



Historicity in Amitav Ghosh's Shadow lines

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh is an internationally acclaimed modern Indian author. As a writer, its importance rests in its international perspective. He is an author who travels and maps the globe via the borders of contemporary nation states. Amitav Ghosh saw his aim as author in his creative quest of political and historical truths and facts and his reworking of cultural and political boundaries dividing and uniting.

key words: Historicism, Cosmopolitanism, Nostalgia, Self identity and post-modern culture. Post colonialism, communalism.

Introduction

Ghosh is the most contemporary Indian writer in the world. As a writer, its worldwide significance lies in its importance. He is an author that goes across the boundaries of modern nation states and maps the world. Amitav Ghosh finds his goal as a creative author in his search for political and historical truths and facts and in rewriting separating and unifying cultural and political borders.

Journeys are a significant element of the fictional environment of Ghosh. The trip as a pattern passes across the books and is also a uniting element. The narrator travels from Calcutta to Bangladesh in *The Shadow Lines* and from there to England. These travels are not only quests; they also provide Ghosh the tools to examine the effects of history and war on human behaviour. Traveling across borders is a topic with which he is concerned. Ghosh makes obvious in his books that men's boundaries are intellectual buildings, that the lines on the maps are only shadow lines. Homi Shroff stated that throughout his travels, Ghosh examines "a colorful and warmly human image of both medieval and contemporary people and places." Ghosh thinks that travel is the fundamental human search for the realization of his consciousness. There is a lot of movement from and to the shadow lines. Someone of the others continues or returns either physically or because of Tridip, the storyteller who travels a lot without really traveling. Written by Amitav Ghosh.



“You see in our family, we don’t know whether ‘we are coming or going’ – it’s all my grandmother’s fault. But of course, the fault wasn’t hers at all : it lay in language. Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to, and what my grandmother was looking for was a word for journey which was not a coming or going at all-a journey that was a search for precisely that fixed point which permits that proper use of verbs of movement.”

Journey is The Shadow Lines' primary theme. It's not only the characters that move around. The narrative movement, whereby the narrator uses the method of the stream of consciousness to manage the movement through time from 1981 back to the 1960s and 1940s, and farther afield. The 'travel theme' passes the whole narrative of the trip of the grandmother to Dhaka in the second half of the book and the journey of the narrator back in time. Journey is also a symbolic of the journey of life, where the person continually moves from the quest for something to something. The book is a family history in which the family has numerous ups and downs as a result of various historical events at the period. The tale spans a long time when Ghosh was not even born. It was in 1939, thirteen years before his birth, that he traveled to England, Mayadebi and her husband and son Tridib, his father's aunt. The Shadow Lines are split into two sections - "Going away" and "Come home" are travel pictures. Tridib travels with his family from India to England and the kid revives the experience indirectly via the vivid descriptions of Tridib, so that, when he grows up to London, it's an easy transfer, a "coming" rather than a "going." Tridib extends the boundaries of his universe of childhood. Tridib reveals to him how one may be taken from other periods and places outside one's consciousness. Thus the kid learns the importance of imagination, something which exposes a genuine, real, incomparably more fascinating world than the actual sense-experienced reality. Amitav Ghosh points the inutility of drawing lines across a country into two countries, the one with an east wing separated by a thousand miles from its west wing. Alpana Neogy refers to the fact that the books concentrate on the Partition of India and subsequent trauma in the psyche of East Bengal, in her essay, "There is a comparative study of Amitav Ghosh's Shadow Lines and Sunil Gangopadhyay's Purba Paschim." The author concentrates on India and Dhaka, where he attempts to discover the meaning of political freedom. After the Partition the significance of nationality or Indian nationalism altered, excluding individuals from the other side of the border, but not everyone on this side of paradise. The Indian subcontinent part has been the



most painful event in our recent history. Nationalism deteriorated into political enmity in the twentieth century. The historical Partition incident shook the feeling of nationalism of the Indian.

The Shadow Lines

The Shadow Lines is Ghosh's second book that secures overtime as one of India's most famous and best Indian writers, after the Rushdie generation. The work of Ghosh is renowned to be infused with minute aspects of time, place and location he writes about, and his words are full with significance. Ghosh appears to reinvent himself with each single work after writing books of various genres, yet The Shadow Lines is one of his finest. His work crosses the boundary between history and fiction. The historical universe of Amitav Ghosh is one of the restless narrative movements. Its primary characters are travelers and exiles from diaspora. He considers national frontiers and intellectual limits as shadow lines and mere illusions. The shadow lines are experiential and political, with political, social and cultural boundaries challenging. Reason becomes emotion; we move away, too, and the distinctions between us and them are disturbed now and then by the itinerant maps of a wandering imagery.

Historical Touches and Their Narratives

Although the book traces historical elements and their tales connected with societal views, it is worth mentioning here that each of its important works focuses its narrative power on historical facts. In this specific situation, the following issues should be discussed.

The new approach to history

The new historicist perspective is not only concerned with the major national issues, such as division and the communal frenzy, but also with the political questions and foreign events of the past. It also includes unfathomable and transcendental problems such as indivisible health, religion and alienation, separation and solitude. Such paintings reflect very effectively the quest for syncretic culture, community peace and a strong commitment to individual freedom in a more collectivised and militant society. The Shadow Lines is a tale recounted via a mnemonic technique by the unnamed kid narrator. It is a non-linear, fragmented, episodic and unfinished story.

Impact of nostalgia and the self-identity issue



The book also emphasizes nostalgia and chronicles community turmoil that are an inherent part of history. The characters are losing and belonging to each other. They constantly yearn for the past, those days and places that can no longer be traced. Tha'mma, who has been residing in Calcutta for nearly two decades, continues to torment remembrance of her youth in Dhaka, for example. Calcutta can never be Dhaka for her, 'no home but memories' For her. It is a tale of a Calcutta-based Indian middle class family. The young narrator provides the perspectives of his immediate and extended relatives and thus gives each person a fully defined character.

An all-knowing historian

In *The Shadow Lines*, the personality of the narrator fuses with that of the historian. For him, the past simply lives in memory and has no tangible traces left behind. Memory is more appropriate here than history and operates in the past as a conduit. Memories, pictures and tales of Tridib which are hard to reject because they are factually accurate yet they are in another place and time are the only materials that the storyteller-historian has to splice history.

Review of past events

The transformation of time and location blurred as the act of collecting turns previous experiences into a sparkling feeling of the lost. The novel's historical events include the independence struggle in Bengal, the Second World War, the 1947 division of India and the spontaneous municipal combustion of riots in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and India in the aftermath of the Hazratbal incident in Srinagar in 64. 3 The book does not recapitulate these stressful historical times; it depicts the pain of emotional break-up and strangulation, as well as of the detrimental potential of the psychological siege in individuals smashed by prejudiced ideologies. The book of Ghosh as a re-appropriate history travels through the stories and melts the historical events into an attractive fiction. The reconstruction of the past via homes, photos, maps, street names, newspapers, ads and other concrete texts enables us to collect text with co-texts and verify the perspective of time and environment covered by the book by the author.

Cross-border humanity and cosmopolitanism concerns

The Shadow Lines examines the main concern of the author with regard to broader, cross-border humanity and offers remarkable insights into ethnic nationality, multi-culturalism and



communalism. Ghosh left Rushdie's "imaginative serio-comics" (Hawley 3) or "disjoint magical realism" (Mukherjee), as can be seen in his apprentice book (The Circle of Reason). What he provides today is a soft and clever mnemonic story. It ties various threads of history together via a mnemonic process or "fantastic evocations of memory" (Mukherjee, "Dancing in Cambodia, Dancing at large in Burma"). The book is based on Ghosh's knowledge of the breach after the partition and the resulting division in the affiliate connections of communities across the border. The method by which his experience is modeled in a compelling and consistent narrative makes his story worthy of inquiry

A World of History and Religion

The Shadow Lines goes on a quest of root and cause discovery. It also shows a world ripped apart by history and displays kinds of brutality that nationalism is sometimes severe. Amitav Ghosh creates a vibrant and compelling story via a complex network of memories, connections and pictures. It is different from the last book, primarily because the narrative is not linear. The contact between Indians and English people, their travel to other continents, their problems of political independence, their self-identity and the forces of nationalism were all well portrayed. The first impression that this book is read is that the individuals who are marked belong to various nations, cultures and backgrounds that make the breadth of the story imposing. The very beginning of the book recounts Maya Debi, the writer and her husband and kid who went to England. It was in 1939 and since then memories have been projected on the contact with and separation from them. By filming the flashback, the action goes from London to Calcutta to Khulna and Dhaka. The narrative time here corresponds with the narrator's awareness. In a worldwide society, no writer can write Jane Austen's book fashion from the center of her location any more.

Historical Reality Review

The tale starts with a period in colonial India when the narrator wasn't even born in chronological terms, but it encompasses many post-colonial times, and all events are simultaneously focused to illumine the conclusion of the story. The book starts as follows: "In 1939, 13 years before I was born, Aunt Maya Debi my father left with her husband and her son Tridib to England" (The Shadow Lines, p.3). The year 1939 is historically important for the beginning of the Second World War and the tremendous events which follow on from the Indian subcontinent. Twenty-one years later, Mayadebi's journey to London, her close contact with the Price Family and the Tridib-May



part of the tale, were told to the narrator, an 8-year-old curious kid, by Tridib. When Tridib saw her in London, May was a tiny baby. A love connection has evolved via communication that transcends the shadow lines of nationality and cultural limits. Amitav Ghosh examines the inexplicable jolt between Tridib and May and the permanent connection between the two families that are challenging distance and physical boundaries, even though the nations they are members of are opposed to each other. The voice of the narrator seems to be the voice of the author, suggesting that the questions of borders and national culture are illusory and non-existent. Universal humanity cannot be divided. The notion of time in history may be seen as a national boundary metaphor. It seems that boundaries between countries are illusion and that there should be no borders between nations and it helps to support the novel's title itself. Thus Ghosh shows a strong understanding of the socio-cultural and historical material behind his tale.

Conclusion

Thus a historicist approach to the text is nothing more than an assessment of a section of historical fact, a writer whose written fictional methods allow him or her to explain his or her worldview. Amitav Ghosh's involvement with history in all of his writings is not the same as the one of an ordinary historian, but in no way reduces its importance as historical fiction. The fictional framework makes history more accessible and alive, and may engage the reader more than history really does. The fiction of Ghosh shows that the main preoccupation of the writer is with history. In fact, he interacts with history in a new level. His literature is infused with the awareness of politics and history. While presenting memories as a more legitimate or better way of evaluating history, Ghosh is thus a writer who practically focuses his books on the requirements of history. The novel describes jumbled events in 1939-40, 1960-63, and 1978-79 but the adult narrator focuses on these recollections in the 1980s and manipulates them into a coherent stretch of postcolonial situations, as well as cultural dislocations and anxieties and presents the question of fractured nationalities in close collaboration and in a very narrative way. We get all the narrative filtered by an authorial voice.

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