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"'We are the Dispossessed': Displacement, Knowledge Production and Bare Life in West Bengali Climate Fiction"

Wilton, Demi

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In his 2019 novel, *Gun Island*, Amitav Ghosh reflects upon the consequences of decades of international political inaction in relation to climate-related human movement. Set in the Sundarbans, a vast area of mangrove forests in the Bay of Bengal, the novel portrays extensive out-migration of the region's isolated agricultural communities along traditional migrant corridors into Northern Africa and Southern Europe. Characters observe that the signs of an impending mass exodus due to climate change have been present for many years ... Despite the region's long anticipation of out-migration, however, *Gun Island* depicts few structural or protective measures to ensure safe, organised movement for Sundarbans refugees. Life-threatening tropical storms, sea level rise, soil salination and their knock-on effects upon the area's agricultural economy push Rafi, and thousands like him, from the archipelago into Italy, where they are drawn into exploitative labour circuits. Like their real-life counterparts in the Sundarbans today, the migrants in the novel are criminalised as they enter foreign nations and encounter manifold abuses from both human traffickers and border guards. (From the article)

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