

Devastation of Nature and Exploitation of Indigenous People: Postcolonial Ecocritical Study of *Gun Island* by Amitav Ghosh

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Abstract

The present study aims to analyze the sources involved in the distortion of the environment: global warming, human and animal migration as presented in Gun Island (2019) by Amitav Ghosh through the lens of postcolonial ecocriticism. The study examines and explores the colonial effects on nature, native land and indigenous people and animals, using the notions propounded by Huggan and Tiffin in their book Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals and Environment published in 2010. Blending the elements of myth, culture and history with fiction, the novel draws upon a relationship between humans and animals with ecological crisis. Findings of the study reveal that these ecological crises cause global warming and climate change which ultimately give rise to the displacement of both humans and non-humans. The study further unveils the hidden agenda behind the myth of development with intended annihilation of native land, economy and horticulture. The study becomes significant in realizing the fact that postcolonial ecocriticism is not limited to certain geographic regions but it has become a universal concern.

Key Words: *Distortion of Environment, Global Warming, Migration, Indigenous People, Postcolonial ecocriticism, Gun Island*

1. Introduction

Ecocriticism is the latest critical discipline that studies the relationship between man and nature, between nature and literature. Glotfelty (1996) has aptly described this relation as

Ecocriticism is the Earth-centered approach for the study of the literature [...] Ecocriticism expands the notion of 'the world' to include the entire ecosphere. He adds ... literature does not float above the world in some aesthetic ether, but, rather, plays a part in an immensely complex global system, in which energy, matter, and ideas interact. (p. xix)

Postcolonial ecocriticism is a newly emerged field in literary criticism that combines the study of the postcolonial environment in literary work and reveals the relationship between literature and environment. Postcolonial literary writers are well aware of ecological changes and recurring problems because of humans' unconscious and ignorant behaviors toward the environment. One reason behind the death of nature was the scientific revolution; another was the rise of industrial capitalism (Huggan and Tiffin, 2010). However, Postcolonial Ecocritical study takes into account the environment as a complete body composed of humans, animals and land and establishes its relationship with the exploitative nature of imperialism and colonialism.

Famous literary authors across the globe have highlighted the environmental issues in their literary pieces and Indian fiction writers writing in English are not without exception. Literary works in English by Indian writers have received impeccable praise both in their motherland and abroad. Indian English literature has carved out a new vision, a new ideology, a vision full of mysteries of hope and faiths, traditions and customs, rituals and myths. The writers have given English literature new forms and colors just like Americans and Australians evolved their own literature having unique identity of their own. In Indian novels, we have often encountered how the socio-political realities play out against the overarching backdrop of environmental plundering and devastation.

Out of many famous Indian literary icons, Amitav Ghosh is the one who was born in Calcutta and grew up in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Ghosh, the winner of the 54th Jnanpith Award, is famous for his contribution to English fiction. Ghosh's debut novel is *The Circle of Reason* (1986). *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000) and *The Hungry Tide* (2004) are his best novels. *Ibis Trilogy* is a work of historical fiction by him consisting of the *Sea*

of *Poppies*, *River of Smoke* and *Flood of Fire* published in 2008, 2011 and 2015 respectively. Ghosh's recently published novel *Gun Island* (2019), discusses environmental changes and human migration and drew admiration from literary critics. Ghosh's tendency to go on tangents is noted by a guardian, calling it a *shaggy dog story*.

A beautifully and artistically written novel, *Gun Island* (2019), traverses space and time. Two remarkable women restore a man's faith in the world and the future. Ghosh writes with deep intelligence and elucidating coherence about complex topics. This challenging and progressive novel memorably draws association among mythology, environment, politics, and history. The novel completes with each character following their way to Venice; the island acting as the background against which myth and reality blend amidst a burst of activity. The present study is a postcolonial ecocritical study of Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019). Using the textual analysis method, the study has employed the underpinnings of postcolonial ecocriticism propounded by Huggan and Tiffin (2010).

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To highlight the environmental issues and their impact under the postcolonial context in *Gun Island* (2019).
2. To unveil the hidden agenda behind the myth of development with intended annihilation of native land, economy and horticulture.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the different environmental issues and how have they been presented under the postcolonial context in *Gun Island*?
2. How has the myth of development with intended annihilation of native land, economy and horticulture been deconstructed in *Gun Island* by Ghosh?

2. Literature Review

The natural and social world has a close connection which is being examined and emphasized in all divisions of knowledge and growth. Literary critics attempt to examine how writers textualize the environment in their works. In this context, two terms have become very significant; ecology and ecocriticism. There is a vast range of ecosystems around India. There are Sunderbans in the East and dry Thar in the West; the Himalayas in the North and Plateaus in the South. These ecosystems have been adversely affected due to humans.

Desai's *Fire on the Mountains* (1977) is a genuine case of ecocritical content managing, the issue of creature murdering, populace blast and moral debasement of man all making a risk to nature symbolized by visit fire in the woodland. Nature, environment, animals, plants, and birds have a strong presence throughout her work. In *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), Maya's inner life complexities and resentment against her husband are effectively depicted through the landscape. Maya compares herself with the peacock in the jungle. Desai, Man Booker Prize winner for *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), is a famous environment-conscious novelist. Desai has concentrated on the issue of climate change. Khan, M.A. et al. (2017) have suggested that print media is working as a tool that is being operated by the capitalists for the completion of their agenda.

) discusses the topics of ecology and nature. The changing condition of the beautiful landscape, the look of Ayemenen and the river Meenachal are caused by environmental pollution. She has used natural images not only for exposing the polluted environment of Ayemenem but also for describing the beautiful atmosphere of this area: "...the river was no more than a swollen drain now. A thin ribbon of thick water lapped wearily at the mud banks on either side, sequined with the occasional silver fish. It was choked with a succulent weed..." (Roy, 1997, p.124).

Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) is the story of the Bay of Bengal which deals geographical areas of Sunderbans. Two significant issues are highlighted in it. One is the present time relevant aspect, the environment and the complicated ecosystem and the other is the plight and miserable condition of the refugees moved from Bangladesh. In his earlier influential work on the climate crisis, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016), Ghosh observes that "[c]limate

change has reversed the temporal order of modernity: those on the margins are now the first to experience the future that awaits all of us” (p. 84).

Gupta (2020) highlights that Ghosh’s *Gun Island* (2019) portrays the great sensitivity of the writer towards the degradation of increasing environmental crisis all over the world and exhibits the same ecological overtones in the story of *Gun Island*, he had mixed the myth, culture, fiction and history. She analyzed the fact that how these ecological crises cause global warming and climate change which ultimately give rise to the displacement of both humans and non-humans in the world.

Kluwick (2020) has described *Gun Island* (2019) as a novel about cyclone Aila of 2009. By connecting the storm to immigration, climate change, and ever-lasting social change, it manages to convey a greater sense of destruction. It points to the transition from portraying hurricanes as life experiences to storms and floods as an intimation of climate and harbingers of social change. At the same time, the claim that flooding is a link between different events and the environment is becoming more and more important, which is also evident in the aquatic language of *Gun Island* (2019).

Samkaria (2022) explores the different issues pertaining to the racial and ecological injustice, migrant ecologies and environmental catastrophes of the 21st century. In this study, the relationship between the cultural forms of human labor and the environment has been explored and the story highlighted the fact that the majority of the workers living in Venice are migrants. This study proves that *Gun Island* seeks to destabilize the borders and how the reconceptualization of Ghosh through the postcolonial nonhuman blurs borders and posits instead, a relational way of living that dismantles the construction of hierarchies while paying attention to (b) orders for ecologically sustainable living.

The review of the previous related studies provides enough space and direction for the present study. The current study analyzes the relationship between *Postcolonial* and *ecocritical* with reference to Ghosh’s *Gun Island* (2019). This study discusses the miserable and disastrous experiences of the postcolonial community migrating from Bengal to Venice.

3. Theoretical Framework

The present study is qualitative and interpretative in nature. Textual analysis has been used as a tool for data analysis from postcolonial ecocritical perspective. Postcolonial Ecocriticism theory deals with that particular literature that narrates the impact of colonialism on nature, lands, animals and humans. Generally, such type of literature is written by the colonized or formerly colonized nations. Huggan and Tiffin’s notions as presented in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals and Environment*, (2010) have been employed to examine relationships between human beings, the environment and animals in postcolonial literary text.

Through literary texts, environmental critics explore how the natural world and nature are imagined. In Western and Indian literature issues like endangered species, deforestation, air pollution, animal rights, wetland loss, and pervasive consumerism have been appearing for a number of years. The flourishing alliance between postcolonial and environmental studies begins with a seemingly obvious coincidence. Imperialism and colonization have always affected people and nations and post colonialism is overwhelmingly human-centric, while ecocriticism is decidedly ecocentric. Huggan and Tiffin (2010) explain the method by which Westerners exploit land in Asia and Africa. Environmental devastation is the deterioration of the environment caused by the use of resources such as soil, air and water, the loss of ecosystems, and wildlife extinction.

Ghosh’s *Gun Island* (2019) is analyzed from the perspective of Huggan and Tiffin’s theoretical framework and evaluated by using the textual analysis method. The text of the novel *Gun Island* (2019) is the primary source for the analysis and secondary sources are articles, books, journals and the internet. The researcher finds out how postcolonial ecocriticism explores sustainable development, improbability; idiosyncratic serendipity and chance meetings combined with folklore and ancient myth, audacity stories, the supernatural set in a modern world distorted by the constant migrations of human beings, animals, and sea creatures.

Huggan and Tiffin (2010) introduce postcolonial ecocriticism and talk about the physical world and human beings by including the matter of racism and specialisms. Indigenous people are

categorized and treated as animalized human in colonized countries. Through exploitative control, colonialism transfers nature to the colonized people. The alleged idea of development is a method to utilize and advance the local land and population, respectively. Through this concept, imperialism enforced the apt demonstration of development to incorporate natural anthropocentrism for the colonized.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Gun Island by Amitav Ghosh is a captivating novel that connects myths, climate change, and human connections across different continents. The story follows the journey of Deen Datta, a rare books dealer in Kolkata, India. While visiting the Sundarbans, a vast mangrove forest in Bengal, he discovers a rare manuscript that tells the story of the goddess Manasa, the serpent deity. This encounter marks the beginning of a transformative journey for Deen. He becomes fascinated by the connections between ancient myths and contemporary events, especially regarding climate change. This discovery sets him on a journey that spans different continents and explores the intersections of myth and reality. Deen's journey takes him from the Sundarbans to Venice, where he faces Cinta, an artist who shares his interest in myths and the environment. Together, they embark on a quest to trace the origins of the Manasa manuscript to understand its significance. As Deen and Cinta delve deeper into the mystery, they encounter communities displaced by rising sea levels and ecological imbalances, highlighting the urgent need for environmental awareness and action. Their journey eventually leads them to Los Angeles, where they meet people from diverse backgrounds, all connected by their shared experiences of displacement, migration due to ecological crisis. As the story unfolds, Deen comes to realize that the Manasa legend is not just a tale of the past but a metaphor for the human impact on nature. The novel weaves together themes of climate change, human migration, and cultural exchange and underscores the interconnectedness of human lives and the complex relationships between humans and the environment.

4.1 Devastation of Nature in *Gun Island*

Gun Island (2019) is a narrative of the devastation of nature; climate change is the main theme in this novel. It covers various histories and geographies around the world, particularly the Sundarbans and Venice. When pressure and pollution are too high, urban life becomes difficult to deal with. Overfishing, coral bleaching, and the destruction of coastal ecosystems are causes of the devastation of nature. "Lusibari, the island where Nilima and her husband lived, suffered a great deal of damage: a large chunk of the island was ripped away by the storm surge, houses and all" (Ghosh, 2019, p.14).

According to the postcolonial ecocritical perspective, when a storm gushes steadily, it demolishes each and everything. When the environment is disturbed, it badly hits humans and animals. According to Huggan and Tiffin (2010), postcolonial ecocriticism, environmental violence and the marginalization of indigenous communities are interlinked. Man is constantly left in stagger by cataclysmic events like drought, flood, storms, earthquakes and so forth which plunder the ecological pyramid and have left us near the precarious edge of desolation and destruction. Cyclone hits West Bengal Sunderbans, where on Lusibari Island, Nilima and her husband lived and suffered from a lot of destruction. Horen Naskar, a young fisherman, having acquaintance with Nilima had witnessed the devastation with his own eyes. There is a terrible sight on an island where every tree has been stripped of its leaves; animals devour corpses floating in the water; villages where most of the residents have been lost. At that time, the refugees were from East Pakistan. For months, people had been coming from the border to escape political disruption. The tide is like a hungry mouth entering an area that is already scarce.

Hundreds of miles of embankment had been swept away and the sea had invaded places where it had never entered before; vast tracts of once fertile land had been swamped by salt water, rendering them uncultivable for a generation, if not forever. The evacuations too had produced effects that no one could have foretold. Having once been uprooted from their villages many evacuees had decided not to return. (Ghosh, 2019, pp. 52–53)

The global influence of *Gun Island* (2019) on the cyclones is not presented as a personal experience like *The Hungry Tide* (2004) but is related to a larger socio-economic constellation. They

are not only related to local disasters but also face challenges of global society because the role becomes obvious when characters use hurricanes as direct cause of migration. A local nurse Moyna explained to Deen's Sundarbans day trip, how hurricane Aila 2009, is different from previous hurricanes. As a result of this hurricane, millions of people moved to Bangladesh and India. Hundreds of people were evacuated from their houses and lost their lives. Cyclones no longer mean a temporary breakage, but a permanent structural change. *Gun Island* (2019) examines many of the author's recurring themes like Irrawaddy dolphins; Sandbanks; climate change.

According to Huggan and Tiffin (2010), the alleged idea of development is a process to utilize and advance the local land and population. Due to this human trafficking and migration, people suffer from starvation, deadly diseases and death. "Half the people had died of starvation; parents had sold their children and people had been reduced to eating carcasses and cadavers" (Ghosh, 2019, p. 60). If anyone goes against the divine law of nature then that individual and the whole group face punishment by nature in the form of hurricanes and other disasters. The images of the wild forests, caves, and crop fields are not only used as background descriptions but are portrayed as strong characters which influence the life of the villagers. This was the time when Horen visited the Gun Merchant's shrine. It is a dark, accurate and explicit picture of the environment, including human obedience to the majestic flora and natural laws. It is a place where corpses are buried, and it has spiritual beliefs that affect people and places.

Deadly diseases such as cholera and typhoid followed. More than a million livestock have been lost. More than 3,500 educational institutions have been damaged. They lost more than a million hectares of rice fields, with their rice crops only two weeks from harvest. Since the cyclone hit on the eve of the rice harvest, food supplies were already at a low level even before the storm shot. There was no prospect of growing a lot of food in the near future since most seed crops and agricultural instruments had been washed by the stormy wave, and rice fields and cultivated land have been temporarily offered sterile from the cultivation of the saltwater. Huggan and Tiffin (2010) points out that exploitation in a colonial environment transpires when humans take nature for granted. The human domination in the form of anthropocentrism is linked to imperialism. "I learnt that massive wildfire had been raging around Los Angeles for several days. Thousands of acres of Land had been incinerated and tens of thousands of people had been moved to safety" (Ghosh, 2019, p. 126).

When Deen boarded the plane; he caught the conversation of massive wildfire around Los Angeles. This natural destruction happened when world leaders were busy rejecting the climate change and global warming theory. Thousands of acres were burnt in this huge fire. Thousands of people were moved out of their houses and many lost their lives. The government gave excuses for extreme weather conditions and climate change in earlier months. Ghosh though did not point out the reasons for the fire in his book but indirectly mentions global warming. When Deen reached Los Angeles, he witnessed the tremendous fire through the window of the plane.

He examined the horizon of this big city through his window. The narration of the view looks so similar to wildfire in California as if he was watching the future. He writes, "It wasn't long before dark smudges appeared in the distance. They quickly grew into dense masses of smoke. Then leaping waves of flame came into view too, lining the horizon with the flickering tints of yellow and orange" (Ghosh, 2019, p. 127). Ghosh further narrates the post fire situation that Deen saw through the window of the plane. This narration helps us to understand the scope of the fire. The firefighters fought with this so-called Sandalwood Fire around 122 Kilometers east of Los Angeles in Riverside County. The fireplace burnt a district of around 500 acres and destroyed 74 structures near the town of Calimesa. This Sandalwood fire began after a truck gets rid of burning trash near dry grass and vegetation. Making a life in the Sundarbans had become so hard that the exodus of the young was accelerating every year: boys and girls were borrowing and stealing to pay agents to find them work elsewhere. Some were slipping over the border into Bangladesh, to join labour gangs headed for the Gulf. (Ghosh, 2019, p. 53)

Life in the Sundarbans becomes very difficult. People want to move away from Sunderbans to meet their basic needs. Migration is not limited to the East. When Deen was in Venice, he was surprised to

hear Bangla everywhere, and as he followed these voices, he plunged into a world of migrant workers whose presence strengthens the exploitative nature of the global climate. Bangladeshi ecological refugees are leaving their sinking homes and trying to earn a living in Venice. There is a serious loss of cultivated land and life due to the whirlwind. As a postcolonial Ecocritical novel, *Gun Island* has projected the appalling environmental degradation caused by colonialism, migration and global warming. Fishermen couldn't catch fish. When they caught a handful of fry, they thought themselves lucky. The communities were destroyed and families dispersed. The young ones moved to cities and the elder had taken to begging in the streets.

Sunderbans is attracted by traffickers because of its poverty. Women are taken to brothels and able-bodied men are transported to faraway places for work. It is a severe condition for people living in Sunderbans. It looks as if both land and water are against people living in Sunderbans. The same situation has aptly been applied in *The Hungry Tide* (2004). The name of this novel aptly puns on the word *hunger* (which likewise represents poverty) which remains a significant component that propels the action and much passion across the eastern coast of India, and furthermore, it also controls the decisions that individuals make, both in real life and in this novel. The human trafficking business is the biggest furtive industry in the world, even bigger than the drug trade. It reaches very deep into society, especially in poor societies which suffer calamities like floods, cyclones etc.

4.2 Myth of Development Deconstructed in *Gun Island*

This section highlights the myth of development deconstructed in *Gun Island* (2019). Myths have different stages of comprehension and representations in various cultures, social norms and understandings which have changed over time. The myth that steers the narrative of *Gun Island* (2019) is based on the popular folk legend and pertains to the wrath of Manasa Devi. Ghosh uses history as a way to develop the mythical narrative and exploratory journey of protagonist, Deen. There are two important components of natural force, wind and the most powerful and dangerous species, snake. Both of these components are presented as commanding aid of the literary text to progress towards the solution to the catastrophic environmental complications. "I learnt that massive wildfire had been raging around Los Angeles for several days. Thousands of acres of Land had been incinerated and tens of thousands of people had been moved to safety" (Ghosh, 2019, p. 126).

There is a myth that Manasa Devi sends scorching winds for gun merchant and captain and the dry wind burns their houses. There is another deconstruction of mythical development that Devi burns their houses which is very fantastical and fictional aspect. Actually, climate change is responsible for dryness and massive fire. Here speaker took a pause to point a finger in the direction of the distant wildfire and writes perturbations of climate change. As a moral and social duty, ecocritics started writing about the environment and nature. It is stated that climate change is a key conductor of this trend, with warmer temperatures of spring and summer creates longer and more extreme dry seasons. These dried seasons increased moisture strain in vegetation and, therefore, have caused forests more susceptible to severe fires.

The myth blames that the unfortunate traveler is the cause of the fire. It deconstructs here that not Manasa Devi but climate change is the main reason for destruction. This is an advance warning to the readers about the consequences of global warming. He even mentions the process of climate change that has already begun but nowhere mentioned the solution to it. Environmental problem is a worldwide issue; it is affecting everything. The environment is manipulated by the super and imperial force. "Manasa Devi had sent scorching winds against them and land had become so dry that one day a burning wind had set their house afire, incinerating everything around them" (Ghosh, 2019, p. 81).

The novel *Gun Island* (2019) starts with myths and folklore, such as the history of the merchant and vengeful Manasa goddess, which is part of the classical poetic traditions of Bengal. It was believed that Chand Sadegar was a wealthy merchant who lost all his wealth and loved ones, including his son Lakhindar and turned his devotion to the legend Manasa. On the wedding night of Lakhinder, Manasa sent a snake to kill Lakhinder and sank Chand's shipment. At last, it came across Behula, Lakhindar's wife who returned to her husband to live with him, like an Orpheus in Greek myths, and satisfying Manasa to convince her father-in-law to reverence her. As part of the Bengali

Oral Folklore for centuries, history has survived performances (Rural Folk Theater), Film, Television Series and other shapes of pop culture. “The snake that bit you is no ordinary snake-my grandfather used to say that it had been sent to protect us” (Ghosh, 2019, p.87). Both Tipu and Rafi are the legatee of this sudden evolution of small worlds, enabled by social media and the internet. Even in the swamps of the Sundarbans where they are compelled to live by doing weird jobs, they dare to dream great. It is often implicated incorrectly that migrants have different humanity from the rest of us, Ghosh says. Rafi consoles Tipu that the snake does not hurt him. It is sent to protect us from a harmful creature. Ghosh has strictly woven ground on *Gun Island* (2019), where the human and the animal, the past and the present, memory and history, combine skillfully.

Venice is one of the most endangered climatic change places. Venice and Sundarbans have solid connections, not only in economic and (post)colonial but also in an ecosphere sense. Deen understood when he looked at Venice from aero plane window. This similarity indicates the complex connections that climate change can be seen between distant places. Sunderbans is located at the mouth of Gages on the east coast where poor and illiterate people experience fear, death, displacement, floods, hurricanes and destruction. One example which is discussed in *Gun Island* (2019) is studying animal migration caused by climate change. For example, Deen finds a spider in an apartment in Venice, which turns out to be a native of the southeastern states of the United States (Ghosh, 2019). Other examples are the deadly yellow-bellied sea snakes that appear off the coast of California (Ghosh, 2019), and the shipworm, “invading Venice, with the warming waters of the lagoon’ and ‘literally devouring [its] foundations” (Ghosh, 2019, p. 251).

Amitav Ghosh indirectly referred that global warming is a true phenomenon and he holds literature, history, and politics responsible for the failure to solve climatic issues. According to Huggan and Tiffin (2010), the relationship of postcolonial problems to globalization has brought with it a revived attention to the probabilities of post development. Ghosh has indirectly scorned world politics; the cruelty of humans in imposing a sacrificial existence on animals, deprived of claiming their rights and at times, the treatment of fellow human beings in lesser order than that of animals by abusing and erasing their traces. “From that height it was possible to mistake the Venetian lagoon for the Sundarbans” (Ghosh, 2019, p.162).

There is another myth that gun merchant kept an eye on Deen. When Deen was in Ghetto’s Venice, one is an old Ghetto and the other is new. The relationship between the two is very complicated and a narrow lane with tall houses is drawn from new to old. One of the houses in the lane is under repair. When Deen passes through there is a sound: Shabdhaan! Careful! A moment later a slab of masonry came crashing down in front of him. If Deen had not stopped the chunk of plaster has certainly hit him on the head. Deen is surprised how there is Bangla in Venice. The worker told him about his mistake and they gathered around him. The older worker said to other to take him to Lubna – Khala’s place. Deen met Rafi there and asked Rafi how he talked about an island within an island. Deen told him that this is exactly the place where the Bonduki Sadagar had actually been. Rafi replied this is just a story. As Huggan and Tiffin (2010) explain, zoo criticism examines animal representations, challenging the othering of animal existence and emphasizes the need for interspecies justice.

The study of mythology is not a new subject, because, since the birth of human civilization, mythology has combined the human desire to conceal with the attempt to depict the unknown. Ghosh’s *Gun Island* (2019) is a product of myths and legends, which shows snakes as superlative and powerful species and has been identified, from the faith of Indians, as a form of Deities, and Ghosh crafts a myth that he has heard as a story during his childhood days through his grandmother and other relatives. Myths are more likely to be assigned aesthetic media-in paintings, oral narratives, poetry, sculptures, dances, songs and later written literature.

5. Findings and conclusion

Findings of the study reveal that:

1. Text of the novel delves deep into the devastating effects of climate change, particularly the rising sea levels and their impact on coastal communities. It highlights the urgent need for environmental awareness and sustainable practices for maintaining a healthy ecosystem in the world.
2. Ghosh addresses the issue of forced migration and displacement caused by various factors; including climate change, political instability, and economic inequality generally caused by the colonial and imperial powers.
3. The novel incorporates elements of mythology and folklore, particularly Bengali legends surrounding the goddess Manasa. Ghosh explores the power of stories and their ability to shape our understanding of the world.

The narrative of *Gun Island* takes the reader from Kolkata to Venice and then to Los Angeles, with Deen following a series of cues and incidents. Throughout the course of the novel, he comes in contact with persons afflicted by climatic change, exile, forced migration, and environmental deterioration. He gets entwined with people from different cultures, customs, communities and backgrounds; discovering unexpected acquaintances and shared exposures. Deen comes to realize that the Manasa legend is not just a tale of the past but a metaphor for the human impact on nature. It symbolizes the delicate balance between humans and the environment and the consequences of disrupting that balance. Moreover, the novel encourages the readers to reflect on the profound collaboration among myths, environment, and human exposure as it reveals the latent agenda behind the myth of development with intended annihilation of local flora and fauna, land and economy across the different continents.

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