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Portrayal of Indian Diaspora in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*

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Abstract

Diaspora is a psychological excursion, an issue between native land and new contract nations. The migrant, traveling around from area to vicinity will become a stranger in a different land and this isolation makes an impact on the identification of psychological peace and empirical status. Diasporic writing occupies a region of great importance between nations and cultures. Diasporic writing primarily ends up a response to the misplaced homes and turns to problems such as Dislocation, Nostalgia, Discrimination, survival, Cultural exchange, and identity. Dislocation is one of the first emotions that irk the diasporic community. When diasporic human being realizes they are dislocated from the native society they are upset mentally and try to be mindful and stumble on a nostalgic past.

Keywords: Diaspora, alienation, migration, dislocation, cultural displacement, identity, nostalgia, cultural diversity

Introduction

Diaspora is an experience closer to self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge, and self- definition. "Diasporic Consciousness" is chosen with distinctive reference to novels of an impartial writer, Amitav Ghosh, who gained a prestigious place in Diasporic literature. Ghosh looks at Diasporic literature from a new perspective. Ghosh, besides V.S.Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, popularized the Diaspora in Indian writing in English. He is not only a writer but also an anthropologist, sociologist, columnist, novelist, author, travel writer, and educator. Both his fictional and non-fictional narratives, go restlessly across countries, continents, and oceans.

Ghosh belongs to the International School of writing which deals effectively with the contemporary post-colonial ethos without sacrificing the historic antiquities of the lands. Ghosh blends fiction and truth flawlessly with magical realism. Ghosh weaves the magical sensible plots with the subject matters of postmodernism. Amitav Ghosh has published a range of acclaimed works of fiction and non-fiction. He was born in 1956 in Calcutta and grew up in India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. He studied in Delhi, Oxford, and Alexandria.

His works are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), *The Flood of Fire* (2015), the three books of *The Ibis Trilogy*. Maximum of his works deal with historical issues. The non-fiction works are *In an Antique Land* (1992), *Dancing in Cambodia and at Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), and *The Imam and the Indian* (2002)

Ghosh's novels deal with the subject matters of political struggles and histories that triggered the diaspora, reminiscences of homeland, transculturation, the concept of oneness, and faceless human plights. He was very conscious of blurring the borders that divide India from its sub-continent. He expressed his perspective of oneness or notion of the utopian world in most of his novels. There used to be a unique depiction of the fact of every and every stage in the lives of migrants in Ghosh's novels. As an Indian diaspora dwelling in America, he was once in a position to seize the outer and internal experiences of the human beings becoming a member of the exodus of migration and the present process of ineffable hardships. Both his fictional as well as non-fictional writings tend to undertake the restless moving throughout the continents, oceans, and countries. Along with his well-known ambition in his writings, he in no way failed to provide a space to register the spirit of his homeland.

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The Indian diasporic writers from all over the world began focusing on their homeland, the problem of migration, and its effects, in their writings. For the Indian diasporic writers, it is India or the reminiscences of India that turn out to be the substances of most of their literary expressions. Some of the important writers who subject their native land and the diasporic topics in their writings are V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, and Anita Desai.

The diasporic literature act as a bridge between two distinctive cultures as it normally offers the reminiscences of home and the journey of the emigrants in a host country with their native culture. Thus this literature became a prolonged structure of home return; many of the diasporic writers looked back at their homeland, its tradition, and its different components through their writings. Among them, Amitav Ghosh is one of the eminent diasporic writers who captures all the Consciousness of diasporic society in his writings.

Therefore, the Diasporic situation is the state in which the longings and yearnings of the migrant are expressed. The notion of Diaspora stands steadfast in its claims in the direction of the inevitability of nostalgia. Nostalgia has constantly been a beneficial compensatory device to construct an alternative historic fact created through the images of the golden past, in particular when there is discontent with the cursocio-economic scenario in any culture. Amitav Ghosh 's fiction is expressive of an urge to locate a context in which the characters attempt to radically change the meaningless activities of life into a sensuous construct. The nostalgic sentiment comes accessible to Ghosh to fill the narrative gaps that inevitably occur in the novel.

The *Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh explores the political and monetary increase of India thru the lives of two families Bengali and English. This novel captures the perspective of time and activities that bring humans together and also keep them apart. The novel has an unnamed narrator referring to the story of his journey and his uncle Tridib's experiences. Tridib is considered to be the protagonist of the novel. Ghosh's novel is a beneficial aid to learn about all the challenges of diaspora as well as the techniques of negotiation. The politics of negotiation determines the multi-layered spectrum of responses to the diasporic space, and various parameters exist in order to learn about these negotiations. In this novel, Ghosh explains the sufferings of Tridib via the unnamed narrator. The distance draws him even nearer and the native land is elevated to a greater pedestal. He uses private testimonies to shed light on the social, political, and historic The Characters keep turning towards the homeland-its sacredness, rituals, and culture, and as a result, undertake a variety of families' symbols to help them freeze the image of the native land in their being. This novel is viewed to be a successful nuthatch stands for its effective imagination. Both Tridib and the narrator are excellent with their dominant imagination

Many stories in the fiction are representative of the theme of diaspora, nationalism, and partition. The novel spans over three decades and has three generations of characters. So, the novelist has a lot of scope for free motion in terms of time and space. The three generations are the grandparents, the father, and the mom of the youngsters which includes the narrator. Various crucial problems have been dealt with by the author with utmost simplicity and ease. The woman

character known as Thamma has unshakable nationalistic values in her and shuns the notion of partition and the forced separation of the people so all of sudden by drawing lines between them. It is the tale about the two families – the Datta Chaudhari and the family of Price. The family is co-related for three generations. The story beings in a united country known as India and ends with the advent of the new country of East Pakistan. So, we can say that it is the enforced diaspora as after the partition the family is separated vehemently. The troubles raised right here have the magnitude of contemporary modern India.

It is a novel that has the story of three generations of a family and their movement which is affected by the history of partition. The experience motif in the novel is associated with the diasporic motion in the life of the characters. Both the bodily and psychological experience is included by the author to deliver the desired impact of the diaspora. The reminiscence plays a vast role in the making of the novel and the incidents in the novel have relevance to the history. It is the psychological trip back in time that makes it viable to relive the moment at present.

The recollections in the novel are now not linear and sequential in manner amongst which some are dependable with the evidence of records and some appear to be unreliable. Memory and creativeness perform a substantial part for Tridib and he advises the narrator to imagine with precision. The memories for Ila are the reality as she memorizes her previous experiences. The memories of the personality are scattered in between the principal narrative which emphasizes the psychological journey of the characters and provides a passage into the psyche of the characters to explore them carefully and analyze the diasporic impact on them. The memories of the past have importance in the sense that it relates to the current in this novel.

A diasporic character is constructed by a number of elements like culture, history, and society. A diasporic being can't get away from these factors and has to discover his real identity. The protagonist in this novel strikes throughout different places, countries barring any restrictions crossing the 'shadow lines' of the keeping apart two nations, states, and men. The novel does not solely focus on the diasporic problems of the people but also on the impact of history on the individual remarks. It stresses the truth that history is no longer simply about incidents in the past however they have their far accomplishing outcomes even in the current existing time. The diasporic novel *The Shadow Lines* has a range of journeys performed through the characters in it. In fact, the chief idea of the novel is the journey. The main characters in the novel undertake a journey to search for their identity. The novel starts with an eight-year-old narrator speaking about his memories of his previous life. He tells the reminiscences of childhood in Calcutta. The development of the Calcutta city is also mentioned through the creator in the novel. The narrator is unknown. He tells about the two families. The two sisters in the novel are Thamma and Mayadebi. Thamma's persona is a typical diasporic personality who suffers alienation from her former country. In her early years, she was residing in Dhaka (a region separated after the India-Bangladesh partition and is now in Bangladesh). She is a simple lady with ethical values and she is honest and believes in nationalism. She doesn't believe in the partition of the countries which in accordance to her is a political

decision. She marries a railway engineer. Unfortunately, she loses her husband and has a son to look after. She works as a teacher in Bengal. Her college lifestyles are of a modern kind. She was involved in matters of national awareness. In her university days, she was once involved in the extremist agency mentioned as Anushilan and Jugantar. She was taken over by the young people engaged in extremist organizations and their nationalistic endeavors in the direction of freedom. She had an influence on her Western schooling on her. She leads an easy lifestyle and is a hardworking lady. She is of the view that the partition of India and Bangladesh is accountable for her dislocation and migration and therefore pays it no importance.

The narrative begins with Tridib who goes with the family to London in 1939, later in the story Tridib is killed in a partition revolt in Dhaka in 1968. The narrator gets the details of the circumstance of post-war London thru Tridib whilst they had been with the household of Price in London. The unhappy story of Tridib's loss of life in a partition rise up is instructed to the narrator by means of Robi and May Price. The narrator is influenced by the way of Tridib and Tridib offers him a number of pieces of advice the narrator enhances his experiences and vision by means of listening to tales told through Tridib and also via analyzing and imagining before venturing a genuine ride in his life.

The novel is divided into two sections – 'Going Away' and 'Coming Home'. The characters in the novel go out and return home at the end. These components of the novel actually point out the movement – an experience that the characters undertake. It is the journey that makes the characters move and have one-of-a-kind experiences of the world. It's about the unhappy memories of the characters that were united before the partition of India, all of sudden after the partition the situation changes, and the family gets divided into two parts. The scenario disturbs the aged folks in the family as they no longer apprehend how all of sudden we need to take the permission from the authorities to visit their very own home. Ghosh effectively brings out the ills of partition and the impact on the residents of the nation. The novel starts with the journey to London of the Tridib's folks in 1939. The journey narrated by the narrator is of memorizing it. He memories a number of occasions related to the trip of the time– the 2nd world war, the partition of India, and the brutal killing of innocent people. It is like shifting out and returning again to the area from where you have started. The novel also stresses the significance of the concept of 'home' as it is decisive in the making of diasporic identity. In a way, it is a center that you have to return to or you constantly look for. The novel has recollections that are not arranged in a sequential manner. The narrator tells us the story of every character.

Immigration and alienation as a truth hold great importance in Diasporic writings. All his novels explore the sense of nostalgia. The haunting impact of losing native land is regarded to be the major component of diasporic writings. The dislocation in the characters explains the great experience of diasporic suffering.

Hence as a diasporic writer, he not only characterizes the 'migrants' lives' but also expresses his own diasporic consciousness in his writings. There are many diverse ways for diasporas to look back at their native land; among those Ghosh glanced at his homeland and its life force by scripting it in his novels.

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