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**A CRITICAL STUDY ON THE SHADOWS OF PARTITION AMITAV GHOSH'S THE SHADOW LINES.**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Amitav Ghosh, a postcolonial novelist, presents the hollowness of partition that has an important part in framing *The Shadow Lines* (1988). He discusses the theme of partition as a primary cause for human sufferings through the main character, Thamma. In this novel, the boundaries, created by the people, made Thamma lose her own identity. The salient feature of Ghosh's argument is that the boundaries are created to separate one nation from another. The concept of partition creates a sense of false nationalism that leads to nothing, but to the extreme chaotic conditions. The painful immigration from one nation to another causes the mental and physical tortures that, in turn, destroy a person's culture, identity and voice.

This novel clarifies that the borders and boundaries that separate people are mere shadows, nothing more than artificial boundaries, created by the politicians. It also presents some historical events like the partition of India in 1947, freedom movement of Bengal and communal riots in Bangladesh. Amitav Ghosh presents the physical and mental violence, caused by these historical events, in which people lose their sense of home. Eventually, it

causes the breakdown of families, loss of identity,. Madness and merciless killing of innocent people. Therefore, Amitav Ghosh appeals for a boundary less world, which is divided by shadow line.

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## **KEYWORDS:**

Partition, Boundaries, Immigration, Nation, Shadows, Amitav Ghosh.

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Amitav Ghosh depicts the idea of partition through his novel *The Shadow Lines*. This novel includes some historical events such as the freedom movement in Bengal, the second world war, the partition of India in 1947, the communal riots in Bangladesh and India, emphasizing the theme of partition. The uselessness of the boundaries is portrayed through these events. The borders always cause the partition among the countries. For example, India and Pakistan is divided by the Radcliffe Line. It was created by the Sir Cyril Radcliffe. The Radcliffe Line in the western side is considered to be the Indo-Pakistani border and the Radcliffe Line in the eastern side to be the India-Bangladesh border. The villages of Bengal and Punjab in India have been terribly affected by these partitions.

This novel has two parts. They are: 1) *Going Away* and 2) *Coming Home*. This novel depicts the story of two families lived in Dhaka, Calcutta, London – three different places of three different countries of the world namely Bangladesh, India and England. The narrator portrays the different experiences of culture, religion and nationality of the generation of the two families. He also depicts the effects of the communal riots. Ghosh exhibits that the riots are the very crucial cause for the creation of border that is constructed by men against men.

In this novel, there are many characters who are connected to each other through the family, friendship or relationship. The narrator lives with his grandmother, Tha'mma and his parents. Mayadebi and her husband inhabit in England. They live there with their three sons Jatin, Robi and Tridib. Tridib lived in Calcutta for a long time with his different experiences. The narrator also presents the character of Ila, the daughter of Jatin. In the first section, *Going Away*, the narrator provides the relationship of two families. The Datta – Chaudhury of Bengal and the Price family of London.

The narrator portrays the theme of love in this section. He presents the love story of Tridib and May Price who have fallen in love with each other. The narrator also presents his love with Ila, his cousin who is in London, but he is not able to propose her of his forbidden feelings. He is influenced especially by the western culture of Ila. But Ila strongly believes that she can get the attraction from the narrator through her physical beauty. The narrator gets disappointment when he comes to know that Ila has married Nick Price. The first section ends with this incident.

'Coming Home' is the second section of the novel that begins with the Tha'mma's retirement from the post of Head mistress. Tha'mma has the experiences of twenty seven years as a teacher and six years as the head mistress. The narrator is magnetized with the stories of Tha'mma's old days at her ancestral home. In fact, Tha'mma was born and grew up in Dhaka after that, she moved to Calcutta. This section also presents Tha'mma's visit to Dhaka to bring her uncle back to Calcutta. Her uncle, Shri Gostobihari Bose is known as Ukilbabu. Tha'mma was accompanied by Mayadebi, Tridib, Robi and May Price on her Bangladesh tour. But Tha'mma was crucially affected by the surroundings as changed forms when she arrived at Dhaka. Ghosh says that past and future meet across religious, political and cultural barriers in a confusion of emotions, ideas, intentions and acts, leading to a shattering end.

The novel reaches the climax when Mayadebi and Tha'mma are returning from their ancestral home with Jethamoshoi following them in Khalil's rickshaw. The violent incidents are

recollected through Robi's narrative as well as May Price 's recollections of that incident when Tha'mma, Mayadebi, Robi, May Price, Tridib and Jethamoshoi were moving toward the bazaar area, they find the shops closed the road deserted.

The western people or the colonizers designed maps according to their necessity of occupying the places to make colonies. The colonizers constructed the idea of nation to get a grip politically over the world. This domination is successful in the purposes of placing partitions among different nations. The main concept of this novel focuses on the idea of shadowy border lines between nations. The concept of division or border leads the people to psychological sufferings of homelessness. As a result, the people are always in a dilemma of belongingness.

The first section of the novel provides the concept that love has the power to go beyond any kind of barriers or boundaries. Borders are meaningless and don't have the power to restrict human emotions. A border may separate the people of two countries geographically but it doesn't have any power at all to separate the people of two countries psychologically. Borders create struggle for people. The second section of the novel reveals the concept of national identity when Tha'mma wants to visit Dhaka to bring back her uncle, Bose, she releases the impact of partition. Tha'mma thinks that she can easily go to her ancestral home which is situated in Dhaka but after partition, it is not so easy to go to Dhaka from Calcutta for Tha'mma because she has to follow the rules for going outside the country. The border challenges the individual identity of Tha'mma.

The novel depicts not only the sufferings of Tha'mma but also the sufferings of everyone and here the character of Tha'mma is representative of those men who are victims of partition. However, Ghosh don't provide any solution to come out from these sufferings. Ghosh, through the character of Tha'mma, shows that all borders and boundaries are nothing but only shadows.

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