

Narratives Across Borders: ‘A Socio-Political study of selected works of Amitav Ghosh.’

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Abstract: The dissertation titled “Narrative Across Borders: A Socio-Political Study of the selected works of Amitav Ghosh” critically analyze and observe *Amitav Ghosh’s* two novels which are “*The Shadow Lines*” and “*The Gun Island.*” The Research methodology applied in this dissertation is Social Anthropology. Social Anthropology is the study of human cultures, society, and human development. These two novels explore the narratives across a person’s homeland and it is positive and negative impacts. This dissertation by research methodology of Social Anthropology narrates a point of view *that climate change, Cultural heritage, Identity, Diasporic effects (separation from homeland) and post-colonial effects* is a social part of a human life and a person must face it and deal with it. A person’s identity is attached from his native homeland from birth and if he changes his city/state/country then he faces too many problems in adjusting between new environment and people which is known as “diasporic effects.” Migration can be forced due to communal or political violence, sometimes because of climate change and sometimes because of wants and willing. This dissertation through the narration of two novels by diasporic writer Amitav Ghosh will enable readers to expand their understandings about forced and willing migration, effects of climate change and the most important part which is separation from homeland and family because it gives permanent scars on a human’s mind.

Keywords: Migration, Diaspora, Climate Change, Feminism, Partition, Nationalism, Bangladesh, Sundarbans, Amitav Ghosh.

Introduction

One of the prolific writers of Kolkata, West Bengal, India Amitav Ghosh gave incomparable contribution to Indian Literature. Ghosh’s major contribution was in Indian Postcolonial Literature for e.g., his novels like *The Circle of reason*, “*The*

Shadow Lines, *The Hungry Tide*, *The Gun Island*, etc. He was born in the city of joy Kolkata on July 11, 1956. He is now 67 years old. Born in Kolkata, he studied in Dehradun from “The Doon School.” Ghosh studied in Delhi University, he pursued B.A and M.A in English. Aside from graduation and post-graduation he started earning as a newspaper editor. From University of Oxford, Ghosh received a degree of Ph.D. in social anthropology in 1982. In Ghosh’s teaching career, he firstly taught in University of Delhi, and then he took teaching experience in American University in Cairo. He had taught at Columbia University in New York City and Queens College of the City University of New York. Ghosh is awarded with 54th Jnanpith award in two018 and awarded a Padma Shri award too. In this research paper, we are going to explore and analyze the diasporic, climate change, exile, postcolonial effects with communal and political turmoil consequences. In this paper, two major novels of Ghosh are being discussed with above mentioned narratives and themes, the novels of Amitav Ghosh are *The Shadow Lines*, and *The Gun Island*. These two novels share some same themes in common such as diasporic effects, post-colonial effects etc. Although both the novels have different genre, in “*The Shadow Lines*” the genre political fiction and in “*The Gun Island*” genre is historical fiction but still the protagonist present in both the novels (in novel *The Shadow Lines* “Tridib” and in novel *The Gun Island* “Deen”) experience and explore the migration’s effects, climate change, connection of nature to humans, life across the border and life of a person who leaves his native land due to some reason. Both Tridib and Deen have migrated in their lives leaving behind their homeland due to some reason which consequences and effects are the tremendous theories to explore. This dissertation through two novels of Ghosh “*The Gun Island*” and “*The Shadow Lines*” studies the narratives of climate change, diasporic effects, post-colonial effects in a person’s life and what consequences it creates in his family.

History

Those invisible lines on the borders of any nation or state play a very significant role in an individual’s life. The effects of these borders can not only be viewed and experienced physically but can be felt and observed mentally/psychologically too. These border lines divide people into various identities, cultures, and climates. As referred in both the novels of Amitav Ghosh, both protagonists in novels (*The Gun Island* and *The Shadow Lines*) Deen Dutta and Tridib suffered from various cultures and climate change throughout their life. Bengal has a major role in Independence struggle from the Britishers. Freedom fighters from Bengal like, Chittaranjan Das, Subhash Chandra Bose, etc. contributed immensely in the independence struggle. Bengalis suffered during the partition of India and Bangladesh even with Pakistan. They were never able to meet their families in their

own native homelands due to political controversies. This can be proved in *The Shadow Lines* novel with “Thamma” character (grandmother of the narrator) who was never able to meet her family in Bangladesh because of partition. Some more novels with the same theme are *The Far Field* by Madhuri Vijay, *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh and *The Hungry Tide* by Amitav Ghosh. “Madhuri Vijay,” “Khushwant Singh” are also well-known writers of diaspora and partition like Amitav Ghosh. The central character of the *Shadow Lines* novel Tridib, he left India (Kolkata) for England and Deen Dutta explored the cultural heritage and climate change from the journey of Bangladesh to Sundarbans in West Bengal. Both protagonists learnt positive messages from negative happenings too in novels. The title of this dissertation “Narrative across Borders” signifies a message that in this research its being discussed different backgrounds, cultures and national identities of people who migrate willing or un-willingly. As a child of the universe, a person should explore and analyze various cultures and lifestyles of people who live across the globe.

As an educated and civilized person, one should begin a journey in life which shapes his/her understanding about concept of diasporic literature, voluntary migration and unwillingly migration, post-colonial literature and cultural heritage. If an individual studies deeply the above-mentioned theories, then surely that person will stay away from culture-phobia, conservativeness, etc. A person will rise higher in life if his/her mindset is broad minded and not hateful towards any culture or community of people. Religion & cultural differences are the major cause of all the historical liberation wars. Studying the narratives and perspectives of people across the borders helps in understanding the human struggles and diversity, which the character faces. This study can also come under “World Literature” criticism because it gives information about literature happening across the globe. “Tridib” the protagonist of the novel “*The Shadow Lines*” and “Dinanath Dutta” the protagonist of the novel “*The Gun Island*” had set a spectacular example of Cultural Heritage and Ecocriticism.

Literature Review

Before starting the elaboration of “The Gun Island,” one famous quote of Ghosh should be recalled here which is “People think that knowing the future can help you prepare for what is to come – but often it only makes you powerless.” This quote from “The Gun Island” novel by Amitav Ghosh is learnable & enlightening quote which portrays a moral message that plans cannot change the results of future. In fact, Ghosh has tried to say that planning often makes a person powerless for the future. Planning does not make a person powerful but planning is a proof that one has done something ill in past & now when it is time to bear, he is trying to escape. There

is also a hidden symbolism in this quote which is related to people of Sundarbans. This quote basically means that people often plan & plot to secure their future happenings but a harsh truth is that no plans & nobody, not even God can save them from their past acts. The past karmas are the major reason of suffering in people's lives. No one can skip the results of the past acts. The symbolism which is hidden in the quote is interrelated to the people of Sundarbans. Ghosh has said symbolically in the quote that people of Sundarbans may plan to save themselves from the disastrous climate change but surely, they must bear the result of the causalities which they have done towards nature. One more quote of Amitav Ghosh cannot be missed from "The Gun Island" novel. "That the world of today presents all the symptoms of demonic possession." This quote has metaphysical comparison in it between today's present acts of people to tomorrow's world. Ghosh through this quote had tried to signify that the negative symptoms of today's people towards nature & society may be disastrous for tomorrow. Ghosh had shown his worries & anxiety for the future & specially for health of the 'natural environment.' Basically, this quote is also a warning for the people to secure & preserve the natural environment & resources for the future generations. Sundarbans's people are suffering due to lack of social responsibility towards nature. This should be taken as a motivational example by all the readers of the novel & should understand the social, moral ethics towards nature. Amitav Ghosh had metaphysically & satirically explained it in his words as a writer. Firstly, this dissertation starts its exploration from *The Gun Island* novel then it focusses on the one of its central character "Deen Dutta" a rare book dealer, (divorced and middle aged) who is settled in New York sets to his home city Sundarbans in West Bengal to experience the blessings of goddess Manasa and people of Sundarbans who faced negative impact of climate change because refugees of there are compelled to leave their homes due to higher sea levels and terrible weather conditions. This dissertation firstly talks about the background of the novel *The Gun Island* then we can see that along with 'cultural heritage,' 'affirmation of humanity' term is also clearly visible in the novel. Then this dissertation looks at the characters of Gun Island then we can observe that protagonist Deen Dutta, who lives in Brooklyn, New York but still he is eager to learn about his cultural roots. As a true Indian Bengali, he is exploring his home state and analyzing about the goddess Manasa who is worshipped in Bengal a lot. Deen was curious to discover the about the magical event happened with the gun merchant "Kanai Dutt." In the background of the whole novel, the above-mentioned want of protagonist Deen Dutta is the soul of it. Transformation of Kanai Dutt into half-man and half tiger and attack of a tiger to a group of tourists in Sundarbans are the motives of Deen to discover in novel which gives this novel a base and a body. This dissertation then also describes about *The Shadow Lines* novel. Since, "The

"Shadow Lines" novel is being elaborated in this paper one famous quote of Amitav Ghosh should be recalled here. The quote is "People like my grandmother, who have no home but in memory, learn to be very skilled in the art of recollection." Writers are genius in shaping their words into pearls and Amitav Ghosh is one of them as a diasporic writer. Amitav Ghosh has beautifully portrayed through this quote that the physical world may be dynamic but sweet memories of a human are irreversible & permanent in their minds. Nobody & no government politics can snatch memories from the minds of anyone. Ghosh has symbolized here narrator's grandmother's diasporic sufferings. Thamma (narrator's grandmother) had made memories her homeland because her homeland "Dhaka" had gone too far from her due to political decision. In the year 1947, when Dhaka became the part of East Pakistan Thamma lost her homeland forever. When a person's anything like favourite place or person becomes unreachable permanently then the memories is the only source through which anybody can be connected through his/her beloved thing. Ghosh through the above-mentioned quote had tried his best to signify that narrator's grandmother had not let the outer division to affect her sense of belongingness from Dhaka. This portrays her "feeling of nationalism" for Dhaka, Bangladesh. By heart she is a truthful & sincere "Bangladeshi woman" who never forgotten her roots. As an active reader one should learn true "feeling of nationalism" from narrator's grandmother (Thamma). She is best example of it in the novel. One more thought provoking & inspiring quote from "The Shadow Lines" novel should be recalled here because it also elaborates themes like diaspora & migration like the previous quote. "Nobody knows, nobody can ever know, not even in memory, because there are moments in time that are not knowable." Through this quote Ghosh has tried to convey that a message that every historical event's reason & answer cannot be unwrapped due to fate. There is a hidden pain in his philosophy that whatever negative incidents have happened with him & his family due to partition, the reason of that tragic events cannot be explained to him that why fate has only chosen him. He (author) is referring to that harsh & painful moments as unfilled gaps of life. The reason of the arrival of that gap (harsh moments) will always be unknown & unanswerable for the author. Several themes in the work are World War II, Partition of India 1947, and communal riots in 1963 to 1964 in Dhaka and Calcutta. The main conflict in this novel is of partition of India and Bangladesh countries in year 1947. India got Independence on 15 august 1947 and in 1971 East Pakistan became an independent country known as "Bangladesh" today. Freedom movement of Bengal played major role in this formation. Partition of any two or more countries leaves permanent scars on any person's mind and even on his family. The war and struggle of freedom-by-freedom fighters like Subhash Chandra Bose may had ended but many innocent people of

countries Pakistan, India, Bangladesh had suffered from lack of belongingness, identity crises, forced migration and political controversies.

In *The Shadow Lines* novel two major elements are clearly visible which are “cosmopolitanism” and “psychoanalytical theory.” Firstly, in this dissertation its being discussed about cosmopolitanism theory then we can analyze it in journey of Tridib in the novel. Tridib travels from Kolkata to London with his father “Saheb” where he creates lots of memories before leaving. Those memories of London and Kolkata act as a psychological fiction in mind of Tridib. Tridib also witnesses two world war which gives him various diasporic lessons. Tridib’s grandmother’s sister named “Tha’mma” who belonged to Dhaka was never able to return her hometown Dhaka because of the partition in 1947. Dhaka became east Pakistan in that year. These were the major reasons why diasporic literature and partition literature are integral part of this novel. In further chapters we will elaborate the above-mentioned terms deeply. Amitav Ghosh has tried his best to make public realize the negative and psychological effects of partition and diasporic life through his novels “The Shadow Lines” and “The Gun Island.”

Diasporic and Partition Literature are also equally important like other forms of literature because it shapes a human life through various stories of different walks of life.

Critical Analysis of both the novels “The Shadow Lines” & “The Gun Island.”

The research paper discusses the analysis of the topic then the first social term which comes to our mind is Social Anthropology. Social Anthropology term is purely related to Ghosh’s both novels *The Gun Island* and *The Shadow Lines* Ecocriticism and Ecofeminism are also integral part of *The Gun Island* novel. Along with ecofeminism and ecocriticism, violence and discrimination can also be seen in novel. It is known that when literature is connected to nature in any form of text or story it is called ecocriticism. It is also observed in *The Gun Island* novel people of Sundarbans are suffering the imbalance of nature due to their partial faults. If people must survive in any habitat, then they surely need to save and secure natural resources. It is a very essential ethical message of novel. In this research, feminism theory has enabled to observe 2 major characters of *The Gun Island* “Nilima” and “Piya Roy”. Firstly, the discussion of feminism theory is started from *The Gun Island* novel in which there 2 empowered women’s named Piya Roy (to which the protagonist Deen was romantically attracted) and Nilima who was the cousin of the gun merchant. Piya Roy’s moral support to his friend Deen and unstoppable interest in history and ecosystem of Sundarbans’s Forest is motivational for all the women readers. Nilima’s character in novel can also be considered as empowered woman

character because she was a translator with a member of a N.G.O. of environment. With Nilima's guidance and elaboration about Sundarbans only Piya and Deen were able to discover about the story of Gun Merchant and history of Sundarbans and goddess Manasa. With this, a shade of woman empowerment can also be analyzed in this dissertation. Nilima and Piya are portrayed as dedicated women to their journey of discovery and Goddess Manasa symbolizes empowerment as a female goddess. As a true reader and critic, the most important and suitable example of ecofeminism in *The Gun Island* novel can be the "Hindu goddess Manasa."

Goddess Manasa in Hindu religion is not just the goddess of snakes but also, she is considered as a mother figure of the natural environment. As we all know in Hindu religion Goddess Adi-Shakti is considered as the divine mother figure of all the creatures on earth. Similarly, in this novel Goddess Manasa is considered the mother and caretaker of Sundarbans island's well-being. This is the major reason why people of Sundarbans are afraid of her wrath. Both these novels deal with critical social issues like migration, partition, cultural heritage, and diasporic lives. Firstly, in this research paper in "The Gun Island" novel it is observed from "Deen" Datta's character that despite of living in New York he is still fond of exploring the magnificence of goddess "Manasa" and about "Bonduki Sadagar's" life's consequences. He wanted to explore these because being an N.R.I has not eliminated his true Indian Bengali Identity. Although Brooklyn is a city full of technologies and with all the comforts but still Deen's life in that city was lonely. He was not living a socially active life. When he visited Kolkata, this visit brings an awakening change in his life about culture, migration, and diaspora. Deen Dutta was one day invited by his female friend named Cinta for a dinner in Kolkata, where Deen's family came to live after the partition of Bangladesh and India. Cinta worked as a professor in Kolkata city. She was widowed. A phone call by his friend Cinta for a casual dinner invitation which could be regarded as the phone call from his fate helped him in getting enlighten about culture and migration. At the dinner table Cinta started a story which she heard from a taxi driver. A story which started in casual conversation brought Deen close to the powerfulness and beauty of Goddess Manasa (The Goddess of Snakes). Deen's friend Cinta had heard that ancient story from a taxi driver which was about a gun dealer. The name of the gun dealer was "Bonduki Sadagar." Bonduki Sadagar terribly wanted to elope from the indignation of goddess Manasa. In Hindu Mythology, Goddess Manasa is the goddess of snakes. The protagonist of this novel "Deen" has one female relative aunt named Nilima Bose. Deen's journey of discovery about that gun dealer was surely a memorable and remarkable experience for him because this visit to Sundarbans (isolated and undeveloped region\forest in West Bengal) in West Bengal was not a casual trip with friends. Deen's this trip opened his

eye towards climate change and forced migration. Deen noticed in Sundarbans Forest that people of that island are forced to leave that area due to negative impact of climate change and many immoral human doings like deforestation and developing the industries by snatching innocent people's livelihood. There was an imbalance in the physical and social environment of Sundarbans Forest.

Ecocriticism is literature connected to the nature. In this novel, lives of people in Sundarbans Forest are negatively affected by nature's wrath. In Sundarbans Forest Deen and his friend Piya Roy met gun merchant's cousin Nilima who was an environmentalist and she elaborates them the negative impacts of climate change in Sundarbans that how natives of that forest were compelled to leave due to unsupportive climatic conditions and unethical establishment of industries. Nilima also told them the belief of people of Sundarbans on goddess Manasa. She told them that people believed her wrath and blessings so much that they assumed only because of her blessings they will be able to successfully settle down in a new place. She said that people of Sundarbans believe that the imbalance in climatic conditions in forest is the wrath of goddess Manasa. Deen's journey further elaborates that he believes in power of goddess Manasa too, he does not deny it by saying superstitious believes. In this novel, by applying social anthropology method and terms like ecocriticism and ecofeminism we can conclude that humans seriously need to preserve and save natural resources of nature otherwise when nature will take its revenge through destruction by natural calamities like floods, higher sea levels, cyclones, drought then human beings will not be able to tolerate it because they will lose all their livelihoods and sources of survival. Moreover, this novel is a novel of belief too. Belief of people over goddess Manasa is admirable here. In the End of novel Deen learns and accepts that the story of the gun merchant was not just a myth but a natural phenomenon by which people will learn and conserve nature and will fear from the wrath of God before harming nature. This "The Gun Island" novel delivers such a great social message that surely a human being cannot control the natural imbalance but he can surely preserve and save the natural resources for a good survival with nature's support. The responsibility of in habitats is of the people who live there. For a better livelihood it is essential to take care of the greenery of us in habitats/environment sincerely.

The second novel which is being discussed and elaborated in this dissertation is *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh. This novel explores the story of a Bengali Family and its 3 generations. Their Lives are interconnected with 3 countries India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. After reading this novel a person can truly understand and relate what is the pain of betrayal from his/her native homelands due to political conditions. The story in "The Shadow Lines" novel is narrated by an unnamed boy

whose whole world revolves around a city “Kolkata.” Kolkata is everything for him because he never went out of his native city Kolkata. He was born in 1953 in Kolkata, living with his parents in the same city and with his grandmother whom he calls “Thamma” in Bengali language. The narrator had a favourite uncle named “Tridib” who entertains the narrator with stories of his journey in London. The character who had suffered lack of belongingness, migration affects, identity crises the most is narrator’s grandmother “Thamma.” Her (Thamma) journey started from Dhaka in 190two (born in 190two). At that time Dhaka was an integral part of India. This novel portrays the story of two Bangladeshi sisters, narrator’s grandmother whom he called “Thamma” and her younger sister named “Mayadebi.” Thamma is elder sister and Mayadebi is her younger sister. These two sisters’ lives in novel are reflected as two different sides of a same coin. Mayadebi is married to a wealthy family. She is married to a man named “Saheb,” who is Justice Chandrashekhar Dutta Chowdhury’s son, they are well settled in London. On the other side, Thamma was married to a man who worked as railway platform worker. These two marriages portray two different aspects of human lives which are ‘rich’ and ‘poor’. The one who is poor has only his\her hard work and self-respect in his\her life. This principle will be proved further in this paper as we will proceed further. Unfortunately, Thamma’s husband expired in 1936. Narrator’s grandmother became a widow at early age but as we have said above that a poor person has his\her principles through which he/she survives his\her life. It is proved because when Thamma’s husband died Thamma did not ask for any kind of financial help from her sister or family. She worked as a school teacher and raised her son (narrator’s father) all alone by working hard. This incident also shows features of woman empowerment. Without a man in her life, Thamma successfully spent her life with financial stability. This proves that it is not a universal rule that only a man can fulfil financial wants of a family. Radical Feminism theory can be applied here because of Thamma’s self-dependency. In Radical Feminism women diminish all the social divisions made by society long ago. Similarly, Thamma through her hard work & self-respect proved that a woman can be the bread earner of the family. She can be called a feminist character of the novel. The story proceeds where Thamma’s native homeland “Dhaka” is left behind forever due to partition of East Bangladesh and India in the year 1947. In the year 1947, East Bangladesh got separated from India and became East Pakistan due to political leader’s decision. In the history of partition literature this period of partition in 1947 and II World War is considered as golden period and the most discussed and essential part of political and historic studies. Due to the above-mentioned partition Thamma was never able to visit her native homeland “Dhaka” permanently. Thamma’s this story is the story of million innocents like Thamma who were never able to meet their

families and visit their homelands only because of political benefits. Here it is portrayed the pain of diaspora at its peak. From 1944 to 1948 this was very controversial time in historic literature because two major events happening parallelly with each other. The first event was II World War (1944-1948) and 2nd event was partition of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. As this paper proceeds there is remembrance of II World War too through a character of the novel named “Tridib” and his father “Saheb.” Tridib is Thamma’s sister Mayadebi’s younger son (elder son name is Jatin). Tridib was 9-year-old when he went to London with his father Saheb. Saheb had some health issues so he went London for his treatment along with his younger son Tridib. Saheb had a friend in London named “Mrs. Price,” she invited him in London for his treatment. In London during 1940’s there was lots of religious violences between people and churches due to 2nd world war. Due to the 2nd world war consequences Saheb with Tridib left London but Tridib had collected lots of memories in London before leaving.

Before proceeding further, it is important to discuss the historical background of both the families of Thamma and Mayadebi. When Tridib returned from London with his father then after few years, Mayadebi and Saheb had one more son named “Robi.” He was the youngest one among Jatin and Tridib. Mrs. Price also had 2 sons till then named “May” and “Nick”. Then Jatin got married to a girl named Queen Victoria and they had a daughter named “Ila.” Ila is considered of the 3rd generation which is in the present in novel and of the same age like our narrator. Thamma’s son (narrator’s father) also got married to narrator’s mother and then our narrator is born in 3rd (present) generation. Ila and our narrator of *The Shadow Lines* are of similar age and generation. In this way it is also clarified that how Tridib is the uncle of our narrator in the novel. Narrator was too close to his uncle Tridib in the novel because Tridib used to tell him stories of different cities & countries. Tridib used to enjoy it a lot because he had only seen Kolkata from his childhood. This can be observed as a symbol of parental love for an innocent child who had not seen the outer world. As this paper proceeds further, it will narrate the dark & painful story of the “Bengal Liberation War” which resulted in lots of tragic demises & lots of innocent families were separated forever. The main reasons of this war held in 1971 were superiority complex of power, religion & culture of West Pakistan over East Pakistan (known as an independent country today “Bangladesh”). There were differences & disunity in castes, religions, languages between West Pakistan & East Pakistan & the most dangerous thing of West Pakistan was that they were overpowered with their army & forces. East Pakistan wanted its separate nation for creating an independent national identity of their own, where they will be not suppressed by any other group of people. In 1971, East Pakistan finally got independent & it formed a new country known as

Bangladesh today. Bangladesh is a country majorly of Bengalis where they are free from all the supremacy of power, religion & culture. Communal riots due to political turmoil or because of communal hate / cultural differences are never good for people in any terms. Supremacy & hate of anything always results in unnatural deaths & those deaths leave a permanent damage on many innocents' mind. Leaders get their power, new countries are formed, time passes on but the pain of betrayal from our loved ones never erases. This paper through this novel *Shadow Lines* tries its best to convey a moral message that "humanity is the best religion" because humanity always saves lives without any profit whereas hate & supremacy of religions always results in destruction of everything. As the paper proceeds further, the above-mentioned communal conflict among Bengali & Muslim community in Pakistan (Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan before an independent country known today as Bangladesh as it is discussed earlier) will be related to two sudden demises in the novel. That two demises shown in the novel will convey & portray the result of unethical conflicts within a country. One day, narrator's grandmother Thamma got a news that his old uncle is too sick & he is unsafe in Dhaka due to the war of Bangladesh & West Pakistan. Mayadebi's husband was getting a posting in Dhaka, so both the sisters decided to visit Dhaka together for their beloved uncle. Thamma also got a chance because of Mayadebi to visit Dhaka to bring "Jethumoshai" to India with her. When they reached Dhaka, a tragedy happened with the family. Jethumoshai & Tridib died due to the communal violence between East Pakistan (known as Bangladesh today) & West Pakistan. The crowd killed both with very cruelty. Hate does not see age & humanity; it only knows destruction. Religious hate from historical time till present has only resulted in demises of lots of innocents. The death of Tridib was a shocker for the narrator of *The Shadow Lines*. The separation of Tridib & narrator, Jethumoshai with Mayadebi & Thamma are best examples of the disastrous result of the communal violence. Narrator of *The Shadow Lines* was stunned after he heard the news of Tridib's demise. He assumed May was responsible for Tridib's demise, he was unaware of the self-less sacrifice of Tridib. Later in the novel this assumption will be diminished. Tridib could had eloped from the communal riot but in want of saving Mayadebi & family he died by the violent crowd. Tridib's this selfless sacrifice can be considered as true sign of "Humanism." This selfless & moral act of Tridib is the perfect example of humanity, where many people became inhuman, he kept his moral duties for his family alive. In the superiority complex of 1 religion, people forget that humanity is the backbone & heart of all the religions. No other religion in this earth is greater than humanity. Surely, a person should be connected to his/her roots (culture & religion) but firstly one person should keep humanity his/her priority in life. This novel portrays features of lack of humanism in it due to

the communal war. Many people become so much blindfolded in hate & want of revenge that they can go to any extent to burst out their revenge. It is no doubt that Thamma was the victim of the war between east & west Pakistan because she lost her beloved uncle Jethumoshai & moreover she was never able to visit her hometown Dhaka till years. Still all these incidents with her (Thamma) did not justify her unethical & insane act of giving donation in war with West Pakistan. By considering humanity, as a good reader everyone can have sympathy from Thamma but it does allow her to give donation in vengeance for war with West Pakistan. This devilish act of Thamma can be considered as a negative characteristic of her nature. Victimized people should not become like other people who are reason for all the communal wars. They should have faith in life & at least they should live their own life peacefully as a good citizen. In this paper, it was discussed in starting that border of the countries divide & categorize people into different nations, caste & religion. If those borders were not invented by government & people then this world would have been different today. One day, the narrator of shadow Lines took an atlas in his hand of Tridib & when he saw the borders made on the countries for division, he imagined how useless those lines are. This act of narrator can be symbolized as an innocent & moral act which portrays the reason of suffering due to the division of countries & identities. This paper does not deny the importance of national borders but surely these imaginary lines had (borders made on maps etc.) categorized us into different national identities & these identities sometimes create superiority complexes of religions which results in communal wars. As this paper proceeds further “cultural differences” will be discussed through few characters of the novel. Mostly people in India yet hesitate to accept & include people of various cultures & religions as a part of their society. Resistance is not just in accepting other’s culture as a part of society but people are even much more insecure & sceptical in making family relations from other culture, caste, or religion. Many people still in India or from other countries too, go for similarities between culture & religion as a priority for marriage. Ila was liked by the narrator of the novel, but Thamma never liked Ila as a girl whom she would make her daughter-in-law. This is one of the major problems of Indian society which creates fiction between love marriages in India. Ila was also a victim of cultural differences, as a result she married a London based man named “Nick.” Although, narrator truly loved Ila but family fiction & cultural differences became a wall in their wedding. One great lesson as an active reader should be observed that culture, caste & religion are for people to respect their roots & forefathers, not for creating conservative boundaries in the way of their happiness like accepting bride & groom from other culture etc... Rigidity, hate & unacceptance is not just in imaginary borders on the maps or in communal riots but also present in social issues like

marriage, etc. which still may be forwarded from generation to generation. Features of “Romanticism” are reflected through narrator, due to his feelings for Ila. The narrator had true feelings of love for Ila, without any religious or cultural partiality. Narrator can be taken as an ideal example from which readers can get a reminder that “Love & humanity are not dependent on religion & culture but only on morals & virtuous. When Ila marries Nick, at the last of the novel it is revealed that Nick had many extra marital affairs. Now here, hypocrisy of the upper-class society is portrayed. Ila was not happy & satisfied with Nick in marriage but still she never wanted to take divorce from Nick because of her blindfolded love for him. This insane love for Nick by Ila, portrays her hypocrisy too in the novel. Nick’s love is completely artificial, immoral & untruthful as a husband. Whereas, Ila’s love is blind towards Nick, which reflects immaturity of her because she is ready to ignore ill things of Nick. Upper-class society people generally only listen to their heart not of their brain. Their love basically lacks morality & truthfulness. Upper class society people lack moral values & moral duties in a relation mostly because they become blind in the glorification of wealth. Nick failed as a good husband because of the same reason as mentioned just above. Women of high-class society forget the ethical & moral values in any relationship & become blindfolded in the relationship. Ila did the same. There are several examples through which hypocrisies of the high-class world are exposed like play by William Congreve “The Way of the World,” in this play the artificialness & sub-intellectualness of the high-class world are exposed. The second example can be novels like “The Marrow of Tradition” by Waddell Chesnutt & “House of Mirth” by Edith Wharton. These works also portrayed the morality-lack issues of upper-class society. In the end of the novel, it is revealed to narrator by the character May that Tridib had sacrificed his life for his family to that violent crowd, she (May) is not responsible for his (Tridib) tragic demise. When narrator became aware of the reality, he became too proud of his uncle Tridib & his love & respect towards his uncle increased too. This brings the end to the novel “The Shadow Lines.”

Conclusion

Now finally, it is time to conclude the learnings, diasporic terms & other philosophical thoughts from the discussion of this dissertation. “The Gun Island” & “The Shadow Lines” are not just two novels of Amitav Ghosh but they both are thoughts on nature & nation, diasporic life lessons & a mirror of society which has many communal hatred people in it. In “The Gun Island” Ghosh was successful in making clear & delivering a moral message to his readers that running away from climatic issues & planning for future without effort is useless (for which he used a specific quote). If humans have to survive in a balanced nature, then to preserve the natural resources & to maintain the green environment is the responsibility of every

human being. God will only shower his blessing if man does his duties towards himself or to nature faithfully. One more moral lesson was delivered that climatic conditions of habitat & life of humans are interrelated with each-other. If climate of any habitat is not cordial with inhabitants, then surely inhabitants will face natural imbalance & their survival will be impossible. Hence, this will lead to undesired & unwanted migrations which can result in unemployment or poverty. It can also create lack of sense of belongingness & lack of any permanent residential identity. A person should never his or her roots & culture, this was also portrayed morally by Deen Dutta in “The Gun Island” by Amitav Ghosh. In “The Shadow Lines” Ghosh creatively & morally stated that borders are not just divisions of countries, but they divide humans into different religion, races & cultures. Those invisible lines or imaginary lines on the maps not just create boundaries of a country, it also categorizes people among different national identity. Feeling of nationalism should be the priority for citizens rather than feeling of communal hatred. Tridib & the unamend narrator of the “The Shadow Lines” are best examples who had portrayed true nationality as a “Bangladeshi.” The partition by government between east & west Pakistan in 1971 had not let their identity as “Bangladeshi Hindu” being affected.

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