



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Narrative historical fiction and memory a literacy device with special reference to Amitav Ghosh novel : Gun Island

KARISHMA NAZ

Research Scholar

Department of English

V.K.S.U Ara,Bihar

### Abstract :-

Gun Island is a beautifully realized novel that effortlessly spans space and time. It is the story of a world on the brink, of increasing displacement and unstoppable transition. But it is also a story of hope and the future is restored by two remarkable women. Amitav Ghosh's new novel, Gun Island, expresses many of the writer's recurring motifs: irrawaddy, dolphins, the

Sundarbans, Climate change. But at the heart of the novel is the theme of illegal migration and refugee crisis, displacement and renewal. Amitav Ghosh's novel "Gun Island" is as much an etymological mystery as a compelling study of illegal migration, a derivation that points to the deep and civilization over the ages. Ghosh writes with deep intelligence and illuminating alacrity about complex issues. This ambitious novel memorably draws connection among history, political and mythology. Ghosh's story involving and intricate, speaks urgently to a time growing ever more perilous. A tender, attentive and engaging account of the ways in which an individual sensibility might be altered by ironies of the history, chance alliances and climatological. Gun Island is a rich and rewarding novel that reaffirms the transformative power of topographical and human connection and registers the rhythms of the quiet and the unquiet life.

**Keywords :** Floods, Water, Water, blue Humanities, Ecocriticism, Climate Change, Realism.

Amitav Ghosh's latest novel, *Gun Island*, traces familiar cross-cultural patterns evident in his earlier novels. There are journeys by land and water, diaspora and migration, experiences aboard ships, the world of animals and sea-creatures. Ghosh foregrounds environmental issues like climate change and the danger to fish from chemical waste dumped into rivers by factories, concerns that carry over from earlier books like *The Hungry Tide* and *The Great Derangement*. *Gun Island* describes the quest of Deen, a scholar and collector of rare books, who returns from New York, his city of domicile, to the Sunderbans in West Bengal to unravel the mystery and legend of a seventeenth-century merchant, Bonduki Sada-gar, translated "The Gun Merchant," and his persecution by Manasi Devi, mythical goddess of snakes. Ghosh stated that the merchant "was a trope for trade." The merchant and the goddess dramatize "the conflict between profit and the world." In the novel, the goddess pursues the merchant to make him aware of other realities like the animal world: "Humans—driven, as was the Merchant, by the quest of profit—would recognize no restraint in relation to other living things." For those looking for deep insights into the minds, compulsions and contradictions of the three

main players – Dinanath Dutta Aka Deen, the rare book dealer, Cinta, the Venetian woman who is an authority on the history of her beloved city, Piya, the marine biologist who works in the Sundarbans. Climate change, present and past, is the glue in this novel, sticking together different geographies – and histories – around the world, most notably the Sundarbans and Venice. Both locations are threatened by the rising seas resulting from global heating, leading to premonitions of catastrophes that were edited out by modernist literature. But now, history is repeating itself as the upheavals caused by the mini ice-age of the seventeenth century, recognized today as an outcome of climate change too, are recalled, first, in the form of the coded legend of Bonduki Saudagar Aka the Gun Merchant, and then echoed in the form of migration. Ghosh ties in the global movement of refugees in search of new lives and livelihoods as survival in their homelands becomes impossible, with climate change, gesturing at these two phenomena being effect and cause, respectively. And because he uses fiction as his vehicle, he conveys this worldview through events in the lives of the four main characters. Tipu, who reflects the changes that both baffle and obsess Deen, who turns for explanations from two ends of the continuum between uncompromising nationality. the story travels with its protagonist, Deen, upon whose inner life much of its telling is hinged, to the US, where he lives and works, to Europe – specifically another riverine city, Venice – where he grapples with both the mysterious and the brutally real in equal measure. In fact, the real and the fantastical intertwine in the story. as a paean to the lessons of history and myth, a rallying cry against the climate crisis and the persecution of refugees, an ode to scholarship and bibliophilia, including an exploration of linguistics and print culture, or as a triumph of speculative fiction.

*Gun Island* deals with two of the biggest issues of the current moment : climate change and human migration. Ghosh had insisted that fiction about climate change would be more impactful if it is situated in strictly realistic worlds to drive home the consequences to this world as it is, in real terms. But the occult and the supernatural haunt the pages of *Gun Island* and propel it forward at every turn – whether it is via hauntings or by the repeated appearance of the creatures associated with Manasa Devi – snakes and spider. This story shows human rights ( specifically the right of refugees) migration and movements means what closed borders and xenophobia are doing to people whose own countries have been historically devastated of imperillist history ( including the history of the slave trade) means for today's world. They find their most compelling realisation in the love story between Rafi and Tipu, two young men from the Sunderbans who make the perilous journey to Europe together, until they get separated. It is the turning over of several binaries and his deeply felt, gentle turning away from the ideals of anthropocentrism that is compelling about his approach to telling *Gun Island*. This is done through the experiences of extreme weather events (from an unseasonal hailstorm to a devastating cyclone), but also through quieter encounters with the natural in ways that urban populations are increasingly not able to even contemplate – a snakebite in Los Angeles, a venomous spider in a big city apartment . It is in the terror of these moments that our utter lack of preparedness with the hugest consequences of climate change, when they come, is reflected. Of course, these are already here for some of the most marginalised people and communities around the world. Ghosh's story, where he shows us not only the ecological costs of this, but the human costs of life in the mangroves that are so crucial to the ecological well-being of the places in its vicinity. The crises mirror each other, endlessly connected in ways In fact, mirrors abound in this story – and this becomes important because it is the lessons of history . Venice and Varanasi are likened to each other in a particularly beautiful paragraph, and there is not one but two snake goddesses that find mention (the other one is A-sa-sa-ra-me, the Minoan goddess). Ghosh reminds us through his scholar characters that the world has already witnessed the 'Little Ice Age', and the discrimination and persecution that the Gun Merchant faces because of his identity is mirrored in the racism that migrants and refugees from the Global South now face at an unprecedented scale .The writer illustrates vast and unknowable world that is being torn apart by human systems, this vulnerability matters, and fuels what we ultimately do with what we have to face in front of us. including its flaws in pacing, or its preoccupation with the inner life of its principal character to the neglect of many of its other compelling people, particularly the women especially Cinta. Women are a stronger presense and force in the novel. than in Ghosh's earlier fiction. Cinta is a scholar from Venice working on the role of Venice in the medieval spice trade from India.

## Conclusion :

In depicting a wide range of diverse characters from various countries and subtly invoking myth and history, fact and fiction, Ghosh has created a work that contrasts nostalgia for a lost past with concerns for the contemporaneous. Ghosh is evidently conscious of it and conjures up a tale full of historical and literary references ranging from Tarantism, the Aztecs to the Catholic inquisition. Yet, history comes to weigh heavy on the narrative and justify the immediate concerns of climate change and cross-border migration the novel seeks to delve into. The tide country remains parched, awaiting its salvation. The motion of interconnection, in his expert hand, also plays out at other levels of the story. Ghosh structure a tightly woven plot in Gun Island, Where human and animal, memory and history, past and present, are threaded together deftly. But the most striking feature of the novel is coexistence of the real and the imaginary, natural and supernatural.

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