HISTORY IN FICTION:
A STUDY OF THE NOVELS OF AMITAV GHOSH

A THESIS

Submitted Towards the Requirement for the Award of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

ENGLISH

Under the Faculty of Arts

BY

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Enrollment Number: 161690305684

(Registration Number: Ph.D/17/Art/Eng/3)

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Year – 2023

P.K. UNIVERSITY, SHIVPURI (M.P)

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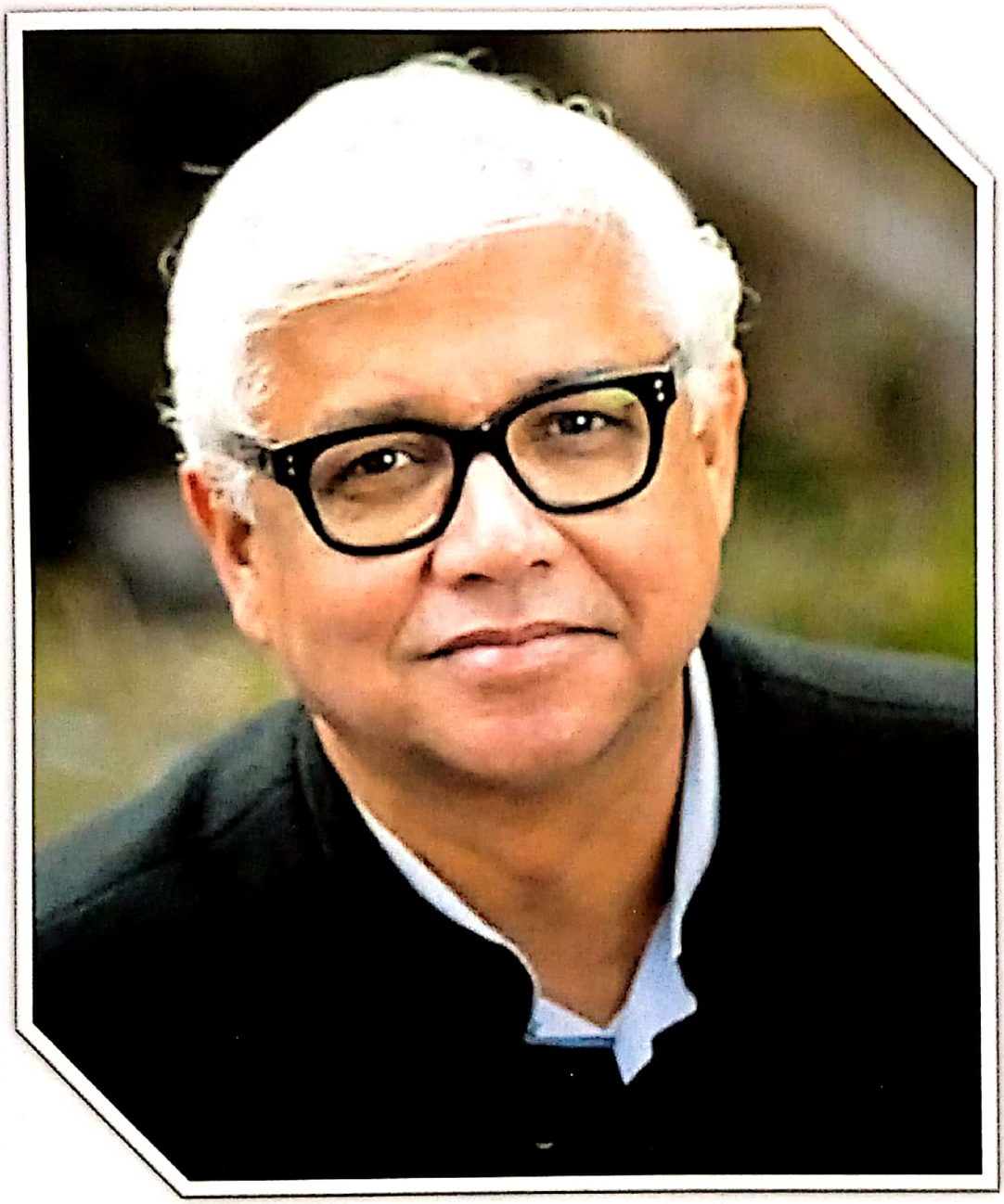
Dedicated

To

MY FAMILY, FRIENDS & TEACHERS

Amitav Ghosh (Born on 11 July 1956)



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INTRODUCTION

Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION

Amitav Ghosh is one of the most promising novelists and non-fiction writers in the post-Rushdie period in the history of Indian writing in English. His birth place is Calcutta where he was born in 1956 and brought up in different places such as India, Bangladesh, Iran, Sri Lanka, etc. He completed his graduation from St. Stephen‘s College in Delhi. He joined as a lecturer in the department of Anthropology School of Economics, Delhi. He obtained a scholarship for his D. Phil in social anthropology at Oxford University.It is Fellaheen village of Lataifa, Egypt where he completed his fieldwork in 1980. The book, In an Antique Land depicted the work he did in Fellaheen village. In Cambodia, he was involved in his field work. He remained in Delhi and contributed to several publications with his intellectual articles on different topics. At the beginning of his career, he became a distinguished professor in the department of Comparative Literature at Queen‘s College in the City College of New York. Nowadays, he resides in Brooklyn, New York with his better-half Deborah Baker.

Amitav Ghosh parents' thinking and lifestyle shaped his life to a great extent. He has mentioned an incidence of his childhood about his mother, in an article in the *New Yorker*, he said: it is Calcutta where my mother was brought up and her mind was full of Mahatma Gandhi: non-violence, civil disobediences and the terrors linked with partition in 1947‖. He keeps on to say that the stories of his mother were very interesting since they consisted of simple and wonderful plot line, and, in Mahatma Gandhi, a remarkably significant and powerful protagonist.

Remembering his father, Ghosh mentioned in the *New Yorker* that his father was only 21 years old in year 1942 that was a very stormy period in history of Indian independence. He also mentions that his father in that year of anti-imperialist dissatisfaction renounce home to have a position of an officer in the military force of British colonial India.

Ghosh, through his keen observation of his father and his colleagues, learned about the subterfuges and silences of his father‘s generations. It is this aspect that has

fascinated Amitav Ghosh. To build the concept of freedom and its multiple associations in the modern world, a main theme of The Shadow Lines‖, Ghosh has employed the memories of his father and his colleagues.

Ghosh is a regular traveller, a sort of globe-trotter. Not only is he a social anthropologist, but he is also a keen student of history. The happy marriage of anthropology and history can be seen in some of his novels and nonfictional works, like, In an Antique Land‖ and The Glass Palace (2000).

Amitav Ghosh, unlike some diasporic writers like Rushdie, Mistry, and critics like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhaba, does not believe in high-sounding theories of the West. Unlike them, his protagonists travel to the East rather than the West. Alu, in *The Circle of Reason*, runs to the Middle East. Rushdie, after writing on India, has now started writing on Western music and lifestyles in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999). Vikram Seth, in *An Equal Music* (1999), has switched over to the Western World. Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, and a host of novelists and fictionists have earned millions by planting the Western skin on the Western face. Amitav Ghosh, on the contrary, writes about Egypt, India, Cambodia, and Burma.

It is this approach of Ghosh that attracted me to his works. Most of his protagonists, like Alu in *The Circle of Reason*, Bomma in *In an Antique Land*, and Murugan in *The Calcutta Chromosome* are the subalterns. Ghosh's essay titled –*The Slave of MS.H.6*‖ was published in *The Subaltern Studies, Vol. II*, 1992. Another essay titled –*The Imam and the Indian*‖ was first published in Granta, Vol. 20 Winter 1986. Both of these essays were incorporated into the ethnography *In an Antique Land*.

The place of Amitav Ghosh in the realm of Indian fiction in English is firmly established. He is one of the greatest novelists in the Rushdie period, i.e., the eighties and nineties of the twentieth centuries, Aparna Dharwadker and Vinay Dharwadker observe:

In discussing the Indian English novel, two influential frameworks formulated by recent theories of post-coloniality to study narrative fiction will be discussed. One

is Homi K. Bhabha‘s contention that narration‖ plays a constitutive role in the formation of a nation. The other is Frederic Jameson‘s argument that all third world narratives are by their nature national allegories. These theoretical positions point to antithetical movements in late-colonial and post-colonial Indian English fiction that emphasize not the formal or aesthetic features of fiction but its role in the evolving cultural and political life of the nation. The first framework portrays the work of the fiction by R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, in as much as they offer –discourses of the nation‖ (Bhabha‘s term) in narrative form and also appears in parodic form in G. V. Desani‘s best-known work. The novelist careers of these writers began in the 1930s and have continued beyond independence, intersecting in different ways with the nationalistic upheaval that ended colonial rule in India. The second frame opposes the first and appears in its strongest form in the antinational and transnational allegories of Salman Rushdie‘s fiction. Although an expatriate writer, Rushdie has made a distinctive contribution to the story of Indian nationhood‘ a third significant frame in Indian English fiction generates what critics call the East-West theme, and this can be explicated regarding the fiction of Ruth Prawar Jhabvala, Anita Desai, and Amitav Ghosh.[1]

We exclude R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, and M. R. Anand from our study, for we are concerned with Amitav Ghosh‘s place in Indian fiction in English since the 1980s. Naturally, the name of Salman Rushdie immediately crops up, as he is the most dominating factor in the eighties and nineties. Frederic Jameson argued that, All third-world texts are mandatory allegorical, and in a particular way they are to be read as national allegories. He mentioned: Third-world texts, even those which are apparently private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic, necessarily project a political dimension in the form of a national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always a legend of the embattled condition of the public third-world culture and society.[2] Various critics have taken Jameson to task for this imperial and uncritical categorization of third-world texts. Modifying Jameson‘s reductive essentialization of all third world texts,‖ and developing his undifferentiated conception of a national allegory into several subtypes, Vinay Dharwadker has argued that a national allegory articulates its concern with

nationhood and nationality through fairly determinate thematic orientations. For instance, in the colonial period, many Third World and Commonwealth writers constructed elaborate nationalistic, even patriotic allegories of a particular land and its people, contributing frequently to an anti-colonial nationalist movement and a future nationalist state ideology. In contrast, in the post-colonial period, we find a proliferation of nationalistic as well as anti-nationalistic allegories of the same land and people, but now with a far more variable conception of nation, national unity and identity, national history, and so forth.[3]

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1980) is the most explicitly, and in some ways conventionally, allegorical novel when compared to Rao's and Desai's fictions. K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger remarks:

The title (of the book) of course refers to the children born in the midnight hour of India's tryst with destiny on 15 August 1947. The narrator hero, Saleem Sinai, is one of the elected 580 children afraid by the time of their nativity with an unusual fate. As he recalls his antecedents and projects the Indian subcontinent's history till the time of the Emergency (1975-77), the spread of the novel is about six decades, and especially all India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.The massive novel has a three-part structure with 30 chapters: Part I going back to Jallianwalla Bagh and endingwith the birth of Saleem Sinai, the narrator-hero, on the fateful midnight of 15 August 1947; part II concluding with the end of the Indo Pakistan war on 23 September 1965; and part III carrying the narrative forward to March 1977, and the end of the Emergency.[4]

R. S. Pathak also remarks: the line drawn between the public and the private stream is so obvious in *Midnight's Children* that it is not feasible to part them accurately. This feature holds unity in the novel. Moreover, the interaction of historical and individual forces has made the narrator what he is. In Saleem, Rushdie forms a reporter who incites much of the past events he accounts and who preserve in his legacy of uniqueness of India himself.[5]

Rushdie's treatment of the white rulers of India is equally fascinating. Ratna Raman writes: In contrast to the usual awe and importance conceded to white men

and their values that reading memory can recall, it is refreshing to see Western figures of authority in the novel, treated irreverently, whether in the case of Brigadier Dyer waxing his moustache or the bald and wig-clad Methwold, stating the terms and conditions for the sale of his estate, Rushdie is also able to turn commonplace events into metaphors for significant historical moments. Associations of declining imperialism and the violence and disturbance generated by it are successfully suggestedby the mentionof the pointing hand, the scattering urchins and the overturned spittoon. The handing over of Methwold's estate is also an elaborate parody of the last stages in the exchange of power between the departing colonials and the succeeding Indians.[6]

Salman Rushdie's sixth novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, takes off where *Midnight's Children* ended the Emergency with prophetic glimmers of olden times. This time, says Madhu Jain, when reviewing the book,

Rushdie has zoomed in on those apocalyptic days: the post-Ayodhya, post-Bombay bomb blasts, post scam-and-Bofors-and high-rise-scandal India, an India with the likes of Thackeray legitimately holding the reins of power. Throw in RDX, Bombay blasts, Dawood Ibrahim, Miss India become Miss World, become-Helen-of-Troy-of-the Bombay-dons, even a Mogambo don update presiding from the summit of his high-rise with tentacles tearing at the city's inwards. Add Ganesh Chaturthi, of Cochin, Rajiv Gandhi's the Jews assassination, *Sati* and the contemporary Indian art scene.[7]

Upamanyu Chatterjee, unlike Salman Rushdie, narrates India, in the post-colonial period. The very title of Chatterjee's novel *English August: An Indian Story* lays great emphasis on the story part of it at the outsetand it is Indian'. This is a story about an Indian by an Indian, which might have otherwise been Indian Agastya: An English Story.‖ A. K. Singh remarks: The ironic connotations of the title suggest that though the English have left, yet English still enjoys its Augustan day in India, as the story may be India but it is in English. Moreover, the Raj Syndrome still haunts the Indians- particularly the young generations, who find August to be more convenient than Agastya.[8]

Upamanyu Chatterjee tells his stories about postcolonial bureaucracy, development, politics and political leaders, education, language and on through various so characters in the drama of an Indian situation. To give one instance, we can take postcolonial bureaucracy, of which August is a limb. It behaves like crippled issues of a colonial culture steeped in artificiality, snobbery, inefficiency, corruption, interference, ingratitude, insolence, disloyalty, ill will and selfishness. The postcolonial bureaucracy, another complex and unwieldy bequest ofthe Raj,[9] have undergone some change, which the novelist sums up: But Indianization (of a method of administration, or language) is integral to the Indian story. During 1947 the collector was almost inaccessible to the people; now he keeps open house, primarily because he does a difficult, more difficult job. He is as human as fallible, but now others can tell him a so, even though he still exhibits the old accoutrements (but now Indianized) of importancethe flashing light on the roof of the car, the passes for the first row at the sitar recital.[10]

Kumar outlines this change: the Collector and the S. P. of a district are not uppity and high-handed, but like meeting them. This is India, *Bhai,* an independent country, and not the Raj, we are servants of the people.‖ [11]

Rohinton Mistry‘s first novel, *Such a Long Journey*, according to Arun Mukherjee, states that he is giving a narrativized rendition of a real incident popularly known in India as the Nagarwalla case. According to Mukherjee, Mistry picks up (a) thread from the rich fabric of narrative imaginary and real-woven around India‘s unofficial royal family and tells us his version of a story that has been told and retold in India millions of times.[12] Nagarwalla received nearly sixty lakh rupees from a bank manager in Delhi, allegedly on the strength of a phone call from the Prime Minister which, it was said, he imitated. Nagarwalla was dead after a few months. Nobody knew where the money went. Here is a view of a Parsi about the incident.

The Nagarwalla incident, because it involved a Parsi, pushed the self-image of the community no less. Having long ago lost their literature to the defacement of Alexander, the Accursed, and their dance, music, art, poetry and even their language to the process of changing to a newhome in India the Parsis have flourished a particularized culture called from a mixture of ancient myth and legend overlaid by

a life-sustaining sense of recent achievement. Gratified to have earned an honourable position in the country of their assumption through their contribution to every field of attempt and proud of having retained a strong ethical tradition the Parsis were deeply anguished by the ambivalent role Nagarwalla had played in the sordid story.

How to make him realize what he was doing to his father, who had made the success of his son‘s life the purpose of his own? Sohrab had snatched away that purpose, like a crutch from a cripple.[13]

But Mistry does not represent the minority situation as entirely one of victimization but sees it as a challenging one is forced to face. Consequently, his narrative method frequently employs humour and irony. On the other hand, Tabish Khair, reviewing Rushdie‘s *The Moor*‘s *Last Sigh*, says: He (Rushdie) has written a premature elegy to Indian pluralism, and the elegy has been addressed to an empty grave‖.[14]

Vikram Seth‘s prose fiction, *A Suitable Boy*, in the words of Dr. Shyam S. Agarwalla is all-encompassing, a magnus opus‘ of social comedy in the great tradition of Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and R. K. Narayaninterlaced with the political realism of Graham Greene and Nayantara Sahgal. Sandwiched between the social comedy and the political realism is the musky and intriguing academic world of Professor Mishra and Professor Pran, in the line of Srilal Shukla‘s *Raag Durbar*.[15]

Themes of *A Suitable Boy* are about the search of India for its social, cultural, educational, and political milieu interwoven with MrsRupa Mehra and Lata, the Chatterjee‘s, Prof. Mishra and Pran, L. M. Agarwal and Mahesh Kapoor and their searches. The political figures-Tandon, Nehru, J. P. and Lohia course through the veins of the invented characters in *A Suitable Boy.*

Vikram Seth writes about the period, 1951-52. Dr Agarwalla says: He (Seth) shows the India of withering idealism, rotting corruption, pestering communal disharmony, parasitical intrigue of politicians, the perpetual fight between the forces of progress and modernity and the forces of tradition and obscures.‖[16]

Anita Desai sees Vikram Seth‘s novel as a comfortable comedy. She remarks that Seth is too fond and too tolerant of his characters to want to transform them.

Although in their rash youth, they might be tempted by the possibilities of change, defiance, and the unknown, they learn their lessons and return, chastened, to the safety and security of the familiar and the traditional, represented here, in the Indian fashion, by the great god Family.[17]

David Myers critiques: Of course, the bulk of *A Suitable Boy* fallswithin the genre of a quiet, epic comedy ofmanners, but this cannot blind us to the tragic heights reached in Maan‘s passion for Saeeda Bai and the fit of insane jealousy in which he attempts to murder his best friend, Firoz. It is more useful to interpret this scene as the tragedy of a character flaw. That is, Maan (like Varun) is charming, spontaneous, and likeable, although undeniably directionless and self-indulgent. His character flows in addition to his passion that is to his strange love for that elegant and artful courtesan-musician, Saeeda Bai. His passion leads him to commit a ghastly crime, but it leads through remorse and renunciation on his part, and forgiveness on his friend Firoz‘s part, to a friendship that is twice as strong. Maan is transformed by remorse, he does renounce his passion for SaeedaBai and he bears the guilt for his mother‘s premature death with a new sorrow and maturity. All these characteristics have far more to do with tragedy than with comedy.[18]

Like Upamanyu Chatterjee‘s academicians in *English, August: An Indian Story, A Suitable Boy* has also a murky world of academicians. Chatterjee writes about a post-graduate college in Uttarkashi, where Mohandas taught for two years. The college was supposed to be of post-graduate level, but the labs were not even worth intermediate. Everything is broken or stolen. There were two goondas who claimed to be Principal; each had younger goondas as bodyguards. I used to wonder which of them was drawing the principal‘s salary. When they met in the corridor, they used to curse each other quite colourfully and most students would rush out of class to hear them.[19]

In *A Suitable Boy,* Professor Mishra was a huge, pale, oily husk, political and manipulative to the very depths of his being.‖[20] He loved power and authority like L.N. Agarwal and Mahesh Kapoor. The selection of Pran for the readership of the university is stoutly blocked by Professor Mishra, in the meeting of the selection committee, on one pretext or another, but one thing is clear that he does it out of

prejudice. It is only the stubborn determination of the external expert, Dr Chattopadhyay, and the wrong calculation of Mahesh Kapoor‘s probable victory in the election to the Legislative Assembly by Badrithat compels Prof. Mishra to agree to the selection of Pran. Rushdie and Mistry do not deal with an academic world.

Shashi Tharoor‘s *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), a biting commentary on the political history of modern India, is modelled on the ancient epic the *Mahabharata* in terms of structure and issues. But it has its immediate precedence in Salman Rushdie‘s *Midnight’s Children* (1980), the first Indian novel in English, written in the aftermath of the Emergency that deals with national history.The nightmarish experience of the country during the darkest period in the history of free India helped to revive the memory of the battle of Kurukshetra, giving birth to the realization that contemporary Indian reality can be understood only about the myths and legends of India‘s remote past. This imperative works behind the genesis of both *Midnight’s Children* and *The Great Indian Novel.*[21]

Covering almost the same period of Indian history, both the novels highlight some important events like the Jalianwala bagh massacre, the partition of India, wars with China and Pakistan, the Bangladesh war, and the horrors of Emergency, the last serving as the climactic point in both. Vanashree Tripathi analyses *The Great Indian Novel:*

The eighteen books of Tharoor‘s novels are planned as parallel to the Cantos of Vyasa‘s epic. They are given titles parodying well-known literary works on India (some of them by Paul Scott). There are chapters entitled The Duel with the Crown, A Raj Quartet and The Power of Silence. Paul Scott is also Lieutenant Governor Scott with a soft spot for the uppity narratives‖

The chapter called Passages through India, and Maurice Forster, just down from Cambridge who seems to prefer young boys recall E. M. Forster. Rudyard Kipling is presented as the archetypal imperialist Colonel Rudyard, who orders the soldiers to fire on the unarmed crowd in the Bibligarh- Jalianwala garden‘s Massacre. There are also chapters like The Jungle Book and The Man Who Could Not be King. The Far Power Villain‖ is reminiscent of M. M. Kaye‘s *The Far Pavillions.* Salman Rushdie‘s presence is lurking in Midnight‘s Parents.[22]

Allan Sealy's *The Trotter Nama* (1988) is the first impressive novel of Allan Sealy. Shyamala A. Narayan critiques the novel: The author was inspired by books like *Babarnama* and the *Shahnama,* medieval chronicles recounting the life of kings like Babar. The name allowed the author to tell a story while digressing freely. This rollicking roller-coaster-of book tells the story of seven generations of Trotters, descendants of a French mercenary, Justine Trattoire, who settled down at Sans Souci near Nakhlau (Lucknow) in the eighteenth century. The 575-page narrative cannot be confined to the formal limits of a conventional novel-it is full of interpolations, on topics ranging from the making of *gud* (jaggery) to a How the Raj is done,' a recipe for writing successful Raj novels.[23]

A careful study of the map of Sans Souci reveals that the novel is located around areas of Sealy's *alma mater,* La Martieniere School at Lucknow. The novelist has succeeded in his primary aim of highlighting the Anglo-Indian cause in the contemporary Indian set-up.

Arundhathi Roy's *The* God *of Small Things,* the winner of the Booker Prize, has been hailed as a modern classic. Aparna Dharwadker writes: The first is the dynastic conception of thefamily which Roy's novel shares with a full range of Rushdie's fiction, from *Midnight's Children* to *The Moor's Last Sigh.* These are all works of the genealogical imagination, although Rushdie subjects Saleem Sinai's genealogy in *Midnight's Children* to merciless irony, while Roy uses Ammu's genealogy in *The God of Small Things* for crucial contextualization. In all these fictions, the narrative of the family reaches backwards into a past power and privilege and arrives in a present marked by decline, decay, and death, if not sexual depravity and mental degeneracy.[24]

Binoo K. John writes: Roy triumphed because, unlike the others, she had the guts and the overwhelming talent to invent a new idiom and vocabulary to tell the story of seemingly remote people. Mammachi, Susie Mol, Estha, Rahel, Ammu and Velutha will stay with us popping up occasionally to remind us of some eternal truth.[25]

When the story opens, it is in the second stage. The twins Rahel and Estha are thirty-one years old now. They are meeting after a gap of twenty-three years.

Separated as children for crimes foisted on them, they meet as quiet and hollow adults in search of a lost childhood that had contained their mother. Estha has been re-returned by his father from Calcutta to their old house in Ayemenem. Rahel, a divorcee working in the US, a woman who, since this separation from him, has failed to identify with her own thoughts and deeds, comes to meet him. Since Estha gives her no sign of recognition, she spends this first day of her arrival wandering around the town and in Estha‘s spotlessly clean room, and the stories that were over one day twenty three years ago, revive in her memory. The very essence of the novel is printed on its inside page. It reads as follows:

Little events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted, imbued with real meaning.Suddenly they become the faded bones of a storyit could be argued that it began thousands of years ago. That it began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The rules established criteria about the person to be loved, about the way to love and about the level of love.[26]

In an interview, Roy confesses that *The* God *of Small Things* has affected my deepest relationships, made them deeper. It‘s more about human biology than human history. It is located very close to me. I have invested myself in it. I can‘t write any other way.[27] The autobiographical element in the novel is an asset because Roy takes the reader into confidence and shares her most personal and intimate views. Agarwalla goes a step further and writes:

Roy is determined to expose the hypocrisy of the upper caste communists, the dominant group, who talk of a casteless and classless society and raise slogans for the unity of all working-class people. The mouth Marxist platitudes but connive with the bourgeois elites to marginalize the subalterns, especially untouchables.[28]

In her language (English) approach, Roy comes close to what Rushdie once wrote of that matter: it is not possible for us to manipulate the English language as the British did; it requires reconstruction to meet our objective. Inspite of our confusion in English, we remake it in the practical ground, conflit between cultures, within ourselves and the effect on activities in the society we live in. The completion of the process of making ourselves may be to conquer English.[29]

It seems that Roy is after some such rewriting. Ruth Prawar Jhabvala is a novelist of Polish-Jewish descent who left her adopted country, Germany, for England in 1939; left English for India in 1951, when she married the Parsi architect Cyrus Jhabvala; and has now left India for the US because, in her words, India is a country for which I was not born. She prefers to be described not as an Indian novelist‖ but as a European novelist of India‖ in the tradition of Kipling and Foster, although she lived in Delhi for about twenty-five years and launched her career as a writer there.

Her two early novels, *To Whom She Will* (1955) and *The Nature of Passion* (1956), deal almost exclusively with the lives of middle and lower-class Indian (specifically Punjabi) characters in India. In the first novel, while Amrita and Hari think they have fallen in love and desire to marry, their families have other views and succeed in marrying off Hari to Sushila Anand, and so the way is cleared at least for Amrita‘s marriage to Krishna. Inthe second novel, a background of sherbet-drinking and pan-chewing helps two wily men, Dev Raj and Lalaji, to throw out feelers with consummate circumspection.‖[30]

Esmond In India (1958) initiates the detailed portrayal of Western characters in India. Esmond has come to India to teach you people all about your own country. Many eligible girls are for marriage with Esmond. But Esmond gets away from culture sessions with young ladies, from India‘s shabbiness and poverty-get away from it all and enjoy on the boat the company of the very English Betty and the exhilaration of games and tennis, and so get back to England where there were solid grey houses, and solid grey people and the sky was kept within decent proportions.[31]

The Householder (1960), in part, follows the theme of the East West encounter.The East-West dialectic fully develops in Jhabvala‘s most celebrated novel, *Heat and Dust* (1975), where, through a double narrative, an unnamed female narrator arrives in India in the 1970s to recreate the life of her grandmother Olivia Rivers, who was the wife of a British civil servant and had left her husband for a Nawab in the 1920s. Aparna Dharwadker and Vinay Dharwadker elaborates: This is Jhabvala‘s most Forsterian novel, one in which she takes on the period of the British Raj fully and conflates colonial with postcolonial India; it is also the last of her novels to be set entirely in India.[32]

In Ralph J. Crane's words, her last two novels, *In Search of Love and Beauty* (1983) and *Three Continents*, attempt –to combine her triple European, Indian, and American heritage, giving relatively minor roles to Indian characters.[33]

Anita Desai, geographically more rooted in comparison, has earned in various ways her title as the foremost contemporary Indian women novelist in English. –Her novels, said Aparna and Vinay, are regarded as lyrical, existentialist, Woolfian studies of individual selves that only incidentally belong in middle-class, post-independence India. But *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* (1971) breaks away from this apolitically by portraying the lives of Macaulay's bastards‖ in postimperial Britain, and by reversing the themes of colonization and postcolonial revenge before these issues become central in the works of Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi.[34]

Bye-Bye, Blackbird highlights the problem of the coloured in the UK, often conflicted by inter-racial marriages (like Adit Sarah's), and Anita Desai herself has called it, of all my novels the most rooted in experience and the least literary in derivation. Her protagonist Dev, the Anglophobe turned Anglophile, rationalizes his decision to stay on in England by assuming the role of an ambassador who must interpret my country to them, to conquer England as they once conquered India, to show them, to conquer England as they once conquered India, to show them, because history may well turn the tables now. *In Custody* (1984), Desai conveys the self indulgence, decadence and corruption of the Urdu poet Nur of his life and his art and they are beautifully conveyed with witty, imagistic beauty. Her anti-hero protagonist (Deven) is reminiscent in his frustrations, harassments, reluctance, involvements, hesitations, fiascos, and amiable monomania of some of Narayan's quasi-heroes.[35]

Amitav Ghosh's novels, said Aparna Dharwadker and Vinay Dharwadker, have so far provided two very different versions of the clash of cultures'. *The Circle of Reason* (1986) alternates at first between Calcutta and the small Bengali village of Lalpukur, creating in sharp, evocative detail the kind of localized urban and rural communities that are usually associated with Indian-language fiction. Halfway through the novel, when the protagonist, Alu (a master-weaver with a potato-head'), flees India to escape charges of terrorism, he arrives, not in England or the United States but in the imaginary Middle Eastern principality of al-Ghazira, where he joins a

multi-ethnic ragbag community of similarly displaced and freakish individuals. The cultural other in this case is not the imperialistic and Christian West but the Islamic Orient, and there is an *Arabian Nights* quality about the second half of the novel. More importantly, Ghosh's narrative radically revises the usual connotations of displacement, exile, and alienation in cross-cultural fiction, besides unsettling the urban, upper-class, English-oriented milieu of most English novels.[36]

Like Salman Rushdie and Marquez there is a fine blend of fantasy and realism in the novel helped by myths and symbols. Indian myth and European myth meet and mingle in the character of Shombhu Debnath. The way he learns the secrets of jamdani weaving from the Boshaks has echoes both the legend of Karna and the Promethean legend. Just as Karna's knowledge and power of weapons becomes powerless at the time of need in his life, the people don't accept Debnath's knowledge when he attempts to make them learn his newly-introduced art. This failure also reminds us of the legend of Prometheus who stole fire from the gods only to find himself chained to a rock.

The fantasy-element of the novel is to be seen in Alu's, their appearance and disappearance takes on a symbolic significance. After Balaram passes away, these ugly swelling begins to appear. One night, he (Gopal) was shown two swellings as big as the egg of duck. Among the two of the swellings, he showed one on his leg and the other under his armpit- very special boils (swellings) but forming holes full of discharge as if his face had accumulated itself together and attempted to part violently from his body.[37]

These boils multiply till the whole of Alu's body is covered with them. Gopal has given us a clue to the origin of these boils. It is as if the spirit of Balaram and those of the oppressed masses were crying out for justice and would not leaveAlu alone till he has found some solution to bring relief to them. Miraculously these boils disappear at the end of the four days of meditation as Alu lies under the debris of the Star. Ghosh follows Marquez and Rushdie in introducing an element of magic realism in his novel.

Novy Kapadia comments on this aspect of Ghosh:

It is a memory novel *(The Shadow Lines),* which skilfully weaves together personal lives and Bangladesh. The focus is on storytelling. The coil within a coil of memories unfurls in the narrator‘s story. The conventional chronological narrative is not used. The narrator is a young boy who at the start of the novel listens to the variety of stories by his perceptive and scholarly cousin Tridib. These stories create new vistas of experience for the narrator, a young schoolboy in Calcutta. Amitav Ghosh is a man with sense of subtle humour and good knowledge of contemporary politics and he determines that private crisis and uncertainty state are reflected and inserted in public crisis and the state of uncertainty.[38]

Catherine Cundy writes about Rushdie’s use of memory in some of his novels:

Midnight’s children saw Rushdie using memory as the tool for recovering his past in Bombay. With his reconstruction of the city in *The Moor’s Last Sigh,* the reliance on memory becomes a personal and political necessity. Effectively exiled not only from India,the place of his birth but also from the active and engaged life thatwas such an important source of ideas in his earlier work, Rushdie has been obliged, more than ever, to construct an India of the mind.‘[39]

Unlike Narayan and Anand, Rushdie and Ghosh construct an India of the mind, by use of their memory. The resulting texts are both homage to the power of memory and also strangely flat-with the two-dimensionality of a largely cerebral reconstitution of reality.

It is 1984 which was in some ways a new point in the writing career of Ghosh. Certain events that took place that year had a deep impact on his mind. One of his articles that were published in *The Guardian* in 1995, Ghosh asserts: the year 1994 was very devastating in India. The separatist movement in Punjab; the military attack on the great Sikh temple in Amritsar (army invasion), the murder of Prime Minister, Bhopal gas explosion- the incidents took place one after another mercilessly. In 1984, there were the most difficult days when extreme courage was needed to open (read) the Delhi papers at morning.

Among the numerous disasters of the year, Ghosh‘s life was affected prominently by the setarian violence that took place after the death of Indira Gandhi.

How could he write, he felt, about what he had seen without reducing it to mere spectacle? Dhawan comments: His novel was sure to be influenced by his experience but he didn't see any other way of presenting straightforwardly about these events without enjoying them as a series of violence, a task of reporting or remaking.[40] Partap Sharma, in his novel *Days of the Turban* (1986), reports exactly of the year 1984. But Ghosh chooses to lead himself backwards in history of the memories of public disturbance which he witnessed in his childhood. Ghosh says: it became a book not about any one event but about the menaing of such events and their impacts upon the individuals who live through them.

In The Shadow Lines, Ghosh evokes postcolonial situations, cultural dislocations and anxieties in the period between 1962 and 1979 and construes the subjects of broken nationalities. But, in his third novel, in *An Antique Land*, Ghosh proves himself to be an indefatigable researcher, a social anthropologist and a keen traveller as well.

Dhawan explicates this aspect of Ghosh:

It bears evidence of Ghosh's interaction with at least four languages and cultures spread over three continents and across several countries. Unlike the other contemporary writers, his canvas keeps on conquering new images, giving expression to new ideas and themes.[41]

In an interview, Ghosh speaks about the book's theme and form: No, at this moment, I am not using my pen to create a novel. Not even sociology, history or belles-letters based on historical research. I can't talk about a new book in this way within the parameters of history, my attempt is to weave a story, a narrative, without trying to create a novel. You might think, as an author, I have involved in technical innovation. Ghosh also joins history and anthropology to write in *An Antique Land* and *The Calcutta Chromosome*. The anthropologist Ghosh is at his best in weaving a complex pattern of fact and fiction in both the novel.

Sharmila Guha Majumdar traces history in The Shadow Lines and in An Antique Land, and proceeds to argue: Amitav Ghosh obtained raw material from World War II, the independence of the country, the partition of the country, etc.

against which he studies the historical facts- the meaning of nationalism and political liberation in the modern world in *The Shadow Lines*.In *An Antique Land* Ghosh has used the mode of the autobiographical traveler's tale to study the past thousand years' history in the context of two continents-Asia and Africa.[42]

Urbashi Bharat comments on a new technique of writing adopted by Ghosh in his fourth novel: When Amitav Ghosh turns to the thriller for the first time in *The Calcutta Chromosome*, then, he is not merely trying his hand at something new, he is making a social and philosophical statement through his choice of the form itself, which posits danger and destabilization of existing modes of thought and belief as to the essence of living. His selection of the amusing pattern in his work becomes highly exciting when it is presented as an ironic shift on the way medical stories, scientific discoveries and inventions are made popular in children book. Where these celebrate celebration and dissemination-science is wisdom- *The Calcutta Chromosome* presents a self-contradictory condition that life finds continuity through counter service, through secrecy, silence and refusal of individuality.[43]

To conclude, Amitav Ghosh adopts the technique of magic realism, history, anthropology, thriller, science fiction, medical science, memory, Indian and European myths, and legends, to write his four novels. His canvas is so vast, so complex, and so interesting that his neglect by critics and scholars is lamentable. He is not an imitator. He is a first-class innovator, a first-class novelist, a combination of some rare fictional qualities, which mark him out as a different sort of novelist. He is a post-colonial critic of contemporary events. With his four novels, he has carved out an unenviable position in the history of Indian writing in English.

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Chapter-2

MIGRATION, EXPULSION AND CULTURAL DISPLACEMENT IN "THE CIRCLE OF REASON"

S. Sengupta compares Ghosh's novel with that of Fielding's: What the novel (The Circle of Reason) celebrates is a quest. In typical fashion, a picaresque protagonist visits to al-Ghazira, Egypt from Lalpukur, India to the little town of El-Qued in the north-eastern edge of Algerian Sahara. But this journey has the appearance more of withdrawal and retreat than of the bold adventures of Fielding's hero. It is a search for a transforming vision.[1]

K. Damodar Rao expands on the theme of a journey:

The trip as a destination moves all over the novel and brings the characters in a place in its three parts, associates with almost the biological necessity, if not always the case and calm and casual shifting birds (G. V. Prasad). The distinctive feature is closely connected to Alu who is fleeing away after he has been taken as an extremist by the police and with Jyoti Das close on his feet ever. He shifts to Kerala from Lalpukur and then sets off to al-Ghazira in the Middle including the East, a number of characters who visit in quest of worldly property and more appropriate times. The journey itself is changed into a homeland. Jyoti Das's expectation was to see more birds on his journey that inspires him to work in search of Alu rather than the duty of his profession. In humorous way, Jyoti Das makes Alu travel once again from al-Ghazira via Egypt, Lisbon, etc. to the small city of Al-Qued. He is accompanied by Zindi, Boss and Kulfi, and whenever Zindi says –we're going West where the sewing machine is‖ Jyoti Das seems to overhear them for he appears wherever they go.[2]

Travel writing, broadly speaking, is of two types, real and fictional. The journey in the fiction is simply a result of the writer's fancy for instance, William Golding's Lord of the Flies. The other type relates to travel with a purpose. In this case, a traveler is a person who goes in quest of something-money, education or knowledge. Also, there are travelers with a purpose who are searching for their roots. For instance, V. S. Naipaul undertakes a journey to India in search of his roots in *An Area of Darkness.* Sometimes, a writer is imperceptibly drawn by the place he visits. In the –Prologue to his travelogue *The Jaguar Smile* Salman Rushdie writes: I did

not go to Nicaragua intending to write a book, or indeed, to write at all, but my encounter with the place affected me so deeply that in the end, I had no choice.[3]

Amitav Ghosh is a compulsive traveler. Born in Calcutta in 1956, Ghosh has a PhD in social anthropology from Oxford and has taught in both Indian and American Universities. His oeuvre now includes five novels, The Circle of Reason (1986), The Shadow Lines (1988), The Calcutta Chromosome (1996), The Glass Palace (2000) and Sea of Poppies (2008) a travelogue, Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma (1998), and several essays, notably the scholarly article The Slave of Ms. H. 6,' published in Subaltern Studies in 1992.

Ghosh's writing, says Robert Dixon depicts the current interest of anthropologists with the loves of cultural limitation.[4] According to Renato Rosaldo, opposite to the classical concept, which views culture as a self-contained whole having logical structure, it can be perceived as a smooth pattern with minute opening of division in which different courses of action interest from within and outside the borders.[5]

In Ghosh's novels the characters dwell in identical cultures. They dwell in travel‖ in cultural ranges that move across borders The Shadow Lines made around modern states. In his piece of writing, The Transit Lounge of Culture, James Clifford, an American anthropologist, has attempted to depicted Ghosh's work in the issue of latest development in the field of anthropology. The texts by La Frontera/ Gloria Anzaldua's Borderlands/ have moved anthropology away from distinct, reliable cultures, between cultures; from separate away intercultural studies. Such diaspora cultures are not oriented towards lost origins or homelands but are brought out by ongoing histories of migration and transnational cultural flows. Once we begin to focus on these intercultural processes, Clifford argues, the idea of separate, isolated cultures disappears, when we begin to concentrate upon the intercultural processes we become conscious that all cultures have histories of border crossings, migrations, and emigrants.[6]

At a conference where the principles within anthropology were clearly presented in the form of a museum and a garage sale, Renato explains Rosaldo symptomatic exchange contesting between delegates:

At a summit the uniformity in anthropology, Bois, Cora Du, a retired Harvard professor, talked of the distance, she realized from the complexity and confusion of what I once faced an appropriate and tough discipline. This movement has become like shifting from a special art museum into a garage sale. The picture of the museum for the classical period and the picture of the garage sale for the present make me feel as if they are quite appropriate but I observe them in different ways than Du, Bois. Her feelings about special art museum are very nostalgic in everything. For me, its space is a symbol of the colonial past. She hates the disarray of the garage sale and I learn that this disarray present an actual vision of the post-colonial situation where a human product of art move among impossible spaces and everything is profane, temporary and open. The vision of the garage sale portrays our current world condition. Our situation is surely a post-colonial era. The third world has shifted into a big town. She hates the anarchy of the garage sale and I discover it gives an accurate image for the post-colonial situation share cultural articles move between non-potential places and nothing remains sacred, permanent or confidential. Our present global situation is portrayed by the image of garage sale. Our era is exactly a post-colonial era; the third world has been changed into a metropolis.[7]

Rosaldo describes in his book that the reframing of social analysis has given new definition to the anthropology‘s field of study. At the same time, he pays attention to the significant role of the observer in forming that field. In this new condition, the description of the uniformly shared culture gradually seems more fruitless than fruitful. According to Rosaldo, ― we tend to think that different kinds of eruptions, pockets and border zones criss-cross our everyday lives including our imaginatively visible cultural identity, it is better to regard such borderlands as a realm of innovative cultural creation with the need of investigation rather than an empty changeable space.[8]

After this theoretical reading of the themes of quest and journey in *The Circle of Reason,* we, temporarily, go to analyse the three headings of the novel, namely, *Satva:* Reason; *Rajas:* Passion, and *Tamas:* Death. Hemanta Ganguli says:

In the *Samkhya* system, *duhkha* is not merely an emotion, but is one of the three most basic classes of material constituents otherwise known as *satva, rajas* and

tamas. These three as the most elemental types of matter are respectively characterised as manifestation, motion and stagnation, and also as pleasure, pain and - languor. The *Samkhya* philosophy underlines a moral assessment of the ontological process in as much as it invests the very primordial and indestructible material stuff of the world with the basic triad of emotive content. The very fact that *satva rajas* and *tamas* the basic constituents of matter are conceived as *sukha duhkha* and *moha* is a pointer to the moral necessity of complete detachment from the world as the only means spiritual emancipation. Feelings are the psychic expressions of *sukha duhkha* and *moha* which as *satva rajas* and *tamas* constitute matter. A piece but *satva* belonging to the *stuff* of intelligence is translucent enough to capture the reflection of the pure spirit or consciousness. Hence intelligence in all forms of its modifications, whether cognitive, emotive or conative attains expression by virtue of its having the *satva* constituent which shines in the reflected glory of the spirit. *Purusa* or the manifestation which is borrowed by satva in the form of reflected consciousness illumines also its inseparable companions, rajas and tamas.

Properly speaking, mind and matter are not external to each other, for both of them are the modifications of material prakrti which is the equilibrium of satva rajas and tamas supposedly caught in an expressionless tension in the most primitive stage. In this stage these three types of elements are arranged in such a way that their equal forces, equally opposed to each other, are neutralised in a condition of equilibrium seething with an internal tension that fails to gain an external expression.[9]Sukha as satva is subject to constant change under the impact imparts motions to it, which is for rajas to be the motive force of evolution synonymous with duhkha unrest. Ganguly further says:

In the triad rajas representing the principle of change and unrest cannot rest. In equilibrium for long preponderance, the disturbances it gains equilibrium and signals the process of evolution in which perpetual unrest is manifest as a chain of constant change from cause to effect. In the Samkhya system, however, duhkha gets a more pronounced is ontological confirmation, for it identified with rajas, the very principle of unrest, which is supposed to be the most powerful basic constituent of matter. As such it is the motive force of evolution. Opposite the Tamas, principle of stagnation, boredom and gloom also has to succumb to the pressure of rajas. But its opposition

exercises a sobering effect upon rajas by introducing order and discipline into the relentless process of change which is thus prevented from being abrupt, chaotic and fortuitous. Tamas, the principle of rest and inertia, as opposed to motion and unrest, does not tamely submit to the irrepressible impact of rajas before bridling the latter's rash on rush and channeling it into an orderly course of evolution. That the world has an order in its system of causality is due to the indispensable service of tamas whose opposition becomes constructive through contradiction with rajas. It is hence unfortunate that religion is uninformed by philosophy, sometimes tends to turn tamas into a derogatory term, the nadir of evil. Thus duhkha as rajas, through the influence of tamas, comes to be the causal order that we call the world.[10]

The Samkhya conception of evolution, of its triad of satva, rajas and tamas, has found ready reception even in the popular religions of the Mahabharata and the Puranas. The Bhagavad Gita is unmistakable. Lord Krishna Arjuna thus: exhorts entities there are, born of Satva (the quality of Goodness), and those that are born of Rajas (the principle of tivity) and Tamas (the principle of inertia), know them all as o! Ved from Me alone. **12 (amitav Ghosh circle of reason pp412)**. The whole of this creation deceived by these objects evolved from the three modes of akriti- Satva, Rajas and Tamas; that is why the world fails to recognize Me, standing apart from these and imperishable.[13]

S. Sengupta explicates this division and says it is significant that The Circle of Reason is divided into three sections: Satva: Reason; Rajas: Passion and Tamas: Death.

What Ghosh tries to show is that ultimately reason proves to be inadequate and he celebrates the triumph of human goodness. Pasteur, the epitome of science and reason, reigns supreme in the first section. Balaram, his ardent devotee, believes that just as Pasteur had destroyed the germ with the help of science, he would bring relief to the society around him by using carbolic acid.[11]

It is an irony that through the lips of a microbiologist, Mrs Verma, that Pasteur stands discredited:

And when do you find something in a specimen that can you help to think sometimes about the sources and the types of microbes, bacteria and viruses. And just let yourself wonder as whether you sometimes they are anything other than a bodily metaphor for human pain and unhappiness and perhaps joy as well you cut yourself short, for it dawns on you yet again that ever since Pasteur that is the one question you can never ask.[12]

S, Sengupta proceeds to analyze it more clearly:

Through Mrs. Verma, the author celebrates love that endures and nurtures humanity. She comes as a fresh shower of rain in the arid world of reason. By the end of the novel, Ghosh makes us realize that there is a terrible one-sidedness to the technocratic world, man has fashioned for himself out of cold scientific rationalism.

There is need to bring back to man the qualities of the heart. The way out of the cold prison may even be a funeral lovingly conducted which even the –backwards‖ Algerians would understand. It is the only way to become whole again in the wasteland of modern civilization.[13]

In the first part titled –Satva Reason has its suzerainty as apotheosized by Balaram Bose. Reason gives Balaram courage, courage to fight germs like Budheb Roy and his power of money with carbolic acid for Reason has nothing to fear. As Balaram indicates: Bhudeb Roy lives in moral fear; there‘s nothing in the world he fears as much as carbolic acid. He fears it as he fears everything true and clean and a child of Reason.[14]

Again, Balaram‘s campaign against dirty underwear seems to be based on Reason and Dantu is quick to point out its limitation: Dirt doesn‘t lie in underwear. It is the world, the world of people which makes dirt possible. How can you hope to transform people‘s bodies without transforming the world?[15] But his protest fails. It is the same obsession with Reasoner a while falls into a bed of smugness and complacency fed the power of the money. And so Balaram conceives of The Circle of Reason: The first task before the Department. It manifests itself in the Pasteur School of Reason which disinfects the whole village. But a Reason proves to be self-destructive. Shombhu Debnath‘s warning to Balaram comes too late:

Balaram-babu, you'll destroy everyone without even stopping to think about it. You are the best sadhu I have ever known, Balaram-babu, but no mortal man can survive with the fierceness of your gods.[16] His words prove prophetic and Balaram is destroyed along with his family. Only Alu survives.

S. Sengupta concludes:

This facet of Reason (Satva) which manifests itself as a crusade for cleanliness and fight against dirt has its sway over Alu at al-Ghazira for some time, especially in his attempts to experiment with Socialism. By the end of Part II, it degenerates into Passion (Rajas) and in a chapter appropriately called Dances socialism crumbles as a lust for money (dirt asserts itself).[17]

In Part II Ghosh shows the death of Reason and through Mrs Verma makes a passionate plea for reaffirmation of the basic qualities of the heart. Mrs Verma talks about the matter that it is carbolic acid in which the corpse of Kulfi can be placed to be cleaned in Gangajal. Similarly she talks about the place to clean the dead body. Generally, common people tend to think that if something is cleaned once, something else is also cleaned. She points out that it does not make any difference to the dead.[18]

But the death of Reason is not a pessimistic view of life. Ghosh asserts that each perfectly skilled demise is next beginning if there is one thing people learn from the history.[19]The world of Reason has come full circle. It is born, grows and dies and its death heralds the birth of a new world where the heart will come into its own. Ghosh gives us a glimpse of the new world in the figure of Jyoti Das as he walks jauntily away to a new life, a new beginning: Jyoti Das's face was radiant, luminous, as though light were shining through him Hope is the beginning.[20]

Mrs Verma tells Alu that she has become a microbiologist because of the Life of Pasteur which she gets from Dantu, her father. Dantu, Balaram Bose had depicted the clear vision of Dantu, Hem Narain Mathur, in this book. Mrs Verma now hates microbiology and tells patients that what they have to do to cure it themselves is to be better human beings. The Infinitely Small holds no terrors to her. Mrs. Verma and Alu determine that Pasteur's life is fit for funeral with that of Kulfi. As she tells Alu whose atrophied thumb starts working again, you can do whatever you like as long as you want to.[21]

The journey and quest of Balaram Bose are of great importance in *The Circle of Reason*. Critics, commentators, scholars, and academicians have not sufficiently focused on the chapter that would do justice to childhood ambition of Balaram. One of his childhood ambitions was to study science and to perform like the great masters of Science, Pasteur and Jagdish Chandra Bose.

Balaram's birth was taken place in Dhaka, then the capital of East Bengal, now of Bangladesh. His father, who had shifted to Dhaka from the little village of Medini-mandolin the nearby district of Bikrampur, was a prosperous timber merchant. The year, 1927, was a turning point in the life of Balaram's father who festooned their house with electric bulbs.

Had Balaram been accustomed to those bulbs with their spiral filaments from his childhood, had they come a year before or after he reached the enchanted age of thirteen when the entire world comes alive for the first time, they would probably never have been touched with magic. He was bewitched from the beginning he used one of those large, unwieldy switches. He read about the Chinese and Benjamin Franklin and Edison became one of his first heroes. In school, he pursued the physics teachers with questions. But it was too late. His teachers were certain that he had a gift for history, and this new enthusiasm for science would pass. Balaram did everything he could, but his teachers-in those days in Bengal teachers knew everything-would not let him change his subject to the Sciences. So instead Balaram read.[22]

But Balaram had no taste for history, Suniti for Prof. Chatterjee, and Prof. Dr S. Radhakrishan. Balarama, a young student, listened to the advice of his teachers quietly, and they took his silence for acquiescence. Balaram thinks that Ronald Ross discovered beginning of malaria in Calcutta and Robert Koch ultimately separated typhoid causing bacteria after continuous attempt at the same place. Similarly he asserts that Jagadish Chandra Bose presented that plants also have life in them and they are no less than other living animals that respond to various stress and other stimulants.

Balaram knew of Presidency College, too: it was there that Jagadish Bose had taught two young men- Satyen Bose, who was to appropriate half of the elementary universe particles with the publication of the Bose-Einstein statistics; and Meghnad Saha, whose formulation of likeness between a star and an atom had laid the foundation of a whole branch of astrophysics. And of course there was the gigantic figure of C. V. Raman, whose quiet researches in the ramshackle laboratories of the Society forthe Advancement of Science. Calcutta had led to the discovery of the effect in the molecular scattering of light which eventually came to be named after him.[23]

Balaram's father would not allow him to go to Calcutta. Calcutta was an expensive city. Dhaka University was a good university. Satyen Bose was teaching at Dhaka University. Ghosh writes of the inner thinking of Balaram: He (Balaram's father) could never have understood that Balaram was launching on a pilgrimage, a quest to retrace the steps of Jagadish Bose and Meghnad Saha from their native district of Bikrampur to Calcutta and Presidency College.[24] The journey of Balaram to Calcutta was in quest of retracing the steps of Bose and Saha.

This quest of Balaram leads him to the rationalists at the Presidency College. Gopal, his new friend at Calcutta, lent him a copy of Mrs. Devonshire's translation of Rene Vallery- Radot's Life of Pasteur. This is the second turning point in his life. The rationalists, under the presidency of Gopal, had their aim to apply the use of rational theories to everything that remain around them to their daily lives, to society, cultures, history, etc. It didn't matter whatever it was. That was what made the Rationalists unique.[25]

When Gopal announced that Brahma is nothing but the Atom,[26] we, therefore, begin all our meetings hereafter with salutations and prayers to the cosmic Atom,[27] Balaram proposed that they should, instead, salute the Boson,[28] because ever since Professor Satyen Bose published his famous paper, all the elementary particles which obey his statistics have been renamed Boson.[29] When Gopal requested the Rationalists to turn their minds to the business of finding a rational substitute for the superstitious incantations which Brahmins chanted at weddings,[30]

Balaram advocated the reaction of this abstract object, and instead, advocated a thought which can link them with the masses. He advocated the example of Pasteur who was asked by the brewers of France: What makes our beer rot? Discovered the infinitesimally small the Germ, In other words. He rhetorically asks the Rationalists:

Has anything changed the world as much as the discovery of the germ? Has there ever been a greater break in history than the moment when men were unburdened of their responsibility for their bodies and all disease was assigned to the treachery of the elements? Nothing but the everyday suffering of helpless children and their mothers. It was that which sustained him when the entire world laughed and said: Pasteur is mad, bitten by his dogs.[31]

Gopal has a feeling of dreadful event that something bad is going to happen. That feeling warns him that it was he who could invite unfortunate event to anybody he is closely connected with. Gopal suspected that the unfortunate events he would invite himself and he was ever allowed to control the society when he observed the departure of Balaram.

As he watched Balaram go, Gopal had a suspicion: a suspicion of the disaster he would call upon himself and all of them if ever he was permitted to take charge of society. He made a decision with a strong determination that he could do anything in his power to maintain that from happening.[32]

It is obvious, says G. V. J. Prasad, that the first part Satva: Reason 'should start with a chapter titled Heads'. It is, literally about heads as it deals with the phrenological adventures of Balaram Bose. Phrenology is an expression of Balaram's search for a unified theory to explain the universe. It is this quest that motivates all his misadventures. It is again apt that this section Satva: Reason 'should be largely about Balaram, once president of the Rationalists.[33]

Balaram got Practical Phrenology, a tattered old book, in a pile of second-hand books in the College Street. Balaram says to Gopal that it is identical if it is inside or outside the science, if it is in the mind or in the body and what people do or who they are. Don't you see how important it is?[34] Bhudeb Roy comes to Balaram for his help, with the aid of phrenology, to find out the future of his sixth son, who is born recently. He says to Balaram:

The astrologers had already seen the boy, he confided to Balaram swaying his gnarled head forward, but their prognostications were not good, and he was worried. The palmists would be of no use until the boy‘s hands grew a bit. In the meantime, he said, drawing his rubbery lower lip back in a smile, I may as well have phrenology. After all, it‘s scientific, and I‘m a man of the future.[35] The request of Bhudeb Roy flatters Balaram. He visits the newly-born child, sees him with a horrified look and walks out of his room. Balaram describes to Bhudeb Roy that his son had unique ridge above the asterion and the temporal muscle over his ears. In addition, his jaw bones and zygomatic arches are developed to an extreme degree that he could only express him with a sad feeling that he recreates nearly identical the patterns of the typical homicidal. Perhaps you may be able to clutch him down to mere a criminal with careful fostering.[36]

This encounter of Balaram with Bhudeb follows a classic pattern-he manages to provoke and humiliate Bhudeb who retaliates more and more ferociously. When Balaram tells Bhudeb about his sixth son, Bhudeb takes his first vengeance on him by axing six of their coconut palms and all their lemon traces were uprooted during the night. Balaram‘s wife, Toru debi, shouts and dares him to come out of his knowledge of phrenology again in the village. He shuts his door and ceases to visit the village with his knowledge.

The notebooks of observations of over three hundred of the village‘s living heads that he had so carefully compiled in a decade‘s painstaking work was frozen. Balaram‘s study became a prison and his evenings would not pass.‖[37]

Balaram‘s another encounter with Bhudeb creates a fresh row and vengeance. He knocked Ma Saraswati‘s clay image with his knuckles. Bhudeb felt insulted and humiliated. He retaliated by poisoning fish in the pond.

At almost exactly the same time, Alu, who was eating in the kitchen, heard screams in the bamboo forest behind their house. He pushed away his brass thala and ran out of the house by the back door.[38]

Out of rage, Toru-debi tips his books out of the bookshelves, Balaram did not even try to stop her it took Toru-debi a long time to carry the books out into the courtyard. But she did a thorough job. Then, after sprinkling kerosene over the huge

mound of books in the courtyard, Toru-debi struck a match and set them alight. That night, what was left in Balaram‘s books was only a heap of ashes and a few half burnt bindings forlorn around the courtyard when Alu sneaked into the room of Balaram. Alu took out a book out of his shirt and tucked it into the lap of Balaram after he climbed on the arm of his easy chair. Subsequently, he placed his hands on his neck and it was the life of Pasteur.[39]

The role played by the book *Life of Pasteur* is even more intricate. For the first time, we are given brief introduction about the life of Pasteur in the book since we are wondering about the seeming absence of feelings in Alu and a brief lesson to him about human sentiments such as passion, emotion, etc. In embarrassment at the boy‘s wide-eyed silence which touches him, he reads to Alu from the book and stops to see –tears in Alu‘s eyes.‖ When Alu retrieves Life of Pasteur- –at this moment the drops of tears rolled down Balaram‘s eyes‖.[40] Hence, the book aids in forming a new relation between generations. G. J. V. Prasad comments:

And the bond extends to a passionate fight against the germs-the seeming root cause of illnesses and by extension the ills of society. In, this confusion, cleanliness and purity merge and it is carbolic acid that helps to fight against infectious diseases, the wicked, the impure, etc. that becomes the obstacles in the progress of mankind. Young Balaram is inspired by the life of Pasteur to continue his campaign for clean underwear as well as against infectious disease at the time of war. The weapon used in the second campaign is then used in his fight against Bhudeb Roy and what he stands for.[41]

Bhudeb Roy is the very apotheosis of the power of money. It is, as if, though Bhudeb Roy, Ghosh tries to point out the degeneration that takes place when money takes complete possession of a man‘s mind. In his youth, Bhudeb appeared like a simple young man having thin hair and a large charming face. He was rather fat but not so fat in his too white coloured dhoti and Kurta and in that dress, he would have a kind of beauty.[42]

The description of the same man as his looks years later under the influence of Mammon is nauseating:

When Gopal saw him years later he had flinched, as anybody would on seeing for the first time that huge slab-like face nodding upon the rolls of a flash of a massively swollen neck. The sockets of his eyes had bulged forward as though to startle a hangman, but curiously the eyes themselves had shrunk into tiny, opaque, red flecked circles. His mouth had grown into a yawning, swallowing, spittle-encrusted chasm, stretching across the entire width of his jaw. His upper lip had shrunk away altogether, while his lower lip had looped upward almost to the tip of his nose. His ears stuck out of his head at right angles and waved occasionally like banana leaves in a breeze.[43]

This hideous worshipper of Mammon cannot contain his pleasure when he finds his sons equally avaricious: He smiled as he watched them sensuously running their fingers over the rustling paper. That‘s right, he said, his tiny eyes bulging. You can‘t ever know what money means unless you feel it.[44]

When the final showdown occurs between Balaram and Bhudeb, the Images of Bhudeb and Middle Parting of Presidency College merge; the antiseptic (the weapon that Balaram uses against Bhudeb) and the clean underwear (the movement that Balaram started in Presidency College) become weapons for fighting evil in this world. Balaram gets quite a bit of help from Shombhu Debnath. He disrupts a public meeting addressed by Bhudeb and douses him and a few others with carbolic acid. In retaliation, Bhudeb saw to it that the huts of Shombhu, Maya, and Rakhal were burnt. The house of Balaram also goes up in flames, sometimes later.

Ghosh weaves an analogue of the complicated web of disparities in which all types of cultures is involved with diverse rituals that may come in conflict as well in the subsequent text that gradually come later on. As Balaram makes a decision to make young Alu a weaver, he reads a history of the technology of weaving for him that inspires cultural exchange throughout the borders. Balaram presents an idea that the large shape has never permitted to divide the world. It has not created a separate world as well. In fact, the large shape does not discriminate anything or anyone.

It does not identify any particular country or continent. Instead, it has unified the world together with its apparent remarks from the very starting point of human history.[45]

According to Balaram culture means a process or motion that has nothing to do with national borders. In Pharaohs tombs, Indian outfit was obtained. Chinese cloth has covered the Indian soil. The cloth business covered the ancient world completely. The continents are connected together by the silk route from China that passes via Central Asia, Persia, Mediterranean harbor, etc. and it also connects the market of Africa and Europe. Throughout these centuries, the cloth business connects the Mediterranean to Asia, India to Africa, the Arabian world to Europe, in its variety, richness and beautiful trade. In this context, the history of weaving has different passages instead of single route and it does not take a simple international passage. Robert Dixon says: –It is not a traditiona 'craft opposed a binary sense to Western science, but another part of a diaspora that unravels the distinction between Orient and Occident.[47]

Robert Dixon again says:

Yet Ghosh's understanding of these routes is also resistant the framework of post-modern to inter-cultural studies which James Clifford in attempts to place it. Clifford's border crossings run the risk of de-contextualizing specific local instances: the passengers in his transit lounge of culture are involved in a seemingly universal postmodern condition that is innocent of specific economic determinants. Ghosh, by contrast, understands that the routes of international trade are over-determined by economic forces; that they tell a history of imperial exploitation.[48]

Balaram keeps up his lecture on the history of the loom by placing it in the context of British imperial trade:

In imperial trade, Lancashire sent out a huge amount of clothes and the so called peaceful Englishmen living in Calcutta changed their business into a slaughterhouse to make the place safe for the cloth of Lancashire banning the other weavers and their techniques to weave the clothes.[49]

Dixon notes: –As the image of the garotte puts forward, the trade routes may cut across national borders, but they are infected by blood and overdetermined by the asymmetries of economic and military power.[50]

Lalpukur is seen moving like liquid cement in a tool named grinder and he seems so busy running after the shooting boundaries with bowls of carbolic acid moving his hair gently on his back in the soft movement of the air.[51] Balaram changes the village of Lalpukur reducing it to the ruins in his attempt to use European principles in the lifestyle of India. The three parts of the book are connected by carbolic acid that moves throughout the text, G.J.V. Prasad remarks.[52] K. Damodar Rao explains with examples that carbolic acid functions as a structural dimension and a metaphor in the book. It moves in the novel from beginning to the end like a mechanism of sanitation. In this text, Balaram employs the carbolic acid as an important chemical to sanitize the settlements of the refugee so that their residential area can be kept away from disease, filth and death. It also functions in the form of psychological therapy and becomes a tool to make the passive villagers conscious against the dominant stifle released by the strongmen such as Bhudeb, Balaram Roy, etc. who keep on keen eyes upon the bowls of carbolic acid constantly and it was presented as an act of agitation and extremist activity and the police forayed.[53]

Throughout the novel, the journey and the quest functions as two major themes and they connect the three parts of the novel logically. With almost the biological necessity, the characters transcend the borders with the feelings of shifting birds that may not have calm feeling and relaxation all the time.[54] The main idea of the journey is closely connected with Alu who is on the move after he had been taken as an extremist by the police and Jyoti Das was always after him to give company. He travels to Kerala from Lalpukur and subsequently he moves to al-Ghazira located in the Middle East including a number of characters in quest of material wealth and more opportunities.

In *The Circle of Reason*, Alu‘s actual name is disclosed on the first page and his original identification is presented in the name of Nachiketa. In a holy book named Upanishads, Nachiketa is a boy who symbolizes an exemplary figure to obey his father and waits at Yama‘s entrance. Nachiketa leaves for the greatest knowledge- the mystery of life and death- after Yama provides him blessings. The importance of

the name is obvious in the second part of the book as Alu is placed in the grave before his death and he is given up for his death in an isolated building that collapsed later on. Alu is at the entrance of death for several days rejecting food and water. He is completely involved only in thinking. G. J. V. Prasad remarks that his search is about –sanitation, dirt and the unlimitedly small instead of the mystery of the universe and the unlimitedly large (p. 235). Similarly, G.J.V. Prasad explains that he seeks not to understand the life after but to understand the cause of the disgrace of the society, the life at present.[55]

After the branding of Alu as a -terrorist by Bhudeb, the police are after his blood. He leaves Lalpukur, lands in Calcutta and takes refuge in Gopal‘s house. In Calcutta, Gopal for –nights without end‖ would sit in his easy chair and weep for Balaram, a friend of his youth, his tears splashing heavily into the open book on his lap; and, weeping, he would watch Alu and wait for the first hint of an answering tear-for a sign at least-of grief, anything but that dumb, blank bewilderment. But there was nothing.[56]

Alu‘s chance meeting with Rajan is a turning point for his journey to Kerala. For Rajan was of Kerala‘s great social class of Chalias who for centuries have woven and traded in simple white cloth. There was no 100m anywhere that was a mystery to Rajan.[57] Armed with eight thousand rupees, probably bequeathed to him by Balaram, and a copy of Life of Pasteur, and a few addresses from Rajan:

He passed down a chain of Rajan‘s Chalia kinsmen, scattered over every factory along the South Eastern Railway, paying out parts of his 8000 rupees where Rajan had told him to down steadily southwards, stopping to catch his breath in the great mills of Madurai and Coimbatore, till whispers came that the police had orders and a sketch, Rajan had been taken in. Then it was time to leave the railways behind, time to slip into the forests of the Nilgiris, led by Rajan‘s great-grandfather‘s cousin‘s great-grandson. Along elephant trails and deer tracks through clouds in blue mountains then over the watershed, into Kerala. He spent the nights secretly away in the Chalia quarters of scattered villages. But then again suddenly rumours of informers of Reports to the police, so faster still westwards, down through the mountains, faster and faster.[58]

Rajan confesses to Dubey and Das that –He‘s on a boat for al-Ghazira (in *Mariamma).* It left two days ago.[59] Alu‘s companions are Professor Samuel, Rakesh, Zindi and Kulfi-didi. Professor talks about the theory of queues:

A queue isn't just one man or two men or ten men standing in a line. Even if those two men or ten men weren‘t there you‘d still have a queue, stretching away in principle. It‘s a thing of the mind, with its own humour and properties. And there it was on- an almost-empty statistics shelf, its blue hardboard cover plastered with dust and perforated by weevils. He‘d picked it up idly. It hadn‘t looked very interesting. *The Theory of Markov Processes.*But then somehow his thumb had caught on the last chapter-ten sparse pages on the theory of Queues.[60]

Kulfi-didi was a slight, weak lady having long, slender arms and a thin wrinkled face. Her cheeks were so ugly that they looked as if they had got damaged like the skin of a drum that had got odd punctured. Her age seems oddly indeterminate, for with her worn face and haggard cheeks combined an incongruously girlish manner.[61]

Zindi has in al-Ghazira a kind of boarding house, also a little tea-shop. Everybody knows it; those Zindi the parts You‘ll out; in Apple‘s house famous find it everywhere you go you‘ll hear people saying:

Beyt Zindi, *beyt* Zindi. People crowd to my house; boys like you offer money to be taken in. They know I know people and there‘s no end to the jobs you can get in al-Ghazira. You know if people-is in construction, sewage and drainage, sweeping, gardening, even shopwork. Oil work‘s difficult, for they usually find their own people. Still, I can find any man a good job.[62]

The job of Rakesh was that of a travelling businessman who worked for a small Ayurvedic pharmacy located in Bhopal that specialized in a patented herbal medicine. Despite his bachelor‘s degree in management, the job of salesman was only one job that he succeeded to get after a year‘s effort. It was the only job he had been able to find despite his bachelor‘s degree in commerce and that, too, only after a year‘s efforts.[63] Zindi Alu al-Ghazira workplace and it gives something good in construction. Alu restarts his skill of weaving but he is accidentally buried as a new concrete building where he is workingas a labourer demolishes suddenly.

The building was at one end of the Corniche which swept round al-Ghazira's little bay of tarmac. Though it was not quite finished, it had a name: it was called Najma, the Star, because of the five-pointed arms that out angled from its domed centre. People said later that the fall shook the whole of al-Ghazira like an emptying wave shakes a boat. A tornado of dusts whirled out of the debris while the rubble was still shuddering and heaving like a labouring beast, and for a few moments, darkness covered the whole city in spite of the bright light of the sun. As the building collapsed, there was a huge mass of bricks, cement, etc. and exactly in the centre of this huge mass, Alu was there.[64]

The collapsed building, The Star, is completely in contrast with the traditional marketplace, the Souq. The Souq was the honeycomb of passageways for the old bazaar that was a live thing, coiling through the tunnels, obscuring every trace of the world outside. Inside the Souq of the passing of the day was marked only by the innumerable clocks and watches in the shop windows. As The Star collapsed, there was high alert in the Souq and the people living in al-Ghazira felt the quake on the ground.[65]

Robert Dixon remarks that the Souq fails to represent a unique culture deeply rooted in one particular nation. Instead, it is a part of a web of trade passages determining the logic of Balaram that knitting does not introduce only one world but it produces so many nations.[66] Alu has restarted knitting again at the workplace of his Egyptian neighbor, Hajj Fahmy, who renounced his traditional skill for the more profit-oriented business of construction. As part of his revival of weaving, Alu must now learn Arabic as he had earlier learned English. His landlady, Zindi, plans to install Alu as her manager when she purchases the Durban Tailoring House from Jeevanbhai Patel, another diasporic Indian. Patel belongs a Gujarati Hindu family from Durban in South Africa and he has approached there after his marriage of which his parents did not approve. His function introduced a massive flow of Indian Ocean business: the Indian businessmen living on the coast fascinated the couple to the northwards like a bowl with water from a well. At the beginning they moved to Mozambique, the Dares Salam, subsequently Zanzibar, Djibouti, Perim and Aden.[67] The cottage of Zindi is replete with migrant labourers whom Zindi wishes to redirect to the present waning cloth business from the industry of the construction: al-Ghazira

was a heaven for the merchants, right at the middle of the world, perceived and nurtured by trend of centuries of business, Persians, Iraqis, Zanzibari Arabs, etc. Indians developed upon it and became wealthy.‖[68] The Souq fails to represent a stable original culture like the village of Lalpukur but it stands for a web of trade that is centuries-old and that opens like cloth through an unlimited, borderless space.

When Alu is buried in the Star, Ghosh contrasts this mobile trading culture with the modern oil economy that threatens to subsume it. Rakesh and Ismail, Alu's friends, enter the ruins to seek Alu. They do not find him there but they lose the way in the field of broken glass and a concrete heap and become aimless. It looked as if it was the manual work of an abnormal man- there were so many steel and iron bars leaning haphazardly, the complete part of the glass dome dispersed like eggshell, and all over, everywhere, thousands of decaying plants.[69] The voice heard by the rescuers in the chapter A Voice in the Ruins turns out to be a transistor radio accidentally switched on during the collapse of the building, which echoes through the ruins.[70] Alu is trapped inside. When the rescuers reach him, they find him lying beneath a slab of concrete that is kept from crushing him by two antique sewing machines. When Yam grants Nachiketa boons, Nachiketa moves for the greatest knowledge, the mystery of life and death. The value of the name is obvious in the second part of the text when Alu is buried alive and renounced for death in a collapsed building. He is at the verge of the death for several days rejecting to eat anything but only pondering. He seeks not for the knowledge of the secret of the universe, the infinitely large, but about cleanliness and dirt and the Infinitely Small.[71] His quest is not for the understanding of the life after but for knowledge of the cause of the ills of the society, the life present. People are very curious to know the wisdom Alu has acquired as he returns to the Ras community and he holds forth on –the Germ.

But Pasteur had always failed to meet him. In all his lifespan, he had thought only to initiate the war but like an outline, the foe had always dodged him and finally he had passed away lost in war and confused in his condition. He is not confirmed about the thing that transmits among the people passing disease and dirt gulping people out. Similarly, he asks the battleground that every man and woman faces and that battleground makes them ready for their loss turning one against the another, helping them destroying themselves?[72]

He shouted in Arabic. *Wa ana warisu,* and I am his (Pasteur's) heir, for in the ruins of the Star I found the answer, Money. The answer is money.[73] The idea that he has acquired brings a movement for the birth of a democratic society. Prasad observes:

But this small utopia still needs the market the reality of al-Ghazira for the major motivation of Alu's listeners and followers is the promised material prosperity, the bigger savings that they will have. Though Alu Nachiketa doesn't seem to have much control over what he has unleashed, and like other major characters confuses the literal and the symbolic, he does seem to have gained some knowledge during his vigil at death's door. Not surprisingly, Alu need not have been there either, in his case it is not the father's command that- he obeys but his aunt Toru Debi's last wish for better sewing machines.[74]

But Alu had not taken account of man's cupidity and soon his principles failed. When Jyoti Das makes al-Ghazira hot for Alu, Alu journeys to the small city of El Qued, Egypt, Tunis, Lisbon and Alexandria. He is accompanied by Zindi, Boss and Kulfi. Here Alu comes into contact with Mrs. Verma, the only whole person in the novel, a person who has affected a proper balance between reason and spirit. This comes out clearly and strongly when Kulfi dies rehearsing for *Chitrangada* and Mrs. Verma tries to give her a proper cremation in spite of the forceful agitation of Dr. Mishra, the fake-intellectual:

Mrs. Verma murmured very gently uttering the word rules, rules. She says that he only talks about its rules and regulation and she also adds that this is the way that has killed everything- socialism, science, religion, etc. with the concept of rules and strict guidelines of traditional customs and rituals. She remarks that it is a line of difference between them (Mrs. Verma and Dr. Mishra) and says that she thinks of being human and Dr. Mishra thinks of the rules only.[75]

She makes Alu perform the ritual of the cremation of Kulfi. It is this kind and firm contact with Mrs. Verma that finally brings solace to Alu's troubled spirit. The novel ends on a note of optimism as Alu decides to return home to India. Jyoti Das, the policeman who has followed Alu from Lalpukur to Calcutta, to Kerala, to al-Ghazira and finally to El Qued, realizes that this victim is no terrorist. Alu's quest for the pasteurized solution to evils, to dirt, falls in shambles. His journey from India to

so many places abroad brings him back to India. His thumbs which used to operate the loom, in the end, get atrophied. His economic plan had failed. He is a chastened man when he sets to return to India.

G. J. V. Prasad finds another quest, the quest for the holy sewing machine. We are introduced to the subject of sewing machines very early in plot of the novel as Toru Debi feels fear about Alu: ‒Toru-Debi did not know anything about small children who lived in the next world. It is a world that does not have any sewing machines. In that world, the children did not attract any body‘s attention, chain-stitch, cross-stitch and cover the bed with any mattress. They did not do anything.‖[76] Her reality is constructed around and mediated through the sewing machine. If a nephew arrives unexpectedly he has arrived for ‒the outfits that she would make for him on her sewing machine.‖[77] Ghosh reads her mind:

Ten years earlier she might perhaps have pushed the machine away altogether, but at the middle age it was not easy to deal with unpredicted matters. In addition, the Singer had been a component of her marriage settlement; she had observed it for the first time at morning just after the emotional shock of her matrimonial night. There was a difference between the ways in the treatment of her child and her husband‘s nephew.[78]

Later she tries to buy peace by shouting out to Parboti Debi, Bhudeb Roy‘s wife, that she would make her six blouses. She‘s done what she can. When Parboti Debi comes with *Shombhu* Debnath and takes refuge in her house, Toru Debi thinks she has come for the blouses. She hurries back to her ‒loom tomake them as early as possible.

Ah, Parboti-didi, she said, I‘m glad you could come, but you shouldn‘t have bothered. Of course, I knew you were coming, I dreamt-I dreamt a lot, you know-I knew you and Bhudeb-babu would come today. But you shouldn‘t have gone to so much trouble. I haven‘t forgotten, really. It‘s just that. So much work, but never mind, I‘ll finish them, right now. You can show them to Bhudeb-babu and tell him that he doesn‘t have to come.[79]

When Alu tries to explain the situation to her and expresses that it is not concerned with the matter of blouses, Toru Debi beats him on his cheeks for the first time. She shouts asking him to think about the seriousness of the matter. He is arriving here very soon and if the blouses are not ready, it will be the termination of everything. At this moment, it is the sewing machine that only protects us. At any cost, I'll never allow your uncle to express that it was caused due to incompletion of the blouses.[80] The machine breaks down when only one blouse is left to be stitched. Toru Debi isn't aware that Parboti has already left. She only knows of her failure and the calamity that it means: What's the use? she said, It's the end.[81]

It is her reading of reality and she is entitled to it. For, it is the end for their Lalpukur house which is to soon go up in flames. She has made her last-ditch stand and lost. She requests Alu to throw the sewing machine into the pond and get her another, a better one. It is possibly this slowing down of Alu, her recalling him from the door and saddling him with the heavy sewing machine that possibly saves his life. In a display window in Calcutta, Alu sees his sewing machine and that helps him in his slow recovery from the shock. It is the best moment for him to share his idea to Gopal who fails to grasp an idea that the day Alu had won a battle for his spirit.[82] It is possible that later, in al-Ghazira, Alu is trapped in the building collapse because of two sewing machines or so Rakesh feels:

The truth is that Alu was the first among us to listen the continuous deep sound and clammer of the bricks and plaster as they fall down on the ground. At that moment, Alu had just found two sewing machines, for display, under a tarpaulin sheet. When he heard the noise, he left the machines uncovered and pushed us out of the basement. I couldn't see much because there was dust everywhere, but, still, I'm certain I saw him carefully covering those two machines.[83]

But these two machines saved his life. Do you know why? Because by him, there were two old kinds of sewing machines on the other side and they were made of black solid steel. Our friend Alu would have already been docked if the machines were not for them.[84] Alu is able to mediate on the root cause of the ills that plague mankind in the company of these two sewing machines. It is to retrieve these sewing machines that the Ras people use when they are attacked by the al-Ghazira police.

Is it any wonder that Jyoti Das shouts to him at the end asking him not to think about the sewing machine; the sewing machine will be better at their hands at home now.[85] It seems, says G. J. V. Prasad, as if the whole novel has been about the quest for the holy sewing machine! And in a sense it is.[86]

Jyoti Das is the only one character to give company to Alu in his trip through the three parts in the novel. Officially he is in charge of the sedition case against Alu and is in his pursuit. Dubey says to Das:

That‘s why I wanted to get that man (Rajan) to confess that the Suspect has connections there-all for your sake. Now you can safely put it in your reports. It is an obvious fact that hundreds of terrorist groups and things exist there and he is sure to involve with them. You must observe that part and put a pressure a bit. And you observe; you will have a chance for a foreign visit to al-Ghazira if you use your reason sensibly.[87]

Jyoti Das did not answer. He was thinking of al-Ghazira. A new sky, a whole new world of birds. Wasn‘t al-Ghazira on one of the major migration routes? He would have to do a bit of reading at the National Library. What would the colours be like?[88] It does not matter if the piece of land belongs to Antarctica or al-Ghazira. It is the journey that was confined only within and the journey was already at the end. What is the most important fact was the matter of departure.

Even six months of hellish confusion was worth a Journey which helped you through time even before it had ended.[89] In Al-Ghazira he meets Lal. Lal knows Jeevanbhai of Durban Tailoring House. He has been arrested by the police. Jai Lal assures Jyoti Das:

Luckily I happen to know this chap. They‘re willing to take us along as observers. They‘ll hand over your Suspect (Alu) once they‘ve got him, and you can take him back. They have no interest in keeping him of course but, still, it‘s very generous, you know because we don‘t have an extradition agreement with them.[90]

Ironically, it was Jyoti Das who made Alu visit again al-Ghazira, Alexandria, Egypt, Lisbon, Tunisia as well as a small town of El Qued. He is accompanied by Zindi, Boss and Kulfi, and whenever Zindi says –we‘re going West where the sewing machines are" Jyoti Das seems to overhear them for he appears wherever they go.

By this time Jyoti Das is deferred temporarily from being involved in his service for his hidden feelings to the man whom he tracks and at present he settles even in El Qued to watch more birds, rare vultures and expiate for his former weaknesses. He is picked up by Mrs. Verma. She introduces him to Kulfi and Dr. Mishra:

May I introduce you to our very own avatarof Arjuna? Mr. Jyoti Das. He‘s not been well. We met him quite by chance a couple of days ago, when he was brought to the hospital with a mild case of heatstroke. He‘d been here a few days already and apparently he‘d spent all his time at the bus station watching the buses from the border come in, and on the dunes, where he was looking for a vulture. Just imagine-a vulture, are you a corpse, I said, that you‘re looking for a vulture in this blazing sun![91]

Mr. Jyoti falls in love with Kulfi. But incidentally Zindi views him as a vulture because, in her opinion, Mr. Jyoti invites death wherever he reaches: Mr. Jyoti possesses death with him wherever he reaches. It is out of his control; he thinks. Think of the condition of Jivanbhai; Karuthamma and all others. And at this moment, he has arrived here with a vulture.[92]

All alone in the desert –terrified of the future, without a past, aware of the prickings of his painful virginal flesh.[93] Kulfi makes Jyoti Das happy but when he begins luring her as they practice for the dance drama Chitrangada, Kulfi passes away because of a heart attack. Zindi‘s expectation of evil deed is proved true once again. He moves to Dusseldorf in Germany to live with his engineer uncle because he has no reason to return to India. He gets information about the departure of Alu and Zindi to Tangier on their way back home and then he starts seeing the sky shining with different birds over Tangier: a sky full of white storks, step eagles, honey buzzards shearwaters etc.[94] He suspects that Zindi accompanies them up to Tangier. He says that he is shifting to Dusseldorf because he has no place to go. He asks if it is possible to stay with him.[95] Then Jyoti Das bought a ticket for the ferry to Algeciras in Spain. When the ferry began churning up the harbour, Jyoti Das was already on deck, waving.

Subsequently, he found a number of dolphins and at once a school of dolphins appeared there and they were moving on the water here and there with the pace of the ferry- dancing, standing on their tails, etc. He felt great pleasure looking at the peaceful sky and the birds flying up in the sky.[96]

While for Jyoti Das his past and future were –continents of defeat- defeat at home, defeat in the world,[97] for Alu the world has come full circle when he remains there for Virat Singh and the oceanliner that would take them to their destination despite his hopeful travels on previous occasions for him, Hope is the beginning.[98] Yet again even at the end of the story.

The quest and journey for the individual self, truth, spiritual and corporeal explorations, the promise for alternative worlds and visions are carried on through the stages of *Satva, Rajas* and *Tamas,* and finally, the circle is completed by a return to *Satva* or Reason.

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Chapter-3

GOING AWAY-COMING HOME AND BACKDROP OF THE HISTORICAL EVENTS IN "THE SHADOW LINES"

The Shadow Lines would be a remarkable novel by any standards. Indeed many facile adjectives such as 'cerebral', 'unputdownable' and 'well-wrought' spring to mind. For sheer craft and compelling story-telling, few recently produced Indian novels touch it. With nothing identifiably Indian 'details of time and place and history the nationality successfully joined an order of world fiction.

Louis James comments on the artistic and thematic quality of *The Shadow Lines:*

A family tree is presented in the novel by Ghosh but it does not legally define the family that belongs to European society, to the society presented in Forsyte Saga of Glasorthy or to the society of Budden books by Thomas Mann. As a whole, the society presented in Ghosh's novel is an Asian family with full of modesty, co-operation and devotion. The narrator is also in puzzle as the matter becomes so complicated. In this context, the novel is somehow about the significance of family, relationship in a fragmented world.[1]

The narrative of *The Shadow Lines* skims or pauses over a crowded tapestry of the past spanning years from 1939 to 1979. The novel begins when the first-person narrator, who is never named, is about eight years old, living in Calcutta, ID admiring Tridib, his intellectual uncle, who is about twenty-nine. Certainly, it records with vividness the inner life of the growing child, but Tridib, who shapes the narrator's youthful personality and Ila, his beautiful cousin who almost defeats it, could really be called the most important people in the novel. We summarize the novel in the woods Robert Dixon:

The narrator's family moved to Calcutta from their home just after the creation of East Pakistan because his family is a Hindus family. There, during the Second World War, when Europe itself lies in ruins, they befriend an English family, the Price's and a complex series of cultural crossing weaves these two families together. Mrs. Price's, father, Lionel Tresawson, lived in India before Independence, and is a type of the travelling Englishman, after he had left his house in Cornwall to visit the

empire widely in the Empire. He visited Malaysia, Ceylon, Fiji, and ultimately Calcutta. At war period, the narrator‘s uncle, shifted to London and stayed with the Tridib, went to London and lived with the Price‘s family. He is writing shortly after his return to Calcutta from England, where he too becomes involved with the Prices. In the narrator‘s memory, the existence of the three generations of his family is connected together. Their lives have been displayed vividly in the cities such as Calcutta, Dhaka, London, etc.[2]

So far, Amitav Ghosh writes about the narrator‘s family and the Prices before India‘s Independence. He goes on to write the latter half thus:

The second part of the novel climaxes in the narrator‘s return visit to the family residence located in Dhaka in the year of 1964. But this arrival at home is full of coincidences. The desire of the grandmother is to make her uncle return from Pakistan which is the area of their Muslim foes, to the house in Calcutta. But Pakistan is her real home, the goal of her ritual homecoming. She is nostalgic for the classical conception of cultures. She believes that her children should not be mixing with English people, and is particularly critical of the narrator‘s cousin Ila for living in England. But when the grandmother looks down from the plane as they pass from India into Pakistan in 1964, she is surprised that there is no visible border on the ground. The elderly relative in Dhaka delivers the ultimate decision on her outlook about the world as he declines to return Calcutta, even denying its existence in reality.[3]

He says that he does not trust in this India-Shindia. He adds that it is fine that I am leaving the place but he warns me that as I approach there, they may make another decision. He asks me what I do after that, where I will shift to. He says that nobody will be there to help me. He asserts that it was his birthplace and he expects to die there.[4]

After this trip to Pakistan, the narrator looks at Tridib, showing the distances between nations with a distinction between memory, human experience and national boundaries. He realizes that the Euclidean space of the Atlas has nothing to do with cognitive and cultural space:

I wondered that there was a time when people with good intention viewed that there existed special magic on the surface. They had specified their borders, based on that structure, in the magic of the surface, expecting possibly that once they had drawn their borders upon the map, the two pieces of land would disintegrate from each other like the moving tectonic plates of the prehistoric Gondwana land. I wondered, what they had realized as they found that there was not any time in the period of 4000-year-old history of that map as the spaces called Dhaka and Calcutta at present were closely connected to each other after they had been separated from each other.[5]

These ideas are summed up in the final act of the novel, on his last night in London May Price and the narrator had sexual relation by which he is granted the glimpse of a final redemptive mystery.[6] The mystery of lived human experience that transcends the artificial borders of nation and race.

Arjya Sircar says: The major concern of the novel, the theme if you like, is easy and difficult to define. To me, *The Shadow Lines* appears to be a quest novel- a contemporary consciousness in search of self-knowledge and self-identity.[7] In this novel, we are, first of all, concerned with the quest of Ha in self-knowledge and self-identity. She belongs to a new generation of post-colonial anglophiles who like Srinivas of Kamala Markandaya‘s *The Nowhere Man* belongs neither to one‘s motherland nor to an adopted country. She represents a vast majority of the Indian youth who, enamoured of the West, tap impatient heels at their Oriental anchorage. No wonder her mother prefers butler English to plain Hindi while speaking to her Indian maid: Shut up Ram Dayal. Stop bukbukking like a Chokra boy.[8] Grandma nicknames her Queen Victoria. In Bengal, even today, a pompous, snobbish, showy, woman is derisively called *Rani Victoria.*

Ila‘s father was with the UN and a university in the North of England. Ila‘s mother was the daughter of a man who had left his village in Barisal in rags and gone on to earn a Knighthood in the old Indian civil service.[9] The narrator in the novel says about Ila‘s father:

It was my grandmother‘s theory that the Shaheb‘s wardrobe was divided into sets of hangers, each with its own label: Calcutta zamindar, Indian diplomat, English

gentleman, would be Nehru, South Club Tennis player, Non-Aligned Statesman, and so on. It was certainly true that there was always rigorous completeness about the Shaheb's appearance. The fall of his dhoti in Calcutta was always perfect-simple and white spot on the top button of his kurta which is open in an exact equilateral triangle. Whatever he wore, there was always a drilled precision about his clothes. He looks like a dressed-up doll in a shop window.[10] the narrator writes about Ila's dress: ―She was wearing clothes like which I had never seen before. English clothes, a white smock with an applique giraffe that had its hooves resting on the hem while its neck stretched almost as far up as her chin.‖[11]

Pannikar aptly describes the type of the anglicized Hindus:

They (aristocratic middle class) conversed in the morning like English gentlemen. Admission to prestigious schools in England was highly sought after and a degree from either Oxford or Cambridge became the ultimate in intellectual attainment.[12]

Agarwalla comments on this type of Anglophiles:

This madness for forum philia is a common characteristic of the anglicized' Bengali elite soaked in everything English, a lapdog of British imperialism. The Chatterjees of Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* belong to this anglicized upper-middle class Calcutta society.[13]

The Subaltern School, led by Ranjit Guha, speaks of this upper-middle class and its role in shaping India's historiography:

The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been elitism-colonial dominated by elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism. Both these varieties of elitism share the prejudice that the making of Indian nation and the development of the consciousness nationalism which informed this process was exclusively or predominantly elite achievement.[14]

These bourgeois elites figure in the Chatterjees and the family of the ―Sahibs.‖ Having the privilege of acquiring degrees from English universities and exploiting their positions in the elite-dominated post-independence India, Ila's father enjoys an unprecedented position and prestige, denied to the subaltern. But these elites, though

born in India, have no sense of belonging to her. A. N. Kaul says: ‒It is true that for the privileged Datta Chaudhuri‘s nationality has ceased to have any significance and crossing national frontiers means nothing more to them than a smooth transition through customs and immigration at identical airports.‖[15]

Into such a family Ila was born, brought up, educated, and moulded. Ila had a lot of friends outside India. She had visited a number of countries with her parents. The narrator tells about them:

All through her childhood her family brought back souvenirs. But there was one kind of souvenir that Ila over thought of bringing back. They were the Yearbooks of the International Schools. She of whatever city happened to be living in, they were always full of photographs.[16]

Nivedita Bagchi observes: ‒The yearbook photographs, with their fixed space-time coordinates, validate or invalidate Ila‘s narrative of Jamshed Tabrizi, Teresa Cassano and Mercedes Aquilar.‖[17]

Ila rejects everything that is Indian and attempts to search her identity for herself in new world. At first, she asks why she has picked out London and she answers that she has picked out London as she desires to be free. She advises me to be free of my bad culture and all of my bad rituals.[18] She yells, as she is dragged out of the hotel dance floor where she has started dancing with an unknown businessman. Her cousin Robi checks her outrageous behaviour by expressing an idea that Girls never treat in that manner. He also addsthat there are certain things which you are unlikely to do here; it is our culture.‖[19] She does not want to remain a Vedic Dasi. This is one aspect of her character. Following the footsteps of the Western feminists, she adopts some un-Indian cultural props which Robi asks her not to use in Calcutta nineteenth-century England,

New women writers adopted the cigarette an aesthetic props, which accompanies the quest for new words and new forms, the effort to describe the elusive and enigmatic nature of female sexuality, feminine consciousness or feminine art. For new woman writers, smoking was a defiant enactment of Pater‘s famous aesthetic injunction to burn with a hard, gem-like flame.[20]

On the other hand, Bankimchandra Chatterjee assigned a role to women who required that women control and sublimate their sexuality in order to energize men who might easily fall into temptations otherwise. For Swami Dayanand, the function of women was to procreate healthy progeny to regenerate what was seen as a weakened Aryan race.[21] Regardless of the differences in their specific formulations, says Anuradha Dingwaney Needham, what comes through clearly is their fear of and anxiety about women's uncontrolled sexuality which is then contained by being garnered for affecting the regeneration of Hindu men and thus the success of the nationalist cause.[22]

The post-Independence Indian Indo-English woman writers, like their counterparts in the Western world, have chosen to overthrow the concept of woman as Vedic Dasi. Kamala Das, for example, presents in her works resistant women characters who exploit their sexuality in their bid for advancement, thereby reversing the Hindu idealization of women generally and the nationalistic discursive construct of a benevolent and protective Mother India specifically. Kamala Das's Manasi in *Alphabet of Lust* is the antithesis of the chaste, Sita-like Brahminic feminine ideal which informed the Indian independence struggle.

In the 1986 collection *Flesh and Paper,* which Suniti Namjoshi co-authored with her lover Gillian Hanscombe, repeatedly likens her quest for an identity as a lesbian, feminist, diasporic Indian to the search for a country, writing, albeit in hesitant interrogatives.

Ila, in *The Shadow Lines,* is not a Vedic Dasi‖ and, therefore, she castigates Indian culture for prohibiting her dance with an anonymous businessman. Ila is Manasi of Kamala Das and Namjoshi's personhood. All three represent the voice of feminism in the India of the eighties of the last century.

The narrator contrasts the cross-cultural perspectives of Tridib and Ila at several places in the novel. For instance:

It was not fixed time but we often talked about it. I attempted to inform her about it but I am not sure if I succeeded to explain her that it was impossible for me to forget since Tridib had promised me to travel in and he had given a positive response.

She had been visiting the different parts of the world as she was a small baby. She could easily comprehend that these hours are totally absent in Tridib‘s chamber had meant a special significance to him as a boy who had not been so far away from Calcutta. I sometimes listened her having conversationwith her father and grandfather in the subject matter of the cafes in the Plaza Mayor situated in Madrid, or high movement of the air in Cuzco, and I was able to read that names, which belonged to a series of magical objects that are supposed to bring good luck for me as Tridib had shown them his torn Old Bartholomew‘s Atlas, had for her familiarity no less dull than the lake had for me and my friends.[23]

The English racism rears its head in *The Shadow Lines.* She is being beaten up by the English racists, like the beating of Srinivas, in Markandaya‘s *The Nowhere Man.* Like Srinivas, Ila does not return to India. Then, she graduated in history from the University College of London, got a job in an office and tied the knot with Nick Price whom she had known for years.

Tha’mma’ did not like Ila because of her free gestures, unusual way of behavior, etc. She had remarked that Ila does not have any right to stay in England. She is not a native citizen of that place. These people built that country after there continuous effort for a long time. She added that everybody who resides there has a right to stay there by birth.[24]

Despite that, Ila lives in London. Ila teaches her cousin to play Houses with her in the dark basement of the family house in the village. Then she talks about Nick Price, with whom she has played this game before and whom she described as coming to her rescue when she is attacked by a group of racist children in London. It is only later that the narrator learns what the reality was like: that Nick was ashamed of her and had certainly not gone to her aid at all. Despite this, Ila‘s infatuation and marriage with Nick materializes.

As to the dislike of Ila by Tha’mma’ and the former‘s unfitness to be a resident of England, Tha‘mma‘s judgement of Ila is wrong. The grandmother lived during the terrorist movement of Bengal. She desired to live a free life. Therefore, the desire of Ila to live in London, rootless, free of middle-class constraints and taboos were disliked by the grandmother. In London, Ila has some friends who have extreme

views on any subject. They stop the political issues. Dan, the Trotskyite produced pamphlets against Nazi system and Tresawsen is a person who did correction a mail wing newsletter. Like his grandmother‘s nationalism, Nick Price‘s nationalism has a face. In Kuwait, Nick Price left his job of a chartered accountant because he did not like the management practice which was outdated and the interference by Arabian business partners. He still clings to Britain‘s colonial past. If the grandmother is violent, so is Ila. In Virginia Woolf, we find the relevant passage:

It is useless to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility: they must have action; and they will build it if they cannot find it. Women are supposed to be very calm usually: but women feel just as men feel; they require exercise for their department and a field for their effort as much as their brothers feel; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced unnecessary for their sex.[25]

We quote Erich Fromm also:

To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration. An individual may be alone in a physical sense for many years and yet he may be related to ideas, values, or at least social patterns that give him a feeling of communion and belonging. On the other hand, he may live among people and yet be overcome with an utter feeling of isolation. This lack of relatedness to values, symbols, patterns, we may call moral aloneness. The kind of relatedness to the world may be noble or trivial, but even being related to the basest kind of pattern is immensely preferable to being alone.[26]

Two views presented finally sum up the quest of Ila for personal freedom. The grandmother condemns Ila for living in London. Ila suffered from the middle-class social morals and taboos in India and she decided to exercise her faculty elsewhere, that is England. Therefore she develops a friendship with Nick and her radical friends. In India, she would have stagnated.

Some scholars write that she was alone in London. This is not correct of Ila. She was neither physically alone nor morally alone. She had attached herself to some

ideas, values, which gave her a sense of ‒belonging‖ in London. On the other hand, she lived with her relatives in India for some time but bereft of ideas, values, she felt lonely in India.

Ila‘s quest for a space of her own should be studied even when she was a school girl. Amitav Ghosh brings it out very deftly. For a schoolgirl, schools are all that matter. Ila lives in the present. She has no regard for memory-either personal or cultural. She happens to make error because of her imagination and her innovation in his creation becomes a self-frustrating wish-fulfilment when the racist Denise harassed and angered her in school. She expects that Nick Price comes there to rescue her. ‒Nick Price sobbed kneeling down and swabbed her eyes with the sleeve of his shirt. He aided her and took her hand in his hand. Then he told her to come so that he would take her to her house.[27] However, the truth is that Nick feels shy to be found by his mates going to house with an Indian. So harshly does Nick‘s behaviour dislodge the equilibrium of Ila‘s emotional make-up that she transfers this fantasy to the imaginary life of her doll?

Then I thought of Ila going back from school without any friend via the passage of West Hampstead. Ila walking alone in a drizzle under the cold grey sky: in Calcutta, Ila remained among so many relatives, cars and house aids with whom she used to walk. We would be waiting for Ila to walk with her. When we would walk together, Ila, the sophisticated girl, would tell us the tales related with rich boys and small girls who were in distant countries and we learned the names of these countries from the maps.[28]

The pathos of a child‘s search for a space of her own is brought out by Amitav Ghosh through Ila. Only an indivisible line, a shadow line divides real and imagined space, but a child is unable to perceive it. Unfortunately, in Ila, this distressfully inadequate vision does not change even when the child attains adulthood, which we have discussed earlier.

Therefore, the quest of Ila for personal freedom In London is fully justified. She retains her ideas, values, belongingness, radicalism, and love. India proved to be claustrophobic for a New Woman in Ila.

There is another quest in *The Shadow Lines*, that is, the grandmother's quest for political freedom. She is the central character in *The Shadow Lines.* The narrator remembers that Tridib had called her a modern middle-class woman. What she desired was a middle class lifestyle in which she would prosper trusting in the integration of nationhood and territory of power and self-respect. She wanted a nation which consists of a modern middle class life and a tiny matter which the history had rejected to provide her.[29]

We quote Mrs. Mukherjee to compare Ila's and the grandmother's quest for freedom:

In *The Shadow Lines,* there is a repeated insistence on the freedom for each individual to be able to create his own stories. Although Ila and the grandmother is in many ways mirror images of each other across generations in their absolutism and rigidity about their concepts of freedom, their situations in the novel are not symmetrical. The grandmother on the other hand never had a ready-made script. After losing her husband, her hidden desire of independent life is in conflict with her bourgeois background. She leaves Dhaka and shifts to Rangoon and then to Calcutta by compulsion. Similarly, she does not possess the region which she called her home, etc. are only the parts of a story which are discontinuous. She can continue the events in the story only by means of the connection of family and nation, duty and moral values.[30]

Amitav Ghosh presents the grandmother's early life as a story told by her to the narrator. His grandmother was born in 1902 in Dhaka. She was brought up in a big joint family being a member of it she would live and eat with everyone in the family together.[31]After the death of her grandfather, the familial house had to be partitioned because of the strife that broke out between her father and her uncle. During her graduation in history at Dhaka, she came to know the terrorist movement among the nationalist in Bengal. She learned the fact about Anushilanand and Jugantar and all their branches which were the secret terrorist societies. She also found that there were secret networks and the bombs made at home and they would try to kill British officials and policemen using those bombs. She also learned a bit regarding the arrest, removal and actions that the British had used to retaliate.[32]

In her classroom, she found a young man and he was shy in nature but a dedicated member of a terrorist group. One day, the police came into the classroom and seized the young man since the lecture was in progress. The police claimed that the young man had made a plan to assassinate an English magistrate who was in service in Khulna district. The police investigated him and sent him to the cellular jail situated in the Andaman Islands. She desired to be terrorist like Khudiram Bose and Bagha Jatin in her youthful enthusiasm. Khudiram Bose and Bagha Jatin were the terrorists who were deceived by the deceptive villagers who in turn had been bribed with English money.

She'd been expecting a huge man with burning eyes and a lion's mane of a beard, and there he was, all the while, at the back of her class, sitting shyly by himself.[33] She had wanted to work for the terrorists, to run errands for them, to cook their food, to wash their clothes and to render some help. She answered that she would have been terrified a lot as the narrator asks her if she would have murdered the English magistrate. She added that she would have prayed for courage and God's willing and she would have murdered him. She remarked that the murder was for their liberation. She added that she would have done anything for freedom.[34]

Suvir Kaul comments on her: This personal history of anti-imperialism sharpens her sense of nationhood and the formation of the Indian nation-state.‖[35] She says to her grandson:

The British learn that they are a nation as they have lined the borders with the blood of their martyrs. Maya has told that the regimental flags hang in the cathedrals and all the churches are queued with statues of men who passed away in wars in all corners of the world. Their religion is war. It is war that makes a country. People do not discriminate each other in terms of culture or cast when it happens once. They are neither Muslim nor Hindu nor Bengali nor Punjabi. They turn into an identical family originated out of the same blood. This is very important to get for India.[36]

Suvir Kaul draws his conclusion from this exhortation of the grandmother about her ideas on nationalism, different from the internationalism of Ila and her generation:

These, after all, are the worth she learns from her youthful desire to be free, where freedom was forged in the crucible of often violent anti-colonial struggle and once achieved, maintained by extending the same antagonistic logic to he construction of the nation-state. War which is waged against common enemies integrates, confirms the boundaries formally and makes ideological and international opposition deeper, forms a coherent national identity. It also helps to make the claim of the state to be the sole agent and authority of violence legal.

Tha‘mma‘s ideas are couched in the language of derivation, requires the syntax of good citizenship and an exclusive national pride.[37]

Seema Bhaduri the nationalism comments of the grandmother:

The spirit of European nationalism is essentialized by Tha‘mma‘. Tha‘mma‘ has a progressive view of the future and puritan sense in her work and discipline so she is a typical neo-Victorian figure. At that time, nationalism for her symbolizes the serious feelings of religion that would inform her every concept and work. Hence, her grandson must run rather than walk that he must be strong enough to face the impending challenges to. Her preferences likewise are for men like Robi (Tridib‘s brother) who have an unintellectual moral impulse and a commitment to action-the type that made the fire brand nationalists of her youth, the type she admired and had wanted to join.[38]

But Amitav Ghosh says that the grandmother did not get the freedom that she had desired from the independence of India: she had to eke out the difficult connotations of widowhood in the class-ridden Hindu society that independence little altered. She became a foreigner to her own home in Dhaka, more foreigner than the English May who didn‘t need a visa to visit Dhaka. Suvir Kaul observes:

Tha‘mma‘s nationalist faith fails her because she comes to realize that borders have a tenuous existence, and that not even a history of bloodshed can make them real and impermeable. In 1964, as she makes a plan to fly to Dhaka, she wonders whether it would be possible for her to see the lines of border drawn between East Pakistan and India from the plane. As her son smiles and queries her if she thought that the borderline was an extended black line with green and scarlet colour like it was

in a school atlas,‘ she speaks, Of course, not‘. When she is told that she might see some green fields, her musing response sums up the pathos of exclusionary nationalism.[39]

Tha‘mma wonders how the common people learn the truth if there are not any ditch or anything. Tha‘mma adds that she means where the dissimilarity is and both sides will be identical if there is lack of dissimilarity: it will be similar with that of before as we would visit to find a train in Dhaka. Partition and all the killing and everything if there is not something in between?[40]

Suvir Kaul defines Tha‘mma‘s rationalism:

Nationalism, militant and brilliant its anti, in imperialism, is tarnished in its need for defining oppositions within, and enemies across, the borders. In the novel, the narrator‘s coming to maturity involves his extending the lessons of the shadow-lines that Tha‘mma reluctantly learns, as she moves from her nationalistic certitude to awareness that even borders confirm identity though they are meant to confirm the difference. Perhaps the beginning coincidence of *The Shadow Lines* is that nearly as soon as Tha‘mma feels that the legacy of her birthplace is not separable from her sense of herself as a civilian of India, at the death of her nephew Tridib‘s at the hands of a Dhaka mob confirms in her a pathological hatred of them.[41]

Seema Bhaduri sums up the quest of the grandmother for political freedom succinctly:

Grandma was unable to see the thing which was very clear to be seen because of her imagination dominated by the idea of nationalism. It is nationalism that had devastating effect upon her house and divided her family members. The length of her personality can be perceived by the fact that she gave away her golden chain even after this tragedy affected her mental balance. It was the only ornament she had kept safely with her after the death of her husband as a gift of her dead husband.[42]

The meaning of political freedom in the modern world is for the grandmother in a complicated and intricate one. Therefore, her quest for political freedom is liable to fail. She is as much uprooted in her country as Ila in England.

The theme of journey in *The Shadow Lines* is symbolic in its topic-derived, importantly, from Conrad-and in the titles it has its two sections, Going Away and Coming Home.

The metaphor of journey fills the text in the book and makes it able to lengthen and widen in terms of space and time (a journey, after all, takes place sequentially and in time). This is of course a traditional method for the novel that sets out to discover the relationship between imagination and reality.[43]

Edward Said, the legendary scholar and critic of the Third World, explains: stories are at the heart of what explores and novelists say about strange regions of the world.[44] Barat explains that Ghosh's approach: has in fact a close affinity with Graham Greene's in *Travels with My Aunt* and *The Captain and the Enemy*, which is likewise concerned with this relationship and which is similarly based on the metaphor of the journey.[45]

The journey in *The Shadow Lines* is of two types: real and imagined. In the latter, we take the examples of Tridib and the narrator. Tridib pointed out places in the Bartholomew's Atlas while telling him stories- Tridib had promised to travel in and he had given me positive response[46], so that long before he moved out of Calcutta, his world had expanded to include many parts of the globe through learning and hearing and reading about these places. Cairo, Madrid, Cuzco or Colombo, names that his globe-trotting cousin Ila mentioned casually, were for the narrator a set of magical talismans[47] to be invested with reality through precise imagination in the way Tridib had taught him, though he knew he could never replicate the same feat: And still I knew that the sights Tridib saw in his imagination were infinitely more detailed, more precise than anything I would ever see.[48] Tridib had told him of the desire that can carry a person beyond the border of ones wit to other times and other spaces and even if one was fortunate to a space that was borderless between oneself and one's figure in the looking glass.[49] Ila lived in the present, in the external world of journeys. Tridib lived in the internal world of journeys. The narrator finds the difference that Ila remained so utterly at present that she would not have trusted that there would be people who were similar with Tridib, who could feel the world as objectively in their vision as she feels through her sense, more so if anything, because these feelings were

permanently available in their memories, whereas with her, when she spoke of her last lover‘s legs. The present was the real for Ila: it was as if she remained at a present which was similar to an airlock in a canal, arrested by the tide waters of the past and the future by steel floodgates.[50]

For Ila, maps and memory are quite irrelevant. All the cities she had lived in went past her in an illusory whirl of movement, like those studio screens in old films which flash past the windows of speeding cars‖.[51]

Meenakshi Mukherjee, herself a Bengali, writes about Bengali culture and the place of a journey in this culture:

Names of the unknown places from the litany of the narrator‘s childhood not only through the lore brought back by the foreign service branch of the family-Bratislave, Conakry, Sophia-but also through twice-removed reports like the life story of the Englishman Tresawsen who is said to have travelled in Malaysia, Fiji, Bolivia, the Guinea Coast and Ceylon before coming to India, or through the encyclopedic repertoire of Tridib who could hold forth on the Mesopotamian Stele and East European Jazz as easily as on the archaeological sites associated with the Sena dynasty of Bengal. Paradoxically, though this subtext of geographical inclusiveness helps to situate the narrator very firmly in his specific cultural milieu.

Cartographic imagination has characterized an aspect of Bengali sensibility in ways that have yet to be analyzed. As a consequence of relatively early colonial education exposure or as a response to it, actual trip within the boundaries of the country and the envisioned travel to the spaces which are very far away outside the boundaries of the nation have always attracted the Bengali middle-class.

Adult literature also often dwelt on the attraction of unknown spaces. Bibhutibhusan Banerjee or Jibananda Das had never crossed the borders of India, yet they wrote of the groves of cinnamon in equatorial forests and the prairies across vast continents. Opu, the hero of Banerjee‘s two-part novel *(Pather Panchali,* 1929 and *Aparajita,* 1931) could, while growing up in the village Nishchidipur in Bengal, imaginatively evoke the Mediterranean sea and the distant lands of South America and Japan.

But these travels do not signify any dislocation because, as in *The Shadow Lines* so in Banerjee‘s novels, time and space are scopes of an individual‘s wish in which the real and the envisioned exist simultaneously and harmoniously.

A paradigmatic fictional figure, Tridib, very easily fits into this inclusive narrative tradition that privileges the traveler/imaginist, reminding the Bengali reader occasionally of the Ghana-da stories by Premendra Mitra, and slightly more peripherally of the Pheluda stories by Satyajit Ray in both of which a boy is held spellbound by a somewhat older person‘s encyclopedic knowledge of other lands and other civilizations.[52]

Once again we talk of ―Going Away‖ and ―Coming Home. Tridib goes away from India to England with his family and the child relives the experience vicariously through Tridib‘s imaginative vividness, descriptions so that when he grows up and goes to London, it is an effortless transition, a coming ‘rather than a going’. Long before the narrator left home he knew the A to Z map of London so well that the first time he came to London he could lead Nick and Ila confidently along the roads of West Hampstead as if he had lived there himself.

As mentioned earlier, the imagined world of Tridib helps the narrator to make a mental journey of different parts of this world. Tridib was an archaeologist, he was not interested in fairylands: the one thing he wanted to teach me, he used to say, was to use my imagination with precision.[53] The viewer‘s exercise of memory and imagination enables him to see in the mind’s eye, more vividly than in actuality.[54]

The actual physical journey of the grandmother is the theme of Coming Home. The narrator in *The Shadow Lines* has a history: the pattern of dwelling in travel. Ghosh subverts what Sara Suleri has called The Rhetoric of English India.[55] The opening sentence of the text at once removes the art of using language. It is 1939, thirteen years before my birth, father‘s aunt, Mayadebi, moved to England with her family.[56] Robert Dixon says:

Unlike the usual colonial novel, in which Westerners travel to India to observe an ancient and self-contained culture, *The Shadow Lines* begins with an Indian passage to England: the natives are the travelers. The main idea of the journey in this

family‘s experience immediately stresses that we change our anticipation about Indian culture and the way it is presented in English novels about the Raj. In addition, these Indians are moving abroad in 1939 and that was the time when the Britain declared war on Germany. According to classical ethnography, the culture of the Western observer is fixed and logical and from this point of view, a native observes a society. Ghosh in his text presents Britain at war with Germany to weaken this concept so that a division happens against the background of an equally unstable England. The analogy between Germany and England and India and Pakistan remarkably weakens the demarcation between East and West, metropolis and colony, etc., and the issue of uniformity and point to similarities and steadiness that minimizes these dissimilarities.[57]

Murari Prasad also concurs with Robert Dixon and says:

A romantic relationship between May Price and Tridib developed through communication between them, crossing the boundary of nationality and culture even though May Price was a small baby when Tridib witnessed her in London. It is Amitav Ghosh who investigates the hidden relationship between Tridib and May and the never-ending closeness between the two families as the countries were set against each other.[58]

Thus, the journey of Mayadebi to England in 1939, when India was a colonial part of England, the two families, like the indivisible sanity of people beyond borders, believe in amity, friendship, love and warmth:

Well, she said, laughing, the couple of months she had spent in London had been so exciting-the atmosphere had changed so dramatically, even within the last few weeks. People were becoming friendlier; in the shops, on the streets, she couldn't help noticing. Everyone was so much nicer now; often when she and Tridib went out walking people would pat him on the head and stop to have a little chat with her husband was, and when he was to have the operation. Yes, that‘s the right word, said Mayadebi: exhilaration. I’ve been lucky I’ve been able to watch English coming alive. I wouldn’t have seen it if I hadn’t been here now.[59]

The journey of the grandmother to Tresawsen in London in 1939 was a memorable event, etched in the mind of Tridib and subsequently, it helps to the

narrator to say: Nobody can ever know what it was like to be young and intelligent in the summer of 1939 in London or Berlin.‖[60] It results, at least, in the first friendship of Miss Price.

In *The Shadow Lines*, the narrator shuttles not only from Calcutta to London to collect material for his PhD thesis but across the loom of time from 1981 to the sixties on to the forties and earlier.

Tridib's father is a diplomat, living abroad or in Delhi and only occasionally visiting Calcutta; but Tridib himself prefers to stay in their family house in an upper middle class neighbourhood of Calcutta with his elderly grandmother.

The excursion of grandmother to Dhaka in the second section of the text becomes a symbolic search for a point of fixity. Born in Dhaka, separated from her birthplace by a history of bloodshed and lines on a map, Tha'mma loses her grammatical coordinates as she thinks of home'. While speaking, Tha'mma fails to connect the grammatical relation among the words and she sometimes feels difficult to discriminate between the words coming and going and I shout saying Tha'mma, Tha'mma.[61] The narrator asks how she would be able to arrive home to Dhaka as she failed to discriminate the meanings of the words coming and going. The narrator expresses that it is not Tha'mma who has committed blunder: all blunders are inherent in language she speaks. He adds that each language postulates a specific centre that is a particular and established norm to depart from and return. The narrator explains that his grandmother was seeking a particular word for a trip that was not going or coming at all; a trip that symbolizes a seeking for accurate and stable point which allows the appropriate application of the verbs of movement.[62]

The grandmother visited Dhaka because of her extreme desire to witness her old cottage and make her uncle Jethamoshai, come to India. The grandmother had only just spent a few days in her sister's house then she along with Mayadebi, Tridib, May Price and Robi started a journey in the Mercedes with a driver and a security guard of the High Commission. In the journey, the car had to take rest at a specific point in the by-lanes of Dhaka and they had to move to the old house on foot. They found an automobile workshop as they were feeling anxiety and they had a garden in their house. Their house was disintegrating and a large number of families were

residing there. Jethamoshai, their uncle who is now known as Ukilbabu, was very weak by age and limited to bed in his movement. It is Khalil, who is a cycle-rickshaw puller and his family members who were looking after the uncle. The old man did not identify them and uttered ill of his relatives when they were cited. He had not any faith upon that as he is going to India.

He had told to his India-bound sons that it is very good since he is leaving now but imagine when he reaches there they make a decision to draw another line somewhere. He asks what he will do after that, where he will move to, etc. He adds that no one will lead you anywhere else. As for me, it is my birthplace and it will be the place to die for me.[63]

The old man wanted to talk continuously but the car driver interfered him to tell him that they must leave the place immediately because a trouble is going to take place outside.[64] Hence, Mayadebi, grandmother and rest of others leave the place making an arrangement with Khalil that it is his duty to make their uncle return to their house in his cycle-rickshaw saying him that he is leaving him out. Girish Karnad in a book review presents the following remarks regarding this episode: in the realm of Indian fiction, the grandmother‘s journey to the familial house is definitely one of the most unforgettable scenes. In the episodes, the past and the future bump into religious, political and cultural borders in a misperception of emotions, ideals, intentions and acts, taking to the devastating turning point.[65]

In the plot, the climax takes place when the grandmother and her sister are coming back in their Mercedes from their familial house and their uncle is following them in the rickshaw (Rabi‘s narrative 243-47, May Price‘s recollection 250-51).

As they arrive in the dangerous area, they find that no shop is open and nobody is on the street. But there were some people wandering here and there and they looked as if they were waiting for vehicle. Very soon, a number of people gather around the car, smash the windscreen and driver is injured on his face. The car becomes unstable and then stops with its front wheel in a roadside. After that the security guard arrives soon and starts firing from his gun and the mass of the people starts moving away from the car. Simultaneously, a mysterious and dreadful silence is disturbed by a check. Then, the sound of rickshaw attracts the attention of the crowd.

It is Khalil‘s rickshaw with their uncle in it and the people again gathered around the rickshaw. May Price and Tridib leave the car to protect the old man although the sisters could have driven away? They lose the way in the mass of big crowd. Within a moment, a harmful event takes place and the crowd starts to disperse. On the road, there are dead bodies of Tridib, Khalil and the old man lying silently.

This death of Khalil, Tridib, and the Jethamoshai at the hands of a Dhaka mob confirms in her a pathological hatred of them‘. In 1965, as soon as the war starts, she gifts her only gold chain to the war fund: she tells her grandson that they had to murder them before they murder us for the sake of your life and freedom.[66] It is our duty to send them out. She feels comfort in the organized propriety of war being emotional from the recollection of the crowds who murdered Tridib. We are fighting them properly at last, she says –with tanks and guns and bombs.[67] The migrancy and consequent blindness to and alienation from the world, her violent intervention in human affairs, all are represented in the novel in negative terms.

Throughout her visit to Dhaka, Tha‘mma seeks to observe her childhood experience and youthful days in Dhaka and this fact is presented in the story as a nostalgic return to the house.

Despite her naturalisation as an Indian citizen, her strong loyalties and affiliations to the city of her birth which surface during her journey to Dhaka, permit Ghosh to investigate the conflicting claims of roots and belonging, national and boundaries in the Indian mind. In the story, Tha‘mma tries to present herself as native person of Dhaka living in the older parts of the town who dislikes the foreigners from the new residential areas and it displays her loss of memory to her new Indian identity when she faced with the more compelling claims of older solidarity. Tha‘mma visits her parental home, ironically figured as a married daughter‘s going home as a widow[68] where, she emotionally declares to her estranged uncle, We‘ve come home at last[69] is used to explore the contradiction of local and national identities further. Anjali Roy‘s analysis of Tha‘mma‘s journey to Dacca is worth quoting:

The immigrant family‘s visit to their ancestral home in their native place becomes the site for Ghosh‘s examination of the meaning of presumed national communities. The narrative reiterates Tha‘mma‘s estrangement from her home and

kin to turn filial duty and nationalist sentiments upside down before they culminate in the horror of the climactic scene of Tridib‘s death.[70]

The delayed account of Tridib‘s death serves the purpose of providing a detailed account of the meaning of essential nationalism and underlines the need for transcending the ways in which meanings get fixed, locked in moments of history which time nor social change, nor personal affiliation can alter.[71] Ghosh argues that only an awareness of the invented‖ nature of communities can release individuals from the manipulations of political imaginings. Tha‘mma remains imprisoned in the myth of nation until the end. Her response to Tridib‘s death, donating her last few pieces of jewelry to the war fund, shows how steeped she is in nationalist rhetoric.

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Chapter-4

LEAP INTO THE FUTURE IN "THE CALCUTTA CHROMOSOME"

Michael Hulse, reviewing Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*, writes:

The Calcutta Chromosome is a melodramatic thriller set simultaneously in three periods: the 1890s, when the anopheles mosquito was identified as the carrier of malaria by Sir Ronald Ross, who received a Nobel Prize for his work in 1902; the1990s, when Murugan pursues his pet theory concerning the truth about Ross's research; and a futurist present in which Antar, on Egyptian computer operator working for a global database in New York, tries to discover the facts of Murugan's disappearance in India in 1995.[1]

In a similar vein, ParsaVenkateshwar Rao JR reviews this novel:

Yet, it is about Ronald Ross, the man who laidbare because of the malarial fever. But Ghosh opens the ground beneath the discovery: the roots of Ross discovery are to be traced back to illiterate Indians Mangala and Lachman, real actors who gradually assume mythical proportions whowere engaged in the laboratory set up by Cunningham Ross' predecessor, at Calcutta. They, like representatives of a semi-religious cult, seems to dictate the course of events.[2]

On the other hand, Madhumalati Adhikari finds more than what the two reviewers found in *The Calcutta Chromosome*. It would be too facile to contemplate that Amitav Ghosh in *The Calcutta Chromosome* has attempted to inscribe a simple scientific thriller on the fever, delirium and discovery of the malarial parasite. Initially, the thematic originality and complexity bewilders the reader but a close scrutiny discloses that like his earlier novels, *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), and *In an Antique Land* (1993), Ghosh in *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) has universalized the specific through the concept of quest and journey. The notion of delirium, fever and discovery superficially associated with malariais extended to the meaning of life having identical symbolic and symptomatic significance.[3]

The Calcutta Chromosome, set in the future, delves into the past. It begins at the New York apartment of a computer-based Egyptian archivist named Antar, who

works for the International Water Council, a global organization that explores and examines the depletion of the world's water supplies.[4] Here, Antar works very hard to follow the adventures and vanishment of L. Murugan. Around the missing links of malaria research conducted by Ross during 1895 to 1899, the search or quest of Murugan is the central point. Ross symbolizes a scientific research that satisfactorily reaches the highest point in a process of discovery; Ross becomes a great researcher with the help of his fictional character, Laakhan and Urmila's little research on Phulboni. He also becomes a great mystery in the guidance of them. Sonali discloses the mystery of Laakhan and her inquiry for Roman Haldar stops here. Grigson launches a mission of exploration to set up the actual identification of Lutchman Laakhan and fails to complete the mission because he feels that the knowledge brings risk and danger in his life.

Similarly, Farley's findings of Mangala-Lutchman mystery restshidden as he vanishes in a rarely used station, Renupur[6]; Mangala and her junior Laakhan search for immortality[7] and it is recognized by its continuity. Definitely, the primary quest presented in the novel is Mangala's experiments with counter-science by means of the theory of silence and secrecy[8] implemented in Egypt and India. The campaign of Mangala skillfully manages other guests and characters. Madhumalati Adhikari expands on this aspect:

All direct communication of the discovery is diverted by the hidden progress of her experiments. It is someone, who is absolutely unconcerned with the exercise that has to find out the truth. Ultimately Urmilabecomes the chosen person.Having performed her role successfully Mrs. Aratounian moves towards her final destination, Renupur. Urmila takes on the role of Mangala and Mrs. Aratounian. The fictional reincarnation reflects the Goddess myth. Despite the story of the complex quest one gets the feeling that all the characters are controlled by the spirit of the Great Goddess, the archetypal mother revered by all forms of life.[9]

She goes on to say about the novel and Ghosh:

Amitav Ghosh's novels, a discourse on human quest, project characters engaged in individual search for truth, self-identity and self-knowledge. The spiritual

and corporeal exploration, the promise of alternative wordsand visions, invariably compel them to shuffle between different geographic locations and points of time. The personal odyssey takes shape through individual memory and recollections of others. In *The Circle of Reason*, the progress is carried on through the stages of Satva, Rajas and Tamas, and finally the circle is completed by a return to Satva or Reason; In *The Shadow Lines* one moves through the bomb-scarred London, riot-torn Calcutta and Bangladesh to view the outside world that affects the inside world and to learn the true value of a man; the story of education and journey continues in a different ensemble in *In An Antique Land*.[10]

Urbashi Barat also comments on this aspect ofGhosh: The queries that is related to diverse times and spaces and that are inspired in different ways are put side by side from the commencement itself. In fact all the characters in the novel, on the contrary of their reality, are trapped by means of their personal queries and associated with other in indirect and hidden ways with one another and with the one greater query of all life, immortality. Therefore, the equipment of the story is within a story and the query is within a query. Their separation from their current atmosphere is the most important feature of these inseparably interconnected characters, paradoxically. The researcher must be free from the limitation of traditional social relationship and must live in poverty, disease, marginalization, exploitation, etc. to get success in his quest. He must face anything or everything that weakens the human spirit.[11]

We take the quest of Antar first of all; he is an Egyptian having faith in a Coptic Christian currently living in New York. He lost his parents very early in his life and currently he is a widower without and child. Now, he works alone at home. Egypt and India were once colonized by England and Antar‘s and Murugan‘s home now is another and the greatest, imperial power, America. As propounded by Barat, Antar and Murugan are interconnected in their quests. While Antar has had malaria, Murugan has had syphilis, which used to be cured by the introduction of the malaria parasite into the system which is the object of Ross‘s search and the subject of Murugan‘s own. If Antar hunts Murugan, Murugan too hunts Antar; as it turns out, the lost ID card that turned up on Antar‘s computer screen was no accident but a carefully planned operation that brings Antar, too, into the web of conspiracy. This is

the pattern that repeats itself in every quest. The connection between each is revealed in the exchange between Antar and Murugan in a New York Restaurant, for what they say here recurs in many guises throughout the novel.

Tell me Antar, Murugan said fixing his piercing gaze upon Antar‘s face. Tell me: do you thinkit‘s natural to want to turn the page, to be curious about what happened next? ‘Well, said Antar, uncomfortably, I‘m not sure if I know what you mean. Let me put it like this then, ‘said Murugan, Do you think that everything that can be known, should be known? ‘Of course’, said Antar. I don’t see why not. ‘All right’, said Murugan, dipping his spoon in his bowl. I’ll turn a few pages for you; butremember,it was you who asked. It‘s your funeral.[12]

Calcutta was the birthplace of Murugan even though he moved from there very early in his age. Murugan for the first time found the immense love of his life when he was a graduate student of Syracuse: i.e., the medical history of malaria. He continued his study of the early history of malaria research when he studied in a small College in New York. He learned that Ross birth place is India where he was born in 1857. In 1906 he was given Nobel Prize for his remarkable contribution on the life cycle of malaria parasite.

The interconnectedness of the themes of the quest now begins. Before coming to India in 1985 for further research on Ross, Murugan tells Antar, that Ross, was not aPasteur or a Koch: he had the same thing without any variety to perform his task. The only remarkable work he ever did was his material on malaria. It was an abnormal task. The actual research was completed within three years. In India, he spent three years involving in his business. In the summer of 1895, he started the research in an army camp situated in Secunderabad and continued for three years in Calcutta till 1898.[13]

Subsequently, Murugan explains Antar about an Austrian psychologist and bacteriologist Julius von Wagne-Jauregg.

Then Murugan tells Antar about another psychologist-cum-bacteriologist Julius von Wagner-Jauregg, an Austrian. He was born the same year as Ronnie Ross, but in Austria. He was a psychologist. Julius and Freud were close mates and they

had joint task of research but Julius‘s name is highlighted because through his research, he found something very new regarding malaria which was out of Ross‘s imagination.[14]

In his research, he found a completely new idea that syphilis can be cured by means of unnaturally instigated malaria. It is possible to cure on this stage of dementia; paralysis as it hits the brain. He got the Nobel in 1927. Recalling the history of malaria Murugan tellsAntar that the mid-nineteenth century was the period when the scientific community began to wake up to malaria. The new field of science such as bacteriology, parasitology, etc. was commencing to bring a new chapter in the field of medicine in Europe at that time. Elaborating on the research work in malaria, Murugan says the nineteenth century‘s biggest breakthrough in malaria research happened in the 1840s.

Way back in the 1840s, a guy called Meckel found microscopic grain-like structures of black pigment in the tissues of malaria patients. Some were black, some were round, and some were curve shaped in nature. He observed them inside the small loom of protoplasm. Nobody was able to identify this stuff for forty years. In 1880, Alphonse Laveran, a French army surgeon in Algeria found, it's a critter, a protozoan-an animal parasite. In 1886 Camillo Golgi shows thatLaveran‘s parasite develops within the red blood cell, consuming its entertainer and eliminating black colour.That the pigment collects in the centre while the bug begins to divide; he demonstrates that the recurrence of malaria fevers is linked to this pattern of asexual reproduction.

The inhabitants of Secunderabad rejected Ross regarding his research project on malaria. For a single pierce on finger, he gave two or three rupees but the people were not ready to support him thinking that it was bad omen of witchcraft. Murugan thinks that Ross was doing progress a lot because he was being helped by some people through the complex network. Among them, Abdul Kadir arrived first. Then a man called Lutchman walked into Ronnie‘s life. He volunteered to drink Ronnie‘s cocktail, Lutchman, as far as Ronnie knew, was a dhooley bearer, a government servant to shovel shit. In April 1897, at Octacumund Lutchman succeeded in planting a crucially important idea in his mind: that the malaria vector might be one particular species of malaria, unaware of the indirect help of Lutchman, Ronnie was supplied more of the anopheles.

Sure enough, says Ronnie, there they were:about a dozen big, brown fellows, with fine tapered bodies and spotted wings, hungrily trying to escape through the gauze covering of the flask which the Angel of Fate had given to my humble retainer!

Ronnie achieved his first great discovery on 20th August, 1897: inside the stomach bag of *Anopheles stephensi* he finds the zygotes of Plasmodium located: in his diary he writes Eureka, the problem is resolved. Lutchman exclaims with joy wiping the sweats from his face. He thought that it would be impossible for him to achieve it.[16]

Antar starts his investigation on Murugan whom he finds and he had mentioned himself in a file, had at once vanished from Calcutta on 21st August 1995. On 20th August 1995, just after a day he found Murugan, he reached the city; the day was ironically but aptly called World Mosquito Day. Murugan was preoccupied with the idea of early history of research on malaria, and particularly with the profession of Ronnie.

Antar launches a computer-aided quest for the missing Murugan who, we know, is engaged in a quest of his own. He thinks that Ronnie, who received the Nobel Prize in 1906 for his great achievement on the life-cycle of the malaria carrier, had been provided the facts on a plate. It was only an imitation but not his original work at all.Murugan had presented a brief note of his research in his writing entitled Certain systematic discrepancies in Ronald Ross‘s account of Plasmodium B years ago and it got negative remarks form the scientific publications, newspaper, etc. to which it was submitted. It only served to brand Murugan as a crank and eccentric[17] and cost him the membership of the Science Society. His ostracism from the scholarly community resulted in a gradually unreliable and delusional manner.[18] And he started to speak in public places about his concept of the Other Mind: a principle that some people had scientifically objected with the experiments of Ronald Ross to divert malaria in particular way while taking it away from others.[19] Murugan was convinced that Ross was on a wrong track. His guide was Patrick Manson who was a remarkable Scottish bacteriologist and had authored a special book on the case of Filaria. Like Patrick Manson, his guide, Ross thought that the malaria parasite was transmitted

from mosquito to man orally, via drinking water. But overnight he changed his track and we have discussed it earlier. Murugan found it hard to swallow and he wanted to know what actually happened and how.

The conspiracy theory had become such an ideefixe that he was determined to leave for Calcuttain Search for the missing links which, he thought, could enlighten him and the world about the century old puzzle. The persuasions of the friends and well-wishers to give up the wild-goose chasewere of no avail.[20]

He reached Calcutta on 20 August 1995, and the very next day he vanished. In Calcutta Murugan finds out the missing links and the brain that had masterminded the conspiracy behind Ross's discovery. He confronts many people and sometimes he makes contemplative moves to meet them as if they were holding their horses for him. He fathoms that most of them are irredeemably subordinated to the mysterious Calcutta Chromosome.[21] He is convinced that marginal group helped Ross to achieve what he yearned for, immortality, the ultimate transcendence of nature.
–Muruganssurmises that while Ross worked on malaria theories, his lab assistants (Laakhan and Mangala) worked on inter-personal transference, transmission of personality:

As your body stops to support you, you hold it no more.You shift. You will make another beginning; a creation of another body.What would you give for that Ant: a technology that allows you make yourself better in your next birth.[22]

Murugan is keen to see the heritability of the philosophy in which he believes now and Mangala practiced once. Murugan calls it: The Calcutta Chromosome. What is this Calcutta Chromosome? Subash Chandra comments on it:

A unique type of chromosome-it is a chromosomeby extension because it does not possess the usual properties of chromosomes-which could enable the transposition of certain personality traits. And thus, if developed it could enable migration from one body to another with a fresh start, without earlier blemishes. We have, thus, counter science posited against science.[23]

Murugan, therefore, is provoked by the inscription with Ross's versification in self-celebration in the marble arch in Calcutta:

This day relenting God,
Hath placed within my hand
A wondrous thing; And God,
Be praised, At His Command,
Seeking his secret deeds,
With tears and toiling breathe,
I find thy cunning seeds,
O million murdering Death[24]

Murugan gleefully parodies these high sounding moral sentiments with bitter humour to expose how these scientific achievements barely touched the lives of the millions living at the edge of death.

Half stunned I look around
And see a land of death
Deed bones that walk the ground
And dead bones underneath;
A race of wretches caught,
Between the palms of need
And rubbed to utter nought
The chaff of human seed.[25]

Murugan explains that the sudden interest of all European countries in finding a cure for malaria was not to save human lives as much to ensure the unrestricted expansion of virgin territories:

The mid-nineteenth century was when the scientific community began to wake up to malaria. Remember this was the century when old Mother Europe was settling all the last unknowns: Africa, Asia, Australia, and the American.[26]

Urmila‘s little research‖ on Phulbani and his fictional character Laakhan guides her to reach the eye of a greater mystery. She may be Bengali Hindu in Calcutta but she is an outsider even at home, used and exploited there.

Urmila is also the name of the mythic Lakshman‘s much-neglected wife. She is a typical middle-class Bengalee elder sister, sacrificing herself for her traditional male-dominated household, till she rebels and takes upon herself the aspect of the vengeful goddess Kali. The suspense surrounding her Avtar and the possibilities of developing her into a full-fledged character are willfully negated as the narratives come to an abrupt halt on the eve of her reincarnation. It is never known how she used her newfound powers if she had used them at all.[27] Murugan, the companion, who helped to instigate her revolt and assisted the preparations for her transmogrification

had pleaded with Urmila to save him from impending madness, minutes before her disappearance: Don‘t forget me, he begged her, If you have it in your power to change the script, write me in. Don‘t leave me behind. Please.[28] But Urmila as a deity was either helpless or worse, had punished Murugan for daring to investigate and illuminate the enigmas of the dark world. It‘s Murugan‘s sudden departure that leads Antar to reconstruct his story on his computer and ultimately discover him locked in a mental asylum. The quest of Antar ends.

Sonali‘s quest for Roman Haldar ceases with the unveiling of Laakhan‘s mystery. She, like Urmila, is a Bengali Hindu in Calcutta. She is an actress and writer. Her parentage and lifestyle are anything but conventional; the revelations of the identity of her father at the end of the novel-thriller-fashion-makes her own participation in the conspiracy inevitable. In 1995, Sonali goes looking for Roman Halder to the old house at Robinson Street which Ramen had shown her:

She caught a glimpse of the tops of dozens of heads, some male, some female, young and old, packed in close together. Their faces were obscured by the smoke and flickering firelight. Then there was a stir in the crowd and Sonali forced herself to lookdown again. A figure had come out of the shadows: it was a woman and she was dressed very plainly in a crisply starched saree, with a white scarf tied around her hair. Her figure was short and matronly and Sonali took her to be in late middle age. She had a cloth bag slung over one shoulder, an ordinary cotton jhola of the kind that every student takes to college. In her left hand she was carrying a bamboo birdcage. She seated herself by the fire and placed the bag and the bird cage beside her. She took out two scalpels and a pair of glass Plates. Then she reached out, placed her hands on whatever it was that was lying before the fire and smiled. Raising her voice, the woman said to the crowd, in archaic rustic Bengali: The time is here, pray that all goes well for our Laakhan, once again‘. There was a flash of bright metal and a necklace of blood flew up and fell sizzling on the fire.[29]

The body on which the rituals are performed is that of Roman Halder and the woman is Mrs. Aratounian who does not speak, to Sonali‘s knowledge, Bengali. Roman Halder, who was to meet Sonali that evening suddenly and inexplicably disappears.

Urbashi Barat writes about the quest of Mangala:

Behind all the characters and all the varietiesof the quest is the elusive unseen presence, whom Phulbani acknowledges as his Muse and his spiritual guide, and who is imaged in clay Mangala-bibi the goddess and worshipped in secret by only those who are part of her continuing quest for immortality achieved not through death and entry into the after-life but through the transference of *The Calcutta Chromosome* transmitted by the malaria parasite.[30]

Against the background of the historical facts of Ronald Ross's discovery about malaria fever, Ghosh presents the supernatural power of Mangala, an assistant to D. D. Cunningham. She is portrayed as a goddess-like figure that has found a so-called cure for syphilis but has also acquired knowledge of transcending life beyond life. In this, she is assisted by Lutchman, appropriately named after Rama's brother in the *Ramayana.* Mangala sometime in 1893 performs certain rituals (recorded in a letter by Farley):

She found the woman, Mangala, sitting at the far corner of the room on a leaned sofa. She did not have any friend and was in the mood of order as if installed. Beside her, there were so many tiny cages made of bamboo consisting of pigeons. They were slumped on the floors of their cages, shivering, evidently near death. A number of people having different outlooks of plea gathered on all sides of the woman's leg. Some of them were holding her leg and others were lying face down. At least two or three among them gathered together by the wall. They were covered in blankets. They were suffering from Syphilis and they were in the last stage of this fatal disease.[31]

Farley, the western scientist, understands this clearly and makes them aware not to depend on the immatured and unexperienced woman practitioner of medicine: to dispose the fabrication that she and her followers had devised to betray those innocent and straight forward people.[32] Murugan believes that Mangala was a genius and she was way ahead of Cunningham in her innate comprehension of the essentials of the meliorism problem.[33] He even hazards a guess that she was the demi-urge[34] of Ross's discovery. While using a variant of the Wagner-Jauregg process, Mangala noticed that malaria worked on paresis through a different route, the brain:

It muddies up the blood-brain barrier.[35] It can be more hallucinogenic than any mind-bending drug.[36] This is one of the reasons why primitive people sometimes thought of malaria as a kind of spirit possession.[37] Mangala, as mentioned earlier, secretly started treating syphilitic patients in Dr Cunningham's laboratory. She, at last,discovered that they were not disorders but transpositions, a cross-over of randomly classified personality features from the meliorism supplier to receiver,[38] via the pigeon. It hinted at a freak chromosome, freak because it eluded standard techniques of detection and isolation. Moreover, unlike other chromosomes, it was not present in every cell because it was not symmetrically paired[39] and was not transmitted from generation to generation by sexual reproduction.[40] It developed out of a process of recombination and is particular toevery individual.[41] Only the non-regenerating organs such as brain consisted of it and could be passed on by means of meliorism.

It is this stray DNA carrier that Murugan names *"The Calcutta Chromosome"*- a biotic presentation of human property and it is neither genetic nor passed into it.[42] What Mangala and her associates had succeeded in doing was, in short, the ultimate transcendence of nature or immortality‖[43] through a technique of interpersonal transference of human traits.

Mangala and her associates succeeded in their quest for immortality.' Lutchman alias Laakhan stands for the epitome of mutual intervention of *The Calcutta Chromosome*. They performed this feat by an indirect help, first, by Ross and, second, by Julius- Von-Wagner.

Julius-Von-Wagner and Mangala are unfit partners in their plan because the mobilization of malaria fevers for manipulation of malarial fever for bringing a condition of dementia which would be able to introduce a magic. The main form of dementia is the disordered system of mind that sets up a base to new findings which provides the unconscious a weapon with two edges. Mangala's creed uses it to transfer knowledge and ideas of a person into another by curving the enclosures of mind by means of pyrexia.[44]

We find a world of uncertainty instead of sanity or coherence in *The Calcutta Chromosome* in which the capacity of Mangala befits to the ability of a magician

rather than that of a craftsman. The anti-science may have exceptional strength to reverse science but their intentions similar with that of their equivalent are self-serving instead of being compassionate.[45]

Urbashi Barat observes:

After all, the quest is not for a drug. There can, accordingly, be no comforting rounding-off, but rather only a step further towards the realms of non-rational and the ineffable-realms that are accessible especially to the poor, the marginalised, the colonized, the survivor, the cult of silence and secrecy spreads to territories governed by the word and reason. Western knowledge and science had once conquered the East, but inevitably the Empire must strike back. Through its subversive quest, *The Calcutta Chromosome* celebrates the eternal, celebrates the triumph of the spirit over all that bogs it down in the mire.[46]

Tapan K. Ghosh also expands on this theme:

What Amitav Ghosh has written is, in fact, a complex, fascinating and highly inventive tale of pursuit and revelation that entwine present, past and future into a complex quality and isnarrated, despite its burden of erudition, in a crisp, racy and crystalline prose that grips the reader‘s attention till the end.[47]

There are some learned reviewers who find this quest for immortality unconvincing. Meenakshi Mukherjee remarks: To pass them out one would have to read the novel a second time,[48] Jaya Banerjee considers it far-fetched and compares it to the grandma‘s Bengali braid,‘ with the thread of malarial research running through the novel:

If Ghosh ever drew his storyline on a blackboard he would end up with real granny‘s knot of aplot each character‘s life intertwined with the others in some way or the other. As for direction, he proceeds in every decreasing circles until he comes to the centre which is where he started in the first place.[49]

The theme of journey in *The Calcutta Chromosome,* like his earlier novels *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines* and *In an Antique Land,* is a recurrent theme. Pradeep Trikha comments: for him (Ghosh) it is not only a transit by means of area or expansion but a pronouncement of the urgent desire for discovery and change that underlies actual movement and experience of travelling.[50]

Madhumalati Adhikari comments on the theme of journey:

The complicated connection of characters, space and cadence often breathtaking thrust the reader to start an expedition of spiritually impure area of all the time. Initially, the thematic originality and complexity bewilders the reader but a close scrutiny discloses that like his earlier novels Ghosh in *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) has universalized the specific through the concept of journey. The spiritual and corporeal exploration, the promise of alternative worlds and visions, invariably compel them (individual) to shuffle between different geographic locations and points of time.[51] Travelling, Jung observes, is an image of aspiration of an unsatisfied longing that never finds a goal. It is a quest‖ that starts in the darkness of the profane world and gropes towards the light.[52]

Pradeep Trikha adds:

In an Antique Land describes Ghosh as a traveler interested in men, places and scenery; he thinks travel is man‘s primordial quest to expand his awareness into realization. Both Antar and Murugan in *The Calcutta Chromosome* have an urgent desire for discovery and they undergo profound experiences during the course of their researches, even Ronald Ross expands his awareness when he works in Cunningham’s laboratory. Hence to study, to inquire, to seek or to live with intensity through new and profound experiences is all modes of travelling or the spiritual and symbolic equivalent of the journey. Antar and Murugan are travelers in that they are restless.[53]

If Antar initiates the journey, Murugan completes it in the end. Whether it is a journey of Antar or Murugan, it is a journey to the unknown. On the face of it, the book is about miasma re-narrating the fiction of Ronald Ross‘s findings of the life-process of the miasma sponge ample of which is accessible in the history of medicine and Ross‘s own memoir. The Story of Ross, the Nobel Prize-winning British bacteriologist, is a familiar one to Indians-it is often included in school texts-and his memorial arc at the entrance to the P. G. Hospital is a common sight to the pedestrians in Calcutta. In spite of that epoch-making discovery in the late nineteenth century, the disease still remains a curse in our lives, continuing to take its annual toll of thousands of lives. It is one of the reasons why the story of Ross evokes at once a fascination and a sense of regret in our minds.

But Amitav Ghosh has largely deviated from the well-known account of Ross's discovery on 20 August 1897 and has cast it in an altogether different vein. His aim is not to write a scientific treatise on malaria but to present an alternative version of the story and, through it, hint at an alternative reality. The novel is divided into two sections: (a) August 20: Mosquito Day, and (b) The Day After. The major part of the narrative takes place in Calcutta in 1995. On 20 August, the World Mosquito Day, L. Murugan-a man obsessed with malaria and Ross arrives in Calcutta on a search for the clues to the enigmatic Calcutta Chromosome. The next day he mysteriously disappears. At the heart of the narrative lie the events of these two days. Connected with these are the medical history of malaria, Ross's search and discovery, the experience of Antar, and some scattered incidents in Calcutta. Tapan K. Ghosh comments on them:

The novel traces the adventures of Murugan and the strange truth of what actually took place on those fateful days in August 1995, and years before in the laboratory at P. G. Hospital where Ross had made his final break through. Wrapped in mystery, the narrative stretches across time and space to cover a hundred years. It ranges from an unspecified time in future to the late nineteenth-century and trails the history of the intriguing but elusive Calcutta Chromosome through a wide assortment of characters and a mind-boggling set of events.[54]

Jaya Banerjee says: Each character is the hunter and the hunted, his or her life woven into an intricate pattern with the lives of others. The ribbon that touches each life is a sinister, mysterious belief in supernatural.[55]

The story moves from the god-forsaken village of Renupur in north India which abounds in ghosts and ghostly trains, through a little Egyptian hamlet on the western edge of the Nile Delta with its –brilliantly sunlit vision of sand and mud-brick and creaking water-wheels[56] which is believed to be the most sacred site of the ancient Valentinian cult: the lost shrine of silence,[57] to New York in the 21st century where Antar tries to solve the puzzle of Murugan's disappearance with the help of his garrulous supercomputer Ava.

The journey of Antar, through his computer, is into the past, the past of Murugan. It begins at the New York apartment of a computer-bound Egyptian archivist named Antar, who works for the International Water Council, a global organisation that explores and examines the depletion of the world‘s water supplies.[58] His is an inconsequential at home‖ job. What he is required to do is tagging, naming, numbering and propelling into the horizonless limbo[59] of Ava‘s phenomenal memory the routine inventories that the I.W.C throws at him with metronomic regularity.[60] One morning Ava ferrets out a lost and badly damaged ID card with a small metal chain attached to it. With her astounding resourcefulness, Ava reconstructs, at Antar‘s command, the lost card that is originated in Calcutta and forms a three-dimensional prediction of the person who was the owner of the card. Antar identifies the card and identifies the man as L Murugan, the principal archivist of Life and Watch, a small but respected non-profit organisation that served as a global public health consultancy and epidemiological data bank‖[61] where Antar had once worked. Murugan a cocky little rooster of man‖[62] with thin and discoloured hair, bright black eyes, moon-like face, a boxer‘s nose, and a trimmed goatee in an aggressively jutting chin-was known for his combativeness, obstinacy and unstoppable fluency.[63] Antar remembers that Murugan has been missing from Calcutta since 21 August 1995.

Antar launches a computer-aided search for the missing Murugan. He finds himself embroiled in a bizarre tale defying all explanations. He is lost in the lives of men and women with whom he had no direct link; discontinuity creeps in his life and he journeys on and on in search of the real goal. The Ghosh journey is a symbol of life that man must undertake in search of truth and fulfilment. Murugan and Antar are in search of truth and fulfilment. Let us put it in the right perspective queried by Antar this other team to use your phrasewas already ahead of Ross on some of this research. Why wouldn‘t they publish their findings and put themselves in the running for the Nobel,[64] Murugan explains:

You understand everything regarding the issue and the counter-issue, okay? And space and vestibule and the redeemer and counter the redeemer, etc.? At the moment, we think there existed a substance like science and anti-science. Consideringthis fact

is synopsis, wouldn't you speak that the earliest theory of operating anti- science would have to be confidentially?[65]

When Antar expresses his inability to follow his line of reasoning, Murugan further explains:

Not making sense is what it's about-conventional sense that is. Maybe, the next group commenced thinking that intelligence is paradoxical. Perhaps, they thought that to perceive something is to convert it, so in grasping something, you have already converted what you suppose you perceive. That's why, you never actually perceive it at all; what you grasp is only its chronicle. Perhaps, they suppose that intelligence begins with the recognition that intelligence is unfeasible.[66]

The writer of the novel shows the Mangala's magical power opposed to the framework of the historical reality of Ronald Ross's findings concerning the miasma pyrexia. Mangala is an assistant to D. D. Cunningham. He smells a conspiracy behind the success of Ross. The source of the other group is silence, the concealed truth. Murugan finds that Phulboni who is the greatest living writer of Bengal. He is the main defender of this craze of tranquility and he is the receiver of the National award. However incredible it may sound, these people had developed the most revolutionary medical technology of all time.[67] These people helped Ross. Murugan puts it humorously:

He regards he is experimenting on the malaria parasite. And all the time it's he who is the experiment of the malaria parasite. But Ronnie never gets it; not to the end of his life.[68]

In his journey to Calcutta in August 1995, Murugan's search is exactly for these people. He confronts many people and sometimes he makes contemplative moves to meet them as if they were holding their horses for him. He fathoms that most of them are irredeemably subordinated to the mysterious Calcutta Chromosome.[69] He is convinced that the marginal group‖ helped Ross to achieve what he yearned for, immortality, the ultimate transcendence of nature. In his search for the marginal group, he got the help of Urmila. Ghosh confirms the strength of the local medicine obtained by means of hit- or miss- and carried out by Mangala. According to the Indian faith, the human spirit moves from one figure to another but the great power that directs the fluctuation.

Mangala, a human being, tries to perform the identical practice on her own as she views that God belongs to her and it means that she desires to be the brain or perception that sets the thing in motion. The child in the Kalighat episode informs Urmila: This day is the final of puja of Mangala-bibi. Baba presents that Mangala-bibi is intending to infiltrate a new figure.[70] A man is granted an exceptional power by means of sensible practice. To describe the principle of transposition of personality‖, Ghosh cites the story of Ganesh from Indian mythos.[71]

Pradeep Trikha writes about the theme of the journey:

The central idea of the novel can be the excursion of the narrator here and there in tempo and expanse to decode the great significance of life and existence. The co-extensive story of the novel provides a remarkable impression to the definition. Perhaps, this may be an effort to force a particular structure upon the experience. Ghosh has distorted the variation of characters and their existence if they are from 19th century or from the present society.[72]

In spite of the themes of quest and journey so delicately written by Amitav Ghosh, we are unable to see the reason behind his writing this novel. We have to search for the hidden agenda. Is not *The Calcutta Chromosome* an attempt at an exoticization of India? Meenakshi Mukherjee, a perceptive scholar and teacher puts it. Thus: How does a writer avoid the allegation of neo-orientalism for such an exoticization of India.[73] Against all the inventions and terminology of the new technology, what we find is the characters appearing and disappearing from the screen and life itself without making any impression on the reader‘s mind. Their journeys and quests do not arrive at any discovery.

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Chapter-5

A STORY OF COLONIAL PERIOD IN "THE GLASS PALACE"

The book *The Glass Palace* is an effort to point out the chronicle of tempo and country such as men, a harassed class of ethnic groups living in British dominated provinces in South-East Asia. Amitav Ghosh presents a confused and often painfully sharp emotional description of a family dispersed in different locations of Asian continents due to imperialist displacement in the life of the central protagonist, Rajkumar when he draws a map of sociological and political implicit effect of dissipation, expulsion and the hunt of a motherland. *The Glass Palace* is nothing if not the discussion of postcolonial subjects. Ghosh doesn't make any claim about the nature of the narrative. The writer tries to redraw the map of chronicle of three important South-Asian nations: Burma, India and Malaysia. The concept of the country symbolizes the loss and consolidation rather than corporeal body that the community perceives complicated outline in the irregular flow of cultural religion and varying histories that form the main theme of Ghosh. The category of culture which in other context can be regarded as satirical blend of nationalities is only flamboyant as a triviality is presented in the first phase of the novel very clearly. The ancient walled city beside the Irrawaddy river, seat of Burmese royalty among the thriving of British weapons, the activities of Rajkumar, the presence of 11-years old Indians chance, etc. symbolizes a shift of power and change in cultural positions. The un-ambivalent language in which the Royal proclamation of the Burmese king is publicly announced is not however without the irony of what comes soon after: For all the people of Royal family and the residents of Royal kingdom: the dissidents, the savage English Kalaas planned for the damage and downfall of our religion, the destruction of our race is sharing and preparing as though they are going to initiate war with our state. They have been answered in accordance with the implication of great nations in just and regular words‖.

While there is clearly the questioning of colonial authority here, Ghosh carefully addresses several related issues in his novel taking up an ambivalent stand on the politics of resistance. In this context it may be interesting to recall Jenny Sharp's brilliant essay *Figures of Colonial Resistance* where she articulates the

position of the colonial subject as one whose resistance is part of the same ideological machinery it seeks to subvert and thus always necessarily incomplete. It is to a great extent an effect of the contradictory representation of colonial authority and thus liable to be preceded by the recognition that such an act is double and constantly mediates between the colonizer colonized binary.

In the mazes of history, new associations are forged, the past is recast in transformed patterns and unspoken allegiances and loyalties are born where there were only hierarchies of power and position. The curious turn of history resulting in the making of community constituted of what Ben Anderson calls characters, author and readers moving onward through cylindrical time‖ thus turns the pages of the novel into an agency for the imagined community which is the nation.

Dolly in this case and by her peculiar new position of being twice enslaved in the breaking of the nation is the unconscious reminder of the national idea which flourishes as Bhabha points out in the soil of foreign conquest. She more than anyone else represents the holiness of Burmese Royal family, their majestic authority that looks gradually intimidated in the time of banishment and most markedly the peaceful and implicit anger of displaced people.

The question of identity is a great matter. Whether cultural or political, it takes into account the collective natural allegiance of the people to their nation. For the postcolonial Gayatri Spivak explains the concept of nationhood is a symbol frequently being claimed back as the area of post-colonial period, cannot move forward significantly that are historically sufficient, in the issue of provincial people, nationhood is probably the only authentic and chronically recent interest. Dolly left her most impressive passion in Burma and she missed it forever. Her dislocation from her vernacular base and her uneasiness with her own new identification is obvious as she openly says to Uma, the better half of Collector, that she has left home forever: I would be a foreigner if I move to Burma at present they would name me a Kalaa like they call Indians a foreigner, a visitor, from beyond the sea. It would be quite hard for me. I suppose that it would be impossible for me to think that I would have to go away from this place one day again like I had to go away in the past‖.

Rajkumar dwells in post-colonial realm disguising double characters: a character of a Kaala, an immigrant in a bizarre land and depending on the immigration of next more factual category engaging in substantial turbulence caused by the British invasion of Burma accompanied by one more chaotic circumstance in spectacular India and attack into the Malayan woodland assets creates an image of an accurate multi-nationalism in him.

Ma Cho, the food stall owner for whom the young Rajkumar works in Mandalay demonstrates through her defiance of Queen Supayalat this exchange of positions most vehemently in *The Glass Palace* as the booty is plundered by the same people who earlier venerated the royals as their sovereign. Still more revealing is Rajkumar‘s empathy with the common expression of sorrow at the death of the King and the immediate invasion of Burma: Rajkumar was at a grief to feel his pain. In a way he was an untrained animal, not aware that in certain places there is unseen connection connecting people to each other by means of human traits of their inter-relationship. In Bengal, his birth place, this relation had been divided by the decades of victory and no longer remained even as a recollection. But, there should remain a world of modesty that was not related to himself and his basic necessities. It was almost beyond our understanding.[1]

In Dolly, the occurrence of dislocation evokes a voluntary deprivation of property restating the principle that colonized people get trouble from the feeling of fake and imaginary homeland. This is valid in the case of Dolly and Rajkumar, both of whom seek to ascertain their rights over Indian and Burmese territories, suited as home in turn. Dolly thinks that her life in Outram House in Ratnagiri is good life for her. Her moment in exile is also ironically her moment of great assertion. She boldly protests the idea of hanging the portrait of Victoria by the front door at her residence where Uma resides with her family. Uma is a native person and she has more opportunities in all fields and she also immediately removes the picture of Victoria from the wall. In Calcutta, she took liberal education and knows she is a spouse of a Collector but her education and marital status have nothing remarkable to the originality of the reaction. She can stress Dolly‘s condition predestined because both of them are in the area of colonial domination and dislocated by the identical glow of monarchical power.

These people easily adopted the foreign culture at the moment of the disintegration of the country and it is unusual experience about them. Their split identities promoted the idea of national desire, estrangement, etc. at the same time and transnationalism. Rajkumar is an important name in the Burmese South Asian market. If Rajkumar's contact with the Indian artists who visit lower part to Rangoon from the upper part of Burmese jungle elicit in his painful experience for Chittagong and boyhood days, he is only briefly in the realm of such sentiments that he easily handles. Saya John's impression of Rajkumar when the latter lands the British timber contract is perhaps most telling. He looks at Rajkumar as someone he had never seen before, a recreated settler who renounced himself and has found space in an alien society by means of his hard work under the assumption that he will soon be adopted into and by the accepted cultural system and hence gets out winding up in rabbles or ghettos. Ghosh's portrays the mean Luga-lei as a wood millionaire. By this portrayal, he addresses the big issue of landing and re-landing of communities and individuals among the convergence of nations and nationalities who as Bhabha suggests is able to gather the signs of approval and acceptance. Uma Dey's sojourn abroad after her husband's sudden and tragic death is not unlike that necessary state in enlightened Western education: the grand European tour, which opens her to another bigger and perhaps more fascinating world. Though Uma is later caught up in the Indian Nationalist cause· and is part of the intelligentsia of the subcontinent in a particularly displaced way is that she is imbued in a culture that gives her what is said in terms of nearly offensive meaning of nation, home country, and property‖. Like most of Ghosh's other heroes, she is a resident of the whole world. They hardly require the kind of representation that most imperialized people search hence the post-colonial importance is moderated and ripped off agency and only unoriginal response. Further, the hybridity of these imperialized people make it unfeasible for them to encounter the nation of banishment front to front because their mixed feature reduces the term exile of its hierarchy of oppression and establishes the experience of post-coloniality, an area in which the colonized-colonizer pair is weakened.

The narrator extends his views and fictitious concept of the world involved in the whirlwind of brutality and violent storm and focusses on the immediate need of protecting the recollections of rational people and human business for cultural self-determination and inter-personal communication.

Self-choice and relational communication to stop the frequent occurrence of deranged hysteria, the public memory and media should preserve the abstract reason of communities. Ghosh has moved towards his novel to manage the allocation of disturbing experiences and events and shake up our indifference to the gathering potential of tragedy. All in all, the novel is what G.R. Taneja says:

An persuasive criticism of colonial headache and cultural displacement in the postcolonial circumstance is‖ also the psychological construction of the modern man who prospers on violence.[2]

Amitav Ghosh projects these genuine Indian vibrations with remarkable competence. The novel *The Glass Palace* by Amitav Ghosh contains a number of individual characters who play a very vital role in upgrading the humanistic concerns of human freedom and dignity. A specific concern for human freedom and dignity in Ghosh‘s understanding of humanism emerges from his rejection of colonial practices. In Ghosh‘s humanistic thoughts, the idea of equality of all human beings regardless of their nationality, cast, religion, culture, social or political status, etc. receives greatest value and importance. In order to express his concern, Ghosh has given fictional expression to the practices that block human freedom and tend to subjugate man/woman. The dehumanizing behaviour of the rider has been depicted by means of the behavior of their people by them. Many maids are there to work for Queen Supayalat. These domestic workers are young ladies. They are parentless and many of them are just children. The saddest matter is that these domestic workers are there to work not by their wish but they have been purchased by the Queen‘s agents in villages along with the Northern frontiers of the kingdom. This episnode displays very cruel and brutal manner and mind of the Queen of Burma. She never treats the workers as human beings. The rulers think the way the maids serve the Queen and the circumstance in which they dwell is normal and natural. For these rulers, the very concept of humanism has a different meaning for the rulers and the ruled. For them, the idea of humanism has different definition to the rulers and the ruled ones. The frequent presentation or portrayal of the brutal situation in which the workers carry out the task and the way they are told to display the honour and respect to the Queen present the critique of the novelist of the force that is against human gravity or self-esteem.

In addition, the practice of Shiko presents the absence of interest for human values among the rulers. In terms of this system, the maids should lie down in front of the Queen to convey their respect to her. Ghosh in his novel illustrates these facts to present how the diverse systems taken by the rulers are prone to brutalise the men.

The postcolonial perspective informing Ghosh's understanding of human values can be traced from the rejection of the authority of the imperial powers to set the standard or others. The imperialists impose their culture and thinking on their subjects through the self-ascribed role of the representatives of humanism and modernization. It is a typical styles of the colonialists that perpetuation of their hold on their subjects races is introduced through the presentation of humanistic concerns as synonymous with the promotion of the cultural values of the colonizers. One such example in *The Glass Palace* can be observed in the propagation of modernization and women's education with a view to abrogate and appropriate the native culture. The propagation of such ideas is in fact to insert the real ulterior motives of the imperialists in the guise of apparent concern for their subjects. The colonialists use these things as an effective ploy to mould the natives according to their own terms of humanism. Ghosh exposes the hollow nature of the humanistic interest of the colonial is incorporated in the understanding of women's right and education. Uma presents the outlook of the novelist on the issue of the illusory type of humanism suggested by the colonialist. She asks how it is feasible to think that a person is likely to bestow freedom by forcing the serfdom. She also asks if a person is likely to disclose a cage by pressing a bigger one and how any group of people could expect to get freedom where the whole population was put in enslavement.[3]

These ideas reveal the false sense of humanism propagated by the British authorities. Ghosh criticizes this sense of humanism employed to promote the interests of the dominating cultures through different practices. The role of different socio-political institutions in stiffing humanity for their own growth and development also brings out Ghosh's concern for human existence. The British imperialism is barbaric and anti-human towards not only its subjects but also towards its propagators and the ones who work for it. It employs even young English people in deceitful way to expand its grip, continue and promote its power. The British colonialists use their young men to work in the jungle until they are able to face the

dangerous environment and polluted climate to explore and exploit the forest wealth. Saya John, who indirectly conveys the voice of the author exposing these sides of imperialism and presents that the young Europeans have to spend minimum two/three years in the forest before they are suffered and weakened from dengue or malaism fever to the extent where they should be in the easy access of medical facilities.[4]

The purpose of the company to use these men as mere tools to further its interests exposes its human attitude. The plight of these workers has been aptly reflected in the following lines:

The company has good concept of it. It thinks that these people will be perpetually old within a few years. They will be twenty-one years old and shifted to the town offices. Then can lead this forest life as they arrive here at first stage at the age of seventeen/eighteen and the company should earn profit from during these few productive years or age.[5]

The humanistic concern of Amitav Ghosh is hoist by the central character Dinu who exposes the designs of power-hungry people: Their ideology is about the superiority of certain races and the inferiority of the others.[6]

The hierarchical structure of society, in Ghosh‘s opinion, even if it is ordained by the native rulers is against the spirit of humanism. The fascist ideas are severely criticized by Ghosh through the character of Dinu. He gives a long speech about the nature of the forces that function against human freedom and dignity. Another aspect of humanistic tendencies in *The Glass Palace* is related to the rejection of a fixed notion of human identity. It brings out the clash between the static notion of identity that forms the core of cultural thought in imperialism and the democratic perspective adopted by Amitav Ghosh in this novel. In order to reject the stable and fixed concept of identity Ghosh presents characters that do not carry essential national identities. Instead of being Indians; Burmans of Malay characters are remembered as Dolly, Uma, Rajkumar, Saya John, Alison, Dinu, Neel, Daw Thin, Thin Aye. Similarly, the two different names- one Burman and the other Indian of Rajkumar‘s son destabilize nation-based identities. This fictional device used by Ghosh liberates the concept of humanism from set values ascribed on the basis of national consensus in transcendental terms. Ghosh‘s perspective here comes closer to an understanding of

multiple possibilities of human existence that tends to make his humanistic concerns multidimensional informing plurality of views defining human values.

The most significant aspect of Ghosh's fictional discourse is the presentation of a dialogical perspective about humanism. Meaning in this discourse lies not in individual utterances, but their dialogical negotiations. It can be understood in the concept of the most of the main characters that are changed at the duration of novel by means of dialogical conversation or communication. Uma, the wife of an Indian officer serving the Empire considered the strategies employed by the Empire as something humane and a form of their concern for bringing the light of civilization to the people suffering under the darkness of the cruelty unleashed by the native rulers. But at a larger stage when a popular insurgent movement is ruthless, crushed by the British rulers she realizes the hollow claims of their humanism and realizes that the empire was so skillful and ruthless in the deployment of its overwhelming power; so expert in the management of opinion. Awareness of true humanistic concerns makes it clear to Uma that only British imperialism is not the only power working against the spirit of humanity. Even the natives are in no way different when they involved in repressive deeds. She refutes Rajkumar for supplying contracted workers to the Britishers. Rajkumar you have lost your point to express views. This tragedy has taken place because of the people like you. Your work and that of your sort go well beyond the worst acts committed by Europeans.[7]

In Ghosh's understanding, the major element threatening humanistic values is power politics. The intrusion of politics in different fields of life tends to subordinate humanistic concerns to the motive related to power. The working of politics does not allow the social and cultural institution to work for the dignity of man. Instead of being in the centre man is subordinated to the level of a means to serve the ends of those powers that control different institutions. Human values can be protected only if politics is made to serve man. It can be achieved only if the people wielding political power realize this. In the episodes of the novel, Aung San Suu Kyi, a great commander who fights to maintain democratic rules and systems instead of the dictatorship of military junta is presented as the embodiment of true humanism in· the given circumstances. Upholding the dignity and sovereignty of man as a man she resists the involvement of politics that blocks the way to human independence.

In *The Glass Palace*, Amitav Ghosh has presented the sense of belongingness and rootedness through his immortal character Rajkumar Raha. Rajkumar Raha, the protagonist of *The Glass Palace* is an eleven-year-old orphan boy who belongs to Chittagong and captured in an unidentified place because of an accident. While he is in Burma, an idea of integration comes in his mindand he plans to live there. Because of an Indian identity, he gets much trouble there (in the new and strange place). As the Indian troops moving towards the city following the instruction of their English commanders, the local people capture Rajkumar and assaulted him in their frenzy mood. The painful diasporic circumstance is revealed by this incident: Twisting Rajkumar head around, he struck him across the face with the back of his feast. A spurt of blood shot out of Rajkumar's nose then the crook of an elbow took Rajkumar in the stomach, pumping the breath out of him and throwing him against a wall. He slid down clutching his stomach, as though he were trying to push his insides back in‖.[8]

The tragic situation of King Thebaw, Queen Supayalat is revealed as they are forced to give up the royalty and are banished to settle in a faraway land, Ratnagiri. The King who was a ruler of the country once is sure to lead a life in prison in a far distant away place from his homeland. It is a coincidence that the queen who once gave order to murder nearly seventy-nine regal princes has to give up the land of her rule and spend life in a jail in a strange place only for the affection of her husband.

Dolly, the heroine, of the novel, is a trustworthy servant of Queen Supayalat who as well has to give up her native land along with the Royal family. The concept of returning to Burma scares her as she spent childhood days in India. She is worried of being labelled as a foreigner (stranger/non-native) in her own motherland. Uma, the wife of the collector, tells Dolly not to give company to the King and Queen since she has not been captivated by British Empire but Dolly's painful experience is obvious when she is treated as a foreigner. She says: I would be an alien person if I shift to Burma presently they would identify me as Kalaa in a way they identify the Indians- a stranger from the waters beyond. This would be very difficult for me. I guess I would not be able to erase the concept from my mind that I would have to move from this land again just as I had to in the past. The diasporic people are scared by the idea of being dislocated twice from their native land.[9] This torturing condition of Dolly is

similar to that of Etta, in the novel *A Backward Place* by Ruth PrawarJhabwala. Etta realizes that it is not easy to reunite with the place in the same manner after a long gap: She longed for Europe, it was true, and would do anything to get there, but she could no longer tackle it on her own.‖[10]

Regarding the context of Dolly and Rakumar who accept their legality in India and Burma to build their house, the self-inflicted task of eviction due to the dislocation on the side of the colonized people who get tribulation from imaginary (fictitious) and artificial native land is not explicit. In another incident when Rajkumar comes to India to marry Dolly, who he has fallen in love with at the first sight, she refuses to marry him. She is completely taken up by the idea of her role as, the caretaker of the royal family especially with the first princess who is pregnant. Uma's liberal outlook and practical approach to life help to convince Dolly, after which, she marries Rajkumar. The fake identity of the colonized people with the colonizer is a matter of joy. The effect of mental colonization results in total absolute discord in thealliance as in the incident of District Collector, Beni Prasad Dey and his wife, Uma Dey. The Collector is enforcing the western code of conduct, keeps the Britishers above Indians and wishes to be in good records of the Britishers as Uma, who plays the role of an elegant hostess, leading a mechanical and lovely life is disappointed in the sophisticated environment generated by her husband.

Uma is not able to cope anymore after Dolly has left the place. Hence she plans to separate from her husband and reside at her family house. Because of this fake understanding of identity, the collector has to suffer and his suffering ends only with death. It is very painful to see people living under illusions regarding the exploitation of the diasporic people. Another character in the novel, Saya John as well leads his life in the false concept of the Empire. He believes that the English are superior and does not view them as usurpers and it is they who have given him the skill of employing everything for his own profit. It invites good results for him and he is no more interested to learn anything except his instant achievement. Rajkumar as well has the similar concept with that of Saya and thinks that economy of Burma will fall completely without the presence of the British. The declaration of war affects the diasporic situation of the people intensely. The wall is full of suffering, misery, etc. crumbling the many delusions. Concentrating on the younger generation, these

conditions are presented further through Arjun, nephew of Uma who joins the military institution in Dehradun inspired by the concept of ardent service to his nation but obtains an uncivilized remarks as his mate Hardy speaks in ironical way. Where does this nation exist? Actually you and I have no nation.[11]

His identification with the British Empire breaks instantly. Not only are the illusions broken, but the heart too is broken by the harsh and cruel consequences of war. Rajkumar and Dolly‘s son, Dinu fall in love with Alison, Saya John‘s grand-daughter. Alison dies in World War II before, she can get married to Dinu and so they part forever. Sudha Tiwari rightly observes: The relationship that might have bloomed and lasted a lifetime is ruptured by the tumult of war.[12]

In many cases, the diasporic condition involves a lot of confusion and anguish and may take a turn for the worse. People who are not able to cope with the unfavourable situation of the dislocation miss their control in life and give in to the pressure. Elder daughter-in-law of Rajkumar, Manju is one such character, who, unable to face the hardships of war and displacement commits suicide. This condition is mirrored in a superb manner by Bharati Mukherjee in her novel 'Wife'. In the novel Dimple she is incapable of integrating herself within the diasporic conditions and loses her mental balance, and in her neurotic obsession with death and Silicate, kills her husband Amit. Loss of one‘s grip on life ultimately leads to the loss of life itself. The intense desire and passion of the dislocated people carry on seeking their identity for a long. These longings and yearnings are satisfied in the case of some characters like Dolly, who being always inclined towards spiritualism, attains satisfaction in it. Likewise, Umeed Salman Rushdie‘s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* finds satisfaction in his art of photography and his relationship with Mira. These characters come out of their diasporic condition by finding a proper balance and adjustment to their lives in an alien land and culture.

But in the case of Rajkumar, his longings and intense desires are unfulfilled until his demise. He looks for one or another thing throughout his lifespan. As he has no alternative to leave India, he struggles for the space he thinks to be his nativeland (Burma). He admits to his granddaughter Jaya that for his grace the holy river Ganga is unlikely to be identical as the Irrawaddy. His longings and yearnings don‘t end in

his lifespan; it ends only with the end of his life. He mourns for life when he and Dolly are living in Burma and remarks:

–Chittagong is the homeland of my father and he arrived in Arakan; I stopped in Rangoon: you moved to Ratnagiri from Mandalay and at present you are also here now. Why should we expect that we‘re going to spend the rest of our lives here? There are some very fortunate people who can spend their entire life in their native land. But our situation is different. On the contrary, we have to expect that a time will come when We‘ll have to move on again. Rather than be swept along by events, we should make plans and take control of our own fate.[13]

The longings and yearnings faced by Rajkumar in *The Glass Palace* can be seen in V.S. Naipaul‘s *A House for Mr. Biswas* where we find the same pathetic situation in the death of Nil Biswas who dies at the young age of forty-six still longing for his roots. Sudha Rai rightly observes:

Biswas leads up to the exile‘s condition of perpetual confrontation with self and culture.[14]

Thus this critical analysis of the various types of characterization in the novels of Amitav Ghosh clearly reveals that the writer is very much alive to the ideals of modem novels in English which lay much stress on the art of characterization rather than plot construction. Amitav Ghosh seems to be very much influenced by the forms of Virginia Woolf who says that man is seldom present in his actions. In other words, in order to know the real truth of man, one has to take the help of the art of characterization especially the art of the inner journey of the character. This is, in fact, what Amitav Ghosh has done with the help of his art of characterization.

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Chapter-6

POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION IN "SEA OF POPPIES"

Primarily centering the story in mid-nineteenth century India, *Sea of Poppies* records the political and socio-economic conditions that caused the group shifting of poor Indian farmers like contracted workers to the Mauritius islands. Applying the tradition and principle of historical novels, the author reveals a realistic world, filled with characters having diverse economic and cultural base and by means of their conversation with aristocratic and colonial indigenous force presents the connection among colonization, explanation and humanism which was, in extensive way, the main reason for almost all of the social, economic, political unfairness (inequality) in the geography of Indian sub-continent at the time of colonial reign. A short review of British imperialism in the Indian subcontinent would contextualize the historical conditions that animate Ghosh's narrative. Entering the subcontinent as the Honorable East India Trading Company in 1708, the British soon took advantage of the in-fighting between the various independent states that made up erstwhile India, and by 1757 AD were ruling large parts of present-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Burma.During approximately two hundred years of imperial rule, a range of economic, social, physical, and political subjectivities was enforced upon the native populations, which resulted in seismic changes in their traditional occupations and livelihood. British policies in the Indian subcontinent resulted in the transformation from the prevailing feudal system to a zamindari system of land ownership, where the tax collector or zamindar became the proprietor of the land, agricultural production was forced to change from staple wheat, pulses, and other food items to the cultivation of cash crops (most notably opium, the drug whose exports bought enormous profits to the Empire), and natives were barred from political rights or offices, to mention only a few of the most important consequences of colonization. My focus is attention on Ghosh's cure of the politically, socially, and economically turbulent period of Indian history during the first of the Opium Wars of the nineteenth century, as is fictionally depicted in *Sea of Poppies*.Using this historical background, I highlight Ghosh's explicit linking of imperialistic politics and self-serving humanist

discourses. Second, I inspect the post-humanist responses he offers to the overwhelming power of such hegemonies, concentrating on the interpersonal aspects of this philosophy that promotes mutual respect, acceptance, and tolerance between humans, and contest imperial and native aristocracy‘s efforts to preserve caste distinctions and maintain hierarchies in social structures. Lastly, I draw parallels between the socio-economic situations described of an era that is at least two centuries old, and examine why it is relevant to us even now, we who live in a politically free but extremely interconnected and globalized world, and the lessons such engagements might have for modern readers.

Ghosh‘s description presents different imperial ways of subjectiveness and vigorous (vital) example of repelling. It also makes criticism of remaining Indian social and traditional forces that were clearly anti-feminist, feudal and male-dominated in essence. Ghosh‘s response to colonialism is then not only a rejection of its dominant ideologies but also a powerful propagation of a post-humanist philosophy, which advocates the renegotiation of enlightenment humanist power relations. Included in this renegotiation are the long-standing privileges afforded to Caucasians over Asians, Africans, and other indigenous peoples, the superiority of men over women, of the individual I over the Other, to enumerate only some of its most important binaries. Further, Ghosh refutes the established holy principles and faith that perpetually divide people weakening their integration and force in front of persecution (deposition). At the end the novel is appropriate at present because of the current social, political and economic equivalents. It makes us think and aware of the innate risk of our present view point that forms the prevailing atmosphere, economic imperialism, racism, suspicion, and intolerance pervading many communities and countries across the globe.

Extensive assurance to human significance and ideals is the fundamental ideology of Amitav Ghosh and it has inspired the Sea of Poppies‘. Ghosh employs this ideology to recognize the development of human society and to retrieve all that is significant finally unavoidable in our divergent culture. In the novel, diverse nature of colonial domination, chiefly social, physical, psychological, religious, political, etc. are depicted.

Portrayed in the novel are the different forms of colonial subjection, mainly physical, economic, political, religious, judicial, and social. One can view Ghosh‘s selection of the characters is nearly metaphorical or figurative: Deeti, a deprived woman and she is a casualty of social, economic and sexual exploitation, forced to commit suicide: Neel, the hedonistic aboriginal raja; vanished in the world of literature, western ideology and dancer girls; Burnham and Doughty, the British people with merciless trait for benefit and authority. All his characters are reinforced by his awareness to present in creating a special make up for each of them. This is obtained to a great extent by the individualized idiom of speech attributed with great verbal felicity to every character, from the creolized jargon of the lascars to the Queen‘s English declared by the western-educated raja, to the broken English, French and Bengali spoken by Paulette. This rich melange of tongues used with seamless ease. More importantly, although the characters initially appear as the model of the subjugated aboriginals, when the story moves forward, each of them personally exhibits a profound feeling of uniqueness, resource and adaptability in the circumstance of individual misfortune and overpowers the risk of convention.

In 1838, Sea of Poppies is set in India. The East India Company, still to be repressed of its redundancies by the British Head, is collecting huge amount of wealth by producing opium and illegitimately selling it to China. Village farmers have been forced to produce opium in their fields and it invites the problem of widespread poverty and starvation as the lands that had once supplied food or rations were now drenched with the increasing amount of poppies. In addition, Chinese are placed to discontinue the business that is speedily weakening the economy by transposing millions of them into drug abuse. As the Chinese authorities acted to safeguard them by forbidding the import of opium, the company took retaliation by proclaiming war on China under the expression of liberation.

The poor Indian peasant genuinely suffered the effects of this poisoning while the Chinese were being poisoned under the pretext of the triangular trade of opium in the middle of the 19th century. Everyone was pushed to produce poppies instead of vitalcrops like wheat, dal, and vegetables by the English "sahibs."

Amitav Ghosh accurately grasps the utter vulnerability of Indian workers and farmers, when the factory's increasing concern for income left them helpless and oppressed. *Sea of Poppies* travels the least walked passage of Indian imperial history by presenting the clever trade perception of the English who threw Indians of its wealth and the Chinese of their desire by intoxicating them with opium. In Sea of Poppies, a large group of characters gathered together in Calcutta, the crowded city people of different caste, creeds and faith reside together. The Ibis, a ship used to carry slaves in the past, is being prepared to receive a massive mass of girmitiyas or contracted workers to Mauritius (Islands of Mareech).

The Ibis consists of a British captain, a second mate is an American, Indian military force is there to maintain system and a crew of lascars is in it. The voyagers are the people from different nationalities, faiths and environments. Some are going to cross the sea to run away from the hardship at home, some were being carried away as prisoners. They are from different sections of society varying from companionless village woman, Deeti, a low caste gigantic man, Kalwa, the gomusta Baboo Nob Kissin Pander, a mulatto American freedman Zachery, a parentless French girl, Paulette, her playmate Jodu and the penniless Raja Neel Rattan of Raskhali. Their former ancestral relation gradually becomes and they start their new lives as they move down to Hooghly and into the Indian Ocean. The ship mates create a fresh coalition of sympathy and for them, the sea turns into their new country. They forget the limitation of caste, creed, religion, community, etc.; they create new name for themselves as jahaz-bhais' and jahaz-bahens'.

The Ibis and Calcutta have similarity as both of them are bilingual institutions. The passengers on the Ibis talk about everything using Pidgin, Bhojpuri, hilariously deformed English of a Bengali Babu and a young French woman. To observe this fact, Ghosh has seriously analyzed the ‒Hobson-Jobson‖ of Sir Henry Yule, the highly appreciated 19th century dictionary of casual and informal Anglo-Indian vocabulary and more ambiguous 1811 English and Hindustani Naval dictionary of technical words and phrases related to sea.

In Ibis trio of Amitav Ghosh, Sea of Poppies is the first volume and it recounts some of the issues of his previous novels. Among these ideologies, the

perpetual phenomenon of the people, trade and colony which has overlooked the Indian ocean since ancient time: and the existence of men and women with very little strength, whose fiction encircled against the splendid account of history, calls for another process of examining the history, culture and individuality.

Amitav Ghosh always suggests a specific oriental pattern of humanism, a faith in similarity that remains beyond class, culture, race, etc. In the novel, political obligation manages many of the connections in the novel but the most part can‘t succeed to put out the power of personal human sentiments- recollection, wishes, dissatisfaction and ambitions. The uniqueness of the characters in his novel is a symbol of his successful career as a historical novelist. These are supported by a group of explorers, information specialists, etc. that revives the past epoch and faded experience by means of graphically perceived particulars. We find a classification of the diverse kinds of opium and their results, a description of human life in Calcutta in mid 19th century and its remote places.

Two significant themes of economy are presented by the Sea of Poppies in 19th century: the saving of opium in the form of bonanza in Bengal and Bihar for export to Chinese bazaar and the delivery of Indian hired labourers to gash sugar canes for the British on the isles such as Fiji, Trinidad, Mauritius, etc. Deeti is the main character to involve in the war of opium and she discloses the strength of opium when she starts employing it to make her irritating mothe-in-law calm.

She learned to respect the drug's power as she structured it and realized how helpless a creature; a human was to be subdued by such minute amounts of this stuff. A human being is a very helpless creature to be subdued by a little amount of this stuff. She grasped now the reason why the workshop in Ghazipur remained ceaseless in operation and why it was regularly followed up by the Sahibs and their soldiers. If a small amount of this opium could provide for a remarkable amount of strength over the life the noticeable character, the main spirit of this elderly woman, then having a bit more amount of opium in her ejection, she would be able to capture the nation and govern the crowd.

The text Sea of Poppies‖ explains that history, basically colonial history, in Asia influences the people‘s contemporary existence. It also portrays the way in which the past epoch of the colonial history affects the present era of modern society. In the text Ghosh inquisitively described the role of imperial power performed in opium business and how England became nation-state drug dealer under the rules of East India Company. India was transformed into a poppy field for Britain. Actually, Sea of Poppies‖ was written at the period of agricultural offence. Due to the blossoming western desire for money-making but inedible product, the inferior world is suffering from starvation. The novel begins in a remote countryside destroyed by these situations. Deeti looks at her motionless husband who surrenders to addiction; at the opium-packing factory, he falls down suddenly. There other labourers work as slowly as an ant in syrup. A small piece of land belongs to her but she gets nothing from the poppies of her land. She doesn‘t get any profit from their sale. After her husband dies, Sati system looks the most desirable alternative. The company replaces worker like Deeti. They integrate to devise a nameless organization on Ibis. Giving an account of Ibis, one of the characters, Baboo Nob Kissin, tells that the Ibis was not a vessel like any other vessels. She thinks that Ibis was a means of modification journeying through the clouds of illusion to the evasive, ever-regressing place that was real. In the period of imperial subject, the fortune has brought together the Indians of different castes, creeds and the Westerners. An unknown family is originated, which will cross the continents, castes and generations. The enormous flow of this historical campaign holds the rich poppy land of the Ganges, the spinning oceans, and the packed passages of Canton. The view of the characters, whose emigration sums up the irritated imperial chronicle of the Orient itself, vitalizes the Sea of Poppies. In the novel Sea of Poppies, fate is the central theme. The writer presents that the undaunted voyage gives an opportunity for new existence and inception when the migrants are disconnected from family and caste culture.

The novelist makes a beautiful comparison between a word play and the troubles of this story. Ghosh accounts the condition of Ibis as it stops for a night in Indian Sea: as the ultimate space for the emigrants to see their domestic beach: the Ganga Sagar roads, a port full of traffics in the protection of Ganga river, the piece of land that is located between the Ocean and the Hooghly river. The specific name

Ganga Sagar, linking as it formed rivulet and ocean, plain and black, famous and unknown, helped to admonish the incomer of the big and wide gulf in front.[1]

As the Ibis starts the voyage from Calcutta and crosses the Bay of Bengal transporting contracted immigrants, most of them are equal to servant; the sea becomes dark and tempestuous. When the ship estimates the situation becomes worse, the ship at once seems like a little world for existence on earth, full of confusion and sudden change in fortune and the heart of everybody becomes blank. On board, everybody is running away from something, so worried to talk about their subject of interest because they find no alternative except to credit the dreadful living state and sporadically brutal supervisor overseas the Ibis. The existence on the ship is differentiated based on brutality and audacity as the residents have felt on the land. When the ship moves towards a new harbor in alien lands, the residents on it get it in the form of only a potential route to get rid of their problems of bygone days.

This epic novel has been set in India at the beginning point of three-year opium war between the Chinese and British in 1838 and it includes a number of characters who are from various social levels and call these characters integrated by means of their individual life boarded on the ship and more often, by means of their relation to the opium and slavery trades. As a young teenager, Deeti Singh tied knot to a young man but he is an incomplete husband due to his dependency on the opium. She is compelled to operate as labour in the opium field of the family outside Ghazipur by herself even though she is terrified with her callous brother-in-law. As she doesn‘t have any choice for sensible stay, she flees ultimately connecting the immigrants boarded on Ibis.

From Baltimore, Burnham Brother‘s ship, the Ibis transports one of its friends, a young seafarer, Zachary Reid, and he has left America because his identity as a mixed blood has taken him to ceaseless intimidation by other American seafarers. The two characters in the novel, Reid and Deeti view the life from realistic point of view. Their attitude towards life is factual. They view as it is accepting all the hardships and blows of it. They also observe the potentialities of life. Their discerning examination of life surrounding them clearly presents their cultural aspects and the duties unlocked to them.

Benjamin Burnham, the owner of Ibis, is at the opposite side of the line from Reid and Deeti. Benjamin owns the Ibis and involves in the trade of opium that his family members run in Ghazipur which is fifty miles far away to the eastern part of Benares. The serf trade has formally come to an end so Burnham has maintained Ibis in undamaged condition to carry the banished detainees and the workers.

Burnham is son of a Liverpool businessman. His desire to invest and control the illegal business has guided him to immense fortune and a luxurious way of living that is inaccessible for him in England. Raja Neel Rattan Halder is one among his new friends and his way of living stands for incredible affluence which the upper caste Brahmins dissemble, is their natural right. Neel has never asked any question about his high caste existence and has not given much care to reducing assets so he has amassed loans now.

In this novel, Ghosh portrays the lives of these characters and their new friends in unique and completely scrutinized account presenting the suffering of Deeti vividly, the attitude about her in her spouse‘s family, the convention and tradition that she must follow and the life that her six-year old daughter should anticipate. On board the Ibis, Zachary Reid happens to be the supporter of Serang Ali, the head of lascars, the vernacular sea-people who carry out the tough physical labour in the ship. Even though the situation of Zachary Reid and lascars is somehow identical; Reid is an alien man, a newcomer who lacks any established caste in Indian society. Serang Ali treats him as if he is superior to lascars: all of them are either of lower caste or without any caste. Zachary Reid is able to get promotion to the level of officer with the support of Serang Ali and lascars and it is unattainable for him staying at home and when he gives out ideas regarding his own life, he is also presenting the general human situation.

In Ibis triplet, this historical novel is the first volume which throbs with life, is replete with the description of daily life and the tradition, custom of the characters that makes the performance of its character obvious and explicit. A memorial of the desire for healthier life and the wish of men to grab opportunity to get it, the novel is also a dazzling and organized depiction of the past time when China stopped the import of opium that was destroying the people attached to opium. English

businessman who had been coercing the Indian workers to grow poppies in their field was interested to wage war to protect their benefit in spite of the fact that the British government was unaware that they were intending to initiate war.

With gradual progress of the story, the readers encounter a divisional section of European who have been residing and involving in trade in India for several years and currently, they talk in intensely weakened structure of English that incorporates Hindi or Bengali vocabularies. The novelist plainly extracts the language spoken by them without any twist or colour and without stressing the Indian part or supplying a dictionary at the end. In addition, he pronounces the native words to delay the European accents which they are employing in their speech. As a result, some of their passages require ceaseless explanation even for a reader who understands the words and their meanings.

Political implication is found in Sea of Poppies. This novel discloses the hollow, deceitful and risky mentality of the then Britishers who pressed the local people to the extent of inferior person in their own homeland. The message presented by the novel in social level is very remarkable and noticeable: the girmitiyaswho assemble in the ship named Ibis give up their identification based on their caste, creed, religion, etc. and receive a new identification of exploited: a new society is born. The writer refutes the attitude of an Englishman regarding religion, when one of the characters in the novel expresses that business is Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is business[2].

This novel is a great work by Amitav Ghosh in which he makes comparison between the historical development of Indian society and the present variation of Indian principles. It is a related critique on imperialism. This critique has some disadvantages for Indian society but it has positive aspects as well. In terms of language and culture, colonialism has integrated Indian spirit and atmosphere with European sentiments and emotions. There was consolidation of societies on social level. In reality, it is a critique upon the socio-cultural development of Indian inferior society. It is a story of scuffle of the poor people of colonial India. Amitav Ghosh has started his journey into one of the unpleasant fields of Indian history. By journeying the unpleasant area of the history, Ghosh reveals the colonial past of Indian society to

the modern readers. The dislocation to the past is only claiming back the thing that is unavoidable to our life.

When the novel Sea of Poppies comes to a satisfying conclusion, Ghosh says that the novel is open ended because Ghosh has left the doors open for the suggestion that guides him to the particular direction to continue the novel. Undoubtedly, the novel will continue in the issue of opium war including a number of same characters. This novel had been shortlisted for Man Booker Prize, in 2008. This opulent and exciting historical novel consists of something for all readers.

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Chapter-7

CONCLUSION

The themes of quest and journey are as old and eternal as the origins of men and women in this world. Humankind cannot bear very much reality, says the Bird of Paradise in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* in which the poet is in search of the meaning of Christ's Incarnation and Resurrection for our times. In his novels, Amitav Ghosh has attempted to show how a man can, and must learn to, bear that reality.

In *The Circle of Reason,* Ghosh thematises the journey from *"Satva"* through *"Rajas"* to *"Tamas,"* in three parts. Here also we encounter reality, but it is meta-fictional and in it the truth is fabricated and negotiated to the degree in which fictional can be grasped by means of proper procedure of reading.[1] We ought to remember that Amitav Ghosh is a social anthropologist. His background thus helps him in foregrounding the literality of cultural study. In the foreword to writing culture, James Clifford writes, literality of the study of humans mainly of cultural studies something for more than the subject of quality writing. Artistic procedures of influences the ways cultural experiences are recorded. In his presentation, Ghosh has moved without any restriction between history, the field of human studies and narration and it is an indication that established borders between these fields have themselves collapsed.

Another anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, writes about the impact of anthropology, the science, upon History, the discipline. He says:

There seem to be some historians who think thatanthropologists present static pictures of immobile societies scattered about in remote corners of the inhabited world, and some anthropologists think what historians do is tell admonitory, and then, stories about another episode in Western Civilisation: true novels (in Paul Veyne's phrase) designed to get us to face-outface-facts.[3]

Then he goes on to write about Big and Little. Historians write and act big and anthropologists write of small, well-bounded communities.

Historians accuse anthropologists of nuance manship, of wallowing in the details of the obscure and unimportant, and to anthropologists accusing historians of schematics, of being out of touch with the immediate of actual life or perhaps it is

about High and Low, Dead and Living, Written and Oral, Particular and General, Description and Explanation, Art, and Science. To the historical imagination, 'we' is a juncture in a cultural genealogy, and here is heritage. To the anthropological imagination, 'we' is an entry in a cultural gazette, and here is home. What has undermined them has been a change in the ecology of learning that has driven historians and anthropologists, like so many migrant geese, onto one another's territories.[4]

These geese turned vagrant by such inducements are not limited to anthropologists and historians. They have been joined by others, novelists, and a literary theorist, among them, Amitav Ghosh is one such novelist.

The Circle of Reason is an epic of restlessness. The immediacy of the experience of reality is juxtaposed with the history, of the eastern world, particularly, Egypt. Around the bare outlines of the plot which moves over continents, are clustered an infinite number of stories ranging back and forth in time. By showing life as a journey larger than death, *The Circle of Reason* makes death find its identity in the horror and sadness which embalms this process. It is connected with the episodic journey of Alu, a worker born and brought up in a tiny hamlet close by Calcutta, who checks out home to travel across the Indian Ocean to the oil town of al-Ghazira located in the gulf of Persia. Why? The answer is connected with Alu and his uncle, Balaram, in the village of Lalpukur. Critics read Alu for tradition; Balaram for progress, Balaram's quest for Reason has made his mind a dumping ground for the West.[5] Robert Dixon remarks:

Amitav Ghosh completed his doctorate at Oxford University and the subject of research in his PhD thesis was an account of the past of entwines and the cloth business between India and Britain at the period of 19^{th} century. Knitting is an analogy of that complicated web of diversities in which all cultures are entangled with the people living next door. As Balaram determines to make a young Alu a knitter, he narrates him a story of the knitting mechanization that arouses cultural fluctuation.[6]

Balaram says that loom has built up not a distinct world but one integrated world because it has never allowed the disintegration of the world. The loom has integrated the world regardless of any nationality or continent. Balaram advances a

concept that culture is a procedure of flow that has not any relation with the boundaries of nation.

The clothes woven in India were obtained from the tomb of Pharaohs. Chinese cloth has covered Indian soil. Cloth business is spread over the whole world. The continents are connected by the Silk Road from China moving via Central Asia and Persia to the section of Mediterranean and from there to the Bazaar of Europe and Africa for centuries. The trade of cloth connected the Arab world to Europe, India to Africa, and Mediterranean to Asia for centuries. The trade in its opulence and diversity was an enormous business.[8]

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the themes of quest and journey are as old and eternal as this earth is. Traders in cloth, in India and China, and several parts of the world, were in quest of equal and bountiful trade and, for that, they journeyed to all parts of the world, and bound Asia, Africa, Europe to one bountiful thread of trade. The Reason destroys Balaram. Phrenology is an expression of Balaram‘s quest for a unified theory to explain the Universe. But Balaram‘s is a losing fight, and every effort of his ends in disaster. Alu‘s journey to al-Ghazira, escaping from the police, characteristically resumes his craft of weaving.

Again, in the novel, Ghosh shows the influx of foreigners like refugees from East Pakistan after the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. It results in the migration of the original people of Lalpukur to other parts of West Bengal in quest of livelihood and, in their place, the journeying of Bangladeshi into Lalpukur in quest of safety. Amitav Ghosh is an eternal pilgrim, with a load of books and a mind full of explorations.

According to Robert Dixon: The orthodox anthropology's view of different cultures and the associated xenophobic mentality were critiqued in "The Shadow Lines‖. The truth is the complicated network of connection between people that transcends the concept of nationality and generations.[9] In this novel, the narrator’s own history continues the pattern of dwelling in travels. As in *The Circle of Reason,* there is a discussion of East Pakistan, which is now Bangladesh.

Robert Dixon again elaborates on this point:

Unlike the usual colonial novel, in which Westerners travel to India to observe an ancient and self-contained culture, *The Shadow Lines* begins with an Indian passage to England; then natives are the travelers. The main truth of the journey in the

realm of Indian family‘s experience instantly insists that we should change our anticipation regarding Indian tradition and ritual and the method it is portrayed in English novels written about the Raj. In addition, these Indians in the novel are heading foreign country in the year of 1939 and it is 1939 when England and Germany were in war against each other. According to classical ethnography, the Western observer has fixed and rational culture and it is a nip to examine aboriginal society. Ghosh subverts this idea by showing Britain in battle with Germany so that the division occurs in opposition to the atmosphere of proportionately changeable Europe. The similarity between Germany and England, and India and Pakistan remarkably weakens the dissimilarities between West and East, metropolis and colony and suggests the resemblance and progression that transcends these dichotomies.[10]

I’m in love with the country, the young Rudyard Kipling exalted soon after his arrival in India: I find heat and smells of oils and spices, and puffs of temple incense, and sweat and darkness, and dirt and lust and cruelty, andabove all, things wonderful and fascinating innumerable.[11]

This response to India was transmitted by Kipling‘s extraordinary creativity as a poet and novelist into imagery that has strongly coloured subsequent Western perceptions of India. Ainslie T. Embree says:

That the old images of India have retained their hold upon Western imagination in the world of post-independence India is suggested by an articledistributed by an airline to introduce travellers to India. They had come with a preconceived notion of a Gandhian, non-violent society; instead, they found an aggressive, mystical, cruel and always fascinating reality.[12]

Amitav Ghosh in *The Shadow Lines,* through the journey of the narrator‘s family to England in 1939, in quest of stability, racial equality, richness, and comfort, shows that England, in 1939, was not stable nor there was lack of racial apartheid and nor it was comfortable.

In the sections, ―Going Away‖ and ―Going Home,‖ Ghosh‘s characters come and go in so many different directions that the narrator is obliged to pose the question, what is home, and is there such a thing as a discrete homeland separable from one‘s experiences elsewhere?

The themes of quest and journey pervade *The Calcutta Chromosome.* The narrator in *The Calcutta Chromosome* comes across the obliterated memorial constructed in the commemoration of Sir Ronald Ross, who received the Nobel Prize for his great achievement in the field of malaria. The marble arch of the monument is inscribed with Ross's versification in self-celebration:

This day relenting God
Hath placed within my hand
A wondrous thing; and God,
Be praised. At his command,
Seeking his sacred deeds,
With tears and toiling breath,
I find thy cunning seed,
O million murdering Death.[20]

This is provocation enough for a rebuttal from L. Murugan, the self-appointed biographer to Ronald Ross,gleefully parodies this high sounding moral sentential with bitter humour to expose how these scientific achievements barely touched the lives of the millions living at the edge of death

Half stunned I look around
And see a land of death
Deed bones that walk the ground
And dead bones underneath;
A race of wretches caught,
Between the palms of need
And rubbed to utter naught
The chaff of human seed.[21]

According to Murugan, the immediate concern of all European countries in discovering a treatment of miasma not to protect the life of human as much as to confirm the unrestrained extension of new area. It was mid 19th century when the science and the community started to be conscious towards malaria. In this century, Europe, the old mother, was working out all the last unknowns: Asia, Australia, Africa, and America even unimpaired section herself.[22]

Urbashi Barat writes about the theme of quest in *The Calcutta Chromosome:*

After all, the quest is not for a drug that will induce universal benevolence but for the renewal of life itself. There can accordingly, be no comforting rounding-off, but rather only a stepfurther towards the realm of the non-rational and ineffable-realms that are accessibleespecially to the poor, the marginalized, the colonized, the survivor. There are no simplistic statements about human nature; there is, instead, the belief in the infinite possibility of the transcendence of human limitations and human mortality. That is why the conspiracy never ends; the cult of silence and secrecy spreads toterritories governed by the Word and reason.Western knowledge and science had once conquered the East, but inevitably the Empire must strike back. Through its subversive quest, *The Calcutta Chromosome* celebrates the eternal, celebrates the triumph of the spirit over all that bogs it down in the mire.[23]

Amitav Ghosh's invigorating and instructive journeys and quests do not end with the publication of *The Calcutta Chromosome.* Like his contemporaries-Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, and Allan Sealy, Amitav Ghosh harnesses his travel experiences for the purpose of writing his fiction. His travelogue *Dancing in Cambodia* and *at Large in Burma* (1998) is based on Ghosh's visits to Cambodia and Burma, but it is not a chronological account. Naik and Narayan comment on the nature of this book: It incorporates history in a fictional format to analyze complex philosophical problems about the growth of nations and cultures. *Dancing in Cambodia* and*At Large in Burma* can be read and enjoyed at the primary level of a journey through modern Cambodia or Burma, but it is more thanthat it is a travel through history, culture and philosophy.[24]

The third chapter, At Large in Burma, is dominated by Aung San Suu Kyi, who represents the very spirit of hope, but Ghosh also describes a Karenni guerrilla camp on Burma's eastern border and sympathetically presents the point of view of the tribal communities, who want to maintain their autonomy.

Amitav Ghosh's next non-fictional work, *Countdown* (1999), is about India after the nuclear test of Pokhran on 11 May 1998, Ghosh makes a journey to Pokhran, Pakistan, and Siachen, in quest of multiple points of view, of politicians, religious zealots and the people. For instance, the religious zealots want to turn Pokhran into a shrine of strength that could be visited by pilgrims. Ghosh meets K.

Subrahmanyam, a civilian defense expert, who tells him that nuclear weapons were not military weapons. Chandan Mitra also says the same thing to Ghosh. Similarly, Ghosh meets Qazi Hussain Ahmed, the leader of Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan, who points out the possibility of nuclear war between India and Pakistan: in the event of war, there is always the danger that they (nuclear weapons) would be used certainly. In situations of war, people become mad. When a nation feels that it is likely to be defeated it can do anything to spare itself the same.[25] This is the language of a religious zealot in Pakistan. On the other hand, Ghosh finds Asma Jahangir, a democratic activist, against the nuclearization of either Pakistan or India. Thus, Ghosh comes to the conclusion that nuclear matter is a grave matter for any country. So, it should be well thought upon before taking it into force.

Sea of Poppies (2019) is the first volume of Amitav Ghosh's projected trilogy which once again confirms his status as a master story teller. The primary concern of the novel is opium war, an important incident in the history of the world and it is written in a period of agricultural propaganda when Western request for profit oriented but uneatable crop such as poppy brought famine in the colonized world. Besides, the novel stresses the variety of interests that the writer would present implicitly or explicitly in his former tasks of novels. Among them, never-ending journey of people from one place to another place, transcending the political and geographical limitation, commerce, existence of powerless people, query on the bygone days, caste, gender, culture, identity.

His work is very absorbing because of his preparation in the exploration of history and anthropology, his avoidance of superb theoreticist's signal and his connection with the study of colonized world. The contemporary discussion regarding the principles of post-colonial era is likely to be carried out based on the issues mentioned above. Ghosh is highly impressed by his connection with the subaltern studies with his painstaking way of pragmatic exploration. Ghosh retrieved the temperament of the lord commander possessing hegemonic power and of their slaves, sighing and crying under the burden of oppression, be it for their caste hierarchy or for the British power or for their gender status. *Sea of poppies* has a number of characters, who groan under the British rule but Kalua is a man who is doubly marginalized. He was an untouchable and Chamar by caste and that is why he had

to bear the burden of being lowest in the caste hierarchy and simultaneously became the victim of British colonial rule.

Afghanistan had become the main manufacturer and provider of opium to Europe during 18th century but in early 19th century, the time period which has been depicted in the fiction, British destiny-hunters changed the productive land of Ganga in India where the eatable crops such as rice, pulse, wheat used to be produced into a land of poppies. Despite the instruction of China to prohibit the business of opium, they pressed the processed opium to be sent to Cantou. Finally they persuaded London to wage the opium war, just denouncing the Chinese restrictions on free trade. It affected the life of native Indians adversely and led them to extreme destitution, hunger, etc. The disempowered part of the society agonized most due to the outlook of the British leader. The novel commences at the time of crisis and depicts eastern part of Bihar. It gives recognition to Deeti, a general lady, religious and pious by temperament, dwelling with her spouse, Hukum Singh, suburbs area of the Ghazipur village. A tiny part of land was also in her possession on which poppy crops had been raised. Her husband worked in an opium factory situated in Ghazipur where he became dependent on the varieties of opium.

In a separate basti, outside the village, there lived Kalua, a low caste cart owner of colossal strength. Amitav Ghosh has drawn his character with an eye of a researcher and presented the minute details with all his subdued passion, restrain to irrational convention and as a loser of cultural set up of caste. During the progress of the narrative, the novelist tries to project his subaltern consciousness to expose his doubly marginalized status. The first appearance of Kalua in the early pages of the novel clearly highlights novelist‘s intention to present him as an individual bearing the pangs of casteism. His untouchable status is highlighted by his advent at the door of Deeti to bring her spouse to the factory of Ghazipur and his attempt to hide his face from him. He belonged to the caste of leather worker and Hukum Singh belonged to Rajput community, a caste of high level and he thought that the vision of his face would invite bad luck for the whole day.

It is the height of mockery that Hukum Singh could sit in his cart, can talk to him on different topics but it was unlikely for him to look into his face due to lesser of being tainted.

As far as the physical strength of Kalua was concerned, he was the most towering figure of the village owing to his unusual height and powerful build. His physical strength astonished every body but the curse of caste even turns his quality to his weakness and he was mainly exploited by high caste people owing to his physical strength. The most prominent family of Ghazipur's Thakur sahib made him the victim of their whims. He was compelled to fight wrestling matches just for their favouritepasttime. Later when he started to win the matches, he became a source of income for them and in return of it Kalua got an ox-cart on which he may earn his living.

The three thakurs had nodded their heads and said that he would get an ox-cart if only hecould win a fight and give a few demonstration of his strength. The young landlords earned a good profit.

In a way they exploited his physical capabilities for their own material gain. Their greed increased day by day and one day they made Kalua agrees, threatening him to confiscate his cart and oxen to have matches at Benaras. He knew tricks which he was not aware of Wrestling was a trial not just of strength, but also of intelligence‖ and Kalua's mind was slow, simple and trusting so much, as he could easily be duped by any one. Even behind his defeat a story began to back that these young landlords, for the sake of their amusements call Kalua in almost naked body to couple with a woman. The comment of the woman Hirabai, whom they called for the purpose were quite humiliating to him. She termed him an animal having two legs and added that this beast should be copulated with animal such as mare instead of a lady. Such a comment which lowered his standard to an animal was enough for him to break his self-confidence and it is reflected in his defeat at Benaras. This sub-human treatment in which Kalua was consideredno better than an animal indicates his pitiable plight in the existing order of the society and highlights his marginalized status in front of the powerful Thakurs.

The sportsloving landlords often used their power to the fragile critter such as Kalua. In an utmost tragic event, they behaved and treated him in an unusual and awful manner. Although they have behaved and treated him in the worst manner, it was not likely for him to oppose uncivilized and brutal behavior he received from them. He bore their behaviour calmly without uttering a single word of complaint against them. By chance Deeti could observe this incident, keeping herself hidden in

poppy fields as she came out in night to fetch water from the river. She saw that these landlords were carrying a man with a halter around his neck like a horse. The man was none other than Kalua who had been incessantly suffering under the hegemonic powers of the landlords. They brought him with a purpose of mating him with a black mare. He persistently asked forgiveness for no fault of his own in a sobbing and whispering sound but in return of it they gave him only Volley of kicks and curses. They whipped him on his naked back and compelled him to mate with the animal from the rear. In the process, Kalua uttered a painful cry which made them laugh.

The latest novel of Amitav Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* (2000), is an example of social realism. Once again, the themes of journey and quest come into prominence. In his Author‘s Notes, Ghosh tells us that he spent five years travelling in Burma, Malaysia, and parts of India as well as reading both published and unpublished material including innumerable books, memoirs, and gazetteers before writing *The Glass Palace.* He single-mindedly located survivors of the 1942 flight from Burma into India, wandered as a tourist in the golden land, interviewed Aung San Suu Kyi, and skillfully melded facts with a convincing storyline spread over some five hundred-odd pages. In many ways, it was clear where Ghosh was headed for in his *Dancing in Cambodia* and *At Large in Burma:* his attraction for these two countries and their culture is palpable in this travel-cum-political commentary. After going through this novel one wonders whether Ghosh is a fine chronicler, a raconteur par excellence or a skilled storyteller, or both.

The Glass Palace tells the story of the deposition of King Thebaw of Burma in 1885 by the British. Rajkumar, the poor orphaned boy from Chittagong who makes a living in Mandalay by working in Macho‘s food stall is witness to the 1886 siege of the Glass Palace by British forces. He spots Dolly, the Second Princess‘s maid, and vows that he will seek her out one day. The King is interned in Ratnagiri, in Maharashtra, where he died two decades later. Rajkumar marries Dolly. There are many ups and downs in the fortunes of Rajkumar and Dolly, Uma Dey, and her Bengali District Collector, Beni Prasad Dey.

Present-day Burma or Myanmar as the junta prefers to call it is rediscovered by Jaya, Rajkumar‘s historian daughter, determined to trace her family‘s history. And *The Glass Palace,* we are told by Jaya, is the story of the families, interweaving through three generations, as seen by her son. A suitable ending to an epic narrative

which takes the reader on a long and satisfying journey, though not only places in history but a range of human dilemmas, the self-doubt of many caught between a nascent national and issues of loyalty to the empire and the country of origin.

In Amitav Ghosh‘s fictional works, important characters are always journeying to real places, into history books and archives in quest of something which is the subaltern in character and anti-west in its execution. For instance, Alu travels to al-Ghazira, a Middle East town. Tridib travels to Dacca, to be killed there by a communally charged mob. Similar to the tasks of the scholars associated with the *Subaltern Studies* and dissimilar to the tasks of other scattered Indians like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, Ghosh‘s The Imam and the Indian and the scholarly article The Slave of Ms.H.6 seem to avoid European theoretical models, grounding their method in a rigorous elaboration of archival and field research which offers itself as series of extended metaphors for allegorical interpretation. One wishes that Ghosh‘s fictional works continue to chart the path in the future, avoiding the flamboyance of Rushdie and the mythic sweep of Shashi Tharoor.

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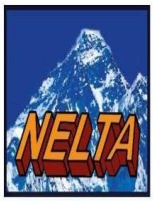

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अनुक्रमणिका

Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow of Lines: A Critical Study

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The Shadow Lines would be a remarkable novel by any a standards. Indeed many facile adjectives such as 'cerebral', Cunputdownable' and 'well-wrought' spring to mind. For sheer craft and compelling story-telling, few recently produced 'Indian' novels touch it. With nothing identifiably 'Indian' .details of time and place and history, the nationality successfully to join an order of world fiction. Louis James comments on the artistic and thematic quality of The Shadow Lines:

Ghosh's novel introduces a family "tree," but it not the legally-defined family of European society, of Galsworthy's fotsyte Saga or Thomas Mann's Buddenbooks—rather it is the Asian extended family of loyalties, affections and associations. This becomes so complex that even the narrator confesses confusion and the novel is to some extent about the meaning of family relationships in a disintegrating world. (Louis James, 1999, p. 56.)

The narrative of The Shadow Lines skims or pauses over a crowded tapestry of the past spanning of years from 1939 to 1979. The novel begins when the first person narrator, who is never named, is about eight years old, living in Calcutta, ID admiring Tridib, his intellectual uncle, who is about twenty-nine. Certainly it records with vividness the inner life of the growing child, but Tridib, who shapes the narrator's youthful personality and Ila, his beautiful cousin who almost defeat it, could really be called the most important people in the novel. We summarize the novel in the words oLRobert Dixon:

The narrator's family are Hindus who fled from their home in Dhaka to Calcutta after the formation of East Pakistan. There, during the Second World War, when Europe itself lies in ruins, they befriend an English family, the Price's and the two families are woven together by a complex series of cultural crossings. Mrs. Price's father, Lionel Tresawson, lived in India before Independence, and is a type of the travelling Englishman, having left his home in Cornwall to travel widely in the Empire: In Malaysia, Fiji, Ceylon and finally Calcutta. The narrator's uncle, Tridib, went to London and lived with the Prices during the war. . . . He is writing shortly after his return to Calcutta from England, where he too becomes involved with the Prices. . .for in the narrator's recollections the lives of three generations of his family are woven together, as are the cities in which their lives have been acted out: Dhaka, Calcutta and London. (Robert Dixon, 1996, pp. 10-11.)

So far, Amitav Ghosh writes about the narrator's family and the Prices before India's Independence. He goes on to write the latter half thus:

The second part of the novel climaxes in the narrator's return visit to the family home in Dhaka in 1964 with but this homecoming abounds Ironies. His grandmother wants to bring her uncle back from' Pakistan, the land of their Muslim enemies, to her home in Calcutta-but Pakistan is her real home, the goal of her ritual homecoing. She is nostalgic for the "classical" conception of cultures. She believes that her children should not be mixing with English people, and is particularly critical of the narrator's cousin Ila for living in England. . . . But when the grandmother looks down from the plane as they pass from India into Pakistan in 1964, she is surprised that there is no visible border on the ground. . . .The elderly relative in Dhaka delivers the final blow to her view of the world when he refuses to back go to Calcutta, even denying its existence in reality. . . .(Ibid., pp. 10-11)

The post-Independence Indian Indo-English woman writers, like their counterparts in the Western world, has chosen to overthrow the concept of woman as "Vedia Dasi." Kamala

Das, for example, presents in her works resistant women characters who exploit their sexuality in their bid for advancement, thereby reversing the Hindu idealization of women generally and the nationalistic discursive construct of a benevolent and protective Mother India specifically. Kamala Das's Manasi in Alphabet of Lus is the antithesis of the chaste, Sita-like Brahminic feminine ideal which informed the Indian independence struggle.

Ila, in The Shadow Lines, is not a "Vedic Dasi" and, therefore, she castigates Indian culture for prohibiting her dance with an anonymous businessman. Ila is Manasi of Kamala Das and Namjoshi's personhood. All three represent the voice of feminism in the India of the eighties of the last century.

The English racism rears its head in the Shadow Lines. She is being beaten up by the English racists, like the beating of Srinivas in Markandaya's The Nowhere Man. Like Srinivas Ila does not return to India. She, subsequently, did her BA in History at the University College in London, took up a job in an office and married Nick Price whom she had known for years.

As to the dislike of Ila by Tha'mma' and the former's unfitness to be a resident of England, Tha'mma' judgement of Ila is wrong. The grandmother lived a period of terrorist movement of Bengal. Her desire was to live a free life. Therefore, the desire of Ila to live in London, rootless, free of middle class constraints and taboos was disliked by the grandmother. Ila also has radical friends in London, who I picket on political issues. Dan the Trotskyrite who wrote anti- Nazi pamphlets and Tresawsen who edited a lefter wing newsletter. Like the grandmother's nationalism, Nick Price's nationalism has a face. Nick Price gave up a lucrative chartered accountant's job in Kuwait because of outdated management practices and interfering Arab business partners. He still clings to Britain's colonial past.

The pathos of a child's search for a space of her own is brought out by Amitav Ghosh through Ila. Only an indivisible line, a shadow line divides real and imagined space, but a child is unable to perceive it. Unfortunately, in Ila, this distressfully inadequate vision does not change even when the child attains adulthood, which we have discussed earlier.

Therefore, the quest of Ila for personal freedom In London is fully justified. She retains her ideas, values, belongingness, radicalism, and love. India proved to be claustrophobic for a New Woman in Ila.

The journey in The Shadow Lines is of two types: real and imagined. In the latter, we take the examples of Tridib and the narrator. Tridib pointed out places in the Bartholomew's Atlas while telling him stories-"Tridib had given me worlds to travel in and he had given me worlds to travel in and he had given me eyes to see them with"(The Shadow Lines, p. 20.)-so that long before he actually moved out of Calcutta, his world had expanded to include many parts of the globe through learning and hearing and reading about these places. Cairo, Madrid, Cuzco or Colombo, names that his globe-trotting cousin Ila mentioned casually, were for the narrator "a set of magical talismans"(The Shadow Lines, p. 20.) to be invested with reality through precise imagination in the way Tridib had taught him, though he knew he could never replicate the same feat: "And still I knew that the sights Tridib saw in his imagination were infinitely more detailed, more precise than anything I would ever see."(The Shadow Lines, p. 29). Tridib had told him of the desire that can carry one beyond "the limits of one's mind to other times and other places, and even, if one was lucky, to a place where there was no border between oneself and one's image in the mirror."(The Shadow Lines, p. 29). Ila lived in the present, in the external world of Journeys. 1ridib lived in the internal world of journeys.

Once again we talk of "Going Away" and "Coming Home." Tridib goes away from India to England with his family and the child relives the experience vicariously through Tridib's imaginatively vivid. descriptions, so that when he himself grows up and goes to London, it is an effortless transition, a 'coming" rather than a "going." Long before the narrator

left home he knew the A to Z map of London so well-that the first time he came to London he could lead Nick and Ila confidently along the roads of West Hampstead as if he had lived there himself.

As mentioned earlier, the imagined world of Tridib helps the narrator to make a mental journey of different parts of this world. "Tridib was an archaeologist, he was not interested in fairylands: the one thing he wanted to teach me, he used to say, was to use my imagination with precision." (The Shadow Lines, p. 24.) 'The viewer's exercise of memory and imagination enables him to 'see' in the mind's eye, more vividly than in actuality." (Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, p. 288.)

The actual physical journey of the grandmother is the theme of "Coming Home." The narrator in The Shadow Lines has a history: the pattern of dwelling in travel. Ghosh subverts what Sara Suleri has called "The Rhetoric of English India".(Sara Suleri, 1992, p. 26.)

The opening sentence of the novel immediately unsettles the rhetoric: "In 1939, thirteen years before I was father's aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib."(The Shadow Lines, p. 3.)

The journey of grandmother to Tresawsenin London in 1939 was a memorable event, etched in the mind of Tridib, and, subsequently it helps to narrator to say: "Nobody can ever know what it was like to be young and intelligent in the summer of 1939 in London or Berline." (The Shadow Lines, p. 152.)

Tridib's father is a diplomat, living abroad or in Delhi and only occasionally visiting Calcutta; but Tridib himself prefers to stay on in their family house in an upper middle- class neighbourhood of Calcutta with his elderly grandmother.

In the second part of the novel, the grandmother's Journey to Dhaka becomes a symbolic search for a point of fixity. Born in Dhaka, separated from her birthplace by a history of bloodshed and lines on a map, Tha'mma loses her grammatical co-ordinates as she thinks of 'home'. She is to distinguish between "going", "coming" and 'Tha'mma, Tha'mma I cried. How could you have 'come' home to Dhaka? You don't know the difference between coming and going" (The Shadow Lines, P.152)

The "climax" occurs as the grandmother and her sister are returning in their Mercedes from their ancestral home and their uncle is following them in the rickshaw (Rabi's narrative 243-47, May Price's recollection 250-51). When they come to the hazar area, they find that the shops are closed and the street is deserted, but for stray people it was as if they were waiting for the car: In no time a lot of men surround the car, break the windscreen and the driver suffers a cut across his face. The car lurches and comes to a halt with its front wheel in a gutter. Then the security guard jumps out and fires a shot from his revolver and the crowd begins to withdraw from the car. At the same time the eerie silence is broken by a check, and the attention of the crowd turns to the sound of a rickshaw-Khalil's rickshaw-with their uncle in it, and the people surrounded the rickshaw. Though the sisters could have driven away, May Price and Tridib leave the car to save the old man and they get lost in the whirligig of the crowd. The mischief takes less than a moment and the crowd begins to melt away. The dead bodies of Khalil, the old man and Tridib lie on the road.

This death of Khalil, Tridib, and the Jethamoshai at the hands of a Dhaka mob confirms in her a pathological hatred of 'them'. In 1965, as soon as the war starts, she gifts her only gold chain to the war fund: "For your sake; for your freedom; she tells her grandson, 'We have to kill them before they kill us; we have to wipe them out'."(The Shadow LInes, p. 237) Hysterical from the memory of the rioters who killed Tridib, she takes comfort in the organized propriety of war: "We are fighting them properly at last," she says "with tanks and guns and bombs."(The Shadow Lines, p. 237) The migrancy and consequent 'blindness' to and alienation

from the world, her violent intervention in human affairs, all are represented in the novel in negative terms.

Throughout her visit to Dacca, Tha'mma's search for the preparation Dhaka of her childhood and youth is projected as &1 nostalgic return home. Despite her naturalisation as an Indian citizen, her strong loyalties and affiliations to the city of her, birth, which surface during her journey to Dhaka, permit Ghosh to investigate the conflicting claims of roots and belonging, national and boundaries in the Indian mind. Tha'mma's attempt to identify herself as a native Dhakaian from the older parts of the city, who is contemptuous of the alien inhabitants of new residential localities, demonstrates her amnesia to her new Indian identify when confronted with the more compelling claims of an older solidarity. Tha'mma's 1tsit to her parental home, ironically figured as a married daughter's "going home as a wid'ow" (The Shadow Lines, p. 205)-where ,she emotionally declares to her estranged uncle, "We've come home at last"(The Shadow Lines, p. 212)-is used to explore the contradiction of local and national identities further.

The delayed account of Tridib's death serves the purpose of providing a detailed account into the meaning of essential nationalism and underline the need for "transcending the ways in which meanings get fixed, locked in moments of history which time nor social change, nor personal affiliation can alter."(Abena Busia, 1993, p. 13.)

Ghosh argues that only an awareness of the 'invented" nature of communities can release individuals from the manipulations of political imaginings. Tha'mma remains imprisoned in the myth of nation until the end. Her response to Tridib's death, donating her last few pieces of jewellery to the war fund, shows steeped she is in nationalist rhetoric.

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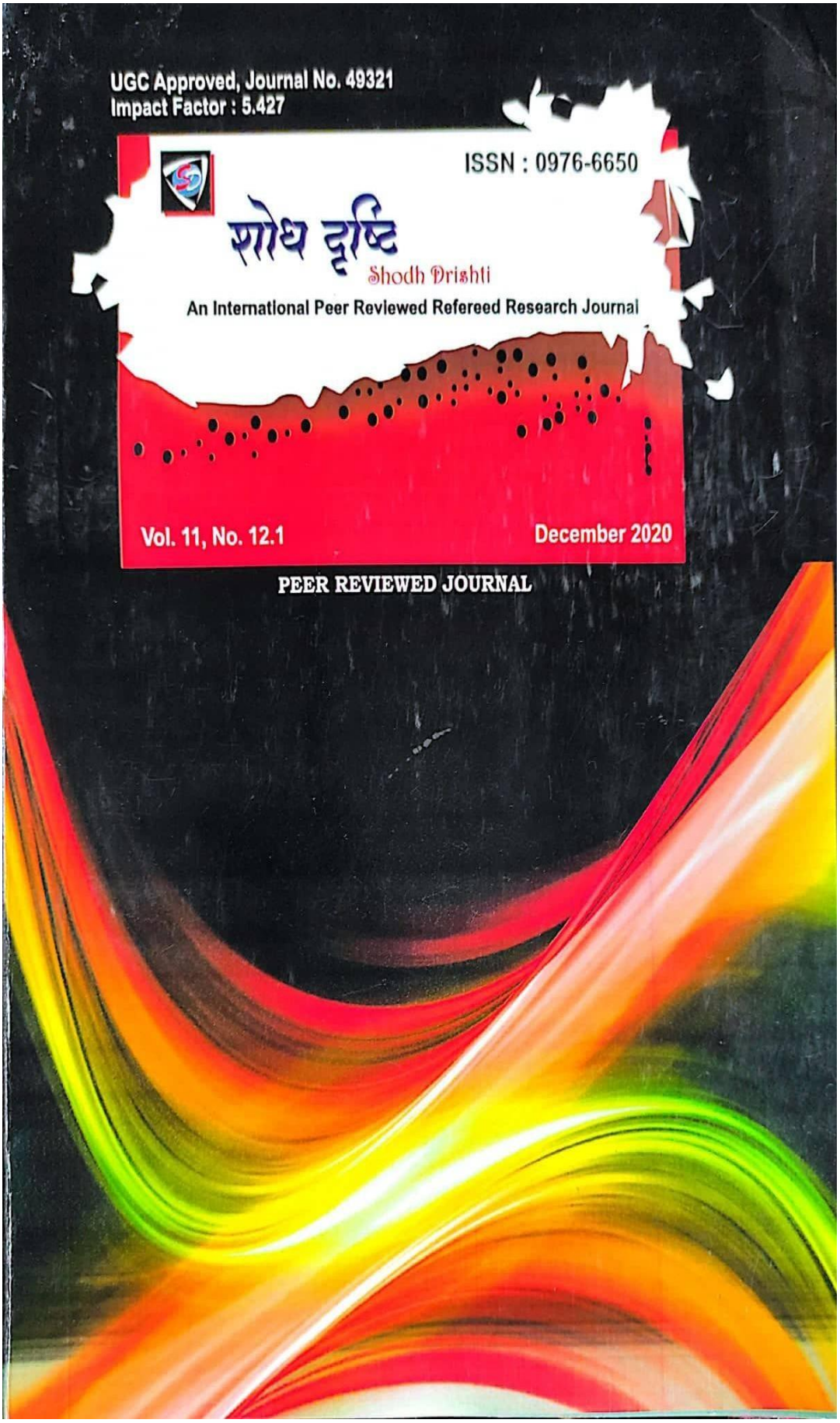
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Amitav Ghosh's The Circle of Reason : A Critical Study

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh adopts the technique of magic realism, history, anthropology, thriller, science fiction, medical science, memory, Indian and European myths, and legends, to write his four novels. His canvas is so vast, so complex, and so interesting that his neglect by critics and scholars is lamentable. He is not an imitator. He is a first a class innovator, a first class novelist, a combination of some rare fictional qualities, which mark him out as a different sort of novelist. He is a post colonial critic of contemporary events. With his four novels, he has carved out an unenviable position in the history of Indian writing in English.

In *The Circle of Reason,* Ghosh thematises the journey from *"Satwa"* through *"Rajas"* to *"Tamas,"* in three parts. Here also we encounter reality, but it is metafictional and in it "'reality' is also constructed and mediated ... (and) is to the extent 'fictional' and can be understood through an appropriate 'reading' process." (Patricia Waugh, 1984, p. 16.) We ought to remember that Arnitav Ghosh is a social anthropologist. His background thus helps him in foregrounding the "literariness" of ethnography. As James Clifford puts it in the preface to *Writing Culture,* "the literariness of anthropology-and especially of ethnography is much more than a matter of good writing .... Literary processes ... affect the ways cultural phenomena are registered."(James Clifford and George E. Marcus, 1986,p. 4.)The fact that Arnitav Ghosh has been able to move freely in his writing between anthropology, history and fiction is symptomatic of the extent to which traditional boundaries between those disciplines have themselves broken down.

Another anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, writes about the impact of anthropology, *the science, upon History, the* discipline. He says:

> There seem to be some historians ... who think that anthropologists present static pictures of immobile societies scattered about in remote corners of the inhabited world, and some anthropologists ... think what historians do is tell admonitory, and then, stories about another episode in Western Civilisation: 'true novels' (in Paul Veyne's phrase) designed to get us to face-outface-facts. (Clifford Geertz, 1990, p. 321.)

Then he goes on to write about Big and Little. Historians write and act big and anthropologists write of small, well-bounded communities. Historians accuse anthropologists of nuancemanship, of wallowing in the details of the obscure and unimportant, and to anthropologists accusing historians of schematicism, of being out of touch with the immediate ... of actual life .. Or perhaps it is about High and Low, Dead and Living, Written and Oral, Particular and General, Description and Explanation, Art and Science. To the historical imagination, 'we' is a juncture in a cultural genealogy, and 'here' is heritage. To the anthropological imagination, 'we' is an entry in a cultural gazette, and 'here' is home .... What has undermined them has been a change in the ecology of learning that has driven historians and anthropologists, like so many migrant geese, onto one another's territorjes.(Clifford Geertz, 1990, pp. 321-324.)These geese turned vagrant by such inducements are not limited to anthropologists and historians. They have been joined by others, novelists and literary theorists, among them, Amitav Ghosh is one such novelist.

The Circle of Reason is an epic of restlessness. The immediacy of experience of reality is juxtaposed with history, of the eastern world, particularly, Egypt. Around the bare outlines of

the plot which moves over continents, are clustered an infinite number of stories ranging back and forth in time. By showing life as a journey larger than death, *The Circle of Reason* makes death find its identity in the horror and sadness which embalms this process. It concerns the picaresque adventures of Alu, a weaver from a small village near Calcutta, who leaves home to journey across the Indian Ocean to the oil town of the al-Ghazira on the Persian Gulf. Why? The answer is connected with Alu and his uncle, Balaram, in the village of Lalpukur. Critics read Alu for tradition; Balaram for progress, Balaram's quest for Reason has made his mind "a dumping ground for the West."(Amitav Ghosh, *The Circle of Reason,* p. 53.) Robert Dixon remarks:

> His (Ghosh's) Ph.D thesis at Oxford was a history of weaving and the cloth trade between Britain and India in the nineteenth century. In each of his subsequent texts, weaving is a synecdoche of that "intricate network of differences" in which all cultures are enmeshed with their neighbours. When Balaram decides to make the young Alu a weaver, he tells him a history of the technology of weaving that evokes cultural instability and borrowing across borders.

According to Balaram, "... (the loom) has created not separate worlds but one, for it has never permitted the division of the world. The loom recognises no continents and no countries. It has tied the world together."(*The Circle of Reason,* p. 55.) Balaram develops the idea that culture is a process of circulation that has nothing to do with national borders:

> Indian cloth was found in the graves of the Pharaohs. Indian soil is strewn with cloth from China. The whole of the ancient world hummed with the cloth trade. The Silk Route from China, running through central Asia and Persia to the parts of the Mediterranean and from there to the markets of Africa and Europe, bound continents together for more centuries than we can count .... All through those centuries cloth, in its richness, and variety, bound the Mediterranean to Asia, India to Africa, the Arab world to Europe, in equal bountiful trade.(*The Circle of Reason,* p. 55-56.)

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the themes of quest and journey are as old and eternal as this earth is. Traders in cloth, in India and China, and several parts of the world, were in quest of equal and bountiful trade and, for that, they journeyed to all parts of the world, and bound Asia, Africa, Europe to one bountiful thread of trade. The Reason destroys Balaram. Phrenology is an expression of Balaram's quest for a unified theory to explain the Universe. But Balaram's is a losing fight, and every effort of his ends in disaster. Alu's journey to al-Ghazira, escaping from the police, characteristically resumes his craft of weaving.

Again, in the novel, Ghosh shows the influx of foreigners like refugees from East Pakistan after the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. It results in the migration of the original people of Lalpukur to other parts of West Bengal in quest of livelihood and, in their place, the journeying of Bangladeshi into Lalpukur in quest of safety. Amitav Ghosh is an eternal pilgrim, with a load of books and mind full of explorations.

In Amitav Ghosh's fictional works, important characters are always journeying to real places, into history books and archives in quest of something which is the subaltern in character and anti-west in its execution. For instance, Alu travels to al-Ghazira, a Middle East town. Tridib travels to Dacca, to be killed there by a communally-charged mob. Like the work of the *Subaltern Studies* scholars, and unlike the work of other diasporic Indians such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha, Ghosh's "The Imam and the Indian" and the scholarly article "The Slave of MS.H.6" seem to avoid European theoretical models, grounding their method in a rigorous elaboration of archival and field research which offers itself as series

of extended metaphors for allegorical interpretation. One wishes that Ghosh's fictional works continue to chart the path in future, avoiding the flamboyance of Rushdie and the mythic sweep of Shashi Tharoor.

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Synopsis

History in Fiction : A study of the novels of Amitav Ghosh

1. Introduction:

Amitav Ghosh is one of the most widely known living writers of Indian fiction in English. He has won many awards including one of the Frances's top literaryawards for his first novel **The Circle of Reason,** the Sahitya Academy award , the most prestigious award of India. His last published novel **Sea of Poppies** was short listed for 2008 Man Booker prize.

Such recognition across the globe itself speaks of his potential as a writer and it justifies my deep interest in him with focus on the topic in hand. While reading Amitav Ghosh novels it is clear that history penetrated his entire fictional owner and it would quite worth while to attempt a full length study on his relation to history.

2.Prospective and perspective of the work

In common critical parlance Amitav Ghosh is labeled as a writer of his historical novels. Infact all his six novels published so far from **The Circle of Reasons** to the **Sea of Poppies** deal with historical events like swadeshi movement, second world war, partition of India, the communal riots of 1963-64 in Dhaka and Kolkata and the opium wars. These are the central issues to be discussed in the proposed work.

3. Hypothesis:

This work hypothesizes that though history ignites the creative imagination of Amitav Ghosh and provides raw materials for his novels. Further that his version of life as embedded in his novels is positive and affirmative inspite of the despairing historical situations they incorporate, adding that the interface with history does not affect the fictional art rather enriches it.

4. Gap in research work:

His work will cover the nature of his treatment of historical events and how does he weaves historical facts into the texture of his novels.This will also add to the

literary history and the literary merit of his novel as historian. It will also compare Ghosh with Manohar Malgonakr and Salman Rushdie who are well known for their use of historical events in their novels. The gap is quite evident.

5. Plan of work:

The following methodology will be adopted while carrying out the plan of work. Reading texts, articles,analyzing facts there is and if possible interview with the writer in person will be arranged.

The following will be the tentative division of the work:

a) Introduction
b) The Circle of Reasons
c) The Shadow Lines
d) The Calcutta Chromosome
e) The Glass Palace
f) The Sea of Poppies
g) Conclusion

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CERTIFICATE OF Ph.D. PRE-SUBMISSION

This is to certify that **Mr. Indra Mohan Jha**, a bonafide research scholar of this department, has successfully completed the pre-submission seminar requirement as a partof his Ph.D. programme.

Date: 16th June, 2023
Place: Shivpuri

(Signature of Head of the Department/Dean Faculty)