

Understanding Ecological Movement and Climate Migration in Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island

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Abstract:

This paper examines the interconnected dynamics of ecological movement and climate migration in Gun Island, presenting climate change as a lived human experience rather than a purely scientific or political concern. The narrative demonstrates how rising sea levels, unstable climatic patterns, and the degradation of ecosystems disrupt human life, compelling communities to relocate in search of safety and continuity. The novel illustrates these disruptions not as isolated incidents but as forces that reshape emotional, cultural, and social realities, generating a sense of uncertainty that influences everyday decisions, relationships, and long-held attachments to place.

The study further analyses the parallel movements within the natural world, shifts in animal behaviour, altered marine patterns, and transforming landscapes to show how environmental instability influences both human and non-human life. By integrating the myth of the serpent goddess Manasa, the narrative links traditional ecological knowledge with contemporary environmental crises, framing climate displacement within a broader cultural and symbolic continuum. This fusion of folklore and ecological disruption reveals how cultural memory and mythic imagination offer interpretive tools to understand the magnitude of present-day environmental challenges.

Guided by Ecocriticism, the analysis proceeds from the view that the novel illuminate's climate migration as a multidimensional experience involving memory, identity, and cultural continuity. The study contends that the narrative's portrayal of displacement moves beyond physical relocation, emphasising the emotional, ethical, and symbolic dimensions that shape human engagement with environmental change. This perspective broadens contemporary literary discussions by foregrounding the novel's capacity to represent the affective and cultural implications of ecological crisis, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how literature interprets and humanises the experience of climate migration.

Keywords: Climate Migration, Ecological Movement, Environmental Humanities, Ecocriticism, Climate Crisis, Folklore and ecology, Cultural Studies and narratives.