

‘Amra kara? Bastuhara. We are the dispossessed’: climate refugees in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* and *Gun Island*

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Abstract

One of the biggest consequences of our current Anthropogenic movement is the massive scale of climate migration caused by the disappearance of ecological spaces. At a time when rising sea-levels, increasing droughts, unpredictable and harsher weather-events, as well as toxicity and pollution are making places unlivable, the International Panel on Climate Change estimates 200 million climate refugees worldwide by 2050. Recent years have seen an increasingly xenophobic reaction to this, as wealthier nations fortify their borders against migrants from the Global South. As we grapple with the rise in anti-immigrant rhetoric around the world, it is crucial to contend with how literature, as a mode of cultural resistance, can provide a discursive counter to this fear-mongering and reinstate the humanity of the migrant in the face of growing climate change. In this light, this paper explores the literary representations of climate refugees-historic, mythical, and speculative- in the novels *The Hungry Tide* (2007) and *Gun Island* (2019) by Amitav Ghosh. This paper argues how, through the novelistic modes of historical recovery in *The Hungry Tide* and myth-making in *Gun Island*, Ghosh creates parallels between the past, present, and future, and between the local and the global to highlight the massive scales of the climate migration crisis. This paper further examines Ghosh’s developing ecological sensibilities post *The Great Derangement* by tracing the changes in his portrayal of refugees in the two novels.

Keywords: Amitav Ghosh, ecocriticism, climate change, refugees, novel