MULTIPLE VOICES AND THEIR DISPLACEMENT: A STUDY OF THE FICTION OF AMITAV GHOSH

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

C. LALAWMPUIA

Regn No: 106/MZU of 3rd November, 2006

Supervisor:

Prof. Margaret Ch. Zama

Department of English

Mizoram University

Aizawl

2011

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> All those voices are shouting, whispering, crying, caressing, threatening, imploring, seducing, commanding, pleading, praying, hypnotizing, confessing, terrorizing, declaring - we can immediately see a difficulty into which any treatment of the voice runs.
>
> - Slavoj Zizek. *A Voice and Nothing More*. (13)

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta on 11 July 1956. His father was a Lieutenant Colonel in the British India army and later a diplomat. Ghosh spent much of his childhood in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iran and India. He attended the Doon School in Dehra Dun, and completed B.A with honours in History from St. Stephen's College and an M.A degree in Sociology from Delhi University. He earned a diploma in Arabic from The Bourguiba Institute of Modern Languages, in Tunis, Tunisia, in 1979, and a Ph. D (D. Phil) in Social Anthropology and Philosophy from Oxford University in 1982. His writing career began the same year at *The Indian Express* newspaper in New Delhi, where he worked for a while as a journalist. Later on he became a regular contributor to *The New Yorker, The New Republic, The Nation, Granta, The Kenyon Review* and more.

In 1980, Amitav Ghosh went to Egypt to do field work in the *fellaheen* village of Lataifa. The work he did there resulted in *In an Antique Land* (1993). Ghosh published his first novel, *The Circle of Reason* in 1986, and his second, *The Shadow Lines*, in 1988. Since then, he has published *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) and done fieldwork in Cambodia that moved him to write a travelogue *Dancing in Cambodia, At large in Burma*

(1998). His other novels are *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Sea of Poppies* (2008). Apart from *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma*, Ghosh also has two other works of non-fiction to his credit, *Countdown* (1999) which reflects on India's nuclear policy, and *The Imam and the Indian* (2002), which is a large collection of essays on different themes such as fundamentalism, history, Egyptian culture and literature.

Contemporary fictions, as Terry Eagleton puts it, "are anything but homogenous" (2004 7). He further emphasizes that fictions are interesting precisely for their ability to locate themselves in the interstices - the spaces between national cultures, genders and histories. With this in mind, reading Ghosh provides an insightful analysis of the Indian subcontinent and its culture and history, identity and nation, family and displacement, tradition and modernity through the eyes of his characters. His interpretation on the 'question of identity' and 'sense of belonging' is based upon self, space, and time. Moreover, the political implications in his works are hard to avoid since the stories are told by voices often described as 'displaced, exiled, and even lost or perhaps rather forgotten.' This may be said to have an affinity with the 'otherness' in him as a writer, as reflected in his novel *The Hungry Tide*, thus

> I listened to them talk and hope blossomed in my heart; these were my people, how could I stand apart? We shared the same tongue, we were joined in our bones; the dreams they had dreamt were no different from my own (165).

Accordingly, fiction attends to a number of dissenting viewpoints allowing stories to be narrated or opinions voiced which may be totally opposed to each other while leaving the responsibility for interpretation with the reader. Ghosh's fundamental concern is in people

and their lives, their histories and plights, and his voice emerges to re-locate the position of ethnography from the inside by "displacing the omniscient, narrativising voice of the traditional historian from the centre to a shared position within a polyphonic discourse alongside other voices - real-life" (Hueso 59). Since Ghosh repeatedly evokes and effaces the institutionalised boundaries, the narrator's voices in his fiction are all crucial in recovering the misplaced part of history. When the dissenting voices are sidelined and marginalized, and when the centre fails to accommodate the unheard, the marginal voices transform into the voices of the dispossessed. The politics of voice are often "presented in terms of a struggle for possession and preservation" (Connor 220). In this sense, Ghosh allows the voices of his characters to be heard alongside his own while projecting himself as a writer without fixed boundaries.

Ghosh's fictional narratives are intricately woven stories of families, political events and local folklores that move back and forth in time and place. His writings are concerned with exploring the significance of India for humankind, and the problems that man faces in the twentieth century - sociopolitical violence, freedom and authority, tradition and progress, individual and family, preservation and annihilation. Ghosh seems to agree that India's problems differ very little fundamentally from those of the other newly formed 'post-colonial nations' together with the intolerable burden of ceaseless poverty. He witnesses the Indian subcontinent in terms of enslavement, caste, impoverishment, religious archaism, and salutes the enduring heroism of her poor. In contrast, he also celebrates the survival of permanent values, as if India is the best witness

in the modern world to an age-old wisdom that lies in compromise, hospitality and tolerance.

Ghosh takes serious interest in the unrepresented past, and his creative writings as a voice denote representation. Then again, the literary expression of "multiple voices" in itself has a far more significant bearing with various theories and critical discourses today. The term "multiple voices," which means multiple points of view is sometimes loosely use and oftentimes differs in the form of its representation and ideas absorbed within it. This form of narrative recalls to a large extent Mikhail Bakhtin's (1895-1975) literary theory known as polyphony. Polyphony, literally meant as 'many-voiced', is a feature of narrative, which includes a diversity of points of view and voices. In this sense, polyphony does not appear to aim for a 'single vision', but simply describing situations from various angles. Bakhtin uses the word "voice in a special way, to include not just matters linguistic but also matters relating to ideology and power in society" **(**Hawthorn 267). A novel having the typical feature of polyphony, according to Bakhtin, is known as a 'polyphonic novel':

> Not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousness, with equal rights and each with its own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the events (Bakhtin 6).

In this sense, Bakhtin offers a practical framework for the study of individual texts, from the level of the primacy of context to textual meaning. 'Polyphonic novel' addresses the complexity of the novel's narrative voice and the layers of voices and languages contained by that voice. It will be seen that Ghosh's novels entwine between the situation of the

voice telling the tale and the situation of voices within the tale, moving from one place to another and back again. In certain cases, his fictional narrator becomes not only the telling voice but also a voice coming from within the tale, a voice that exists on a level connecting the literary voice and character voices.

In addition, voices have become the object of critical analysis to distinguish who is addressing what and for whom. Voices have liberating effects on how culture is perceived, about people's relation to one another through the experience of crossing boundaries, making home, issues of belonging and geographical movement. The concept of boundaries that is approached and evoked in this study is one of the driving forces also witnessed in modernist mythology. According to modernist discourse, a myth is the chain of ideas that is associated with a sign, representing a cultural way of making sense of the surrounding environ. The modernist seeks to modify received opinions and propose new perspectives while eliminating the habitual ways of explaining the world in the process. Whether it is institutional, societal or formal, contemporary writers have "approached boundaries and their limitations, dispensing with them and finding new spaces, values and styles" (Vernall 1).

From the different theoretical readings, this thesis follows the kind of isolated voices found in *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies*. Each text has its own stamp of originality while forging a link as they confront histories of conflict and struggle in the lives of the common people they depict. Thus, critical reading in the context of Ghosh's various protagonists engages one with their 'silences'. Silence is not self-imposed; it is readily imposed by what is called

'grand narratives'[1] in the form of social control and political manoeuvre that underline narrative tension. Silence, which has political perimeter and social implications becomes more voiced in that it operates between exclusion and inclusion, and the "multiple voices" in Ghosh's narratives are "most intimately concerned with the tenuousness of national and other boundaries" (Mongia 226). Consequently, the manner in which Ghosh chooses to counteract "challenges the dominant discourse of both imperialism and nationalism in banishing local history to oblivion" (Gera 125).

Critics like Fredric Jameson argue that the developing third-world novel is particularly devoted to themes such as nation building and nationalism to a large degree. It is certain that the early post-independence writers attended to a 'nationalist narrative', in which communal solidarity, social transformation, as well as sociopolitical concerns of nationalism are endorsed in an awe-inspiring manner. However, from the late 1980s to the twenty-first century "postcolonial literary theory rarely applauds nationalism as a feature of the counter-textuality of the anti-colonial writer/novelist" (Gandhi 152). Although the postcolonial critic and "the anti-colonial novelist was often, although not always, a nationalist" (Gandhi 152), they provided counter-hegemonic voices.

Under such circumstances, postcolonial criticism forges as the essential element in communicating modernity and its inherent ideology. And yet, it is a complicated problem to proceed further without signifying more clearly on the theoretical fabrication of colonialism, imperialism and postcolonialism. Historically, colonialism has been a policy of extending rule over foreign countries. In addition, colonialism is a political orientation that advocates imperial interests in economic mobilization with a view to subjugating the

freedom, dignity, life and culture of the original inhabitants. Underneath colonial domination, the exploited and marginalised people's creativity and resourcefulness weaken, unless the people resist and keep up the struggle against the colonialist or imperialist. In this way, colonialism and imperialism is often used as an interchangeable descriptive term.

Post-colonialism or postcolonial criticism, a literary discipline implanted in the postcolonial world refers to theories in philosophy and literature that contest the legacy of colonial rule. In a limited sense, postcolonial literature may be considered as a branch of postmodern literature since it also encodes the political and cultural independence of peoples formerly subjugated in colonial empires. In fact, the immense influence of both postcolonial and modern theory in Ghosh's works will be one of the chief characteristics of this thesis. The two theories discredit previous literary concepts, colonialism in the case of postcolonialism and modernism to postmodernism, to the extent of questioning the content of literary component, its centrality and its agency. For quick reference, contemporary critics like Dipesh Chakravarty have propounded that, "postmodern critiques of "grand narratives" have been used to question single narratives of the nation" (97). And this is exactly what postcolonial modernists like Ghosh strive to accomplish, i.e., to challenge the centrality of dominant discourses, such as those on nation and nationalism. In spite of the fact that both theories reject conventional form, their dissimilarity is much greater than their similarity as seen in the works of postcolonial critics like Elleke Boehmer, Bill Ashcroft, who were vocal about this awkward relationship.[2]

The dual characteristic of colonial enterprise, of the colonizer and colonized strata has occurred for centuries and persists even today. And the pragmatical and theoretical concept of colonial resistance is the chief principle of postcolonial analysis with literature as mutually constitutive process. Contemporary discourses tend to expose both the elite story of history, written through an elite colonial lens, and the story told from the political platform of the 'bourgeois-nationalist class.' Approached from this direction,

> Post-colonial literature is often examined in terms of binaries; black and white, colonized and colonizer, 'good' and 'bad'. This perspective tends to oversimplify the complexity of a post-colonial nation's situation and forces individuals into either dominant or subordinate positions (Blackwell 29).

"Post-colonial nation" is another topic of contestation with an element of ambiguity. Nation, otherwise nation-states, is a westernized artefact that recommends a territory controlled by a single government. However, nation as commonly understood today is a cultural or ethnic entity within and outside the boundary of that state, conceivable as "community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness" (Watson 1977). Nationalism, with all its intricacies, has been considered as the replacement of colonialism and affirmatively designed to settle a new social order. In the Indian subcontinent, nationalism, which will be discussed in Chapter Two of this research, can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, as a groundbreaking force that represents the concerns of a nation by identifying the common enemy - the British colonialism. Secondly, the nature and functioning of nationalism after India's independence, of its socio-economic class division, and its hegemonic composition.

Apart from being a symbolic and collective representation of political and cultural institutions, nationalism, otherwise national consciousness, stands for the much-sought internal and external security system, which was absent in the past. Nonetheless, the sense of national belonging becomes doubtful and questionable whenever common inheritance reverses it course as Anthony D. Smith, in *The Antiquity of Nations*, states: "the sense of national identity is reinterpreted and reconstructed at periodic intervals" (3). And such periodical changes seem to widen 'class struggle' and inequality in the social structure, leading to social disorder.

The phrasal nomenclature 'Indian-Subcontinent,' which provided the framework of most Ghosh novels has been often used in a nonlinear correlation with 'South Asia,' as it covers the similar topography in South Asia, including the countries of Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. The political division of the area into three nations took place in the 20th century; before that, the entire region was generally referred to as India. Throughout its history, the subcontinent has been characterized by heterogeneity. A critic explains this phenomenon,

> Relevant to all of us in South Asia is the question of what has been called 'mega-diversity,' probably the principal cultural bonding which exists among us in the countries of Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan, India and other peoples on the periphery of South Asia such as in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, the Xingjian and Tibet regions of China and in Myanmar (De 39).

In the context of Ghosh's narration, regional differences are not the only common problems of humanity concerning the process of flowing beyond boundaries. Samenesses,

as opposite to differences, also encourage the process of flowing beyond boundaries. And, in an ever changing macrocosmic, Ghosh demonstrates that "different strands of nationalism and ideology will exist and even compete" (Kapadia 142). Today, nationalism in its present usage is in conflict with multicultural society, transnational entity, information technology, hybrid culture, and even with Ghosh's 'nuclear family,' which is shaped by geographical displacement. In this scenario, nationalism tends to provide a singular space and not for the 'voiceless others.'

Ghosh, as a 'travel' writer with a postcolonial background has practically explored both the known and unknown human experiences through glimpses of history and cultural roots. In his creative works, Ghosh projects himself as a writer without boundaries and deals with themes and characters that do not have a fixed location - geographically. Through his fictional creation, he "belies the ideologies of nation impressed by the 'traditional' realist novel form" (Jones 431). His writings also seem to signify the futility of lines that divide nation-states on geographical landscape, the shadow lines amid one's place of birth and one's nationality, and the impact of borders on human lives. Based on this assumption, John Thieme feels that "in all Ghosh's work, one of the main emphases is on the arbitrariness of cartographical demarcations" (2004 257).

However, a close reading reveals the contradictory issue, that his works reflect nostalgia for roots or a sense of home. While his writings "illuminates the intimacy between the familial and the foreign, his work suggests that a robust cosmopolitan sensibility requires close attention to the energies of domestic life," states Shameem Black. As an individual, Ghosh's self-consciousness is tied-up with "the centrality of Calcutta to

his literary experience and imagination" (Bose 2003 33). The immediate question that arises out of this thought is: what is the true nature of boundary if one clings to the centrality of one's ancestry? The antonym for central/centrality is neither border nor boundary, it is peripheral and marginality. Any diasporic writer with linkages back home in the Indian subcontinent appears to address it like a homesick exile. However, Rakhee Moral observes the paradigm shift as follows

> In what is now an infamous and provocatively titled essay, "Damme, This is the Oriental Scene For You," in the Special Fiction Issue of *The New Yorker* marking 50 years of postcolonial Indian writing, Salman Rushdie remarks that "Literature has little or nothing to do with a writers' home address" (1997: June 23 & 30). *The Glass Palace*, however, seems to question this impression as the author's close family affiliations with the Indian freedom struggle and his father's connections with the Second World War... easily find their way into the pages of his work, informing it with a deep compassion and understanding rare in literature that is meant to be written only from the margins, and intended simply as representation (152-153).

The Glass Palace begins in Mandalay on the eve of the Anglo-Burmese war in 1885 extending to the Japanese invasion during the Second World War, and it covers the tumultuous history of the subcontinent during British India era involving people with diverse cultures and practices in unexpected relationships. Ghosh's father, Lieutenant-General Shailendra Chandra Ghosh, fought in the Second World War as an officer of the 12th Frontier Force Regiment and was twice mentioned in dispatches during the Burma campaign of 1945. Ghosh's family history has undoubtedly played a large part in *The Glass Palace*, which attempts to chronicle the impact of all the historical and personal

events. The novel, according to Meenakshi Mukherjee, depicts character after character, event after event spilling "over national boundaries, refusing to stay contained in neat compartments. A person is remembered not as Burmese, Indian, Chinese, Malay or American - but merely as Uma, Dolly, Saya John, Alison, Dinu, Neel or Daw Thin Thin Aye" (xi). The key players of *The Glass Palace* are masses who do not belong to any specific space and eventually the narrative ends up in Calcutta. *The Hungry Tide*, to a degree, as in *The Glass Palace*, is also personal to Ghosh as his own kith and kin were directly associated with the vast terrain of Sunderbans, the region where the fiction is grounded. In fact, the bond occurred much before the publication of *The Hungry Tide*, and in his Author's Note, Ghosh adds that his uncle Chandra Ghosh was the high school headmaster for a decade of the Rural Reconstruction Institute founded by Sir Daniel Hamilton in Gosaba, until his death in 1967.

It is understandable that 'nostalgia' represents a sense of rooted belonging, a sense of home, of family space, a sense of the past, and more importantly, a desire to return home. This sense of home, naturally, has nostalgic overtones that focuses on a search for personal voice, keenly attached with the concept of 'looking back' or of an imagined 'past.' However, the reality behind the thematic "return home or homeward journey" in contemporary situation can be contested in the context of real homelessness and real alienation. To support this argument, a critic comments that, "Whilst the ideal of return to the homeland is a real one, the practicalities involved makes return very unrealistic" (Hoque 6). Yet it sustains the tenuous hope of return to a fixed destination for roots. This

would further suggest the necessity of redefining or reframing the concept of 'home,' 'border/boundary' and 'return.'

A nostalgic yearning for 'return' to one's home coexists with the "ambivalence toward an emergent home for memories, to which one can return and whose images one can evoke" (Jinhu 150). Despite anything to the contrary, it appears that contemporary criticism, chiefly postmodernism, construes nostalgia for its temporal rather than its spatial significances. According to this reflection, return to the original home also exists mostly as a place in the imagination. Nostalgia for roots, or the longing to return, according to John S. Su in *Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel*, dwells only in one's imagination. He observes,

> The longing to return to a lost homeland becomes a central feature of the Western literary tradition long before the term 'nostalgia' was coined to describe it. [...] This first 'narrative of return' establishes a pattern that continues to compel writers even now in the twenty-first century [...] nostalgic homelands frequently exist only in the imagination - literary texts continue to depict characters defined by their longing to return (1).

Looking at it differently, the kind of mediation developed from the preceding statement and elsewhere has animated diasporic subjects who were feeling the necessity to reinvent and rewrite home. Generally, writers in diaspora want to come to terms with their foreign location from what they considered as their home. Home, in a diasporic imagination, as Avtar Brah puts it, is "a mythic place to desire" (196), which is a place of origin but a place of no return. Since one is no longer at home, another critic reiterates, "Homelessness and exile constitute a major motif of any theory of modernity" (Lambropoulos 252).

According to Su, exiled writers or diasporic writers embrace or reject the nostalgia surrounding them, they all consciously exploit nostalgia's tendency to interweave imagination, longing, and memory in their efforts to envision resolutions to the social dilemmas of fragmentation and displacement described in their novels. Kanika Batra, while dealing with the geographical and generic traversings in the writings of Amitav Ghosh says that: "Ghosh's traversings across geographical and generic boundaries are symptomatic of his privileged diasporic status as an intellectual in the first world academy, an issue which is foregrounded in his work" (2008). Claire Chambers, while reviewing *In An Antique Land*, is more robust towards Ghosh in her approach and states that Ghosh's "Indian nationality provokes particularly complex and often contradictory reactions from the community in which he lives, as he is at once seen as insider (fellow inhabitant of a third-world country) and outsider (cow-worshipping, uncircumcised infidel)" (7). In this sense, Ghosh is placed in an ambiguous position, neither inside nor outside.

Ghosh does not think of himself as a 'political' writer and yet, paradoxically, nationalism and anti-nationalism is a major concern as seen in the familial relationships of his novels. Both his fiction and non-fiction writings have a strong political content - whether it is to do with India or Cambodia or Bangladesh or Burma, and it would be a difficult task to wipe out the politics from his writings. Ghosh addresses the contestation of 'border' and 'home', in connection with his roots in the Indian subcontinent. In a literary conversation with Frederick Luis Aldama, Ghosh talks of his childhood pastime spent in his grandfather's house as mostly reading books, for Calcutta to him is "a bookish city," as he wrote in *The Testimony of my Grandfather's Bookcase* (1998). His reading appears to

help him to live within his own space and within his own literary creativity. It is also obvious that Ghosh has maintained a tenuous but lasting long-distance connection with Calcutta, the city he once lived in and still remembers with nostalgia.

Somdatta Mandal, in an essay titled "Oh Calcutta! The New Bengal Movement in Diasporic Indian English Fiction," observes that Ghosh and his contemporaries cannot simply disassociate themselves from the most culturally vibrant and politically lively city of the subcontinent. They "make repeated references to the cultural tradition of Calcutta and their cherished moments of nostalgia or moments of bewilderment in encounters with the real Calcutta" (Mandal 19). The nostalgic reminiscence for the lost days of one's childhood is indeed the archetypical form of nostalgia often empowered with the natures of stability and fixity.

Ghosh's literary contribution in remembering and giving voice to the conflicting experiences of Calcutta's past-ridden present is very difficult to avoid. He, according to Mandal, "straddles both the eastern and western worlds regularly, who often takes recourse to his Bengali roots. Though he sets most of his novels in different cities and countries around the world, the 'old country' sometimes serves as a ready referral at any point of creativity" (10). It was Rushdie, who once remarked, "India is a continent of deeply rooted people. Indians don't just own the ground beneath their feet; it owns them, too" (299-300). Ghosh too is said to have stated that, "I've never really left India!" (Ziv 2005).

In the light of these observations, both imagined and concrete relationship can be realized through a sense of presence while in absence. The same process appears to have

influenced Ghosh to use his roots, to facilitate and accelerate his distinct works while relating it with his individual sense of nostalgia. It is obvious that the human mind can generate divisions in consciousness or identity, but when it comes to 'home' and 'return' in the context of displacement, how does "the arbitrariness of cartographical demarcations" (Thieme 2004 257) best suffice the contestation of displacement? How does one project Ghosh as a writer without boundaries, who deals with themes and characters that do not have fixed locations, hence the multiple voices, while the writer himself is constantly conscious of his fixed roots? The following chapters will attempt to address these questions.

A literary study on Ghosh has shown signs of growth both in Indian universities and abroad. A number of critics have examined and theorised the narrative structure and multiple processes of Ghosh's fictions in geographical and metaphorical terms. Critical themes such as myth and history, imagination and politics, the ebb and flow of peoples across continents and generations, colonialism and beyond, quest and discovery - all find a berth in the novelist's writing. A critical reading sees his fictional characters often projected to exemplify the artificiality of national boundary and of literary foundation with a new insight. Review works of Ghosh's fiction interface the connection and disassociation of diverse ideological concepts and human realities.

Erik Peeters, while examining the concept of boundaries, home and the areas of belonging and migration (displacement in certain cases), indicates that the works of Ghosh is chiefly concerned "with issues of exile and migration, and a related critique of a particular construction of belonging" (29). In a world of transnational setting, the notion of

belonging according to Peeters, “pre-supposes the conjoining of a specific space and a single culture in a unified nation state” (29), this, in comparison with the view of some other critics, might not be too persuasive. The “specific space” and “single culture” differ in the lived experiences of person-to-person, and the presence of shadowy lines in *The Shadow Lines*, for example, indicates the absence of fixity and specificity. For instance, Murari Prasad poses the narrator as “a participant in the story with shadowy extra-diegetic voices” (75). With this “extra-diegetic voices,” the narrator manages to disunify “specific space” and “single culture” in a postmodernist fashion. Robert Dixon too celebrates *The Shadow Lines* for its critique of “a discursive space that flows across political and national boundaries” (10). The irony, in contrast, is that the shadowy lines have often been constituted by “the silence of voiceless events in a backward world” (*TSL* 104).

According to Nadia Butt, space is not simply associated with the structuring of imagination alone; instead, space is a representation of “political and cultural encounters, encounters which actually shape the connection of different characters with territory and location” (3). In this mode, “space is represented as a dynamic arrangement between people, places, cultures and societies” (Butt 3), which in a manner dissolves the boundaries of “specific space” and “single culture” mentioned earlier. From different perspectives, spaces in Ghosh’s fiction need not entirely succumb to what Tuomas Huttunen calls “postmodern spaces that are imagined” (2004). It could be unrelated versions of the same space, because, according to John Thieme, “an undifferentiated space becomes a place, when human beings assign a meaning to it, through practices such as naming and mapping” (2008 73).

Frederick Luis Aldama refers to *The Glass Palace* as a "postcolonial text that revises and dramatically transforms Anglo-colonial biased histories that traditionally have silenced and/or erased the subaltern presence and agency" (2005), while Yumna Siddiqi notes that in *The Circle of Reason*, "Ghosh underscores the repressive aspects of colonial rationality that linger in the structures of postcolonial government" (175). Meanwhile *The Hungry Tide*, according to Terri Tomsky, "functions as a testimony to the historically unresolved sufferings of the rural poor" (55). In the light of these critical remarks, postcolonial criticism, as discussed earlier, emphasises on "the legacy of colonial violence, forcible displacement, and social justice - a model expounded upon by Homi Bhabha, Sheldon Pollack, Dipesh Chakravarty, Carol Breckenridge, Timothy Brennan, James Clifford, and Bruce Robbins" (Johansen 3). However, to challenge colonial legacy in its entirety is not the complete factor of postcolonial criticism; it is the complex nature of postcolonial fluidity that dominates the core of contemporary writings, such as the works of Ghosh.

The fiction of Ghosh therefore represents a mixture of multiple voices depicting constant instability. Voices, according to Nivedita Majumdar are the "voices appropriated and marginalized within the discourse of nationalism" (240). In locating the critique of nationalism in an alternative view of history that itself is "derived from the often-silenced voices of the nation," Majumdar states that "*The Shadow Lines* pitches the Nation against Nationalism" (242), and further admits that, "the all-encompassing ideology of the nation is all too often relegated to a chasm of silence" (250).

In the predominantly Western-centric post-modern dialogue, Saloni Mathur observes that Ghosh represents the voice of the 'other.' In this respect, "Ghosh's voice, though marginally heard, effectively decenters the post-modernist debate from its politically advantaged North American setting" (Mathur 66). While alternating the Indian experience as its centres of discourse, Ghosh fastidious attempt, in the words of Parag Moni Sarma, is to "uncover footnotes of history." Sarma further vocalizes that "the post-colonial mode of narration is not only about documenting losses with Ghosh, but also reinstating the recoverable and traceable breaches of history" (34). This is again set in tune with another critic Paul Sharrad, who writes,

> We can go on to seek a literary history of works like Ghosh's not by placing them in national or diasporic narratives, but by tracking their oscillating effects across sites of community and mobility as part of our postcolonial literary enterprise - itself a tale of constant negotiations of historical disillusionments and utopian ideals. (2007)

"What does it mean to be at home in the world?" (45), asks Shameem Black in her review article "Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines.*" She suggests that it should be less invested in a traditional idea of feeling "at home" in the world and more committed to recognizing "the world" through the home. However, the metaphorical expression of 'home' and 'homelessness' entity, which will be addressed in Chapter Three, do not denote the same meaning. In this regard, Huttunen raises the question of "how to represent multicultural communities; should differences between groups be emphasized, or should their common "universal" features be highlighted?" (28). Finding a way of giving each group or collective individual in Ghosh's fiction its own distinctive

voice without simultaneously appropriating that voice is seen as a dilemma by Huttunen. The dilemma, otherwise the disturbing realization of that 'voice,' according to Greg Esplin is that, "how we think we sound when we speak is not how others hear us" (14).

Ghosh, according to Saswat S. Das, "while pretending to make space for his fiction beyond the post-modern debate [...] has displayed 'homelessness' as the natural condition of man" (181). It is obvious enough that Ghosh constructs his narrative fiction, in the words of another critic, "on the lines of 'epic restlessness' which is characteristic of growing internationalism and sweeping winds of globalization" (Rao 45). Yet, how does one respond to the actual 'homelessness', while, at the same time, "endorsing the viewpoint that the state of homelessness, of being in a cultural void, is a source of enlightenment" (Das 179), enlightenment in relation to nirvana, beatification and sophistication. What is homelessness especially in the context of postcolonial acculturation; does it imply displacement and return? In the context of globalization and internationalism, 'homelessness' as "the natural condition of man" can be visualized only if, as pointed out by Stephanie Jones, the "rooted terms of 'community' are themselves collapsed into a recognition that all people can be traced back to histories of displacement and migration" (431).

The fictional spaces thus created for his characters are often located between the boundaries of sociocultural impact, of the strangeness of different ethnicity and the historical impact. Traditionally, boundaries are emblematic, cultural, and societal, constituting a cognitive or mental geography and yet unstable due to difference and distinctiveness. And these boundaries, according to Brinda Bose, negotiate "into that third

space where boundaries are blurred and cultures collide" (2001 239). Not too different from this observation, Anjali Roy has argued that Ghosh's novels concern themselves with "geographical restoration in the context of a new borderless, global landscape" (35). The contemporaneity of this new borderless and global landscape is conveyed in the form of Ghosh's literary activity which according to Maria Hueso is "Ghosh's tendency to blur the boundaries between the ethnographic study and the literary narrative" (55). However, despite the fact that Ghosh manages to "blur the boundaries" of certain norms and principles, it appears that he secretly constructs a narrative centre that often takes recourse to his Bengali roots, and this requires to be examined. Contemporary novelists oft times fail to detach their roots. "The 'old country' sometimes serves as a ready referral at any point of creativity" (Mandal 11) to contemporary writers, though they situate most of their creative writings in different cities and countries around the world. Ghosh, as a creative writer carries the burden of all the 'voices' and 'silences' of his fictional characters and he "speaks as one who questions, argues and re-fashions paradigms and moves towards possibilities rather than re-present rigid givens" (Choudhury 96).

From the novels by Ghosh, one finds the literary exploration of different critics "sometimes contradictory, on other occasions conciliatory" (Choudhury 96). Literature, the representative body of written works of a particular culture, language, people, or period needs its own time to gain vigour through the human consciousness. It deepens human natural sensibilities, and strengthens by connecting past and present into a conscious unity and literal signification. Looking at it differently, literature has its own site of struggles

with literary criticism and critical theory to the extent of questioning the literary representation itself.

In view of the above discussion, the thesis is divided into five chapters and arranged in the following manner:

Chapter One - Introduction

Chapter One is introductory in nature and gives a general overview of the objective and intent of the research by dilating on key terms and concepts, and of how these can be foregrounded as foundations for interpreting the fiction of Amitav Ghosh. It thus provides a framework of the thesis.

Chapter Two - Borderless Writing and Family Narratives

Chapter Two is theoretical in nature and deals in-depth with 'borderless writing' and family narratives through the notion of border, nation, family and displacement that are contested terms in the works of Amitav Ghosh. He challenges the predominant idea of pro-colonial hegemonism that manages to survive in postcolonial scenario by positioning 'family' against 'nation' in his fiction. The chapter addresses questions such as, what comprises/constitutes nation/nationalism in the milieu of the existing systems of thought, and emphasizing contemporary redefinitions on the concept of 'family.' It explores the theory of nation and nationalism in terms of its content and structure before examining whether the concept of family can substitute nation in the analysis of his novels *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide,* and *Sea of Poppies*.

Chapter Three - The Voices of Home and Utopia

Chapter Three addresses 'home' entity as literary discourse. Contemporary studies of 'home' emphasize the theoretical dispute between post-colonial literature and post-modernism, between 'at home in the world' and home in utopianism, between actual homelessness/displacement, and politicized home. The fluidity of redefining or reframing the concept of 'home' has other alternatives in the form of utopian representation as a subject that is both theoretical and practical. Utopianism in Ghosh's fiction has acquired its own history and its own narratives. The chapter will deal with whether utopian entity is possible through the individual spirit or by collective negotiations, and whether as a concrete vision, it is indeed reasonable or desirable, as depicted through the multiple characters and their multiple voices in *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide*.

Chapter Four - Nostalgic Voices for Home

The creative narration of multiple displacements and repetitive writing on the subject by Ghosh, a writer without any predetermined boundary - is to be addressed here through the manifestation of nostalgia for roots and home metaphor. By analyzing *The Circle of Reason* and *The Hungry Tide,* the aim is to interrogate home formation both as social psychological space and as topographical location or structure, rather than looking at the concepts of 'nation' as home and citizenship as 'belonging.' The chapter follows Ghosh, who opens up the possibilities for belonging by displaying that individuals really have evolved and so have the geographically rootedness they have returned to, though it requires critiquing the length and summary of such return, individually - narrative after narrative.

Chapter Five - Conclusion

The thesis is concluded in this chapter that summarizes the interpretations put forth in Chapters Two to Chapter Four. In addition to this, critical observations of various sources during the course of research work will be highlighted.

Endnotes.

1. Grand narrative, meta-narrative, or master narratives are interchangeable descriptive terms. A grand narrative, which is a modernist concept, means an authority in general. According to Jean Baudrillard, grand narrative expresses the loss of spontaneous, symbolic human relations; society falling under the logic of signs and the code; the achievement of communion through technical rather than symbolic means; sexuality as a spectre (something existing in perception only) rather than as symbolic rejoicing and exchange; and the loss of authentic relationships. Jean-François Lyotard defines the modern era as the era of the grand narratives. These understand human history as a collective progress through time to a specific goal, such as the maximum realization of the human spirit, the creation of a free and just society or the perfect operation of society as an efficient economic machine. See Jean Baudrillard. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage, 1998. p. 22. Nick Mansfield. *Subjectivity: Theories of the self from Freud to Haraway*. St Leonards NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000. p. 182.

2. Elleke Boehmer argues that, "postcolonial and postmodern critical approaches cross in their concern with marginality, ambiguity, disintegrating binaries, and all things parodied, piebald, dual, mimicked, always-already borrowed, and ironically secondhand." The emergence of theoretical interest in postcolonial studies has coincided with the rise of postmodernism in Western society, says Bill Ashcroft. However, Ashcroft believes that, "Post-colonialism is not simply a kind of 'postmodernism with politics' - it is a sustained attention to imperial process in colonial and neo-colonial societies, and an examination of the strategies to subvert the actual material and discursive effects of that process." See Elleke Boehmer. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005. p. 237-238. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back; Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989. p. 117.

Works Cited

Aldama, Frederick Luis. "Unraveling the Nation from Narration in Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*." 5 Nov. 2005 <http://www.academic-ink.com/ink/faldama>.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Caryl Emerson, ed and trans. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

Batra, Kanika. "Geographical and Generic Traversings in the Writings of Amitav Ghosh" in *Thamyris/Intersecting: Place, Sex and Race, Convergences and Interferences: Newness in Intercultural Practices.* Kathleen Gyssels, Isabel Hoving and Maggie Ann Bowers, eds. <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/rodopi/tham>.

Black, Shameem. "Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines." The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 41.3 (2006)

Blackwell, Michelle. "Blurring the Boundaries: Challenging Binaries in *The God of Small Things*." *traverse - a comparative studies journal* 5 (2005)

Bose, Brinda. "Footnoting History: The Diasporic Imagination of Amitav Ghosh" in *In Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*. Makarand Paranjape, ed. New Delhi: Indialog, 2001.

----. "Introduction" in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Butt, Nadia. "Inventing or Recalling the Contact Zones? Transcultural Spaces in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*." *Postcolonial Text* 4.3 (2008)

Chakravarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Chambers, Claire. "Anthropology as Cultural Translation: Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land.*" *Postcolonial Text* 2.3 (2006)

Choudhury, Bibhash. "Amitav Ghosh, Modernity and the Theory of the Novel." *Journal of Contemporary Thought* 28 (2008)

Connor, Steven. "The Ethics of the Voice" in *Critical Ethics: Text, Theory and Responsibility*. Dominic Rainsford, Tim Woods, eds. London: MacMillan Pvt. Ltd., 1999.

Das, Saswat S. “Home and Homelessness in *The Hungry Tide*: A Discourse Unmade.” *Indian Literature* 235 1.5 (2006)

De, Barun. “Moving beyond boundaries - contradictions between people and territory” in *States, Citizens and Outsiders: The Uprooted Peoples of South Asia*. Tapan K. Bose, Rita Manchanda, eds. Katmandu: South Asia Forum for Human Rights, 1997.

Dixon, Robert. “Travelling in the West: The Writing of Amitav Ghosh.” *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 31.1 (1996)

Eagleton, Terry. *The English Novel: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004.

Esplin, Greg. “Melancholic Longing in *The Shadow Lines*.” *Portals: a journal in comparative literature* (2004) <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~clsa/portals/2004/esplin.html>.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1998.

Gera, Anjali. “Des Kothay? Amitav Ghosh Tells Old Wives Tales” in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion.* Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Hawthorn, Jeremy. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*. 4th ed. London: Arnold, 2000.

Hoque, Aminul. “Long-Distance Nationalism: a study of the Bagir Ghati Community Living in East London.” *eSharp*. 5 (2005)

Hueso, Maria Elena Martos. “The Subaltern Ethnographer: Blurring the Boundaries through Amitav Ghosh’s Writing.” *Miscelanea: a journal of English and American Studies* 36 (2007)

Hutcheon, Linda. “Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern.” Methods for the study of literature as cultural memory. *Studies in Comparative Literature* 30 (2000)

Huttunen, Tuomas. “Narration and silence in the works of Amitav Ghosh.” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 38.2 (2000)

------ . “Representation of London in *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh.” *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London* March 2004. 10 Jan. 2008 <http://homepage.gold.au.uk/london-journal/>.

Jinhu, Dai, Judy T. H. Chen. “Imagined Nostalgia.” *boundary 2* 24.3 (1997)

Johansen, Emily. “Imagining the Global and the Rural: Rural Cosmopolitanism in Sharon Butala’s *The Garden of Eden* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*.” *Postcolonial Text* 4.3 (2008)

Kapadia, Novy. “Imagination and Politics in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines”* in *Many Indias, Many Literatures: New Critical Essays*. Shormishtha Panja, ed. Delhi: Worldview, 2000.

Lambropoulos, Vassilis. *The Rise of Eurocentrism: Anatomy of Interpretation*. Princeton/New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Majumdar, Nivedita. “Shadows of the nation: Amitav Ghosh and the critique of nationalism.” *ariel* 34:2-3 (2003)

Mandal, Somdatta. “Oh Calcutta! The New Bengal Movement in Diasporic Indian English Fiction.” Special Issue on Indian Diaspora: The 21st Century-Migration, Change and Adaptation. *Anthropologist* 2 (2007)

Mathur, Saloni. ““Weaving is Reason”: A Critical Reading of Amitav Ghosh.” *NEXUS* 9 (1991)

Mongia, Padmini. “Postcolonial identity and gender boundaries in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Line*.” *College Literature* 19/20.3/1 (1999) 9 June 2007 <http://web.ebscohost.com/lrc/detail?vid=2&hid=17&sid=d8eaf6d3-a3b2-4e7d-86f7-42e584024619%40sessionmgr104>.

Moral, Rakhee. “In Time of the Breaking of Nations”: *The Glass Palace* as Postcolonial Narrative” in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. “Of love, war and empire.” Rev. of *The Glass Palace*, by Amitav Ghosh. *The Hindu* 1 Oct. (2000)

Peeters, Erik. “Crossing boundaries, making home: Issues of belonging and migration in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*.” *English Academy Review* 25.1 (2008)

Prasad, Murari. “Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*: Re-Reading its Craft and Concerns.” *Asiatic* 2.1 (2008)

Rao, A. S. “Myth and History in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason”* in *Myth and History in Contemporary Indian Novel in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2000.

Roy, Anjali. “Microstoria: Indian Nationalism’s ‘Little Stories’ in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*.” *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 35.2 (2000)

Rushdie, Salman. *Step across This Line*. New York: Modern Library Paperback, 2002.

Sarma, Parag Moni. “Alternate Centres of the Indian Experience: The Peripheral Discourse of Amitav Ghosh with a special Reference to *The Glass Palace*.” *Assam University Journal* 2.1 (2007)

Sharrad, Paul. “Towards a Post-diasporic Literary History.” 11 May 2007 <http://myuminfo.umanitoba.ca/Documents/1221/PlacingOutPlace.pdf>.

Siddiqi, Yumna. “Police and Postcolonial Rationality in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*.” *Cultural Critique* 50 (2002)

Smith, Anthony D. *The Antiquity of Nations*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004.

Stephanie Jones. “A novel genre: polylingualism and magical realism in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66 (2003)

Thieme, John. “Amitav Ghosh” in *A Companion to Indian Fiction in English*. Pier Paolo Piciucco, ed. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004.

----. “‘Out of Place’? The Poetics of Space in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* and Michael Ondaatje’s *Anil’s Ghost”* in *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/Longing*. Neera Singh, ed. New Delhi: Books Plus, 2008.

Tomsky, Terri. “Amitav Ghosh’s Anxious Witnessing and the Ethics of Action in *The Hungry Tide*.” *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 44.1 (2009)

Vernall, Colin. “Boundaries? What Boundaries?” *eSharp* 3 (2004)

Watson, Hugh Seton. *Nations and States*. London: Methuen, 1977. 5 July 2006. <http://tamilnation.org/index.htm>

Ziv, Daniel. Interview with Amitav Ghosh. “Novelist in Paradise. Writing in Bali.” *Jakarta Post Sunday* 23 Oct. 2005. <http://novelistinparadise.com/?p=57>.

Zizek, Slavoj. *A Voice and Nothing More*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006.

CHAPTER TWO

BORDERLESS WRITING AND FAMILY NARRATIVES

> Of course the family is one of those territories the novel, as a form, has most successfully claimed for itself everywhere: all around the world there are novelists who [...] build their books on families and their histories, on the endless cycle of birth, marriage and death.
>
> - Amitav Ghosh. "Confessions of a Xenophile." (2008)

Border, nation, family and displacement are contested terms in the works of a post-colonial modernist writer like Ghosh, who challenges the predominant idea of 'nation' as an institutionalized entity within a fixed boundary. He instead privileges his own notion of 'family,' denoting those that spill over and are not confined within this traditional sphere of nation. This gives rise to a multicultural narrative in Ghosh whereby he shapes his fictional world in their historical contexts, and this in turn generates his multiple characters who span several geographical boundaries. This chapter will hence focus on issues like 'what comprises/constitutes nation/nationalism' in the context of contemporary redefinition of 'family.' The theoretical groundings thus projected here are necessitated by the fact that the study of multiple voices and their displacement in Ghosh's novels take their trajectory on how the author has conceptualized the notion of nation and family.

The multiple voices of Ghosh's novels are an attempt to create greater possibilities of expression, through his various characters, who are often seen as speaking from confined institutionalized spaces, yet speaking and voicing the unspeakable and thus communicating the unspeakable aspects of human experience.

In the Indian subcontinent, nation formation is identifiable with corporeal violence and ‘political catastrophes’ rather than with the much debated “Benedict Anderson’s overused and sometimes abused idea of nations as imagined community.”[1] The interrelatedness of violence as political agency and nation as its breeding ground could be best examined in the course of historical reinterpretation. The cataclysm of geographical partition of the Indian subcontinent was a horrifying result of differences in the concept of nationalism. Moreover, 15 August 1947 was as much a tragedy and a triumph for Indian nationalism - a victim to its own political and class variations. It must be remembered that nation is constituted by the social group's (the people's) consciousness of being a nation or of wanting to be one - by demanding political self determination from ‘those’ (colonialist, dominant authority, etc.) who control and restrain the voiceless other.

To question directly and justify the historical narration on nation or nationalism might be the most favorable alternative from the postcolonial platform, yet the pertaining question is who necessitates these changes? Frantz Fanon, French West Indian political thinker probes words into matters and proposed a typical ‘ideal’ nation. He urges, “The need for this change exists in a raw, repressed, and reckless state in the lives and consciousness of colonized men and women” (1). The colonized citizens here need not necessarily represent the colonial past, but the postcolonial citizens who are trapped ‘in-between’ the hegemonic systems of ‘them’ and ‘us.’ Also, to frame the natural process of nation and ‘imagination’ together could result in a resemblance of the two, as an attempt to dissolve the familiar sociopolitical boundaries of modern nation-states. It may possibly correlate to the critical contestation of Anderson's notion of nation, which is imaginative

and empirical rather than scientific, for it involves the preconceived notion of identifying "Anderson's idea of 'imagined communities' which rely on a cultural bond rather than a racial or geographic one" (Lehmann 1998). "Cultural bond" within the periphery of "imagined communities" shares ground with the political connotation that divides rather than unites. Seen from this perspective, it is possible that when imagination confronts reality, an eruption perhaps of violence, is inevitable before the realization of a utopia.

Nation formation without incorporating violence is obviously a rare case since it relates to tremendous changes, both positive and negative. A contemporary study on nation is not a mere academic sojourning since the concept of nation formation is deeply rooted with various forms of hostilities. Such changes are observable in two directions. Firstly, wars took place over centuries in the name of a nation, and political conflict of recent decades is waged to preserve, safeguard or destroy several 'imagined communities'. A pragmatic study on nationhood and nationalism is increasingly urgent to appraise its complicated reality, because, the development of articulating nation in the interior of nationalism, and not contrariwise, has undergone radical changes in contemporary studies.

Secondly, "while the historical conjuncture in the West favoured a convergence between nation and nationalism, it did not do so in the subcontinent" (Aloysius 226). In the Indian subcontinent, nationalism is largely diverged from the western notion of nation. It is true that nationalism has been an important feature of decolonisation struggles in the third world, and yet, there is a far more pressing concern to address concerns "between the people-who-comprise-the-nation and the state-which-represent-the-nation" (Gandhi 119).

Though seemingly clear, trying to understand the multiple meanings of nation and

nationalism in all their complexity is essential and crucial. It requires to look beyond the nation's borders, and to understand how the nation is viewed from vantage points beyond its borders. The reason, a critic opines, is that

> Nations and nationalism had by the second half of the nineteenth century assumed aggressive, intolerant forms identified with military and trade rivalries, national expansion, and imperialism. In the twentieth century, nationalism has been an essential element of Fascism and other totalitarian movements. Given such a history, it is entirely understandable why many countries of the West view nation and nationalism today with great suspicion (Kumar 13).

The manner in which contemporary West has negotiated nationalism seen in South East Asia as 'radical' nationalism is a pure misconception. Since the pattern of nation and narration differs, phenomenon such as fundamentalism, terrorism or ethnocentrism is not necessarily the doing of nationalism alone. Hans Kohn, in his study on *The Idea of Nation* (2005), states that,

> In the West, nations grew up as unions of citizens, by the will of individuals who expressed it in contracts, covenants or plebiscites. This, they integrated around a political idea, looking towards the common future which would spring from their common effort (351).

The "common effort" depicted by Kohn, which aim for the "common future" is solely based upon the Western model on nation of civil-society (otherwise Anderson's 'imagined community'). Even so, this projected "common effort" when pushed forward with the intention of territorial expansion towards the third world location, the manufactured idea of Kohn's "common future" begins to demonstrate different perimeters of modernity. In

other words, modernity implicates “common future” as the extension of a nation’s sovereignty beyond territorial delimitation in which colonial populations are directly ruled or displaced.

In the Indian subcontinent, the knowledge of modernity or a desire to embrace modernness was hatched while being a colonial subject. From the postcolonial context, the concept of European modernity emerges in a form of domination, collectivism, and segregation. More importantly, the modern approach of South East Asian nationalism collides with these Eurocentric colonial factors. Through differences of opinion of postcolonial modernity, contemporary writers such as Ghosh challenge the existing “perception of a linear shift from the British Empire into a postcolonial world of discrete nations, by portrayal of a teeming world of transverse histories” (Jones 434).

The concept of colonial resistance is the chief principle of postcolonial analysis in the minds of the people and comes out in a form of ‘nationalism’. The search for identity, the need for independence and the difficult relationship with colonial culture, the rewriting of colonial past, an attempt at creating a new language and a new narrative form and the use of personal memory to understand communal past - all merge in postcolonial discourses. Postcolonial narration exposed the elite story of Indian history, a historical script written through elite colonial lens with colonial flavour. Intrigued by such interrelationships, Ghosh observes,

> The postcolonial state is heir to the anxieties about order and control that are characteristic of colonial regimes, and the full force of postcolonial rationality is seen in the state's response to insurgency and subaltern migrancy (Siddiqi 175).

In the subcontinent, nationalism has been considered as the replacement of colonialism. As a matter of fact, nationalism derived its meaning from the conflict between colony and colonizer and in this sense it is a vision of political community founded on the notion of a 'pure' homogenous body of people, undivided by divergent interests, and united by common traditions. Apart from being a symbolic representation of political and cultural institutions, nationalism stands for social convention and economic security. Nonetheless, it is important to note that domineering revivalism and nationalism were inseparable, and it grew through political framework. Kohn's idea of nationalism perched with imaginary "common future" through (un)desirable "common effort" turns futile especially in the context of post-independence India. The sense of national belonging becomes doubtful and questionable whenever common inheritance reverses it course towards communal conflict.

According to Anthony D. Smith, the sense of "national identity is reinterpreted and reconstructed at periodic intervals" (3), that depends upon circumstances and events. This suggests that, in an ever-changing political scenario, different patterns of nationalism and ideology will exist and even compete. In such situations, the force of nationalism in the quest for freedom could turn into a source of violence. Postcolonial nations achieve liberty and defend its freedom through a sort of violence in one way or another. Violence in the backdrop of colonialism typifies power and rule. However, it is an illusion to believe that one can meet demands for social justice with violence and military might. Ghosh, in his essay *Imperial Temptation* (2002), analyzes the development of nation and its binary functioning by putting forth an argument:

> To begin with, empire cannot be the object of universal human aspirations. In a world run by empires, some people are rulers and some are the ruled:

> On the other hand, the idea of the nation-state, for all its failings, holds the great advantage that it can indeed be generalized to all peoples everywhere. The proposition that, every human being should belong to a nation and that all nations should be equal is not a contradiction in terms, although it may well be utterly unfounded as a description of the real world (27).

The multi-form of literary criticism amid postcolonial framework has continuously consolidated the controversial definitions of nation and nationalism. Also, trying to entrap the fragmented identity as a singular and oriented unit could invoke a contentious disagreement for the reason that, various manners in which "representational binaries inscribed within nationalist discourses give the impression of being fixed but, at certain moments, are thrown into crisis or unsettled by other possibilities" (Silva 27). In an age of shifting perceptions on national and ethnic identity, destabilized borders, and nonterritorial coalitions, Ghosh strives to "call for new articulations of subjectivity; asserting that a collective identity has been fractured by nationalism" (Esplin 10).

Ghosh's conceptualization on 'nation' as past artefact, enclosed by the European museums and embedded with half-written history has its own itinerary. Social marginalization and the notion of central authority stimulated a deep impact on his thematic choices of literary narration and the voices taken up therein. Following the post-modern culture, Ghosh decentralized the dominant idea of nation and its central authority, and replaces them with 'family' and 'individual' as seen in his narrative writing. What Ghosh attempts to break free of is dominant historical perspectives, and in return, encounters struggle and conflict that is empowering. The fact that Ghosh has been able to move freely in his writing between history and fiction is also "symptomatic of the extent

to which traditional boundaries between those disciplines have themselves broken down" (Dixon 13).

Aijaz Ahmad, in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (1992), vindicates the necessity of thematic elaborations of nation in a literary discourse. According to him, it constitutes

> ...a basic summation of the fundamental dialectic - between imperialism, decolonization, and the struggles for socialism - which in my view constitutes the contradictory unity of the world in epoch. Some clarification of this issue, however generalized or abbreviated, appears to me to be the necessary backdrop against which issues of nation, nationalism, colony, empire, post-coloniality, and so on, need to be posed, in literary or any other theory (9-10).

It is in a largely post-colonial world in which nations are exposed to each other intimately and cultures become firstly more knowable and then engulfed in each other's affairs. How people handle differences - in locality, natural resources, skin colour, values, dress, language, religion - is behind much human woe, both personal and political. Understandably, then, it is the main theme in most contemporary writings. In this process, the transnational networks of different peoples - nationalities, languages, classes, religions, and ideologies - all intersect in the vast populated area of borderless nations. With a sense of the unrestrained mind, Ghosh's writings materialize from such borderless divergences from the forces within it.

The idea of nation or nation-state, according to Ghosh is a symptom rather than a cause. A nation denotes a political togetherness but it is not a state. "The belief that every

state is a nation, or that all sovereign states are national states, has done much to obfuscate human understanding of political realities" (Watson 1977). In a literary conversation with Sheela Reddy, Ghosh implies that

> The whole system of nation-states is coming under increasing strain. The rich countries are essentially more and more a single unit: Borders don't really apply. At the bottom of the scale, in countries like Pakistan and Burma, again, borders have melted away and there's a general collapse of the state. I think we are at a point where the ideal of the nation as a way of organizing society is no longer holding. (2002)

Many of the nation-states and their associated political nationalisms have been fragmenting ever since. Another dimension also comes into play. If nation-state is a Eurocentric culture, or if modernists' reinterpretation of "nation-states as international, nationalist as the ideological byproduct of nationalism" (Smith 15), where would the marginal, the remote and the rural locate their sense of belonging? "What is the alternative? Can subjectivity be formed outside the group identification?" (Esplin 8). Nationalism, in all its distinct features is "more than a collective sentiment or a discourse" (Smith 23). If it is not so, then it tends to provoke an internal tension since sentiment is a personal belief or judgment that is not founded on proof or certainty. Consciousness is the driving feature here, not sentiment.

With this backdrop of dilemmas in the structuring of post-colonial nationalism and nation, the present study will move on to discuss various forms of 'family' - a replacement of nation - in Ghosh's fictional narratives. Generally, Ghosh's fictional family is best visualized, in the words of Elleke Boehmer, as "multicultural mixing and individual

self expression" (229). The most common form of family is 'traditional family,'[2] which is the foundational institution in human society representing individual identity, shared experience, group consciousness, religious conviction, national foundation, and so on, not found in other institutions. Originally, it functions as an act of symbolic integrity due to its genealogical inheritance. The narrative discourses on "the critical theory of the family begins with self-reflection, grounding the construction of theory in the context of the contemporary situation of the family" (Poster 139). On the other hand, contemporary studies on 'traditional family' have multiple complications as Ernest Gellner reiterated, it "has always been organized in groups, of all kinds of shapes and sizes, sometimes sharply defined and sometimes loose, sometimes neatly nested and sometimes overlapping or intertwined" (53).

Family as a central theme in contemporary discourse poses a crucial issue, considering a question like: When is a family a family? Such an agenda would develop an awareness that there is no ideal type of family, and that a typical culture draws much of its strength from the diversity that each individual brings to it. On the other hand, it could also influence an individual into realizing a sense of self. There might be a possibility to generate a unifying collectivity by displacing family ties and bonds, and dislocating its nominal purposes as a social institution. Then, however, society could supersede to retain the notion of family as a group, giving up self for the whole.

The centrality of kinship and the family in nineteenth-century societies suggests that nations, otherwise states, were based on a dense network of families, i.e., the family institution. And within this scenario, the traditional family becomes the primary unit inside

the social domain and as the moral foundation of the state. Family was transformed into civil society and that civil society was the original foundation of the nation. Eventually, an individual domestic responsibility to family has been consequently defragmented by 'civic society' and the state.

Traditional family, as mentioned earlier, is also fundamental in theoretical contestations over human existence, since culture is believed to initiate from family as its central and critical position. Family performs imperative chores, which contribute to the indispensable needs of society, and helps to facilitate social arrangement. The German philosopher Gadamer has pointed out that, "We all find ourselves born into a specific family at a certain place and time that we did not choose. The character of the people and circumstances in which we find ourselves has been shaped, moreover, by past events and the cumulative interpretation of their meaning we call our tradition" (Zuckert 205). In spite of this, the living spaces of modern-oriented family appear more motley and incompatible than it looked years ago. While the institution of traditional family still exists and manages to impact human lives, the supposed spirit of 'oneness' has changed dramatically. Therefore, this further suggests reconsidering the constituency of family as being nuclearised, physical, social and psychological elements.

Contemporary definition on the exact concept of family is impossible owing to trans-cultural influences and political legitimacy. Nevertheless, the unit of family has always been a subjective term, especially with Ghosh who opines that, "Individual relations, political ambition, identity-formation, and power are regulated through the formation of the family."[3] He offers an emphasis on the family trope in his fiction that has

dual components, as social hierarchy and as a development through historical changes. Since he takes on cultural theory as well as contemporary politics, the predominant representation of family in his writings requires comprehensive analyses.[4]

The first type of family seen in Ghosh's fiction is the traditional family that signifies through kinship or blood relationship, observed in *The Shadow Lines*. Based inclusively on the post-independence era with frequent references to postwar England, the novel traverses historical and topographical boundaries through Calcutta, Delhi, Dhaka, and London between 1952 and 1979. Since the narrator switches from one family story to the other, the narration conveys the complex interconnections amongst diametrical cultures. The narration also shows the inevitable conflicts perpetuated by the vague concept of nationalism that divides the family, and thereby threatening its survival. The first category of this family preserves a strong sense of generic boundaries and wholeness imposed by historical situation and modern destiny. And yet, their social existence has been challenged periodically by means of caste disputes and communal violence. Naturally, this type of family cannot escape the insulation from the surrounding communal politics.

The Shadow Lines is the story of the traditional family and friends of the nameless narrator, who grows up in a Bengali middle class family in Calcutta. The protagonist, as a young boy, seldom gets to travel farther than his school. And yet his world spans far beyond, across continents in which the past, present and future combine and melt together erasing any kind of line of demarcation. Thus the going away - the title of the first section of the novel - becomes coming home - the title of the second section. The story starts

thirteen years before the birth of the narrator and ends on the night preceding his return to Delhi from London, where he spent less than a year researching for his doctorate work, and it is seen that he knew London very well even before he set foot on its pavements.

The narrator creates the world vividly, borrowing colours from others, just as Ghosh did as a young boy, in his essay *The Testimony of my Grandfather's Bookcase* (1998). Tridib, the narrator's real mentor and inspirer, is the second son of his father's aunt and he uses Tridib's eyes to view a certain family in London, their house, the streets, and the panic of war. He uses his grandmother's eyes to see her life in Dhaka as a young girl, her uncle and cousins, the other side of the big house where everything was upside down. He uses his cousin Ila's eyes to view different parts of the world where she travelled, but who has seen little compared to what the narrator has seen through his mental eye.

Violence has many faces in *The Shadow Lines* even though it is all about human aspirations and utopian dreams, about nostalgia and defeat, about home and displacement. It is about helpless voices of human beings in the face of events and situations beyond their control. It is about their tenacity to accept life the way it is, although many questions remain unanswered. With the issues of ethnic nationalism and communalism in the backdrop, the traditional family in *The Shadow Lines* find themselves staggered in the whirlpool of historical changes. The complex nature of the representation of nation in this family narration, of the failures of interconnections amongst diametrical cultures, is highlighted thus by Anshuman Mondal:

> What is significant here is that communal crises are also, in the context of the Indian subcontinent, national crises; that the line that divides the nations, India and Pakistan is also a line that is constructed by communal

> difference. One is a mirror of the other, hence "looking glass border" since across that border is not an Other but rather the Self, the divided Indian Self. It is this Self across the border that renders secular Indian nationalism a failure since it has not united the Self… The formation of Pakistan and the Partition are registers of this failure of the national imagination to deal with communalism and Pakistan (East and West) becomes "Otherized" in the national history (28-29).

Ghosh narrates various forms of nation and nationalism through the effects of the main protagonist's traditional family by tracking ordinary people's confrontations, individual memory and their connections with the nature of such space. For instance, the narrator's grandmother, Tha'mma believes that "the border was a long black line with green on one side and scarlet on the other, like it was on the school atlas," (*TSL* 151). The traditional family in *The Shadow Lines* is responsive to family values despite the fact that it often ends in a form of bitter disappointment and physical wounds. Although it is beyond their control, they appreciate the ties of kinship and the continuity of family tradition in a culture that is rapidly changing and often isolating. Shared activities and shared memories continue to be the very architecture of their connection even though it transforms into a poignant ending.

In contrast, 'nuclear family,'[5] the other form of family found in some of Ghosh's novels uphold neither blood kinship nor common ancestry for its foundation. Generally, the members of his nuclear family are common folks, ordinary citizens, pavement dwellers, oppressed individuals. In fact, "they are participants and citizens of multiple, uneven, overlapping, and cross-matched worlds and discourses" (Radhakrishnan 148). Alu

and his newfound family, in the novel *The Circle of Reason*, are the prototypes of "a group of immigrants - South Asian and Middle Eastern - living in a fictitious oil-rich sheikhdom in the Gulf."[6]

The Circle of Reason is the story of the adventures of Alu, a young orphan, who is taken care of by his Uncle Balaram in Lalpukur, a village located near Calcutta. Like Saleem Sinai, the central character in Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* (1982), whose nose was so large it resembled the shape of the Indian sub-continent, Ghosh's protagonist Alu is also physically disfigured. Alu, which means potato in Hindi, is named so because of the "knots and bumps which cover his head like a huge, freshly dug, lumpy potato" (*TCR* 3). By the end of the first part of the book, the village is destroyed by a series of bizarre events and Balaram is killed. Alu survives, and rejects his uncle's absurd notions of scientific positivism. Instead, he becomes a master weaver. Weaving is symbolical in the novel and it represents hope. "Weaving is hope because it has no country, no continent. Weaving is reason, which makes the world mad and makes it human" (*TCR* 58). But why weaving? Ghosh answers this question himself:

> What could it be but weaving? Man at the loom is the finest example of Mechanical man; a creature who makes his own world as no other can, with his mind. The machine is man's curse and his salvation, and no machine has created man as much as the loom. It has created not separate worlds but one, for it has never permitted the division of the world. The loom recognizes no continents and no countries. It has tied the world together with its bloody ironies from the beginning of human time (*TCR* 55).

In *The Circle of Reason*, the nuclear family inhabits an isolated micro-world, a space created due to domestic violence and social displacement. Ghosh builds a utopian space for his characters where each member "not only tolerates but delights in their deep differences of temperament and interest because they are sufficiently committed to each other not to feel threatened by the differences" (Parekh 2008). Firm relationships are established out of their collective attitudes, which is a requirement for their social security as well since some of the characters had been driven out of India. Ranges of peculiar individuals occupy the novel as well. For instance, "Balaram at Lalpukur is obsessed with phrenology and carbolic acid; Toru-Debi, wife of Balaram, is always preoccupied with the world of sewing machines while Alu with weaving. Jyothi Das, the only character to have accompanied Alu through the three parts apart from the structural entities is called a Bird Man; Zindi herself is obsessed with Durban Tailoring House; and Professor Samuel with theories of queues" (Rao 49).

Another comparable set of fictional family can be visualized in *The Hungry Tide*, observed as the "impressionistic family" (Rollason 49) where persons of diverse cultures and personalities juxtapose an unusual social unit, a utopian congregation in the Sunderbans islands. Piyali Roy, an Indian-born American and a marine biologist; Kanai Dutt, a professional translator from Delhi; Fokir, an illiterate fisherman; Nirmal Bose, a veteran Marxist intellectual; and Kusum, who confronted the traumatic reality of displacement, all give balance to a mismatched constituent. Beyond the territory of such heterogeneity, Ghosh's novel follows, "the exploration of a vast field of human communication, testing both its possibilities and its limits as the characters seek to cross

multiple barriers - the barriers of language, religion and social class, those between human beings and nature, between traditional and cosmopolitan India, between urban and rural, between India and the wider world" (Rollason 66).

In *The Hungry Tide,* an intriguing and ambiguous family relationship exists quite different from the traditional family and nuclear family. Between *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide*, "the former is typical of family and nationalist bond, and the latter is found in 'associations' such as those modern industrial societies may create."[7] As a matter of fact, time, space and distance conceptualize their differences in an overt motion. In Ghosh's narrative fictions, as Brinda Bose states, "the diasporic entity continuously negotiates between two lands, separated by both time and space - history and geography - and attempts to redefine the present through a nuanced understanding of the past" (19). By and large, Ghosh's inherent sense of belonging facilitates his storytelling, making connection with his family history including those whose experiences resemble his own.

While discussing the framework of fictional family in Ghosh's narrative, the involvement of gendered division that is deeply rooted in human society, require reconsideration. From time immemorial, society conditions uneven platform between men-folk and women-folk in economical, political and social concerns. But, the social structuring of Ghosh's platonic family fails to recognize the impact of patriarchal influences as well as matriarchal obligation. His narrative fictions demonstrate his keenness in an individual spirit rather than conforming to gender identity. Also, this could be recognized as Ghosh's attempt in disregarding and overlooking the singularity of "gendered nation" as a dominant hegemony.

It appears that Ghosh does not feel the need to reflect on the pitfalls of representing community or family as gender factor and instead projects home and host countries as homogeneous territorial entities. For instance, Zindi, in *The Circle of Reason*, who runs a boarding house in al-Ghazira, where different nationalities coexist, is very vocal in her dealings with her wards and explains herself thus, "It's not a business; it's my family, my aila, my own house, and I look after them, all the boys and girls, and no one's unhappy and they all love me" (181). Interestingly enough, the rickety boat *Mariamma*, which is taking Alu, Zindi, Professor Samuel, Karthamma and others to al-Ghazira as migrant labourers, is called as Mariam which is the South Indian name for Mary since *Mariamma* means Mother Mary, which includes 'amma' (and 'amma' is 'mother' in Tamil), its analogy to Zindi as the maternal figure can also be seen.

On the other hand, the crucial foundation of family, especially in the subcontinent, plays a pivotal role towards nation formation. Neluka Silva states that

> The presence of a dominant father figure and the secondary, nurturing role of the mother symbolize the power structures within the Nation. However, the nuclear family structure in South Asia, like the concept of Nation itself, can be termed as catachresis. It was originally a Western import and is fraught with ambiguities and contradictions and competes with the traditional, established presence of the joint family structure in South Asia. There is a mismatch between the patriarchal gender divisions of the nuclear family and the nexuses of power in the joint family structure, nationalist movements, often by virtue of their violence and chaos, disrupt, fracture and dislocate the family unit (31).

Though the reality might be different, as depicted above, literary discourse on nuclear family has a far more signifying impact. Concerned with the issues of exile and migration, *Sea of Poppies* begins its narration from the Calcutta of British India and its characters from various walks of life, who board the Ibis that heads for Mauritius, shape Ghosh's invented community. In one sense, the Ibis acts as the symbolic representation of colonial dominants, and to Ghosh the ship becomes an ideal backyard to nurture his fictional community while providing the multiple voices from disparate locations. Distinct characters that make the possibility of this narrative background also shape a sense of organic community. Neel Rattan, former Bengali zamindar; philosophical Deeti, upper-caste woman; Kalua a Dalit and Deeti's second husband; the orphaned French lady Paulette Lambert on her search for roots; the Bengali boy Jodu, a Muslim lascar; an American mulatto Zachary Reid, the ship's second-mate; Ah Fatt, the Chinese-Parsi convict; and a virtuous accountant Baboo Nob Kissin. The Noah's Ark type "Ibis represents at once an intriguing clash and an amalgamation of cultures. Identities are left behind, secrets are spilled, and bonds are forged as the ship makes its journey out of Calcutta" (Padmanabhan 11).

In *Sea of Poppies,* the fluid identity illustrated in the various characters is noticeable as they conceptualize the variety of transterritorial context into a transcendent reality. With the help of historical evidences, Ghosh's cross-cultural characters merge with the possibility of borderless activity and interaction. While construing the potentiality of transnational course, Willem Van Schendel observes that

> The literature on the nation in South Asia recognizes the interplay between national identities and sub-national identities - based on religion, language, region, and ethnic group - but pays scant attention to the interplay between national and transnational identities (143).

At this juncture, instead of trying to fortify the nuclear family as a sign of civilization and modernity, an attempt to understand the dynamic structure of nuclear family in the context of modern civilization could be more significant. In addition, one must understand its significant contribution in the formation of the much-debated 'globalization,' a contemporary usage for modern civilization. The fragmented 'nuclear families' in a natural pattern of human displacement reenact the very idea of globalization, otherwise literally known as 'transnationalism.' In the midst of this argument, it is also important to note, "Representations of displacement function as powerful tropes in the cultural production of modernism" (Kaplan 28) and Ghosh in like manner, has been able to invent his own powerful tropes of displacement and the voices that they echo.

Ghosh's writings are apolitical on his translated world, and deliberately contain the caste-based sociocultural marginalization. Such differences, which are generated by social inequity, has found a place within the 'national' and 'transnational' sphere as observed in *The Glass Palace*. Rukmini Bhaya Nair notes,

> Ghosh's characters, in this most capacious of his fictions, literally include both kings (Thebaw, Queen Supalayat, the Burmese princesses) and commoners (Dolly, Rajkumar, Saya John, Uma) but what unites them all is the inescapable narrative of colonial displacement. Buffeted about by the gale-winds of history, these protagonists are driven from Burma to India, Malaya, Singapore and back again (162).

Hence, Ghosh's multiple interests in history, politics, religion, family, relationship and sexuality help him to provide imaginative interpretation of reality. His narratives have shifted the settled space of traditional community and nation, to that of crossing political and cultural perimeters. Though nation may be imaginable, the kind of family projected in place of nation in his inventive story telling is always "conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship which has the ability to rouse unlikely peoples in dramatically unlikely conditions in an impassioned chorus of voluntary co-operation and sacrifice" (Yahya). This 'unlikely people' therefore, has a mystifying impact towards the 'unlikely' formation of nuclear family.

"Family saga,"[8] based on the firm ground of an extended family, intertwines *The Glass Palace* with the backdrop of international turmoil "during a period of history both harrowing and exciting, the interaction between three families: of Dolly and Rajkumar in Burma, of Uma and her brother in India and of Saya John - Rajkumar's mentor - and his son Matthew in Malaysia" (Nair 167). The novel voices the multiple and complex personalities Ghosh creates and the meaning of historical evolution in all its manifestations and the compelling interaction between human, social, animal, environmental, and even economic relationships. Apprehending various predicaments, Ghosh, through the life of his central protagonist Rajkumar, reconstructs traditional nation building, by substituting it with a replica of the 'nuclear family':

> Symbolic as well as real orphan-hood implies that he has to *invent* a family where none exists; he has to build lasting bonds of trust with strangers. Structurally, that is, the *un*folding of this novel is associated with the *en*folding of family and friends around the central character. […] he has to

> make sense of the 'exit-tential' conundrum that plagues all individuals who cross, for one reason or another, the well-defined lines of 'national identity' and 'family genealogy' (Nair 166).

Rajkumar, having "survived the killer fever that had emptied so many of the towns and villages of the coast" (*TGP* 14) of Chittagong, including his own family, rises from homeless kid in Mandalay to a successful businessperson in Rangoon. The kind of cross-cultural encounters and migration Rajkumar confronted during his early years in Mandalay were with "envoys and missionaries from Europe; traders and merchants of Greek, Armenian, Chinese and Indian origin; labourers and boatmen from Bengal, Malaya and the Coromandel coast; white-clothed astrologers from Manipur; businessmen from Gujarat" (*TGP* 16), a mixture of people Rajkumar had never seen before. And, under such a turbulent surface it is not surprising to find "members of caste, religious community or nation being described as members of an extended family" (Pandey 415) in *The Glass Palace*.

The family as a social institution has been regarded as an essential entity for the development of an individual, state and society. The pattern in each family is unique, that each family develops myths, rituals, a shared view of the outside world, mutual definitions of each other, and which in return effectively individualize the family. The function of the traditional family is no more natural than its concept since it changes and shifts in relation to social and economic developments. As such, human activity became the basis for the modern concept of family. Based upon this purview, Ghosh seems to reiterate that the family should be modeled, before anything else, as the symbol of human entity,

> What you do is you make your family your nation, your domain of autonomy. That's where you locate your individuality, your sovereignty (Aldama 2002).

Thus, it is established that Ghosh locates 'nuclear family' at the center of his reinvented narrative space, while, at the same time, paying less heed to the traditional system of bonded family. Almost every form of familial relationship - whether it is between social community and extended family, or whether contained by genealogical family - customary practices have limited space in his meta-narration. The notion of infinite spaces impact Ghosh's narration:

> The extended family, the basic unit of the Indian society, the very archetype of our social fabric has served as the bedrock for representing national identity. In the post-modern context, however, it would be a misnomer to use family in this sense. Ghosh would rather employ it to examine the fractured identities of the displaced Indian diaspora, the inhabitants of what has now been termed the 'third space'. [9]

And it follows that Ghosh, whose fictional families spill over and spread beyond the borderlines of several nations, visualizes borders as shadowy and illusionary. He clarifies his approach thus:

> Many of my books, if not all of my books, have really been centered on families. To me, the family is the central unit, because it's not about the nation. Families can actually span nations between what are now many different nations, so it's absolutely not about a nation or one nation or whatever. The fact that it has been structured around the family is absolutely essential to its narration because the nation is not, as it were, the central imaginative unit (Aldama 2002).

On the boundary line of differences and similarities of disparate ethnic and biotic communities, the 'nuclear family' according to Ghosh deems to accommodate transnational relationship. To accomplish the task, he provides relationships among characters who are not blood-related, and thus illustrates the existence of a larger brotherhood of humankind.

While evaluating the concept of family, it seems that family has different and changing meanings. To Ghosh, it seems that, home has a deeper attachment than whatever nation stands for. Based on the perspective of diasporic discourse, the idea of home has been eliminated, since contemporary critics, especially postmodernists have estimated diaspora as home in itself. This seems to contradict with interpreting the works of Ghosh who is more preoccupied with a fixed notion of 'home.'[10] However, 'a fixed notion of home' need not inevitably connote a fixed location or ancestral home. In his narrative fictions, home is representational and oftentimes interpreted in a form of individual consciousness. His purpose is to translate "home and the world as collaborative rather than competing realities" (Black 45). Even though home has been constructed as a source of identity and as an essential social order, his theory on home has closer linkage to utopia imagining rather than concrete arrangement.

Moreover, the natural events of displacement dismiss return to the traditional family value, or might succeed through psychological imagination alone. What is more important is the nature of relationship with the current form, and with values essential for survival. The desired values noticed in Ghosh's nuclear family are autonomy, self-development, a desire to overcome obstacles, a curiosity about how things work and a

desire to seek perfection, even if it can never really be achieved. Though seemingly clear, John Thieme affirms that, "Ghosh is not only at pains to demonstrate the porousness of geographical borders, but also the artificiality of a range of binary categorizations of culture and areas of the human psyche" (257).

Social categories such as individual responsibility, civil society, family unit, primary unit, central authority, and so on, encouraged political marginalization in people's lives and were therefore not fully representative. Treating nuclear family as unified individual anatomy and as socio-political axis, Ghosh on purpose centralized Alu in *The Circle of Reason*, the grandmother in *The Shadow Lines* and Rajkumar in *The Glass Palace*. These central figures in each narratives, according to Prusse "are migrants who can afford to move across borders (though sometimes they are also forced to do so by circumstances): for Rajkumar, migration is the initial instrument and opportunity to acquire wealth" (Prusse 11). For instance, Rajkumar was "in a way, a feral creature, unaware that in certain places there exist invisible bonds linking people to one another through personifications of their commonality. […] He reserved his trust and affection for those who earned it by concrete example […] once earned, his loyalty was given wholeheartedly" (*TGP* 47). Therefore, Ghosh's substantial framework sees individuals as a dynamic moral of disposition and powers, and humankind as a dialectical balance, and reiterates:

> In the end it's about people's lives; it's about people's history; it's about people's destinies. When I write nonfiction, I'm really writing about characters and people, and when I'm writing fiction, I'm doing the same thing. And in the end my real interest is in the predicament of individuals.

> And in this I don't think there is that much difference between fiction and nonfiction (Aldama 2002).

The animated composition of community in Ghosh's narratives function as family relations without any social and political hindrances, despite the fact that his characters are the frequent victims of marginalization, displacement and state violence. So the communities that we see in Ghosh's novels are not static communities but communities on the move, and since "nation is so permanently "unhomed"" (Pandey 415), evoking of the 'third space' by Ghosh in his narratives could be one way of projecting himself as a writer without borders.

Endnotes.

1. John Mee. "'The Burthen of the Mystery': Imaginations and Differences in *The Shadow Lines*" in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. p. 99. Also see Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London/New York: Verso, (1983) 1991. p. 25.
In an interview with Anderson, titled "Likes Nationalism's utopian elements," (2005) Lorenz Khazaleh annotates; "one of the main points in Anderson's book is that Nations are imagined communities. Imagined because never - not even in the smallest Nations - can one know all the members of the Nation. A Nation is, in a manner, a Utopian community. Anderson attaches importance to modern communication, by way of books, the telephone and more recently radio and TV, as a condition for the existence of a National community. How could we otherwise even know about each other?" See "Interview with Benedict Anderson about Nationalism and globalization." 5 January 2007 <http://www.culcom.uio.no/aktivitet/anderson-kapittel.html>.

2. Lorna Dils suggest that "the regular portrayal of 'traditional family' in literature, stands as an institution of the past, could be baffling with it existence." See Lorna Dils, "Cultural Diversity: The American Family - Past, Present, and Future" in *American Family Portraits Vol. V*. Bryan J. Wolf, ed. Yale: Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, 1990. 23 February 2007 <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1990/5/90.05.01.x.html>.

3. "The family, enshrined as the fundamental unit of society, is assigned a metonymical value and the nuclear family in particular is projected as the microcosm of the Nation."
See Neluka Silva. "Critical Moments: Nationalism and Gendered in South Asia" Introduction. *The Gendered Nation: Contemporary Writings from South Asia.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004. p. 30-31.

4. According to Chaim Gans, there are two set of families undivided with the concept of nation and nationalism: "The term 'nationalism' is even more complex, for it is the surname not only of one family of ideas, but of two. One family is that of *statist nationalism*. According to this type of nationalism, in order for states to realize political

values such as democracy, economic welfare and distributive justice, the citizenries of states must share a homogeneous national culture. The second family is that of *cultural nationalism*. According to this nationalism, members of groups sharing a common history and societal culture have a fundamental, morally significant interest in adhering to their culture and in sustaining it across generations." See Chaim Gans. *The Limits of Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. p. 7.

5. The term 'nuclear family' developed in the western world to distinguish the family group consisting of parents (usually a father and mother) and their children, from what is known as an extended family. 'Nuclear families' can be any size, as long as the family can support itself and there are only parents and children (or the family is an extended family.) According to *Merriam-Webster* the term dates back to 1947 and is therefore relatively new, although 'nuclear family' structures themselves are not. 28 June 2009 <http://www.bookrags.com/nuclear_family>.
Sociologists emphasize that biology is not sufficient for understanding family forms and insist that it is also necessary to examine how the 'nuclear family' is shaped by ideological, political, and economic processes. 28 June 2009 <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O88-familynuclear.html>.
Definition on family has a subjective term. The *Chambers Dictionary* and *Oxford Thesaurus* offer different and sometimes contradictory definitions, for example: nuclear family, extended family, clan, tribe, offspring, dynasty, all those who live in a household (such as parents, children, servants, etc.) were considered family. According to Cynthia Hoffman, family only intersects with nation through one alternative meaning: tribe. See Cynthia Hoffman, et al. "Family and Nation" Introduction. *Bad Subjects* 67 (2004): 3.

6. Amitav Ghosh. "No Greater Sorrow: Times of Joy Recalled in Wretchedness." Speech on the Second Millennium Lecture, ICES, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 29 July, 2001. The Second Millennium Lecture has been renamed Neelan Tiruchelvam Millennium Lecture Series. 10 August 2008 <http://www.icescolombo.org/event2.htm>.

7. Martin Cohen. *Political Philosophy: From Plato to Mao*. London/Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press, 2001. p. 158.
Cohen explains: "In the west, there is a popular perception that the conventional patriarchal family is the defining model of the family, and hence of the state too. Yet it is not necessarily so. Plato [...] thought that children should be brought collectively [...] whilst Rousseau specifically argued against the nuclear family as reducing individual freedom and encouraging laziness." See p. 196.

8. John Thieme neutralizes *The Glass Palace* as a 'family saga.' See "Amitav Ghosh" in *A Companion to Indian Fiction in English*. Pier Paolo Piciucco, ed. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004. p. 250.

9. M.S. Nagarajan. "Essays in Criticism." *The Hindu* 6 Apr. (2003): 3.
The 'Third Space' is a term originally coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg in his book, 'The Great, Good Place.' (See "The new oases." *The Economist* 10 April 2008) It has been used in the concept of community building to refer to social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home and the workplace. Oldenburg argues that 'third places' are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place. Subaltern critic, Homi Bhabha's 'Third Space' is an in-between space - within and between the fissures of colonial rule - where resistance can be enunciated and where hierarchies between cultures, colonisers and colonised become untenable. See Alison Blunt; Jane Wills, eds. "Decolonsing Geography: Postcolonial Perspectives" in *Dissident Geographies: An Introduction to Radical Ideas and Practice*. London: Prentice Hall, 2000.

10. Mishra comments, "If these prenationalised diasporas had a homeland referent at all, it was usually a village or a locality, a city or a family, but never the politically managed macro territory captured by the idea of a nation-state." See Sudesh Mishra. *Diaspora Criticism.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. p. 108.

Works Cited.

Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Aldama, Frederick Luis. "An Interview with Amitav Ghosh." *World Literature Today* 76.2 (2002)

Aloysius, G. *Nationalism without a Nation in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Black, Shameem. "Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 41.3 (2006).

Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Bose, Brinda. *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Dixon, Robert. "The Writing of Amitav Ghosh" in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion.* Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Esplin, Greg. "Melancholic Longing in *The Shadow Lines*." *Portals: a journal in comparative literature* (2004). <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~clsa/portals/2004/esplin.html>.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of The Earth*. (trans. Richard Philcox) New York: Grove Press, (1963) 2004.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983.

Ghosh, Amitav. "Imperial Temptation." *Nation* 27 May 2002.

------- . "Confessions of a Xenophile." *Outlook* 22 December 2008. http://www.outlookindia.com/peoplefnl.aspx?pid+4282&author=Amitav+Ghosh>.

Jones, Stephanie. "A novel genre: polylingualism and magical realism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason*." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66 (2003).

Kaplan, Caren. *Question of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1996.

Kohn, Hans. *The Idea of Nationalism*: *A Study In Its Origins And Background*. New York: Transaction Publishers, (1994) 2005.

Kumar, T. Vijay. "Introduction" in *Focus India: Postcolonial Narratives of the Nation*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007.

------. "'Postcolonial' describes you as a Negative." An interview with Amitav Ghosh. *interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 9.1 (2007).

Lehmann, Sophia. "In Search of a Mother Tongue: Locating Home in Diaspora." *MELUS* 22 December 1998 <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/MELUS/1998/December/22-p567>.

Mondal, Anshuman A. "Allegories of Identity: 'Postmodern' Anxiety and 'Postcolonial' Ambivalence in Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land* and *The Shadow Lines*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 38.3 (2003).

Nair, Rukmini Bhaya. "The Road from Mandalay: Reflections on Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*" in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Neluka Silva. "Critical Moments: Nationalism and Gender in South Asia" in *The Gendered Nation: Contemporary Writings from South Asia*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004.

Padmanabhan, Mukund. "In the great story-telling tradition, a novel that celebrates the human spirit." *The Hindu* 5 July (2008).

Pandey, Gyanendra. "Notions of community: popular and subaltern." *Postcolonial Studies* 8.4 (2005).

Parekh, Bhikhu. "A Commitment to Cultural Pluralism." *DeColonizing English Language Journal* 15 November 2008 <http://powerofculture.nl/uk/archive/commentary/parekh.html>.

Poster, Mark. *Critical Theory of the Family*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1988.

Prusse, Michael C. “Imaginary Pasts: Colonisation, Migration and Loss in J.G. Farrell’s *The Singapore Grip* and *Amitav Ghosh’s The Glass Palace*.” *Transnational Literature* 2.1 (2009).

Radhakrishnan, R. *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Rao, K. Damodar. “Magic and Irony as Principles of Structure: A Reading of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*” in *Indian Fiction in English*. P. Mallikarjuna Rao, M. Rajeshwar, eds. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1999.

Reddy, Sheela. Interview. “Amitav Ghosh: Writing Through Turmoil.” *Outlook* (New Delhi) 19 August 2002. n.pag.

Robert Dixon. “Travelling in the West: The Writing of Amitav Ghosh” in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Rollason, Christopher. “In Our Translated World: Transcultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*.” *The Atlantic Literary Review* 6.1-2 (2005).

Schendel, Willem Van. “Stateless in South Asia: The Making of the India - Bangladesh Enclaves.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61:1 (2002).

Siddiqi, Yumna. “Police and Postcolonial Rationality in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*.” *Cultural Critique* 50 (2002).

Smith, Anthony D. *The Antiquity of Nations*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004.

Watson, Hugh Seton. *Nations and States*. London: Methuen, 1977. 5 July 2006 <http://tamilnation.org/index.htm>.

Yahya, Zawiah. “The Making of a Nation.” *DeColonizing English Language Journal* 8 September 2008 <http://powerofculture.nl/uk/archive/commentary/yahya.html>.

Zuckert, Catherine H. “Hermeneutics in Practice: Gadamer on Ancient Philosophy” in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. Robert J. Dostal, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

CHAPTER THREE

THE VOICES OF HOME AND UTOPIA

> "The movement I am most conscious of now is the movement of memory, shuttling between places. One place is home, the other the world."
>
> - Amitava Kumar. *Bombay, London, New York*. (220)

To address home entity as literary discourse requires a broad insight as home not only describes traditional house or place of dwelling, it also stands for cultural coded meanings. Home has always been a challenging factor to an individual when standing outside the line of demarcation. This is particularly true in the context of Amitav Ghosh's multiple characters, who are mostly the underprivileged and whose voices are seldom if ever heard. On the other hand, an attempt to locate one-self, seemingly, is natural but an attempt to construct one's home is in conflict with the postmodernist projection of 'at home in the world.' Theorized home represents a fixed centre, which is a modernist concept. The apparent challenge seen in the 'lived experiences' of various characters in Ghosh's fictional narratives for a fixed home and then replaced by their circumstances also collides with the postmodernist elimination of single-centeredness, including their fragmentation of home, family and nation. The question of home, as a result, is intrinsically linked with the way in which the processes of inclusion or exclusion have operated. The fluidity of redefining or reframing 'home' concept has widespread possible alternatives in a form of utopian representation. At this stage, it might be too early to counterbalance whether postmodernist sense of fragmentation on the central positioning of

'home' as anti-home, or whether diasporic 'at home in the world' could turn into reality.

Utopia, simply defined, is an imaginary place considered perfect or ideal, especially in its socio-political and moral aspects. According to *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, utopia derives from two Greek words, εὐτόποσ and οὐτόποσ, meaning respectively 'good place' and 'no place.' And, "utopian writings have reflected this ambiguity, being sometimes visions of good and possibly attainable social systems and at other times fantasies of a desirable but unattainable perfection" (Emerson 459). Utopianism, on the other hand is the political orientation of a utopian who believes in performing the idealistic schemes of social perfection.

The present chapter attempts to enquire into the possibilities of an achievable utopia under the normal conditions of human life. The kind of utopian forms found in *The Shadow Lines* and in *The Hungry Tide* correspond to both the reality and the literary imagination, though in a contrasting manner. The imaginative geographies found in the two fictional works mentioned, have certain ideological clashes fathoming whether utopia is 'desirable' or 'to be desired.' In other words, the multiple voices observed among Ghosh's diverse characters further demonstrate whether utopian possibility is desirable or, whether utopian reality is for the future or for an immediate outcome. It is true that utopianism is realizable collectively and individually and yet, utopian reality works differently.

The projected utopian elements found in Ghosh's writings need not necessarily reproduce the kind of utopian entity depicted in the 4th century BC Greek philosopher Plato's *The Republic*, which centers on the nature of justice in consideration of the

aristocratic ideal society, nor with Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). More's *Utopia* is a satirical account of life on the fictitious island of Utopia where the interests of the individual are subordinate to those of society at large, where all people must do some work, where universal education and religious toleration are practiced, and all land is collectively owned. In fact, More's *Utopia* is a genre between fiction and non-fiction in which human reason reaches justice and happiness that is not found in Ghosh's fictions. In Plato's *Republic*, communism had been strongly engaged in public welfare and yet it failed to function for equality, and critics denounced the "*Republic* as a dystopian nightmare bordering on totalitarianism" (Rocco 88). On the other hand, More's *Utopia* competes with the materiality of communism and holds "the world in doubt over the real nature of the utopian project."[1]

Dystopia, on the other hand, while it co-exists and co-relates with utopian characteristics, in contrast it refers to an extremely bad condition of human existence. It is also applicable in literary fiction to describing an imaginary place marked with chaotic disorder. Dystopia is the diametric form of utopia. Therefore, in this process, the value-system in dystopia discards utopian views as falsehood, under which its pessimistic view of human nature challenge any utopian hopes for the perfectibility of human kind. Dystopia aims to divert utopian idea so that "utopian dream whose realization under the nonutopian conditions of this world would do more harm than good" (Banchoff 280).

History sheds light on the consequences of utopian dreams where it ends in dystopian nightmare of communal violence and political disintegration; the transitional period of India's Partition is one such example. Utopian imagination forms a basic core for

any significant political accomplishment, implicitly yet centrally nationalist in which politicized nationalism rises out of the abyss of communalism and domination. Sensing violence as an agent of "triumphant utopianism," Ashis Nandy notes,

> Indeed, a realized utopia can be another name for terror. Most tangible utopias are a threat, not only to their detractors, but also to their own sensitive foot soldiers (91).

Apart from its violent behaviour, certain critics allege that utopia exist only in human imagination, that is to say, it can only be found 'nowhere.'[2] Based on this assumption, utopia can be found 'nowhere' or 'no-place,' indicating nothing particularly significant especially in the context of utopian reality and utopian possibility. "The best riposte," according to Gwiazda, "to those who say utopia can only be found nowhere is that, by the same token, it might also be found anywhere" (2001). Otherwise, the effort to locate utopian possibility through the multiple voices of Ghosh's characters could become contradictory if utopia is confined completely within something that exists in man's imagination as 'nowhere.'

Human imagination is not merely a daydreaming. When one speaks of utopia as a place that does not exist, or exists only as the result of the imagination, one sees it in terms of agreement or criticism of the reality at hand. Since utopia whether imagined or attempted, affects all levels of human experience, and the concept of the 'nowhere' or 'no-place' may lie within the postmodernist projection of centerless universe or even with diasporic engineered 'at home in the world.' Nevertheless, can this be accepted as true? Concerning this question, it might be useful to remind oneself that while post-modernism

destabilizes the notion of literary location, an attempt to locate the realizable utopia is not "merely a(s) foolish utopianism" (Banchoff 186).

A utopian element in Ghosh's writing, mostly in a multilingual locale, shows his personal exploration for a stabilized centre, though he openly denies it. The symbolic images of utopianism in his fiction have acquired their own history of evolution and their own narratives. The nature of utopian reality have been portrayed in *The Shadow Lines* and in *The Hungry Tide,* though projected differently, in different dimensions. The easiest way to differentiate the two narratives is by examining whether "Utopian location of idyllic societies" (Ghosh 2008) is viable through individual spirit or by collective negotiations. Also, by differentiating "the certainty of whether or not such a utopian vision, as a concrete vision, is indeed reasonable or desirable" (Rundell 305). This chapter will analyze the utopian metamorphosis in *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide* and, how the disparate voices move on along their own path and struggles.

The Shadow Lines rooted largely in the Indian subcontinent of the newly formed nation state after India's independence, spans three generations of the narrator's family, and spreads over Bangladesh, Calcutta and London. Opening in Calcutta in the 1960s, the novel portrays two families - one English, one Bengali - known to each other from the time of British India, as their lives intertwine in tragic and comic ways. The narrator travels between Calcutta and London in the early 1980s to awaken multiple stories which contains that of his grandmother Tha'mma, and his grandaunt Mayadebi, of his uncles Tridib and Robi, of his cousin Ila, and of May Price, a family friend in London. The thread of memory and imagination unites all these stories - within - stories as the novelist treats

memory as a driving force of the sequence of events. While going down memory lane, the narrator tries to inhabit a transcultural space like Tridib does, to achieve freedom and liberty in its entirety since freedom is central to every character's story in the novel.

Against the backdrop of the multiple stories about his relatives, the narrator struggles to assert a different form of belonging and motion that constructs belonging out of a painful and powerless desire. At one time, the narrator suggests that his life holds some autonomy, that everyone "lived in stories. […] Because stories are all there are to live in, it was just a question of which one you chose" (*TSL* 182). Therefore, the narrator manages to reconstruct lived geographies with great success through the narration of the others. He realizes a creative self-determination, and further attempts to replace one system of mapmaking with another that ignores geopolitical inclination. Radhakrishnan, in his work *Theory in an Uneven World* (2003) observes that in *The Shadow Lines*

> ...the critical utopian desire of Ghosh's novel insists that the world - structurally, systematically, cartographically - cannot remain the way it is if new realities are to be ushered in and celebrated. This world exists in theory, and therefore in principle and reality. The novel resolutely refuses to surrender reality to what is the 'facticity' of history (vii-viii).

Seeing Ghosh as one who "refuses to surrender reality to what is the 'facticity' of history" is understandable, since his characters and their voices contain a hidden part of colonial history, a hidden history of pain and prejudices. In fact, *The Shadow Lines*, which begins in 1939, has a strong historical origin passing through a historical timeframe that contains both the family history and an individual story to encounter with. While Europe, Asia and Africa were engaged in a bitter Second World War, the period provided the timeframe for

his fiction as his aunt went to England along with her husband and their son, Tridib. The novel graphically depicts the infamous communal riots of 1964 in Dhaka where, unfortunately Tridib lost his life. The chaotic post-partition era and the transition of the Indian subcontinent - all sustain a spot in the narrative text.

As the story moves on, Ghosh centers the narrator, Indian-born and English-educated, as an energetic teller of tales, who takes turns to contain and represent the many voices from disparate locations. The narrator traces events back and forth in time, from the outbreak of World War II to the late twentieth century, through the years of Bengali partition and violence, observing the ways in which political events encroach upon private lives. The narrator never underestimates even the smallest details of all the recounted experiences of his uncle Tridib and his free and frolicking cousin Ila. With the help of the family history and their related stories, the narrator is able to understand "the reality of space" (*TSL* 219), and he is "very much alive to the place in which he is living, and alert to the potential emergence of other places in his imagination" (Hawley 68). In due course, the narrator is able to understand the significance of one particular place and episode, which holds an important connection with other things as well. He is also able to looks toward the utopian possibility and its meaning inherent within it. At one point, he says that "I believed in the reality of space; I believed that distance separates, that it is a corporeal substance; I believed in the reality of nations and borders: I believed that across the border there existed another reality" (*TSL* 219).

The narrator is "spellbound throughout the novel with the impact that a particular place - an alleyway, a darkened living room - can have on one particular individual, while

others pass it by unscathed" (Hawley 66). On the other hand, the spiritedness of Ghosh's narrator seems to open up wider scopes of utopianism, also his spiritedness has a tendency to parallel utopias imagined and utopias attempted. However, the hypothesis of the 'product of the imagination' requires further explanation here, since it is part of the present study. Ian Almond, a post-colonial critic, expanded an outspoken view towards one's mental ability in dreaming the impossible dreams. He, while flouting the pragmatic potentiality of utopianism, remarks, "The Romantic imagination, which in *The Shadow Lines* substitutes for and competes with reality [...] is the accurate reflection of a real condition" (92).

Yet, this same critic sees a contradiction and says that "*The Shadow Lines* is more than anything else a text about the failure of the imagination. Its Romantic facade - the emphasis on memory, the power of narrative, the creation of worlds (Tridib) and selves (Ila) and even countries (the grandmother) to live in - actually conceals a very material and un-Romantic antithesis" (94). The narrator's grandmother, in *The Shadow Lines*, has entrapped herself between her birthplace in Dhaka and her descent from Hindu ancestors. Forced to flee from her ancestral home in Dhaka, she becomes an eternal refugee in Calcutta, and she "hasn't come all this way merely to indulge her nostalgia - she hates nostalgia" (*TSL* 208). And yet, she does shelter a nostalgia for her past. Her historical imagination, which shape the present story of her past and the story in which she struggled to live by, remain out of reach as it is concentrated on "their old house" in Dhaka. The narrator is able to see how the grandmother's nostalgia works.

> The Dhaka she was thinking of was the city that had surrounded their old house [...] I could see them myself, though only in patches [...] I could see

> all that, because people like my grandmother, who have no home but in memory, learn to be very skilled in the art of recollection (*TSL* 194).

In the closing chapter of the novel, the grandmother's 'historical imagination' on revisiting Dhaka in 1964, is transformed into a form that Ashis Nandy called "tangible utopias." The grandmother's ancestral house was occupied only by her uncle Jethamoshai, who is over ninety, along with a family of Muslim refugees from India. Much to her dismay, old feuds inherited in the family remain uncompromised, and utopian hopes of reconciliation turn sour. Firstly, Jethamoshai flatly refused to go with them back to India, and instead declares, "I know everything, I understand everything. […] As for me, I was born here, and I'll die here" (*TSL* 215). Secondly, the family ran into a mob, "the old man's head had been hacked off. And they'd cut Tridib's throat, from ear to ear" (*TSL* 251).

Even though the narrator has a tremendous admiration for his grandmother, the sense of hopefulness nurtured between the narrator's attitude and the grandmother's nonconformity results in an awkward relationship. The narrator reveals that, "she has spent years telling me [...] that it is everyone's duty to forget the past and look ahead and get on with building the future" (*TSL* 208). The grandmother's own projected utopian beliefs hardly affect herself, who is constantly preoccupied with her discontent of the past while "building the future." The narrator, on the other hand, "learns to distrust the dreams and ideals through which one interprets the raw data of daily experience" (Hawley 78). The point made here is that is it "only through a critical engagement with the history of the present that any utopian vision can be inaugurated" (Radhakrishnan 189). After all, it is not the 'historical imagination,' or the historicized social paradigm that results in a

successful utopian vision. Utopianism springs from one's present circumstance, and not from one's present awareness of the historical past in connection with the vision for the future. If the historical past is revertible, then it is no longer utopian vision but a "nostalgia-driven utopianism" (Attewell 28), or "nostalgic liberal-utopian hope" (Hutcheon 195).

Greg Esplin, in his review article of *The Shadow Lines*, states,

> By rejecting the melancholic longing for a false, pre-modern condition of unity, at least we now can project our utopian hopes where they belong, not lost forever in an irrecoverable past, but in our future, where we can fight for their realization (14).

Based on this assumption, a utopian vision has a tendency to reach into the future. It conveys hope from the present condition toward the future. In this belief, utopianism might not be directly viable or immediate other than in the near future.

The 'quests for meaning' on the narrator's part is a very crucial procedure since it completely overshadows the grandmother's predicament. In *The Shadow Lines*, John Mee notes that, "the ways in which people make sense of or imagine their worlds impinge on others as well as themselves" (14). The "London" part "invented" by Ila for her cousin, the narrator, is one such example. The text has shown the narrator mentioning, "we would never be free of other people's inventions [...] she had herself had once invented London for me" (*TSL* 32). However, Hawley, by criticizing Ila's metropolitan adaptation and the grandmother's open antagonism, observes that "the narrator learns to distrust the dreams and ideals through which one interprets the raw data of daily experience" (78), as mentioned earlier.

Drawing together these differences, a utopian vision can be seen to envisage social reality as part of self-creation as well. The images he has been given of England by his cousin Ila, also have not prevented him from glimpsing a different London, nor a different Thames. The narrator "went to England on a year's research grant, to collect material from the India Office Library, where all the old colonial records were kept, for a Ph.D. thesis on the textile trade between India and England in the nineteenth century" (*TSL* 13). The novelist grants his narrator the opportunity to achieve a 'tangible utopia' devoid of impediments unlike other characters encountered in the novel. Tuomas Huttunen in closely studying the narrator, asserts, "The narrator refuses to integrate received (spatial as well as temporal) versions of London (the map of the city, the details of official history, even eye-sight) and his own imaginary construction, which he considers more truthful than the others" (2004). This could imply that the narrator had the ability to integrate utopianism with the blessing from his eccentric but exceptionally intelligent uncle Tridib and his vivid descriptions. Apart from this, the narrator goes through places and location depicted in Ila's stories as he travelled, that further helps him to adapt to London unusually well. Before even reaching London, the narrator already constructs his own plan, "I wanted to know England not as I saw her, but in her finest hour - every place chooses its own and to me it did not seem an accident that England had chosen hers in war" (*TSL* 57).

Surprisingly enough, a particular episode wherein the narrator's spontaneous energy in ascertaining locations he have never visited and seen before sounds quite surrealistic. The clarity of his mental ability is one thing, his quest for an actualized utopia, which opens without any hindrances, is another.

> It was easy enough on the A to Z Street Atlas of London that my father had brought me. I knew page 43, square 2F by heart: Lymington Road ought to have been right across the road from where we were. But now that we had reached the place I knew best, I was suddenly uncertain. The road opposite us was lined with terraces of cheerfully grimy, red-brick houses, stretching all the way down the length of the road. The houses were not as high or as angular as I had expected. But still, as far as I could tell that was where Lymington Road should have been, so I pointed to it and asked whether that was it. Yes! Said Nick. Good boy: got it first time (*TSL* 58).

Utopia, originally perceived as a place of belonging, spiritual, temporal or literal, changed quite drastically through conflicting experiences of cultural otherness. In this sense, the myth which views utopianism as non-existent thus becomes unconvincing as it may be possible to find it in *The Shadow Lines* through the multiple stories and their accompanying voices - with the narrator, the grandmother and Ila - though it works out differently in each different case.

The narrator's ability to see everything minutely and clearly in unknown places is extraordinary. He is free from culture shock unlike those experienced by his mentor Tridib, his cousin Ila and his grandmother in their cross-cultural interactions with other communities. He stands far "superior to his British friends in this respect: as a member of a colonized group, he has knowledge and quite intimate knowledge at that, of the colonizer's world" (Huttunen 2004). What could this mean? It is likely that Ghosh refuses to accept any idea of dominated hybridity, as his narrator is portrayed as being free from culture shock and the narrator's attraction to unknown places is remarkable. Culture shock affects a behavioral change due to disorientation and lack of self-assurance that one may

experience while being located in an open unfamiliar culture. And, this is exactly what Silvia Albertazzi has observed in *The Shadow Lines*, as she argues that,

> ...paradoxically, the London the narrator creates in his own imagination is no less home for him that the Dhaka his grandmother has never ceased to dream of in all her years in Calcutta. To stress this point, in a much quoted scene of his novel, Ghosh shows us his narrator walking through the streets of London for the first time, and yet finding his way better than even a native: the city he had created in his imagination was so real that he has no problem in recognizing all its features in reality. Metaphorically, here the narrator is finding his way in everyday life, an ability you don't achieve once and for good, but which you learn day by day, always at the risk of experiencing the uncanny, when you lose your inner sense of direction (140).

The narrator's psychological development is not something rejuvenated while being abroad because he already has developed a key concept based on trials and tribulations marked by Tridib, Ila and the grandmother. Rooted in the narrative stance and point of view, it is ascertained that the experience of empire for the subcontinent shows it can be negotiated in many ways. Albertazzi illustrates Ghosh as conveying the hegemony of the colonial education received by the young Indian man at 'home', by representing the way Indian subjectivity is constructed through linguistic as well as other discursive shadow lines. *The Shadow Lines* can thus also be seen as a reflection of the desire to validate the postcolonial experience and to attempt a reconstruction of public history through a reconstruction of the individual history. Moreover, to place the narrator in a post-colonial situation that convey the multiple voices is an emphasis on the possibility for the colonial

histories to be told again, and from different positions. The narrator himself exclaims that,

> I was happy to be bound: whether I was alone in knowing that I could not live without the clamour of the voices within me (*TSL* 89).

Eventually, the narrator's reconciliation with 'the voices' of the past - of the storytellers - does, indeed, perform some kind of transformation by providing the feeling of consistency. The point here is that, two extreme reactions in a form of utopia attempted and utopia imagined are witnessed in the narrator's fulfillment of substantiating virtually impossible utopian sensibility. The utopian reality found in the narrator's account has more leaning towards a pragmatic approach to the extent of eliminating such assumption that utopia can be found 'nowhere' or 'no-place.' On the other hand, the narrator's sojourning that is contained by geographical and temporal constraints is observable as a visionary venture, one that is duty bound. Also, his obligatory effort appears to recover the distant and vague memories of his relatives, of their "extraordinary history" (*TSL* 37) where they lost their connections.

In the midst of all these incorporated rudiments, it seems that Ghosh has appointed his narrator to create a possible utopian image, out of individual and cultural otherness, by way of disassociating "the mystery of difference" (*TSL* 31) and being free from cultural shock. Nevertheless, such an exceptional characteristic seen in the narrator becomes problematic due to the stories of the others which controlled and directed him and which also, as he confessed, made him "trip where there was nothing to trip on" (*TSL* 18). For instance, the voices of

> Ila - in whose life, where "context had no place in her judgment" (*TSL* 82).

Mrs. Price - who "lived out in the silence of voiceless events in a backward world" (*TSL* 104).

The grandmother - who does not know "the difference between coming and going" (*TSL* 152).

Tridib - who once told him "this is our ruin; this is where we meet" (*TSL* 171).

Here, each individual lends a hand in "constructing places and identities precisely because he feels he has none of his own to impede the process" (Almond 98). This double quality is responsive in nature in bringing about the total evolution in each of Ghosh's characters. The narrator's adventure, in a similar way, is an act of fulfillment in tracing the family history and making it compact and meaningful.

In the end, what makes utopianism possible is the story - not of the successful narrator's story but in the interior of the story within the story of the narrator's story. After all, the narrator confesses, "everyone lives in a story - my grandmother, my father, Lenin, Einstein, all lived in stories, because stories are all there are to live in, it was just a question of which one you chose" (*TSL* 182). Hence, the utopian aspects witnessed in The Shadow Lines are the self-contained performances that have no part in the actualized reality, which is accomplishable and is to a greater degree more physical. His contribution towards utopianism is personalized as he acts as an envoy for such storytellers. Therefore, the kind of utopian form discussed to this point is representational and yet personal which is almost in every aspect, far removed from the utopianism seen in *The Hungry Tide.*

In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh exhibits people of divergent personalities, an American of Bengali parentage Piyali Roy (Piya), who studies dolphins and other marine

mammals, a well-educated Indian Kanai Dutt, a Delhi businessman who was called to the Sunderbans in Southern Bengal by an aunt; and Fokir, an illiterate fisherman with abounding knowledge of his own world. Ghosh literally puts to work a prototype congregation - at home in the tide country in the "rat-eaten islands" (*THT* 53) in India's Sunderbans. To locate utopianism in the islands of Sunderbans may be seen by some as utopian at best especially when one takes its catastrophic historical records. Yet, utopian hope "dominated by the human desire to improve everyday reality and create a better place on earth" (Gwiazda 2001), reverberates here in the very remote islands. The reverberation is witnessed through the multiple characters and their disparate stories, all in some way or the other, linked by or located, in the Sunderbans.

The irony is that collective utopianism could fall into dystopia because "utopias are always real for those who live by or with utopias, either as participants or as victims" (Nandy 3). Even though it is a paradoxical combination, 'desire' and 'fear' have had a larger impact on utopian projection in *The Hungry Tide*. There is a kind of free revolutionary utopia forked out of this awkward relationship as seen in "the perfect landscape" (Rai 64) of the Sunderbans. Sunderbans, "stretching from almost three hundred kilometers, from the Hooghly River in West Bengal to the shores of the Meghna in Bangladesh" (*THT* 6) is also "a province defined by its exclusion of human sociability" (Ghosh Wild Fictions).

The polarity of places in which the characters are made to live, and between which they are made to choose in order to survive, is particularly symbolical. Symbolical because a symbol of attempted survival and triumph over forces of oppression - man-made and

natural phenomenon - unfolds and echoes through the silent voices of Ghosh's characters. Moreover, Ghosh states that, "in placing *The Hungry Tide*, my own novel about the Sunderbans, squarely within domain of an environment that is peopled, inhabited and continually enriched by history, I am glad to acknowledge my debt to this other way of envisioning our relationship with the world around us."[3] His writing on the Sunderbans explores the space between cultures, and the people who inhabit that space. It has prompted competitiveness between men against the natural physical world including plants, animals and landscapes. Therefore, Ghosh's cloistered community found in the godforsaken wilderness is too important to disregard entirely. Supriya Choudhuri describes,

> Two-thirds of the Sunderbans are in Bangladesh, only one-third in India: it is a region whose fishing folk easily traverse the imaginary boundaries of the modern nation-state, crossing, as the wind and the tides take them, the mouths of the many river-channels that set up a unique turbulence of fresh and salt water washing the islands of the archipelago. (2004)

The way in which utopian possibility of a genuinely shared community in *The Hungry Tide* has been projected as it crisscrosses the politics of landscape and the meaning of belongings, is deeply rooted in the post-independence era. Majority of the characters seen in *The Hungry Tide* are either displaced refugees from Bangladesh or land squatters from northern Orissa or its neighboring places. The notorious Partition reconstructed the western portion of former Bengal Province into a part of India known as West Bengal, and the eastern portion became East Pakistan (later to be known as Bangladesh). The landlocked archipelago under the jurisdiction of the two new nations has also given rise to

some interesting viewpoints. In his research paper on "Stateless in South Asia: The Making of the India-Bangladesh Enclaves," historian Willem Van Schendel provides additional information on the significance of the present study. He reports,

> Having suffered the state equivalent of a messy divorce, the power elites of the two states became uncomfortable neighbours who could not avoid frictions over their garden fence, the borderland that simultaneously joined and separated them. The exact location of the new border itself became a point of contention. [...] The enclaves were located in this highly sensitive borderland. Their fate was tied up with the uneasy and unproductive relationship between the state elites (121-122).

The peculiar nature of state and nation formation in the 'two-step partition' directly affected "tens of millions of Indian Muslims and East Pakistani non-Muslims (Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, etc.) whose self-identification varied enormously, both between individuals and over time" (Schendel 127). The picture of chaos and confusion during this harrowing transition has a typical similarity with the fictional allegory of Saadat Hasan Manto's *Toba Tek Singh* (2007), where the narrative text juxtaposes the two nations as having failed to suffice the psychological needs of her innocent citizens. The post-colonial narrative of *Toba Tek Singh*, set in Lahore's lunatic asylum goes thus,

> As to where Pakistan was located, the inmates knew nothing. That was why both the mad and partially mad were unable to decide whether they were now in India or in Pakistan. If they were in India, where on earth was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then how come that until only the other day it was India? (10)

Despite Manto's narration that is set elsewhere, the scourge of mental conflict that discourages a common sense of belonging cannot be classified separately since the nebulous outlines take shape under the common political system. Political victims of the Sunderbans region have fared no better as "the states have created a landlocked archipelago of stateless territories inhabited by tens of thousands of individuals who are, in practice, also stateless" (Schendel 126). The hard realities of people from both camps, trapped in transterritorial politics, were being subjugated to a 'third category.' They are - people of the two nations without having any specified nation - citizens of a space without border, yet bordered by borderline in a conflict situations. Similarly, the people who flocked Sunderbans were

> refugees, originally from Bangladesh. Some had come to India after Partition, while others had trickled over later. In Bangladesh they had been among the poorest of rural people, oppressed and exploited both by Muslim communalists and by Hindus of the upper castes (*THT* 118).

The multiple voices generated out of this condition addresses the burdensomeness of historiography and geographical formation, and this chapter is confined to the Indian part of the Sunderbans. *The Hungry Tide,* to some extent is personal to Ghosh as his own kith and kin were associated with the utopian entity that this study refers to. He himself explains his connection with the vast terrain of Sunderbans thus,

> My entire relationship with the Sunderbans began with my family. I had an uncle who went there in 1947 as the headmaster of a school in a small town called Gosaba, which had been founded by Sir Daniel Hamilton. It is because of my uncle's presence there [...] it was just those connections, the sense in which you see a landscape growing within your mind. [...] It is not

> something that we can postpone or think about elsewhere; it is absolutely present within the conditions of our lives, here and now.[4]

What Ghosh tried to show underneath his parental relationship is not simply an emotional version but something humane, emanating from human consciousness. This assertion, as Christopher Rollason puts it is "an essentialist world-view, based on unexamined notions of a common humanity that may *be* seen as either enticingly utopian or dangerously naïve" (103). This argument in turn reflects certain challenges involving utopian hopes, for instance, as to whether the "notions of a common humanity" could pave the path in achieving utopian goal. Ghosh's critic John Hawley has observed the birth of utopianism in the austere world of the rickety settlement by revisiting the fictional narrative as a tale of extreme, poignant dislocation; and called it a "Ghosh-ian" theme,

> Such a setting makes an apt symbol for the ebb and flow of history and the uprooting of populations, both of which have come to be seen as "Ghosh-ian" themes. Furthermore, just as the natural tides of the area tend to obliterate the sense of permanent division between land and sea, Ghosh's characters gradually learn to recognize the transient nature of the divisions between individuals - of whatever social class (132).

Ghosh is deeply concerned with the unique aspects of the history of Sunderbans wilderness, and declares, "The strange thing is that when you look at any place closely, you discover that a place that seems empty of history is actually deeply layered" (Chronicle Interview 2005). In the novel therefore, "no place was so remote as to escape the flood of history" (*THT* 77). The sense of history intersects in Ghosh's writings often, if not all the time, and a sense of place is manifested in a form of an individual's utopian

dreams and sometimes in nostalgic behaviour. This exists in *The Hungry Tide* quite early as Hawley notes, “from the book’s opening, we already know why Ghosh has chosen such an unusual setting for this novel: the Sunderbans are presented as being borderless, a “utopia” in its original meaning of no-place, where one’s familiar markers for identity are constantly shifting” (142). Quite surprisingly, the inspiration for a utopian re-imagining in the tide country is not something hatched from literary devices but the vision of Sir Daniel Hamilton - the pioneer of co-operative movement in India.

Hamilton, a Scottish aristocrat who chose India as his second home was a Zamindar during British-India, and owned vast lands in Sunderbans, which he bought from the British government in 1903. The visionary Scotsman “came to Calcutta and joined MacKinnon & McKenzie, a company with which he had a family connection. This company sold tickets for the P&O shipping line, which was then one of the largest in the world [...] Soon S’Daniel was the head of the company and master of an immense fortune, one of the richest men in India [...] another man might have taken his money and left - or spent it all on palaces and luxury. But not S’Daniel” (*THT* 49-50).

When Hamilton passed away in 1939, his Gosaba estate was inherited by his nephew James Hamilton, who lived on the isle of Arran in Scotland and it was through the connection of Nilima’s father, which landed Nirmal a job in Lusibari at Hamilton’s school. The pivotal couple in the story - Nirmal and Nilima Bose, migrated to Sundarbans “in search of a safe haven” (*THT* 76). On their first contact with Hamilton’s islands they “had not expected a utopia but nor had they expected such destitution [...] they saw what it really meant to ask a question such as ‘What is to be done?’” (*THT* 80). Creating

connection in a place where unlikely relationships are forged, Ghosh successfully builds a multicultural community. His fiction is narrated from the perspective of his main characters, Kanai Dutt, Nilima's nephew and Piya Roy, an Indian-born American. Kanai, "a self-important, sometimes cocksure individual" (Supriya 2004) went to Lusibari to sort out a diary left by his late uncle Nirmal. Nirmal's diary contains an account of the atrocious violence on the island of Morichjhãpi, [5] and revolves around the hardships faced by Kusum, who was Kanai's childhood friend. Within this relationship appears an illiterate fisherman Fokir, the son of Kusum, who escorted Piya for her research venture on river dolphins; and his ambitious wife Moyna, a trainee nurse assigned to arrange food for Kanai. To complete this 'nuclear family,' Horen Naskor, the local fisherman, is the additional individual. Horen was not only an accidental lifesaver for Kusum from an attempted rape, but he also rescued Kanai from a life threatening storm and also helps in turning the tide for Nirmal when he introduced him to the Morichjhãpi settlement. The flow of circumstances does not end itself here and instead goes back to Nilima, the proprietor of the Badaban Trust, who, by the end of the novel has successfully persuaded Piya and Kanai to return and work for the Trust. As a result, the impression derived of this intermingling kinship as coincidental at first, becomes a systematic association subsequently. This relational tie-up serves to question whether Hamilton was the solitary figure in laying the foundation for utopianism in the fenland of Sunderbans or not.

Sir Daniel Hamilton, a man of utopian visionary had "invited impoverished people to come and populate the place, free to them on one condition - there would be no caste system, and no tribal nationalisms" (Hawley 127). The rule was impressive and simple -

no religious bigotry, no political dissident, and all the settlers have to do is to work together to reach a common good, that is, an ideal community, a "healthy society."

> People came pouring in, from northern Orissa, from eastern Bengal, from the Santhal Parganas. They came in boats and dinghies and whatever else they could lay their hands on. When the waters fell the settlers hacked at the forest with their daas, and when the tides rose they waited out the flood on stilt-mounted platforms. At night they slept in hammocks that were hung so as to keep them safe from the high tide (*THT* 52).

From time immemorial, there was nothing except forest, tigers and crocodiles in the tide country, "no people, no embankments, no field [...] mud and mangrove. At high tide most of the land vanished under water" (*THT* 51). However, these potential obstacles had not dissuaded Hamilton. He made the region priceless for human settlement and tutored the settled villagers to be self-sufficient. The villagers used to survive only on fish and honey found aplenty in Sunderbans. Hamilton not only established banking system for business transaction, the trust he launched in his name was planned to develop medical facility, to improve roadless wilderness for rural connectivity and introduce night schools for adults, homeopathic dispensaries, workshops to encourage small scale cottage industries, and agriculture.

Looking at it differently, Hamilton's civil society created a sense of uneasiness as it raised some doubtful questions on the significance of his utopian avatar. *The Hungry Tide*, according to John Thieme, "offers various visions of the possible ways in which a place can be shaped, viewing a supposedly remote region as a product of both its ever-changing physical geography and of human agency" (2009). In this view, a European

capitalist building a well-nigh Marxist utopia on one of the flood-harassed islands in Sunderbans is, without doubt, most unusual or unexpected. The question is not whether 'desire,' 'reality' or 'actuality' survived and resurrected ultimately, but more crucially, does the system work in Lusibari, Gosaba, Emilybari and elsewhere? There is logical implication when one says that conceived utopianism "creates a circumstance that is its own context, and in this sense is imaginatively available far beyond the boundaries of its location" (Ghosh 2002 283). By evaluating "an imaginary perfect society" (Harrison, Boyd 178) into a more pragmatical mode, it is possible to suggest that 'fear' was overcome by 'desire' in this situation.

People who answered the invitation of Hamilton dared to struggle against the hostile environment and predators that inhabit the tide country. Hamilton's people "mainly of farming stock who had been drawn to Lusibari by the promise of free farmland" (*THT* 79) are vulnerable to nature's dominance making their battle for survival harsher than anywhere else. In the harsh eyes of the eco-system, nature does not discriminate but rather engages each person in a fight to survive. While discussing the hostile environment, it might be helpful to know that "two of the most devastating hurricanes in human history have been visited upon the coast of Bengal [...] *that* this region will be hit by another storm is a near certainty" (Ghosh 2004 61). This assurance suggests that natural calamities do not differentiate any class structure. To put it differently, the relentlessly shifting topography of Sunderbans depicts an extended metaphor for the fluid interaction between various ways of thinking, connoting complexity and multiple structures in a utopian study.

Two things shocked the urbanized couple Nirmal and Nilima right from the first day in Lusibari. First, that Hamilton, a capitalist, had years ago succeeded in his attempt to establish a utopian community and wherein the community was empowered to look after itself. Secondly, what they saw on arrival of the present challenged them even as they witnessed Hamilton's dreams in ruins now. For them everything looked bewildering, "the realities of the tide country were of strangeness beyond reckoning [...] it was impossible to tell who was who [...] where was the shared wealth of the Republic of Co-operative Credit? Where was the gold that was to have been distilled from the tide country's mud?" (*THT* 79). As for Hamilton High School, the roof and walls was the only item left for the couple to contend with, and what they saw was "utter destitution: much had fallen into decrepitude in the last eleven years" (Hawley 127). Funds were spent for community works, rural education, and civic health, but nothing to alleviate the needs of the needy. The Hamilton Estate too was close to bankruptcy and clamped by lawsuits. In this sense, utopia is understandable in the "context of the strengths and the crises of the way of life in which it is rooted" (Nandy 3).

Nevertheless, the affection and regard that the islanders had for the visionary Scot, seen as a "deity" or "venerated ancestral spirit" (*THT* 78), still remained entrenched in their collective memory. In a sense, Nirmal and Nilima were not surprised at what they chanced upon in Hamilton's islands. Instead "it shamed them to think that this man - a foreigner, a Burra Sahib, a rich capitalist - had taken it upon himself to address the issue of rural poverty when they themselves, despite all their radical talk, had scarcely any knowledge of life outside the city" (*THT* 78). The impact was so hard-hitting that Nirmal,

being “overwhelmed, read and reread Lenin’s pamphlets” (*THT* 80) trying to find an answer for a question he could not put into words. Soon after, Nilima, who “was from a family well known for its tradition of public service” (*THT* 76), established the Women’s Union and the Badabon Trust which had become her life’s work.

Approaching his retirement, Nirmal realized that his life was slowly passing him by but that he had never fulfilled his revolutionary ideologue as desired. Being “an idealistic, Marxist intellectual in the Bengali tradition” (Rollason 89), he could not easily fathom “the thought of being associated with an enterprise founded by a leading capitalist” (*THT* 78). In the novel, Nirmal is curious about Hamilton’s rural program as he stresses that, “what Hamilton had done there was one vital aspect of difference: this was not one man’s vision. This dream had been dreamt by the very people who were trying to make it real” (*THT* 171). He disagrees with the idea of a single utopia or the concept of one-world. A unified utopia, according to him corroborates the political dichotomy, an attitude of domination between the oppressor and the oppressed. The concept of ‘one vision’ is somewhat impossible as already discussed in the context of the Sundarbans, which has India and Bangladesh as part of its geography. A hardheaded Nirmal, brought up in Bangladesh, seems at first to disregard the notion of imaginative utopian dreams in the Morichjhãpi context where the realities are life threatening and unpredictable, where he believed that a cooperative utopian community could not be imagined outside the material conditions, especially when it came to the kind of Hamilton’s utopian dreams.

The question, however, is whether such “utopia is essentially progressive? Can dreams be productive?” (Gwiazda 2001). What has changed Nirmal’s consciousness is the

spatial craft of ‘dreams,’ because what he has encountered in Hamilton’s blueprint was nothing but dreams. Because, for him, the present circumstance is central and urgent more so than what will be materialized ‘later on,’ as the government had already taken steps to wipe out settlers in Morichjhãpi. He argues that, what Hamilton “wanted was no different from what dreamers have always wanted [...] of a place where men and women could be farmers in the morning, poets in the afternoon and carpenters in the evening” (*THT* 53). Eventually though “the idea of utopia, as conceived by the visionary Hamilton and hankered after by Nirmal, always runs the risk of eliding the concrete historical realities of class” (Rollason 88).

Although currently the term ‘dreams’ usually refers to a state of mind characterized by abstraction and release from reality, and centre upon the future, “dreams come easy in this magic land” according to Alok Rai who further emphasizes that,

> What is at play in Nirmal’s notebook is the contrast between the utopian impulse that prompted the initial “colonial” settlement of the Sunderbans by Daniel Hamilton in the ‘20s, and the subaltern-utopian motivation that underlay the appropriation of Morichjhãpi island by doubly displaced Bangladeshis in 1979. Hamilton’s is a sort of “Nehruvian” ambition, to make a place where people would shed their atavistic baggage of custom and prejudice and avail of the blessings of modernity. Nature and bureaucracy soon grind that into the mud, because of course there is little dust in the Sunderbans [...] Dreams are soon dead, too - in this nightmare land (64).

To Nirmal, the materiality of a utopian dreamscape for the “blessings of modernity,” has lesser impact since an opportunity of immediate relief, in other words ‘free revolutionary

utopia' is what compelled him towards the refugee settlement in Morichjhãpi, which is a tiger reserve. To clarify the theoretical grounding on the sociological notion of 'free revolutionary utopia,' it appears that "all revolutionaries, regardless of sex, are the smashers of myths and the destroyers of illusion [...] always died and lived again to build new myths [...] of a utopia, a new kind of synthesis and equilibrium" (Kelley 148). That the utopian ideal in a real world and in a real situation, both physical and concrete, is ever insecure and threatened by subjugation and destruction is what Nirmal seems to realize. The conflicting sense of duty prevails over his sense of ethics, because,

> The needs lie in the present - and because a utopia survives and dies within the minds of men and not in the pages of a scientific treatise - the creative and destructive powers of a utopia, too, are mostly located in the present" (Nandy 3).

To predict the future one needs to understand all the forces and aspects of the present, to shape changes and events in the future.

Nirmal became strongly motivated on his visit to the refugee encampment in Morichjhãpi and indeed baffled as the reality slowly unwinds before him. Instead of discovering "untidy heaps of people, piled high upon each other", he ran into "the birth of something new, something hitherto unseen" (*THT* 171). In order to live their dream, the refugees occupying the island of Morichjhãpi, through sheer hard work and determination, "set up a self-sufficient village - Netaji Nagar'" (Gupta 148). Nirmal was impressed with the systematic coordination in the hamlet and comments "I, an ageing, bookish schoolmaster, should live to see this, an experiment, imagined not by those with learning and power, but by those without! [...] Because I want to have some part in what is

happening here. I want to be of help" (*THT* 171). He recognizes a just cause worth fighting for the settlers - the Bangladeshi refugees - his own people - "the poorest of rural people, oppressed and exploited both by Muslim communalists and by Hindus of upper castes" (*THT* 118). Despite the fact that this people ignore and invoke the wrath of the state authority who warned them of eviction, they take a firm stand to stay put, "because they feel less unwanted, less of a burden, there than anywhere else" (Taras 2006).

Ironically, the sense of reality starts to weigh upon the wretched refugees, who were anxious to survive the odds of a harsh life. A positive image could not develop through the eyes of the state authority, and, as a matter of fact,

> A strategy was planned to 'cleanse' Marichjhanpi, which translated into evicting refugees by means of violence. Before launching into action, the CPI-M had to construct a rationale for it. Its slander campaign began against Netaji Nagar and its inhabitants. Unfounded, dark rumours began circulating about shadowy CIA agents active on Marichjhanpi. Soon the peaceful habitat was metamorphosing the public imagination, into a land teeming with foreign aided and abetted conspirators. Whipping out the Reserve Forest Act, the government accused Netaji Nagar settlers of encroaching upon reserved forest land (Gupta 148).

Out of their intense engagement with the government threat, Nirmal "finds a strong utopian strand in their endeavour, in this attempt by the dispossessed to possess something of their own" (Rollason 88). Broadly speaking, the refugees in Morichjhãpi were in harmony with their natural habitat and dwelled on communist principles customary during that period - of abolishing private ownership while favouring collectivism. Nevertheless, their particular island came under the authority's purview and the government deemed it

compulsory to eliminate the settlers, resulting in a massacre. The people of Morichjhãpi fail to gain ground since they are at the mercy of the law-enforcers. They were scripting their own revolutionary obituary since all their efforts were destined to be, sooner or later destroyed. The chance to succeed is slim in this inhospitable environ, and Nirmal

> ... thinking of the necessity that compels the refugees to clear the forest and till the land on Morichjhãpi, as of the honey-collectors and woodcutters who go into the forest and are eaten by tigers and crocodiles, also asks a question central to the novel's concerns: whose is this land, nature's or man's? It is a question that cannot be answered, not even by the idealizing solution of co-existence [...] Nirmal is overcome by the very effort of posing the question (Supriya 2004).

Nirmal, with an element of pathos, could not construe with the wide privilege granted to Hamilton for his rural experimentation while an order of eviction were shown to displaced people in Morichjhãpi "who have nowhere else to go"(*THT* 214). What Hamilton had done occurred decades ago, yet Nirmal contends, "What was the difference then? Were the dreams of these settlers less valuable than those of a man like Sir Daniel just because he was a rich shaheb and they impoverished refugees?" (*THT* 213). The deep-rooted feeling of helplessness in him was no less painful than the sense of betrayal of the oppressed people who were driven by the desire to better their collective living conditions. 'Temporary' because, there is an air of uncertainty everywhere. Even with all their preparation for improvement in order to tackle the police force, it is inevitable that their fate does not stand a chance in the eyes of the state administration. The coming of this inevitability is not what ails him most, but the manner in which Hamilton received

benediction from "Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Thakur and many other *bujuwa* nationalists" (*THT* 52) to build a model place for India.

Surprisingly enough, Nilima is frustrated with the "impossible" task and obsession of her husband, Nirmal "who wears unsettlement as a kind of lifestyle apparel" (Saswat 180). To her, settlers in Morichjhãpi were nothing but "squatters." She is indifferent towards them and alleged that, "those people are squatters; that land doesn't belong to them; it's government property. How can they just seize it? If they're allowed to remain, people will think every island in the tide country can be seized. What will become of the forest, the environment?" (*THT* 213). However, her argument and her plea do not move Nirmal. To clear out human habitation in the name of environmental protection belies "Nirmal's eminently Bengali brand of Marxism" (Rollason 89). Since he could not elude the environmental issues and concerns in exchange of humanitarian rationale, he countered Nilima with a voice that compels attention, "If you care for the environment, does that mean you don't care about the plight of human beings, especially impoverished people?" (Ghosh Chronicle Interview). Here, Nirmal's argument on human settlement juxtaposes 'need' versus 'greed.' Because, to justify 'environmental security' one must consider that modern development and the expansion of commercial enterprise often resulted in a form of an ecological disaster. To understand the 'environmental security' better, Ghosh writes,

> The limitation of political action, in turn, is that it cannot generate the imaginative resources that are necessary to a re-thinking of the human relationship with nature. And yet new policies will be impossible without such a re-thinking (Wild Fictions 2005).

Nirmal recognizes, sadly enough, that a vain battle was being fought. In spite of this, Nirmal is committed to his dreams having been influenced by Hamilton through the span of time, and he in turn, through his daily records is destined to influence the attitude of Kanai. Tragically enough, Nirmal's utopia meets with a dystopian conclusion and ends in poignant tragedy.

> The vexed issue of social class barriers [...] the failed popular revolt [...] creation of a short-lived community in the Sundarbans with visible utopian-rationalist features, and the bloody retaliation of the authorities [...] utopia cannot and does not last: it is brutally repressed by the government forces [...] and in its aftermath Kusum is killed, while Nirmal, whose journal ends at the moment of the repression, having got mixed up in the events loses his sanity and dies soon after (Rollason 93).

Coming to Nilima, she is not only "a real personage on the island"(*THT* 14) but also "legendary for her persistence - her doggedness and tenacity had built the Badabon Trust into what it was, an organization widely cited as a model for NGOs working in rural India" (*THT* 19). Critics view her as the practical partner of the marriage and her pragmatic conviction as the compulsion that compels her to establish a charity trust and health facilities, which reciprocally created a scenario of hope to many hopeless lives. As Saswat Das comments, "she is entirely rooted in her socio-cultural milieu, which she has only partly created and yet which she owns wholly by encompassing a section of humanity within it" (181). As a matter of fact, her staunch reaction against the revolutionary enthusiasm shown by her husband Nirmal, and her unwillingness to provide medical aid for the "squatters" suggest her to be a loyal, patriotic, hardworking citizen. As the

authority planned a campaign to dislodge the settlement in Morichjhãpi, and warned all with dire consequences if caught offering a helping hand to the specified settlers, Nilima in her typical practical approach to life "had the hospital and the Union to think of: she could not afford to alienate the government. She had to consider the greater good" (*THT* 122).

While she had the upper hand to challenge and resist Nirmal's futile objective in Morichjhãpi, Nilima's conviction that considers her interest as "the greater good" above anything else, is quite extraordinary. Visibly, the maintenance of her "more pragmatic hospital-centred Development Trust" (Thieme 2009), was orderly beyond measure - "spotlessly clean," "well equipped" with residential doctors. Apart from this, the hospital was quite well-known in providing health care "at a nominal cost, a standard of care [...] the growth of a small service industry around the hospital [...] tea-shops, guest houses" (*THT* 132). While the hospital transforms itself into the major services provider for the island community in Lusibari, it is vital to acknowledge Nirmal's input and his methodical "contribution to the hospital: a large ward specially equipped to withstand cyclones" (*THT* 133).

Then where shall one locate "the more robust and enduring social activism of his wife, Nilima?" (Supriya 2004). Without having and without holding any history on medical profession except "tradition of public service," her running a health institution in a remotest corner is indeed remarkable. After encountering Hamilton's exhausted utopian model for the first time in Lusibari, the initial reaction seen in Nilima's case deserve citing: "Nilima, ever practical, began to talk to the women who gathered at the wells and the ponds" (*THT* 80). Since nothing is permanent in the tide country, the initiative taken

up by Nilima, in establishing the Badoban Trust reflects to some extent, her ignorance on the subject of cyclonic windstorm, as if, “Lusibari was the one place where history would not repeat itself” (*THT* 133). It would be appropriate to reconsider Nilima’s utopianism, in the form of her health society which offers the local community the hope of a better world, as political and national vision. Whatever Nilima might achieve and reap by applying her sympathetic trust, it stems from the seeds implanted by Hamilton. Naturally, to address Nilima’s ‘small new world’ as a replica of Hamilton’s utopia is not too suggestive yet, in either case, one can view it that way for a critical evaluation. As mentioned earlier, “the most obvious common feature in the utopian socialists’ transformative projects was the belief that a society based on harmony, association, and cooperation could be established through communal living and working” (Newman 7). Based on this speculation, one thing certain is that Nilima successfully achieves a great deal in a place where Hamilton stumbled, and which Nirmal fails to accomplish at Morichjhãpi.

Both Nirmal and Nilima take pains to cultivate their abstract thought and both attempt to workout human values they have collided with within their own devoted spaces. And the difference between them is while one “want*s* to stay on the right side of the government” (*THT* 214), the other saw fit to cross that line. One is the shadow at the outset, but as the tide interchanges, the shadow ascends to shed the light. In short, while Nilima has enough patients to occupy her services, Nirmal on the other hand though strongly motivated and driven by his own interest, is working against a limited time frame even as he spent his days in Morichjhãpi. Nevertheless, to differentiate the differences between the couple by featuring one as a ‘saint,’ and the other less so does not do justice.

Against this backdrop, where shall one locate utopian imagined or utopian attempted - in Nirmal's short-lived Bangla community of Morichjhãpi or with Hamilton's shamble model of a rural community? If Nirmal attempts to assist the inhabitants of Morichjhãpi into "a safe haven, a place of true freedom for the country's most oppressed" (*THT* 191) turned successful, the historical massacre in Morichjhãpi would not have happened. And if Hamilton's pre-independence utopian estate remained firm and steady even after his departure, Nilima need not "talk to the women who gathered at the wells and the ponds" (*THT* 80), and might not pace ahead for her rural health mission. It is true that the human sense of place has been strongly inter-webbed in *The Hungry Tide*; free of cultural diversity and social order (with Ghosh's main characters only) in the ever-changing tide prone Sundarbans.

While trying to apply the "Ghosh-ian" framework, Hawley infers, "in setting the book in this very strange spot, Ghosh has found a metaphor that represents an erasure of the border between what is familiar and what is uncanny" (138). In extension to this perception, the kind of visual representation witnessed in Nirmal, can be an example, when he uttered in desperation: "Who was I? Where did I belong? In Kolkata or in the tide country? In India or across the border? In prose or in poetry? [...] Where else could you belong, except in the place you refused to leave?" (*THT* 254).

In speaking of the limitation of geographical space, "virtual space is regarded as potentially utopian space" (Gwiazda 2001). Therefore, it would be no overstatement to imply that, in spite of everything, by cross mixing the context of 'real,' 'ideal,' 'desire' and 'fear' Nirmal concludes, "A place is what you make of it" (*THT* 283). Even though,

The Hungry Tide offers no plausible solution at the end, Saswat comments that "the idea of home is sustained; both through fixity and ceaseless negotiations in space [...] specific location can be called "home" as long as one lives there" (182). And this is "the kind of attachment that Nilima experiences for her location" (Saswat 183), which is none other than Lusibari, the place which silhouettes her destiny. The "figure of maternal nurture" (*THT* 22) and the intellectual stamina seen in Nilima have ignited positive reactions in both Piya and Kanai - a sense of purpose - by returning from their urban place to spend time with her. Having procured further funding for her research on the river dolphins, Piya returns and begin to address Nilima's house her "home" (*THT* 399), suggesting that to her 'home' is wherever she could study the Orcaella dolphins. As for Kanai, he "recognizes the pull of the Sundarbans, and returns" (Hawley 141) to write "the story of Nirmal's notebook" (*THT* 399).

So the novel moves towards its end as "all characters leave to find something, and all departures imply a return, all separations a reunion" (Albertazzi 2000 138). The fundamental principles forked in the characters of the narration through their human emotions, physical devotion, inner pride and moral conviction have enough strength in fulfilling the authentic utopian scenario. To summarize the perception of utopian entity:

> As the novel comes to an end, the utopian possibility opens up of a coming together of all the book's narrative and conceptual strands: global and local, urban and rural, linguistic and scientific, anglophone and Bengali-speaking - even, it may be, male and female. [...] The utopian goal of mutual understanding, implicit in this novel's recurrent theme of translation, begins to appear as something actually possible. As both Piya and Kanai seem to morph into a new kind of cosmopolitan who can actually feel at home in a

> place like the tide country, [...] nonetheless proclaims the need and the desire, for us as global citizens, to communicate in new forms - to think transculturally, and to build new bridges across that world (Rollason 105).

"In this desolate and mysterious place of mangroves and mudflats, (where) the poor villagers lead a precarious existence" (Ghosh Chronicle Interview), lies the concept of the location of home, which is none other than "the space in which we can make our own connections most readily" (Ghosh in Silva, Tickell 216). With Nilima in the lead, Ghosh's fictional characters in *The Hungry Tide* seek their place in humanity, where the whole world is equally alien and equally home.

Endnotes.

1. Piotr Gwiazda. “Utopia in the City.” *Postmodern Culture* 2001, n pag. 12 Apr. 2008 <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pmc/index.html>.

Between the similar and dissimilar notion of Plato’s ‘Republic’ and Thomas More’s ‘Utopia,’ Bertrand Russell notes: “In ‘Utopia,’ as in Plato’s ‘Republic,’ all things are held in common, for the public good cannot flourish where there is private property, and without communism there can be no equality. More, in the dialogue, objects that communism would make men idle, and destroy respect for magistrates [...] that no one would say this who had lived in Utopia.” Bertrand Russell. *A History of Western Philosophy: And It’s Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945. p. 519.

More’s ‘Utopia’ was written in Latin, was probably written towards the close of 1515; the first part, introductory, early in 1516. The book was first printed at Louvain, late in 1516, under the editorship of Erasmus, Peter Giles, and other of More’s friends in Flanders. It was then revised by More, and printed by Frobenius at Basle in November, 1518. It was reprinted at Paris and Vienna, but was not printed in England during More’s lifetime. Notes from “Introduction.” Thomas More. *Utopia*. p. 5. Published by Planet PDF at <http://www.planetpdf.com>.

2. Kelley states that, “the idea that we could possibly go somewhere that exists only in our imaginations - that is, “nowhere” - is the classic definition of *utopia.*” See Robin D. G. Kelley. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002. p.2. Similarly, Harrison and Boyd loosely defined utopia as “a word that literally means ‘Nowhere.’” See Kevin Harrison, Tony Boyd. *Understanding Political Ideas and Movements*. Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2003. p. 178.

3. The Sundarbans influences numerous Bengali and Indian English fictions. *Sundarbaney Arjan Sardar*, a novel by Shibshankar Mitra, and *Padma Nadir Majhi*, a novel by Manik Bandopadhyay, are based on the rigors of lives of villagers and fishermen in the Sunderbans region, and are woven into the Bengali psyche to an extent. Part of the plot of

Salman Rushdie's Booker Prize winning novel, *Midnight's Children* is also set in the Sundarbans. While visiting Sundarbans in 2004, French author Dominique Lapierre was felicitated by the residents of *Sandeshkhali*, Basanti, Gosaba and Kultali. Lapierre financed a health campaign within these areas. See "Sundarbans gratitude to Lapierre." *The Telegraph* 30 Nov 2004.
<http://www.telegraphindia.com/1041130/asp/bengal/story_4066942.asp>.

4. Amitav Ghosh. "The Chronicle Interview." *UN Chronicle* 1 Dec. 2005.
<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/UN-chronicle/2005/December/1-p57>.
In his author's note, Ghosh adds that his uncle Chandra Ghosh was the high school headmaster of the Rural Reconstruction Institute founded by Sir Daniel Hamilton, for a decade. 'The Author's Note,' *The Hungry Tide*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2004. p. 401.

5. For further details on the incident of Morichjhãpi, See Annu Jalais. "Dwelling on Morichjhãpi: When Tigers Became 'Citizens', Refugees 'Tiger-Food." *Economic and Political Weekly* 23 Apr. (2005): 1757-1762.

Works Cited.

Albertazzi, Silvia. "Crossing *The Shadow Lines*" in *Interactions: Essays on the Literature and Culture of the Asia Pacific Region*. Haskell Dennis, ed. Nedlands: University of Western Australia, 2000.

Almond, Ian. "Post-Colonial Melancholy: An Examination of Sadness in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*." *Orbis Litterarum* 59 (2004).

Attewell, Nadine. ""Bouncy Little Tunes": Nostalgia, Sentimentality, and Narrative in Gravity's Rainbow." *Contemporary Literature* 45.1 (2004).

Banchoff, Thomas. *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Choudhuri, Supriya. "A Sense of Place" Review of *The Hungry Tide*. *Doon Online* 12 Oct. 2004. <http://www.dosco.org/index.htm>.

Das, Saswat S. "Home and Homelessness in *The Hungry Tide*: A Discourse Unmade." *Indian Literature* 235, 1.5 (2006).

Emerson, Roger L. The Dictionary of the History of Ideas. Vol. 4. 2003. The Electronic Text Center at the University of Virginia Library. <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/DictHist/dict.html>.

Esplin, Greg. "Melancholic Longing in *The Shadow Lines*." *Portals: a journal in comparative literature* (2004). <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~clsa/portals/2004/esplin.html>.

Ghosh, Amitav. "The Fundamentalist Challenge" in *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2002.

----. "A Crocodile in the Swamplands." *Outlook* 18 Oct. (2004).

----. "Wild Fictions: Narratives of Nature and the Politics of Forests." *Van der Leeuw-lezing, 2005*. 27 March 2008 <http://www.vanderleeuwlezing.nl/2005/Wild%20Fictions%20-%20Ghosh.pdf>.

Gupta, Monobina. *Left Politics in Bengal*. Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2010.

Hawley, John. "A Tale of Two Riots: *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*" in *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005.

Hutcheon, Linda. “Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern.” *Studies in Comparative Literature* 30 (2000).

Huttunen, Tuomas. “Representation of London in *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh.” *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London* March 2004. 10 Jan. 2008 <http://homepage.gold.au.uk/london-journal/>.

Kelley, Robin D. G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination.* Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

Kumar, Amitava. *Bombay, London New York*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Manto, Saadat Hasan. “Toba Tek Singh” in *Selected Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto*. (trans. Khalid Hasan) New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007.

Mee, John. “‘The Burthen of the Mystery’: Imagination and Difference in *The Shadow Lines*” in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Nandy, Ashis. “Of utopias and faiths.” *Seminar* 293 (1984).

Newman, Michael. *Socialism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Radhakrishnan, R. *Theory in an Uneven World*. Oxford: Blackwell Publication Limited, 2003.

Rai, Alok. “Saga of Morichjhãpi.” Review of *The Hungry Tide*. *Outlook* 12 July (2004).

Rocco, Christopher. *Tragedy and Enlightenment: Athenian Political Thought and the Dilemmas of Modernity*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997.

Rollason, Christopher. “In Our Translated World: Transcultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*.” *The Atlantic Literary Review* 6.1-2 (2005).

Rundell, John. “Imaginary Turns in Critical Theory: Imagining Subjects in Tension” in *Critical Theory after Habermas: Encounters and Departures*. Dieter Freundlieb, et al, eds. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004.

Schendel, Willem Van. “Stateless in South Asia: The Making of the India–Bangladesh Enclaves.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61.1 (2002).

Silva, Neluka, Alex Tickell. “An interview with Amitav Ghosh” in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Taras, Ray. Review of *The Hungry Tide*. *Campaign for the American Reader* 27 Aug. 2006. <http://www.americareads.blogspot.com/2006/08/amitav-ghoshs-hungry-tide.html>.

Thieme, John. “Global Positioning in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide*.” *Muse India* 24 Mar-Apr 2009. <http://www.museindia.com/index24.asp>.

CHAPTER FOUR

NOSTALGIC VOICES FOR HOME

> I think there is often a lingering sense that in all that we have gained, we are also losing something. Some part of us, some aspect of our lives, have also been lost. I think this is a regret, a nostalgia, that runs through many minds, not just my own. For myself, even though I'm very much a part of urban India, indeed the urban world, my mind has always been drawn to the marginal, the remote and the rural.
>
> - Amitav Ghosh. *Chronicle Interview*. (2005)

Amitav Ghosh's fictional works have largely grounded themselves upon a historical backdrop in a diverse platform in which the sense of geographical movement is one of the few things his versatile works have in common. The creative narration of multiple displacements of people and individuals, and his repetitive rejection of literary trends, as a writer without any predetermined boundary is to be addressed here through the manifestation of a nostalgia for roots and home metaphor. This in a sense is a contradiction in terms, as Ghosh is indeed, by his own admission, a writer without borders. But the contention of this chapter is that, such a claim does not necessarily rule out nostalgia for roots. To illustrate 'nostalgia' and 'home' together might incur a conflicting framework since binary factors often attract theoretical disputes. Critical evaluation is required so it becomes crucial to distinguish within Ghosh's writings that which appears to direct his readers to opine that he "does not create centres in the borders as the

postmodernists would do" (Rajalakshmi 146), and that of the other negotiation wherein "'postmodern' has little to do with nostalgia and much to do with irony" (Hutcheon 190).

A narrative fiction is a dialogic discourse where one comes across many ideas and different voices. Contemporary studies have witnessed this dialogic discourse as a force of movement that does not have a fixed end, instead it continues as an ongoing process. Therefore, by analyzing *The Shadow Lines, The Circle of Reason* and *The Hungry Tide,* in this chapter, the aim is to interrogate home formation both as social psychological space and as topographical location or structure, rather than looking at the concepts of 'nation' as home and citizenship as 'belonging.' On the other hand, the allegorical engagement with 'home' and 'homeland,' along with 'homelessness' and 'displacement' has formed a central theme in postcolonial writings, especially within the context of mapping one's space.

However, to look upon the nation-state as the people's home, is not considered a viable preference at this point. If home links community as a nation or a state, "the people belonging to a nation must occupy a particular geographical location with some specified boundaries [...] people must be under the affairs of the state" (Coates 401). Nevertheless, this is not how Ghosh has projected his multiple characters and their negotiation, of place and belonging. It is not that people fail to consent to the idea of 'belonging,' but it is the manner in which the 'concept of belonging' that has been perpetuated, that is seen as discouraging.

The projection of nostalgia for a lost past, and anxiety due to a homeless future simultaneously changes perception of the idealized 'home' and the manner in which

nostalgia functions as longing and desire for ‘home’ vis-à-vis experiences of alienation, displacement, and estrangement. In this sense, nostalgia refers to the psychological uneasiness of the displaced individual being overwhelmed with the obsession of returning home. In a realistic sense of the word, ‘home’ denotes a dual symbolism associated with security and place of collective relationship, and also as a symbolical representation of an individual’s belongingness through the sense of return to one’s root. To explore and present the complexities and various meanings of ‘home’ concurrently, many factors contribute to its familiar territory and mental space. In spite of the plurality of views,

> The concept of home is one that naturally evokes a complex network of associations and feelings, and has served as soulful inspiration for a host of disparate artists. Many writers, especially, have attested to the heightened awareness and sense of individuation that leaving home tends to provide. Paradoxically, it is this very distance that often illuminates the rich meaning of the past and its bearing on an individual’s interior landscape (Boland 2006).

On the other hand, nostalgia as part of human memory could prove unreliable as well, since it is not a mere flashback down memory lane. The concept of nostalgia raises a number of wide questions on the significance of its contemporary stature, particularly in academia. For instance, nostalgia is seen as having binary relationships with memory - memory as representing cheerfulness and sadness. While postmodernism ascribes ‘memory’ as a form of history, people are often nostalgic for primordial forms of life, specific points in time and places, and their individual history. Nostalgia has multiple

linearity with the human sense of place and belonging and it evokes longing for the perfection of the old days.

A detailed examination of nostalgia for a home that now exists only in memory is one way of putting forth an argument as to whether memory is history, and the ways in which contemporary writers used historical material to define what they have conveyed. In spite of plurality of views, it is probably true today that writers like Ghosh do not simply write from experience or memory, but also from something too painful for memory or too light for experience. In comparing and contrasting interpretive and critical narration, his works spur on the desire to return home which becomes an important theme - regardless of whether the home is real or imaginary, temporary, or whether it is manifest in a fascination with the sense of belonging, affiliation, and community attributed to the homes of others.

The concept of nostalgia representing home is exemplified in *The Shadow Lines*, which centers on the shadowiness of existing borders as the title suggests. The novel describes the division of Bengal between India and Pakistan in 1947 by arbitrarily drawn boundaries, which the novelist calls “shadow lines” because they do not correspond to any social difference. The novel also has plurality of meanings on the thesis of nostalgia in contemporary writings. Concentrating on a single character, the sense of nostalgia is evident in the narrator’s grandmother, Tha’mma, whose self-centered personality is seen in the difficult politics of nostalgia, sentimentality, and resistance. While taking refuge in Calcutta, the grandmother begins to feel nostalgic about her house in Dhaka though - “she hates nostalgia” (*TSL* 208). Nevertheless, she has reached a stage in her life where she cannot suppress old memories of her ancestral home any longer - how a wall between two

brothers, her father and her uncle Jethamoshai had divided the house. The interplay of nostalgia in the novel wherein "much of the grandmother's vision is nostalgic" (Kapadia 140), and the differing views of certain critics can be examined.

Greg Esplin suggests, "Ghosh's novel act as cathexed objects that artificially construct a melancholic longing for lost national identity" (11). Meanwhile, Ian Almond has examined sadness in *The Shadow Lines* and claims that "the moments of sadness in Ghosh's text could be better understood as a form of postcolonial melancholy for the lost colonial object - not in any nostalgic sense, but rather the sadness which arises from the crisis of identity" (90). The "melancholic longing for lost national identity" or the "postcolonial melancholy for the lost colonial object" as suggested by the two critics is projected in *The Shadow Lines*, principally in the context of the grandmother. Having an orthodox view of nationalism, the grandmother maintains a fierce moral standard, Spartan outlook of life, and intolerance of any nonsense - real and imagined. Seen this way the grandmother truly "hates nostalgia" (*TSL* 208), and this is seen as the narrative unfolds,

> My grandmother, she has spent years telling me that nostalgia is a weakness, a waste of time, that it is everyone's duty to forget the past and look ahead and get on with building the future - so now slowly, she reminds herself of the duty that has brought her here, her duty to take her uncle away from his past and thrust him into the future (*TSL* 208).

However, it is a perplexing situation to gauge what the grandmother, who could not figure "the difference between coming and going" (*TSL* 152), strives to cut through the boundary line drawn by India and Bangladesh. Her memory of the family house in Dhaka, as Kapadia puts it, "becomes an ideal worth living for amidst the travails of daily life" (139).

The grandmother's attachment to the family house was so strong that she manages to live with all the internal tension imbued within the "big joint family." After the partition of Bengal, the house in Dhaka no longer possesses its previous serenity. The house had been divided "when the quarrels were at their worst [...] instead of the peace they had so much looked forward to, they found that a strange, eerie silence had descended on the house" (*TSL* 123). One can thus have a nostalgic memory and yearn for something that is now lost, as the novelist has depicted through the characterization of the grandmother. To discuss this aspect further, Hilary Dickinson explains that

> The yearning of nostalgia, originally formulated as a longing for a specific place, need not be for a real place, or indeed a place at all, but may be for past relationships or people, real or imaginary. However, places, specific locales, are consistently important in nostalgic memory, and a psychoanalytic perspective is valuable in showing that locales often represent people and forgotten or repressed relationships with them (227).

Under different circumstances, one often travels (not displaced) around looking for a 'promising home' while another returns home - physically or through imagination. A nostalgic return has to do with the ethos of the residence, of one's home, and the familiar place of dwelling. In addition, such sense of nostalgic return or the desire for home could stem from an individual's hope for the future as well as the memory of the past. A single and fixed centre of territorial origin, otherwise "specific locales" has more validity than an idea of multiple scattered homes with regard to this present study. However, the idea of a single and fixed centre is not how Ghosh projects Alu, who is the central protagonist in *The Circle of Reason*.

In Ghosh's narrative texts, the notion of fixed centre suggest to understand "the home and the world as collaborative rather than competing realities" (Black 45). In *The Shadow Lines*, Tha'mma, the grandmother living with her family in Calcutta is going to revisit her childhood home in Dhaka. It is the first time in many years, and, though the city becomes the capital of Bangladesh, she keeps referring to her journey as going "home." Actually, as she has to cross a border she cannot be going "home," she must be going "away." As such, the grandmother's confusion of the confines of "home" and "away" is reflected in the novel itself: in mirror images and unorthodox drawings of maps. And what one find in the grandmother's behaviour before her trip to Dhaka, is her nostalgic sensibility - of her childhood, her happy days - for roots and a sense of connection. Since homesickness is not necessarily a part of sadness and sorrow, her desperate longing for the ancestral home in Dhaka equates more with the concept of nostalgia for roots. However, Esplin writes "Ghosh and his characters are longing for a past that never existed" (2004), and further eliminates this longing as "false nostalgia." Besides this, the grandmother's expectations turn futile when encountering the wretchedness of her long lost home, and her mission fails consequently. Displaced people, not only in the case of the grandmother, on their homecoming would generally "find that the past they want to return to is not quite what they imagine it to be" (Ghosh 2007).

Whether a disappointed homecoming suggests "a melancholic longing for lost national identity" (Esplin 2004) or "a form of postcolonial melancholy for the lost colonial object" (Almond 90), what the grandmother really looks forward to in Dhaka is neither one of these, but a mere sense of belonging and more notably, a sense of

connection. As earlier referred to in Chapter Three, Ghosh has given his narrator in *The Shadow Lines* certain extraordinary advantages. He is free from cultural shock, free from any bondage, free from mental confusion unlike his mentor Tridib, his cousin Ila and the grandmother, and more importantly free from any romanticized melancholy. Gradually, the grandmother's recollection of her own past and the narrator's recollection of Tridib's have been fulfilled through steadfast memories and not with some kind of misplaced "incarnation of melancholic longing" (Esplin 2004), or with any sort of "a patriotic fantasy about England's glorious past."[1] Again, "one does not feel a nostalgic desire for the childhood of somebody else" (Ankersmit 203).

A new sense of self, of subjectivity and individuality often affects the account of social changes and human experience. The pertinent thing is that the grandmother betrayed herself, betrayed her own memory and "the moment of 'homecoming' becomes the point of permanent severance of all family ties" (Malhotra 169). And when the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. The experience of encountering the burned down remains of a home that was once filled with happiness shapes an obscure longing, a kind of mixed feeling which evokes the past in a way that arouses nostalgia. From the context of the grandmother Tha'mma, the closest definition of nostalgia links a subject of loss, otherwise the unbounded longing to be or to become human again.

Gaurav Desai, in his study on Amitav Ghosh and the writing of nostalgia, suggests that, "nostalgia is, in effect, a necessary forgetting of trauma and a celebration of recuperable memories oriented toward a desirable future" (141). In line with this observation, the chapter will pursue the concept of nostalgia characterized in the other

novels of Ghosh with the issues of a Janus-faced representation, the dual sense of belonging and sense of homelessness. The tension between 'home' and 'outside' - the encompassing voices it creates among Ghosh's constantly displaced characters and its subsequent outcome in forming a 'nuclear family' is one way of interpreting the dual sense of belonging. After all, the multiple voices found in Ghosh's characters and their displacement directly attend to whether 'homelessness' presages a possible 'return home,' and the very idea of 'home' itself in the context of 'homelessness.'

By 'homelessness' the chief references is the situation in which an individual, or a collective, is subjected to permanent loss of home, due to rejection and fraudulent dealings. Based upon Ghosh's narratives where the character's voices are at the centres, homelessness accentuates doubt, for instance, as to whether home is located in geographical space or whether it refers to a territorial rootedness. A clearer understanding of the subject of geographical location or territorial rootedness necessitates further study of the larger theme**,** of boundary. Boundaries are symbolic, cultural, and social, constituting a cognitive or mental geography which influences the transnational ties between different communities and shapes their identities.

As discussed elsewhere, the concept of 'nation' and its fluid representation is a complex endless issue, because, for the novelist "the ideal of the nation as a way of organizing society is no longer holding" (Reddy 2002). In *Dancing In Cambodia, At Large In Burma*, Ghosh confirms that,

> All boundaries are artificial: there is no such thing as a 'natural' nation, which has journeyed through history with its boundaries and ethnic

> composition intact. In a region as heterogeneous as South-East Asia, any boundary is sure to be arbitrary (100).

Both *The Hungry Tide* and *The Circle of Reason* portray "a world in which the smaller terms of community belie the ideologies of nation" (Jones 431), and becomes a fragmentary embodiment. Ghosh decentralized both the conventional and contemporary literary form where "borders don't really apply" (Reddy 2002), and home remains the 'centre of meaning' for the marginalized and displaced characters. Institutional monopoly and cultural homogenization, the binary functioning of majority and minority, according to Ghosh, have broadened the line of borders.

Writing a novel is the most feasible form of dialogue and the novelist stresses that it is indeed, "the most complete form of expressive utterance."[2] To put it into effect, Ghosh's essential interest lies in the situational aspect of people and their lives, histories and predicament, and the following consequences from then on. The interesting features of his works are most likely the sense of connection between people and history, displacement and home, nation and family, centre and border, nostalgia and childhood, identity and multiculturalism. Fictional writing, as he narrates,

> ...allows you to explore something with a richness and a sense of context, but most of all it allows you to explore people. So I don't think I could really say that the novel appeals to me because it lets me do this or lets me do that. I think what's appealing to me is that it doesn't have any borders; you can really make it what you want (Ghosh in Chambers 33).

He anticipates novels as a "meta-form that transcends the boundaries that circumscribe other kinds of writing, rendering meaningless the usual workaday distinctions between historian, journalist, anthropologist, etc" (Ghosh *A Fine Imbalance*). While adopting his own experience in a sense of multiplicity, boundaries have a much deeper significance in his works. "At the bottom of the scale," Ghosh explains in a literary correspondence with Sheela Reddy, "in countries like Pakistan and Burma, again borders have melted away and there's a general collapse of the state" (2002). Having made his argument, Ghosh's characters in his novels may be able to cross borders, but most certainly cannot overcome them.

Certain characters in *The Hungry Tide* and *The Circle of Reason* leave their place of birth as a displaced person owing to socio-economic or political reasons, in which some return and others do not. Alu, the chief protagonist in *The Circle of Reason* has been depicted as having a different history to the extent of questioning 'home' itself. Through the characterization of Alu, the story provides the impression that Ghosh challenges the concept of 'home' in a situation where there is no 'home,' and diminishes the rationale of nostalgic 'return' where there is no place to 'return' home.

It is important to note that displaced people "tend to be poor and experience displacement not as cultural plenitude but as torment; what they seek is not displacement but, precisely, a *place* from where they might begin anew, with some sense of a stable future" (Ahmad 16). Alu, the fugitive, is adjusting himself in the fictional town of al-Ghazira in the Middle East to Algeria in the Northwestern Africa, where he seeks a new

rootedness in an unfamiliar ground with a sense of determination. In an article *No Greater Sorrow: Times of Joy Recalled in Wretchedness* (2001), Ghosh states,

> This novel, *The Circle of Reason* was the story of a journey, and its central section told the story of a group of immigrants - South Asian and Middle Eastern - living in a fictitious oil-rich sheikhdom in the Gulf. Looking back today, it strikes me that *The Circle of Reason* could [...] be identified as an exodus novel, a story of migration in the classic sense of having its gaze turned firmly towards the future. The book ended with the words: 'Hope is the beginning'.

The novel begins with eight-year-old newly orphaned Alu, who goes to sleepy Lalpukur, a fictional town in West Bengal, to live with his uncle Balaram and aunt Toru-debi. Then, in Lalpukur a fictional town somewhere close to Calcutta, Alu acquired the skills of weaving under his uncle's guidance and was further introduced to Vallery-Radot's *Life of Pasteur*. [3] The weaving skills yielded Alu an access of flight "across India and beyond; it is the professional skills of his medical acquaintances that see them moving all over the globe, and these keep them also grounded in their origins in Bengal" (Sharrad 8).

Lalpukur, the place where Alu earned his artisanship was constellated by a strong contingent of displaced people who were the victims of the partition of 1947, and Bangladesh war of 1971. The refugees were

> Vomited out of their native soil years ago in another carnage, and dumped hundreds of miles away, they had no anger left. Their only passion was memory; a longing for a land where the green was greener, the rice whiter, the fish bigger than boats; where the rivers' names sang like Megh Malhar on a rainy day - the Meghna, the Dholeshwari, the Kirtinosha, the Shitolokhkha, the majestic Arialkha, wider than the horizon. Rivers which

> bore the wealth of a continent to their land, from Tibet, from the Himalayas. Rivers overflowing with bounty, as wide as seas, their banks invisible from one another (*TCR* 59).

Inspired by Pasteur, Balaram sets up the Pasteur School of Reason with two departments, the Department of Pure Reason (elementary reading, writing, arithmetic and lectures in science and technology) and the Department of Practical Reason (weaving and tailoring). Bhudeb Roy, the rich property owner in Lalpukur sees this as threatening the established and feudal norms of the village, brands Balaram a terrorist and the school is burnt down. Identical to the displaced community of Morichjhãpi in *The Hungry Tide*, who were being threatened with forced eviction by the state authority, Lalpukur is also placed in a similar circumstance. The saddest thing was that "Lalpukur could fight no war because it was damned to a hell of longing" (*TCR* 59). The situation typifies nothing but the power of domination and the villagers were the casualty of that very dominance.

Having engaged in such a harrowing event, Alu lost his sense of belonging and security at Lalpukur in his uncle's place. After the village has been destroyed, Alu forced into exile boarded a ship called *Mariamma* that headed for al-Ghazira, an affluent seaport and trade center in the Middle East. Being exiled, "homeless and orphaned twice over, Alu becomes not only an immigrant but also a 'wanted terrorist'" (Singh 49). Jyoti Das, an Assistant Superintendent of Police, pursued him as he travels from Calcutta to Kerala to the fictional town of Al-Ghazira in the Middle East, to Algeria. The rest of the story is about the people Alu encounters and "the shifting, provisional communities of migrants to which he belongs" (Singh 49).

In al-Ghazira, Alu was fortunate enough to find a place in a boarding house owned by Zindi al-Tiffaha, an Egyptian woman and a fellow passenger in *Mariamma*. Similar to Lalpukur, "al-Ghazira does not represent a stable authentic culture, but a vast network of trade, centuries old that unfurls like a cloth through a vast, borderless region" (Dixon 16). Zindi, a brothel keeper runs her own lodging house after being banished by her husband owing to her barrenness. She not only took charge of Alu, but also accommodated the other travellers - Karthamma, Kulfi, Rakesh and Professor Samuel. In fact, she is relieved to have a mixed group of migrant workers, and says, "It's not a business; it's my family, my aila, my own house, and I look after them, all the boys and girls, and no one's unhappy and they all love me" (*TCR* 181). So, Zindi's utopian domain was mostly comprised of heterogeneous immigrant labourers from South East Asia, "whom she hopes to divert from the construction industry to the [...] declining cloth trade" (Dixon 16). In this setting, they maintain a kind of communistic system in which all resources are pooled together and no one makes a profit from their enterprise beyond what they immediately need. Regrettably, the system of shared economy could not last long since this motley congregated group not only relied on their own earnings, but the political and situational peril soon becomes a major setback.

Fiona Allon, in her article "Boundary Anxieties: Between Borders and Belongings," estimates that mass migratory movement which was set in motion round-the-clock across the globe "have not only redefined place-based identity, but have led to deterritorialised connections and attachments to multiple places, where people's lives transcend and are translated across specific boundaries and identities" (2002). As the

fiction progresses, Zindi heads Alu, Kulfi, the baby Boss further west to Algeria after the demolition of their utopian community in al-Ghazira, and run into a small Indian community where they finally encountered Jyoti Das. In "Fabricating Community: Local, National and Global in Three Indian novels," Sharrad hinted at a sense of consistency in the migratory movements, thus,

> Ghosh clearly depicts the haphazard movement of subaltern labour across state and national borders, noting in the process how artisan skill can be carried from place to place, but the subaltern language of specific communal craft (in this case of a sub-caste of Bengali weavers) ceases to have power as it moves away from home. He suggests, on the other hand, that no matter how far we travel, even into the sandy backblocks of north-west Africa, we do not escape our personal pasts, our communal and national traditions or questions of how to keep them meaningful, nor the grand narratives of enlightenment reason (7).

The preceding statements made by Allon and Sharrad seem to suggest that a tale of extreme, poignant dislocation, specifically experienced by Alu and his circle of associates attract critical disagreement. Therefore, the attempt here is to reread the dynamics and complexities of 'return' and 'home' discourses.

Home, as generally interpreted, is the answer to human "deeply ingrained territorial needs, which require us to shape and order space in a way that accords with our personality, vision of the world, and basic need for security" (Mircescu 5). Alu had earlier been portrayed as representing both the concept of emotionalized 'home' in a situation where there is no concrete 'home,' and nostalgic 'return' where there is none. While Allon points out "deterritorialised connections and attachments to multiple places" by migratory

movement including displacement, Sharrad envisages that there is no final escape from "our personal pasts, our communal and national traditions." In spite of the fact that Alu "stands for tradition" (Dixon 13), on the other hand he also carries forward "a hope for the future of subalterns who are marginalised in the discourses of nationalism and transnational migration" (Singh 55). The traditional Bengali weaving skills acquired by Alu, and "the significance of science - celebrated through Pasteur," as Sujala Singh puts it, "becomes the magical bond across different generations and countries" (55).

In the twist and turn of events, the "exodus novel" ends in Tangier, a city in northern Morocco at the west end of the Strait of Gibraltar, where Alu and Zindi, with Boss in her arms were seen waiting for "the ship that was to carry them home" (*TCR* 423), and to travel back towards al-Ghazira. In this sense, they might have agreed to turn back firmly towards the future where "Hope is the beginning" (*TCR* 423). Yet, this 'hope' suggests that their journey cannot be simply untied at all cost since it only just begins. Because, the beginning comes back to the end, and the ending comes back to the beginning. Looking at it differently, how does one correlate an individual sense of belongingness while suggesting that "the displaced must now learn the ways of the new home" (Erfani 2005), or, in other words, should "all characters have to find their own motivations in their journey through life?" (Prasad 65). To theorize a person as having no sense of home, or otherwise not having any sense of roots, in the context of postmodernist's homelessness and centerless entity, will not suffice the actual situation of homelessness.

Similarly, Sujala Singh talks of 'return' and suggests that, "reconstructed through scattered fragments of memory, home remains a site of an indelible present and impossible return for many of the subaltern characters in *Circle*" (50). Here, it is important to consider that sense of belonging and that the familial ground of homeliness to Zindi entails something different because home represents a blank space in which "her own patriarchal cultural community/family exiles her from" (Daiya 395). As for Karthamma, from Bangalore, ""home" refers not just to a house and the everyday life that it symbolizes but also a community (national or otherwise) in which one has a place" (Daiya 395). This is particularly true in the Indian context where 'home' has been created as a source for individual groundings and as an indispensable foundation of social hierarchy. However, this projected 'safe haven' of the domestic home and community in its reality fails to match the dream. This begins to make sense especially for Karthamma, because 'home' as a sense of belonging and relationship connotes "a future-time of a secure life, as a place where she and her unborn child can stay and not be sent back to India" (Daiya 395). The point made here supports the romantic image of home that is,

> More often than not dispelled when we return to the domestic fold. Home may be the place of our nurturance but it can also stultify us. It pulls us back and pushes us away. It fascinates and repels us. It is very much ambivalent and ambiguous (Mircescu 7).

The contemporary notion of 'home' and 'return' becomes a dilemma for characters who are constantly repositioning their infinite space throughout *The Circle of Reason*. While the narration sweeps across time and space, uncommon in his other novels, 'imaginative home' and 'familial return' to one's origin fail to occur especially with the two major

characters, Alu and Zindi. Oftentimes the narrative appears to discourage a longing and desire for territorial rootedness - a belonging sentimentally attached to one's mother country, where one tends to return, and instead be replaced with the colloquial "at home in a globalized capitalism" (Chakravarty 213). The text deals with and "provides a critique of the rhetoric of belonging, identity and citizenship mobilised by the nation state through its representatives" (Singh 53). Zindi, the pragmatic side of Alu and with her maternal posture has erased the concept of nostalgic belonging just as her own traditional family and its patriarchal structures had rejected her. In short, she feels that only by learning "to accept that what's happened has happened that you can use your knowledge of the past to cheat the future" (*TCR* 224). This is what practical life meant to Zindi.

On the contrary, for both Alu and Zindi the possibility of "the return home is not, cannot be a return back in time to how things used to be, though that is precisely how it is romanticized" (Mircescu 4). This is well manipulated in the context of Alu, who has been displaced three times - once 'vomited' from Bangladesh, then from Lalpukur and later from al-Ghazira; and of Zindi, also being twice banished - once from her matrimonial home and from her own ancestral place. Jyoti Das, who has pursued Alu by making him a global traveller, too soon realized that, "foreign places are all alike in that they are not home. Nothing binds you there" (*TCR* 266). Later on, Jyoti Das was perplexed when he realized that "al-Ghazira wasn't a real place at all, but a question: are foreign countries merely not-home, or are they all that home is not?" (*TCR* 269). He jumps to a confusing conclusion and says, "I'm migrating myself - to Dusseldorf. I've got nowhere else to go" (*TCR* 421).

Metaphorically, the centre of their present existence is home, and since the fictional narrative ends by framing "hope is the beginning" - home is in the process, in the making and under construction. And, based upon their situation, in the end there is no such thing as nostalgic bearing to one's grassroots, instead they managed to travel happily back towards al-Ghazira, where, in spite of everything, "they were welcome: since the beginning of time al-Ghazira has been home to anyone who chooses to call it such" (*TCR* 260). Their place of dwelling, whether it is Algeria or al-Ghazira, transforms into their place of belonging since regional rootedness becomes disarrayed for both Alu and Zindi.

Thus far, the chapter has analyzed a situation in which Ghosh's characters face various difficulties during the process of defining what they could consider as their 'home.' To materialize the notion of 'home' through the eyes of displaced and scattered characters, Avtar Brah suggests, "Home is also the lived experience of locality" (196). While trying to come to terms with 'home' and its physical entity, the factor of inclusion and exclusion determine Alu's future along with "the varying experience of the pains and pleasures, the terrors and contentments, or the highs and humdrum" (Brah 192) of everyday reality. In *The Self in Social Judgment* (2005), it has been stated that, "those who have high self-esteem possess a strong sense of belonging, competence, and purpose. Those without it are painted as withdrawn, unenthusiastic, insecure souls" (Alicke 203). Thus, individuals like Alu and Zindi with their high self-esteem personality, manage to free themselves from certain difficulties they encountered in Africa.

The 'myth of return' and home and belonging in displacement functions differently for Alu in *The Circle of Reason* or Kusum from *The Hungry Tide*, even though they were

both the offsprings of political turmoil in a similar landscape. The main characters in the two fictions were harassed by state sponsored violence in the course of displacement, where a sense of belonging and notion of home works in tandem and yet, the consequences are not identical. While returning home is a question of safety and fulfillment to Kusum, it is not so to Alu. Despite the fact that both had experienced more than one displacement and encountered excruciating experiences, yet the plight undergone by Kusum is far more chaotic. Kusum, one of the victims in the merciless butchering of thousands of refugees living in Morichjhãpi in the Sunderbans, represents homelessness and disunity of humanity in a conflict situation.

In the previous chapter, this study addressed a series of inter-related events on the historical formation of various communities on both the Indian and Bangladesh side of the Sundarbans. Here, we refer to the unwanted refugees, otherwise the land-squatters, who found themselves a brief breathing space in the Sundarbans island of Morichjhãpi. In *Midnight's Children* (1982), Salman Rushdie writes tellingly on the influx of refugee from Bangladesh to India as follows;

> During 1971, ten million refugees fled across the borders of East Pakistan-Bangladesh into India - but ten million (like all numbers larger than one thousand and one) refuses to be understood. Comparisons do not help: 'the biggest migration in the history of the human race' - meaningless. Bigger than Exodus, larger than the Partition crowds, the many-headed monster poured into India (209).

The overflow of displaced people from the neighboring nation is generated because of the Bangladesh war of independence in 1971. Millions of "the poorest of rural people,

oppressed and exploited both by Muslim communalists and by Hindus of upper castes" (*THT* 118), having no other preferences seek shelter in Calcutta and elsewhere in West Bengal. The plight of homeless Bangladeshis, whether in Calcutta or in the resettlement center in Dandakaranya face bigger adversity, as one researcher observes,

> Unlike their richer counterparts, who were backed by family and caste connections, many of these poorer migrants did not find a way of living in Kolkata and were sent to various inhospitable and infertile areas - most infamous amongst them being Dandakaranya, a semi-arid and rocky place in east-central India which included part of Orissa, and former Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, now in present-day Chhattisgarh - thus an area entirely removed, both culturally and physically, from the refugees' known world.[4]

Tha'mma, the grandmother in *The Shadow Lines* was one among the privileged class who found shelter in Calcutta. Likewise, Nirmal Bose of *The Hungry Tide* is another case in point. The political, social and economical state of affairs subsequently led to the collapse of territorial boundaries of Indo-Bangladesh border, resulting in a massive exodus. Dandakaranya, the resettlement center, is not only an area that is different in culture and physical geographical feature for the displaced Bangladeshis, but also an inhospitable terrain of dry forest region inhabited by native Adivasis. Dandakaranya is Sanskrit 'aranya' to 'the jungle' and 'dandakas' meaning 'punishment,' is also a spiritually significant region to mythical tales for Hinduism.

In Dandakaranya, a hundred kilometers distance from Bengal, the refugees were huddled in a "settlement" or "reservation," which resemble concentration camp-like conditions. Similar looking huts or tarpaulin tents were erected and crammed with

refugees. Treated like an endangered species in a zoological park, the camp was circle by barbed wire fencing, guarded and strictly monitored by security forces. The displaced people were forbidden to leave, and "those who tried to get away were hunted down" (*THT* 118). In *The Hungry Tide*, Nilima recounted the grueling times faced in Dandakaranya, to her visiting nephew Kanai Dutt: "The soil was rocky and the environment was nothing like they had ever known. They could not speak the languages of that area and the local people treated them as intruders, attacking them with bows, arrows and other weapons. For many years they put up with these conditions" (118).

For the unsettled population, their homelessness is a source of horror, an embodiment of their fears of poverty and alienation and with their dreams of freedom crushed; they are degraded to the level of what Fanon in another context, so aptly described as "the wretched of the earth." In this godforsaken land they were nowhere near to finding a home to settle in, and instead the circumstance that befalls them is that of "being a resident alien" (Spivak 121). In *Dancing In Cambodia, At Large In Burma*, Ghosh documented a similar confinement practiced in South East Asia on Burmese refugees who,

> ... have very limited options. Legally, they are not allowed either to work or to study in Thailand; to seek asylum abroad as refugees, they would have to enter a holding camp in southern Thailand while their papers were processed. [...] The alternative is to join the underworld of illegal foreign workers in Thailand, vanishing into a nightmarish half-life of crime, drugs, and prostitution. They have been pushed into a situation where the jungle is the sanest choice available (104-105).

When the Left Front party formed the government in West Bengal, they broke their promises made earlier to thousands of Bangladeshi refugees - before they were herded to Dandakaranya camp. Expecting the government to honour its word, they then make a "collective decision to return "home" - if not to East Pakistan/Bangladesh, at least to West Bengal and the Sundarbans."[5] More than ten thousand refugees arrived from Dandakaranya "by train and on foot they moved eastwards" (*THT* 118), in the hope of making a permanent settlement in the landlocked Bengal terrain. "Morichjhãpi was the place they decided on" (*THT* 118), and since Morichjhãpi was a protected forest reserve their aggressiveness eventually provoked the state authority. Supriya Choudhuri, in her review write-up on *The Hungry Tide* reiterated the root of the repressive incident, popularly known as "double betrayal of Morichjhãpi":

> At the heart of Nirmal's diary is an historical event: the eviction of refugee settlers from the island of Morichjhãpi in the Sunderbans by the Left Front government of West Bengal in 1979. For the old Communist in the novel, like many others at the time, this act of state violence was a betrayal of everything left-wing politics in the post-Partition era had stood for. It was these very leftists who had declared, in the face of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy's attempts to find land in neighbouring states for the successive waves of refugees who crossed over from East Pakistan that they would not consent to a single one being resettled outside West Bengal. And indeed the conditions of such resettlement were harsh and alien. In 1978 a group of refugees fled from the Dandakaranya camp in Madhya Pradesh and came to the island of Morichjhãpi in the Sundarbans with the intention of settling there. They cleared the land for agriculture, and began to fish and farm. But their presence there alarmed the Left Front ministry, who saw it as the first of a possibly endless series of encroachments on protected forest land, and

> the settlers were evicted in a brutal display of state power in May, 1979. Many, like the girl Kusum in Ghosh's novel, Kanai's childhood playmate who becomes the repository of Nirmal's idealist hopes, were killed. Nirmal, who stays with the settlers during those final hours, is later discovered wandering in the port town of Canning; he is shattered by the event and never recovers. As the last significant expression of the trauma of Bengal's Partition, the story of Morichjhãpi occupies a central place in the novel. (2004)

The state authority, which failed to fulfill its promises instead mercilessly subjected the desperate refugees, who had departed of their own free will from Dandakaranya provided by the authorities, and occupied Morichjhãpi without state consent, to even more suffering. These refugees and their resistance, according to one observation, "was of little avail against the guns of the "leftist" government of Kolkata, deployed in defence of "environment" but also, it is implied, against subaltern presumption. Dreams are soon dead, too - in this nightmare land" (Rai 64).

Ghosh states that, "When a party comes to power, it must govern; it is subject to certain compulsions" (*THT* 275-276), and in his novel, strongly condemns the resultant suffering provoked by broken promises. An intimate relationship between the state as the host, and displacement involving migrants and refugees is often subject to a stalemate. Even if any relationship develops between the host and the displaced, it still runs the risk of neglecting the trust. In addition, the turn of the tide against the escaped refugees from Dandakaranya and their momentary utopian dreamscape in Morichjhãpi Island was indeed devastating. Nirmal the retired schoolmaster was caught in "a confrontation with the authorities that resulted in a lot of violence. The government wanted to force the refugees

to return to their settlement camp in central India" (*THT* 26). Therefore, relationship, in the context of the escaped refugees from Dandakaranya or the occupant of Morichjhãpi Island, is based upon political implication.

In an article on "Transcultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*," Christopher Rollason scrutinizes the mistrust and fear that prevails during the settler's resistance, and comments on the inevitable conclusion:

> The vexed issue of social class barriers [...] the failed popular revolt [...] creation of a short-lived community in the Sundarbans with visible utopian-rationalist features, and the bloody retaliation of the authorities [...] it is brutally repressed by the government forces (103).

In the site of socioeconomic struggle, industrial development proceeds at the cost of class, caste and racial differences. The social-psychological effects were far more grievous for the underprivileged: the loss of social recognition. This is clearly depicted in *THT* wherein the lives of the refugees at Morichjhãpi are undervalued as against reservation of the forests for wildlife conservation.

In the story, circumstances coerce the disheartened Kusum to flee to Dhanbad, formerly in Bihar now in Jharkhand, searching for her mother who has been betrayed through double-dealing into a sex worker. When Kusum finally chances upon her mother, the tragic circumstance is palpable:

> "Don't look, Kusum," she said. "Don't touch me with your eyes; think of me as I was, before your father died. I blame that Dilip; he's more demon than man. He said he'd find me work, and look where he brought me: to eat leaves at home, would have been a better fate. [...] This is no place for you, Kusum. You must go back" (*THT* 163).

"To eat leaves at home" need not necessarily be seen as an exaggerated statement since the settlers in Morichjhãpi indeed were "forced to eat wild grass" (Jalais 1759), during the siege. Kusum's mother wishes her to go back to the Sundarbans, connoting a sense of belonging and a sense to return to an unknown location. It might denote their previous habitation or it could be anywhere in the Sundarbans since "the longing for 'return' is implied in the very term nostalgia" (Kandiyoti 2006). Also, nostalgia in the logical sense is "intimately related to awareness of displacement or of being displaced [...] the subject of nostalgic experience is painfully aware of being where and when she does not want to be" (Ankersmit 199). On the other hand, there are enough instances in *The Hungry Tide*, in defining 'home' - more so in the voices of their plight and struggles.

Kusum is, in a certain sense, akin to Alu and Zindi in *The Circle of Reason*, because being "displaced, they are not members of any community or society [...] they cannot be citizens of any state. So they live 'haunted,' without any home" (Nagraju 74). Broadening this stance, "the hidden motif of 'home' negotiates its way through numerous treacherous experiences" (Das 183), and yet only to actualize the irony of (un)belonging and 'home.' Kusum, having spent four years in Dhanbad, instead of keeping alive her dreams would often succumb to her depression. Her yearning for home at the heart of homelessness through her narrated tales is vivid:

> Many months passed and we spoke of coming back here: that place was not home; there was nothing for us there. Walking on iron, we longed for the touch of mud; encircled by rails, we dreamed of the Raimangal in the flood. We dreamed of storm-tossed islands, straining at their anchors and of the rivers that bound them in golden fetters. We thought of high tide, and the mohonas mounting, of islands submerged, like underwater clouds. By night

> we remembered, we talked and we dreamed - by day coal and metal were the stuff of our lives (*THT* 164).

Coming to grips with the importance of specifying 'home,' a question, which instantly emerges on the concept of territorial home is, where did Kusum truly desire to return home? Going home to tide country without her husband Rajen and her old fragile mother is highly unlikely. Young Fokir, her son, is all she has besides her nostalgic memory, which "merges with dissatisfaction with the present" (Hutcheon 192). And trying to comprehend the tide country which arrested Kusum's inmost consciousness, the illusionary home she longs to return and come to terms with - seems more of a contradiction within herself. Contradiction, because in Sundarbans "at high tide most of the land vanished under water" (*THT* 51), infested with tigers and crocodiles, and whenever "the tides rose they waited out the flood on stilt-mounted platforms. At night they slept in hammocks that were hung so as to keep them safe from the high tide" (*THT* 52). To cope with the extremes of water, wildlife and vegetation, nothing is certain "in this desolate and mysterious place of mangroves and mudflats, (*where*) the poor villagers lead a precarious existence."[6] By addressing its natural landscapes, its richness in flora and fauna, its freshwater swamp and mangrove forests, one could have immediately recognized the yearning for Sundarbans. Yet the possibility of return is denied in the text;

> Return, if any, as it has been portrayed in the text is not a return into origins or specified locations. It is a return that carries with it tools that further contaminates the imagined purity of specified locations, the tools are so powerful that they crudely violate the ideologies of a particular location that shaped one's identity (Das 182).

With the preceding statement, the postcolonial quest for ‘home’ has a linkage with ‘identity.’ However, what Kusum yearns for is a free space rather than the politicized identity. Besides, the memory of the Sundarbans forms the mental images here and not as a mere ‘illusionary home,’ while ‘identity’ as a postcolonial subject is rootless and homeless and fails to connect to any specified locations. The predicament in which Kusum has been located - a past happy time that contrasts with a threatening present - has no reference to identity. Nonetheless, if she returns to Sundarbans with young Fokir, the questions in her mind is; “Whom would I go there? Who would I ask for help? What if I couldn’t make do and it came to worst? What if I had to fall begging, at Dilip’s feet?” (*THT* 164).

Out of the intense engagement with her present helpless situation, what Kusum yearns for is nothing more than a fulfillment of her dreams, her dreams of belonging and becoming where she could find a respite even for a day. It is her homesickness and nostalgia for the Sundarbans. And, “to build something is not the same as dreaming of it: building is always a matter of well-chosen compromises” (*THT* 214). Her predicament in Dhanbad was more favourable than people herded inside Dandakaranya camp where they had to face a double marginalization by both the native and the host supervision that negate their belonging to specific location. Kusum describes their exodus thus:

> For one night I heard tell of a great march to the east. They passed us next day - like ghosts, covered in dust, strung out in a line, shuffling beside the rail tracks. They had children on their shoulders, bundles on their backs. Where were there heading? From what city had they come? They were not from those parts; they were strangers to us. I saw someone stumble as old as ma [...] it was in Bangla they spoke back to me. I was amazed: the very

> same words, the same tongue! “Who are you?” I said. “Tell me: where are you headed?” (*THT* 164).

The people running away from Dandakaranya’s ‘concentration camp’ were her own kith and kin she has never met before. They were heading towards the tide country, “at least a safe haven, a place of true freedom for the country’s most oppressed” (*THT* 191), and they share their traumatic story with Kusum.

> No matter how we tried, we couldn’t settle there: rivers ran in our heads, the tides were in our blood. Our fathers had once answered Hamilton’s call: they had wrested the estate from the sway of the tides. What they’d done for another, couldn’t we do for ourselves? [...] But the police fell on us the moment we moved: they swarmed on the trains, they put blocks on the road - but we still would not go back; we began to walk (*THT* 165).

It would seem that finding a place to belong is an impossibility. They had been driven out of their homeland only to be forcibly resettled in another alien location. However, the human determination depicted by Ghosh in the story is a factor to be reckoned with. Taking this cue, it appears that despite the history of displacement Kusum’s sense of memory and belonging is really not lost as seen in the following lines,

> These were my people, how could I stand apart? We shared the same tongue, we were joined in our bones; the dreams they had dreamt were no different from my own. They too hankered for our tide country; they too had longed to watch the tide rise to full flood. If we stayed on in Dhanbad, what would our future be? A lifetime of toil, in a city of rust? I gathered our things, put clothes on Fokir’s back; with Rajen in our hearts, we stepped away from the shack (*THT* 165).

In any interchanging circumstance, memories are very crucial for any relocated and displaced people. The collective conviction of the refugees and their pursuit for a utopian home, a territorial place, is equally comparable with the idea imbibed in the 'sense of belonging'. It was their 'sense of belonging' - a meta-concept of 'togetherness' which pushes them forward to a place of uncertainty. Ultimately, what is recognizable in the eventual outcome of Morichjhãpi is utopian pattern of community, a kind of 'nuclear family.' In the light of this discussion, 'sense of belonging' is primary, and 'place of belonging' secondary. On the other hand, the arrival of globalization can overshadow the positivity of this projected 'sense of belonging.' Furthermore, it has been suggested that globalization offers fewer possibilities for belonging within the realm of 'global village' to people dwelling on the sideline. Globalization, in this logic, eliminates the "possibilities for belonging." Viewed from this angle, Daiya has pointed out that Ghosh's novel "offers a grim exploration of the oppressions of migrancy and the violence of the modern postcolonial state in the lives of those who live in the shadows of globalization" (329). The speculation over the impossibilities for belonging "within the 'global village'" must not necessarily misguide the present study and its effort to invoke the "possibilities for belonging." Given that, the combination of dwelling and belonging is usually associated with the concept of home. Belonging is then a varied concept that can be expressed in different ways such as shared beliefs, shared experience, even in cultural diversity.

Another argument coming from the opposite meaning of 'home' and 'homelessness' in Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, according to Das, is that, "though nowhere in his narrative the author sounds judgmental [...] while pretending to make space for his

fiction beyond the post-modern debate [...] has displayed 'homelessness' as the natural condition of man" (179). Keeping this view in mind, if homelessness is really "the natural condition of man" then the postmodernist concept of 'fewer possibilities for belonging' requires a second look. Theoretically speaking, 'homelessness' is one of the key concepts of postmodern critic. It is an act of decentralizing the homogeneity of home and its centrality in human's perception. Because, according to Hariharan, globalization, nationalism, terrorism, jingoism, obscurantism and communalism, are the major agencies in deconstructing the "possibilities for belonging" (129), to the extent of homelessness.

The myths of home and homelessness, as the preceding statement puts it, reproduce a "spiral into a network of meanings" (Nagraju 68). For instance, the oppressed people struggling to arrive at Morichjhãpi and the situations they constantly encountered are by no means imaginary. They are the real people, homeless people, people who literally shiver for lack of shelter. These people have struggled hard to preserve the meaning of their existence. And yet, what "the quest for 'home' and the dialectic of belonging and unbelonging [...] to the quest for personal and racial/cultural identity" (Bhattacharjee 112) appears to have little to do with these people, in their state of homelessness.

Keeping aside 'identity' for the time being, homelessness is a belonging in itself, and this very belonging is home for the homeless since they belong to this center of homelessness. In this current discussion, 'home' need not necessarily mean house vis-à-vis 'home' which offers psychical comfort of familiarity and sense of 'homeliness.' 'Home' in the context of Kusum largely symbolizes a space of freedom, where she and others could

chase their dreams, though such a place turns temporal in the end. Despite its "acknowledged hierarchies, the home is a space of hope" (Upstone 264). Once having achieved such space, the rootless existence of 'homelessness' metamorphoses into a place of belonging. The possibility, according to John Thieme is that: "an undifferentiated space becomes a place, when human beings assign a meaning to it, through practices such as naming and mapping" (73).

When thousands of homeless refugees "settled in Morichjhãpi they had 'all become one big family' as they had 'the same hopes, went through the same ordeal, fought on the same side'" (Jalais 1760). Occupying, "a little land to settle on" (*THT* 119), they rallied together for "they were willing to pit themselves against the government. They were prepared to resist until the end" (*THT* 119). It was the state authority which showed the impossibilities for belonging and not vice versa. The refugees were "ignominiously tortured by the government administration, an incident known in the local Bengali parlance as the Morichjhãpi incident of 1978" (Mandal 11), or "the massacre at Morichjhãpi" (*THT* 122).

In a literal sense, long separation changes the returnee "into an external outsider and his plans of rebuilding his life after his return to the native land sometimes go awry because he soon discovers that he simply cannot start from where he left off" (Rajakrishnan 146). Pragmatically, to return home safely seems quite paradoxical, as it also implies that there is barely a modest chance for recuperation of the past for the future from the present moment. To step ahead, "the drama of the settlers' arrival" (*THT* 189) is worth referring. The motivation received by the new settlers from the adjoining islanders

suggests, somewhat, the "possibilities for belonging." The islanders held fast with the new arrivals "not only because they shared with them a common place of origin which was eastern Bengal but also because they could identify with the terrible hardship they had gone through" (Jalais 1760). Once they settled in Morichjhãpi, they have well established cooperation similar to that of an agrarian society in the field of agricultural farming and vocational tutoring. Comparable to the systematic functioning at Hamilton's 'utopian' campus, "hundreds of families had come flocking in" (*THT* 172) to share the new development in the government protected island. Concerning this development, the "possibilities for belonging" has two traditional factors: as the result of genealogical rootage and as the product of a common geographical origin. This is probable because,

> As a whole, the refugees were looked up to by the Sundarbans islanders of the islands adjoining that of Morichjhãpi because they were better educated and more articulate than themselves and because, having lost everything, they were seen as having the moral courage to face the Kolkata ruling class with their rural concern. The islanders often expressed their awe at the way East Bengali refugees rapidly established Morichjhãpi as one of the best-developed islands of the Sundarbans - within a few months tube-wells had been dug, a viable fishing industry, salt pans, dispensaries and schools established, and this contrasted lamentably with the islands they came from, where many of these facilities were, and are, still lacking (Jalais 1759).

While establishing a connection with "the passage of history and its continuities over time, this novel seems more to underscore the fragility of our brief time on earth" (Hawley 134). This argument does appear to hold ground in Ghosh's historically charged fiction where Kusum, Nirmal and the utopian edifice in Morichjhãpi end in poignant grief.

Ghosh's exploration of the historical eviction of the island dwellers of Morichjhãpi, somewhat resemble internal colonialism. Internal colonialism, metaphorically, denote extremes of categorization and discrimination of people. And the refugees' plight in Morichjhãpi, in short is "in the first place the product of Partition, and therefore ultimately of British colonialism and its divide-and-rule strategies" (Rollason 88). Moreover, steps taken by the state government when they began to eradicate the 'squatters' was equally in the line of "divide-and-rule strategies." As Nirmal notes:

> ... the people in the boat joined together their voices and began to shout, in unison, 'Who are we? We are the dispossessed.'
> How strange it was to hear this plaintive cry wafting across the water. [...] Who, indeed are we? Where do we belong? [...] Who was I? Where did I belong? In Kolkata or in the tide country? In India or across the border? In prose or in poetry?
> Then we heard the settlers shouting a refrain, answering the questions they had themselves posed: We'll not leave Morichjhãpi, do what you may.'
> Standing on the deck of the bhotbhoti, I was struck by the beauty of this. Where else could you belong, except in the place you refused to leave (*THT* 254).

Urging the settlers to abandon their homes, the state authority implemented every exploitive measure available to them. "Busloads of outsiders were assembling in the villages around the island; they were people such as had never before been seen in the tide country, hardened men from cities, criminals, gangsters" (*THT* 276). With this band of goons, the police boats completely blocked the outlet and inlet of the settler's island - where they for eighteen months had built a better topography than Hamilton's utopian

landmark; and where they had demonstrated the authenticity of collective "possibilities for belonging." As the siege continued for days, "the settlers had been reduced to eating grass. The police had destroyed the tube wells and there was no potable water left; the settlers were drinking from puddles and ponds and an epidemic of cholera had broken out" (*THT* 260). And when the law enforcer unleashed the gangsters to carry out direct havoc and rampages at Morichjhãpi – "they burnt the settlers' huts, they sank their boats, they laid waste to their fields [...] a group of women taken away by force, Kusum among them. People say they were used and then thrown into the rivers" (*THT* 279). A few days before the brutal eviction in Morichjhãpi, Nirmal in a pensive mood wonders,

> I remembered the story Kusum had told me, of her exile in Bihar and how she had dreamed of returning to this place, of seeing once more these rich fields of mud, these trembling tides; I thought of all the others who had come with her to Morichjhãpi and of all they had braved to find their way here. In what way could I ever do justice to this place? (*THT* 216).

Continuing on the topic of place, "there is no global without its constituent locals and locales" (Bahri 503), for at the deepest levels, not only does it implicitly communicate nostalgia for lost roots or family linkages, but place as home also represents a human embodiment - "as places of departure versus destinations" (Ishkanian 111). In contemporary times, if "return to place or past ways of life may be impossible or inconvenient" (Kandiyoti 2006), can this view have an effect on a displaced community of peoples of diverse cultural and ecological backgrounds? A critic argues that place is a form of "memory, history, family and beliefs that are the significant factors determining identity rather than the claim to belong to certain spaces and lands to be geographically

rooted" (Begum 145). This argument does not suffice in the context of Kusum since place to her is home, of belonging and an entire relationship, because "'home' is created through 'tangential locations,' or the places where geographical location, racial background, and cultural history concurrently impact an individual" (Maloney 1999).

In the beginning, this chapter talks about a yearning for the warmth of home, the solidity of place, and the security of a fixed cultural identity which becomes a possibility. Perhaps, the saddest part of the possibility of belonging and homecoming is that it is primarily composed of ephemeral yet strong memories of the place itself. Even as "the feeling accompanying the memory is of safety, belonging and security" (Jinhu Chen 241), the fleetingness of hope and vision that dwindled down in Morichjhãpi is a fine example. With the consent of state administration, the action against the settlement accomplished its destruction in the name of environmental goodwill, for the sake of forest protection and reservation of land for tigers. The act resulted in the demoralization and collapse of everything that gave meaning to their lives. Kusum best describes their tragic predicament.

> The worst part was not the hunger or the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the policemen making their announcements, hearing them say that our lives, our existence, was worth less than dirt or dust. "This island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals, it is a part of a reserve forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers, which is paid by people from all around the world." Every day, sitting here, with hunger gnawing at our bellies, we would listen to these words, over and over again. Who are these people, I wondered, who love animals so much that they are willing to kill us for them? [...] As I thought of these things it seemed to me that this whole world has become a place of animals, and our fault, our crime, was that we were just human beings, trying to live as human beings always

> have, from the water and the soil. No human being could think this a crime unless they have forgotten that this is how humans have always lived - by fishing, by clearing land and by planting the soil (*THT* 261-262).

Wildlife protection eventually resulted in "systematic decimation and eventual destruction" (Das 185) of human existence in the Sundarbans. The novel concludes on a poignant and nostalgic note heard through the multiple voices of Ghosh's fictional narrators. He want his readers to understand that nostalgia functions as longing and desire for 'home' in relation to experiences of alienation, displacement, and estrangement. And while representing the estranged voices, Ghosh "problematizes the mythologies of nationalism and globalization, revealing the violence of the state and capital in minoritized lives" (Daiya 397).

Ghosh opens up the "possibilities for belonging" by showing that individuals do have geographical rootedness to return to, though it requires consideration of the process of return, and the length and summary of such return narrated through several voices, in so many different ways. Kusum's optimism and hope against hope, in settling down at Morichjhãpi cannot not be assessed at the same level as the betrayal of Tha'mma's homecoming in Dhaka while having a place in Calcutta. It appears that Ghosh attempts to disclose that, "The very concept of nativeness (and everything that it qualifies) is shot through with our basic instinct of territoriality, the need to mark the space, to name and claim it" (Mircescu 11).

By projecting nostalgic relationships with places and locations, through individual and collective voices, Ghosh restructures the concept and meaning of nostalgia "by virtue

of the fact that they are generally identifiable experiences belonging to a widely recognizable sociocultural context and historical period" (Jinhu Chen 241). Moreover, in situating his multiple characters, the illusion of boundaries have a wider significance "to his aesthetic project in that the narrative becomes the tool through which recollections come together and interpenetrate to produce a memory-driven meaning" (Prasad 77). In sum, Ghosh encourages the possibility of reflective nostalgia that dwells in "human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity" (Desai 142). In a digitized world of perennial transformation, 'home' and 'homelessness' will remain contested evenly as a centre of fluid experiences, and definition. In addition, 'place' and 'displacement' will continue to transfigure the human 'sense of belonging.'

Endnotes.

1. Jonathan Gil Harris. "Untimely Mediations." *Early Modern Culture* 2007. 19 Sept. 2008 <http://emc.eserver.org/1-6/issue6.html>. Harris states that, "The very condition of nostalgia is an eighteenth-century invention that has anachronistically collided with the play-text and helped to turn it into a patriotic fantasy about England's glorious past."

2. Priyamvada Gopal. "Histories of belonging and becoming." An Interview with Amitav Ghosh. *The Hindu Literary Review* 5 Oct. (2008): 1.
Ghosh suggests that: "Not only does it allow you to tell a story, but it also permits you to create the world within which that story is told." He also pointed out: "For me, the value of the novel, as a form, is that it is able to incorporate elements of every aspect of life - history, natural history, rhetoric, politics, beliefs, religion, family, love, sexuality." See "A Fine Imbalance." Interview with Amitav Ghosh. 19 April 2006.
<http://asuph.wordpress.com/2006/04/19/amitav-ghosh-interview-old-one>.
In an interview with Daniel Ziv, he also stresses that: "Mainly I write about people, and what I find very interesting in writing about history is that it gives you the distance where you can see that relationship between people and their circumstances in a more complete kind of way. And I think that's something that has always been a part of the novelistic tradition." See Interview with Amitav Ghosh. "Novelist in Paradise - Writing in Bali." *Jakarta Post Sunday* 23 Oct. 2005. <http://novelistinparadise.com/?p=57>.

3. Pasteur or Pasteur treatment, also known as rabies treatment is a treatment for somebody infected with rabies in which increasingly strong injections of a less infective form of the virus are given to produce antibodies against it. (Microsoft® Encarta® 2008 (DVD) Microsoft Corporation, 2007) The treatment is named after Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) a French chemist and biologist whose discovery that fermentation is caused by microorganisms resulted in the process of pasteurization.
(<http://www.wordweb.info/WW5>)

Pasteur proposed the germ theory of disease, in which diseases arise from naturally existing microorganisms, not from spontaneous generation, the supposed formation of disease-causing organisms from nonliving matter. (Microsoft® Encarta® 2008)

4. Annu Jalais. “Dwelling on Morichjhãpi: When Tigers Became ‘Citizens’, Refugees ‘Tiger-Food.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 23 Apr. (2005): 17570-758.
In the same article, Jalais stresses the political connotation imbibed in the ironic phrase of “Morichjhãpi: A Double Betrayal,” and quoting her: The opposition, *the Left Front*, denounced the Congress’ attempts to evict the refugees from West Bengal and promised that when they came to power they would settle the refugees in West Bengal; and that this would, in all probability, be on one of the islands of the Sundarbans. In 1977, when the Left Front came to power, they found their refugee supporters had taken them at their word [...] In all, 1,50,000 refugees arrived from Dandakaranya expecting the government to honour its word. Fearing that an influx of refugees might jeopardize the prospects of the state’s economic recovery, the government started to forcibly send them back.(1758) Also see Ross Mallick’s article, “Refugee Recruitment in Forest Reserve: West Bengal Policy Reversal and the Morichjhãpi Massacre.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58.1 (1999): 103-125.

5. Christopher Rollason. “In Our Translated World: Transcultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*.” *The Atlantic Literary Review* 6.1-2 (2005): 92.
Rollason continue to mention that, the failed popular revolt is, not surprisingly, a recurrent topos in postcolonial/transcultural/third-world writing: examples in Latin American literature include the salt rebellion of the indigenous women in José María Arguedas’*Los Ríos profundos* (1958) and the banana workers’ strike in Gabriel García Márquez’s *Cien años de soledad* (1967), while in Indian literature Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938), with its Gandhian women villagers’ insurrection, provides a classic exploration of the theme.

6. Amitav Ghosh. “The Chronicle Interview.” *UN Chronicle* 1 Dec. 2005. <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/UN-chronicle/2005/December/1-p57>. See ‘The Author’s Note,’ *The Hungry Tide*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2004. p. 401.

Works Cited.

Ahmad, Aijaz. 1995, "The politics of literary postcoloniality." *Race and Class* 36.3 (1995).

Alicke, Mark D., David A. Dunning, Joachim I. Krueger, eds. *The Self in Social Judgment*. New York: Psychology Press, 2005.

Allon, Fiona. "Boundary Anxieties: Between Borders and Belongings." *Borderlands e journal* 1.2 (2002) 8 June 2009 <http://www.borderlands.net.au/index.html>.

Almond, Ian. "Post-Colonial Melancholy: An Examination of Sadness in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*." *Orbis Litterarum* 59 (2004).

Ankersmit, Frank. R. *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Bahri, Deepika. "Predicting the Past." *Modern Language Quarterly* 65.3 (2004).

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London/New York: Routledge, (1994) 2007.

Bhattacharjee, Sukalpa. "Diaspora and Migrancy: The Possibilities of the In-between" in *Post-Colonial Literature: Essays on Gender, Theory and Genres*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2004.

Black, Shameem. "Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 41.3 (2006).

Boland, Daniel A. Rev. of *Home and Away*, by Ian Wiseman. Pottersfield Press, 1999. *The Antigonish Review* 124 (2006): 13 Sept. 2008 <http://www.antigonishreview.com/bi-124/index.html>.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Chakravarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Chambers, Claire. "The Absolute Essentialness of Conversations: A discussion with Amitav Ghosh." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 41.1 (2005).

Choudhuri, Supriya. "A Sense of Place." Rev. of *The Hungry Tide*. *Doon Online* 12 Oct. 2004. <http://www.dosco.org/index.htm>.

Coates, Rodney D. *Race and Ethnicity: Across Time, Space and Discipline*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004.

Daiya, Kavita. "No Home but in Memory: Migrant Bodies and Belongings, Globalization and Nationalism *in The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*" in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Das, Saswat S. "Home and Homelessness in *The Hungry Tide*: A Discourse Unmade" *Indian Literature* 235, 1.5 (2006).

Desai, Gaurav. "Old World Orders: Amitav Ghosh and the Writing of Nostalgia." *Representations* 85 (2004).

Dickinson, Hilary, Michael Erben. "Nostalgia and Autobiography: The Past in the Present." *Auto/Biography* 14 (2006).

Dixon, Robert. "'Travelling in the West': The Writing of Amitav Ghosh" in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Erfani, Farhang. "Being-There and Being-From-Elsewhere: An Existential-Analytic of Exile." *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* 5.3 (2005) <http://reconstruction.eserver.org/023/erfani.htm>.

Esplin, Greg. "Melancholic Longing in *The Shadow Lines*." *Portals: a journal in comparative literature* (2004). <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~clsa/portals/2004/esplin.html>.

Ghosh, Amitav. "No Greater Sorrow: Times of Joy Recalled in Wretchedness." Speech on the Second Millennium Lecture. ICES, Colombo on 29 July, 2001. <http://www.icescolombo.org/event2.htm>.

-----. "The Man behind the Mosque." 2 May 2007 <http://www.amitavghosh.com/essays_html.php>.

Hariharan, Githa. "In Search of our Other Selves: Literature as Resistance." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 43.2 (2007).

Hawley, John. "A Tale of Two Riots: *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*" in *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005.

Hutcheon, Linda. “Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern.” Methods for the study of literature as cultural memory. *Studies in Comparative Literature* 30 (2000).

Ishkanian, Armine. “Home-Coming and Goings.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 13.1 (2004).

Jameela, Begum. “An Immigrant’s Vision of Nationalism: Rohinton Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey*” in *Rohinton Mistry: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Anjali Gera Roy; Meena T Pillai, eds. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007.

Jinhu, Dai, Judy T. H. Chen. “Imagined Nostalgia.” *boundary* 2 24.3 (1997).

Jones, Stephanie. “A novel genre: polylingualism and magical realism in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66 (2003).

Kandiyoti, Dalia. “Consuming nostalgia: nostalgia and the marketplace in Cristina Garcia and Ana Menendez.” *MELUS* 22 March 2006. <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/MELUS/2006/March/22-p567>.

Kapadia, Novy. “Imagination and Politics in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*” in *Many Indias, Many Literatures*: New Critical Essays. Delhi: Worldview, 2000.

Malhotra, Meenakshi. “Gender; Nation, History: Some observation on teaching *The Shadow Lines*” in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Maloney, Carol. Rev. of *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth Century Fiction*, by Rosemary Marangoly George. Cambridge University Press, 1996. *MELUS* 22 Dec. 1999. <http://www.freelibrary.com/MELUS/1999/December/22-p567>.

Mandal, Somdatta. “Oh Calcutta! The New Bengal Movement in Diasporic Indian English Fiction.” *Anthropologist*. Special Issue on Indian Diaspora: The 21st Century-Migration, Change and Adaptation. 2 (2007).

Mircescu, Monica. “The Language of Home.” *eSharp* 7 (2006)

Nagraju, N. “Narrating New Pasts: The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh” in *Modern Literary Criticism: Theory and Practice Vol. I*. New Delhi: Authorspress, 2003.

Prasad, G.J.V. “Re-Writing the World: *The Circle of Reason* as the Beginning of the Quest” in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Rai, Alok. “Saga of Marichjhapi.” Rev. of *The Hungry Tide. Outlook* 12 July (2004).

Rajalakshmi, N.K. “Modernity in the Work of Amitav Ghosh” in *Rethinking Modernity*. Prafulla C. Kar, et al, eds. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007.

Reddy, Sheela. Interview, ‘Amitav Ghosh: Writing Through Turmoil’ *Outlook* (New Delhi) 19 Aug. 2002.

Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight’s Children*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1982.

Sharrad, Paul. “Fabricating Community: Local, National and Global in Three Indian novels.” *Faculty of Arts* (2004).

Singh, Sujala. “Who Can Save the Subaltern? Knowledge and Power in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*.” *Critical Survey* 16.2 (2004).

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Moving Devi.” *Cultural Critique* 47 (2001).

Thieme, John. “‘Out of Place’? The Poetics of Space in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* and Michael Ondaatje’s *Anil’s Ghost*” in *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/Longing*. New Delhi: Books Plus, 2008.

Upstone, Sara. “Domesticity in Magical-Realist Postcolonial Fiction.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 28.1&2 (2007).

V, Rajakrishnan. “The Land of the Dead in Salman Rushdie’s *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, and some reflections based on Indian Response to the Theme of Exile.” *Indian Literature* 185 42.3 (1998).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

> He knew suddenly that al-Ghazira wasn't a real place at all, but a question: are foreign countries merely not-home, or are they all that home is not?
>
> - Amitav Ghosh, *The Circle of Reason.*

As a postcolonial modernist writer, Amitav Ghosh is known for the transnational character of his writings as he transcends traditional and literary borderlines. As a novelist, he is candidly critical in his interpretation on nation formation, and makes the most of it as an allegory for the expressive style of nationhood, which in due course intercommunicate the early post-independence nationalistic views. A contemporary postcolonial writer who is equipped with a multidimensional personality and an independent thinking, Amitav Ghosh is more likely to be "a cultural traveller, or an 'extra-territorial' than a national" (Boehmer 227), beyond the boundary of nation and narration. Nevertheless, this does not indicate that the writer is free of a specified centre, free from confinement and not fixed in position. The literary experiences and vast cultural interaction hardly diminishes his rootage and sense of familial connection, and more importantly his ties with the mother country. This is apparent as Leela Gandhi propounded that, histories and families cannot be chosen freely by a simple act of will, as seen in newly emergent postcolonial nation-states who are often deluded and unsuccessful in their attempts to disown the burdens of their colonial inheritance. This is particularly true in Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* and in *The Glass Palace*, where colonial legacy is strongly depicted.

There is some truth in saying that the 21st century postcolonial writers are no longer aware of the direct linearity of colonial impingement, but of the 'national bourgeoisie' class who have reduplicated the hegemonic power structure of the colonial past. Stepping away from the 'formal attire' pioneered by the early post-independence narratives, contemporary postcolonial writers cause to change the old "vision of the world as divided between white man and the other, the West and the rest" (Boehmer 228). Having been burdened with a colonial legacy, Ghosh's narratives focus on the local towards the global rather than global to local. He renders voice to the unrepresented stories of ordinary common people in his fiction, since he is not in a position to overlook the cultural reality of postcolonial "hybridity and displacement within the nation, its peoples, and its history" (Hutcheon 17). Contemporary postcolonial writers concerns are about the encounter of cultures not in principle but in reality. Repression and resistance, hybridity and difference within a nation all have their connectedness in postcolonial studies.

Since postcolonial writings also refer to any kind of marginality within the process of nation formation, Ghosh does manage to break up geographical, historical and cultural spaces but only to rework from the beginning through unconventional patterns by inventing his own stories. Historical connections with regional background become standard themes of his literary works without succumbing to the stories and voices, invented by a central power. Ghosh creates a complex and provocative image of a modern-state, and punctuates the extreme difficulties in order to determine a convincing definition on nation. For instance, it is believed that no one else sees a nation more clearly than an outsider does. Outsider in this sense is the one who is excluded from social institution or is

not a member of a centralized group. Perhaps, outsiders otherwise marginalized people have unique ability to show a response to the formation of a particular nation, and how the nation affects its citizens.

The concept of nation has been regarded as having, in the words of Grosby, "trans-individual structure," and rotates as "social relation of collective self-consciousness." In contrast, Ghosh's fictions have uplifted individuality to a great extent, and constructed an individual moral consciousness to symbolize collective entity. While nationalism diminishes the existence of individualism, contemporary narratives favour borderless individuality to oppose the central theme of 'master narrative' as promoted by both nationalism and its hegemonic power. To do this, Amitav Ghosh deliberately projects 'nuclear family,' as an essential entity and as a basic social unit that opposes the idea of nation or nationalism, by giving it a less significant space in his narrative.

The term 'nuclear family' developed in the western world to distinguish the family group consisting of parents and their children, from what is known as an extended family. Regardless of its original definition, ideological, political, and economic processes shape the contemporary meaning of nuclear family. As such, Ghosh provide serious attention to 'nuclear family' instead of centralizing nation, and states the reason as - "what you do is you make your family your nation, your domain of autonomy. That's where you locate your individuality, your sovereignty" (Ghosh in Aldama). The narrative of nuclear family is very strong in his novels, and there is always a firm connection between an individual's experience of defeat and happiness and his/her place within the national historical record,

especially in *The Circle of Reason, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide* and in *Sea of Poppies*.

The members of Ghosh's nuclear family are mostly common folk, ordinary citizens, land squatters, oppressed individuals and stateless persons. Alu, Zindi, Professor Samuel and their equalitarian family in the novel *The Circle of Reason* is the archetype of one such nuclear family. Driven out of India, a range of peculiar individuals converge in the novel and manage to form a strong bond through group relationship whether it is in al-Ghazira or elsewhere. Each member not only endures but also delights in their social differences since they are adequately committed to each other not to feel threatened by the differences. Likewise, in *The Hungry Tide*, persons of diverse cultures and personalities assemble a strange social unit in the Sunderbans islands. Piyali Roy, American of Indian parentage; Kanai Dutt, a sophisticated Delhi businessman; Fokir, an illiterate fisherman; Nirmal Bose, a veteran Marxist intellectual; Nilima Bose, a housewife turned social worker and Kusum, displaced and homeless, all give balance to a mismatched constituent.

In *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh brings together a motley group of people, an invented community, who board the *Ibis*, a former slave ship toward Mauritius across the Indian Ocean, in the midst of the Opium Wars between Britain and China. This world contains a mulatto from America, a bankrupt raja, a free-spirited French orphan, a widowed tribeswoman, and other disparate members of society. Once abroad and after overcoming their differences that "they were all kin now; that their rebirth in the ship's womb had made them into a single family" (*SOP* 432). The fluid identity illustrated in the various

characters in *Sea of Poppies*, represents the possibility of borderless movement and cross-cultural relationship.

Critics like Fredric Jameson argue that the developing third-world novel is particularly devoted to themes such as nation building and nationalism to a large degree. Ghosh, who projects family as a mirror of the nation, shows concern about this remark. In a conversation with Aldama, he explains,

> I think one of the reasons for that kind of analysis is that it's become fashionable now, since Jameson and so on, to talk about Third World novels as being essentially about nation and nation building. I think that's just a load of rubbish. Many of my books, if not all of my books, have really been centered on families. To me, the family is the central unit, because it's not about the nation, you know? Families can actually span nations. *The Glass Palace* actually ranges between what are now many different nations, so it's absolutely not about a nation or one nation or whatever. The fact that it has been structured around the family is absolutely essential to its narration. It is explicitly not about a nation, as it were. And I think it is not just me. I think the reason why you see so many Indian books essentially centered on the family is precisely because the nation is not, as it were, the central imaginative unit. So I think Jameson and Bhabha and all the others are completely wrong about this. That is a very lopsided and ultimately not an alert reading. I think this way of writing about the contemporary world goes back to Proust, you know? With Proust, again, it's essentially the family that pulls in the threads of nationhood and politics and individuality. That's very much an available tradition within modernism. I mean, the family certainly is absolutely critical to my narration. And so that's why I said to you, this book has the form of the family memoir, because I do think that it gives you a narrative form that can transcend the national. It's evident that a book like this can't be written

> within the borders of the national. How can it be written within the borders? I see especially in American writing today the nation as being absolutely fundamental to the imaginative life of writers, you know? I mean, half the books you open that are by American writers are American -- an American romance, or American Beauty -- or it's about a generation, which is really just a subset of “nation,” because that generation is imagined nationally. But it's not at all the case with writers from my part of the world. (2002)

Based on the above assumption, the traditional definition of nationalism, which is characterized principally by a feeling of community among a people, based on common descent, language, and religion is rather contentious. It may be defined in principle as a pressure group that seeks to attain and maintain citizenship, unity and identity and yet it achieved political characteristic only through the influence of western ideas, notably those of British origin, and in struggle against British rule. In western society, individuals come together and form a social unit, whereas in Indian society, it is said that a group forms a social unit. In the Indian context, nationalism is the byproduct of ‘collective’ consciousness while in the American society, for example, patriotism/Americanism is not necessarily a group realization but is oftentimes an individual expression. In addition, nation and nationalism, though it shares lexical root formation, is not the same thing. Nation links with national and nationality while nationalist, nationalistic, and ultranationalism is the offshoot of nationalism. In other words, a person who belongs to a single nation (as geographical area) does not necessarily share the same idea of nationalism (as political consciousness) with others.

From a different viewpoint, extreme fundamentalism in a form of violence is one of the foundation stones of the early post-independence nationalism. In his essay *The Fundamentalist Challenge*, Ghosh confronts the "dehumanization of contemporary life" by questioning political oriented religious fundamentalism: "Why are these movements so easily pushed over the edge, why are they so violent, so destructive, and why is their thinking so filled with intolerance and hate?" (284-285). In this sense, the notions of freedom, autonomy and democracy are well connected with violent behavior in the political background of the Indian history. In a literary discussion with Neluka Silva and Alex Tickell, Ghosh has openly pointed out saying that, "I hate these fundamentalists, I hate extreme nationalism […] the way in which that kind of violence lives in our imaginations and lives in our minds is very much a South Asian thing" (215-218). Violence, in the context of his fictional narratives is the reproduction of voices that represent political upheaval, economical insecurity, religious fanaticism and social differences.

Violence erupts when truth resists and challenges the socio-political. And, violence causes chaos, trauma, disorder and disintegration, and more importantly displacement. The great Indian exodus from Burma during the Second World War, as depicted in *The Glass Palace* is one such example. The police invasion of Lalpukur in *The Circle of Reason*, the brutal eviction of land squatters in *The Hungry Tide* and Dhaka riots in *The Shadow Lines* are examples. In fact, the firsthand knowledge of the Delhi riots in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 inspired Ghosh into writing *The Shadow Lines*.

Since violence seeks to strangulate the spirit of freedom, the idea of "representations of representations" (Ghosh in Silva Tickell 215) becomes the chief cause of sociopolitical violence. Seen from another angle, it can be considered that the issue of human evolution and the theory of violence is a combination of social fact that further generates violence as interpretative, suffering as representational, displacement as identity, and an integral part of human existence. In this sense, the calculated use of violence by means of instilling fear and intimidation is to attain goals that are political, religious, social or ideological in nature. To accept violence in this order, particularly for marginalised and displaced persons, is to accept defeat and reality, the reality of being betrayed by law, being subjugated by social structure in a clashes of class struggle, being marked as a homeless wanderer - being a prisoner in one's own backyard.

From another point of view, critics too analyze Ghosh's tireless campaign against the "dehumanization of contemporary life" (2002 268) as a mere political exertion of "anti-nationalism", which in different ways breed different connotation. However, Ghosh negotiates the struggle of that suffering in silence. In his essay *The Greatest Sorrow: Times of Joy Recalled in Wretchedness*, writes,

> ...the sufferings of displacement are tinged here with the hope of arrival and the opening of new vistas in the future. An expulsion offers no such consolation: the pain that haunts it is not that of remembered oppression; it is rather that particular species of pain - so well documented in the literature of Partition - that comes from the knowledge that the oppressor and the oppressed were once brothers (312).

Voices that compel attention get deepened when the feeling of insecurity of the minority groups, especially of those who do not have political stability are expressed, and it is not "easy to celebrate the commodification of one's suffering" (Ghosh 2002 17). There is a possibility in striking counter-violence when there is a great disparity in the way state security and welfare system were implemented. However, Ghosh's chief purpose in referring to the culture of violence is not to indulge in any blame game but to show how the lessons of history have never been learnt.

Coming to the issue of gender/identity formation, the 'nuclear family' observed in Ghosh's narratives fail to recognize the burden of neither patriarchal influences, or of matriarchal obligation. His fiction demonstrates his keenness for individual characteristics rather than focusing on gender identity issues. Identity and gender differences cannot "fully flourish while men and women languish under forms of exploitation; and to combat those forms effectively implicates ideas of humanity which are necessarily universal" (Eagleton 121). Identity is one 'right,' in the sense of right to life, and is foremost in Ghosh's fiction. Within the scenario of Ghosh's 'nuclear family,' identity is a subtle issue, for no person belongs to just one particular societal group or community, and no community entirely embraces all its members. In short, Ghosh does not privilege gender identity and challenges masculinist nationalistic narratives.

Ghosh displays a deep sensitivity to the role of gender identities - both masculinity and femininity - in determining and molding his fictionalized family. For instance, Kusum or Nilima in *The Hungry Tide* can be considered genderless citizens in the sense that their individual experiences and personal contribution to the society they attach themselves to is

much stronger than it reflecting their femininity. The widowed village woman Deeti, in *Sea of Poppies*, brings to life her misery, the expectations made on her by her husband's family, the customs which she must honor (including sati), and the life which her six-year-old daughter Kabutri must expect (including marriage within three or four years). Deeti, who had never "seen the sea, never left the district, never spoken any language but her native Bhojpuri" (*SOP* 8), yet she sees life as it is, recognizing all its cruelty but also seeing its potential, and her clear-sighted observations of life around her vividly convey her strong characteristic and the roles thrust open to her. For instance, Deeti discovers the power of opium when she uses it in order to sedate her bothersome mother-in-law,

> The more she ministered the drug, the more she came to respect its potency: how frail a creature was a human being, to be tamed by such tiny doses of this substance! She saw now why the factory in Ghazipur was so diligently patrolled by the sahibs and their sepoys - for if a little bit of this gum could give her such power over the life, the character, the very soul of this elderly woman, then with more of it at her disposal, why should she not be able to seize kingdoms and control multitudes? And surely this could not be the only such substance upon the earth? (38)

In the novel, the old woman, whenever she is in her intoxicated mood, often refers to Deeti as "Draupadi, of the *Mahabharata*, wife to five brothers […] a fortunate woman, who bears the children of brothers for each other" (*SOP* 39). With the story of legends and myths, *The Mahabharata* treats all the aspects of ancient Indian culture - religion, moral values, politics, economics, art, science, and mathematics. Even though Deeti's mother-in-law depicted her as a "virtuous woman" (*SOP* 39), yet it was never an easy passage to Draupadi, the common wife of the five Pandava brothers. While revenge is always present

in the mind of the shamed Draupadi, the central theme of *The Mahabharata* is the contest between two noble families, the Pandavas and their blood relatives the Kauravas, for possession of a kingdom in northern India. Deeti, on the other hand, believes that, "the child in her belly had been fathered not by her husband, but by Chandan Singh, her leering, slack-jawed brother-in-law" (*SOP* 39). This is possible because Deeti was drugged on the night of her wedding. There is no point in confronting neither her husband nor her mother-in-law on "the shamelessness of her own curiosity" (*SOP* 59), because it would serve no purpose, and "it was no use to weep and bemoan the influence of the planets" (*SOP* 37). Therefore, Deeti never seeks revenge unlike Draupadi, and instead she willingly complies with the customary expectations from her husband's family to the extent of sati.

While India is infested with the abysmal social inequalities, Ghosh deliberately develops an unusual relationship between Deeti, who is a high-caste Rajput widowed and Kalua, a low-caste Bihari ox-cart-driver, in spite of the fact that "Kalua knew full well that between her and himself, none but the most tenuous connection could exist" (*SOP* 174). In Deeti eyes, Kalua, whose "dwelling did not look like a hut at all, but had more the look of a cattle pen" (*SOP* 53), still felt secure and attached in spite of this. Through these conflicting narrative voices, Ghosh consciously discloses yet challenges the norms and practices of Hindu religious tradition. Eloping with Kalua from Ghazipur, "some fifty miles east of Benares" (*SOP* 3), Deeti tried to imagine what it would be like and,

> …to know that you were forever an outcaste; to know that you would never again enter your father's house; that you would never throw your arms

> around your mother; never eat a meal with your sisters and brothers; never feel the cleansing touch of the Ganga (*SOP* 72).

Here, through the character of Deeti, Ghosh gave voice not to frustration and anger, nor to dreams and aspirations, but simply a voice of social reality. While a community of sorts begins to form among the migrants, Deeti's role as a woman is distinguishable from the men on the *Ibis*. Once the ship begins her journey, relationships are forged within the indentured labourers, Munia, Heeru, Sarju, Champa, Ratna and Dokhanee, including Paulette, the French orphan, who soon regard Deeti as an elder sister. She is the "girl's surrogate bhauji, the sister-in-law that everyone dreamed of, friend, protector and confidant" (*SOP* 243). In *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh brings to life a period of colonial upheaval that caused cultural shifts throughout the globe. Within such a location, he has taken up the task of seeking out the voices silent in and arguably silenced by dominant discourse and practice. He simply paid special attention to how identity, gender and customs can be articulated within borderless social practices. Zindi al-Tiffaha, the Egyptian woman in *The Circle of Reason*, is one such character who makes it possible to depict Ghosh's projection on trans-border and trans-cultural activities.

Zindi, after being banished by her husband owing to her barrenness, runs her own lodging house, a brothel in al-Ghazira. She not only took charge of Alu, the chief protagonist in *The Circle of Reason*, but also lodged the other travellers - Karthamma, Kulfi, Rakesh and Professor Samuel in their search for jobs and security, as well as travelling with them to El Qued, on the edge of the Algerian Sahara. She may have had her origins in any African myth or none, but she is clearly in her present existence the product

of a borderless continent, indeed, of a world without boundaries. In the context of an unparalleled political and cultural setting, Zindi, quite similar in quality and in character to Deeti, has a strong sense of responsibility towards those who were dependent on her - just as Alu did himself. In this sense, Ghosh's narrative fictions exhibit his keenness for the individual spirit rather than adapt to gender inequality.

Coming to the subject of home, within which belonging and exclusion are constantly reshaped and renegotiated, Ghosh is often preoccupied with a fixed notion of home. In his fiction, family is the home of an individual identity and, he projects it in such a way that home and family are seen to be closely linked. For instance, to young Jodu in *Sea of Poppies*, his parents place in Naskarpara lying on the edge of the Sundarbans is "never home to him in the way of the Lambert bungalow, where he reigned as Miss Paulette's favoured playmate and mock consort" (*SOP 67*). Among other children in the bungalow's quarters, "only Jodu was allowed free access to the main house and its bedroom" (*SOP 67*), due to the fact that "Jodu's mother became Paulette's wet nurse" (*SOP 66*), her "'Tantima' - 'aunt-mother'" (*SOP 66*).

As for the North Indian women, home associates with "embers of recollection" (*SOP 397*). In their case, "no matter how hard the times at home may have been, in the ashes of every past there were a few cinders of memory that glowed with warmth" (*SOP 397*). To Deeti, home served only to "remind her of Kabutri and the memories from which she would be forever excluded" (*SOP 397*). Similarly, for Raja Neel Rattan Haldar, the disgraced zamindar of Raskhali, home is just "an illusion, no more than a matter of playing a part in the great charade of conducting a householder's life" (*SOP 297*). In his confusion

and bafflement, the degraded Raja is not in a condition to have a sound thinking on home, family or village. In fact, "what he needed now, was to be elsewhere, in a place where he could be free of his memories" (*SOP 375*). Home and family, in their predicament merely imply how fluid the notions of place and identity have become.

From the issue of home to the discourse of postcolonial nation, Ghosh portrays the human race in which the understanding of community falsifies the ideologies of nation, adapted through postcolonial reading. For instance, *The Glass Palace* rejects colonial binaries and essentialist notions of culture, history and politics and offers a novel definition on nation. Rajkumar, the chief protagonist in the novel, was

> … at a loss to understand his grief. He was, in a way, a feral creature, unaware that in certain places there exist invisible bonds linking people to one another through personifications of their commonality. In the Bengal of his birth, those ties had been sundered by a century of conquest and no longer existed even as a memory […] But that there should exist a universe of loyalties that was unrelated to himself and his own immediate needs - this was very nearly incomprehensible (47).

Several contemporary postcolonial novelists represent India as unified through diversity. However, Ghosh anticipates differently. He states, "No matter how hard Indians tried to be like the British, they were never admitted into the elite club of white colonialists beyond a point […] This left Indians with an immense sense of hurt […] sometimes I think we don't realize what it was like to live in a colonial society […] The rulers controlled all access to knowledge. That's why India could not prosper despite all the talent" (Ghosh in Mitra 2).

Ghosh's narrative stance helps in realizing that all nations can be traced back to histories of displacement and migration. Both displacement and emplacement are projected as a ceaseless trajectory in his works. Hence, the multiple voices worked into his narratives are more confined to the nature of physical displacement rather than the sense of travel or journey. While the lexical meaning of 'travel' connotes choice, the actual experiences of displacement have more to do with involuntary compulsion; the characterization of Dolly and Uma of *The Glass Palace* is one such example.

An interesting observation made in the discourse of geographical movement is that immigrants and diasporic communities from former colonies of Asia and Africa have viewed England not as a land of opportunity alone, but rather as a kind of 'secondary home,' a mother country whose cultural history and literature were studied in their own native educational curriculum. However, 'cultural shock' is a frequent occurrence except in out of the ordinary cases of the narrators such as those found in *The Shadow Lines,* and Alu in *The Circle of Reason*. Self-identity usually depends on one's so that the encounter with culture that is entirely different from one's own can cause a feeling of confusion and disorientation. Social scientists refer to this phenomenon as 'cultural shock.' In multicultural societies, into which people come from a diversity of cultures, unshared forms of culture can also lead to tension. Antagonism from the host nation is a common event, and yet to embrace 'displacement' abroad is to embrace modernity.

The unrepresented people, as in the Morichjhãpi incident found in *The Hungry Tide,* are the original refugees from Bangladesh who resettled first in West Bengal, then moved to Dandakaranya, from where they escaped and came to the Sunderbans in 1978

only to become the victims of state-sponsored violence a year later. Another event that evokes graphic detail in *The Glass Palace* is the 'Forgotten Long March' of the Indians out of Burma following Japan's invasion in 1942. In *The Glass Palace*, the politically banished people who walked the trial of "the Indian exodus" (*TGP* 468) include the principal characters Rajkumar, Dolly and their daughter-in-law Manju and her infant Jaya. Ghosh dramatizes the 'Forgotten Long March' in the novel, thus,

> Some thirty thousand refugees were squatting along the riverbank *of Chindwin*, waiting to move on towards the densely forested mountain ranges that lay ahead. Ahead there were no roads, only tracks, rivers of mud, flowing through green tunnels of jungle […] several hundred thousand people had already trampled through this wilderness. Great numbers of refugees were still arriving, every day […] most of the refugees were afraid of leaving the trail; there were persistent rumours of thieves and dacoits, keeping watch and picking off stragglers (468-470).

The historic refugees trail along the uncompleted Ledo Road, renamed Stilwell Road after the war, which crossed the Chindwin River in the northern part of Burma to connect a railhead in Assam. The condition of the Indian refugees was terrible for they had no food or clothing nor proper transport, as the railroad was hopelessly overcrowded and thus situation compels Rajkumar and his family to follow the same track. In the heat of Burmese open country, malaria, parasites, dysentery and cholera befall the refugees. Thousands died by day and night due to exhaustion from walking, hunger and sickness; even Rajkumar's daughter-in-law Manju is not spared.

In *The Circle of Reason*, displaced people who were the victims of the Indian partition of 1947 and the Bangladesh war of 1971 overcrowd Lalpukur, a fictional town in

West Bengal. Lalpukur grew and swelled overnight, “first, it was brothers with burnt backs and balls cut off at the roots. Then it was cousins and cousins of cousins. Then it did not matter […] bamboo shanties soon luxuriated around the village […] people eating surrounded by their children’s shit; the tin roofs were black with flies; in the lanes rats wouldn’t yield to human feet; there were no drains and no clean water, and the air was stagnant with germs, pregnant with every known disease” (59-61). Whether it is Dandakaranya, Morichjhãpi or Lalpukur, all the people living in these communities, regardless of their personal choices, experienced a sense of displacement imbibed with a sense of defeat. Therefore, displacement, in its intrinsic nature is never desirable.

Ghosh’s narratives apparently convey the understanding that it is through the act of displacement that one arrives at a truer sense of family and home, place and self. The issue of displacement is raised in *The Circle of Reason, The Shadow Lines, The Glass Palace* and in *The Hungry Tide* by imbuing it with socio-political realities, such as the agony of being displaced where power becomes powerlessness, vision turns invisible and space spins into blank space and displacement forms a permanent state of the utopian dreams. For instance, in *The Glass Palace*, Uma Dey, the collector’s wife who belongs to an educated class in the Calcutta of British India, travels abroad after her husband’s death. The emptiness present in her consciousness, as Rukmini Bhaya Nair puts it, empathize with Dolly’s circumstances as both have encountered personal dilemmas in “the sites of colonial oppression, and displaced by the same, single stroke of imperial authority” (167).

However, the idea of Uma as being displaced much before her husband’s death sounds unconvincing. Living in an isolated dinky town of Ratnagiri where her husband

works as a district collector under the British Raj hardly resembles displacement. Moreover, her sojourning in search of solace across continents cannot be romanticized as an act of displacement. She belongs to an elite class and her movements abroad seemingly relate more to travelling, which is a kind of self-imposed exile in her case. Travelling represents class hierarchy and social status, and not necessarily meant for every section of the society. It has a plurality of meanings, while displacement, far from being neutral is forced travel of banishment, resettlement and hostilities. Travel can be taken as a European concept in this context as it designates an unequal division between the elite class and their subject, between the colonizer and the colonized. While the European travelled, discovered, occupied and settled, the Asian and African stayed home, or most of the time - were being displaced, expelled, and forced to immigrate.

Dolly, on the contrary, is an attendant of the royal entourage ever since her childhood and it was not her birthright to forecast her fate. Bound to the magisterial Queen Supayalat of Burma, Dolly accompanied the royal family who were displaced in the small town of Ratnagiri, an isolated port over a hundred miles from Bombay. Displacement, for the Burmese family and to Dolly, becomes the permanent mark of exile. Geographical movement witnessed in *The Glass Palace* resembles the specified notions of home and boundary, settling and travel, family and displacement, the familiar and the foreign. In the narrative, whatever Uma desires and strives to attain is an impossible for Dolly. Space is non-existential to Dolly and displacement is her placement, her fate. It is obvious that travel imbibed both freedom and leisure movement largely, while displacement refers to the process of forced eviction.

Home abroad or ‘at home in the world’ is a very confusing analogue. Through various critical readings on Ghosh, it appears that the contemporary projection of home concept persists a nation in one’s mind, not actual but platonic or mythical and free from history. Home, as mentioned in Chapters Three and Four, is explicable through memory in a nostalgic sensibility, and via imagination as a utopian entity in which diaspora and nation are seen as competing with the other for a prominent platform.

For Ghosh, the novelist, home - as a sense of roots and as a line of descent - remains the centre of his creative writing. His works “make repeated references to the cultural tradition of Calcutta [...] cherished moments of nostalgia or moments of bewilderment in encounters with the real Calcutta” (Mandal 19). Ghosh’s literary contribution in remembering and giving voice to the conflicting experiences of Calcutta’s past-ridden present, is prominent and difficult to avoid. A place, though it might be sad and ugly, remains more or less same or constant as one’s nostalgic centre. The longing for the lost days of one’s childhood is indeed the archetypal form of nostalgia and often empowered with the natures of stability and fixity. Despite the fact that his fictional narratives bridge the first world and the third world repeatedly, “the ‘old country’ sometimes serves as a ready referral at any point of creativity” (Mandal 10). To view it in this way, it will be seen that Ghosh hardly slips away from the centre of his Bengali roots. Even if he managed to cross any assumed boundary line, it is done only to return to his creative centre of action.

The presence of nostalgia is very firm in Ghosh’s fiction for it narrates a ‘sense of connection.’ In the context of displacement (not mental but physical and literal), the

projection of ‘nostalgia’ for a lost past and anxiety about a homeless future simultaneously changes the common perception of the idealized home. Nostalgia then refers to moral discomfort of the displaced individual being overwhelmed with the obsession to return home. In a realistic sense of the word, ‘home’ denotes a dual symbolism associated with security and place of collective relationship, and also as a symbolic centre for an individual’s belongingness through the discursive notion of ‘magical return.’

The term nostalgia, without a doubt, invokes home in its very meaning, as it is derived from Greek *nostos*, for a return home, and *algos*, to be engaged in a painful condition. While it implies homesickness or hankering for one’s home, the concept of postmodernism and its continual paradigm shift on the allegorical reality of nostalgia away from its previous history have created uneasy relationships. The postmodernist version of nostalgia has stratified the whole construction of an individual experience, its interpretation, and the meaning one assigns to the experience, layering it with all sorts of assumptions. The idea of nostalgia has much to do with, according to Nadine Attewell, “our sense of the pastness of the past” (44). On the other hand, the “victim of nostalgia” and their desire to escape from nostalgia, come “to feature prominently in theories of postmodernism and postmodernity” (Attewell 23). In her footnotes, Attewell states that Hutcheon, who overvalues nostalgia in carrying “considerable emotional weight,” asserts that postmodernist fiction invokes not a nostalgic return to the past but rather a critical revisiting of that past.

And coming to the context of the present study, a postmodernist “critical” return to that past is extremely difficult to anticipate in absolute terms since “return to the past” or

"revisiting of that past" is, already, incredibly critical. Because, firstly, postmodernism or any contemporary diasporic discourse "works against any nostalgic return to a falsely idealized past" (Rocco 172). Secondly, "postmodernist historical writing also has a natural nostalgia for a pre-Socratic early history" (Ankersmit 181). Because, history has always been a diverse subject and in postmodern mode, it has become a many-sided discourse in which the old status of political and social institutions no longer obtain its former meaning. Due to varying individual views, what has been entailed in nostalgia transpire not in actual happenings but in meaningful happenings rather than in rhetoric. Therefore, nostalgia is not a mere revisiting of that past; it is a symbol of connection, of roots and familial space.

People who have dispersed from their place of origin, otherwise homelands, by means of various agencies, viz. displacement, diaspora, travelling, etc., hold one 'home' while they belong to several 'homes' as well - springing multiple forms of belonging. A sense of belonging is an open-ended concept in diasporic scenario and must not necessarily postulate one's original home. If diaspora achieved in coming to terms with the sense of belonging within their newfound frame, it is unlikely to be repeated and quite opposite in the process of displacement. It is important to understand that people do not live in different worlds but live differently in the world, and occupy place in different ways to make it one's site of belonging. On the other hand, Ghosh and his works seem to suggest that "borders don't really apply," and yet home remains the 'centre of meaning' with which he imagined his creative literary world. In a discussion, he openly remarks on his theory on fictional writing, which

> ...allows you to explore something with a richness and a sense of context, but most of all it allows you to explore people. So I don't think I could really say that the novel appeals to me because it lets me do this or lets me do that. I think what's appealing to me is that it doesn't have any borders; you can really make it what you want (Ghosh in Chambers 33).

The interesting factor in Ghosh works however, is most likely the sense of connection between people and history, between displacement and home. However, this notion does not suggest that maps and boundaries are penetrative at one's will. His narrator in *The Shadow Lines* acknowledges this, he "believed in the reality of space; I believed that distance separates, that it is a corporeal substance; I believed in the reality of nations and borders; I believed that across the border there existed another reality" (219). On the contrary, Ghosh refuses the very existence of lines and border, and instead projects it as shadowy and illusory as he believes in sharing the similar frame of history, memories, and communities on both sides of the border.

Border is always institutionalized, and it readily stands as a symbol of marginalization between one boundary and another. Ghosh's concept of borderlessness is being away from marginalization of the restricted boundaries, both geographical and societal. Borderlessness also refers to an unsettled location of human dwelling since places are not fixed and unitary. He adopted the concept of borderlessness in defining a given extent in his narrative space, to the reader's imagination, since boundaries do really exist. On the other hand, Ghosh's narrative tends to indicate that in the Indian subcontinent, borderlines cannot simply discriminate people of the same roots, of identical lineage, of history, culture and tradition. To put it differently, borders cannot subdue the deep-seated

identicalness of people on both sides. His attempt to understand the political histories of nations makes him to apply a common framework for peoples across borderlines. As a result, his narrative maps and borders cannot change into ‘the other’ entity. In this sense, “borders don’t really apply” and, he therefore conveys that borders are created and are meant for crossing.

Works Cited.

Aldama, Frederick Luis. "An Interview with Amitav Ghosh." *World Literature Today* 76.2 (2002).

Ankersmit, Frank. R. *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Attewell, Nadine. ""Bouncy Little Tunes": Nostalgia, Sentimentality, and Narrative *in Gravity's Rainbow*." *Contemporary Literature* 45.1 (2004).

Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Chambers, Claire. "The Absolute Essentialness of Conversations: A discussion with Amitav Ghosh." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 41.1 (2005).

Eagleton, Terry. *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998.

Ghosh, Amitav. "The Fundamentalist Challenge" in *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2002.

----. "The Greatest Sorrow: Times of Joy Recalled in Wretchedness" in *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2002.

----. "Tibetan Dinner" in *The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces*. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2002.

Grosby, Steven. *Nationalism. A Very Short Introduction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Hutcheon, Linda, and Mario J. Valdes, eds. *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Mandal, Somdatta. "Oh Calcutta! The New Bengal Movement in Diasporic Indian English Fiction." *Anthropologist*. Special Issue on Indian Diaspora: The 21st Century-Migration, Change and Adaptation. 2 (2007).

Mitra, Chandan. Interview with Amitav Ghosh. *Sunday Pioneer*. Agenda section, 6 March 2005.

Nair, Rukmini Bhaya. “The Road from Mandalay: Reflections on Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*” in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Rocco, Christopher. *Tragedy and Enlightenment: Athenian Political Thought and the Dilemmas of Modernity*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997.

Silva, Neluka and Alex Tickell. “An Interview with Amitav Ghosh” in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Books

The Circle of Reason. New Delhi: Roli Books, 1986.

The Shadow Lines. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1988.

Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in India. New Delhi, Ravi Dayal, 1998.

The Glass Palace. New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2000.

The Imam and the Indian: Prose Pieces. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2002.

The Hungry Tide. New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 2004.

Sea of Poppies. New Delhi: Penguin-Viking, 2008.

Articles

"Confessions of a Xenophile." *Outlook India* 22 Dec. <http://www.outlookindia.com/peoplefnl.aspx?pid+4282&author=Amitav+Ghosh>.

"Imperial Temptation." *Nation* 27 May 2002.

"No Greater Sorrow: Times of Joy Recalled in Wretchedness." Speech on the Second Millennium Lecture, ICES, Colombo, Sri Lanka on 29 July, 2001. http://www.icescolombo.org/event2.htm

"Wild Fictions: Narratives of Nature and the Politics of Forests." Van der Leeuw-lezing, 2005. http://www.vanderleeuwlezing.nl/2005/Wild%20Fictions%20-%20Ghosh.pdf

Interviews

"A Fine Imbalance." Interview with Amitav Ghosh. April 19th, 2006. <http://asuph.wordpress.com/2006/04/19/amitav-ghosh-interview-old-one>.

Aldama, Frederick Luis. "An Interview with Amitav Ghosh." *World Literature Today* 76.2 (2002): n.pag

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. Correspondence with Amitav Ghosh. <http://www.amitavghosh.com/correspondence_html_indv.php?conv_id=1>.

Gopal, Priyamvada. Interview with Amitav Ghosh. "Histories of belonging and becoming." *The Hindu Literary Review* 5 Oct. 2008.

Kumar, T. Vijay. Interview with Amitav Ghosh. "'Postcolonial' describes you as a Negative." *interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 9.1 (2007): 99-105.

Reddy, Sheela. Interview. "Amitav Ghosh: Writing Through Turmoil." *Outlook* (New Delhi) 19 Aug. 2002.

Silva, Neluka, and Alex Tickell. "An interview with Amitav Ghosh" in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Ziv, Daniel. Interview with Amitav Ghosh. "Novelist in Paradise. Writing in Bali." *Jakarta Post Sunday* 23 Oct. 2005. <http://novelistinparadise.com/?p=57>.

"The Chronicle Interview." *UN Chronicle* 1 Dec. 2005. <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/UN-chronicle/2005/December/1-p57>.

Secondary Sources

Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Alicke, Mark D., et al, eds. *The Self in Social Judgment*. New York: Psychology Press, 2005.

Aloysius, G. *Nationalism without a Nation in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London/New York: Verso, (1983) 1991.

Ankersmit, Frank R. *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Spinsters Aunt Lute, 1987.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr, eds. *Identities*. Chicago/London: Chicago Press, 1995.

Aravamudan, Srinivas. *Guru English: South Asian Religion in a Cosmopolitan Language*. Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back; Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.

Assayag, Jackie, and Veronique Benei, eds. *Remapping Knowledge: The Making of South Asian Studies in India, Europe and America (19th and 20th Centuries)*. New Delhi: Three Essays Collective, 2005.

Attridge, Derek. *The Singularity of Literature*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Bal, Miekel, ed. *Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies (Vol. III Political Narratology*). London/New York: Routledge, 2004.

Baldwin, Dean, and Patrick J. Quinn, eds. *An Anthology of Colonial and Postcolonial Short Fiction*. Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007.

Banchoff, Thomas, ed. *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Bannerji, Himani, ed. *Inventing Subjects: Studies in Hegemony, Patriarchy, and Colonialism*. New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2001.

Barfoot, C. C., and Theo D'Haen, eds. *Shades of Empire: In Colonial and Post-Colonial Literatures*. Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi, 1993.

Baucom, Ian. *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. London: Sage, 1998.

Baycroft, Timothy, and Mark Hewitson, eds. *What is a Nation?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Begum, Jameela, and B. Hariharan, eds. *Literary Theory: (Re)Reading Culture and Aesthetics*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 1997.

Behdad, Ali. *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999.

Bennett, David, ed. *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*. London/New York: Routledge, 1998.

Berger, Morroe. *Real and Imagined Worlds: The Novel and Social Science*. Cambridge(Mass)/London: Harvard University Press, 1977.

Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. London/New York: Routledge, n.d.

Bhabha, Homi K., ed. *Nation and Narration*. London/New York: Routledge, 2006.

----. *The Location of Culture*. London/New York: Routledge, (1994) 2007.

Bhatnagar, M. K., ed. *Commonwealth English Literature*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1999.

Bhatt, Indira, and Indira Nityanandam, eds. *The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Creative, 2001.

Bhattacharjee, Sukalpa. *Post-Colonial Literature: Essays on Gender, Theory and Genres*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2004.

Blunt, Alison, and Jane Wills, eds. *Dissident Geographies: An Introduction to Radical Ideas and Practice.* London: Prentice Hall, 2000.

Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Bose, Brinda, ed. *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003.

Bose, Tapan K, and Rita Manchanda, eds. *States, Citizens and Outsiders: The Uprooted Peoples of South Asia*. Kathmandu: South Asia Forum for Human Rights, 1997.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Braziel, Jana Evans, and Anita Mannur, eds. *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Brennan, Timothy. *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now.* Cambridge(Mass)/London: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Brown, Judith M. *Global South Asians: Introducing the Modern Diaspora*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Carver, Terrel C., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Marx*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Castoriadis, Cornelius. *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Chambers, Ian. *Migrancy, Culture, Idenity*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Chandra, N.D.R., ed. *Modern Literary Criticism: Theory and Practice. Vol. I.* New Delhi: Authorspress, 2003.

----. ed. *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Theory and Practice.* New Delhi: Authors Press, 2005.

Chakravarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

----. *A Possible India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.

----. *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

----. *A Princely Impostor? The Kumar of Bhawal & the Secret History of Indian Nationalism.* New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002.

Chatterjee, Partha, and Gyanendra Pandey, eds. *Subaltern Studies VII: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Chatterjee, Partha, and Pradeep Jeganathan, eds. *Subaltern Studies XI: Community, Gender and Violence*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2000.

Chatterjee, Partha, and Anjan Ghosh, eds. *History and the Present*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004.

Chaudhuri, Sukanta, ed. *Calcutta The Living City Vol.: 2 The Present and Future*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Chowdhary, Arvind, ed. *The Shadow Lines*: Critical Essays. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2002.

Chrisman, Laura, and Benita Parry, eds. *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism: Essays and Studies*. Cambridge: D. S Brewer, 2000.

Clark, Steve, ed. *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*. London/New York: Zed Books, 1999.

Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art.* London: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Coates, Rodney D., ed. *Race and Ethnicity: Across Time, Space and Discipline*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004.

Cohen, Martin. *Political Philosophy: From Plato to Mao*. London/Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press, 2001.

Coundouriotis, Eleni. *Claiming History: Colonialism, Ethnography and the Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Crick, Bernard. *Crossing Borders: Political Essays*. London/New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2001.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Das, Bijay Kumar. *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2005.

Das, Veena, and Deborah Poole, eds. *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Dennis, Haskell, ed. *Interactions: Essays on the Literature and Culture of the Asia Pacific Region.* Nedlands: University of Western Australia, 2000.

Desai, Shantinath K., ed. *Creative Aspects of Indian English*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1995.

Dodiya, Jaydipsinh, ed. *Perspective on Indian English Fiction*. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors, 2002.

Dolar, Mladen. *A Voice and Nothing More*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2006.

Dostal, Robert J., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Eagleton, Terry. *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996.

----. *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. London/New York: Routledge Classics, 2003.

-----. *The English Novel: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004.

Edgar, Andrew, and Peter Sedgwick. *Cultural Theory: The Key Thinkers*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Eley, Feoff, and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds. *Becoming National: A Reader*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

English, James F., ed. *A Concise Companion to Contemporary British Fiction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Fischer, Michael M.J. *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Fludernik, Monika, ed. *Hybridity and Postcolonialism: 20th Century Indian Literature*. Jaipur: Rawat Pubs, 2006.

Frantz, Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth.* (trans. Richard Philcox) New York: Grove Press, (1963) 2004.

Freundlieb, Dieter, et al, eds. *Critical Theory after Habermas: Encounters and Departures*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004.

Ganesh, Kamala, and Usha Thakkar, eds. *Culture and the making of Identity in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998.

Gans, Chaim. *The Limits of Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983.

George, Rosemary Marangoly. *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth Century Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Gilroy, Paul. *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race*. London/New York: Routledge, 2000.

Gowda, H. H. Anniah. *Encyclopedia of Commonwealth Literature. 2 vols*. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1998.

Gregory, Derek. *The Colonial Present*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Grosby, Steven. *Nationalism. A Very Short Introduction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Guha, Ranajit, ed. *A Subaltern Studies Reader 1986-1995*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Guha, Swapna Banerjee, ed. *Space, Society and Geography*. Jaipur/New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2004.

Gungwu, Wang. *Nation-Building: Five Southeast Asian Histories*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005.

Gupta, Dipankar, ed. *Anti-Utopia: Essential Writings of Andre Beteille*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Gupta, Monobina. *Left Politics in Bengal*. Hyderabad: Orient BlackSwan, 2010.

Hale, Dorothy J., ed. *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Hamilton, Paul. *Historicism: The New Critical Idiom*. London/New York: Routledge, 1996.

Harrison, Kevin, and Tony Boyd. *Understanding Political Ideas and Movements*. Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2003.

Hawley, John C. *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005.

Hawthorn, Jeremy. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*. 4th ed. London: Arnold, 2000.

Hegel, G.W.F. *The Philosophy of Rights*. (trans. SW Dyde) Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001 (rpt).

Hoffman, Michael J., and Patrick D. Murphy, eds. *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*. 3rd ed. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2005.

Hulme, Peter, and Tim Young, eds. *The Cambridge Companion To Travel Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Hutcheon, Linda, and Mario J. Valdes, eds. *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Hutchinson, John, and Anthony D. Smith, eds. *Ethnicity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Ichijo, Atsuka, and Gordana Uzelac, eds. *When is the Nation? Towards an Understanding of Theories of Nationalism*. New York: Routledge (Taylor & Francis), 2005.

Inden, Ronald. *Text and Practice: Essays on South Asian History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Jain, Jasbir, ed. *Writers of the Indian Diaspora: Theory and Practise.* Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2003.

Jameson, Frederick, and Masao Miyoshi, eds. *The Cultures of Globalization*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1998.

Joshi, Priya. *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Kachru, Braj B. *The Indianization of English: The English Language in India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Kar, Prafulla C., et al. eds. *Rethinking Modernity*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007.

Kaplan, Caren. *Question of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1996.

Kebede, Messay. *Africa's Quest for a Philosophy of Decolonization*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2004.

Kelley, Robin D.G. *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

Khair, Tabish. *Babu Fictions: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

----. ed. *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Khatri, Chhote Lal. *Indian Novels in English: Sense and Sensibility*. Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2004.

King, Bruce, ed. *New National and Post-Colonial Literature: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Kohn, Hans. *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background*. New York: Transaction Publishers, (1994) 2005.

Kumar, Amitava. *Bombay, London, New York*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Kumar, Shiv K., and Keith McKean, eds. *Critical Approaches to Fiction*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2003.

Kumar, T. Vijay, and Meenakshi Mukherjee, eds. *Focus India: Postcolonial Narratives of the Nation.* New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007.

Kurien, Prema A. *Kaleidoscopic Ethnicity: International Migration and the Reconstruction of Community identities in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Lamming, George. *The Pleasures of Exile*. Ann Arbor Paperbacks: 1992. University of Michigan Press, 2004.

Lawrence, Karen R, ed. *Decolonizing Tradition: New Views of Twentieth-Century 'British' Literary Canons.* Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

Lavie, Smadar, and Ted Swedenburg, eds. *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1996.

Lentricchia, Frank, and Stanley Hauerwas, eds. *Dissent from the Homeland: Essays After September 11*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Lewis, Reina, and Sara Mills, eds. *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003.

Lionnet, Francoise, and Shu-mei Shih. *Minor Transnationalism*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2005.

Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism and Post-colonialism*. London/New York: Routledge, 2001.

----. ed. *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006.

Mahanta, Namrata Rathore. *V.S. Naipaul: The Indian Trilogy*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004.

Malpas, Simon, and Paul Wake, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*. London/New York: Routledge, 2006.

Mansfield, Nick. *Subjectivity: Theories of the self from Freud to Haraway*. St Leonards NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000.

Manto, Saadat Hasan. *Selected Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto*. (Trans. Khalid Hasan) New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007.

Marx, Karl, and Frederic Engels. *The Holy Family*. n.pub. 1854.

Matz, Jesse. *The Modern Novel: A Short Introduction*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004.

McGee, Patrick. *Telling the Other: The Question of Value in Modern and Postcolonial Writing*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Minogue, Kenneth. *Politics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Mishra, Sudesh. *Diaspora Criticism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.

Mittapalli, Rajeshwar, and Pier Paolo Piciucco, eds. *Studies in Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2001.

Mittapalli, Rajeshwar, and Alessando Monti, eds. *Commonwealth Fiction: Twenty-First Century Readings*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2002.

More, Thomas. *Utopia*. Published by Planet PDF, electronics. <http://www.planetpdf.com>.

Morey, Peter. *Fictions of India: Narrative and Power*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2000.

Morrison, Jago. *Contemporary Fiction*. London/New York: Routledge, 2003.

Moya, Paula M. L., and Michael R. Hames-Garcia. *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2003.

Mudimbe, V. Y., ed. *Nations, Identities, Cultures*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1997.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. *The Perishable Empire: Essays in Indian Writings in English*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Naik, Chanchala K., ed. *Writing Difference: The Novels of Shashi Deshpande*. New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005.

Naikar, Basavaraj. Perspectives on Commonwealth Literature. Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2004.

Nairn, Tom. *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited*. London/New York: Verso, 1997.

Nandy, Ashis. *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias: Essays in the Politics of Awareness*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987.

----. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Newman, Michael. *Socialism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Nettle, Daniel, and Suzanne Romaine. *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Nicol, Bran. *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Niyogi, Chandreyee, ed. *Reorienting Orientalism*. New Delhi/Thousand Oaks/London: Sage Publications, 2006.

Noble, David W. *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism*. Minneapolis/London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Pandey, Gyanendra. *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006.

Panja, Shormishtha, ed. *Many Indias, Many Literatures: New Critical Essays*. Delhi: Worldview, 2000.

Parry, Benita. *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*. London/New York: Routledge, 2004.

Pathak, R. S., ed. *Recent Indian Fiction*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994.

----. ed. *Indianization of English Language and Literature*. New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1994.

Piciucco, Pier Paolo, ed. *A Companion to Indian Fiction in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004.

Pecora, Vincent P., ed. *Nations and Identities: Classic Readings*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.

Pollock, Sheldon, ed. *Literary Culture in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Poster, Mark. *Critical Theory of the Family*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 1988.

Prasad, Amar Nath, ed. *Critical Essays: Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2003.

Prasad, Amar Nath, and S.K. Paul, eds. *Feminism in Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2006.

Radhakrishnan, R. *Diasporic Mediations: Between Home and Location*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

----. *Theory in an Uneven World*. Oxford: Blackwell Publication Limited, 2003.

----. *Between Identity and Location: The Cultural Politics of Theory.* Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007.

Rajan, P. K., ed. *Commonwealth Literature: Themes and Techniques*. Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1993.

Ramakrishna, D, ed. *Critical Essays on Indian English Writing*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2005.

Rao, A. S, ed. *Myth and History in Contemporary Indian Novel in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2000.

Rao, P. Mallikarjuna, and M. Rajeshwar, eds. *Indian Fiction in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1999.

Ravi, P.S. *Modern Indian Fiction : History, Politics and Individual in the Novels of Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and Upamanyu Chatterjee*. New Delhi, Prestige Books, 2003.

Renato, Rosaldo. *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

Rocco, Christopher. *Tragedy and Enlightenment: Athenian Political Thought and the Dilemmas of Modernity*. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997.

Roston, Murray. *The Search for Selfhood in Modern Literature*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Roy, Anjali Gera, and Meena T. Pillai, eds. *Rohinton Mistry: An Anthology of Recent Criticism*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007.

Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1982.

----. *Step across This Line*. New York: Modern Library Paperback, 2002.

Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy: And It's Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945.

Rutherford, Jonathan, ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, (1978) 2001.

Sanga, Jaina C., ed. *South Asian Literature in English: An Encyclopedia*. Westport, Connecticut/London: Greenwood Press, 2004.

Seton-Watson, Hugh. *Nations and States*. London: Methuen, 1977.

Shaffer, Brian W. *Reading the Novel in English 1950-2000*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Shapiro, Michael J. *For Moral Ambiguity: National Culture and the Politics of the Family*. Minneapolis/London: Minnesota University Press, 2001.

Shukla, Sandhya. *India Abroad: Diasporic Cultures of Postwar America and England*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2005.

Shukla, Sheobhushan, and Anu Shukla, eds. *Indian English Novel in the Nineties: Studies in Contemporary Literature*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2002.

Silva, Neluka. *The Gendered Nation: Contemporary Writings from South Asia*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004.

Singh, Neera, ed. *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/Longing*. New Delhi: Books Plus, 2008.

Sivaramakrishnan, K., ed. *Regional Modernities: The Cultural Politics of Development in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Smith, Anthony D. *The Antiquity of Nations*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004.

Smith, Mark J. *Culture: Reinventing the Social Sciences*. New Delhi: Viva Books Private Ltd., 2005.

Souza, Dinesh D'. *The End of Racism*. New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer. *Imagining a Self*. London/Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press, 1976.

Srivastava, Ramesh K., ed. *Symbolism in Indian Fiction in English*. Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 1997.

Stocker, Barry. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Derrida on Deconstruction*. London/New York: Routledge, 2006.

Sturrock, John, ed. *The Oxford Guide to Contemporary World Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Talib, Ismail S. *The Language of Postcolonial Literatures: An Introduction*. London/New York: Routledge, 2002.

Thieme, John, and Ira Raja, eds. *The Table is Laid: The Oxford Anthology of South Asian Food Writing*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Tew, Philip. *The Contemporary British Novel*. London/New York: The Continuum Publishing Corporation, 2004.

Tiwari, Shubha. *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2003.

Trifonas, Peter Pericles and Michael A. Peters, eds. *Deconstructing Derrida: Tasks for the New Humanities*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Vinita, Damodaran, and Maya Unnithan-Kumar, eds. *Postcolonial India: History, Politics and Culture*. New Delhi: Manohar, 2000.

Walder, Dennis, ed. *Approaching Literature: The Realist Novel*. London: Routledge, 1995.

----. *Post-Colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998.

Walters, Wendy W. *At Home in Diaspora: Black International Writings*. Minneapolis/London: Minnesota University Press, 2005.

Walzer, Michael. *Arguing about War*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2004.

Waters, Malcolm, ed. *Modernity: Critical Concepts (Modernization) Vol. I*. London/New York: Routledge, 1999.

Watkins, Susan, ed. *Selection from new left review: III Front Lines*. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2006.

Welchman, John C., ed. *Rethinking Borders*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1966.

Wellek, Rene. *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism.* Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1970.

Wickremesekera, Channa. *Best Black Troops in the World: British Perceptions and the Making of the Sepoy 1746–1805*. New Delhi: Manohar, 2002.

Wierzbicka, Anna. *English Meaning and Culture*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Wolf, Bryan J. ed. *American Family Portraits Vol. V*. Yale: Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, 1990.

Wood, Ellen Meiksins, and John Bellamy Foster, eds. *In Defence of History: Marxism and the Postmodern Agenda*. Delhi: Aakar Books, 2006.

Young, Iris Marion. *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy, and Policy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Secondary Works on Amitav Ghosh

Albertazzi, Silvia. "Crossing *The Shadow Lines"* in *Interactions: Essays on the Literature and Culture of the Asia Pacific Region*. Haskell Dennis, ed. Nedlands: University of Western Australia, 2000. pp. 133-142.

Aldama, Frederick Luis. "An Interview with Amitav Ghosh." *World Literature Today* 76.2 (2002): 84-92.

-----. "Unraveling the Nation from Narration in Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace*." Internet Address: <http://www.humanitiesretooled.org/index.php?sm=hrt_articles.php&modCMS_cidd=70>.

Almond, Ian. "Post-Colonial Melancholy: An Examination of Sadness in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines." Orbis Litterarum* 59 (2004): 90-99.

Bagchi, Nivedita. "The Process of Validation in Relation to Materiality and Historical Reconstruction in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines." Modern Fiction Studies* 39.1 (1993): 187-202.

Basu, R. "Amitav Ghosh's Action: Turning the Full Circle" in *Indian-English Fiction 1980-1990: An Assessment*. N. E. Bharucha and V. Sarang, eds. New Delhi: B.R. Publishing, 1994. pp. 151-60.

Batra, Kanika. "Geographical and Generic Traversings in the Writings of Amitav Ghosh" in *Thamyris/Intersecting: Place, Sex and Race, Convergences and Interferences: Newness in Intercultural Practices.* Kathleen Gyssels, et al, eds. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002. pp. 211-220

Beliappa, K.C. "Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land*: An Excursion into Time Past and Time Present" in *The Postmodern Indian Novel: Interrogating the 1980s and 1990s*. Viney Kirpal, ed. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1996. pp. 59-66.

Black, Shameem. **"**Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines." The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 41.3 (2006): 45-65.

Bordoloi, Mridul. "The Ethics of Otherness in *The Glass Palace." Journal of English Studies* 18 (2009): 88-102.

Bose, Brinda. “Footnoting History: The Diasporic Imagination of Amitav Ghosh” in *In Diaspora: Theories, Histories, Texts*. Makarand Paranjape, ed. New Delhi: Indialog**,** 2001. pp.

-----, ed. “Introduction” in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Delhi: Pencraft International**,** 2003. pp. 13-15.

Butt, Nadia. “Inventing or Recalling the Contact Zones? Transcultural Spaces in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines.” Postcolonial Text* 4.3 (2008): 1-16.

Chambers, Claire. “Historicizing Scientific Reason in Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason”* in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. pp. 36-55.

----. “The Absolute Essentialness of Conversations: A discussion with Amitav Ghosh.” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 41.1 (2005): 26-39.

----. “Anthropology as Cultural Translation: Amitav Ghosh’s *In an Antique Land.” Postcolonial Text* 2.3 (2006): 1-19.

----. “*Representations of the Oil Encounter in Amitav Ghosh’s* The Circle of Reason.” The Journal of Commonwealth Literature *41.1 (2006): 33-50.*

Chaturdevi, Lata. “*The Glass Palace*: An Epic Narrative.” *Arunachal University Research Journal* 4.2 (2007): 7-15.

Cheuse, Alan. Rev. of *The Hungry Tide*, by Amitav Ghosh. *World Literature Today* March-April (2006): 23.

Chew, S. “Texts and Worlds in Amitav Ghosh’s *In An Antique Land”* in *Re-Constructing the Book: Literary Texts in Transmission*. M. Bell, S. Chew, et al, eds. West III, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001. pp. 197-209.

Choudhuri, Supriya. “A Sense of Place” Rev. of *The Hungry Tide*, by Amitav Ghosh. Doon Online. Internet Address: <http://www.dosco.org/index.htm>.

Choudhury, Bibhash. “Amitav Ghosh, Modernity and the Theory of the Novel.” *Journal of Contemporary Thought 28 (2008): 95-107.*

Daiya, Kavita. “No Home but in Memory: Migrant Bodies and Belongings, Globalization and Nationalism in *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines”* in *Amitav Ghosh:*

Critical Perspective. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003. pp. 36-55.

Das, Saswat S. "Home and Homelessness in *The Hungry Tide*: A Discourse Unmade." *Indian Literature* 235, 1.5 (2006): 181-195.

Datta, Ketaki. "Multiculturalism, Magic Realism, Quest and Discovery: Raison d'etre in the Major Novels of Amitav Ghosh" in *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Theory and Practice*. NDR Chandra, ed. New Delhi: Authors Press, 2005. pp. 489-502.

Dayal, S. "The Emergence of the Fragile Subject: Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land"* in *Hybridity and Postcolonialism: Twentieth-Century Indian Literature*. M. Fludernik, ed. Tubingen (Germany): Stauffenburg, 1998. pp. 103-33.

Desai, Gaurav. "Old World Orders: Amitav Ghosh and the Writing of Nostalgia." *Representations* 85 (2004): 125-148.

Dixon, Robert. "Travelling in the West: The Writing of Amitav Ghosh" in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. pp. 9-35.

Dubbe, P.D. "Postcolonial Discourse in the novel of Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines"* in *Indian English Literature Vol. I*. Basavaraj Naikar, ed. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2002. pp. 90-95.

Esplin, Greg. "Melancholic Longing in *The Shadow Lines." Portals: a journal in comparative literature* (2004) Internet Address: <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~clsa/portals/2004/esplin.html>.

Gandhi, Leela. "'A Choice of Histories': Ghosh vs. Hegel in *In An Antique Land"* in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. pp. 56-72.

Gaur, Rashmi. "Colonialism and Beyond It: *The Glass Palace* as a Symbol of Hope" in *Indian English Literature*. Vol. 6. Basavaraj Naikar, ed. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2002. pp. 173-181.

Gera, Anjali. "Des Kothay? Amitav Ghosh Tells Old Wives Tales" *in Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. pp. 109-127.

Ghosh, Bishnupriya. "On Grafting the Vernacular: The Consequences of Postcolonial Spectrology." *boundary 2* 31.2 (2004): 197-218.

Gopal, Priyamvada. “Confronting the past.” An Interview with Amitav Ghosh. *The Hindu Literary Review* (Online edition) 1 June 2008. Internet Address: <http://www.hindu.com/lr/06/01/index.htm>.

----. “Histories of belonging and becoming.” An Interview with Amitav Ghosh. *The Hindu Literary Review* 5 Oct. 2008.

Gupta, Babli. “Investigating Middle Class Subjectivity in *The Shadow Lines”* in *Many Indias, Many Literatures: New Critical Essays.* Shormishtha Panja, ed. Delhi: Worldview, 2000. pp. 152-163.

Hawley, John C. “The Writer, his Contexts and his Themes” in *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005. pp. 1-17.

----. “A Writer Situated in a History and in a Place: Ghosh’s Non-Fiction” in *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005. pp. 18-45.

----. “A Tale of Two Riots: *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines”* in *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005. pp. 46-82.

----. “The Ebb and Flow of Peoples across Continents and Generations: *In An Antique Land, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide”* in *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005. pp. 83-143.

----. “Subaltern Agency as Fiction or Science: *The Calcutta Chromosome”* in *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005. pp. 144-163.

----. “Beyond the Commonwealth: Amitav Ghosh and Indian Writing in English” in *Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Foundation Books Pvt. Ltd., 2005. pp. 164-177.

Hayward, Helen. “Once a golden land.” Rev. of *The Glass Palace*, by Amitav Ghosh. *Times Literary Supplement* 14 July (2000): 21.

Hueso, Maria Elena Martos. “The Subaltern Ethnographer: Blurring the Boundaries through Amitav Ghosh's Writing.” *Miscelanea: a journal of English and American Studies* 36 (2007): 55-66.

Huttunen, Tuomas. “Narration and silence in the works of Amitav Ghosh.” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 38.2 (2000): 28-43.

----. “Ethics of Multi-Sited Representation in the Fiction of Amitav Ghosh.” *The Atlantic Literary Review Special Issue on Indian Diasporic Fiction*. 3.4 (2000)

----. “Connections beyond Partitions: Amitav Ghosh’s In An Antique Land.” *The Atlantic Literary Review* 4.3. (2003)

----. “Representation of London in *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh.” *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London* March 2004. <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2004/huttunen.html>.

James, L. and J. Shepherd. “Shadow Lines: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in the Fiction of Amitav Ghosh.” *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 14.1 (1991): 28-32.

Jeyan, Subash. “India and its location.” An interview with Amitav Ghosh. *The Hindu Literary Review* (Online edition) 3 Sept. 2006. Internet Address: <http://www.hinduonnet.com/lr/2006/09/03/index.htm>.

Johansen, Emily. “Imagining the Global and the Rural: Rural Cosmopolitanism in Sharon Butala’s *The Garden of Eden* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide.” Postcolonial Text* 4.3 (2008): 1-18.

Jones, Stephanie. “A novel genre: polylingualism and magical realism in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason.” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66 (2003): 431-441.

K, Rajalakshmi N. “Modernity in the Work of Amitav Ghosh” in *Rethinking Modernity.* Santosh Gupta, Prafulla C. Kar, eds. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2007. pp. 144-145.

Kapadia, Novy. “Imagination and Politics in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines”* in *Many Indias, Many Literatures: New Critical Essays*. Shormishtha Panja, ed. Delhi: Worldview, 2000. pp. 137-151. (Also published in *The New Indian Novel in*

English: A Study of the 1980s. Viney Kirpal, ed. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1990. pp. 201-212.)

Kaul, S. "Separation Anxiety, Growing-up Inter/National in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines." Oxford Literary Review* 16.1-2 (1994): 125-145.

Khair, Tabish. "Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*: The Question of Subaltern Agency" in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. pp. 142-161.

----. "The Example of Amitav Ghosh: (Re)Establishing Connections" in *Babu Fictions: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001. pp. 302-332.

Khatri, Chhote Lal. "The Narrative Technique in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*" in *Indian Novels in English: Sense and Sensibility*. Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2004. pp. 70-78.

King, Bruce. Rev. of *In An Antique Land*, by Amitav Ghosh. *World Literature Today* 68.2 (1994): 430.

Kobayashi, Masaomi. "Silence, Speech, and Shadowiness: Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines." SCRIPSIMUS* l5 (2006): 42-63.

Krupa Shandilya, "*The Calcutta Chromosome* by Amitav Ghosh" in *South Asian Literature in English: An Encyclopedia*. Jaina C. Sanga, ed. Westport, Connecticut/London: Greenwood Press, 2004. pp. 39-40.

Kumar, Alok, and Madhusudan Prasad. "The Novels of Amitav Ghosh: A Study in the Sociology of the Symbol" in *Symbolism in Indian Fiction in English*. Ramesh K. Srivastava, ed. Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 1997. pp. 179-188.

Kumar, T. Vijay. "'Postcolonial' describes you as a Negative." An interview with Amitav Ghosh. *interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 9.1 (2007): 99-105.

Kundu, Rama. "*The Shadow Lines*: A New(er) Historicism" *Commonwealth Fiction: Twenty-First Century Readings*. Rajeshwar Mittapalli and Alessando Monti, eds. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2002. pp. 239-253.

Maharaj, Neelam. “Amitav Ghosh and the Forgotten Army.” *Postcolonial Text* 2.2 (2006).

Majumdar, Nivedita. “Shadows of the nation: Amitav Ghosh and the critique of nationalism.” *ariel* 34:2-3 (2003): 237-258.

Malhotra, Meenakshi. “Gender; Nation, History: Some observation on teaching *The Shadow Lines”* in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003. pp. 161-172.

Mallik, Rajiv K. “Maturity of Mnemonic in *The Shadow Lines”* in *Indian English Poetry and Fiction: Critical Elucidations*. Amar Nath Prasad and Rajiv K. Mallik, eds. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2007. pp. 252-263.

Mallot, J. Edward. “A Land Outside Space, an Expanse without Distances: Amitav Ghosh, Kamila Shamsie, and the Maps of Memory.” *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory* 18.3 (2007): 261-284.

Mandal, Somdatta. “Oh Calcutta! The New Bengal Movement in Diasporic Indian English Fiction.” Special Issue on Indian Diaspora: The 21st Century-Migration, Change and Adaptation. *Anthropologist* 2 (2007): 9-23.

Mani, K. Ratna Shiela. “Of Lines and Borders: A Reading of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines”* in *Perspective on Indian English Fiction*. Jaydipsinh Dodiya, ed. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributors, 2002. pp. 85-96.

Mathur, Saloni. ““Weaving is Reason”: A Critical Reading of Amitav Ghosh.” *NEXUS* 9 (1991): 59-74.

Mee, John. “‘The Burthen of the Mystery’: Imaginations and Differences in *The Shadow Lines”* in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. pp. 90-108.

Mongia, Padmini. “Postcolonial identity and gender boundaries in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Line.” College Literature* 20.1 (1993): 225-228.

----. “Medieval Travel in Postcolonial Times: Amitav Ghosh’s *In An Antique Land”* in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. pp. 73-89.

Moral, Rakhee. “In Time of the Breaking of Nations: *The Glass Palace* as Postcolonial Narrative” in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003. pp. 139-154.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. “Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma.” *IndiaStar Review of Books* 1998 Internet Address: <http://www.indiastar.com/mukherjee1.html>.

----. “Maps and Mirrors: Co-Ordinates of Meaning in *The Shadow Lines”* in *The Perishable Empire: Essays in Indian Writings in English*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000. pp. 134-148.

----. “Of love, war and empire.” Rev. of *The Glass Palace*, by Amitav Ghosh. *The Hindu* 1 Oct. (2000).

Nagraju, N. “Narrating New Pasts: The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh” in *Modern Literary Criticism: Theory and Practice*. *Vol. I.* NDR. Chandra, ed. New Delhi: Authorspress, 2003. pp. 66-76.

Nair, Rukmini Bhaya. “The Road from Mandalay: Reflections on Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace”* in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*. Tabish Khair, ed. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003. pp. 162-174.

Padmanabhan, Mukund. “In the great story-telling tradition, a novel that celebrates the human spirit.” Rev. of *Sea of Poppies*, by Amitav Ghosh. *The Hindu* 5 July (2008): 11.

Peeters, Erik. “Crossing boundaries, making home: Issues of belonging and migration in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines.” English Academy Review* 25.1 (2008): 29-39.

Pillai, Shanthini. “The Gaze of a Diasporic, the Voice of a Subaltern: Amitav Ghosh’s Articulation of the Indian Immigrant Labour Experience in The Glass Palace.” The Atlantic Literary Review Special Issue on Indian Diasporic Fiction. 3.4 (2000)

Prasad, Amar Nath. “Amitav Ghosh’s *Countdown*: A Portrayal of the Dance of Death” in *Critical Essays: Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2003. pp. 58-70.

Prasad, G.J.V. “The Unfolding of a Raga: Narrative Structure in *The Circle of Reason”* in *The New Indian Novel in English: A Study of the 1980s.* Viney Kirpal, ed. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1990. pp. 101-8.

----. “Re-Writing the World: *The Circle of Reason* as the Beginning of the Quest” in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003. pp. 57-66.

Prasad, Murari. “Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*: Re-Reading its Craft and Concerns.” *Asiatic* 2.1 (2008): 69-82.

Priya, K. Mohana. “Sense of Place and Sense of Dislocation in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace.” Language in India* 9.8 (2009): 381-389.

Prusse, Michael C. “Imaginary Pasts: Colonisation, Migration and Loss in J.G. Farrell’s *The Singapore Grip* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace.” Transnational Literature* 2.1 (2009): 1-14.

Rai, Alok. “Saga of Morichjhãpi.” Rev. of *The Hungry Tide*, by Amitav Ghosh. *Outlook* 12 July (2004): 64.

Rao, A. S. “Myth and History in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason”* in *Myth and History in Contemporary Indian Novel in English*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2000. pp. 36-59.

Rao, K. Damodar. “Magic and Irony as Principles of Structure: A Reading of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason”* in *Indian Fiction in English*. P. Mallikarjuna Rao, M. Rajeshwar, eds. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1999. pp. 279-287.

Reddy, Sheela. Interview. “Amitav Ghosh: Writing Through Turmoil.” *Outlook* (New Delhi) 19 Aug. 2002.

Rollason, Christopher. “In Our Translated World: Transcultural Communication in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide.” The Atlantic Literary Review* 6.1-2 (2005): 86-107.

----. “Empire, Sense of Place and Culture in contact: George Orwell’s *Burmese Days* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*.” Seminar paper at the University of Manchester, England, July 2008. Internet Address: <http://yatrarollason.info/files/GhoshandOrwellJan09.pdf>.

Roy, Anjali. “Microstoria: Indian Nationalism’s ‘Little Stories’ in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines.” The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 35.2 (2000): 35-49.

Roy, Rituparna. "*The Hungry Tide*: Bengali Hindu refugees in the Subcontinent." *The Newsletter* 51 (2009): 8-9.

Sarma, Parag Mani. "Alternate Centres of the Indian Experience: The Peripheral Discourse of Amitav Ghosh with a special Reference to *The Glass Palace." Assam University Journal* 2.1 (2007): 28-35.

Sen, Sudeep. Rev. of *The Calcutta Chromosome,* by Amitav Ghosh. *World Literature Today* 71.1 (1997): 221-222.

Sengupta, S. "An Allegorical Tom Jones: An Analysis of Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason"* in *Recent Indian Fiction*. R.S. Pathak, ed. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994. pp. 29-46.

Shandilya, Krupa. "Amitav Ghosh" in *South Asian Literature in English: An Encyclopedia.* Jaina C. Sanga, ed. Westport, Connecticut/London: Greenwood Press, 2004. pp. 110-112.

Siddiqi, Yumna. "Police and Postcolonial Rationality in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason." Cultural Critique* 50 (2002): 175-211.

Silva, Neluka and Alex Tickell. "Amitav Ghosh in Interview." *Kunapipi* 19.3 (1997): 171-177.

----. "An Interview with Amitav Ghosh" in *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspective*. Brinda Bose, ed. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003. pp. 214-221.

Singh, Sujala. "Who Can Save the Subaltern? Knowledge and Power in Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason." Critical Survey* 16.2 (2004): 45-58.

----. "The routes of national identity in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines"* in *Alternative Indias: Writing, Nation and Communalism.* Peter Morey and Alex Tickell, eds. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005. pp. 161-180.

Sircar, Arjya. "*The Shadow Lines*: The Promise of another Dawn" in *Recent Indian Fiction*. R. S. Pathak, ed. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1994. pp. 47-53.

Spriya, Ania. "Is Cosmopolitanism Not For Women? Migration in Qurratulain Hyder's *Sita Betrayed* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines." frontiers* 27.2 (2006): 1-26.

Srivastava, Neelam. “Fictions of Nationhood in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines.”* *Journal of Contemporary Thought* 9 (1999): 59-70.

Swain, S. P. “The Quest for Meaning: A Study of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines”* in *Commonwealth English Literature*. M. K. Bhatnagar, ed. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1999. pp. 258-264.

Taneja, G. R. Rev. of *The Shadow Lines*, by Amitav Ghosh. *World Literature Today* 65.2 (1991): 365.

Taras, Ray. Rev. of *The Hungry Tide*, by Amitav Ghosh. *Campaign for the American Reader* 27 Aug. 2006. <http://www.americareads.blogspot.com/2006/08/amitav-Ghoshs-hungry-tide.html>.

Thieme, John. “The Discoverer Discovered: Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome”* in *Studies in Indian Writing in English*. Rajeshwar Mittapalli and Pier Paolo Piciucco, eds. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2001. pp. 170-183.

----. “Amitav Ghosh” in *A Companion to Indian Fiction in English*. Pier Paolo Piciucco, ed. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2004. pp. 251-275.

----**.** “‘Out of Place’? The Poetics of Space in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* and Michael Ondaatje’s *Anil’s Ghost”* in *Diasporic Writing: The Dynamics of Be/Longing*. Neera Singh, ed. New Delhi: Books Plus, 2008. pp. 70-87.

----. “Global Positioning in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide.” Muse India* 24 Mar-Apr 2009. Internet Address: <http://www.museindia.com/index24.asp>.

Thieme, John, and Ira Raja, eds. “Nostalgia, Memory and Diaspora from Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide”* in *The Table is Laid: The Oxford Anthology of South Asian Food Writing*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007. pp. 321-324

Tomsky, Terri. “Amitav Ghosh’s Anxious Witnessing and the Ethics of Action in *The Hungry Tide.” The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 44.1 (2009): 53-65.

Viswanathan, Gauri. “Beyond Orientalism: Syncretism and the Politics of Knowledge.” *Stanford Humanities Review* 5.1 (1995): 19-34.