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**THE SHADOW LINES BY AMITAV GHOSH  
AND POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS.**

**SUMMARY**

Shadow Lines of Amitav Ghosh is a work of art, and this research has aimed to bring out the uniqueness that has been inscribed on every component of it. It is apparent that Shadow Lines is concerned with the relationship between the person and his or her relationship to the historical and political events that shape his or her existence. The book is a family chronicle that also serves as a ride through the currents of history, as the title suggests. The story follows three generations of the narrator's family, who live in three different cities: Dhaka, Calcutta, and London. It is roughly separated into two sections: Going Away and Coming Home, which correspond to the novel's principal preoccupations. Ghosh covered the unity of freedom and violence in his writing. He calls into question the justification for violence as well as the notion of political and personal freedom. The confrontation puts to light the fact that personal freedom does not imply the right to do anything one wants, and that there can be no clear demarcation between personal and national borders. The anonymity of the narrator, allusions to otherness, geographic displacement, hybridity in identity, and the use of memory all contribute to the fact that the whole tale is best understood within a postcolonial context.

**Key words:** Postcolonial, analysis, shadow, Amitav Ghosh, lines.

The postcolonial period may be defined as the period after the onset of colonialism, but not necessarily as the period following the process of decolonization. Over the past few years, post-colonial studies have begun to gain prominence, and they are now included in almost every English-language literature curriculum. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of contemporary English literature is that it strongly relies on writing originating from post-colonial issues and post-colonial authors who live in British ex-colonies or who live in Britain or the United States but were born and raised in colonized nations. Amitav Ghosh is one of these authors, and he is well-known for works such as *The Sea of Poppies*, *The Shadow Lines*, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, and other similar titles as well. Amitav Ghosh's books are often regarded as the definitive example of postcolonial literature. At the same time, Amitav Ghosh lives within the traditions of Indo-English literature and writes within those traditions, appealing to a broad range of cultural standards and

preferences around the globe. Ghosh's books deal with a wide range of national and international issues, although his major concentration is on his homeland and the subcontinents that surround it. When it comes to history, Ghosh's involvement is not the same as that of a historian, as seen by his works. However, this in no way diminishes the relevance of the novel as historical fiction. History becomes more accessible and exciting because of the fictional context. He is able to engage the reader in a more meaningful way than history can. Throughout Ghosh's novels, it is clear that the novelist's relationship with history is his primary concern. Throughout his work, there is a strong sense of both political and historical awareness. Ghosh is a writer who, in a sense, bends his books to the necessities of history, extracting meaning and structure from it in the process. Almost every one of his literary works is intertwined with historical events. Exile, migration, nationalism, diaspora, post-modernism, and postcolonialism are among the themes that emerge in his works of fiction. Furthermore, his ideas have become the focal point of a specific form of cultural identity conflict in Britain and other Western countries. Amitav Ghosh brings to life a previously unremembered era of time as well as previously unremembered situations via beautifully realized detail. He has made significant contributions to the development of concepts about the postcolonial in general, as well as its relationship to postmodernism. From current realism to historical fiction to science fiction, his writing has dealt with the dislocations, violence, and meets of people and civilizations that have resulted from colonialism throughout his career. Current article is focused on the novel of Amitav Ghosh *The Shadow Lines* which combines private lives, public events, personal and social history, the racial riots in India, England and Bangladesh. The story takes place across three generations in three different cities: Dhaka, Calcutta, and London. We examine various components of the novel within the context of a postcolonial approach to literature. The novel reveals elements of postcolonialism. *Going Away and Coming Home* are the two halves of the novel. Ghosh masterfully balances time of two forms, time past: memory, and time present: reality, as it gracefully moves from past to present and present to past. *Going Away* is the first section, and it refers to getting away from oneself. *Returning home*, on the other hand, entails a return to one's own self. The postcolonial characters in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* are striving for their own identities. Unknown narrator observes reality through his uncle Tridib's eyes. The anti-imperialist grandmother's national religion is honesty and devotion to both country and family. Ila's identity is shaped by diaspora and colonial dominance. The image in the mirror will eventually be replaced by a name, and it will be sooner rather than later.<sup>1</sup> The projecting region of the mirrors has both a physical and

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<sup>1</sup> Ghosh, A. (2005). *The Shadow Lines* (11 ed.). New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Kasikhan, H. R., and Kasikhan, N. (2015). Postcolonial Approach to Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 6, Issue 4, pp. 247-255

metaphorical significance in the novel, according to the author. It is the narrator's mirror image that turns into a different person, one who does not share the narrator's identity. It is referred to as realization when someone recognizes another in a social environment. Throughout the tale, the personal history of anti-imperialism has helped the protagonist create a sense of who she is. One's identity is shaped by one's ability to choose. The visions and desires of human subjectivity result in the formation of identity.<sup>2</sup> *The Shadow Lines* begins with an explicit allusion to certain characters' deliberate decision to relocate from their homeland to a foreign continent. The narrator's character, whose identity is not revealed until the end of the narrative, appears intriguing and thought-provoking. His key position and physique, as well as his crucial representation throughout the story, are evocative of a colonizer who tries to go unnoticed. His thoughts and sequential descriptions of the evolving recollections are deemed noteworthy, but his unclear identity remains hidden behind one of Ghosh's shadows.<sup>3</sup> Practically everything in the novel is described in details. "Yesterday, Snipe had shown them an Air-Raid Precautions notice which said: Tins of toffees are believed to have been dropped by enemy aeroplanes. They are shaped like handbags and some have coloured tartan designs, with a puzzle, on the lid, marked Lyons Assorted Toffee and 'Scotch' and bearing the name of J. Lyons and Co."<sup>4</sup> However, reader never knows the exact name and surname of narrator which brings an idea to us that the narrator, who represents colonized people, is so low, inconsequential, and subservient that colonists do not notice him, and therefore no precise description or picture of him is offered. In *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh's postcolonial perspective motivates him to illustrate the universal presence of grief. Inaction brings grief, as does materialism's failure, disappointment, the never-ending search for truth and identity, unrequited love, and so on. Similarly, in Ghosh's postcolonial setting, the issue of borders and maps takes center stage since he feels his people have suffered as a result of the partitions generated by geographical limits. Because the writer has no confidence in national boundaries or geographical maps that divide and separate people, he regards them all as just artificial lines drawn by politicians who have no true interest in the people's wellbeing.<sup>5</sup>

"They know they're a nation because they've drawn their borders with blood."<sup>6</sup> The work also delves into the history of the legacy of colonization. The

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<sup>2</sup> Nivedhaa, N. (2018). Postcolonial elements in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, Munich, GRIN Verlag, <https://www.grin.com/document/423886>

<sup>3</sup> Singh, S. (2005). The Routes of National Identity in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. In *Alternative Indias: Writing, Nation and Communalism* edited by Peter Morey and Alex Tickell. Amsterdam: Rodopi. pp. 161-180.

<sup>4</sup> Ghosh, A. (2005). *The Shadow Lines* (11 ed.). New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Kasikhan, H. R., and Kasikhan, N. (2015). Postcolonial Approach to Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 6, Issue 4, pp. 247-255

<sup>6</sup> Ghosh, A. (2005). *The Shadow Lines* (11 ed.). New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

heroes' death at the border is a genuine picture of the anguish of those who have had to bear the pains and repercussions of separation when crossing national boundaries. Tredeeb urges the narrator to use his mental skills to envision locations he's never visited before and recall happenings he's never witnessed in real life from an early age. Using his imagination, the narrator can envision numerous locations or spaces. *"But of course, among other things, 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."*<sup>7</sup> He had such a vivid picture of London as a young schoolboy that when he returned to the city a few years later, he could readily recognize locations by name. Tridib and the narrator are the sole characters in this story who are attempting to escape and live their lonely lives while creating their own stories. The aspect of otherness or otherness corresponds to their desire to be different.<sup>8</sup> Individuals' ability to create their own narrative apart from the others is emphasized throughout *The Shadow Lines* in order to avoid becoming tangled up with someone else's interpretation of reality. Perhaps this is why Tridib persuades the narrator to master accurate imagination and world creation. Being able to create tales sets you apart from other people's creations. Persuasion and encouragement of this kind might symbolically signify independence, autonomy, and freedom from everything that others present or force on one. On a bigger scale, it seems that Ghosh is attempting to convey that there are no subalterns or colonial states as long as they are not reliant on the inventions of others.<sup>9</sup> The novel begins with an identity crisis. This issue affects not just characters, but also places and regions. Imaginative stories, images, maps, and recollections, according to the storyteller, construct and establish a location's identity. A psychological technique through which one can effectively satisfy suppressed fantasies and desires they had been yearning for but failed to achieve in real life.<sup>10</sup>

Othering is a postcolonial element in which one group excludes or marginalizes another by declaring them 'other' in order to emphasize their differences or opposites. It is based on how they represent others, especially through stereotypical images, showing behavior that is repeated without variation and regardless of circumstances. Tridib exemplifies this otherness utilizing his degree to gain personal freedom and has lived his life according to his own principles. Unlike others, he sees the world as a seamless mosaic of interrelated places. To him, no

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Shubha, T. (2003). *The Shadow Lines* Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study. Atlantic, New Delhi

<sup>9</sup> Kaul, A.N. (2015). "A Reading of *The Shadow Lines*:" *The Shadow Lines*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Soukaï, S. (2018). *Commonwealth Essays and Studies. The Hybridity of Partition Novels in English: Reshaping National Identities in Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines and Kamila Shamsie's Burnt Shadows*. SEPC

location in the world has any superiority or inferiority.<sup>11</sup> His ability to visualize, which was subsequently imparted to the narrator, sets him apart from the rest. This novel's understanding of otherness is weird, and hence closer to the concept of ambivalence found in postcolonial writings. Otherness is not always synonymous with difference or dissimilarity. The tale uses mirror to demolish the supposed disparities between Dhaka and Calcutta. These two cities are so culturally and socially similar that looking at one implies looking at the other. *“What had they felt, I wondered, when they discovered that they had created not a separation, but a yet-undiscovered irony – the irony that killed Tridib: the simple fact that there had never been a moment in the 4000-year-old history of that map when the places we know as Dhaka and Calcutta were more closely bound to each other than after they had drawn their lines – so closely that I, in Calcutta, had only to look into the mirror to be in Dhaka; a moment when each city was the inverted image of the other, locked into an irreversible symmetry by the line that was to set us free – our looking-glass border.”*<sup>12</sup>

In Ghosh's creative worlds, where his heroes are captivated by location, imagined or recalled, one of the primary characteristics of postcolonialism is Place. Change of place in stories is viewed as an important part of personal, national, family, and community evolution. Location and identity are important in postcolonial texts, since it is the place that renders identity and promotes fervent patriotic enthusiasm. Space is a geographical or abstract location, a blank room or area without a clear function.<sup>13</sup> Place, on the other hand, is the scene or event that creates or owns a space. Landscapes, language, environment, culture, etc.<sup>14</sup> This story describes numerous sites. Trideb had lived with his ailing grandmother in Ballygunge Place, Calcutta, England, Banaras, America, London, and Delhi.

*“When the Kalka Mail from Delhi got in at Howrah Station they were waiting, as they always were, under the old clock that no one had ever seen working, on platform 9: my mother in a sea-green sari, flushed with pleasure at the thought of having me back for the summer; my father bustling, looking after our luggage, organising. We dropped Robi at their house in Ballygunge Place, where he was to spend a few days before going off to visit his parents in Darjeeling.”*

These are locations with a history, a relationship, and an identity. The present, past, and future give these locations identity. Landscape, language, ecology,

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<sup>11</sup> Kasikhan, H. R., and Kasikhan, N. (2015). Postcolonial Approach to Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 6, Issue 4, pp. 247-255

<sup>12</sup> Ghosh, A. (2005). *The Shadow Lines* (11 ed.). New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

<sup>13</sup> Sushila, S. (1992). Double Self in Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines Quest for Identity in Indian Writing, Part 1, Fiction, ed. R. S. Pathak New Delhi

<sup>14</sup> Sharma, B. S. (2013). Concept of Space and Time in The Shadow Lines, Issue 12, *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, pp. 1-13

and culture all have a role in place. Another postcolonial notion coined by postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha and used by Ghosh in *Shadow Lines* is hybridity.

Hibridity is a term that refers to the blending of new cultural forms and identities as a consequence of colonial contact. It might take the shape of reclaiming a precolonial history or adapting to current globalization and multiculturalism circumstances in postcolonial civilizations. Ila and the grandma are two characters that have no roots. The grandma is a refugee, and Ila is a postcolonial cosmopolitan. Ila chose to live in London because she desired a more independent lifestyle. However, freedom might be purchased for the cost of a plane ticket. Mayadevi's granddaughter, Ila, yearned for a type of cultural independence that she couldn't find in India. Her independence as a woman raised in Western society shapes her identity.

*“Do you see now why I’ve chosen to live in London? Do you see? It’s only because I want to be free. Free of what? I said. Free of you! she shouted back. Free of your bloody culture and free of all of you.”*<sup>15</sup>

Thamma tells the narrator to stay away from Ila, who is spoiled. Thamma was curious as to why Ila chose to reside in London. Because she shared a property in London with a few other individuals. In India, on the other hand, she might have led a very comfortable life. The narrator's description of Ila to his grandma is the final reality of her quest for an identity. She want to live in a society where she was free to act as she pleased. On the other hand, the anonymous narrator's wandering lifestyle hasn't impacted his affinity for his own culture, which we see in Robi as well, despite the fact that he was born and raised in different nations. Ila, the narrator, and Robi's quest for identity is based on the hybridity that contemporary individuals must deal with. Robi's identity is founded on his love and respect for his nation and culture, while Ila's identity is based on her unfavorable feelings toward her country. In the book *The Shadow Lines*, Thamma, Narrator, Jethamoshai, and Ila are building their own identity space. The similar features discovered via mirror images and the subsequent revelation of the difference are very important in comprehending human psychology.<sup>16</sup>

Characters like Thamma and her elderly uncle Jethamoshai represent national identity based on allegiance to their own nations, with Thamma dissatisfied with modern Dhaka and Jethamoshai content to remain in the location where he was born. Ila's identity is built on the freedom she has gained to live away from her family and do anything she wants. Without an inner and sincere speech from the heart for a yearning for her nation and culture, this is an illusory independence. So the postcolonial history that Ghosh portrays in *The Shadow Lines* is read not from the center but from the margin's abandoned perimeter, as is the case in many other works

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<sup>15</sup> Ghosh, A. (2005). *The Shadow Lines* (11 ed.). New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

<sup>16</sup> James, L. (1999). *Shadow Lines: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in the Fiction of Amitav Ghosh*. In R. K. Dhawan (Ed.), *The Novels of Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi, India: Sangam. pp. 52-58

of literature. When the colonized people write their history in their own language, they are presenting it to the colonizer as a kind of response to the coloniser. Thus, he made it possible to examine and comprehend the history and legacy of the postcolonial country from the perspective of those who were colonised rather than from the perspective of those who were colonisers. A major theme in Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is the colonized people's point of view, which reflects the present movement of post colonialism, which expresses hatred towards the colonial power. This theme is very explicitly expressed throughout the novel.

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**СЕВДА ФАТУЛЛАЕВА**

**РЕЗЮМЕ**

**ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЕ АМИТАВА ГОША «ЛИНИИ ТЕНЕЙ»  
И ПОСТКОЛОНИАЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ**

«Теневые линии» Амитав Гоша — это произведение искусства, и это исследование было направлено на то, чтобы выявить уникальность, которая была вписана в каждый его компонент. Очевидно, что «Теневые линии» касаются отношений между человеком и его или ее отношениями с историческими и политическими событиями, которые формируют его или ее существование. Книга представляет собой семейную хронику, которая также служит путешествием по течениям истории, как следует из названия. История следует за тремя поколениями семьи рассказчика, которые живут в трех разных городах: Дакке, Калькутте и Лондоне. Она примерно разделена на две части: «Уход» и «Возвращение домой», которые соответствуют основным заботам романа. Гош освещал единство свободы и насилия в своем произведении. Он ставит под сомнение оправдание насилия, а также понятие политической и личной свободы. Конфронтация выявляет тот факт, что личная свобода не подразумевает права делать все, что хочется, и что не может быть четкого разграничения между личными и национальными границами. Анонимность рассказчика, географическое перемещение, использование памяти — все это способствует тому, что всю историю лучше всего понимать в постколониальном контексте.

## **SEVDA ƏSGƏR QIZI FƏTULLAYEVA**

### **AMITAV QOŞUN “KÖLGƏ XƏTLƏRİ” ƏSƏRİ VƏ POSTKOLONIAL TƏHLİL XÜLASƏ**

Amitav Qoşun “Kölgə xətləri” romanı bir sənət əsəridir və bu araşdırma onun hər bir komponentində yazılmış unikalığı ortaya çıxarmaq məqsədi daşıyır. Məqalədən göründüyü kimi, “Kölgə Xətləri” əsərində şəxs və onun varlığını formalaşdıran tarixi və siyasi hadisələrin bağlılığı vurğulanır. Bu roman tarixin cərəyanları arasında gəzinti rolunu oynayan bir ailə salnaməsidir və üç fərqli şəhərdə - Dəkkə, Kəlküttə və Londonda yaşayan dastançı ailəsinin üç nəslindən bəhs edilir. Romanın məzmunu iki hissədən “Getdiş” və “Evə dönüş” hissələrindən ibarətdir. Qoş öz əsərində azadlıq və zorakılığın vəhdətini əks etdirir. O, zorakılığa bəraət qazandırmağı, eləcə də siyasi və şəxsi azadlıq anlayışını şübhə altına alır. Qarşıdurma bir həqiqəti ortaya qoyur ki, şəxsi azadlıq istədiyi hər şeyi etmək hüququnu nəzərdə tutmur, şəxsi və milli sərhədlər arasında dəqiq demarkasiya ola bilməz. Əsərdə hadisələri nəql edən şəxsin anonimliyi, coğrafi yerdəyişmə, yaddaşdan istifadə - romanın postkolonial kontekstdə daha yaxşı başa düşülməsinə kömək edir.



**Rəyçi: F.f.d., dosent Səmədova İradə Amin qızı**