



A Study on Human and Animal Migration Due to Climate Change in Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island: The Growth of Climate Fiction (CLI-FI) in Contemporary English Literature

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the exploitation of natural resources and the destruction of ecosystems. Amitav Ghosh work reflects on the silence of mainstream literature regarding the climate crisis and questioning why realist fiction has struggled to engage with the urgency of environmental change. The book Gun Island examines the complex relationship between human activity and environmental degradation, using the legend of a mysterious island to explore themes of migration, climate related displacement and the need for collective action. His narratives explore stories of resilience, community-based solutions and the importance of traditional knowledge in adapting to the challenges of a changing climate. This book incorporates non-human perspectives, such as animals and natural elements, to underscore the interconnectedness of all life and the need for ecological understanding. His work delves into the social and economic inequalities exacerbated by climate change, particularly the vulnerability of marginalized communities and the impact on migration patterns. A problem as massive as global climate change is difficult to capture in literary language. But Amitav Ghosh claimed that focusing on mundane life was actually unrealistic in our era of ever more frequent climate disasters from Chennai floods to California wildfires. This paper also examines the emergence and evolution of climate fiction in contemporary English literature, focusing on how authors address issues such as environmental collapse, displacement, survival and activism. His novels were addressing climate change as a central issue of our time. This paper explores how climate fiction has emerged as a powerful form of storytelling in contemporary literature, highlighting its thematic concerns, major authors and its role in shaping public consciousness.

Keywords: climate change, environmental degradation, displacement, migration, climate crisis, exploitation of natural resources

Introduction

Recent developments in climate change in English Literature involve a growing body of work, particularly within the genre of climate fiction

(cli-fi), that explores the impacts of climate change, potential future scenarios, and the ethical and political dimensions of the crisis. Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island (2019) is a significant (cli-fi) that



explores the interconnection between climate change, human displacement and animal migration. The literature often draws inspiration from climate science and aims to raise awareness, provoke action and explore the human experience of changing planet. In recent years, English literature has seen a notable increase in works addressing climate change, reflecting a broader societal recognition of the issue's urgency and multifaceted implications. Amitav Ghosh's recent novels, particularly *Gun Island* and *The Great Derangement* explore the impact of climate change, emphasizing the need for multispecies cooperation. The novel combines mythology, historical trade routes and present-day ecological crises, using the protagonist's journey to showcase the deep ecological disruptions and their impact on both humans and non-human species. His novels involve a shift towards acknowledging the profound impact of climate change on human lives and the lives and the environment, moving beyond traditional realist narratives. His work explores themes of migration, environmental degradation and the need for multispecies cooperation in the face of ecological uncertainty. This has spurred a rise in the literary subgenre of climate fiction (cli-fi) and a corresponding surge in ecocritical analysis in literary studies. Ghosh questions the ability of traditional literary realism to adequately represent the realities of climate change, arguing that its focus on individual experience often overlooks the systematic and global nature of the crises. The paper considers how climate fiction serves not only as a narrative tool but as a form of resistance that questions political apathy and ecological neglect.

Growth of Climate Fiction (cli-fi)

Climate change has become one of the most urgent global concerns of the 21st century and literature has responded with a growing body of works now recognised as Climate Fiction (Cli-Fi). Literature, as a mirror of society, has responded to this urgent issue through a rapidly growing genre known as Climate Fiction or "Cli-Fi." In recent decades, climate change has evolved from a scientific concern into a cultural and existential crisis. Climate Fiction (cli-fi) genre

represents a literary engagement with environmental challenges, particularly global warming, ecological collapse, rising sea levels and their socio-political impacts. Cli-fi as a means of exploring the potential consequences of climate change and environmental destruction on human society and the planet. Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) is a significant work of climate fiction (cli-fi) that explores the interconnection between climate change, human displacement and animal migration. It also explores the human and ecological consequences of climate crisis, often blending realism, dystopia and speculative elements. It fosters empathy and awareness; it also influences other media, including films, television and digital storytelling. By highlighting the ethical responsibilities of storytelling, this study shows how Cli-Fi is reshaping the role of literature in the anthropogenic era. Amitav Ghosh critiques the limitations of traditional realist fiction in capturing the scale and complexity of the climate crisis and also arguing that it often fails to address the non-human agency and the vastness of ecological change. Climate fiction critiques consumerism, capitalism and political inaction, urging readers to rethink their relationship with nature.

Human-Nature Relationship

Amitav Ghosh novels emphasize the deep connections between human actions and the environment. It is demonstrating how climate change affects not only individuals but also entire communities and ecosystems. In Amitav Ghosh's latest novel *Gun Island*, released this fall, he creates a world in which his characters literally fly from fire to flood, each scene unfolding in a new disaster zone. The novel combines mythology, historical trade routes and present day ecological crises, using the protagonist's journey to showcase the deep ecological disruptions and their impact on both humans and non-human species. Climate fiction bridges the gap between scientific data and human emotion.



Human Migration Due to Climate Change

Through intertwined migration of humans and animals, he urges for climate justice and a rethinking of human relationships with nature. The novel discusses how forest fires, melting glaciers and desertification are pushing both animals and humans out of their natural habitats. Amitav Ghosh portrays the harsh realities of climate-induced migration, especially from Sundarbans, Bangladesh and coastal areas of south Asia. The concept of interconnected suffering is emphasized – when non-human species suffer, humans too are displaced. Amitav Ghosh reveals the trafficking networks that exploit these climate migrants. The journey across the Mediterranean Sea reflects the dangerous conditions faced by such migrants. Characters like Tipu and Rafi flee their homes due to flooding, cyclones and loss of livelihoods, not war or politics. They represent the new generation of climate refugees, highlighting how climate change directly affects economic survival, facing young people to migrate illegally to the West.

Animal Migration

The appearance of poisonous blue creature in Venice, a creature usually found in the Indian Ocean, symbolizes disturbed marine ecosystems. The Venice scenes show how Europe is being reshaped by climate migration, not only demographically but also politically and culturally. Amitav Ghosh shows how animals are migrating or appearing in unexpected places due to rising ocean temperatures, plastic pollution and ecosystem collapse. Amitav Ghosh shows how animals are migrating or appearing in unexpected places due to rising ocean temperatures, plastic pollution and ecosystem collapse.

Ecocriticism in Gun Island

Gun Island is a strong text for ecocritical reading, especially because it shows how literature can challenge anthropocentrism (human-centered thinking). Ecocriticism examines human-nature relationships in literature. The novel depicts nature as active and sentient. It includes non-human voices (dolphins, sea snakes, storms). It explores

posthumanism and environmental justice. Ecocriticism, a branch of literary studies focusing on the relationship between literature and the environment. It has significantly expanded its focus to include climate change as a major area of study. This has led to an increasing number of ecocritical analyses of climate change literature, particularly novels, contributing to the establishment of a “canon of climate change literature”.

Climate Change Fiction

Gun Island highlights the interconnectedness of human and animal migration due to climate change, suggesting that climate justice must extend beyond human concerns to encompass all living beings. Amitav Ghosh argues that traditional literary forms struggle to capture the scale and complexity of climate change. He has recently turned his attention to the impacts of climate change on human cultures. The novel addresses the direct and indirect effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, cyclones and floods in the Sundarbans, forest fires in California, Animal displacement eg. Dolphins, venomous sea.

Non-Human Voices

In Gun Island, Ghosh gives narrative space to the displaced, not only human migrants but also non-human migrants like marine creatures and forest animals, whose voices emerge through symbolic presence and environmental disruption. By weaving myth with ecological fact, Amitav Ghosh elevates the non-human voice from the dolphins of the Sundarbans to the venomous sea snake in Venice-as critical storytellers in the Anthropocene. By centring the stories of marginalized and vulnerable populations, Cli-Fi highlights environmental injustice and amplifies voices often excluded from environmental discourse.

Conclusion

The rise of climate fiction signals a shift in how literature engages with the world. As the climate crisis deepens, the stories we tell about it become increasingly vital. Climate fiction not only warns of



possible futures but also inspires hope, resilience and action. It challenges us to imagine a better world-and to fight for it. Amitav Ghosh's work is significant in climate change literature because it brings the climate crisis to the forefront of literary discourse. By blending storytelling with environmental science, Amitav Ghosh transforms a novel into a climate narrative of resistance and survival. It challenges the limitations of traditional literary forms in representing ecological change. He argues that climate change is not just a scientific issue, but a moral and cultural crisis. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of human and non-human lives in the face of environmental challenges. Amitav Ghosh critiques Western rationalism, which separates nature and culture. It encourages a more nuanced and socially conscious approach to climate change narratives. In *Gun Island*, Amitav Ghosh shows that climate change is borderless, affecting all beings across the globe. His depiction of human and animal migration underline the urgency to address climate disasters, not just with policies, but with empathy, global cooperation and a renewed ecological consciousness. The mythological journey parallels the modern climate migration, creating a cyclical

pattern of history where environmental crisis reappear in new forms.

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