

The Era of Environmental Derangement: Witnessing Climate Crisis in Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island*

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Abstract

Drawing on Amitav Ghosh's novel *Gun Island* (2019) together with his nonfictional *The Great Derangement* (2016), the article strives to present that while advancing endless desires, human-centric culture and the idea of 'good life' drive climate change and environmental deterioration. It seeks to enumerate the devastating consequences of changing climatic conditions and degenerating ecosystems and their cumulative impacts on the humankind and non-human world. It aims to locate how human life at the margins has been affected by these cataclysmic consequences through analysing Ghosh's *Gun Island*. It attempts to show that human interventions had significantly fuelled the global climate crisis in the seventeenth century, decoding the myth of *Bonduki Sadagar* that Ghosh identifies in *Gun Island*.

Keywords: Climate change, human-centric culture, the idea of 'good life', environmental derangement, myth of *Bonduki Sadagar*

Introduction

The Climate crisis has become one of the major global threats in the Anthropocene. The whole world is witnessing the devastating consequences of climate change. Both human-centric culture and lifestyle at the expense of Nature have been held responsible for driving climate change. The impulse to exploit natural resources has posed grave threats to the survival of life on the planet. Ghosh contends that the actual problem lies in the separation between Culture and Nature (Ghosh, 2017). This argument is particularly obvious in light of the various critical studies. For example, André Krebber in his article *Anthropocentrism and Reason in Dialectic of Enlightenment: Environmental Crisis and Animal Subject* (2011), endorses this viewpoint and notes that human history is a constant human-centric struggle to subjugate Nature in order to ensure betterment and security of human society (Krebber, 2011. p. 324). Krebber describes that Nature was downgraded to a mere resource for fulfilling our consumerist desires (p. 324).

The broken relation between human culture and Nature complements our argument that the crisis of climate is an offshoot of limitless desires of humankind as Ghosh describes in *The Great Derangement*. Ghosh foregrounds in the text that climate change has been accelerated by an anthropocentric lifestyle that has changed cultural patterns and advanced unending desires

(Ghosh, 2016). Ghosh contends that human activities expand carbon footprint since our desires are mostly to do with carbon. He, further, claims that the deterioration led by the global carbon-dependent economy has reached such a level that even if we put all efforts to make the necessary changes today — if today we were to stop emitting fossil fuels altogether —some of the consequences are inevitable (Ghosh, 2017).

We examine, in the article, the role of human-centric culture with respect to the representation of climate change through an analysis of the idea of ‘good life’. The article draws on Amitav Ghosh’s novel *Gun Island* (2019) together with his nonfictional *The Great Derangement* (2016). We argue that the idea of ‘good life’, through promoting overconsumption, causes climate change and both of them lead to various effects of climate change like rising temperatures, weather extremes, increasing sea levels, wildfires and so forth. The article explores the cumulative impacts of these catastrophic events on both human as well as non-human worlds. Also, we intend to address habitat loss in the Sunderbans due to increased cyclone activity, floods and deteriorating swamps.

Further, in the article, we attempt to probe how Ghosh, in the novel, decodes the myth of *Bonduki Sadagar* and deciphers that the global climate crisis that had occurred in the seventeenth century was also inextricably linked to human actions like the ecological crisis of the twenty-first century that we are encountering.

The Great Environmental Derangement: Climate Crisis and Crisis of Culture

Ghosh’s nonfiction, *The Great Derangement* prepares the understructure for his novel *Gun Island*. The nonfictional highlights the cataclysmic phenomena fuelled by changing climatic conditions and underscores the prime factors that create these predicaments. Climate change has been occurring across the globe and it is very evident in the form of frequent floods, increased intensity of hurricanes and melting ice caps resulting in the collapse of ice shelves and so forth. Human interventions and climate change, both are gearing up the geophysical alterations of the planet. Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement* narrates this situation while representing rapid ecological destruction in the Sunderbans:

“The great mangrove forest of the Bengal Delta, the Sunderbans, where the flow of water and silt is such that geological processes that usually unfold in deep time appear to occur at a speed where they can be followed from week to week and month to month. Overnight, a stretch of riverbank will disappear, sometimes taking houses and people with it, but elsewhere a shallow mudbank will arise and within weeks the shore will have broadened by several feet. For the most part, these processes are, of course, cyclical. But even back then, in the first years of the twenty-first century, portents of accumulative and irreversible change could also be seen, in receding shorelines and a steady intrusion of saltwater on lands that had previously been cultivated”. (Ghosh, 2016, p. 7)

Given these human-induced alterations, Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay, *The Climate of History* (2009), terms humans as ‘geological agents’ and attributes them to alter “the most basic physical processes of the earth” (Chakrabarty, 2009, p. 206). In the lack of persistent political and social narratives – concern about global climate change notwithstanding – the pursuit of the ‘good life’ through practices of what is known as ‘consumerism’ has become one of the prominent global social forces (Szeman & James, 2010, p. x.). Thus, the drivers of anthropogenic climate change are deeply rooted in the lifestyle of modern societies (Reusswig & Lass, 2010, p. 175). Ghosh, in *The*

Great Derangement, attributes human-centric culture to trigger the climatic upheaval and claims that 'climate crisis' is a 'crisis of culture' (Ghosh, 2016, p. 12).

To explain his argument Ghosh argues that by sprouting unending desires, culture hikes production of vehicles and appliances and construction of some specific types of gardens and dwellings— these things are among “the principal drivers of the carbon economy” (Ghosh, 2016, p. 12). It is in this context, Ghosh, in an interview with Steve Paulson (*Los Angeles Review of Books*), explains how anthropocentric desires increase the use of fossil fuels and shape the natural landscapes. He articulates that people in the Middle East or water-stressed parts of Australia have a desire to grow lawns and use fossil fuels to make water. In order to maintain these lawns, they purify seawater to create very expensive water through highly energy-intensive processes. Pointing towards changed cultural patterns, he further illustrates that 200 or 300 years ago these people did not even know about lawns, they did not desire to have lawns (Ghosh, 2017). Ghosh regards that anthropocentric culture is primarily responsible for generating these desires, he says:

“You have to think about a whole history and culture of people reading, perhaps, Jane Austen and imagining English greensward all around them. That becomes the idea of a good life. What we are all chasing is an idea of the good life that comes to us from culture”. (Ghosh, 2017)

Ghosh associates this culture with wider spectrums of capitalism and puts forward that it has provided an idea of 'good life'. Murray Bookchin's *Social Ecology and Communalism* (2006) provides an insight into Ghosh's argument. In the text, Bookchin argues that the spirit of capitalism is completely anthropocentric and it leads to wanton exploitation of natural resources. Trade to gain profit, human-centric industrial expansion and the identification of progress with corporate self-interest are the prime factors of capitalism as well as the root causes of creating ecological disturbance (Bookchin, 2006, p. 20). Ghosh believes that in relation to global warming, empire is another important aspect along with capitalism (Ghosh, 2016, p. 117). In *Decolonizing Nature* (2003) Adams and Mulligan represent the engagement of the European empire with Nature and for that, they enunciate an exclusive pattern of its involvement with the environment that comprises “a destructive, utilitarian and cornucopian view of the feasibility of yoking Nature to economic gain” (Adams, 2003, p. 22).

Furthermore, Ghosh warns of the impacts and repercussions of the climate-induced cataclysmic events and addresses them as “fingerprints of climate change” (Ghosh, 2017). He doubts why we avoid the seriousness of the phenomena and the uncertainties we confront. Observing the unwillingness of humankind to discuss these “fingerprints of climate change”, Ghosh compares climate change with death since “no one wants to talk about it” (Rao, 2016). This argument is particularly obvious in light of the various critical studies. For example, consider George Marshall's *Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Ignore Climate Change* (2015) in which he compares climate change with “the great taboo, death” and claims that people choose to refrain themselves from discussing these life-changing events (Marshall, 2015).

Analysing the reason behind that reluctance, Marshall writes: “People yearn for normality and safety, and no one wants to be reminded of a growing global threat. As they rebuild their lives, they invest their hopes along with their savings in the belief that the catastrophe was a rare natural aberration” (Marshall, 2015). Also, they abandon addressing it as that would require them to overhaul their lifestyle and the idea of 'good life'.

This weighs on Ghosh that the wild has become the new normal. Ghosh, in *Gun Island*, illustrates this new normal, when Deen, a dealer of rare books and Asian antiquities, presents an

explanation for climate change and argues that global warming is happening because of excessive carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases present in the atmosphere and the change is natural (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 214). Cinta, the humanist, remonstrates when Deen calls global warming a natural phenomenon and she asks where these gases come from and questions: “Do they not come from cars and planes and factories that make whistling kettles and electric toasters and espresso machines? Is all this natural too – that we should need these things that nobody needed a hundred years ago?” (p. 214).

In this context, Vrajindra Upadhyay’s essay *Degrowth* (2014) targets the economic idea based on desires. He, in the essay, states that the climate crisis we encounter is a result of this economic idea. Excessive production and overconsumption levels in modern societies are the key contributors to environmental derangement. He further mentions: “Excessive consumption of natural resources, especially of the fossil fuels, in the West (and by rich sections of the population in developing countries) now poses grave threats to the survival of life on our planet” (Upadhyay, 2014, p. 1).

Hence, Ghosh attributes our anthropocentric cultural pattern and the idea of ‘good life’ to the deterioration of the environment that further leads to climate change and its devastating consequences.

The Degenerating Ecosystems and Non-human world

Having analysed that by providing the ability to manipulate Nature and to emerge victorious over it, human-centric cultural practices foment the environmental crisis, we will probe how the climate-induced catastrophic events devastate ecosystems, perpetrate habitat loss, alter distribution patterns of various overland and aquatic animal species analysing Ghosh’s *Gun Island*. Ghosh, being a writer, does not make any sort of projection about the impending scenario, nevertheless, he calculates the catastrophic consequences and thus alerts humankind to be prepared for the inescapable destruction created by them.

Ghosh’s novel focuses on indistinctive boundaries between water and land to represent the consequences of the climatic disturbances. Ghosh, in the novel, travels from the wild and tangled Sundarbans (a mangrove area that spans between India and Bangladesh) to Los Angeles parched by wildfires to slowly sinking Venice. He depicts the impacts of the ecological chaos that had happened in the Sunderbans and highlights the same process of destruction of ecosystems that has been happening across the world. The anthropogenic deterioration pattern of Venice shows visible similarities with that of the Sundarbans. The swiftly changing milieu in Venice occurring due to global warming resembles the degenerating Sundarbans.

Ghosh in a conversation (2019) with Sukanta Chaudhuri covered by Sudeshna Banerjee (*The Telegraph*), manifests: “The Venetian lagoon looks startlingly like the Sunderbans from the sky” and during this conversation, Chaudhuri terms Venice as ‘urban Sunderban’ (Banerjee, 2019). Venice denotes signs of sinking like the mangrove forests. Various studies indicate the ecological destruction of the city. For example, Nicolas Whybrow in his essay *Losing Venice: Conversations in a Sinking City* (2013) represents that Venice submerged some 23 centimetres in the last century. The seasonal floods are increasing gradually with the inundation of the foundations of the city (Whybrow, 2013, p. 99). Ghosh understands that the city is being pushed to the edge of destruction and emphasizes that in the novel. When Deen visits Cinta’s place after twelve years, he observes the gradual dissolving of the building due to the rising water level. The lobby’s floor was often underwater, sometimes the water was knee-deep due to frequent floods (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 164).

Along with swamping the buildings, global warming also poses a threat to its bridges. Venice is known as a 'city of bridges' and its bridges have never broken. Ghosh, in the novel, offers a sight that the bridges are on the verge of collapse. The woods are strong but shipworms have been hollowing them bit by bit. While visiting *Punta Della Dogana*, the art museum with Deen, Cinta shows him shipworms and calls them monsters since they have been rotting the wood of the bridges. She further reinforces that these creatures are invading Venice with the warming of the lagoon's water and damaging the city. While showing concern, Cinta states that they are not just eating up the wood from the inside but they are weakening the foundations of the city. Since the city is built on wooden pilings (p. 230) and then Deen and Cinta witness toppling and falling rails, hollowed-out interior and squirming shipworms pouring out of the broken logs (p. 231).

With increasing temperature, the lifespan of these creatures has been extending. There is a study, *A phenological shift in the time of recruitment of the shipworm, Teredo navalis L., mirrors marine climate change* (2016) done by Christin Appelqvist and Jonathan N Havenhand that shows that the length of the recruitment period of shipworms in temperate climatic conditions has increased significantly due to significant warming of the sea surface (Appelqvist and Havenhand, 2016, p. 7). With extended lifespan, these creatures have become a grave threat to the bridges of the city.

Similarly, burrowing crabs have also been observed as a threat to the mangrove forests. When Deen tells Rafi, a young Bengali man who migrates to Venice, about the incident. Rafi says that it is exactly like the Sundarbans. There, in the forests, the burrowing crabs are digging and damaging the embankments (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 235). The increasing water level has increased their population and life span. In this context, a study *Burrowing crabs reshaping salt marshes, with climate change to blame* (2020), done by Brown University, reveals that soils, softened by rising sea level and increased tidal inundation, allow burrowing crabs to thrive in the marshes (Stacey, 2020). These crabs feed on mangrove propagules that hold the marshes together and thus hollow out these forests.

Additionally, Ghosh's *Gun Island*, draws attention that due to global warming distribution of flora and fauna of ecosystems is being reconstructed. Deen witnesses a venomous spider, *Brown Recluse* at Cinta's apartment that is used to be found in relatively warm regions. Ghosh argues that rising temperatures across the globe caused by global warming is changing habitats of various kinds of animals, such as spiders, shipworms, cobras, snakes among others (Ghosh 2019a, p. 204).

Similarly, Ghosh, in his novel *The Hungry Tide* (2004), deals with the pattern of behaviour and movement of dolphins. One of its characters, Piya, a marine biologist, tracks the movement of dolphins in the Sundarbans (Ghosh, 2004b, p. 9). Ghosh has created the character again in *Gun Island*, wherein she records varying patterns of dolphins that become increasingly erratic along with a rising number of stranded whales and dolphins. She holds extending oceanic and riverine dead zones responsible for the upsurge. It has, Piya believes, happened due to changes in the composition of the waters of the Sundarbans. She claims that with rising sea levels and diminishing flow of freshwater, water salinity has started to increase and intrude deeper upstream that has made the waters too saline for the dolphins. And consequently, they have started to avoid these water stretches. Also, she argues that they have gradually begun to shift upwards (Ghosh 2019a, p. 92). Piya beholds dolphins and whales up there in the Adriatic sea and while talking about their presence in the sea, she asserts that climate change is hugely affecting animal migrations (p. 284).

Furthermore, Ghosh introduces that these changes in the distribution and migration patterns of the species have huge adverse impacts on ecosystems because the invasive species damage the native environment by destroying and replacing its vegetation. Lisa, one of Piya's

friends, is an entomologist and working on a research project on Bark beetles. During the research, Lisa gets to know that as the mountains are warming up, Bark beetles have been spreading wider and have invaded the forests around the town (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 109). As she warns, the town faces a long drought and a huge wildfire breaks out (p. 109). Kari Heliövaara and Mikko Peltonen, in their research article, *Bark Beetles in a Changing Environment* (1999), reveal that Bark beetles hollow out trees from the inside and cause wildfires during the dry spell when the deadwood kindle a fire (Heliövaara & Peltonen, 1999, p. 48).

Ghosh, in addition, adverts to Los Angeles benighted by massive wildfires. While travelling to Los Angeles Deen sees the wrecked sight of incinerated thousands of acres of land around. The entire forest turned into a vast field of ashes with a great mass of blackened tree trunks (Ghosh 2019a, p. 116). Earth's temperature has been rising due to climate change and the hotter climatic conditions have been igniting fires and have been damaging the environment and local wildlife. Recently, we have experienced dreadful wildfires in many parts of the world, such as California wildfires (2020), Brazil's Amazon rainforest fire (2020), bushfires in Australia (2019), with increasing size, duration and intensity.

The Ecological Destruction: The Entangled Human Life at The Margins

The human-caused climate crisis, in its several forms like increasing temperatures, weather extremes, rising sea levels, tidal inundation and so forth, has been intensifying destruction of ecosystems and habitat loss and changing distribution patterns of nonhuman worlds. Besides, these calamitous changes have largely influenced humankind as well. We will attempt to locate how human life at the margins has been controlled by these life-altering events through examining Ghosh's *Gun Island*. He, in the novel, exposes the consequence that the inhabitants of the Sundarbans are facing due to the ecological destruction of the mangrove swamps.

The Sundarbans mangroves protect the hinterland serving as a natural barrier against floods and cyclones. Ghosh explains that the forests absorb the fury of cyclones and function as a crucial buffer zone between human settlements and the cyclones of the Bay of Bengal that has been known as a 'storm breeder'. He argues that the Sundarbans are very crucial to protect Bengal from the furies of the cyclones (Ghosh, 2019b).

However, increasing human intervention in the mangrove swamps to dominate the ecosystem in order to fulfil endless desires and provide for luxurious facilities, has been deteriorating the ecosystem. Ghosh, in his essay *Folly in the Sunderbans* (2004), shows an attempt of human encroachment in the area. The essay criticizes an ambitious plan of creating an enormous new tourism complex in the Sundarbans, proposed by Sahara India Pariwar in 2003. The plan included several different types of accommodation along with "5-star floating hotels, high-speed bathhouses, land-based huts, luxury cottages and an *eco-village*" (Ghosh, 2004a).

This kind of alterations in the environment propels and intensifies the climate events that have very significant repercussions on people who live at the margins. Anshuman A. Mondal, in his book, *Amitav Ghosh: Contemporary World Writers* (2007) highlights Ghosh's inclination towards the marginalised section of society in his fictional writings. Mondal mentions that Ghosh, during his entire career, has sought to depict marginal, lost, or suppressed stories from the 'other' pasts that have yielded to the historical necessity posited by the metanarrative of History (Mondal, 2007, p. 131). Ghosh tends to narrate these 'tiny threads', interwoven with the borders of the gigantic social fabric (Ghosh, 1992, p. 95). In *Gun Island*, Ghosh's ecocentric narration does not simply represent chaotic impacts of climate change on non-human worlds only; it locates the deranged 'margins' of

the 'marginalised countries'. While focusing upon the movement of sea snakes and spiders, displacement of dolphins and whales, shifting of ecosystems, Ghosh asserts huge dislocation of people induced by the deteriorating natural landscape.

It is in this context Piya reinforces the dislocation of the inhabitants of the Sundarbans and denotes that the world has changed, we do not know where we belong any more -neither humans (mostly marginalised section) nor animals (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 97). Piya claims that the locals must have got to know about the changing environment and everything they know, everything they are familiar with – “the water, the currents, the earth itself – was rising up against them” (p. 97). Ghosh articulates that people in the margins confront the repercussion directly and are the “first to experience the future that awaits all of us” (Ghosh, 2016, p. 84).

Ghosh, further, elaborates the statement in *The Great Derangement* and talks about an incident shared with him, that was of a mangrove forest in Papua New Guinea. The area was populated by its inhabitants and sustained through mutual sustenance and symbolism till the wet season of 2007. In this time the beaches that used to function as barriers were breached, cutting incalculable water channels through to the lakes. Sand encroached the area through these channels. Tidal surges destroyed the villages with severed trunks of coconut palms and dead shoreline trees, drifting canoes, trenches, and gullies. The villages had to be evacuated and the inhabitants had to abandon their villages (p. 83).

Ghosh, in *Gun Island*, puts efforts to expose the ecological devastation of the Sundarbans. He outlines the long-term consequences of cyclone Aila that hit the Sundarbans in 2009 during which hundreds of miles of embankment and thousands of acres of lands were damaged and destroyed; the sea waters had encroached in the hinterland along with entering in low lying places; widespread fertile lands had been devastated by saltwater, making them uncultivable for a generation, if not forever: millions of the inhabitants were struck by the cyclone and of which thousands were rendered homeless (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 48-49). The novel highlights that after the landfall of the cyclone the land and water turned against the inhabitants. The land that had been providing food, water and livelihood to them, became 'devourer' as the water got poisoned by arsenic-laced brew (p. 49).

Ghosh attempts to reveal that the already entangled lives of the locals were turned upside-down after cyclone Aila. Consequently, they were forced to evacuate their lands and had to migrate. Ghosh displays how after witnessing these catastrophic events, like cyclone Aila, life in the Sundarbans becomes so hard that it leads to exceeding outflow of the young population every year. They borrow and steal money to pay agents to get work or slip into Bangladesh and join labour gangs that head for the Gulf. Sometimes, they pay traffickers to smuggle them to Malaysia or Indonesia, on boats (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 49). Simon Behrman and Avidan Kent, in their book *Climate Refugees: Beyond the Legal Impasse?* (2018), explain how circumstances force people to migrate illegally. They, in the book, assert that poverty, lack of skill and lack of infrastructure obstruct their ability to adapt and migrate legally (Behrman & Kent 2018).

Ghosh's *Gun Island*, along with describing the factors that drive ecological derangement and its destabilizing effects that further force people to flee, addresses the wretched lives of climate migrants. Tipu and Rafi, a pair of young Bengali boys in the novel, get trapped into the corrupt net of the traffickers in order to flee overseas. They are smuggled from Bangladesh to Turkey via India, Pakistan, Iran in minibuses wherein they are stuffed like animals. Meanwhile, they are stopped at 'connection houses' situated close to the borders. After arriving at these 'connection houses', they have to pay to go further (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 182). Ghosh describes the merciless and inhumane

treatment these people have to face during the journey, they are beaten, slapped and assaulted physically and sexually (p. 238).

Thus, Ghosh attributes the ecological disarray to fuel climate-induced migration and efforts to show that the disruptive local ecosystems drive internal and international human migration. It is in this context, the World Bank hints that by 2050, more than 13 million Bangladeshis — including most of those on the margins of the Sundarbans — might migrate because of the climate-related crisis. The forecast in West Bengal is similarly alarming (Schwartzstein, 2019).

Global Climate Crisis and Human Interventions in The Seventeenth Century

Ghosh's novel *Gun Island*, along with highlighting the prints of the epiphenomena caused by climate change, employs myth and magic realism in order to represent the recurrence of the global climate crisis. These different facets of narration like myth and magic realism, have been recurring threads of Ghosh's works throughout his career. Talking about the concept of intertextuality in Ghosh's works, Shao-Pin Luo, in her essay, *Intertextuality in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide* (2012) articulates that Ghosh's motive in bringing together or embracing polyphonic discourses or a plurality of types of narratives like poetry, scientific notebooks, testimonial memoirs, myths and legends in his novel, is to represent the different strands of contact and communication in the world and the heterogeneity of human reality (Luo, 2012, p. 146). This purpose of Ghosh is evident in *Gun Island* wherein he paints the reality of the inextricable connection between human actions and the global climate crisis. He uses implausibility; coincidences and ancient myth and folklore, contemporary world disrupted by the constant migrations of humans and animals.

Acknowledging the roles old legends play in denoting the apocalyptic consequences of climate change, Ghosh realises that these old legends had experienced exactly what we have been facing, for example, floods, droughts, famines and storms. He, in *Gun Island*, intertwines the repercussions of climate change in the form of migration and displacement of human and nonhuman with a Bengali myth that links the Sundarbans to Venice. The novel delivers a modern interpretation of the myth of *Bonduki Sadagar*, a merchant who went to Venice in the seventeenth century (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 141). The Merchant's homeland, in eastern India, got struck by drought and floods brought on by the climatic chaos that occurred back then. He lost everything including his family and decided to travel overseas towards Venice to recoup his fortune in trade. The Mediterranean region was experiencing unseasonal weather with ferocious storms and devastating floods back then (p. 141). Alexander Koch et al. in their study *Earth system impacts of the European arrival and Great Dying in the Americas after 1492* (2018) establish that just before the Industrial Revolution, CO₂ levels and global surface air temperatures in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were impacted by human actions (Koch et al., 2018, p. 14).

Similarly, Ghosh shows that the seventeenth century, often known as the 'Little Ice Age', witnessed intense climatic upheaval due to human interventions. When the Merchant reached Venice, the city was a haunted place and "its best days as a commercial power were over...this was, after all, the calamitous time of the Little Ice Age" (Ghosh, 2019a, p. 220). In *Gun Island*, delivering his speech during the conference, the opening speaker talks about human interventions that were made to conquer and subjugate land and people:

"During this time temperatures across the globe had dropped sharply, maybe because of fluctuations in solar activity, or a spate of volcanic eruptions – or possibly even because of the reforestation of vast tracts of land following on the genocide of Amerindian peoples

after the European conquests of the Americas. In any event, many parts of the world had been struck by famines, droughts and epidemics in the seventeenth century". (p. 122)

In this context, Ursula Kluwick in her essay, *The global deluge: floods, diluvian imagery, and aquatic language in Amitav Ghosh's The Hungry Tide and Gun Island* (2020), claims that the tale of the Gun Merchant functions as a review of climate change and it determines human reluctance to recognise the underlying and inextricable links between human actions and environmental alterations (Kluwick, 2020, p. 9).

Conclusion

Human activities are principally responsible for the increasing alterations of climatic conditions. Ghosh's *Gun Island* reflects that the ecological mishaps occurring in the Sunderbans and Venice indicate that the planet is on the brink of an environmental catastrophe. Human-centric cultural patterns regard Nature as an object to exploit it in order to fulfil human desires. This conception of Nature has been adopted in the modern society wherein the carbon-dependent economic model we pursue is oriented towards perpetual growth and sustainable development without dealing with environmental issues. Since we are witnessing the great era of environmental derangement due to the human-induced climate crisis, we must reconsider the pattern of our lifestyle along with the underlying balance between the natural landscape and human culture. Adopting a holistic view that has an ecocentric and Nature inclusive model of growth, will prevent the pernicious impressions of climate change. There must be a partnership ethic between Nature and humanity that does not posit nature as a resource created specifically for human utility, rather represents coexistence between human life and biotic life with mutual support, reciprocity, and partnership with each other.

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