective Ecological Trauma*

The Morichjhapi massacre constitutes the novel's suppressed historical core and represents a moment of profound environmental and cultural trauma. The forcible eviction of refugee settlers by the state—ostensibly in the name of conservation—exemplifies the violence embedded within postcolonial environmental governance. Ghosh deliberately presents Morichjhapi as a memory that survives only in fragments, testimonies, and silences, emphasizing how state power regulates historical visibility.

From the perspective of Rob Nixon's **slow violence**, Morichjhapi illustrates how environmental and political violence unfold gradually, without spectacle, and are therefore easily erased from public consciousness (Nixon 2). The massacre is not commemorated through monuments or official narratives; instead, it lingers as an absence, a void in historical memory. This absence itself becomes a form of trauma, reinforcing cultural amnesia.

Nirmal's obsessive attempt to document Morichjhapi reflects an ethical struggle against erasure. His writings represent a counter-archive that challenges institutional forgetting, even as their marginalization underscores the limits of individual remembrance in the face of systemic power.

3. *Environmental Silencing and Erasure of Local Histories*

Environmental trauma in *The Hungry Tide* is accompanied by the systematic silencing of local histories. Conservation policies and administrative language reduce the Sundarbans to a biological zone, erasing its human past. This bureaucratic abstraction transforms lived spaces into expendable territory, legitimizing displacement and violence.

Ghosh critiques this logic by foregrounding the voices and memories that official discourse suppresses. The novel insists that environmental protection cannot be ethically separated from historical accountability. By representing environmental silencing as a form of epistemic violence, *The Hungry Tide* exposes how ecological narratives can be mobilized to justify human suffering.

4. *Modernity, Conservation, and Memory*

The tension between modernity and memory is central to the novel's critique of conservation discourse. Scientific rationality and bureaucratic governance prioritize efficiency and control, often at the cost of historical continuity. Ghosh demonstrates that when conservation disregards memory, it reproduces colonial patterns of ecological domination under postcolonial regimes.

B. *Cultural and Ecological Memory Reconstruction*

1. *River and Tide as Metaphors of Remembrance*

The river and tide in *The Hungry Tide* function as recurring metaphors of remembrance and renewal. Unlike linear historical narratives, tidal movement embodies cyclical temporality. Memory in the novel does not progress forward but returns unpredictably, much like submerged islands re-emerging with the ebbing tide.This cyclical temporality challenges dominant historical models rooted in progress and development. Instead, Ghosh proposes an alternative temporal framework grounded in ecological rhythms. Memory becomes adaptive, fluid, and responsive to environmental change.

2. *Storytelling as Cultural and Environmental Preservation*

In the absence of institutional recognition, storytelling emerges as a crucial mode of memory preservation. Nirmal's notebooks, oral narratives, and

lived ecological practices together constitute a fragile yet resilient archive. These forms of remembrance align with Assmann's concept of cultural memory, which relies on symbolic transmission rather than material permanence (Assmann 29).

The act of narration itself becomes an ethical gesture, preserving histories that might otherwise vanish. Ghosh positions literature as a medium capable of sustaining memory beyond the lifespan of individuals or the stability of landscapes.

3. Fokir and Piya as Mediators of Ecological Empathy

Fokir and Piya represent contrasting epistemological approaches to the environment. Piya's scientific training initially encourages detachment and objectivity, while Fokir's knowledge is embodied, intuitive, and relational. Through their interaction, Ghosh critiques the limitations of scientific abstraction and emphasizes the value of indigenous ecological memory.

Fokir's eventual death symbolizes the irreversible loss of ecological knowledge that cannot be fully archived or translated. His absence underscores the urgency of recognizing and preserving subaltern ecological memory before it disappears.

4. Kanai's Rediscovery of Memory

Kanai's journey represents a shift from linguistic authority to ethical engagement. His encounter with Nirmal's writings forces him to confront inherited responsibility, illustrating Hirsch's concept of postmemory (Hirsch 5). Memory becomes transformative, compelling Kanai to reassess his relationship to place, history, and privilege.

C. Environmental Consciousness and Human–Nonhuman Relations

1. Dolphins as Interspecies Memory and Continuity

The Irrawaddy dolphins in *The Hungry Tide* symbolize interspecies communication and ecological continuity. Their presence disrupts anthropocentric narratives by suggesting that memory and survival extend beyond human history. Piya's research foregrounds the ethical implications of recognizing non-human agency within environmental discourse.

The dolphins function as living indicators of ecological health and continuity, reinforcing the novel's argument that environmental memory is inherently interspecies.

2. The River as a Living Archive

The river in *The Hungry Tide* operates as a living archive that records both violence and resilience. It witnesses death and survival without judgment,

embodying what may be described as **environmental witnessing**. This aligns with environmental humanities' emphasis on recognizing non-human agency in the production of meaning.

3. Nature's Agency and Moral Recovery

Ghosh attributes moral significance to nature without romanticizing it. The environment is neither benevolent nor malicious; it is responsive, reactive, and ethically demanding. Human survival depends upon acknowledging this agency and adapting accordingly.

D. Narrative Structure and Memorial Form

1. Non-Linear Structure and Tidal Temporality

The novel's non-linear narrative structure mirrors the cyclical rhythm of tides. Shifts between past and present, memory and experience, disrupt chronological coherence. This formal strategy resists closure and reflects the unfinished nature of ecological trauma.

2. Memory, Migration, and Environmental Belonging

Migration in *The Hungry Tide* is framed not merely as movement across space but as dislocation from memory. The loss of place entails the loss of historical anchoring, intensifying vulnerability. Ghosh emphasizes that belonging emerges through memory rather than ownership.

3. Language, Silence, and Ecological Remembrance

Silence functions as a powerful narrative device. The absence of official acknowledgment regarding Morichjhapi becomes a form of textual silence that readers are compelled to confront. Ghosh transforms silence into a site of ethical engagement, urging readers to recognize what remains unsaid.

5. CONCLUSION

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* emerges, through the lens of Memory Studies and Environmental Humanities, as a profoundly ethical narrative that reconceptualizes environmental consciousness as a struggle against cultural and historical erasure. The novel demonstrates that ecological trauma is never purely environmental; it is inseparably tied to the forgetting of marginalized lives, suppressed histories, and subaltern knowledge systems. By situating the narrative within the unstable geography of the Sundarbans, Ghosh foregrounds how memory itself becomes endangered in ecologically precarious spaces.

This study has argued that *The Hungry Tide* constructs the Sundarbans as a **mnemonic landscape**, where rivers, tides, forests, and non-human entities function as repositories of memory. Drawing upon Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory, the paper has shown how spatial instability undermines conventional frameworks of remembrance, necessitating alternative modes of memory preservation. Jan Assmann's distinction between communicative and cultural memory reveals the fragility of both oral and archival forms of remembrance in the face of state power and ecological erosion. Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory illuminates how inherited trauma—particularly the memory of the Morichjhapi massacre—continues to shape ethical responsibility across generations, even when official histories remain silent.

The integration of Environmental Humanities, particularly Rob Nixon's theory of slow violence, has enabled a deeper understanding of how environmental degradation and historical erasure operate through gradual, invisible processes. The erosion of land in the Sundarbans parallels the erosion of memory, producing a condition of ecological and cultural amnesia. Ghosh's narrative resists this amnesia by transforming literature itself into an ethical archive that preserves suppressed environmental histories. The novel's refusal to offer narrative closure reflects the unfinished nature of ecological trauma, emphasizing that remembrance is an ongoing moral obligation rather than a completed act.

Furthermore, the paper has demonstrated that *The Hungry Tide* challenges anthropocentric models of environmental ethics by foregrounding human–nonhuman interdependence. The Irrawaddy dolphins, the river, and the tides are not passive elements but active agents that participate in memory-making and moral reckoning. Through characters such as Fokir, Piya, and Kanai, Ghosh critiques dominant epistemologies and affirms the importance of subaltern ecological knowledge rooted in lived experience.

In conclusion, *The Hungry Tide* insists that environmental justice cannot be achieved without mnemonic justice. To forget ecological trauma is to perpetuate violence against both people and place. By reclaiming silenced histories and embedding them within a living landscape, Ghosh's novel offers a powerful literary intervention into contemporary debates on environmental ethics, displacement, and cultural sustainability. The integration of memory studies and environmental humanities thus provides a vital framework for understanding not only *The Hungry Tide* but also the broader role of literature in confronting the environmental crises of the present and future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

REFERENCES

Assmann, Jan. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Translated by David Henry Wilson, Cambridge UP, 2011.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Harvard UP, 1995.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The Climate of History: Four Theses." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2009, pp. 197–222.

Cvetkovich, Ann. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Duke UP, 2003.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide*. HarperCollins, 2004.

Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser, U of Chicago P, 1992.

Heise, Ursula K. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. Oxford UP, 2008.

Hirsch, Marianne. *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*. Columbia UP, 2012.

Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. Routledge, 2010.

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard UP, 2011.

Van Dijck, José. *Mediated Memories in the Digital Age*. Stanford UP, 2007.