

Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island: Myth, Climate Change and Human Displacement

Aishwarya R

Assistant Professor Department of English Seshadripuram First Grade College

ABSTRACT

Amitav Ghosh's 2019 novel *Gun Island*, set around diverse locations such as the Sundarbans and Venice, engages with vital global questions of climate change, migration and cultural memorymaking in a contemporary fashion that makes it one of the major contributions to Indian English literature over recent decades. Through the weaving of folklore and contemporary ecological realities, this novel illustrates the interconnectivity of environmental crisis and human displacement. *Adventures on the ship of history: Through its unlikely hero Deen Datta*, Ghosh interrogates the relevance of myth as a way of comprehending contemporary environmental disasters. The paper investigates the novel through an ecocritical lens and posits that *Gun Island* conveys both the apprehensions of the Anthropocene epoch along with a revival for environmental awareness. The study also shows how Ghosh goes further, linking environmental disaster to forced migration and global capitalism.

Keywords: Ecocriticism; Climate fiction; Migration; Myth; Anthropocene; Displacement

INTRODUCTION

Modern fiction is more concerned than ever with climate change and ecological imbalance. One amongst the writers who have influenced environmental discourse is Amitav Ghosh. His novel *Gun Island* extends the ecological concerns present in *The Hungry Tide* and his non-fiction book *The Great Derangement*.

Gun Island tells the story of Dinanath Datta (Deen), a rare book dealer whose curiosity about a Bengali folk legend leads to some surprising insights into climate change and migration. The novel jets between geographic spaces — in the Sundarbans, Los Angeles, Venice — and this cross-pollination underscores how environmental crises don't stop at national borders.

This novel can be read as cli-fi, or climate fiction, a genre that deals with the repercussions of global warming and ecological disasters. He blurs myth and realism to imply that traditional stories might have solutions to modern ecological issues.

Climate Change as a Narrative Driver

Climate change is one of the central concerns in *Gun Island*. The novel imagines ecological disturbances less as theoretical possibilities than as already existing. Rising sea levels and cyclones make the Sundarbans region particularly vulnerable, casting it as a potent symbol of environmental fragility.

Ghosh describes strange natural phenomena like: Deadly heat waves, Forest fires in California, Flooding in Venice, Cyclones in the Bay of Bengal.

These events show that climate change is a global phenomenon. The novel also implies that nature is not quiescent but responds to human abuse.

The text reflects an ecocritical perspective, making us call into question the anthropomorphic worldview that situates man above nature. Ghosh, instead, advocates for an eco-centric world where human beings co-exist within the ecological system.

Migration and the Refugee Crisis

Migration is another important theme of the novel. And Ghosh treats migration as a direct result of environmental degradation and economic inequality. Tipu and Rafi appear as symbols of climate migrants who risk their lives in search of greener pastures.

The novel depicts the harsh realities confronting migrants like: Illegal border crossings, Human trafficking networks, Detention camps, Cultural alienation.

In this way, Ghosh critiques global inequalities and the inability of political mechanisms to engage with humanitarian crises. Migration in the novel is, hence, not merely a social problem but an environmental problem.

The Role of Myth and Folklore

One of the most distinctive aspects of Gun Island is its relationship with mythology. The story is structurally framed by the legend of Bonduki Sadagar (the Gun Merchant). k Deen first dismisses the legend as superstition, but gradually comes to understand its symbolic significance.

The myth depicts themes including:

Human greed
Escape from danger
Nature's revenge
Survival and adaptation

Ghosh proposes that myths are rational, housing cultural memory and environmental knowledge. The novel thus questions the rigid binary between reason and faith.

Globalization and Environmental Interconnectedness

The crossing of continents in the narrative signals globalization. Ghosh illustrates how trade routes, migration networks and environmental shifts link far-flung corners of the globe.

For example:A pollution occurrence in one area influences world order weather patterns.

Economic inequalities encourage migration.

Technological networks spread information rapidly.

The novel therefore portrays a world where blunting environmental elimination portal and human systems are intertwined. This is an expression of the idea that global problems need global solutions.

Character Transformation and Environmental Awareness

Character development is key to Dutta's Deen. From the start, he embodies rational skepticism — and intellectual detachment. But he is transformed through his interactions with migrants and environmental devastation.

His transformation reflects: Growing ecological awareness Acceptance of cultural knowledge

Recognition of global responsibility. This characterization mirrors the intellectual evolution modern society must undertake amid climate change.

Narrative Style and Technique

Ghosh uses a hybrid mix of narrative styles — realism mixed with travel writing and mythic fairy tales. His invocation of numerous locations shapes a transnational narrative structure.

Important techniques include: Symbolism (snakes, storms, fire), Interdisciplinary references (history, anthropology, science), Multiple perspectives, Blending of past and present. This narrative strategy reinforces the novel's exciting message about combined histories and ecological futures.

CONCLUSION

Gun island's latest title is a significant ecological novel that tackles some of the most problems facing the twenty-first century. In mixing myth with contemporary environmental realities, Ghosh shows how cultural narratives can help arrange the scene of climate change. The novel makes an argument ultimately that climate change and migration, and globalization as well, cannot be extracted and affected in a vacuum." Ghosh says that increasing perceptivity meaning an environmental



ethics based on shared experiences is needed to reverse the destructive trends. With this work, he encourages literature as a means of environmental awareness and societal introspection.

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