



Cultural Differences & Representation of Post-Colonial Sensibility in *The Shadow Lines*

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Abstract:

This research article spins about investigating the features of postcolonialism in Amitav Ghosh's novels: *The Shadow Lines*. He has integrated and scrutinized the repercussions of colonialism on the culture and society of two key neighboring cities, namely Calcutta and Dhaka. Reflecting the fallout from colonial control, post-colonial themes in Indian literature explore identity and resistance in a variety of ways. This article highlights the nuanced depictions of societal, cultural, and personal problems in navigating the complex tapestry of Indian literature. Through numerous examples, it discusses the themes of identity, cultural reclamation, and resistance that are pervasive in post-colonial Indian works. The dynamic terrain of Indian literature symbolizes a narrative journey through the aftermath of colonialism, showcasing a rich tapestry of topics that resonate with the post-colonial age. The examination of identity and resistance within this literary world is a tribute to the continuing legacy of colonial rule and its profound impact on the fabric of Indian society and culture.

Amitav Ghosh's An important postcolonial novel, *The Shadow Lines* (1988) examines the bloodshed of Partition, the fallout from British colonialism, and the falsity of national borders. It explores the effects of communalism, exile/belonging, and divided identity in post-independence Bangladesh and India through a non-linear, memory-driven story. Criticism of Nationalism and Borders: The title refers to the "shadow lines" imaginary, arbitrary boundaries that separate cultures and families, such as the Radcliffe Line. According to Ghosh, these limits are "shadows" that lead to actual violence, such the communal riots in Dhaka and Calcutta in 1963–1964. The narrator reconstructs personal and social history through memory, rejecting official colonial narratives and underlining the subjective character of historical fact.

Key Word : Post-colonial, Amitav Ghosh, The Datta Chaudharis, Delhi riots, identity, crises, suppression, resistance, gender and exploitation

Amitav Ghosh is one of the best writer of Indian English literature. He has focused on many issues of the Indian modern society. Amitav Ghosh born on July 11, 1956, Calcutta now he is staying at Kolkata, India. He is an Indian-born writer whose ambitious novels use intricate narrative tactics to investigate the nature of national and personal identity, notably of the people of India and Southeast Asia. He earned the Jnanpith Award in 2018. As a child, Ghosh, whose father was a diplomat, lived in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Iran. He got a B.A. in 1976

and an M.A. in 1978 from the University of Delhi; at approximately the same time, he also worked as a newspaper writer and editor. After that, he studied at the University of Oxford, where he earned a Ph.D. in social anthropology in 1982. Ghosh later taught at a number of universities, including Queens College of the City University of New York, Columbia University in New York City, the American University in Cairo, and the University of Delhi. After a stay at Harvard University that began in 2004, Ghosh turned to writing full-time and shared his time between the United States and India.

His first novel, *The Circle of Reason* (1986), depicts an Indian protagonist who, suspected of being a terrorist, flees India for northern Africa and the Middle East. Blending aspects of fable and picaresque fiction, it is unmistakably postcolonial in its marginalization of Europe and postmodern in its nonlinear structure and deep intertextuality. *The Shadow Lines* (1988) tells the narrative of two families one Indian and the other English—that are profoundly impacted by the events that transpired after the British left India in 1947. Ghosh's English-language works, *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*, were extensively translated and attracted readers from all over the world. Ghosh's first science fiction work is *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium, and Discovery* (1995), a multi-layered book that tells a different account of the discovery of the malaria-causing parasite. His later books include *The Hungry Tide* (2004), which is set in Bengal and features American and Indian characters, and *The Glass Palace* (2000), a family history focused on Burma (Myanmar) from its British occupation in 1885 through its independence following World War II and into the late 20th century. *With Sea of Poppies* (2009) a novel that follows individuals on the Ibis, a ship on the seas of Southeast Asia carrying indentured labourers and opium—Ghosh veered away from his past novels' formal experimentation and toward a more traditional type of storytelling. The first book in his Ibis trilogy, *Sea of Poppies*, is set just before and during the first Opium War. *River of Smoke* and *Flood of Fire* are two more historical series.

The novel *Shadow Lines* illustrates the battle of subaltern people for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy and sheds light on early knowledge of the social, psychological, and cultural inferiority imposed by colonisers. It also presents a comprehensive political and cultural transformation. In order to demonstrate his interest in portraying the consequences of colonisation, particularly in a period following freedom, the author both overtly and covertly emits sparks or remnants of postcolonial principles throughout the book. The article, therefore, aims to explore the overall structure of the novel through postcolonial approach and provides examples from the novel regarding the application of some postcolonial elements such as obscurity, memory, imagination, identity, essentialism, otherness, ambivalence, nationalism, space/place, worlding, diaspora, hybridity, unbelonging, independence...etc.

The Datta Chaudharis and Prices families in London, as well as the young middle-class boy protagonist (i.e., the narrator), are the focus of the novel's events. Tridib, (the second uncle of the narrator) is widely praised by the narrator because he (Tridib) is endowed with enormous broad knowledge and has distinctive and eccentric attitude to events and places. Tridib instructs him (the narrator) to use his imagination with precision and in this way helps him being released from the restrictions around him. On the other hand, when Tridib is slain at the end of the book, his family tries to forget and dismiss this terrible event, but the narrator starts looking for the reason for his murder since he believes he owes him his new perspective on life. One of the main characters in the book is Tha'mma, the narrator's strict and disciplined grandmother, who disapproves of Tridib's actions and thinks he is simply wasting his life by wandering around the corners of streets. As a result, even though Tridib has strong familial ties, he is unable to establish a respectable career.

The narrator finds Tridib's unique personality and point of view intriguing and engaging, and he finds it enjoyable to listen to him since he thinks Tridib has great knowledge. Tridib falls in love with May Price (daughter of Prices family) and endangers his life to save her from the potential threats in the communal upheaval of 1963-64 in Dhaka. Similarly, the narrator is emotionally attached to Ila, his cousin and attractive woman, but he never

explicitly communicates his feelings to her for fear of losing their bond. Ila feels sad for him after learning of his affection for her out of the blue. It is worthy to note that Ila is highly despised by Tha'mma who calls her with nasty and derogatory qualities.

She (Tha'mma) never likes her grandson (narrator) either, as he supports Ila. Tha'mma travels to Dhaka to convince her uncle, Jethamoshai, to return to Calcutta in order to rejoin the family after her traumatic past. The narrative enters round three generations of the narrator's family who live in Dhaka, Calcutta and London. It embodies a wide-range of characters picked up from many religions and cultures juxtaposed next each other in a unified comprehensible context. The novel begins in 1939, when World War II broke out, and ends in 1964, following the start of riots, violence, and uprisings in Pakistan and India. The narrator's father's cousin, 8-year-old Tridib, was killed by a street mob in Dhaka in 1964 after being transported to England in 1939. Therefore, the shade of death, violence and horror is fairly visible throughout the narrative, and that the antagonism and lines isolating individuals from each other feel usual and ordinary. The novel's events don't go in a straight line; instead, they follow an erratic, cyclical pattern that weaves together the narrator's experiences and what he sees with the help of his imagination and recollections. *The Shadow Lines* highlights the political and cultural challenges that any decolonised country often encounters and tackles the issues and repercussions of a decolonised nation. Problems as identity, crises, suppression, resistance, gender and exploitation are prominently underlined and dealt with in this novel. Cultural differences are revealed in the text, along with the ways that race, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, cultural beliefs, and practices come together to create individual identities that influence how we see ourselves, other people, and the world. It also covers topics like double consciousness and hybridity, as well as the connection between cultural and personal identity.

Like Tridib, his mentor who gifted him (the narrator) the gift of imagination, the narrator has a profound desire to travel around the world. Tridib and the narrator both experienced a clear mental trip to places they had never been. Even after Tridib was killed in a communal riot, the narrator can recall nearly every detail of their time and location together due to their unique and intimate bond. They are emotionally connected by the realm of memory and imagination. The grandmother is frightened by Tridib's profound and potent effect on the narrator, which is unilateral and evocative of a colonizer-colonized connection. As a result, she orders her grandson—the narrator—to stay away from Tridib. The narrator views Tridib as a hero who can assist him in overcoming all social constraints because he is fed up with them. For him, Tridib means openness toward space and place, competent to use his memory from the past to connect with the present. The narrator symbolizes a colonised nation who is in quest of anything or anyone who renders him a sense of success, openness and freedom.

The 1984 Delhi riots and the 1987 Meerut riots were comparable to the 1964 Calcutta riots. These riots have essentially the same plan. Newspaper reporting is a method that perpetuates communal conflict. The violence in Calcutta is conveyed as the memories of the narrator. The general mistrust is emphasised, facts that also have an impact on social unrest in the current decade. Such treatment adds to the immediate relevant of *The Shadow Lines*. Two, postmodern subjectivity is typified by the fragmented, disjointed, and discontinuous manner of experience described in the text. To give an example, various characters in the book deal with Tridib's passing in a fragmented and inconsistent way. When several characters share their partial perspectives on this extremely painful and heartbreaking tragedy, its fuller consequences become clear. Ashcroft, 196

Many years after Tridib's death, May tells the narrator about his demise in London. She also had the guilty sensation that she was responsible for Tridib's death. The narrator thought that Tridib's death was caused by an accident. Although Tridib was able to save himself after saving May, he was ultimately killed by the insane crowd. As an iconoclast and mystery, Tridib passes away. *The Shadow Lines* was a very engaging and believable book because it lacked pessimism and narrative style. The novelist described the political freedom in the modern age without any clear remedies. Ghosh illustrates how tensions between various ethnicities and cultures are escalating

to an irreversible level. The novel, which was narrated in the first person, portrayed the story of a developing youngster who lives in the shadow of the father he idolises and of a person entangled in social and political upheavals as well as history. Tridib provides the youngster, who serves as the book's narrator, with eyes to see the worlds he travels through in his head. The third key figure in the novel's framework is Tha'mma, the grandmother of the narrator. The narrator (35) views England via Ila's eyes when he is eight years old, and when Tridib emerges from Ila's shadows at the age of 26, he discovers the reality. Tha'mma and Tridib. Tha'mma is a crucial character because she opposes the younger generation and criticises individuals who, in her opinion, have strayed from Indian customs. Tha'mma is a crucial character because she opposes the younger generation and criticises individuals who, in her opinion, have strayed from Indian customs. She is the grandmother of a writer, a retired administrator, and and the authoritative head of the family.

Like old individuals, she has trust in the recognized standards of life and looks down upon those who do not fall in line with her. In Dhaka, she was born and raised in a blended family. Tha'mma spent the first twelve years of her marriage in railway colonies since she was married to a Burmese railway engineer. The protagonist of the character belongs to a boy, who grows up in a middle- class home; he is the narrator's uncle. He is in love with May and takes the central role in various occurrences of the narrative. The author repeatedly emphasizes that there are no subaltern people or colonized states as long as they are independent of others' creations. Tridib and the narrator develop alternative ways to narrate stories and reject Eurocentric metanarratives. Places such as Mrs. Price's house in West Hamstead and Khalil's home in Dhaka are spaces that are free from stubborn binaries and constantly create new possibilities by inviting both local and non- native individuals. *The Shadow Lines*, a postcolonial novel emphasizes how colonialism divided lives into nations, cultures, societies, and interpersonal relationships, resulting in a politics of prejudice and bigotry among these components. The superficiality of these boundaries and their discursive impact on the connection between the coloniser and the colonised are both reflected in the novel.

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