



Gun Island: Fusion Of Realism And Surrealism

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Abstract-Gun Island is a tribute to all environmentalists and the mother nature as the plot of this book has major influence from the previous novel The Hungry Tide. The same characters which were present in his previous novel The Hungry Tide, are also present in this novel and in this sense Gun Island is the continuation of The Hungry Tide. Gun Island is a new literary form, a new attempt to look at history from the point of view of a new direction. It is a surreal novel about climate change and migration.

Keywords-Realism, Surrealism, Environment, Climate change, refugee.

Surreal novels are a beautiful blend of facts and fantasies. Ghosh in his novels, lays stress on the theme and technique to induce a foreign language which is Indian and modern as well. We can refer English as Indian to some extent, which is a foreign language certainly, but authors like Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Anita Desai and Amitav Ghosh etc. have contributed enough to make it an Indian language to some extent. The narrator lives in world of surrealist beliefs. He is mystified by the various events of his life and ethereal incidents. The author has created an illusion to capture the issues and characters of real world in this novel. The author has attempted to switch to a new genre and a new theme of nature conservation with the application of surrealism from the former theme of realism. This new effort is widely welcomed by the readers throughout the globe.

We believe that this novel is an amazing fusion of realism and surrealism since, nothing can be more realistic than the theme of nature conservation in today's time when melting of glaciers and other natural disasters are taking place very frequently in different parts of the world and on the other hand the mysterious tales of snakes and jungles and iconographic portrayal of the beauty of Sundarban Delta. The author seems to have worn photographic lenses while writing this novel. Hence, he becomes the favourite of many youngsters of today who are very much interested into photographs and environment conservation.

The beauty of Sundarban Delta does not need any introduction yet, this paper cannot be completed without mentioning the only mangrove forest of India. Which is not only important for its beauty but for the medicinal properties of these trees and worth watching wildlife as well. This delta is formed by the confluence of many important rivers of India which includes Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna river in Bay of Bengal. This confluence begins from Hoogly river in West Bengal state of India and leads to the Baleswar river in Bangladesh. We can say that India shares the water border with Bangladesh through this delta. Tidal movements and its everyday impacts are prominent in this area. These big rivers are also assisted by many small streams and channels of water which can be held responsible for forming various islands in this location. The villagers are majorly dependent on fishes for their livelihood. Sundarbans has become a centre of attraction for many NGOs and environmentalists in recent years since, the forest is a habitat to many wild creatures and The White Tigers. The white tiger is enlisted in the rare animals because they are only available in Sundarbans in the world. They are also considered as the pride of India. Intervention of humans is causing a great harm for various wild and aquatic creatures.

This novel introduces the situations of day-to-day life, independent experiences, retrospections, stories conveyed through legends, folk-tales, mythological stories, and the vital significance is the Indianness of language used throughout the novel. Gun Island is the journey full of wonders and fate of all human or wild creatures of Sundarbans is the platform of this new age novel.

The novel's narrator Deen, is in his fifties. He deals in unusual books. He lives in Brooklyn, New York. But he belongs to Kolkata. He does not like winters of Brooklyn so, he lives in Kolkata when there is winter season in New York. He sometime visits Venice, Italy as well, for his work of books. Once, when he was In India, a relative told him about the folk tale of BondukiSadagar, or the Gun Merchant. This story drew Deen's interest. The Gun Merchant is the story of conflict of a proudly man with Manasa Devi. Manasa Devi is the goddess of snakes and other poisonous creatures. Some incidents of this story are also written on the walls of a small shrine of the goddess which is situated on an island in the Sundarbans. Sundarbans is the only mangrove forest of India. This is situated at the border of India and Bangladesh. This story also shows an aspect of Hindu and Muslim relationship, which depicts a glass like picture of India and its real life.

Deen has a rational personality, a middle-aged man, who is despirit to get into a relationship with some woman and is already very disappointed with his previous relationships with women. He could never find true love till now even after trying his luck with many girls. Deen is a strict pragmatist, and does not believe in superstitious stories, and he thinks that even those stories which are written in antique books with which he deals, these stories have got nothing to do with reality these are written for mere entertainment. But this time he is inquisitive about this tale of Manasa Devi. He decides to visit Sundarban Delta and particularly the shrine of the goddess, to collect the

truth from the locals. He has already heard about an ancient, mythological, Odyssey angle of a similar Goddess. In that story a man travels as he tries to escape the goddess of snakes, Manasa Devi. Deen's quest to collect the facts about the legend of the Gun Merchant becomes the reason for his journey through all over the world. He gets various encounters with different and interesting characters and all of those events which are chronologically written by the author, are responsible to make this folktale worth remembering.

Ghosh has presented many natural disastrous events in this novel to support his argument for example, in addition to the doomed dolphin, there are forest fires in Los Angeles, a flooding Venice, boats ferrying migrants to Europe. perhaps, this is the harsh reality of today. Every day or the other we encounter such news. This is why this novel is referred as a realistic novel as well.

The geographical backgrounds which are chosen by the author are not less than a beautiful portrait. The plot includes the scenic locations like Sundarbans in West Bengal, India and Venice in Italy. This projects a painting of a struggling artist.

We often point to carbon emissions as the root cause of the climate crisis. And while carbon emissions do cause the greenhouse effect that leads to global warming, Amitav Ghosh would argue the roots of the climate crisis run deeper. He has disclosed the deeper layers of the climate crisis with this book. Perhaps, here he discussed many modern issues of the concurrent era which are invited or produced by the human advancement of technology and lifestyle. While addressing the issue of climate refugees, Ghosh has successfully managed to merge his forte theme of diaspora and migration with his latest love for environment and mother nature. This can be acknowledged at the end of the novel when the little blue boat crosses the Mediterranean.

We see a pattern of stories inside the stories. All the stories are surrealistic but at the same time these are not away from realism be it the feelings of middle-aged man towards a woman or the real-life struggles of climate refugees or the global issues of environment. The folktale of the Gun Merchant can also be understood from one more angle of climate refugee. The author has effortlessly blended the two diverse genres by the device of eco-cosmopolitan.

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