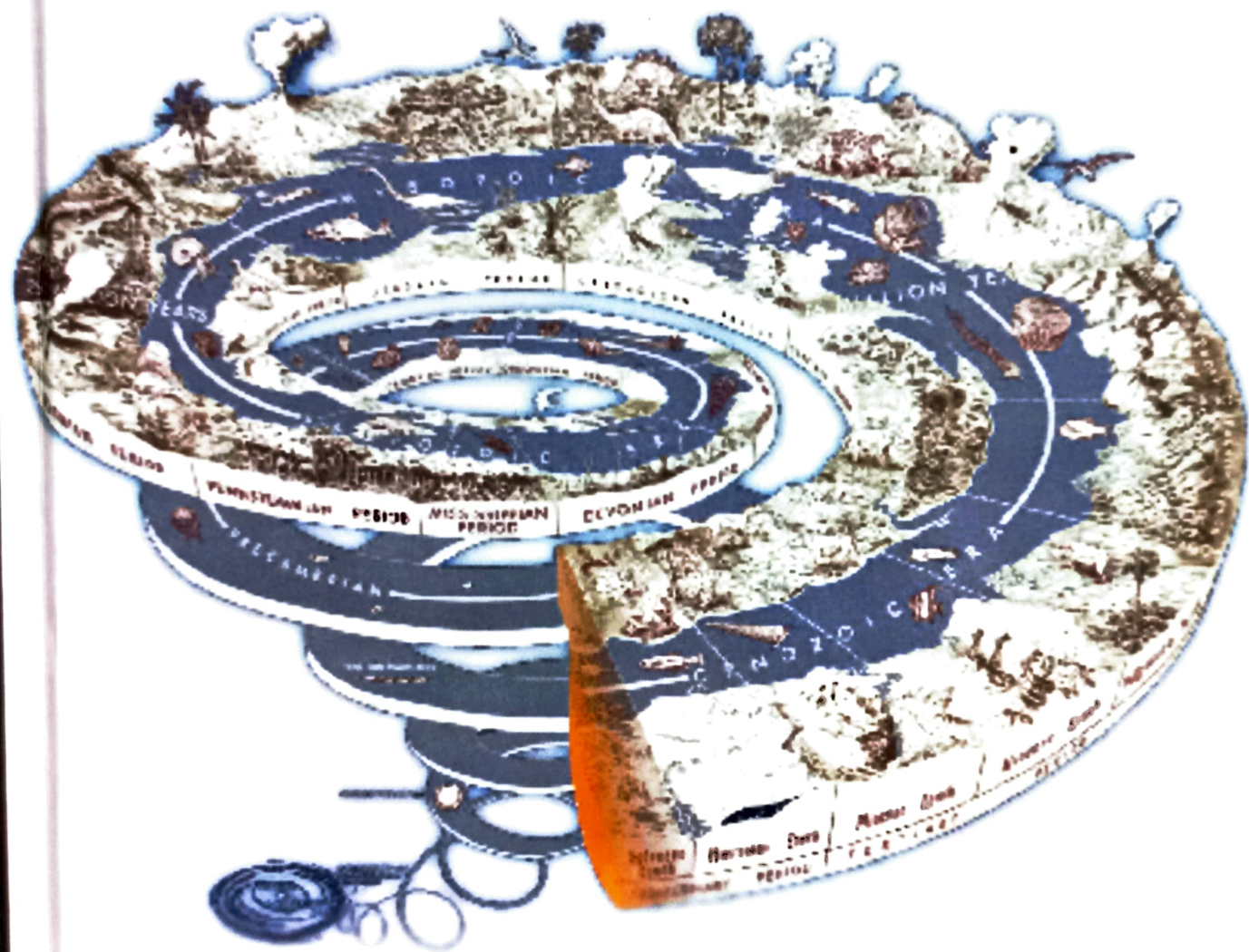


A CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO THE ANTHROPOCENE

FICTION AND REALITY



EDITORS

**M. SUBHA
V. MEENAKSHI**

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V. Meenakshi**

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ROMANTICISM AND TENACITY INTERSPERSED IN AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

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Abstract

Deeply evocative and emotive, *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh brings alive the quintessence of innate romanticism that pervades the very climes of Bengal and gives credence to all that the epithet 'Bangalee' denotes. The novel is woven around a major ecosystem of the world, the iconic Sunderbans, which are slowly and irrevocably ebbing out of existence due to extreme weather events, rising sea level and human culpability. Hanging precariously on the edge of existence along with the natural ecosystem are the dispossessed people who continue to bear the brunt of daily struggle with a quiet tenacity and resignation. This paper attempts to highlight the admirable poise of people in the face of imminent doom as well as the urgency of waking up to the impending possibility of a future bereft of this indispensable ecosphere and the sheer necessity of saving the world from itself before it is too late for as chilling as it might sound, Nature does not really need us.

Keywords: Anthropocene fiction, Sunderbans, Romanticism, Tenacity, surrender, Hope.

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Constructing Constricted Spaces for Women to Inhabit – A Study of Balli Kaur Jaswal’s novel ‘Erotic Stories for Punjabi Widows’

Harmeet Kaur Jhaji

The first generation Punjabi immigrant community seems to be caught in the vortex of a curious dilemma. On the one hand prospects of a much better life than the one they are already leading make them gravitate towards foreign countries and on the other hand, they feel compelled to play out their old lives exactly as they had been doing in their native places. The conservative, close-knit structures of a majority of Punjabi rural households have held so powerfully that comes what the ‘fortune seekers’ cannot afford to disregard the expectations that people back home have of them. Their flawed sense of duty to their village patriarchs despite the chasms created by such long distances cannot weaken their sense of guilt for leaving behind the extended family. This is attempted to be condoned for by paying regular visits of obeisance to convince them that they have maintained their ethnicity and culture. The most convenient way of accomplishing this is by exercising a stranglehold over their women so that they do not take to the ways of the new country since everything that is not Punjabi is viewed with a morbid sense of distrust. One is left wondering why they immigrated in the first place.

This article attempts to examine Balli Kaur Jaswal’s astute insight into the lives of the most marginalized of Punjabi women who were earlier considered to be very lucky on



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Harmeet Kaur Jhaji

CHAPTER 18

The Raw and Ragged Human Emotions in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*

Harmeet Kaur Jhajj

The Middle East has been a contentious region throughout history. It enjoys the rare honour of being the birthplace of two of the world's biggest religions – Christianity and Islam. Inadvertently this led to strife between their followers for control of the Holy Land which later converted into a Jewish-Muslim conflict for the right to a homeland. To date, the region remains embroiled in protracted and convoluted a strife perpetuated in equal measure by inside factions as well as by vested interests of foreign powers due to its strategic location as the gateway between Asia and Europe, and its vast petroleum reserves. The extended Cold War between the USA and the erstwhile USSR played itself out in Afghanistan also post-World War II for establishing a power praxis in an otherwise unappealing, arid, and rugged terrain. Tanks rolling down its mountains and valleys where Pashto '*tappes*' had earlier resounded, the staccato of assault rifles pummelling bullets, deafening gunfire from helicopters, rockets blasting everything up and digging craters everywhere, landmines blowing up innocent people, mostly unsuspecting children – have shredded the nation and its people, intensifying the rivalry between the different tribal factions, and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and extremism in the form of the Taliban.

It would seem as if Thomas Hardy had foreseen the tragedy of the Afghan people when he wrote in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) – "... happiness was but the occasional episode in the general drama of pain." The people of Afghanistan have known peace only in fragments snatched during lulls, and their resilient spirit and hope intact in the mercy of *Allah SWT* propels them to try to build lives

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Reclaiming one's own in Balli Kaur Jaswal's 'The Unlikely Adventures of The Shergill Sisters'

Prof Harmeet Kaur Jhajj

Religion is a potent force that is both perceptive and imperceptive with its impact and influence reaching far. Worldwide Sikhs seem to be identified by the culture of 'balle balle', high-spiritedness and living life full throttle when in reality it is their religion that accords them a unique identity and sets them apart from other religious communities. The heritage bestowed upon us by our Gurus is such that it inspires heartfelt obeisance and infuses courage to strive despite the odds while remaining altruistic. Once we attain this understanding we realise that we are distinct and that we have to stand out. And it is one religion which lays no claims. You need to embrace it voluntarily, through a conscious and deliberate choice, not by proxy. This is the reason why initiated Sikhs are far less in number as compared to the overall number of Sikhs worldwide. The Sikh religion also lays no injunctions on undertaking pilgrimages. We are reminded about this a couple of times in the novel. Shri Guru Granth Sahib ji says...

*"Tirath Navan Jaa-oo, Tirath Naam
Hai, Tirath Sabd Bichar, Antar Gyan
Hai."*(Raag Dhanasari, Mahala Pehla,
pg 687)

However, the observance of certain rituals lends a sense of discipline, purpose and moral support in our life. So palpable is the 'Shabd Guru' that most Punjabi homes reverberate with the hymns transmitted from The Golden Temple. Hence, religion is a tangible presence in the lives of the immigrant Punjabis too. In fact in an alien land they hold on tenaciously to their religious beliefs and

Amrita Pritam



Writer in Context

AMRITA PRITAM

THE WRITER PROVOCATEUR

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