

# Destructive Physical Action in the Shadow Lines

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**Abstract:** Indian English literature has stamped its greatness in the production of literary art through the texture of mixing up tradition and modernity. During Ghoshian era (1980's), there is a paradigm shift in themes as well as technique. Here, individuals are placed at the centre of national issues. The Shadow Lines" focuses on the theme of partition and its consequent tragedy effects on the psychological and social condition of the people.

**Keywords:** Shadow lines, Gosh, literature.

## 1. Introduction

Indian English Literature has attracted a widespread interest recently both in India and abroad. It has come to occupy a greater significance in world literature. From the beginning of literary world, Indian English literature was not actually accepted as reasonably good.

Nowadays, new crop of Indian writers in English have set milestones in the field of Indian literature and elevated its status by gaining international reputation and acclamation. In particular, the postmodern novelists bring out the complexities of the present world by juxtaposing the present, the past and the future taking place in the different locales.

Indian English Literature has proliferated over by Salman Rushdie, Vikaram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee and Amitav Ghosh who are the makers of new pattern in writing novels. Amitav Ghosh is one of the prominent postmodern novelists in the contemporary context. The significance of his works lies in his ability to give a wealth of encyclopedic information on other subjects.

Ghosh's novels reflect various political, social and cultural issues that most of colonized countries face in the present context. His novels display the postcolonial problems like colonial encounter, its impact on social, economic, political life of the colonized countries, exploitation by the colonizers and neo-colonizers, placing of Other's values, imposition of the western thoughts and theories on the colonized [1].

The appeal of his works lies in his ability to present a world of complex reality. His debut novel, *The Circle of Reason* is a postmodernist novel. The second novel, *The Shadow Lines* focuses on the impact of an historical event on individual's life. In *An Antique Land* is a blend of autobiography, travelogue, history and anthropology. *The Calcutta Chromosome* is a science fiction. *The Glass Palace* is a postcolonial novel which

depicts the impact of colonialism and neocolonialism on the Burmese royal family and people, dislocation and identity crisis. *The Hungry Tide* depicts the life of subalterns and their suppression under the hegemonic power. Thus, every novel is different from others. So, it is very difficult to label his works by narrowing down to any group. Henceforth, he is considered a canonical writer whose literary ambience has become a literary touchstone. Though he shares some aspects of his contemporaries, he differs from them through his humanistic insights and concern. Therefore, Ghosh has a unique place in the literary world.

## A. Shadow lines

The shadow lines of the title refer to the invisible and blurred lines that exist between cultures, races, lands, nations, families, and even within one's own identity. A close look at the present historical moment reveals that such lines are undergoing much stress and strain, and even showing signs of fading. *The Shadow Lines*, through which he depicted the issues of meaningless border and its consequent disastrous calamity with great humanistic sensibility.

The dispute over the cartographical demarcation between the Hindus and the Muslims separated the fraternal bond of human relationship and led to the animalistic barbarous action towards the mankind without a tinge of sympathy. Moreover, it forced the people to migrate away from their home and a few people like Ila undertook voluntary migration to free themselves from their disgusting culture and partitive riots. Even though partition and migration seemed to be the best solution, it would not put an end to the problem permanently. The refugees on both sides of the border faced psychological difficulties. At times, the politicians on power stirred the people against the people on another land for their own benefit by infusing the political ideology in the matters of border lines and aggravated the nationalistic and racial emotion which turned into violence.

In *The Shadow Lines*, India erupts into violence as family turns on family, as Muslim turns on Hindu, as Pakistan breaks from India. Moreover, the violence that is projected in the novel is psychological, racial and communal. The historical event of partition compelled the people to undertake the migration with the tedious journey by leaving their own accustomed land. This sudden transportation resulted in psychological discomfiture.

Even after the partition, the colonized people who remained under the influence of imperial power wanted to escape from the native culture in the name of freedom. They immigrated to the colonizers' land, London with a hope of becoming 'white'. But, they miserably failed in their attempt and underwent racial violence. Moreover, Partition between Pakistan and India failed to install harmonious environ on the both sides of the border. Even after 68 years since the partition was made, both the countries are fighting incessantly on the matter of border lines. The disharmony between the Muslims and the Hindus resulted in a perennial holocaust, leading to communal violence. Thus, Amitav Ghosh projected the multifarious facets of violence through the vignettes of individual life.

The Shadow Lines has many connotations. It not only refers to the borders between countries but also the borders which separate the colonized people.

The Shadow Lines is a revelation of the spirit of humanity, of the fact that human beings are bonded not by their status or their similarity of regional, cultural, political or religious backgrounds but by the similarity in experiences shared and

struggled, by the similarity in mental make-ups, and the ability of understanding one another.

Eventually, Ghosh stresses the shadowiness of borders by expressing his cosmopolitan view of the world where the human feelings are same whichever nationality we are. Thus, he aspires for the borderless utopia, free from national.

## **2. Conclusion**

In short, Ghosh has shown his concern for humanity by projecting the sites of shadow lines and advocates that universal humanism beyond cartographic demarcation is the need of the hour to avoid all types of social evils in the world. This novel unearthed the truth that the extreme effect of violence was not only on the body but also on the very soul and emotions of mankind. Amitav Ghosh used historical incidents of violence resulting from border divisions, maps and cartography.

## **References**

- [1] Ghosh Amitav, The Shadow Lines, Ravi Dayal Publisher, 1988.