

## ECO-ANXIETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHE IN AMITAV GHOSH'S GUN ISLAND: A SLOW VIOLENCE PERSPECTIVE

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### **Abstract**

*This study analyzes Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island (2019) through the theoretical frameworks of Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence and eco-anxiety theory. It examines how environmental catastrophe in this novel is a process that has been unfolding over many years, is a cumulative phenomenon resulting from global economic relations, colonial histories, and climate change. The study is qualitative, interpretive and close reading, using selected text passages to explore the dynamic of ecological degradation over time and space, all the while revealing its often hidden and intensely harmful nature.*

*The findings reveal that Gun Island (2019) portrays environmental harm as slow violence that manifests through droughts, floods, biodiversity loss, and forced migration. These processes destabilize human life while remaining socially and politically unrecognized until they reach visible intensity. At the same time, it reveals what conditions such ecological instability create in the characters' minds, conditions that manifest as fear, uncertainty and grief, as well as psychological disorientation. This fear is magnified by a series of interconnected crises like migration, trafficking networks and global capitalism.*

*The study concludes that the novel interlinks slow violence and eco-anxiety, presenting environmental catastrophe as both a structural and psychological phenomenon. It states that ecological destruction isn't some mere material problem, but also a tremendous emotional and psychological one, one which has a remarkable effect on human consciousness.*

**Keywords:** Slow violence, Eco-anxiety, Climate fiction, Ecocriticism, Amitav Ghosh, Environmental catastrophe, Gun Island, South Asian literature.

### **Introduction & Background**

This study examines the representation of eco-anxiety and environmental catastrophe through the theoretical lens of slow violence in Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island (2019). The concept of eco-anxiety has grown into a prominent one in the environmental humanities, in psychology and in literary studies, highlighting the emotional and psychological reactions to change and ecological degradation. Pihkala (2020) defines eco-anxiety as a combination of distress, worry, and uncertainty that individuals feel when they feel concerned about environmental crises and the future impacts of climate change. Likewise, eco-anxiety is described by Kurth and Pihkala (2022) as a "multi-layered emotion" that stems from the understanding of ecological risks, includes fear, helplessness, sorrow, and worry over the future, and is normally felt by a subset of individuals. Nowadays, eco-anxiety is referred to as ecological crisis anxiety, a mental state that is considered an adaptive and rational reaction to current environmental issues.

In recent years, the term eco-anxiety has been a topic of increasing research interest in light of the growing Climate Disaster. Public anxiety about ecological futures has been heightened by

environmental disasters, biodiversity loss, high sea rising and extreme weather events and massive forced population movements. Coffey et al., (2021) suggest that eco-anxiety is a multiple dimensional phenomenon characterized by emotional, cognitive and behavioral reactions to environmental change. These responses are shaped not only by direct experiences of ecological disruption but also by awareness of global environmental threats communicated through media, science, and cultural narratives. Thus, the concept of eco-anxiety is emerging as an important lens for observing the psychological reactions of people and communities to environmental catastrophes.

The ecological crisis, however, is not solely characterized by sudden disasters and visible destruction. Environmental harms can take years to materialize and, frequently times, are not recognized until they have built up to a level that causes dramatic consequences. This dimension of environmental degradation is captured by Rob Nixon's (2011) concept of slow violence. Slow violence, as defined by Nixon, is an incredibly powerful, deadly force that is slow, dispersed, and often initial violence that is left unseen at the outset. Slow violence is not all the great explosions and bombings that catch the headlines, but rather the growth of the disease; the imperceptible warming or cooling of the climate; the gradual squander of the air, water and soil. It has impact on vulnerable groups, such as those in economically and politically underrepresented areas.

Slow violence offers a useful lens to explore the link between environmental catastrophe and psychological distress. Climate change is a social and emotional experience, as well as a physical one. As the ecological anxiety grows, people have less and less certainty about their livelihoods, their identities and their futures. Eco-anxiety can thus be seen as one of the psychological effects of "slow violence" resulting from life-long exposure to environmental uncertainty and ecological dangers. Emotional regions are likely to be the emotional response to the environmental disaster, frequently the emotions of worry, anticipating, loss and insecurity.

In literary studies, ecocriticism has offered valuable resources for the examination of "representations of environmental crisis" and "human/nature relation" questions. According to Garrard (2004), ecocriticism is the field of discourse analyzing literature, the environmental, and how they relate to one another. Marland (2013) notes that ecocriticism is engaged with in order to highlight how literary texts interact with environmental issues and ethics. The recent evolution of the concept of ecocritical scholarship has shifted to the realm of the so-called Cli-Fi genre which examines climate change from a cultural, social and psychological perspective. Climate fiction uses fictionalised stories to present environmental situations in a way that invites readers to face reality, yet allows them to imagine future scenarios based on ecological transformation.

South Asian climate fiction stands out as a unique genre of modern environmental literature because of the region's susceptibility to climate-induced disasters such as forced migration, floods, cyclones, droughts, rising sea levels, and more. These ecological issues have significant connections to past colonial, economic and social marginalisation. A South Asian Cli-Fi film generally does not depict an environmental catastrophe as an event, but as a process that unfolds within a historical and structural context. These representations recall Nixon's thinking about slow violence and tell of the disparity of environmental risks and consequences.

Amitav Ghosh is one of the most influential contemporary South Asian authors who writes on environmental issues. His novel, *Gun Island* (2019), is about the interlinked realities of climate change, migration, displacement, biodiversity loss and ecological uncertainty in South Asia and elsewhere. The novel tells the story of its characters to uncover the importance of life's physical and mental experience in the wake of environmental upheaval. This story illustrates that climate change is not a scientific or environmental problem, nor is it just a social one it is

a crisis of emotions, identity, and social relations. The environment offers changes which cause the characters nervousness, and confusion, propelling them into the growing phenomenon of eco-anxiety of living in an ecological crisis.

While certain themes found in the novel have been explored previously such as climate change, migration, environmental degradation, etc., and the notion of an interconnected ecology has been much discussed about, there has been little study of eco-anxiety and slow violence on Gun Island. Researches on the psychological impacts of ecological breakdown are relatively scarce, and the environmental breakdown is the major and socio-political topic that has been investigated so far. In addition, there are limited studies that have specifically examined the effect of an “across-the-life span” cumulative effect of environmental damage on emotional and psychological ill-health of people and communities.

This study focuses on this to explore the role of Gun Island as a slow violence and the creation of an eco-anxiety experience amongst the protagonists in this film. By integrating eco-anxiety theory with Nixon's concept of slow violence, the study offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the psychological dimensions of climate change in contemporary South Asian climate fiction. It asserts that environmental disaster in the novel serves as a physical danger as well as being an emotional, psychological, and affectual event that also impacts a person's ability to experience fear, uncertainty and displacement.

The study ultimately helps to continue ecological criticism, the environmental humanities and climate fiction studies in revealing the ambiguous interwovenness of eco-crisis and human mental health in literature. The study demonstrates how the concept of eco-anxiety is essential for understanding slow violence, and how the representation of contemporary South Asian Cli-Fi is fundamental in the emotional imagination of the climate crisis.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To examine how environmental catastrophe is represented as a form of slow violence in Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island.
2. To explore the portrayal of eco-anxiety as a psychological response to environmental degradation and climate-induced uncertainties in the novel.

### **Research Questions**

1. How does Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island depict environmental catastrophe through the lens of Rob Nixon's theory of slow violence?
2. How does the novel represent eco-anxiety as a consequence of environmental degradation and climate-related disruptions?

### **Significance of the Study**

The present study is significant because it contributes to the growing body of scholarship in ecocriticism, climate fiction, and environmental humanities by examining the intersection of eco-anxiety, environmental catastrophe, and slow violence in Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island (2019). With the physical and material impacts of climate change a growing part of the present social, cultural, and psychological landscape, we need to move beyond focusing solely on the material effects of climate change towards examining the emotional and psychological impact of climate change on individuals and communities. By focusing on eco-anxiety as a response to ecological crises, this research broadens existing discussions of climate change in literature and highlights the human dimensions of environmental catastrophe.

The study is also significant for its application of Rob Nixon's theory of slow violence to the analysis of climate fiction. While previous studies on Gun Island (2019) have primarily examined themes such as migration, globalization, environmental degradation, and ecological interconnectedness, limited attention has been paid to the relationship between slow violence and eco-anxiety. The confluence of these two is a more integrated framework which give a more complete view of how insidious and subtle environmental damage produces these

psychological stresses that lead to emotional uncertainties. This will connect ecocriticism with environmental psychology, enriching the work of both disciplines.

Moreover, the study takes an interdisciplinary approach that engages with South Asian literary studies by examining how contemporary South Asian climate fiction portrays South Asia's vulnerability to climate change and ecological disruption. Climate change poses severe environmental risks to South Asia such as sea-level rises, extreme climate events, loss of biodiversity, and forced migration as a result of climate change. The research examines Gun Island (2019) and "reality" as portrayed in literature as a way to uncover the lived experiences of people facing environmental uncertainty. The research contributes to the South Asian relevance of understanding of culture and human implications of climate changes, therefore.

Finally, this research is of value to future scholars who wish to explore climate fiction, ecoanxiety and environmental justice. By establishing a connection between environmental catastrophe, slow violence, and psychological responses, it opens new avenues for literary and interdisciplinary research. The findings may encourage further studies on the emotional consequences of climate change and the role of literature in raising awareness about ecological crises, resilience, and environmental responsibility in the contemporary world.

#### Literature Review

This research is grounded in contemporary ecocritical theory, particularly Rob Nixon's influential concept of slow violence, as articulated in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011). Slow violence, according to Nixon, is a type of environmental damage that builds up over time, spreads in time and space, and is usually not immediately perceptible. Slow violence occurs over a period of time: climate change, toxic pollution, deforestation, rising sea levels and biodiversity loss are examples of slow violence that garner no instant attention. Because it takes so long to become visible, it can pass unrecognized for much longer than is warranted, with all the catastrophic impacts it has. Slow violence is more likely to happen among marginalized groups, such as people in the Global South, who have experienced environmental degradation as a result of poverty, displacement, and historical injustice, says Nixon.

In this sense environmental catastrophe is not perceived as a state of nature or as an event, but as a process, related to long term ecological and socio-economic structures. Both scholars, DeLoughrey and Handley (2011), expand on Nixon's claim and highlight the temporal complexity of environmental storytelling, noting that ecological damage generally happens as "delayed aftermaths," which demands that one's sense of witnessing and representing be complicated. Likewise, Huggan and Tiffin (2015) state that postcolonial ecocriticism must have the capacity to recognize the ravages on the planet in the context of colonial narratives of extraction, resource exploitation, and uneven development. They are especially important in the context of South Asia, where colonial histories and present global capitalism have effaced ecological susceptibility and environmental fragility.

At the same time, ecological theory has been joined by environmental psychology and cultural studies which have shaped the perception of eco-anxiety as a key concept to grasp emotional reactions to climate change. Pihkala (2020) defines eco-anxiety as a complex psychological state, comprising worry, grief, fear and emotional upset over environmental degradation and ecological collapse. Most importantly, Pihkala states that the sense of anticipatory distress arising from climate impacts shouldn't be pathologized, but seen as a prudent response to the genuine threat of the environment. Kurth and Pihkala (2022) go on to explain how eco-anxiety comes from our growing ecological awareness in the Anthropocene where we are serial receivers of news about environmental meltdowns, extinction crises, and climate uncertainties. Eco-anxiety has also been seen as a multidimensional phenomenon with emotional responses (e.g. fear, sadness, grief), cognitive responses (e.g. worry, rumination, anticipatory thinking)

and behavioral responses (e.g. avoidance, activism, helplessness) as important aspects, which is confirmed by a systematic scoping review by Coffey et al. (2021). Their study also shows that, aside from actual experiences of the environment, mediated exposure via social media, education, and narratives help to form one's study of eco-anxiety. In this way, the emotions of the climate crisis turn into an individual and communal emotion: an eco-anxiety.

On the literary side of things, eco-anxiety has become more and more associated with a new subgenre: climate fiction (Cli-Fi) which creatively imagines or mentions real or loved-up futures affected by climate disaster. Randall (2019) theorises that climate fiction acts as a “literature of pre-traumatic stress” that created causes an emotional response to imagined climates futures. Likewise, Cli-Fi challenges conventional narrative structures by narrating uncertainty, collapse and ecological unpredictability, leading readers to experience affective feelings of anxiety, grief and ecological dread, as proposed by Johns-Putra (2019). These readings ground not simply a psychological condition, but also a narrative effect comprised of ecological storytelling, ecological anxiety.

In the case of south Asian climate fiction, the theoretical concerns take on special relevance in the light of their extreme susceptibility to climate change. The frequency with which the people of South Asia face floods, cyclones, heatwaves, droughts, sea-level rise and their severity are compounded by socio-economic inequality, population densities, and unequal development. Critics believe South Asian Cli-Fi films are portraying an environmentally apocalyptic reality rather than a preview of the future. This is similar to Nixon's slow violence, since the damage done to the environment in the area may be historical, cumulative, and structural rather than happening in isolation or in a moment.

Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) serves as a product of the contemporary South Asian climate fiction and has been much studied in the context of eco-critical studies. Hoydis argues that the novel is an account of planetary crisis, a focus on multispecies migration and an interconnectedness of human and non-human ecological systems. Nowhere in this reading does the author mention the word nation or species, as Ghosh builds up environmental changes as a global phenomenon—beyond the borders of nation and species.

The work on myth and epistemology of *Gun Island* (2019) is by Kalaivani, Selvi (2025) who believes that Ghosh uses folklore, religion and cultural memory as alternate “seasons” of interpretation for ecological uncertainty. Based on their study they argue that myth is not so much a superstition as a way of ecological knowing that undermines the scientific rationalities of modernity. This is especially important in the context of ecocritical applications because it opens up the epistemological frames to which ecological crises are subject.

Bose and Panda (2025) discuss cultural memory and “climate-induced displacement,” and focus on how climatic catastrophe is a transformative factor in historical consciousness and collective identity. They believe that migration in the novel is a space and a mind breach due to ecological instability which leads to psychological and cultural break. In like manner, Sardar (2026) looks at migration, hybridity and formation of identities, proposing that the fluidity and the instability of identities present in a globalized context may well be attributed to ecological crisis in an uncertain environment.

Furthermore, Bhardwaj and O'Key (2024) examine the concept of everything else losing its life along with the vulnerability of species other than humans in Ghosh's ecological imaginaries, which underscores the moral aspect of their work. Raimondi (2026) notes through an “archipelagic reading” on the fragmented geographies and intertwined ecological spaces, with the *Gun Island* (2019) that doesn't exist as isolated spaces and forms a network of relations to the ecological world. All these studies put together show migration, myth, extinction, memory, and ecological interconnectedness as themes of engagement for the novel.

The amount of scholarship currently available on the left side of the continuum of environmental catastrophe – depicted as either a material reality (climate change, migration, extinction) or a cultural-symbolic phenomenon (myth, memory, identity) is quite plentiful. These viewpoints are important but neglect some of the affective and psychological aspects of ecological crises including the development of a lived emotional reaction to environmental violence: eco-anxiety.

Furthermore, while the idea of slow violence abstraction is often referred to in climate fiction's eco-discussions, it is employed mainly descriptively rather than analytically. There are few studies that provide a systematic examination of the psychological effects of slow violence, both its gradual accumulation and its invisibility and delayed effect, such as anxiety, grief and ecological fear. Thus, in current scholarship the relationship between environmental temporality and emotional experience is still under-theorized.

The current study thus finds that there is a critical gap in the theoretical discussions pertaining to South Asian Climate Fiction as these are absent of integration of the concept of Slow Violence (structural and temporal environmental damage) with that of Eco-anxiety (psychological and affective engagement with ecological crisis). Work on social-ecological issues of environmental degradation and emotional distress tends to consider them as two distinct issues rather than a joint phenomenon.

This study aims to provide a merged framework that could be seen as an eco-anxiety-psychological reading model by interpreting eco-anxiety as an affective product of the phenomenon of slow violence in Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) as a fares to fill this gap. The novel not only really conveys the reality of environmental crisis but also its internalization within the human mind in the form of fear, uncertainty and ecological pain, it argues. Slow violence, in this sense, exists not just at the environmental/societal level, but also at the emotional/subjective level.

Ultimately, this research contributes to ecocritical studies, climate fiction scholarship, and environmental humanities by offering a more integrated and interdisciplinary reading of *Gun Island* (2019). It shows that environmental catastrophism in South Asian Cli-Fi is all three structural, historical, and psychological. By foregrounding the connection between slow violence and ecological anxiety, the study calls attention to the ways in which literature can define the emotional landscape of the Anthropocene while furthering the understanding of the ways in which ecological crises can be experienced, narrated, and felt.

### **Research Gap**

Despite substantial scholarship on Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019), most studies focus on themes such as migration, myth, and ecological memory, while treating environmental crisis mainly as a material or cultural issue. Limited attention has been given to the combined application of Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence and eco-anxiety theory in understanding the novel. Most studies have not examined how progressive destruction of the environment translates into characters' psychological and emotional distresses. Furthermore, the concept of eco-anxiety is not yet used as a critical analysis tool for climate fiction literature from South Asia. Additionally, there are no integrated approaches that link environmental temporality with human affect. Therefore, a gap exists for examining environmental catastrophe as both a structural and psychological phenomenon through slow violence and eco-anxiety.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The research design of this paper is qualitative, interpretive, and literary-analytical in nature, which is most suitable for examining the representation of environmental catastrophe and eco-anxiety in Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) through the lens of slow violence. In the case of climate change, ecological disruption and the emotional reaction of humans, a qualitative

approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the meanings of the text, the strategies used in the story, any symbols, and any thematic issues (Creswell, 2018).

The study employs a literary-analytical method to critically examine how Ghosh's narrative constructs environmental crisis through language, imagery, setting, and character experiences. This method allows the researcher to explore how slow violence is represented as a gradual and often invisible process, and how it produces psychological effects such as fear, uncertainty, and ecological anxiety (Barry, 2009). The study examines the correlation between degradation in the context of the novel and human subjectivity through this.

Close reading is an essential part of the methodology employed in the analysis of selected textual passages that emphasize disruption, migration related to climate change, and emotional response. In the context of a close reading, it is possible to interpret in detail the way in which the novel evokes the felt experience of environmental instability and emergence of eco-anxiety for characters. It also contributes to the understanding of the cumulative and delayed nature of slow violence, as well as the text's interconnectedness of ecological, psychological, and social issues, through narrative techniques.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The present study is based on the theory of ecocriticism as used by Rob Nixon specifically his theory of slow violence and the contemporary theories of eco-anxiety in the context of Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019). Ecocriticism broadly investigates the relationship between literature and the environment, emphasizing how texts represent ecological change, human-nature relations, and environmental ethics. In this perspective, environmental crisis is not only understood as a backdrop of an overall narrative but also as an active agent in defining the meaning of the narration and the experience of the humans.

A key theoretical foundation of this study is Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence, as developed in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011). Slow violence is defined by Nixon as an environmental harm that is slow, delayed, and, often, invisible. It encompasses processes like climate change, rising sea levels, pollution and ecological degradation that impact vulnerable communities in an unequal manner. From this point of view, environmental catastrophe is not sudden or instant, and is often difficult to portray and socially invisible despite its devastating long-term impacts.

Building on this, the present study also engages with the theory of eco-anxiety, as developed in contemporary environmental psychology and ecocritical discourse. Eco-anxiety is described as a "fear, grief, emotional suffering and uncertainty arising from climate change and environmental degradation" by Pihkala (2020). Kurth and Pihkala (2022) also claim ecologic anxiety is not a pathological state but a rational reaction to an authentic ecological torment in the Anthropocene. Coffey et al. (2021) highlight its multidimensional nature, involving emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses shaped by both direct environmental experience and global ecological awareness.

In this theoretical context, the effects of slow violence are conceptualized as affective, specifically as "eco-anxiety." Slow violence was used to describe the gradual and long-term process of the environment's degradation while eco-anxiety is used to describe the psychological and emotional experience of individuals and communities. We can combine these two theories and gain more of an overall picture of how environmental catastrophe happens at a material, at a temporal, but at ever also an emotional level in fictional accounts of climate change.

Moreover, this approach provides a spaces for an ecocritical re-reading of climate fiction from South Asia, where environmental calamities are intimately connected with questions of displacement, vulnerability and ecological injustice. In *Gun Island* (2019), this theoretical lens helps to interpret how gradual environmental changes translate into lived experiences of fear,

uncertainty, and ecological grief among characters. Therefore, the concept of slow violence combined with the concept of eco-anxiety offers a powerful framework for analysing environmental catastrophes in this novel from both an empirical and intrapsychic perspective.

### **Data Analysis**

This section analyzes Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) through the theoretical lenses of Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence and the theory of eco-anxiety. The analysis is based on the objectives and questions of the study, which specifically examine the depiction of environmental catastrophe as a slow, progressive, and sometimes unseen process, and understand the psychological and emotional outcomes this catastrophe has in its character's lives.

By applying Nixon's slow violence perspective, environmental degradation can be better understood as a long-term process that happens over time and is rooted in structural issues. The ecological destruction in this model occurs slowly, including through mechanisms like climate change, rising sea level, biodiversity loss and unusual weather patterns. These alterations are cumulative, making smaller but significant impacts on landscapes, livelihoods, and human life, especially in vulnerable areas.

In parallel to this structuring, the emotional and psychological aspects of a climate crisis are explored using the lens of eco-anxiety. Eco-anxiety is defined as feelings of fear, uncertainty, grief, and distress when one experiences ecological instability and is aware of climate change. Emotional responses, as illustrated in the novel, mark the degradation of the environment as a process that is not only imposed from the outside but also internalized by the individual, with consequences on the perception of security, future and identity.

Slow violence and eco-anxiety are combined in this section to allow two analytical perspectives: one on the process of ecological violence, one on how this collision is psychologically experienced. This approach allows an in-depth analysis of ecological destruction at four levels at once, directly to the research aims of the study.

### **Slow Violence and Environmental Catastrophe in *Gun Island***

Environmental catastrophe in Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) is deeply rooted in the concept of slow violence the gradual, imperceptible, but nevertheless real, violence that is waged by ecological breakdown over time spans that appear vast and seem to last forever. The environmental instability in the novel is connected to unsettled climates over a prolonged period, like droughts, floods, and changing weather patterns, and their impact changes the nature of human life, migration, and survival.

Central to slow violence in the novel is the multi-generational and multi-locational impact of climate disaster. The story speaks of some sort of historical transformation, by relying on the concept of ecological instability:

**“The protagonist is a merchant, whose homeland, in eastern India, is struck by drought and floods brought on by the climatic disturbances of the Little Ice Age.”**

This passage emphasizes that environmental catastrophe is not an event, but rather a consequence of climate conditions that have fluctuated over time. Droughts and Floods negatively impact livelihoods, resulting in forced displacement and loss of family stability. This ecological damage shows the process of accumulating damage in slow increments over an extended period that impacts humans as well as non-humans.

The novel also illustrates the inextricable links between migration, colonial violence and global trade and commerce shaped by environmental crisis. Gun Merchant's movement in different regions illustrates how ecological stress drives individuals to undertake long journeys of survival:

**“On the way his ship is attacked and he is captured by Portuguese pirates who take him to Goa and put him up for sale, as a slave.”**

In this context, environmental displacement is closely tied and connected to colonial exploitation and practices. Climate instability initiates a chain of vulnerability that is intensified by piracy, slavery, and imperial trade networks. It is evident that slow violence exists not just in terms of the environment, but in economic and political terms—environmental degradation is entangled with systems of domination.

Furthermore, the narrative also demonstrates how environmental change persists and is realised in other geographical areas such as Egypt and Istanbul, revealing the trans-regional dimension of the ecological crisis:

**“Egypt... is also convulsed by the ‘general crisis’ of the seventeenth century.” And “The land is in the grip of a fearsome drought; strange messianic figures have emerged.”**

These lines show the socio-political instability that can be caused by environmental stress. Drought and ecological pressure result in famines, fear and social unrest, evidence of slow violations that involve the splitting of ecosystems and societies over time.

The text also makes the link between environmental catastrophe and historical disasters like fire, drought and forced migration:

**“A great fire breaks out... the finger of blame lands upon the Jewish community.”**

This shows how environmental conditions (such as drought and heat) contribute to urban catastrophe, which is then followed by social violence and scapegoating. Again, look at the situation of forced displacement of communities, where over time environmental and political violence strengthens and reinforce each other.

Lastly the novel places environmental crisis in global systems of trade and imperialism in which ecological resources enter into long-distance exploitation:

**“Cowries were for centuries an important article of trade in Venice.” And “In the seventeenth century the demand for cowries began to rise because they were used for the Atlantic slave trade.”**

These lines expose how environmental resources are part of the global networks of extraction and slavery. The movement of commodities like cowries across continents demonstrates that ecological materials are part of long-term historical circuits of exploitation, reinforcing the concept of slow violence as a distributed and prolonged process.

The analysis as a whole indicates that environmental distress in *Gun Island* (2019) is a process, not an event, and is the result of multiple factors such as colonialism, global economic structure, and climate change. As part of the novel's slow violence framework, the novel shows how ecological destruction is a process that takes place over time, creating material destruction and general human exposure.

#### **Eco-Anxiety as a Psychological Response to Environmental Crisis in *Gun Island***

Eco-anxiety in *Gun Island* (2019) is constructed as a sustained psychological condition emerging from ecological instability, migration crises, and the unpredictability of a rapidly changing world. This description does not leave environmental change too far away or in another dimension: it slowly seizes, situates, and fragments the reader with fear, uncertainty, and emotional disorientation in spontaneous encounters, conversations, disruptions. This fear is not calmed by the fact that ecological distress is intimately linked with human trafficking, with internal and external political chaos, and global capitalism, creating a general feeling of an increasingly “unmanageable world”.

One such notable event that is only a pointer to this broader crises is the symbolic viewing of the refugee issue as a global ecological and political emergency:

**“Across the planet everyone’s eyes are on the Blue Boat now: it has become a symbol of everything that’s going wrong with the world inequality, climate change, capitalism, corruption, the arms trade, the oil industry.”**

This passage is an illustration of how environmental destruction is linked to other economies of exploitation. The “Blue Boat” is the site of “collective anxiety” not only because of climate change, but also because of systemic inequalities that affect displacement. As the crises became more polarizing, it's easy to see how eco-anxiety works psychologically in that solidifying in one symbol. As the crises have been polarising in nature, it was easy to see how they psychologically “feel” when they come together in one symbol in the form of 'eco-anxiety'.

by packaging several threats from around the world into one “collapsing” feeling.

The narrative further intensifies this psychological distress through its depiction of human trafficking and systemic violence, which indirectly intersect with environmental instability. The 'scafisti' discussion points how individuals enter into the vicious cycle of exploitation and fear, and brings a wider sense of insecurities that also extends to eco-anxiety. It offers a parallel between ecological vulnerability and human precarity, where migrants are forced into bondage with the ecological and both are constructed by the mutually supportive global systems of exploitation.

Eco-anxiety is also exacerbated by the psychological aspect of releasing fears and uncertainties about unknown risks in familiar environments. This is observable in the constantly fluctuating experience of safety, both in the very spaces that seem reassuring and comfortable and in the way they are represented:

**“The brown recluse has been increasing its range very quickly because it’s getting so much hotter in Europe.”**

This statement demonstrates the atmospheric changes in ecological boundaries and the new kind of danger which arises within an ecological environment. The spread of venomous species into Europe is representative of the gradual nature of ecological repercussions that are invisible. This gradual shift creates uncertainty in peoples' minds because they can no longer rely on ecological dynamics for safety. It's not the threat of a specific disaster; it's the worry that unforeseen dangers gradually creep into humanity, quietly. It is not the threat of a specific disaster, but the fear that dangers will simply make their way into human space little by little - in an undisturbingly quiet way.

This feeling of the uncertainty is also conveyed in the general mood of the narrative for which characters are always faced with incomplete information, shifting narratives and unsolved crises. The freedom of movement of Rafi and Tipu and their movements between Turkey and Egypt adds to this sense of global disorientation. The concept of “it's connected” with networks of criminals and migrants further reinforces the notion that there are hidden systems impacting people's lives that they cannot control, as it has become a greater psychological insecurity.

Eco-anxiety can also be exacerbated by working from speculations as to ecological/historical relationships, especially within discourses that combine interpretations of the environment and culture. It is an attempt to understand the overwhelming complexity by trying to trace some historical routes and symbolic meanings. But it is as if the search for meaning uncovers anxiety's need to add pattern to a world that faces new disruptions and dissolutions every day and everywhere.

Overall, Gun Island (2019) becomes a form of eco-anxiety as an entrenched emotional reaction to a gradual environmental and social violence. It is expressed through symbols such as the “Blue Boat”; through other disruptive ecological phenomena involving migration, such as the movement of species; through phenomena of general instability of global systems, such as the dynamics of climate change, capitalism and migration. Environmental crisis is not just a physical one, it's a psychological one too, as the novel proves, as in there's an constant sense of fear, of anticipation, of uncertainty, for today's existence.

**Relationship Between Slow Violence and Eco-Anxiety in the Novel**

Slow violence and eco-anxiety are manifested in the accumulation of ecological harms that culminate in moments of emotional and perceptual overload, as in *Gun Island* (2019). The novel demonstrates that degradation is not an instantaneous event but built up over time until it can be seen in extreme manifestations such as natural catastrophes that impact on living and non-living things. These moments inspire fear, awe, and emotional instability amongst the viewers, directly connecting ecological crisis to emotional response.

**“An awestruck silence descended on us as the dark mass came arrowing through the sky...”**

This serves as an example of “slow violence”, violence that has been occurring steadily in the environment for years and now is suddenly present, in this case as a mass migration of birds. The “silence” of the observers represents shock to the mind and hence a fear of the extent of environmental transformation beyond human capacity. Shows how majority of environmental activities occur slowly but still create a moment of emotional disorientation hence creating an eco-anxiety effect in the audience came from the overwhelming environment.

The novel also ties together marine ecological insecurity with the same process, in which several species turn up in unexpected abundance:

**“There must have been hundreds of them, concentrated within a couple of square kilometres.”**

The unusual aggregation of whales and dolphins indicates that there is an ecological problem in their environment, one that impacts whale and dolphin migration patterns and marine ecological balances, all over a long period of time. Such a literalizing of “intervening events” as not happening at random but as the result of a long history of environmental stress, in keeping with the notion of “slow violence. The characters' response, including a scientist's (Piya's) shock that the ecological systems behave contrary to current patterns of thought, shows how eco-anxiety arises when ecosystems operate in ways that contradict normal patterns.

The imagery of nature fosters this association further when it is represented as an active, reacting element:

**“It was as if some limb of the earth had risen into the heavens...”**

This metaphor points to the fact that the Earth is the post-staged wounding response body of climate instability. Slow violence is manifested in the drama of nature, human witnesses belong to emotional constellations, between the feeling of disconnection and the feeling of fear. Slow violence is bodily, it is the drama of nature, emotional constellations of human witnesses, feeling of disconnection and feeling of fear, an enhanced eco-anxiety in response to eco-breakdown.

The phenomena in the skies, additionally, coincide with the phenomena in the ocean and enhance the connectivity between ecological disturbance and psychological responses, namely birds flying in the sky and marine life in the ocean. These overlapping ecological protests in turn imply a flattened-out ecology in which the harm done in one sphere has repercussions in other spheres. Due to its lack of action, the observers are positioned in the helpless perspective of witnessing, making them feel vulnerable and unstable emotionally.

Finally, eco-anxiety is the short-term emotional response to “slow violence”: environmental devastation occurs slowly and sometimes unobservably, but it can only be felt through larger, dramatic environmental events that surge beyond human notice. Therefore, in this connection *Gun Island* (2019) shows the interplay of introspection and feeling, it shows how ecological crisis is not just a matter of ecology, but of psyche as well, a matter of fear and wonder, of uncertainty and lack of clarity.

The objectives of the study have been supported by the analysis of Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) using the concept of slow violence by Rob Nixon and theory of eco-anxiety. The novel portrays environmental disaster as a long and very slow process, affecting by climate, colonial past and global economy.

The present analysis reveals that ecological degradation takes place slowly over time, and can impact human life by migration, loss of livelihood and environmental instability. Often until it is visibly disruptive will the changes of course remain undetected.

The characters in turn, feel powerful psychological reactions to these changes in the environment. Eco-anxiety is expressed as fear, uncertainty and emotional disorientation due to ecological and socio-political instability.

Overall, the novel draws a connection between slow violence and eco-anxiety, demonstrating the environmental degradation as a structural issue and a psychological experience that inflects the perception of humanity in the changing world.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* (2019) through Rob Nixon's concept of slow violence and the theory of eco-anxiety. A novel as a method, it shows how environmental disaster happened not all at once, but as a process; one that happens over time; one that is a history, too, that is colored by colonial struggles and global economies and happens because of climate change.

This indicates that ecological degradation is a gradual process that results in a long-term spread and disruption, including migration, loss of livelihoods, and environmental instability. These transformations are typically imperceptible or 'normal' until they unmistakably emerge into the open, thus demonstrating the essence of slow violence.

Alongside, the environmental setting arouses significant psychological reactions from the characters of the study. Simultaneously, the environmental situation evokes strong psychological reactions in the characters of the study. Eco-anxiety is a fear and uncertainty, grief and emotional disorientation to ecological and socio-political uncertainty.

Overall, the study finds that *Gun Island* (2019) connects the concepts of slow violence, eco-anxiety, and that it makes current ecological devastation seem like an emotional state as well as a structural process. It emphasizes the novel's psychological dimension in its treatment of ecological crisis, and how these experiences affect people's perceptions, feelings and reactions to the world around them, and to its rapidly changing nature.

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