



Recognition from Ignorance to Knowledge: Traversing Ecological Crisis in *The Great Derangement : Climate change and the Unthinkable*

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ABSTRACT

*Recognition, to this day, is famously a passage from ignorance to knowledge. It meets the eye for exchange of words to hark back to something prior and highlight the existing awareness . A moment of recognition occurs when a prior awareness flashes before us. An instant change in our understanding is our knowledge that results from recognition. It arises from a renewed reckoning with a potentiality that lies within oneself. The movement of climate change becomes the outcome of catastrophic convergence. Such change is a recognition of our comprehension which results from the ignorance of human society. In his book *The Great Derangement*, Amitav Ghosh portrays climate change and the unthinkable. This brilliant production observes and portrays the limits of human consideration when the environmental disaster is apprehended and thought globally. He says that the current ecological crises requires us to recognize the changes the Earth is facing in view of collision of political, economic and environmental disasters. It reflects our deranged attitudes for the environment. Between ignorance and knowledge, recognition moves us to rethink and evaluate the earthly conditions for finding the truth. The objective of the present study is set to make a detailed study from an eco-critical perspective of responding to the matter of environmental crisis as a serious threat for the global society.*

KEYWORDS: recognition, Ignorance, knowledge, catastrophic convergence, derangement

1.Introduction:

Literature and Ecocriticism are interrelated to each other .This relation results in recognition of environmental issues. Language and literature carry ethical values identifying ecological implications. In the name of capitalism and industrialization, the relationship between nature and humans is curtailed. This will destroy the Earth and the environmental slaughter has never been accurately assessed. Ethical responsibility is ignored by landlords and capitalists. Instead of thinking seriously about the aesthetic beauty of the environment, human beings are clearing forests. Natural vegetation which has grown naturally without human aid has been left disturbed for long time. The future generation will meet an imminent crisis of survival.

All the plants and animals are interdependent and interrelated in their physical environment. The vegetation cover of India in large parts is no more natural in real sense because most of the areas at some places have been degraded by human activities. In view of alteration in vegetation, the nature of the plants, to a large extent, fails to determine the animal life. At present, this has come to the knowledge of ecocritics, researchers, environmentalists and fictional writer.

Literature responds to global climate change. The environmental awareness becomes the main agenda to reflect on excessive modification of the earth by humans. To put back the environmental condition and think of finding the solution should be the strong united voice of human beings. Now the moral duty of human society is to stand against such unexpected crisis of the earth. The future generation will suffer a lot in view of our reckless activities for gaining our targets. This is the belief of Ecologists that we have failed to reinstate the face of the climatic condition. In the past years, studies about the relationship between literature and the physical environment have emerged as a formal field of study. Known as ecocriticism, this new approach is a particular strand of scholarship that illustrates how environment concerns such as climate change and environmental preservation are manifested in the literary works of today's writers.

The term ' Eco-criticism' is used to discuss the big bonding between literature and the environment. The ecological concerns detected in the environment are displayed by the eco-critical approach. Environment generates its own organic matter which differs in space, from region to region and climate to climate. Environment tends to maintain an ecological balance. Changes of climate and human interferences can cause the loss of natural habitats for the plants and animals. Many species have become vulnerable or endangered. Deforestation, soil erosion, constructional activities, forest fires, tsunami and landslides are some of the human and natural factors which accelerate the process of extinction of these resources.

Human beings are an integral part of the ecosystem. The greed of human beings leads to over utilization of these resources. They cut the trees and kill the animals creating ecological imbalance. As a result some of the plants and animals have reached the verge of extinction. Due to excessive exploitation of the plants and animal resources by human beings, the ecosystem has been disturbed. Pollution due to chemical and industrial waste , acid deposits,

introduction of alien species and reckless cutting of the forests to bring land under cultivation and inhabitation, are also responsible for the imbalance.

Climate change is a real and urgent challenge. It is already affecting people and the environment worldwide. Significant changes are occurring on Earth. Natural events and human activities are the key issues for bringing climate change. Man-made causes like forest destruction, agricultural activities, fossil fuels, urbanization and industrialization are allegedly responsible for climate change. The earth has warmed remarkably over the last hundred years and particularly over the last two decades. Global warming is the increase of earth's average surface temperature. This results in changing climate globally.

Natural disasters occurred recently in Chennai, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Andra Pradesh and also the Andaman and Nicobar islands due to the lack of an adequate warning system. Floods, cyclones, heat waves and droughts, cold waves have made Odisha the disaster capital of India. From 1995 to 2020, India has experienced 1,058 floods, cyclones, droughts, cold waves and heat waves. Floods accounted for 33% of these disasters, followed by cyclones (5%), heat waves (24%) and droughts (22%), cold waves (16%). As per World Risk Report 2020, India was poorly prepared to deal with 'Climate reality', due to which it was more vulnerable to extreme natural disasters. India has been ranked 89th among 181 countries on the World Risk Index (WRI) 2020. Environmentalists raise concern surrounding climate variability in the ecologically fragile Himalayas. Now, Himachal witnesses a gradual shift in snowfall patterns. This is worrisome and alarming.

Man has continually been changing the forms and modes of his interaction with the Environment at an increasing rate. Natural processes and factors have been interwoven. Air, water and land surrounding us constitute our environment and influence us directly. At the same time, we too have an influence on our environment due to overuse or over-exploitation of resources or due to discharge of pollutants in the air, water and land.

The word 'Ecology' was first used by Ernest Haeckel in 1869. He coined the term 'Ecology' from two Greek words 'Oikos' meaning house or place to live and 'Logos' meaning to study it. Literally, ecology is a study of Organisms in their homes. Climatic factor is a part of ecological study. According to Barry Commoner, Everything in the ecological laws has some cost and their payment cannot be avoided. Major man-made change in a natural system is likely to be detrimental.

William Rueckert, an American critic first used the term Ecocriticism in 1978. But after 1990, this term developed as a school of criticism in America with the foundation of an organization called the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) in 1992. Richard Corridge in an article titled "Environmentalism and Ecocriticism" defines Ecocriticism in the following words:

"Ecocriticism is Literary and cultural criticism from an Environmentalist view point. Texts are evaluated in terms of their environmentally helpful or harmful effects. Ecocritics analyze the history of concepts such as 'nature' in an attempt to understand the cultural developments that have led to the present global ecological crisis." (**Waugh, 530**).

Two important texts of ecocriticism in recent times are *Ecocriticism* by **Greg Garrad** and *The Ecocriticism Reader Landmarks in Literary Ecology* edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Ecocritics deny the binary opposition between nature and culture but seek to establish the intimate relationship between man and nature. Jonathan Bate is the finest British critic to use the term ecocriticism in *Romantic Ecology* in 1991. Bate treats ecocriticism as a theory that moves away from the Marxist and New Historicist criticism for their lack of interest in nature.

The word 'ecocriticism' comes from the statement of Cheryl Glotfelty, who stated that ecocriticism is “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment”. The views on ecocriticism were communicated by Cheryl Glotfelty, Harold Fromm and Laurence Buell. At present, ecocritical studies are treated as interdisciplinary in approach. **John Mui's** statement has drawn the interdisciplinary nature of ecocriticism. Ecocriticism follows the same analogous pattern of Showalter's feminist criticism. Thus, ecocriticism defines that nature is portrayed in literature, It later leads to hiking public consciousness of attitudes toward the natural world. **Hubert Zapf**, a German eco-critic and theorist, points out that literature challenges and transforms cultural narratives of humanity's relationship to nature via language, imagination, and critique in his concept of **Triadic Model of Literature** as Cultural Ecology. **Hannes Berghaller** reviewed Zap's triadic model of literature as cultural ecology as a new transdisciplinary paradigm for literary studies.

From the point of view of eco-criticism, Several creative steps to highlight the power of nature are attempted by John Keats, S.T. Coleridge, William Wordsworth, P. B. Shelley, Toru Dutt, A.D. Hope, Robert Frost and so on. Indian writers in English willingly accept canonical English writers, but their ingenuity cannot be ignored. They have craving for global visibility but they are not crammers or mere imitators. They have their own ideals and ideas. They write with an artist's ambition, but never get recognition in their own land. They get recognition from the west. Then India identifies them as creative artists. Writers like Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry and Amitav Ghosh started writing about India as a country which is globally interlinked with other nations and activities of the world. Amitav Ghosh is a writer whose style of writing effectively combines the rigours of social research with the masterly ability of spinning a yarn. We all recognize that the story element has been a strong part of Amitav Ghosh's writings. Amitav Ghosh has earned his recognition for his first fiction *The Circle of Reason* from the west. Then Sahitya Academy of India recognizes him as a fictionalist. His body of writing includes seven full fledged novels and some non-fictions.

Amitav Ghosh, one of the most popular novelists of the period has joined the ranks of notable novelists such as Monohar Malgonkar, Shashi Tharoor, Khushwant Singh, Salman Rushdie, Chaman Nahal, and others. In Ghosh's novels, one may detect a feeling of historical realism. Ghosh's writings are characterised by a strong desire for strong identifications and race relations.

Amitav Ghosh's writings comprise of eight major fictions and non-fictions works. The six novels of him namely *The Circle of Reason*(1986), *The Shadow Lines*(1988), *The Glass Palace*(2000), *The Hungry Tide*(2004),

Sea of Poppies(2008), *River Smoke*(2011),*Gun Island* (2019) are noted to cover the environmental problems at wider range with respect to different global changes that took place during that period. Ghosh began working on the *Ibis* trilogy in 2004. Set in the 1830s, Its story follows the build-up of the First Opium War across China and the Indian Ocean region. The trilogy consists of *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), and *Flood of Fire* (2015).

His nonfiction works include *Kinship in Relation to the Economic and Social Organization of an Egyptian Village Community* (1981), *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), *Incendiary Circumstances: A Chronicle of the Turmoil's of our Times* (2005),*The Great Derangement: Climate Change and The Unthinkable* (2016), *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Plant in Crisis* (2021), *Uncanny and Improbable Events* (2021), *The Living Mountain*(2022), *Smoke and Ashes: A Writer's Journey through Opium's Hidden Histories*(2023) . Besides these, he has published a number of short stories, essays and articles in various national and international magazines and journals. Ghosh's writings amazingly blend the real historical facts and environmental issue as its core theme. He usually interlinks human world and natural world in all his novels. He is an outstanding climate change activist.

Ghosh has received several awards, honours and due recognition for his exceptional and exemplary endowment in the field of fiction, non-fiction, travelogue, history, anthropology and journalism. He is one of the few Indian writers in English who constructs nature in his fictional works by interweaving legends, experience, myth and history. He blends fiction with history. He has brought out the nature and man from his perspective in an eco-centric world. The dimensions of ecocriticism are reflected in Amitav Ghosh's writings.

But a close reading of his writings reveal a number of environmental concerns of ecocriticism in almost all his works such as Environmental Justice, Ecological Imperialism and degradation, Ecocide, man's hegemony over nature and anthropocentric attitude to the environment, identity crisis, the effect of ecological failure in the face of global warming , socio-economic conditions and inability of the present generation, violence of climate change and so on. Extreme consequences of climate change are felt by human society. Amitav Ghosh talks about the presence and proximity of non-human interlocutors. The book consists of three sections such as Story, History and politics. Every single family has a story of a tiger in Sunderbans.

2. Significance if the Study

Amitav Ghosh published his non-fiction *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* in 2016. In *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*, acclaimed novelist *Amitav Ghosh* provides aims to confront this urgent issue by reflecting on our 'deranged' modes of political and socio-economic organization. The themes like literature, history and politics are illustrated to highlight the fallen modes of human beings. This book examines and manifests the limits of human thought when it comes to the spectre of environmental catastrophe (*Alexandre Leskanich*).

The main concern of the work is set on climate change and reverse order of weather patterns throughout the world. It has shown the failures of the human society in the literary world, history and politics on the fake and severity of climate change. The book has three parts such as Part I, titled Stories, Part II, History, and Part III, Politics. The first part states why the modern novel struggles as an art form to describe and grapple with the concept of climate change. To understand this shortcoming, Ghosh highlights the role of the uncanny. In the second section, Ghosh describes the role of colonialism in the climate crisis. With examples ranging from Miami to Mumbai to New York, Ghosh explores why urban planning deviated and deviates from the indigenous multigenerational knowledge that compelled cultures to build away from the ocean. In the final section, Ghosh notes that activists who single out capitalism as the systemic driver of climate change miss imperialism.

3. Exploring Ecocritical Concerns *In the Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*

The *Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016) serves as a brilliant writer's summons to confront the most urgent task of our time. This book is set to highlight climate change through the branches of history, politics, and literature. Amitav Ghosh says about humans' unwillingness to engage with the climate catastrophe and find out the ways to stop climate crisis. According to him, It's time to stop our ignorance and pay our utmost heed to highlight the art of recognizing the state of the Earth. Everything has got deranged. No other way is born to run the future generations. Future is fired by the ignorance of the ongoing generation. The novelist argues that future generations may well think so.

This book has transversed the significant changes of Climate through literature, history and politics. In fact, the book is a way to drag the attention of the readers to keep vigil on climate change. It stands as an Interdisciplinary approach to present the inner issues of climate change. Critics appreciate its instant importance to check the aggressive condition of the climate. So, this is an eloquent prose which ventilates the pros and cons of the environment and addresses our ignorance towards climate crisis. This is the need of the hour to think and rethink on global climatic issues. This non-fiction has undergone challenges for the readers to rewire the moral connection between nature and human beings, Ecological disconnection has imbalanced the earth's as usual condition and broken the peaceful life of the human beings and non-human beings.

In this groundbreaking return to non-fiction, Ghosh examines our inability at the level of literature, history and politics to grasp the scale and violence of climate. The climate crisis asks us to imagine other forms of human existence. We need balanced life for survival in the society. so, collective responsibility is highly required to fight against catastrophic convergence. Human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuel fuels. Now, we keep facing incredible heat wave across northern and central India. Catastrophic is doubtful. Climate change is about caring the economic growth.

This book is an absorbing narrative on climate change and its impact which is getting closer with each passing day. (Hindustan Times)

The book is built up with three sections such as “Stories,” “History,” and “Politics.”

Amitav Ghosh told to *Bomb* magazine, “Climate change became a matter of personal urgency for me while I was writing my 2005 novel *The Hungry Tide*. The novel is set in the Sundarbans, the great mangrove forest of the Bengal Delta. While working on the book I realized that this region was already being impacted by rising sea levels and a retreating coastline. In the years after that, even though I was occupied with a project of a different kind (the Ibis trilogy), I found myself becoming more and more preoccupied with climate change — no doubt because the impact was increasingly obvious. After I finished the trilogy, I felt a great need to put down my thoughts on environmental change and its bearing on my practice as a writer.”

The book "*The Great Derangement*" received brilliant positive reviews. The London **Society of Economics reviewer** said, “This admirable book is the latest testament to the limits of contemporary thought and language, to the frustration of human cognitive power over a world we thought we knew,”

Kirkus Reviews called it "A slim but certainly significant contribution to the climate crisis dialogue sure to provoke discussion and increased awareness about our imperiled planet."

Publisher's Weekly liked the book writing that "In this concise and utterly enlightening volume, Ghosh urges the public to find new artistic and political frameworks to understand and reduce the effects of human-caused climate change, sharing his own visionary perspective as a novelist, scholar, and citizen of our imperiled world."

The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable (2016) is dealt with climate change in which Ghosh illuminates the boundaries of history, politics, and literature to draw the magnitude of this climate change. In this book, the author considers how and why humankind has failed to recognize the crisis of climate change. T Ghosh explores the lack of representation of climate change in the contemporary novel, the history of imperialism and industrialization that caused the climate crisis. This non-fiction commenced with some lectures which were delivered in the name of the Randy L. and Melvin R. Berlin Family Lectures at the University of Chicago in 4 parts from 29th September to 7th October 2015.

The book discusses themes such as politics, literature, and climate change denial. Climate change is the focal point of this book. Ghosh details the evidence of climate change's disruptions and paints disturbing pictures of what is to come for future generations. He concerns novelists' lack of attention towards global crisis that the earth is confronting today. Ghosh demands that the novelists should focus on climate change and their knowledge towards this "Great Derangement." It's time for them to recognize the process of change which is reshaping the Earth. He pays his target towards recognition. Drawing the day today situations in various urban areas and cities like Modern-day New Delhi or Beijing, Amitav stresses that 'the air too can come to life with sudden and deadly violence' in these places.

Ghosh appeals to his fellow writers from all over the world to hark back their attention from Modernist humanism and recognize the worst situation of the Earth which is going to burn our future generation. There is nothing to be ignored. Rather they must utilize their knowledge to find the possibilities of holding green life in the society. The strangeness of climate change is unfolding around us. We recognize something we had merely turned away from the

presence and proximity of non-human interlocutors. The ghosts of literary fiction are not human, but they are certainly represented as projections of humans. But animals like the Sunderbans tiger, and freakish weather events like the Delhi tornado, have no human referents at all.

The recognition from ignorance to knowledge is showing our consciousness in reducing global warming. The mysterious works done by humans are returning to haunt us in unthinkable shapes and forms. Nature writing or ecological writing highlights about the uncanny intimacy of our relationship with the non-human. Amitav Ghosh says that the way to identify climate change is very challenging. The timing of this renewed recognition is coincidence. It is certainly the most uncanny. Non-human forces have the ability to int Amitav Ghosh examines the inability of the present generation to control the running climate wheel because of high acceleration of man-made causes. The first part of the book provides deliberations about historical frameworks of climate crisis.

Climate change, Environmental issues and socio-political issues are the burning episodes reflected through Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement*. In part one of the book, Ghosh has cited one reference i.e. a movie *The Empire Strikes Back*. The rebel Hero in this movie is Han Solo who lands a spaceship on what he believes is an asteroid. It is actually a giant Space monster. Ghosh states that the future historians are going to see this scene as a reflection of a very brief period in which humans believed planets to be inert objects.

Ghosh has also said about his ancestors were climate refugees due change of path of rivers because they lived on the banks of a river in what is now Bangladesh. Their village had been washed away by the river. So, his ancestors were climate refugees who had suffered a lot. The power of the river could be experienced by them. They had faced severe natural disasters which led to their displacement. He states that his family was the part and parcel of environmental disaster. While researching the Sundarbans, Ghosh has identified that the forest is captured by non-human forces like rivers and silt.

In Amitav Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide" (2004), it is portrayed that all are hungry and dispossessed in view of significant changes of the climate. The violent waves at Sundarbans displaced the inhabitants and took the lives of some people. its land had been washed away due to frequent tides. In the name of the Industrialization, the trees in Sundarbans were cleared. As a result, the tigers and dolphins killed the people being hungry .Fokir who saved Piya, a researcher on dolphins, from the dolphins lost his life in view of severe cyclone. storm. It has taken place due to climatic crisis. But now, many years later, the accelerating impacts of global warming have begun to threaten the very existense of low lying areas like the Sunderbans.

The currents of global warming seem to be too wild. But it is a striking fact that the novelists are not focusing on climate change. It is almost always outside of fiction. Arundhoti Roy's writings are in various forms of non-fiction. Paul Kingsnorth's much admired historical novel "The Wake" set in eleventh century England has highlighted about climate change because he dedicated several years of his life to climate change activism before founding the influential Dark Mountain Project, 'a network of writers, artists and thinkers'. Citing Dipesh

Chakrabarty's seminal essay, 'The Climate History', Ghosh says that the Anthropocene presents a challenge to the arts of humanities and to our common sense understandings when Chakrabarty has stated in his essay that humans have become geological agents. He has reflected some handful of names who are prominent novelists, but no attention is given towards climate crisis by them. Increased participation and rising sea levels are the major impacts of climate change. Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai are always at risk of climate change.

The history of the present climate crisis has resulted from capitalism and industrialism. The continent of Asia is conceptually critical to every aspect of global warming: its causes, its philosophical and historical implications and global response. Bengal has faced the effects of sea level rise. The ongoing changes in climate become a threat to the interior of the continent because of droughts periodic flooding and extreme weather events. India, China and Pakistan keep facing heavy losses due to severe climate changes. The reality is that the continent has also played a crucial role in changing the present cycle of climate change. Ghosh says that the planet would have faced a climate crisis sooner or later.

In *The Glass Palace*, Amitav presents regarding European greed and the brutality of colonization. The British came to India and Burma who drained all the resources. When the end of the royal way of life came, the whole idea of maintaining luxurious life died. In *Countdown*, The novelist presents that the people forget their real problems. This book is an account of his journeys towards Pokhran, Siachen, Pakistan and Nepal. It portrays a detailed illustration of fatal consequences of nuclear explosion to hold its position at the international level. This writing knocks out the peace, prosperity and sustainability of people. Ghosh requests readers to set up peace out of love, but not by prosperity.

Climate poses a powerful challenge which is the single most important political conception of the modern era. The taste of freedom is not only central to contemporary politics but also to the humanities, the arts and literature. Amitav Ghosh portrays the awful reality of apathy of politicians who ignore the earth and atmosphere. The writers like Margaret Atwood, Dorris Lessing, Barbara Kingsolver, Mc Carthy, Boyle have raised seriously about the world Environment. Amitav Ghosh has merged himself with them. He says a lot of discussions have been made on religion, gender, caste and so on, but the issue of environmental disaster is ignored. Not the time has knocked the door of consciousness to explore the issues and find out solutions. It is a political issue in South Asia.

Amitav Ghosh discovers that civilisation is now facing the major force of anthropocene during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate change and the environment. It is a new geological era that is on the way to reshape and reorganize the globe. Human beings, according to Ghosh, act as ecological agents who change the physical processes of the Earth. Anthropocene becomes the important challenge for climate change. Amitav Ghosh argues that "The climate crisis is also a crisis of the culture and that of the generation." According to him, the writers at present are not focusing on climatic conditions of the earth. They are traditionally writing for the readers instead of reflecting the environmental issues.

Recognition of climate change from the extreme ignorance of the modernity is truly our well focused knowledge. Ghosh's true spirit towards environmental change is unthinkable. His literary creation is dealt with the issues of environmental and social advocacy and "catalyst for social action and exploratory literary analysis into a full-fledged form of engaged cultural critique". (Huggan and Tiffin) .

Present -day politics has not attention for human survival. According to him, the natural events will disrupt food and energy markets. The fossil fuels is at present keeps searching for alternative energy route. Climate change is an recognition which is exposing the ignorance of the modern society over the earth. Politics of climate change is a major concern for the human civilization. It's time to address climate change to wipe out cry of the poor.

4. Conclusion:

Recognition from ignorance to knowledge is an exploration of global climate crisis. Amitav Ghosh concerns over the survival of human life. Climate change can be discussed in the forum of diverse perspectives. It is an interdisciplinary conversation to detect the movement of climatic change. Collective responsibility is highly essential to sort out environmental issues. Human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily in view of burning of fossil fuels. The incredible heat wave has impacted the natural atmosphere. Amitav Ghosh argues that modern fiction and literary criticism tend to ignore the threat of climate change, neglecting texts which address the topic to subgenres like fantasy or science fiction. The artists are ignoring climate change. This is a mark of great derangement. The novel's characteristic focus on the local and regional is incompatible with the challenges of the climate crisis.

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