

CHAPTER IV

TREMORS OF TRANQUILITY IN *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

Beauty is nothing
 but the start of terror we can hardly bear,
 and we adore it because of the serene scorn
 it could kill us with... (THT 69)

Tranquillity is the bliss of nature gifted to mankind. Nature is the source of survival for all living things from time immemorial. It is adored and worshipped for its tenacity as humans are always at the mercy of nature. There has always been an equilibrium that connects man with nature in the balance of coexistence. This equilibrium has to be maintained for peaceful survival on earth. Any slightest disturbance or imbalance between the two would naturally result in tremors of destruction and disaster.

Tremor is the ultimate outcome of man's selfish desires. It began with mere selfish ambition and disobedience. According to Christian belief God has bestowed man with the responsibility of guarding and nurturing nature for his well being but he in order to hoard his selfish ambition neglected his responsibility and fell prey to the miseries and tremors which was the result of his disobediences. Man's insatiable desire for power and supremacy nullified his humanistic concern towards nature and fellow human beings. Such supremacy became the root cause for all anti-humanistic feelings like hatred, enmity and animosity that breeds the tremor of life 'death'.

Ghosh in *The Hungry Tide* (2005) portrays the tremors in everyday life of the islanders 'Sundarbans' both by nature and by man. He sketches the simple practicality of life in an island of archipelago where survival becomes almost a battle with the tremors of ebb and flow of tides, escapisms from deadly crocodiles, poisonous snakes

and man-eaters. The novel explores the destiny of mankind through the various tremors of destruction that are natural and invited. Man's disturbance on nature invites tremors of natural disaster like earthquake, storms, floods, famine, plagues and wild animals; and man's disturbance on fellow human beings results in communal clash, hatred, riots, partition and war. This novel interrogates the need for hostile move towards human beings in the name of patriotism when the terrain of Sunderbans itself is hostile and antagonistic to survival.

Ghosh has chosen the lap of nature 'Sundarbans' as a set up for his novel. Sunderbans is situated in the eastern part of the country known for its highest rainfall and Benagl Tiger reserve. It is a vast, erratic archipelago, largely covered by mangrove forests that form the delta of the Ganges as it debouches into the Bay of Bengal. It is a region of no rigid borders and boundaries. It is supposed that one-third of the land is in India and two-thirds in Bangladesh. The boundaries of these borderless lands vary according to the tide of the river. It is a unique turbulence of fresh and salt water forming the islands of the archipelago.

The inhabitants of this archipelago live a life of nomadic population. They inhabit the *chors* in the Island of Sunderbans. They neither possess sense of belonging or patriotic feeling. To them survival is primary every land that enables their survival becomes their motherland. They fall under the category of 'floating population' and are treated as stateless or immigrants by the government. Fishing becomes the only source of survival. The fishing folk traverse the imaginary boundaries to make their livelihood. It is in this place that the nature's tranquillity serves as both the source of reliability for protection and the tremor of threat for losing one's life.

In Sunderbans nature is a bountiful mother as well as a hostile force to every human being. Ghosh describes the hostility of mangrove forest thus:

A mangrove forest is a universe unto itself. Mangrove leaves are tough and leathery the branches gnarled and the foliage often impassably dense. Visibility is short and the air still and fetid. At no moment can human beings have any doubt of the terrain's utter hostility to their presence, of its cunning and resourcefulness of its determination to destroy or expel them. Every year dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage, killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles (THT 7-8).

For the inhabitants of the islands, the storms and the tigers are the tremors in which nature expresses its hostility to human beings. Ghosh brings to light the meekness of human beings in spite of being supreme to other creature. The novel portrays how every living creature - right from the plants to human beings - are treated one and the same in the hands of nature yet the hostility of the government and ruling people surpasses the hostility of nature.

Ghosh structures the story through the relationships among three major characters Piya, Fokir and Kanai. He employs the epistolary narration through the diary of Nirmal that narrates the tale of Morcijihap refugees, using political, philosophical, and religious themes linked with passages from Rilke. In this novel, history, politics, poetry, biography, religion and myth are brought together to experience the ripples of tremors that these tranquil island brings and tells a seamless story of incredible beauty.

The story begins with Kanai, a multi-linguist, awaiting the train that would take him to Canning. His attention naturally fell on Piyali Roy, a foreigner who is also awaiting the train to Canning. On enquiry he learns that she is a cetologist, a marine biologist born in India but raised in America. Piya visits Canning in her

pursuit of researching the endangered river dolphins the *Orcaella brevirostris*, which lives in the waters of the Sundarbans. Kanai Dutt, a multilingual interpreter from New Delhi is travelling to the Sundarbans, on the invitation from his aunt Nilima. His aunt Nilima runs a local NGO and hospital in the town of Lusibari. She sends for him after the discovery of a diary belonging to her late husband Nirmal. Kanai's journal reveals the inhuman act of the government of West Bengal for the holocaust of Morichjhapi. The diary that was written twenty years ago contains descriptions of the tide country's history, geography, and folklore. Ghosh attempts to bring alive an actual historical event neglected in India's postcolonial history.

The intended humanitarianism is revealed through the plotline of a local fisherman named Fokir, and his relationship with Piya. Fokir, who is an illiterate and know no other language than his mother tongue, was able to communicate with Piya, a foreigner. The two share the language of silence yet develops a bonding beyond human comprehension that Kanai at one stage becomes jealous of their relationship. He wonders how language becomes powerless before the tranquillity of their understanding. Fokir with his deep knowledge of the environment helps her find some of the river dolphins she is researching. Ghosh has brought in the authenticity of humanism and love that encompasses all differences. He has emphasised on the extreme form of humanism through the sacrifice of Fokir in order to save Piya. Thus Fokir becomes the epitome of martyrdom- transhumanization. The main characters, forming the triangle love, an American Indian female researcher, an Indian male translator and an Indian male illiterate fisherman, carry the tidal shifts and currents between the tremor of survival and human relationship.

Ghosh in this novel discusses the foremost aspect - 'Survival'. In Sundarbans the life-style of the people is always at war either with the complex and dangerous

ecosystem or against the animals for survival. All the more the people of the island had to put up with the government authorities too. These people could little think of patriotism and nationalism. Nilanjana Chatterjee in her essay on *East Bengali refugee* writes: “theirs was a lesson in survival” (10). The people of Morichjhapi have to fight with other people in order to survive, Ghosh remarks, “As I thought of these things it seemed to me that this whole world has become a place of animals” (THT12). Ghosh interrogates whether the value of human life is diminished when compared with the life of animals especially ‘tigers’ in a place like Sundarbans.

Natural tremors engulf the lives of the islanders in the form of tides- that ebbs and flows at unpredicted time. Sundarbans forms the delta of the Irrawaddy River where the river water mixes with sea water and the ecological functions as a hub for all wild animals, peculiar living creatures and rare kind of river mammals like *Orcaella brevirostris*. It is a unique place where ‘borders’ lose its grip on humanity; humanity gripped on the basis of humanism. Ghosh describes the island as:

There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as far as three hundred kilometres inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater only to re-emerge hours later. The currents are so powerful as to reshape the island almost daily – some days the water tears away entire promontories and peninsulas; at other times it throws up new shelves and sand banks were there were none before.(THT 7)

With such changing nature of the island, the people were left at the mercy of the tides for their home and shelter, mainly survival, Ghosh states “The river’s channels are spread across the land like a fine –mesh net, creating a terrain where the boundaries between the land and water are always mutating, always unpredictable” (THT 7). All

the more these borderland people have become one with this difficult terrain that migration of crossing the imaginary borders almost becomes their way of life.

Humanism serves to be the fulcrum for the transformation of Sundarbans into a place of living. The notion of converting this terrain as a place of human habitat was first conceived by a rich Scotsman, Sir Daniel Hamilton. He is a visionary who dreamt of creating a sample land where humanism converges and differences diverge. Sir Daniel Hamilton is a transnationalist to India from Scotland in order to create a place of *sans* differences. He had left his nation and landed on India not just to seek his fortune but also in his attempt to bring his dreams into reality. He envisioned to develop a model island where humanism surpasses differences like caste, class, religion and creed, for he believed what his teacher had taught him in school that “labour conquers everything” (THT 25). He initiated his journey on the ground of humanism to fulfil his dream of establishing a society of *sans* differences. His dream is the same of Tagore’s dream, who dreamt of a freedom “breaking the domestic walls”.

Hamilton during his voyage looked upon the crab-covered shore of the tide country and mistaken it for a rich land. He joined a shipping company and as a result of his hard work, he accumulated immense wealth. Ghosh highlights the Sundarbans richness as: “This is after all no remote and lonely frontier. This is India’s doormat, the threshold of a teeming subcontinent” (THT 48). He also proclaims that when the Scotsman looked upon the crab-covered shores of the tide country, “Look how much this mud is worth, a single acre of Bengal’s mud yields fifteen maunds of rice. What does a square mile of gold yield? Nothing” (THT 49). Ghosh lays bare the richness of India, which is so fertile that there was nothing to lack in an abundant place like India.

Banibrata Mahanta in his article *Of Cultural Constructs and Human Dilemmas: Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* writes,

Daniel MacKinnon Hamilton, a Scotsman, comes to colonial India to seek his fortune. During his travels, he chances upon the islands of the Sundarbans. He then proceeded to establish a utopian human settlement he attempted to establish a casteless, classless human society.(63)

Hamilton's attempt to establish a utopian society brings out his dissatisfaction in the existing norms and differences of the society. In this regard he named the island after his niece Lucy, and so the island derives its name as Lusibari.

The thirst for a humanitarian living is revealed with the inflow of population as an answer to Hamilton's summon. As soon as the mission of Hamilton was announced throughout all the neighbouring states, people started to pour in to this envisioned island. The settlers were mainly farmers who migrated with a new hope and high dreams. They were also promised with farmlands free of cost but on the condition of fruitful labour. Hence civilization flourished in this unsuitable environment. Despite the tremors caused by the tides the islanders are dumb struck with the tremors that befall them everyday in the form of ferocious tigers, crocodiles, snakes and other dangerous animals, In Ghosh's words:

Remember at that time there were nothing but forest here. There were no people, no embankments, no fields. Just mud and mangrove. At high tide most of the land vanished under water and everywhere you looked there were tigers, crocodiles, sharks and leopards.(THT 54)

As the terrain nurtured wild life than human habitat, survival became tough. Ghosh sketches the terrain through Nirmal to Kanai as:

Think of what it was like: think of tigers, crocodiles and snakes that lived in the creeks and nalas that covered the island. This was a feast for them. They killed hundreds of people. So many were killed that Hamilton began to give out rewards to any who killed a tiger or a crocodile. (THT 55)

Thus, civilization flourished by clearing and mending the terrain for human habitat.

The essence of humanism is lost with the spirit of patriotism in this island of Sundarbans. Sundarbans is hailed as the habitat of Royal Bengal Tigers. Tiger being the national animal of India is feared to be one among the endangered species. In this regard the Indian government has taken infinite measures to save these man-eaters than saving human lives. They have set up tiger reserves throughout the country among which the Sundarban reserve is very active in protecting the Bengal tigers.

These tigers are claimed as most ferocious predators or the man-eaters. Prasanna Devi in her article *The Hunger Motif: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* states,

Bengal tigers, the much feared predators are zealously protected by various international environment group (who apply economic pressure on the Indian and Bangladeshi governments to maintain the tiger habitats by military force). But in the name of tiger preservation, human lives are threatened by the state. The tigers routinely maul and often kill the islanders. Though here are obvious modern devices that might be used to protect the islanders, the state allows the deaths to continue. (4)

The tremor of these man-eaters freezes all human activities but then the inhuman act of the government of valuing human life less than animals is very peculiar in this democratic nation.

The tiger reserves of the Sundarbans do not reveal the conservatism of the environmentalists but exhibits their bestiality towards humanity. The man-eaters of this place preys upon human life leaving most of the young women as widows and children fatherless. Nilima too admits her view on the tigers:

In other habitats, tigers only attacked human beings in abnormal circumstances: if they happen to be crippled or were otherwise unable to hunt down any other kind of prey. But this was not true of the tide country's tigers; even young and healthy animals were known to attack human beings. Some said that this propensity came from the peculiar conditions of the tidal ecology, in which large parts of the forest were subjected to daily submersions. The theory went that this raised the animals' threshold of aggression by washing away their scent markings and confusing their territorial instincts.(THT 241)

Therefore the tigers of this terrain gain their name 'man-eaters'. The government in the name of patriotism has taken every effort to preserve the life of these man-eaters even at the cost of human life just because they are regarded as the national animal. Auradkar in his *Amitav Ghosh a Critical study* explains the inhuman and hostile nature of human beings towards humanity thus:

In the Sundarbans, drinking water is a huge problem. There was a German biologist who went there and decided the reason why the tigers were killing human being was because they did not have fresh water. At enormous cost, fresh water wells were dug for the tigers and water was plentiful, while human beings there had no fresh water. They were looking on these wells being dug for the tigers while they themselves and their children were dying because they did not have

access to fresh water. If one can care the environment, does that mean one doesn't care about the plight of human beings, especially impoverished people or indigenous people. (116)

In such a situation, there arose this immediate question in mind: Are tigers more important than humans? If so then where is humanism?

The Bengal tigers were declared as the national animal on April 1973. The royal tiger of Bengal is deemed as a symbol to proclaim national wealth in wildlife. The Project Tiger was initiated as an attempt to protect the endangered species. Prior to tiger, lion was the national animal until 1973. It is evident that choosing of national symbols is also like drawing borders left to the fancies of the political leaders. Therefore choosing of national symbols has no fixed rules or norms but could be changed with the tide of time. The government could have decided upon any other animal if not for tigers but how could they neglect human life with triviality. If only the government had taken humanistic steps to protect human life than the tigers then may be humanity would have flourished without much difficulty in such hostile place like Sundarbans. If not tigers any other animal would have taken the place of a national animal. Instead the government had treated the value of human life as a mere refuse. In Kanai's words:

And the reason is just that these people are too poor to matter. We all know it, but we choose not to see it. Isn't that a horror too – that we can feel the suffering of an animal, but not of human beings?"(THT 300).

If only the government had accepted and provided certain basic amenities for protecting people; then there wouldn't have been such an anti-humanistic massacre

and holocaust. Therefore in this place, protecting human life is treated as burden by the government.

Poverty is another tremor that devours human life in this island. The terrain and climate of the tranquil island proved to be unhealthy for agriculture and vegetation. Devi in her article *The Hunger Motif: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* explains, "The soil bore poor crops; the floods and storms rendered the land infertile. Most of the families subsided on a single day meal"(7). This unhealthy climate naturally made the settlers look out for other alternative job that would help them to survive. As a matter of fact they tried their hand in fishing, hunting and honey collecting. No matter what they did their death toll never seem to descend instead it increased day by day. The result of their endeavour ended up in disaster. "No day seemed to pass without the news of someone being killed by a tiger, a snake or a crocodile"(THT 79). The poverty of the land was so strong that it just allowed the skeletal frame work of these settlers to exist. Even the chief protagonist Fokir who makes his living by fishing, is given an outlook that poverty could afford him, "he had a skeletal frame a look of utter destitution"(THT 46). Thus Ghosh probes into the struggle and survival of the neglected lot in this island.

The theme of patriotism is imbibed with the political changes of Bengal by Partition and the story of Morichjhapi refugees' traumatic experiences of people who are forced to be transnationalists. Apart from the transnationalistic experiences Ghosh also probes into the theme of transformation that wakes the characters to social consciousness and the theme of transhumanization that hails an ordinary man as an extraordinary individual – a martyr.

Kanai and Piya are the representation of elite community. They both meet on a train heading for the tide country southwest of Kolkatta (Calcutta). Kanai lives in

New Delhi, running his own successful translation business that caters to a growing business community. Piya is an American researcher on *Orcaella brevirostris*. She grew up in Seattle where her parents emigrated from Calcutta and she never even learned to speak Bangla, which was her mother tongue indeed. Kanai is on his visit to meet his aunt Nilima, who had sent for him to inherit his uncle's journal which he had left it for him.

Kanai is lustful towards Piya and offers his help as a translator. Meantime, Piya hires Fokir, a local fisherman and a man of nature who guides her in finding the rare species of dolphins. Though Fokir is illiterate he could understand and perceive the language of nature. Later on Piya and Kanai understands the limitation of language. Piya finds that the presence of Kanai as an intrusion between her and Fokir as she feels that their communication through silence is intruded by language. Their language of silence engulfs barriers of culture, class, caste, religion and language. Mahanta in his article *Of Cultural Constructs and Human Dilemmas: Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* describes that: "Ghosh explores the manifold cultural barriers of religion, class, language and gender that have been created in the course of onward march of civilization"(62). It is evident that all technological development on the forefront is only an attempt for survival from such dangerous and devouring disasters.

The inhuman attitude of Mej-da reveals hostility to Piya. Piya is a black American who represent the transnational community. She was born in Calcutta but was migrated to America. She had arrived to Canning for researching on some rare species of river dolphins like *Orcaella brevirostris* and Irradway dolphins. The insecurity of new place and inhuman activity of heartless people is revealed through her encounter with Mej-da, (the guide). Piya, despite of obtaining permission from the

forest department for her research was subjected to embarrassment and shame by the guides who had to assist her throughout her endeavour.

The Mej-da is a representation of immoral and inhuman lot who live without conscience. He instead of assisting her on her research revealed their beastly nature by passively harassing her with his awkward motions and sucking off money from her. He was dominant and hired a streamer without Piya's consent, as for her the sound of the launch would naturally frighten the dolphins and all her effort would only result in vain. Despite these troubles she tried to proceed on with her research. The tremor fell on Piya in the form of Mej-da. The action of Mej-da towards Piya proves the helpless situation in which she is passively subjected to humiliation Ghosh described her humiliation:

Then, to her surprise, Mej-da ordered all the helpers to leave the launch. Evidently the crew was to consist of no one other than himself and the guard. Why just these two and no one else? There was something about this that was not quite right. She watched in concern as the boys filed off the launch and her misgivings only deepened when Mej-da proceeded to enact a curious little pantomime, as if to welcome her on his vessel....But the performance ended with a gesture both puzzling and peculiarly obscene. Bursting into laughter, he gesticulated in the direction of his tongue and his crotch. She looked away quickly, frowning, puzzled as to the meaning of this bizarre coda (THT 33-34).

On this absurd action of the guide she resolved not to continue her expedition with them. She spots Fokir's boat and asks the guide to take her to the fisherman to show her display card to him, inquiring about the dolphins that she was in search of. His

harassment did not stop with that he also robbed all the money from the hands of Tutul, the son of Fokir. Piya sympathising with the poor man threw them some wad of bank notes which resulted in her fall from the streamer. Rescue came in the form of Fokir from the gushing wave of the river and mainly from the dominant guide who never even bothered to save her when she fell into the water.

The essence of human life – innocence and humility – is revealed through Fokir in the island called Garjontala. It is a place where “No one who is good at heart has anything to fear in this place” (325) though it is a habitat of wild life. It is in this place Fokir becomes the leader and master. His gestures exhibit his professionalism of nature’s man that he even addresses Kanai –babu as tui instead of the respectful form *apni*. This place brings out the true nature of Fokir’s leadership quality for his naive innocence and good heartedness. The dense mangrove forest of this place is impenetrable and human being with pure hearts can alone find their way back home. The forest is described through Piya’s eyes:

Staring at it now, she was struck by the way the greenery worked to confound the eye. It was not just that it was a barrier, like a screen or a wall: it seemed to trick the human gaze, in the manner of a cleverly drawn optical illusion. There was such a profusion of shapes, forms, hues, and textures, that even things that were in plain view seemed to disappear, vanishing into the tangles of lines like the hidden objects in children’s puzzles. (150)

In such an impenetrable forest Fokir is safe. He also performs puja like a Hindu and a prayer that sounds like ‘Allah’. Here Piya witnesses a confluence of the two religions and understands that the distinction of religion and tradition is again man-made. She

is of the view that true and sincerity of heart is important and more presentable to the creator – God, despite of any religious traditions.

Piya's purity of heart is also revealed in Garjontola. She is also a woman of nature for she feels at home with her dolphins. She rejoices with the dolphins on seeing the newly born baby dolphin. She deems the life of animals also with value. She was quick enough to condemn the act of killing a tiger that she witnessed in the village. It was her concern for nature and pure thoughts that she too was fortunate to be safe in this island of Garjontala. The myth of Bon Bi is employed to highlight the purity of heart. Both Piya and Fokir pass the test of purity that they are successful in escaping the man-eaters from the island.

Kanai's experience in Gajontala was different. He is self-ambitious man, too dominant and egoistic. His ego was hurt when Fokir asked him "Are you a clean man, Kanai – babu? "You know – are you good at heart? (THT 323). Kanai wasn't sure of who he was. He was triggered to introspection to know who he really was yet his answer to Fokir was "I think so... my intentions are good anyway – as for the rest, who knows?" (THT 323). He is aware of his negatives and lustful desires that he could not assure Fokir for his goodness. He also accepts and declares Fokir's innocence, "you may be a child, but I'm not -" (THT 325). All the more his superiority does not allow him to get the assistance of Fokir in Garjontola. On his confession of his impurity he started to experience negative impact. First his ankles were caught in a ropelike tendril that fastened him so tight he was immobilized and fell face down being drowned in the sludge of mud. He spewed out obscenities on Fokir for his act. He without remembering the fact that he is at the mercy of Fokir who is the only man who could take him away from the island, insulted and poured out obscenities even when Fokir offered him his help. He even said, "Get away from

me you son of a pig” (THT 326). He exhibited such inhuman act that just because Fokir does not belong to a elite group like him.

Kanai’s attitude towards Fokir is the replica of Indian mentality and attitude. The feeling of superiority over the other human being is determined by the caste in Indian society. Just because Kanai is a businessman and a multi-linguist, it doesn’t mean that he could ill treat the other human being Fokir like an animal. Ghosh remarks on his attitude thus:

His anger came welling up with an atavistic explosiveness,...the master’s suspicion of the menial; the pride of caste; the townsman’s mistrust of the rustic; the city’s antagonism to the village. (THT 326)

He had to pay for his antagonistic behaviour that he had an encounter with the big cat and had almost been to the verge of death, if not for Fokir who rescued him from the island. Despite of Kanai’s inhuman behaviour, Fokir’s goodness reigned supreme in saving Kanai.

The magic of tranquillity sets Piya and Fokir in close proximity. It is Fokir’s humanism that reigned over every situation, initially, Fokir saving Piya from the river and then Kanai from the island. It is his humanism that created a special bond between the two. Though there is no common language between them, their communication almost seems to be complete. Ghosh puts their bonding in this way:

It was surprising enough that their jobs had not proved to be utterly incompatible – especially considering that one of the tasks required the input of geostationary satellites while the other depended on bits of shark-bone and broken tile. But that it had proved possible for two such people to pursue their own ends simultaneously – people who could not exchange a word with each other and had no idea of what

was going on in one another's heads – was far more surprising: it seemed almost miraculous. And nor was she the only one to remark on this: once, when her glance happened accidentally to cross Fokir's she saw something in his expression that told her that he too was amazed by the seamless intertwining of their pleasures and their purposes (THT 141).

The two who were therefore deeply rooted in their profession shared a unique bond that no language could express. Moyna becomes jealous on perceiving the bond that Piya and Fokir share and so she requests Kannai to be their intermediary on her expedition.

Kanai's transformation is noteworthy. He is the representation of connoisseurship and linguistic ability. He is at ease with Bengali, English, Arabic, Hindi and Arakanese. Ghosh describes him as: "Language was both his livelihood and his addiction and he was often preyed upon by a near irresistible compulsion to eavesdrop on conversations in public places" (THT 4). Being a man of forty two, he always viewed women as his prey for sensual pleasures. He a bachelor and womanizer, on the very first meeting with Piya finds her attractive and a good prospect for a holiday affair. He even tried to entice Moyna with his word addressing *tumi*, but she understands his intention and leaves the place immediately. He being a multilingualist is exposed to different culture and tradition and does not confine his limits to any nation or culture. He is a man of *sans* borders and boundaries.

Kanai understands his limitation with language when it didn't serve to win his love. In his expedition with Piya, he was asked to translate the lore sung by Fokir. Fokir's lore had fused two religions the Hindu and the Islam into one. The ritual he performed was that of Hindus but the song that accompanied the rites sounds Allah.

The two religions had been fused into one in the tide country like that of Fokir and Piya. Piya asks Kanai to translate the traditional song that Fokir sang and he was at loss, he could hardly translate few of the lines that he sung. Kanai who airs to possess the true connoisseur's ability is now reduced to the state of an illiterate. He feels that his ability as a translator, as a man and as a lover has been robbed off by Fokir because he feels that he is defeated in love by an illiterate like Fokir, who won Piya's heart. Kanai undergoes a great transformation in his heart and mind because of his defeat in his love. Kanai, for whom women are the means for sensual pleasure, for the very first time realises his true feeling for Piya. Rituparna Datta Roy in her article *The Hungry Hearts* writes:

During the expedition on the big motor boat, Megha, silent but hostile cross-currents of tension fly like sparks between Kanai and Piya.

Kanai, to whom so far women have been merely substances for amorous dalliances, realizes his true feelings for Piya. (37)

He also finds Fokir as his competitor and grew jealous of him because he knew that Fokir had already won Piya's heart.

Kanai's transformation has brought him to understand and accept the limitations of his linguistic abilities. The main characters of the novel meditate upon the restrictions of spoken language as an effective means of establishing communication; while Piya believes "speech was only a bag of tricks that fooled you into believing that you could see through the eyes of another" (THT 159), Moyna uses imagery from nature to express her conviction that "words are just air ... when the wind blows on the water's surface, you see ripples and waves, but the real river lies beneath, unseen and unheard" (THT 258). The novel is a reminder to reincarnate the importance of nature and its language that communicates to humans in different

forms, from the forewarning sounds of crabs constantly burrowing and undermining the protective wall around the island, to the ‘mad’ Matla river threatening human construction on its fragile banks with its capricious flow. It is apt to quote from The Book of Psalms Chapter 19 verses 1-4,

The heavens declare the glory of the Lord;
 The skies proclaim the work of his hands.
 Day after day they pour forth speech;
 Night after night they display knowledge.
 There is no speech or language
 where their voice is not heard.
 Their voice goes out into all the earth,
 Their words to the ends of the world.

Ghosh draws his readers to understand the importance of the language of nature and Silence. He insists that every move and sound of nature is Gods’ language to human being. Nature’s tranquillity is the authentic expression of God. Fokir reigns supreme by understanding the language of nature. Thus Kanai’s multi-linguistic ability is nullified in the presence of nature and Fokir’s humanistic concern for he says, “the instrument of language had metamorphosed” (THT 327).

The theme of humanism is the central focus in Nirmal’s journal. His diary is a record of inhuman acts of the West Bengal government. Nirmal shares the same vein of Tridib in *The Shadow Lines*. He is a revolutionary, in Nilima’s words:

That as a young man Nirmal was in love with the idea of revolution.
 Men, like that, even when they turn their backs on their party and their comrades, can never let go of the idea: it’s the secret god that rules

their hearts. It is what makes them come alive; they revel in danger, the exquisite pain. (THT 119)

He as a revolutionary spends much of his time in narrating stories and teaching the children of the islanders. Indeed Nirmal and Nilima Bose arrive to this island on doctor's advice, as Nirmal was diagnosed with a terminal disease and asked to spend his life in a pollution free environment. It is in this context the aristocratic couple make their way to this tide country.

Nirmal is a former radical Marxist who ended up as a teacher in the school on one of the islands, Lusibari. He is obsessed with Rilke and radical Marxism. His obsession transforms him to be a revolutionary. This enabled him to set great socio-political ideals, and is very eager to become part of the socialist project beginning in the area, which he sees as an instance of revolutionary transformation. He desired to be remembered in history, Nilima states of his view:

For him (Nirmal) that everything which existed was interconnected: the trees, the sky, the weather, people, poetry, science, nature. He hunted down facts in the way a magpie collects shiny things. Yet when he strung them all together, somehow they did become stories – of a kind. (THT 282)

Nirmal is keen and attentive to the language of nature for to him tranquillity exists only in coexistence of both man and nature. Mahanta in his article *Of Cultural Constructs and Human Dilemmas: Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* quotes, "He believes that utopia can be achieved by revolution" (63). Ghosh substantiates his view on nature by drawing references from *Duino Elegies* by Rainer Maria Rilke. Rilke excerpts are found in Nirmal's diary, which is read by Kanai. Through these excerpts it is understood that Rilke pays attention to nature's tranquillity and human's

alienation from nature and animals. Rilke's idea of nature goes hand in hand with that of Ghosh's experience with nature.

Nirmal's interest lies in serving the humanity. He represents a character who is alienated from the world and finds solace in the tranquillity. He lives in a world of stories which he used to tell in order to engage the little children of the islanders. His revolutionary idea makes him immune to the changes. Nilima comments on his revolutionary idea of being a part of the Morichjhapi resettlement, "This was closest Nirmal would ever come to a revolutionary moment. He desperately wanted to be a part of it. Perhaps it was his way of delaying the recognition of his age" (THT 120). Though he fails or postpones to understand the practical reality and the changes that is happening around him, his concern for humanism grows stronger. He also shares certain characteristics like Tridib in *The Shadow Lines*, who in the end is destroyed by the violent actions of the real world. Likewise, Nirmal's involvement with the refugee movement paves way for the tremor of his death.

The inhuman act of women trafficking is another evil for the women of the tide country. Nirmal's revolutionary feeling was triggered on for the inhuman and injustice done to Kusum – Fokir's mother. Kusum was Kanai's childhood friend from the island of Satjelia. Kusum lost her father at an very early age and her mother was taken to the city limits on a promise of employment by Dilip Choudhury, a man from her own village. She was forcefully doomed into flesh trade somewhere in Sonargachhi. Soon Kusum was also sought after, if not for Horen – Nirmal's boatman. Kusum was brought to Lusibari by Horen and she was given protection and safety by the Women's Union.

Kusum after years went in search of her mother to Dhanbad, a mining town. It was here she met Rajen, a man from tide country. He was lame as he had met with an

accident in Kolkata. He made his living by selling food in the stations and trains. It was he who gave her a place to stay and treated her with dignity, in Kusum's words, "he was a good, Kind man: how many such are there?" (THT 163). He had helped Kusum to find her mother and also expressed his wish to marry her. They were married in the presence of her mother. She was grateful to him for he had given her his entire life and met his untimely death leaving her son Fokir and her orphaned. She is fortunate to experience the good days of her life with Rajen, a man of virtue and humanism and to escape the iron clutches of inhuman man like Dilip, who sought fortune by women trafficking.

Patriotism and partition had transformed the inhabitants as refugees. The refugees in the novel are drawn from real life. The people belonged to Bangladesh of Khulna jila, the edge of Sundarbans. The iron sceptre of partition burned their village to ashes. They were forced to cross the borders of their nation in search of survival and livelihood. The policemen drove them to a settlement camp that was unsuitable for them to live. This settlement camp did not satisfy their thirst for survival so they decided to return to their tide country. The government was heartless and inhuman to treat these people as waste that is dumped in an unused place. They were neither allowed to survive nor to return, in Kusum's words, "they swarmed on the trains, they put blocks on the roads – but still we would not go back; we began to walk" (THT 187). They were totally uprooted from their original soil. These people were denied their freedom to return to their own country after the partition. They became the scapegoat for the selfish ambitions of politicians and rulers.

The simple folk could not resist the inhuman treatment of the government. They made their own arrangements for their return to their own land despite of all efforts by the government to stop them. They were fleeing from the inhuman

authorities of resettlement camp in Central India, who had forced them to settle in a deep forest of Madhya Pradesh called Dandakaranya. They were treated like prisoners. These simple folk, for no fault of theirs had to suffer such loss and pain.

They became the victim of partition and political rulers. Ghosh puts their agony thus,

The soil was rocky and the environment was nothing like they had ever known. They could not speak the language of that area and the local people treated them as intruders, attacking with bows, arrows and other weapons. (THT 118)

The state government ditched them their hope and refused either to accept or support them. It only treated them as intruders and trespassers.

Nirmal records the untold historical event in his diary to be passed on to Kanai. The diary reveals the eviction of refugee settlers from the island of Morichjhapi in the Sundarbans by the Left Front government of West Bengal in 1979. In 1978 a group of refugees fled from the Dandakaranya camp in Madhya Pradesh and came to the island of Morichjhapi in the Sundarbans with the intention of settling there on retrospection that their fathers settled in the tide country as an answer to Hamilton's summon. In Kusum's words,

“Our fathers had once answered Hamilton's call: they had wrested the estate from the sway of tides. What they'd done for another, couldn't we do for ourselves?”

(THT 165). They with the dream of settling in their own land, cleared the land for agriculture, and began to fish and farm. But their presence alarmed the government, who saw it as encroachments on the island that was used as tiger reserve. The settlers were evicted in a brutal display of state power in May, 1979. Kusum, Fokir's mother and Kanai's childhood playmate becomes the muse of Nirmal in forcing him to record the voice of these voiceless people. Nirmal, who stays with the settlers during

those final hours, is later discovered wandering in the port town of Canning; he is shattered by the event and never recovers.

Sir Daniel Hamilton first conceived the notion of building up a new town *sans* differences in the nineteenth century. He was a rich Scottish capitalist who bought acres of land in the island from the British officials. He invited everyone to join in his mission of creating a new world and welcomed anyone who was willing to work on it but on one condition, that there shouldn't be any differences. Nirmal describes this dream of Hamilton in his diary that he had left for Kanai:

They could not bring all their petty little divisions and differences.

Here there would be no Brahmins or Untouchables, no Bengalis and no Oriyas. Everyone would have to live and work together. [...] What he wanted was to build a new society, a new kind of country. It would be a country run by co-operatives, he said. Here people wouldn't exploit each other and everyone would have a share in the land. (THT 51-52)

In this society the people are more valued than money. As the place was very wild and unsuited for human survival Sir Hamilton announced gifts for all those who were daring enough to kill a tiger or a crocodile. This project got a good start, with the blessings of eminent nationalist figures like Gandhi and Tagore, but after the death of Hamilton it gradually withered away as there was no one to lead this cause as dedicated like Sir Hamilton.

The faded dream of Sir Daniel Hamilton was brought back to life by the refugees in 1970. These refugees are a group of Bengali Hindus originally from Dhaka, were forced to move to India during partition. As these refugees were huge in number, the then government found them to be a burden, so it selected Dandkaranya, a deep forest in Madhya Pradesh as an ideal solution for these refugees. This place

was not suitable for human life as it was a semi-arid and rocky place. Neena Jain in *Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide: a retrieval of Forgotten Historical Event of Migration and Refugee Resettlement in West Bengal* recollects:

The government fearing that the massive influx of refugees might jeopardize the prospects of the state's economic recovery, it started to forcibly send them back. The massive inflow of refugees was met with severe and violent resistance at many places. (99)

But the refugees on the other hand managed to escape from the rehabilitation centre despite of the police cordons and patrols and reached their promised island, Sundarbans. To quote Jain Neena, *Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide: A Retrieval of Forgotten Historical Event of Migration and Refugee Resettlement in West Bengal* as

... a group of East Bengal refugees who left Dandakaranya and tried to settle in Morichjhapi were forced to abandon that island in spite of the fact that the then Left Front Government of West Bengal had given them assurance that they would be given land and shelter in Sundarbans. (100)

Ghosh express the pathetic state of the people through Nirmal: "The government saw these people as squatters and land grabbers... and decided that: They would not be allowed to remain" (THT 190). It is for this very reason the government started to employ all means to get rid of these people.

A few months after the settlement of the refugees the government announced Morichjaphi as a forest reserve area and urged them to leave the land for the flora and fauna to flourish. But the conviction of the settlers was so strong that it made the government to employ third rated methods to evict these people from the island. The news of the emerging new island spread so fast the people from the neighbouring

island came to look at the transformed island. Nirmal express his awe on seeing all the efforts these people have put in to making their living:

What had I expected? A mere jumble, perhaps, untidy heaps of people, piled high upon each other? ...But what I saw was quite different from the picture in my mind's eyes. Paths have been laid... little plots of land had been enclosed with fences; fishing nets had been hung up to dry. There were men and women sitting outside their huts, repairing their nets and stringing their crablines with bits of bait and bone. Such industry! Such diligence! Yet it was only a few weeks since they had come (THT 171).

Nirmal is amazed at the organising calibre and the discipline of the refugees and gives a detail description of all their attempts to transform such an unsuitable island into a suitable place for living. He is dumb struck on learning the fact that:

Salt pans had been created, tube wells had been planted, water had been dammed for the rearing of fish, a bakery had started up, boat-builders had set up workshops, a pottery had been founded as well as an ironsmith's shop; there were people making boats while others were fashioning nets and crablines; little market places, where all kinds of goods were being sold, had sprung up. All this in the space of a few months! It was an astonishing spectacle- as though an entire civilization had sprouted suddenly in the mud' (THT 190).

These Morichjhapi refugees did not rely on the government or the locale people for aid. They meted out all their needs independently, yet were concerned about their governing officials. For this reason they held a feast and invited all the authorities and dignitaries to approve their new enterprise. The inhuman authorities accepted their

invitation and attended their feast and welcomed the gathering and also appreciated their hard work through their lofty speeches, despite the fact that they know pretty well that these people will eventually be evicted forcibly.

The government used inhuman means to evict the refugees from the island. As a first step to their effort, the government announced the island as a natural reserve for tigers. It stopped rationing food materials to the people and stopped their access to the source of drinking water. The government closed all their possibility for survival and left them with no other option than evicting. But these settlers on the contrary, became more arrogant and aggressive. They were equally adamant of not to evacuate their home. They were left with nothing but hope. The atrocity of the government grew so worse that it raised funds in order to save the tiger and the environment, but were mindless of the people who were dying out of hunger. Kusum's anger on the government is revealed through her words to Nirmal and Horen:

The worst part was not the hunger or the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the policeman making their announcements, hearing them say that our lives, our existence, was worth less than dirt or dust. "This island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals, it is a part of a reserve forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers, which is paid for by people from all around the world". Every day sitting here, with hunger gnawing at our bellies, we would listen to these words, over and over again. Who are these people, I wondered, who love animals so much that they are willing to kill us for them? ... As I thought of these things it seemed to me that this whole world has become a place for animals, and our fault, our crime, was that we were

just human beings, trying to live as human beings always have, from the water and the soil (THT 261-62).

The settlers had to suffer such atrocities just because they were humans of less importance. What if these people were left to live on the basis of humanism? Has the spirit of nationalism and patriotism robbed off the essence of humanity – humanism?

The inhuman act of the government is explicitly revealed with the Morichjhapi holocaust. Despite of the constant threat by the government, the settlers continued to stay in the island. The count of the settlers was not less than ten thousand. The whole group were totally alienated from other islands. Moreover, the government had planned an assault that would erase humanity from the island. For the impending assault, the government had hoarded the island with outsiders. Kusum, despite of Horen and Nirmal's persuasion, was very stubborn to stay back because she had least expected such atrocities on human race.

The holocaust of Morichjhapi was beyond imagination. The life of more than ten thousand men was just treated as refuse. The holocaust of the island is revealed through the words of Horen to Kanai thus:

The assault began the next day; the gangsters who'd been assembling around the island were carried over in boats and dinghies and bhotbhotis. They burnt the settler's hut, they sank their boats, they laid waste to their fields...whatever you can imagine them doing, they did... No one knows for sure, but what I've heard is that a group of women were taken away by force, Kusum among them. People say they were used and then thrown into the rivers, so that they would be washed away by the tides. Dozen of settlers were killed that day. The sea claimed them all. (THT 279).

Such was the cruelty and inhuman treatment meted out by the government. Also if only such holocaust would have been checked then, there would not have been another like the SriLankan tragedy.

The government under the guise of conserving environment became inhuman and insane. It tried all means to evacuate them from their island. The refugees were strictly deprived of all essentials they were forced to turn to the grass and mud as their food. Though these refugees shuttle back and forth in search of a permanent place, Ghosh has satisfied their desires of placing them permanently in his novel. While they flee one way, and the other, like the ebb and flow of the tide, they are given a permanent and a 'stable' place in history by Ghosh. If only the authorities had treated them with humanitarian concern then such massacre could have been prevented.

The first attempt by Sir Hamilton was born out of his influence from the European states. He modelled the village in such a way that after the settlement of the people, they were left on their own. This left them in utter confusion. They didn't know where to start from or on what to rely upon for their living, despite the daily changing terrain and devouring animals. Hence the structure of this utopian village has collapsed. Mahanta in his article *Of Cultural Constructs and Human Dilemmas: Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* explains the reason for its failure:

This idea could not take root because of two reasons. Firstly, the idea of utopia is in itself fantastic. Secondly, the fact that Hamilton was merely an English colonizer, with no knowledge of the land and its people, doomed not only his enterprise but also the lives of the people.

(63)

Whereas the second attempt by the refugees is a genuine outcome of the desires of the people who needed a land for survival. Sadly, these people have chosen an island which the government has assigned as a nature reserve and reserve for tigers, as their area. The efforts of the government to make the people evacuate the island resulted in the massacre of the inhabitants of the island. This event emphasizes the theme of transnationalism and the relationship between humans and nature. It proves that the government prioritizes the life of trees and animals than the life of the islanders.

Piya witnesses the act of transhumanization through Fokir. She in order to pursue her research seeks the assistance of Fokir. Moyna in order to seek fortune accepts to send Fokir with Piya. They decide to hire a big motor boat, Megha that belongs to Horen, along with Fokir's small launch that would be of great use to spot the rare dolphins. The complex of Piya's emotional attachment for Fokir and the simultaneous envy of Kanai for the fisherman are conspicuous in the following conversation between Piya and Kanai:

...Very few people can adapt themselves to that kind of rhythm—one in a million, I'd say. That is why it was so amazing to come across someone like Fokir.'

'Amazing? Why?'

You saw how he spotted that dolphin there, didn't you? ', said Piya.

'It's like he's always watching the water—even without being aware of it. I have worked with many experienced fishermen before but I've never met anyone with such an incredible instinct: it's as if he can see right into the river's heart (THT 267)

Piya admires Fokir for his professionalism. Though Piya and Fokir do not share a common language for communication, Piya is able to convey her thoughts with ease.

This has triggered the tidal onslaught of envy in Kanai. While the turbulent waves of jealousy are dashing against the shores of Kanai's heart, the tranquil waves of love for Fokir are touching the innermost chords of Piya's heart. Mark the following dialogue between Kanai and Piya again:

Fokir's abilities as an observer are really extraordinary. I wish I could tell you what it was like to be with him these last few days—it was one of the most exciting experiences of my life.'

A sudden stab of envy provoked Kanai to make a mocking aside. 'And all that while, you couldn't understand a word he was saying, could you?'

'No,' she said, with a nod of acknowledgment. 'But you know what?

There was so much common between us it didn't matter. (THT 268)

The relationship between Piya and Fokir is evident that humanism and love could surpass any and every difference like caste, class, nation, language, border and boundaries.

Humility and simplicity is the adobe of Fokir. It must be stated that there is in Fokir this instinctive warmth and child like naïve simplicity sets him apart from Kanai. He being childlike in heart fulfils to be human. Christ also emphasis this quality of being naive, innocent and childlike when his disciples asked him "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (NIV, Matt 18:2) in the gospel of Matthew chapter 18 verse 3, he says, "...unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (NIV, Matt 18:3). He assures that unless one is transformed to be childlike in heart one cannot enter into the eternal kingdom.

Moyna, his wife, grows anxious, when she finds her husband in close proximity with Piya. Moyna is evident that Fokir's spontaneous innocence is sure to

create emotional ripples in Piya. The concern of Moyna due to the relationship between Piya and Fokir is clearly visible in her following conversation with Kanai: “‘I’m just glad that you’ll be there, Kanai-babu; that they won’t be alone.’ ‘Who?’ ‘The two of them.’ Her voice was suddenly serious. ‘You mean Fokir and Piya?’” (THT 258). In the course of the expedition Kanai feels that he has become an intruder between Piya and Fokir, for she is well at ease in communicating with Fokir without his aid. Christopher Rollason in his article, “*In Our Translated World*”: *Transcultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh’s The Hungry Tide* writes:

Kanai interprets for Piya a portion of her expedition, but at a certain point he concludes she does not in fact need his services, apparently supposing she can communicate intuitively with her guide Fokir: ... Piya has already shown an attitude to Fokir that supposes the two can communicate intuitively across the language and cultural divide that separate them (89).

Even when Piya asks him to translate the chanting of Fokir, he replies that “it is beyond my power, ... the meter is too complicated. I can’t do it” (THT 309). Though in his farewell letter to Piya Kanai attempts to translate the song Fokir sang, but his effort is only partially fulfilled. For he writes:

You asked me what Fokir was singing and I said I could not translate it: it was too difficult. And this was no more than the truth, for in those words there was a history that is not just his own but also of this place, the tide country (THT 354).

Kanai, thus slowly enters into the saga of transformation.

Kanai dejected in love decides to leave for Delhi, where he successfully runs his own translation business, quits in the middle of the expedition and starts for

Lusibari. He decides to leave Piya and Fokir in his small boat to continue her expedition. On their way back Horen expects a cyclone and decides to return to Lusibari and sends the steamer back the next day to fetch the two from Garjontola. It is here that the tremor of tranquillity incarnates itself as a cyclone.

A big cyclone breaks out early the next morning. Kanai and Horen decide to return immediately to fetch the two as Fokir's boat is not an apt one that is to be used at the time of cyclone; and also the two Fokir and Piya together could not row the boat fast enough to Megha before the cyclone, so they decide to find shelter on a huge tree top that would be capable enough to sustain the flood. Here Fokir goes beyond serving as a guide.

The transcendence from human to a martyr is sketched through Fokir. Fokir and Piya are unexpectedly caught in the cyclone towards the climax of the novel. Fokir being the nature's man could sense the misfortune and immediately seeks shelter on a branch of a huge tree. They were placed in such a way that the tree trunk could protect them from the rash beating of the cyclone first Piya and then Fokir sheltering her back. He had also wound them together with her wife's saree so that the force would not separate them. On the tree trunk both of them also witnessed a tiger taking shelter in a tree close by. He positions himself in such a way that he becomes a shield protecting Piya from the mighty storm.

The wind was now coming at them from the opposite direction. Where she had had the tree trunk to shelter her before, now there was only Fokir's body.... Their bodies were so close, so finely merged that she could feel the impact of everything hitting him, she could sense the blows raining down on his back. She could feel the bones of his cheeks as if they had been superimposed upon her own; it was as if the storm

had given them what life could not; it had fused them together and made them one (THT 389-390).

Fokir, the naive and innocent man of nature was willing to save a life at the cost of his own life.

It happened in the last hour of the storm, she said. He'd been hit by something very big and very heavy, an uprooted stump; it had hit him so hard that she too had been crushed against the trunk of the tree they were sitting on. The sari had kept them attached to the trunk even as he was dying. His mouth was close enough to her ear so that she'd been able to hear him. He'd said Moyna's name and Tutul's before breath faded on his lips. She'd left his body on the tree, tied to the trunk with Moyna's sari, to keep it safe from animals. They would have to go back to Garjontola to cut it down (THT 392).

Thus Fokir becomes the embodiment of sacrifice, who was willing to give his life in order to save the one who trusted him, thereby he becomes a transhumanist. Mahanta in his article *Of Cultural Constructs and Human Dilemmas: Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* concludes that:

The cyclone towards the end of the novel serves to put things in perspective. It exposes the transitory nature of human constructs posited against elemental forces. It also shows the relevance of those things that are relegated as unfit for the demands of the new world order. The cyclone, as the symbol of natural forces, serves to dismantle the hegemonic constructs of superior cultures and ways of life.... The cyclone is, thus, an agent of nature, which leaves in its wake the

realization for a need for dialogue with the indigenous cultures of the world. (universal humanism) (67).

Both human and tiger were treated same by the nature. Though they were in so close, the tiger did not harm them as an assurance of their purity in thought and relationship. This naive and simple man transcends the boundary of being human and becomes a martyr and is celebrated as an epitome of transhumanization by willingly sacrificing his life in order to save Piya.

The novel addresses the issue of humanism. The character Rajen, Fokir, Nirmal and Piya seek to cross multiple barriers with the only weapon of humanism. They cross the barriers of language, religion, social-class and nationality. They find their source of life in nature and contradict the hustle and bustle of busy city life of Kanai. Kanai, who had thought that he possessed the true connoisseurship ability, understands his limitations as a multi-linguist and the limitations of language itself. He realizes that the language of nature and of emotions could neither be confined within symbols called language nor could be translated.

Ghosh has fused a number of problems faced by the contemporary society. The major issues are religious animosity, partition, national identity and quest for survival. This serves a best platform to reason out that if the spirit of patriotism is stirred for a national cause then why is religious difference magnified so that the nation India is separated into India and Pakistan? If partition is the result of patriotism then did the spirit of patriotism has served its full measure in attaining the intended freedom and liberty? The existing religious animosity and communal clash insist the need for humanism overlooking the spirit of nationalism and religious difference. Ghosh is of the view that nationalism could be converged with transnationalism, as

migration is a process of development in order to universalise the creed 'Unity in Diversity'.

Ghosh had made his dream come true through the character of Sir Daniel Hamilton who envisioned establishing a locality *sans* any differences. Sir Daniel visualizes a world where all are welcome irrespective of their caste, class or nationality.

They could not bring all their petty little divisions and differences.

Here there would be no Brahmins or untouchables, no Bengalis and no Oriyas. Everyone would have to live and work together when the news of this spread, people came pouring in, from northern Orissa, from eastern Bengal, from , Santhal Parganas (THT 51-52).

Ghosh's vision of a unified world free from petty divisions of borders and boundaries are revealed through Sir Daniel Hamilton's dreams:

What he wanted was to build a new society, a new kind of country. It would be a country run by co-operatives, he said here people wouldn't exploit each other and everyone would have a share in the land" (THT 52).

Even the banknotes he has designed for this new free land says:

The note is based on the living man, not on the dead coin. It costs practically nothing, and yields a dividend of one hundred percent in land reclaimed, tanks excavated, houses built, etc and in a more healthy and abundant life (THT 53).

Ghosh has imbibed with the dreams of Hamilton to build a unified nation on the basis of humanism.

The very title of the novel *The Hungry Tide* is suggestive of the tremors of human habitat. The tide country is rich in its ecological contents and unapproachable. It is implied that only because of such stubbornness of the land that it remains less exploited and used. John Hawely states, “this novel deals with the archipelago called the Sundarbans off the easternmost coast off India, between the sea and plains of India” (Hawley 14). The title implies the *hunger* for survival of the refugees in the Sundarbans which Ghosh dramatizes in the novel. Survival of the refugees had been difficult ever since their forced migration to India. They had moved to West Bengal after partition, hoping for a better life there. That hope proved utopia as they were later pushed further inland from their deltaic origins into central India. Migration was conceived as a long-lasting solution to their problem.

The literal meaning of *The Hungry Tide* refers to the fury of wild nature in the tidal country, the study emphasizes that the hungry nature of the tide is not actually hungry of human life but of humanism. The nature of the land might be irregular claiming numerous lives yet its hunger is never satisfied. Moreover, the holocaust of Morichjhapi has filled the waters of the tide with bodies and the sea has claimed them all yet the tide and the land remained hungry. If only the government had taken humanitarian concern over these refugees and had provided a place for their survival then the *hungry tide* would have been satisfied.

The myth of Bon Bibi implies the idea of humanism. Bon Bibi is the protecting Goddess of the tide country. The tide country expects everyone to be good at heart. The myth is employed to emphasise that the good and pure will be safe. Likewise the refugees though poor were united together to settle down in their tide country. Nature was in their favour but humans weren't. Though the land was yielding the prospect of human civilization the government were unyielding to this

prospect. If only the government had also supported the refugees and had satisfied their *hunger for survival* then hopefully the hunger of tide country would also have been subsided. Thus the title *The Hungry Tide* is *hungry for humanism*.

Ghosh has thus successfully attempted to highlight the need for a humanistic concern towards another. He insists to maintain the balance of coexistence for survival. It insists on a humanitarian approach rather than being patriotic. He also portrays that the spirit of patriotism overlooks the basic need of humanism and breeds tremors like riots, violence and holocaust. Amidst the inhuman characters like Mejd-a, Kanai he has also portrays human beings like Sir Daniel Hamilton and Fokir who sacrifice their life in order to save the life of the fellow human beings. M.Saji in his article *Multiculturalism in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* opines that

Ghosh gives importance to the human tradition. His dream is that of a human centered universe devoid of narrow-mindedness and cultural parochialism. He believes in breaking down the artificial human made boundaries between nations and people and emphasises the oneness of humanity (106).

He also concludes that: "Ghosh insists that the artificial barriers can be transcended through all embracing love for humankind (107). Thus Ghosh raises his voice in professing universal humanism that would help to achieve the creed 'Unity in Diversity'.

The novel is about the struggle of each person to find their place in the world for 'Survival'. Ghosh has tried to stage his revelation about the aftermath of the evils of war and the lost identity of an individual tossed between both the natural disaster and artificial disaster which arises out of human selfish desires. Hence violence is the heart of the novels that keeps the story vibrant throughout the intellectual journey.

The next chapter focuses on the cruelty imposed by the colonizers both on the colonized people and lands. It discusses the cultivation and exportation of poppies in the name of free trade. It is also an attempt to engulf the life beyond the domestic territory to a place unknown by crossing the Black waters. The characters break free from their conventional living and join the *Ibis* to form a new community of *sans-caste* and religion.