



From Ecology to Economy: The Visualization of Imperialism in *Ibis* Trilogy of Amitav Ghosh

Avantika Porwal^{a++*} and Parul Aggarwal^{a#}

^a Department of English, SHSS, Shri Guru Ram Rai University, Dehradun, India.

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This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The *Ibis* Trilogy, which consists of the novels "Sea of Poppies," "River of Smoke," and "Flood of Fire," authored by the distinguished writer Amitav Ghosh, skillfully integrates the concepts of economy and ecology within the historical setting of colonialism in 19th-century Asia. The work critically analyses the trilogy's assessment of the preceding subjects, with a specific emphasis on the intricate relationship between economic factors, natural environments, and cultures among humans. The central focus of the trilogy is around the opium trade, a highly profitable yet ethically controversial endeavor that facilitated the connection between British India and China. The trilogy illuminates the inequitable allocation of power and resources within imperial systems by exploring the multilayered economic dynamics of colonialism, capitalism, and globalization through vibrant character narratives and historical characteristics. This paper outlines the economic spirit of colonial Asia; Ghosh provides a vivid depiction of the ecological regions during this era. In addition

⁺⁺ Research Scholar;

[#] Assistant Professor;

^{*}Corresponding author: Email: avantikaporwal53@gmail.com;

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to illustrating the environmental repercussions of colonial exploitation, such as habitat devastation, pollution, and deforestation, Ghosh demonstrates the adaptability and resilience of environments in the face of civilization's intervention. The Ibis Trilogy illuminates the interdependence of human societies and non-human domains by examining the interplay between economy and ecology. Furthermore, the trilogy delves into significant issues such as resistance, labour exploitation, and cultural exchange, all of which occur within the framework of colonial economies. It exposes the profound consequences of imperialism on communities of both human and non-human species. In conclusion, the Ibis Trilogy presents a nuanced examination of economy and ecology during the colonial era, thus standing as a monumental literary accomplishment.

Keywords: Imperialism; globalization; capitalism; colonialism; human intervention; ecology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Amitav Ghosh's "Ibis Trilogy," comprising "Sea of Poppies," "River of Smoke," and "Flood of Fire," effectively incorporates a bio-centric viewpoint by depicting the natural surroundings, specifically the landscapes and oceans that the characters navigate. By presenting the immensity and diversity of the Indian Ocean region, the trilogy emphasizes the intricate relationships between humanity and natural phenomena and the mutual dependency of ecosystems. Ghosh's scrupulous depiction of oceanic environments, living organisms, and fauna demonstrates a profound admiration for the region's ecological diversity. By employing vibrant illustrations of agricultural landscapes, mangrove forests, and seascapes, he underscores the significance of environmental stewardship and the detrimental effects that human actions can have on delicate ecosystems. Furthermore, Ghosh delves into the ramifications of cultural exchange, environmental degradation, and exploitation within the framework of colonialism and globalization. The opium trade contributes significantly to ecological degradation, soil devastation, and the disruption of conventional agricultural methods. Through the portrayal of these ecological repercussions, Ghosh highlights the interdependence of economic, social, and ecological systems. Ghosh prompts readers to reflect on the consequences of imperialism and globalization on our interdependent planet by employing evocative narratives and conducting thorough research. This serves as a poignant reminder of the complex network of interconnections that regulate the histories of nations, communities, and ecosystems. The field recenters the very communities and cultures who were rendered inert and without world-making powers by imperial regimes, prioritizing their modes of ecological interdependence and relation as instructive for repairing the damage caused by

imperial narratives of environmental inertness [1].

The history of the Opium War is the subject of the *Ibis* trilogy, while the cultivation, production, and commercial activity of opium are the subject of the *Sea of Poppies*. *River of Smoke* participates in the oceanic shipment of opium from India to China. *Flood of Fire* elucidates the conditions that precipitated the First Opium War as well as the British military execution. Amitav Ghosh's "Ibis Trilogy" delves into significant inquiries about resistance, identity, and belonging within the framework of oppressive colonialism. The characters confront the intricate nature of power dynamics and the quest for autonomy amid significant historical turmoil. The dependent relationship of distant regions and peoples in the developing global economy of the 19th century is beautifully illustrated in the trilogy. The narrative insinuates environmental concerns, which serve as a subtle reflection on the ecological repercussions of colonial exploitation. The narrative explores essential themes such as displacement, migration, and diaspora as the characters navigate their complex connections with colonial powers and indigenous cultures. The trilogy consistently underscores the malleability and fortitude of human identity in the face of hybrid cultural environments. This statement sheds light on the ethical dilemmas that arise when labour and resources are exploited for the sake of economic advantage. Ghosh skillfully illustrates the multifaceted webs of commerce, emphasising the opium trade's contribution to economic exploitation, the accumulation of wealth, and societal changes. Amitav Ghosh as a well-known humanist has penned against all kind of oppression in his novels. He vehemently disagrees with the idea of domination of man, either it be political or social. Amitav Ghosh has brought out the real struggle of women characters at various social statuses; he has pictured an ideal society with a

cooperative work of dreamers, social workers, culturalism and economist. Ghosh with his imaginary vision constructs a new society, with a new cultural consciousness [2].

Ghosh evaluates environmental issues from the perspectives of political science, geography, sociology, history, anthropology, ethics, philosophy, and law. His works of literature shed light on the anthropogenic era's ecological catastrophe, which was caused by capitalism. Ghosh uses mythological characters, subalterns, folklore, and history in his narratives that pass through places, eliminate to explain, provide answers for the current global predicament and he combines history, mythology, culture, and fiction to present ecological connotations in the chosen novels. His creations encourage a return to the natural world and acceptance of all species of vegetation and animals, as well as rivers, mountains, deltas, archipelagos, and seas. There are rational justifications for his fervent belief in the divine essence of nature and the capability to react, respond to, and regenerate.

The environmental turn in literary studies is best understood, then, less as a monolith than as a concourse of discrepant practices [3]. Mindfulness ecopedagogy encourages awareness of mental narratives, but unlikennarrative ecocriticism, mindfulness invites students to "let go of the story," thereby cultivating intimacy with present-moment experience [4]. The main environmental issues include an overabundance of finite resources, the previously unparalleled levels of greenhouse gas emissions, the carbon-intensive economy, the massive quantity of trash, the destruction of the ozone layer, numerous types of pollution, and the degradation of species. In his nonfiction work, Ghosh cites Dipesh Chakrabarty in the context of human-caused climate change *The Great Derangement Climate Change and the Unthinkable*— "humans have become geological agents, changing the most basic physical processes of the earth." (Ghosh, *Great Derangement* 12) [5] At the price of preserving the environment, revolutionary shifts have made it possible for economic, technical, and scientific growth. Ghosh issues a dire warning, indicating that the Earth's ecological disaster has grown beyond our capacity to comprehend and that immediate intervention is required for the survival of the environment. The hazards of technological advancement are great enough to endanger Earth's resources, including air, water, and land.

The Earth's environmental disaster is caused by man's callous and irresponsible plundering of Mother Nature and its resources.

2. THE *IBIS* TRILOGY: THE SHADES AND STORIES OF COLONIZATION, ECONOMY AND ECOLOGY

The first novel in Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis* trilogy, *Sea of Poppies*, was released in 2008; it has been divided into three sections: Land, River, and Sea—Each section illustrates the transition from fixity to flux. The sequence of events leading the characters to the ship is shown in the first section, Land. All of these characters board the ship in the second section, River, by a miracle of divine intervention. In the last segment, Sea, they go on a voyage aboard the *Ibis* to embark on an entirely new destiny that lies ahead in Mauritius. Ghosh emphasizes the linked histories of the travel of opium, lascars, and migrant labor and contests their marginal place in the colonial archives [6]. Hence, the narrative of the novel intricately ties together the experiences of several people, who, during the concluding section of the novel, go on a voyage from Kolkata to Mauritius on a schooner. Ghosh brilliantly intertwines historical events and human lives in *Sea of Poppies* to examine the interconnectedness of culture, identity, and nation. The novel thus globalizes the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade by writing its post-history and linking the former's trac in human bodies with that of other regions, most notably the trac of indentured bodies across the Indian Ocean [7].

Sea of Poppies depicts the experiences of many individuals, including men, women, peasants, sailors, and princes, known as *jahaj-behans* and *-bhais*, boarding the American schooner named the *Ibis*. The cultivation of poppy flowers and the processing of seeds into opium in India and its sale in China by British [8]. The novel is politically impactful, expertly integrating elements of history and mythology and examines the historical roots of the opium trade, noting that the Dutch were the first to use opium as a lucrative substance. However, the British adopted this clandestine aspect of capitalism, extending its influence to the urban centres and rural areas of 18th-century British India, ultimately reaching industrialization. The author provides a comprehensive account of the individuals who were directly affected by the British growing of opium in India, as well as the resulting financial struggles they suffered. The

narrative initiates with Deeti, the central character, who has been bereaved by her husband's addiction to opium and is being taken advantage of by her brother-in-law. The protagonist is compelled to depart from her closest relatives and societal norms to seek protection onboard the Ibis. This main narrative commences in the village situated in eastern Bihar, where Deeti were staying "outskirts of the town of Ghazipur, some fifty miles east of Benaras." (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 3) [9]. The preliminary words of the novel delineate Deeti's perception of a ship, which represents a metaphor for her approaching existence:

The vision of a tall-masted ship, at sail on the ocean, came to Deeti on an otherwise ordinary day, but she knew instantly that the apparition was a sign of destiny for she had never seen such a vessel before, not even in a dream: how could she have, living as she did in northern Bihar, four hundred miles from the coast? (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 3) [9].

Significantly meant for her and resembling characters, Ghosh illustrates the living circumstances and backgrounds of individuals who are compelled to relinquish their residences to serve as indentured laborers. In the novel "*Sea of Poppies*," Ghosh concentrated his analysis on the girmityas, who were indentured laborers from North India. He provides a detailed account of their ordeals during the height of the indenture movement in the late 1830s. Ghosh elucidates how the girmityas encounter changing aspects of identity as they belong to religious and social perspectives in *Sea of Poppies*. Ultimately, the identity of girmityas transforms into that of foreign captives, however, as Ghosh underscores, this impedes their ambitions and aspirations within itself. To investigate this process, the author analyses the experiences of individuals who were enslaved labourers. Thus, the narrative of the novel unfolds in the Bhojpuri-speaking regions of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Northern Bihar, in the Gangetic plains. This densely populated area was utilized by Indian indentured labourers as a recruiting ground. Amitav Ghosh vividly highlights the irony in the cultivators residing in Bhojpuri-speaking areas that are nourished by the Ganga River, who had an exceptionally low probability of emigrating with the rural Indian population:

How had it happened that when choosing the men and women who were to be torn from this subjugated plain, the hand of destiny had strayed so far inland, away from the busy coastlines, to light on the people who were, of all, the most stubbornly rooted in the silt of the Ganges, in a soil that had to be sown with suffering to yield its crop of story and song? It was as if fate had thrust its fist through the living flesh of the land in order to tear away a piece of its stricken heart. (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 399) [9].

Ghosh extensively explores the extensive poppy cultivation that took place under British colonial authority and the cultivation of poppy had a profound and enduring impact on the ecology of the earth. On a universal magnitude, poppy cultivation unites all the components of nature, humanity, society, and capital and the ecological consequences of an economy reliant on this cash crop and the emerging urban trading systems are catastrophic and incapacitating. Ghosh illustrates in the Ibis trilogy the inescapable catastrophes and disruptions that are unavoidable, including famine and drought, destitution and forced migration. *Sea of Poppies* commences with the establishment of Bengal opium plantations along the Gangetic Valley, situated in the state of Bihar, where a "flood of flowers... had washed over the countryside." (202) it sum up with the rain "lashing down from the sky in knotted sheets." (511) The ensuing cyclone deviates the Ibis from its intended direction towards Mauritius, providing Serang Ali, Jodu, Neel, Kalua, and Ah Fatt with an opportunity to get away. Indian farming communities were obligated to cultivate opium on their ancestral territories, which were previously designated for the production of staple food crops. Deeti describes the displacement of farmers caused by the British colonial system's implementation of monoculture agriculture.

"Many of these people had been driven from their villages by the flood of flowers that had washed over the countryside: lands that had once provided sustenance were now swamped by the rising tide of poppies." (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 202) [9]

The cultivation of opium increases both food scarcity and environmental vulnerability. While the transition from sustenance crops to cash crops stimulated the British economy, it also paved the way for imperialistic tendencies. "act of geographical violence" on the other hand. It

generated depravity and destitution among the peasantry and Deeti is unable to restore her roof as a result of the substitution of poppy cultivation for wheat cultivation, which has deprived her of straw, which she typically obtained after the wheat harvest. Historically, the cultivation and harvest of wheat not only guaranteed a steady supply of a source of food but the chaff also contributed to the maintenance of their dwellings. Ghosh paints a colourful portrait of pastoral existence:

“In the old days, the fields would be heavy with wheat in the winter, and after the spring harvest, the straw would be used to repair the damage of the year before. But now, with the sahibs forcing everyone to grow poppy, no one had thatch to spare – it had to be bought at the market, from people who lived in faraway villages, and the expense was such that people put off their repairs as long as they possibly could.” (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 29) [9].

As a consequence of the degradation of natural defensive structures and protective barriers caused by a modification in agricultural patterns, people were exposed to the violence of natural forces. Opium induced a state of perpetual unconsciousness in individuals, transforming them into lifeless creatures that remained inert, incapable, and ineffectual. The power of narrative in shaping environmental awareness has been a central theme of our exploration [10]. Deeti's preference to embark on the Ibis as an indentured labourer is motivated by the underprivileged capital system, which prohibits her from an adequate standard of living. Deeti has visions in which future events and the Ibis will determine the trajectory of her existence, not only do these events, which appear implausible, advance the plot, but they also serve as catalysts that force the characters to abandon their native habitats, which are no longer habitable. The narratives of the characters correspond and intertwine because they are all present aboard an identical vessel. The shared destinies of the character's result from their being "in the same Boat." Undoubtedly, the Ibis serves as an anchor for discussions and an epicenter of evolution, wherein unprecedented alliances are established. The Ibis, an antiquated blackbirder that conveys Africans to America via the Atlantic Ocean, is, therefore, a slave ship; thus, it becomes an early symbol of compelled immigration and enslavement in the novel. The ship is marked by the suffering of the slaves: “the

‘tween-deck, where the schooner’s human cargo had been accommodated with peepholes and air ducts, bored by generations of captive Africans.” (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 12) [9] She has been exchanged in order to participate in the lucrative trade of opium:

One thing Zachery did know about the Ibis was that she had been built to serve as a ‘blackbirder’, for transporting slaves . . . the years since the formal abolition of the slave trade, British and American naval vessels had taken to patrolling the West African coast in growing numbers, and the Ibis was not swift enough to be confident of outrunning them. As with many another slave-ships, the schooner’s new owner had acquired her with an eye to fitting her for a different trade: the export of opium. In this instance, the purchasers were a firm called Burnham Bros., a shipping company and trading house that had extensive interests in India and China. (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 11) [9]

Subsequently, indentured labourers and opium comprise the cargo carried by Ibis, which was initially an immoral cargo of prisoners. Slavery serves as a connection between the Ibis and both its past and its present and presently, the majority of the characters are enduring hardships due to their employment. Food-restricting factors were a consequence of opium and indigo cultivation, even in arid regions such as the Gangetic Plain. In the subsequent passage, Ghosh delineates the repercussions that must be endured by the inhabitants of this region, specifically the dearth of sustenance and employment:

Both Deeti and Kalua have tried to find work, but employment was hard to come by in Chhapra. The town was thronged with hundreds of impoverished transients, many of whom were willing to sweat themselves half to death for a few handfuls of rice. Many of these people had been driven from their villages by the flood of flowers that had washed over the countryside: lands that had once provided sustenance were now swamped by the rising tide of poppies. (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 187) [9]

As a result, Kalua and Deeti are compelled to seek occupation and eventually turn into indentured labourers upon learning that labourers are being recruited. The narrative

presents opium as a contemporary commodity, evoking a sense of enchantment and a steadfast adherence to tradition and history. Ghosh envisions the opium factory, complete with its iron-roofed building and water containers, as a "great mediaeval fort," (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 90) [9] imbued with superstitions and beliefs, and associated with ceremonial occasions and fortuitous occurrences. The author successfully communicates the characters' current state of wretched existence and the future ramifications of the opium trade through the use of prolepsis as a narrative technique. He outlines the way opium has integrated itself into the lives of the populace and they gain the ability to live by and with it. The use of opium becomes their primary source of income, to generate income, they engage in the opium trade themselves and this has detrimental effects on both human life and the environment. The health of the general population is significantly impacted by the pollution originating from the opium facility. They experience respiratory complications and bouts of wheezing and animals receive food with opium; for his horse's relaxation after a long day of labour, Kalua gives it opium.

The river Ganga, which flows perpendicular to the opium factory, contaminates the water with effluents and sewage, rendering it unsuitable for consumption by people and animals. Additionally, grasshoppers, bees, and wasps are perilously and fatally drawn to the poppy blossoms and they are entangled in the fluid produced by the legume that grows naturally. The opium is dissolved in the liquid that their corpses are submerged in and the land experiences a decline in its fecundity, compelling individuals to migrate elsewhere in search of survival and protection. Once the opium has been harvested "the country side was blanketed with the parched remnants...Except for the foliage of a few mango and jackfruit trees, nowhere was there anything green to relieve the eye." (*Sea of Poppies* 192) [9]

Sea of Poppies is a critical revisiting of the colonial past, a reinterpretation of the past. The novel encompasses the colonial trade and its effects starting from 1838 till the end of the war with China regarding opium trade, in its long sweep the novel also covers Anglo-Chinese war. On behalf of the opium trade among the British, China and India. These three countries were transformed into a theatre of the opium war [11].

Due to the East India Company's voracious avarice, the land was exploited to the point

where the ecological integrity of the entire region was irreparably damaged. Raskhali, the estate of Raja Neel Ratan Halder, was appropriated to secure a poppy plantation and this was accomplished by falsely accusing Halder of a crime and deporting him to Mauritius as an indentured labourer on board the *Ibis*.

"Were that to happen, poppies might well become a plantation crop, like indigo or sugarcane; with the demand rising annually in China, merchants who controlled their own production, rather than depending on small farmers, would stand to multiply their already astronomical profits." (Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* 215) [9]

The foundational volume of the trilogy provides a depiction of the intricate web of colonial trading centres that were constructed upon opium. The opium trade, which generated "astronomical revenues," was the source of affluence in the colonial capitals of Bombay, Calcutta, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Canton, according to Ghosh. Trade hub status had been attained by these urban centres, which guided their exponential expansion. These literary works illustrate various perspectives of intangible entities such as trees, rivers, mountains, and animals, emphasising their significance in the broader context of environmental comprehension and highlighting the critical need to prevent further environmental degradation. Rapidly, the environment is being plundered in the name of progress. Climate change has never received the crisis treatment from our leaders, despite the fact that it carries the risk of destroying lives on a vastly greater scale than collapsed banks or collapsed buildings [12]. Ghosh's novel offers a critical analysis of the exorbitant manufacturing aspiration of the global capitalist system, which has unequivocally resulted in an unparalleled deterioration of the environment. In order to manipulate natural environments, his novels subvert essentialist notions that the human subject possesses epistemological superiority and alleviates nature's fundamental components to malleable objects. The title of the novel *Sea of Poppies* is realized in the poppy plantations in Ghazipur for the entire area was surrounded with opium. Constant influence of opium contaminated all the living organisms and the environment [13].

River of Smoke (2011) by Amitav Ghosh is the second novel in the *Ibis* trilogy; he has populated this novel with a colourful and diverse cast of

individuals from various cultural and geographical contexts whose only common goal is to profit from trade with China. *River of Smoke* is a voluminous novel of over five hundred and fifty pages and it's divided into three parts - Islands, Canton, Commissioner Lin - with eighteen chapters and more than twenty major characters. The naming of the tripartite division in this novel, *River of Smoke* denotes that the theme of the novel goes from the whole to the part, from the margin to the centre. *River of Smoke* began its narrative in 1938 and three ships—Anahita, Redruth, and Ibis from *Sea of Poppies*—confront a violent tempest off the coast of Canton, the Chinese port city, at the beginning of the novel. The owner of the vessel Anahita is Bahram Moddie, a Bombay-based Parsi opium merchant. Fitcher Penrose, who is on a voyage to China to collect extremely rare species of flora, owns the ship Redruth and to Mauritius, the third ship, the Ibis, transports condemned individuals and indentured labourers.

Ghosh discusses the thriving opium industry in China, which has resulted from the reduction of trade barriers to advance the interests of the wealthy at the expense of the impoverished. Additionally, local regulations and customs that protect the rights of ecosystems are disregarded and the sale of refined opium as pharmaceuticals has caused the opium trade to soar. A viable market for narcotic products emerges in China; China descends into an opium-dependent state where its morals and ethics have been contaminated by the smoke of opium. Within the congested waterways of Canton, which was the principal commercial hub of mainland China in the 19th century and is now Guangzhou, the British persist in their trade of profiting from opiate-induced hallucinations. The juvenile becomes inebriated, lifeless, and sedated, China emerged as the inaugural civilization in recorded history to confront widespread addiction and Opium products, which are toxic substances, imported from overseas and are prohibited by the Chinese government. Immediately, the Chinese government acknowledges the deleterious capacity of the substance. The drug "raises the animal spirit and prevents lassitude" during the early stages of inhalation but as time passes, the toxic substance takes into effect, the habit becomes entrenched, and slumbering smoking resembles corpses – as frail and decrepit as demons." opium for an extended period "throws whole families into ruin, dissipates every kind of property, and destroys man himself." (Ghosh, *River of Smoke* 132) [14].

The novel begins with Deeti, an elderly woman, narrating her previous existence to her grandchildren. She details the tumultuous tempest they encountered while migrating to Mauritius in 1838, detailing the disappearance of two convicts, one passenger, and five crew members. Deeti relates to them about the monument and how, amidst the tempest, she had a vision in which she realised that every single one of the vanished members was alive and well. Amitav Ghosh recognises:

Dyé-koné, you can imagine how this news affected us all and the grief that was caused, with the lascars lamenting the death of Serang Ali, the girmityas mourning for Kalua, and Paulette weeping for Jodu, who was like a bhai to her, and for Zikri Malum too, because he was her hombo and she had set her heart on him. I was the only one there; let me tell you, whose eyes were dry, for I know better. Listen, I whispered to your Tantinn Paulette, don't worry, they're safe, those five; it was they who pushed the boat back in the sea, so they'd be taken for dead and quickly forgotten. (Ghosh, *River of Smoke* 18) [14]

As a result of the constant introduction of new identities, the novel can be considered an examination of identity formation. Hence, the narrative of Shireenbai is essential in this context. Indeed, the process of characterization gives rise to the portrayal of identities that are contingent upon psychological characteristics in addition to socioeconomic standing. As Ghosh puts it:

Shireenbai, the first wife of Bahram Moddie, was a shy and retiring girl whose spirit had been permanently dimmed by the tragedy that preceded her marriage, her demeanour was more of a widow than a bride, and she seemed always to be shrouded in melancholy, as though she were mourning the husband she should have had. (Ghosh, *River of Smoke* 48) [14]

Amitav Ghosh's *River of Smoke* portrays an unparalleled exploration of nation, culture, and identity against the backdrop of colonialism. The convergence of nation, culture, and identity within this novel framework frequently results in disorder in the burgeoning multiculturalism of societies, in addition to psychological and ethical tensions. Ghosh also portrays the species that are in danger of extinction. He mentions that the

eating practices of Chinese people are responsible for the extinction of animals. Chinese people not only eat different types of animals but also utilize them to prepare products that were not known to the world [15]. However, it is worth noting that colonialism also offers abundant opportunities for cultural blending and hybridization, as demonstrated through the novel. In an interview, Amitav Ghosh discusses the novel *River of Smoke* as follows:

... I'm drawn to marginal people in India, I'm drawn to marginal people around the world, I'm drawn to Burmese, Cambodians, to obscure figures, defeated figures and people who salvage some sort of life out of wreckage ... these characters' appeal to me, they interest me. (*Diasporic Predicaments* 15) [16]

Flood of Fire, the concluding volume of the *Ibis* trilogy, was released in 2015. It is concerned with the opium traffic between India and China during the nineteenth century. The Opium War marked the start of the so-called "century of humiliation" for China during 1839-1949, as well as the start of modern Chinese history [17]. *Flood of Fire* further develops and elaborates on the narrative established in the preceding two volumes, *River of Smoke* and *Sea of Poppies*. This third volume's narrative commences in the year 1939, Kesri Singh, the elder sibling of Deeti and a havildar in East India, discovers that his younger sister, Deeti, fled the funeral pyre of her spouse in order to evade sati. Deeti was wed to Hukam Singh, the nephew of Nirbhay Singh; Hukam Singh, who was previously a member of the British army, was amputated in a conflict and subsequently resigned. Following his recovery, he commenced employment at an opium factory in Ghazipur. Early in life; Hukam Singh succumbed to his opium addiction and passed away. Due to Deeti's extramarital affair with Kalua, a labourer of an inferior caste, her spouse's family takes great disgrace in her. The novel commences with a sequence portraying Kesri Singh, an East India Company havildar, advancing with his battalion:

Havildar Kesri Singh was the kind of soldier who liked to take the lead, particularly on days like this one, when his battalion was marching through the territory that had already been subdued and the advance-guard's job was only to fly the paltan's colours and put on their best parade-faces for the benefit of the crowds that had

gathered by the roadside. (Ghosh, *Flood of Fire* 01) [18]

This war that commenced in 1841 resulted in unprecedented levels of carnage and massacre. Indian troops lacked comprehension of their position in the conflict. Kesri, who is the sibling of Deeti, is a British army sepoy. In the context of colonial international affairs, his narrative sheds light on the challenges of military service, including humiliation, discrimination, and uninformed judgment. The miserable situation faced by Kesri exemplifies the futility and unresponsiveness of violence and avarice.

"So much death; so much destruction, and that too visited upon a people who had neither attacked nor harmed the men who were so intent on engulfing them in this flood of fire. What was the meaning of it? What was it for?" (Ghosh, *Flood of Fire* 505) [18]

Opium commerce was rejuvenated by China's defeat, following the execution of an accord between the British and the newly appointed Commissioner, the island of Hong Kong was incorporated into British sovereignty. Additionally, substantial monetary amounts were disbursed in restitution to the British in exchange for the opium that had been seized, due to the British intransigence in attempting to resolve the dispute diplomatically, the violence continued for over a year and the peripheral port of Hong Kong emerged as a significant hub for the opium trade. The refuge of free commerce in the Chinese territory of Hong Kong, according to Ghosh, represents a breach of the city's pristine ecology.

The proliferation of British colonies and imperialism resulted in the introduction of new international markets, trade and the movement of merchants and traders increased at a rapid rate as new ports and locations were established to facilitate commerce and trade between different countries. This causes considerable disturbance in the lives of numerous citizens, including Shireen, in numerous ways. Although the entry into unique markets presented fresh prospects, it also carried inherent dangers and threats. The demise of her husband's opium trade enterprise in China profoundly disrupts Shireen's existence and he describes the specifics in the subsequent passage:

It was not entirely Bahram's fault, they said. He had been caught unawares by recent developments in China. Soon after he

reached Canton a new viceroy had been appointed, a mandarin by the name of Commissioner Lin – by all accounts a power – crazed madman. He had detained all the foreign merchants and forced them to surrender the opium they had shipped to China that season. Then he had personally overseen the destruction of their cargoes – goods worth millions of Spanish dollars! Bahram was among the biggest loser; his entire cargo had been seized and destroyed – a consignment that he had bought mostly with borrowed money. (Ghosh, *Flood of Fire* 41) [18]

Flood of Fire, particularly prominent among the diverse ensemble of characters depicted by Ghosh, is merchants and traders who are engaged in trade from India to China in pursuit of greater financial security and profits. The novel portrays the period from the conclusion of the First Opium War to the ignominious defeat of China. The British annexed Hong Kong into their dominions as a result of the victory. *Flood of Fire* Globalization's emergence as a consequence of British imperialism is one of the many nations that Ghosh examines in relation to British imperialistic ambitions. Despite the significant role played by the opium trade and the First Opium War in China as contextual and background elements in the novel, Ghosh's focus is on the lives of individuals rather than the historical period itself. The narrative centers around the experiences of common people who experienced the political conflict between India, China, and Europe.

3. CONCLUSION

One of the main aims in ecocriticism is to study how human beings in society behave and react in relation to nature and ecological aspects. This form of ecocriticism has gained a lot of attention during recent years due to higher social emphasis on environmental destruction linked to increased usage of technology [19]. Ghosh explores the anthropocentric era and environmental degradation in his novels, while also scrutinizing the current generation's incapability to fully grasp the profound and far-reaching consequences of climate change. By delving into the intricate and contradictory complexities of the carbon economy, his trilogy emphasizes both the impending melancholy and the escalating apocalyptic vision. His eco-critical fictions demonstrate how literature, mythology, and narratives are the most effective vehicles for

addressing the most critical climate-related challenges. Ghosh's writing the recent concern of anthropologies with the porosity of cultural boundaries [20]. Through the utilization of myth and adopting an eco-feminist perspective, Ghosh effectively incorporates climate catastrophe issues into several domains such as literature, science, history, culture, politics, and power. The author believes that dependency on fossil fuels has had extensive and detrimental consequences for the Earth and responsibility to humanity and urges policymakers to transition towards a more environmentally friendly technology in order to establish a distinct, sustainable world. Ghosh's trilogy also centers on Diaspora and migration, which emerged as a prevalent consequence of colonization and expansionist imperialism. The *Ibis* trilogy delineates a historical epoch commencing with the cultivation of opium in India, elucidating the subsequent commerce and cultivation of this commodity, ultimately culminating in the Opium War between the British and the Chinese. This has extensive ramifications when the Chinese are vanquished and compelled to acquiesce to degrading and inequitable conditions of commerce and enterprise. The advent of a new multicultural world has had a profound impact on several aspects of society, including people, families, communities, nations, diplomacy, and international relations. This transformation has resulted in the emergence of hybrid identities and the development of common harmonious cultures, which have played a significant role in shaping the world we currently inherit [21].

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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