

**HOME AND NATION: ISSUES OF CULTURAL IDENTITY
IN THE NOVELS OF AMITAV GHOSH**

Ph.D. THESIS

by

MAN SINGH



**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ROORKEE
ROORKEE-247667 (INDIA)
FEBRUARY, 2019**

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A THESIS

*Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree*

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the work which is being presented in the thesis entitled “**HOME AND NATION: ISSUES OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE NOVELS OF AMITAV GHOSH**” in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and submitted in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee is an authentic record of my own work carried out during a period from January, 2013 to February, 2019 under the supervision of Dr. Rashmi Gaur, Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee.

The matter presented in the thesis has not been submitted by me for the award of any other degree of this or any other Institution.

(MAN SINGH)

This is to certify that the above statement made by the candidate is correct to the best of my knowledge.

(Rashmi Gaur)
Supervisor

The Ph. D. Viva-Voce Examination of Man Singh, Research Scholar, has been held on

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Dated:

ABSTRACT

This thesis mainly deals with three topics home, nation and Cultural identity in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh. Essentially, the research is centered on the subject of the home, nation and cultural identity in the context of postcolonial theory, diaspora, nationalism and multiculturalism. Even thought, with the emergence of the postmodernism the concept home, nation and cultural identity become the matter of intellectual examination and debate. Therefore, with the help of the selected novels of Amitav Ghosh the research has through the light on the home nation and cultural identity which is the not, in the postmodern era, static but is in the flux. A close survey of Post 1980 Indian English literature establishes that the quest for identity especially cultural identity and a feeling of some kind of rootlessness or homelessness under the shadow of emergence of culturally orthodox groups and their evolution and major political forces forms central aspect of the Indian English fiction. The major argument of the research is that in the present world the home, nation and more precisely cultural identity is no more exist in the real world but it is just an illusion or deception as we see in the novels of Ghosh namely, *the Circle of Reason*, *the Shadow Line*, *Hungry Tide* etc. So, the concept of home, nation and cultural identity as we have defined earlier that is no more vailed in the present day therefore an essential question arises in front of us in the contemporary world. Amitav Ghosh in his novels attempts a reading of the colonial encounter by focusing on the global amalgam of cultures and identities consolidated by imperialism and problematizes the very notion of nationalism especially the militant nationalism rooted in the regional, religious, and caste-based prejudices. Therefore, most of his novel shows that kind of nationalism uproots people and renders them homeless. The search for identity is one of the major aspects of the Third World writing in general and Indian writing in particular. This particular aspect is foregrounded in the novels of Amitav Ghosh. His novels emerge as a search for identity, which is an urgent quest for Third World countries attempting to assert their individuality as nations and shed the yoke of having been culturally oppressed for a significant period of their history.

However, this thesis studies Amitav Ghosh's individual novels in each chapter from a particular perspective and by making use of theoretical tools appropriate to that particular perspective. The thesis primarily contains eight chapters except chapter seven, which is, based on the *Ibis Trilogy* (three novels- *The Sea of Poppies*, *The River of Smoke*, and *The Flood of Fire*) all other chapters –second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth analyze individual novels.

In the Chapter one entitled “Introduction” defines the concepts of home, nation, nationalism, and cultural identity, as they are understood in postmodern age and outlines the research objectives, research questions and research methodology and a brief biography of the author taken for case study i.e. Amitav Ghosh follows.

In the Chapter Two entitled “Culture and Rationality within A Nation State: A Study of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*” shows how Ghosh illustrates that all borders instead of safeguarding home pose biggest danger to home and it remaps the world drawing connections across the boundaries of modern nation states. It shows a critique of the repressive aspects of postcolonial societies and explores the idea of a perpetual traveler as an escape from the repressive elements of modern rationalities and society. However, it reminds the reader that one can escape the geographical nation but it is almost impossible to escape the national borders engraved in the psyche by the nationalist discourses. Thus, the theme of this chapter is transcendence of politically constructed cultural differences, lines and borders supposedly maintained for the welfare of common humanity.

In the Chapter Three entitled “Searching of Home in Postcolonial Nations: A Study of *The Shadow Lines*” analyzes the way Amitav Ghosh explore the issues of home, national borders, the historical process responsible for their mergence, and the resulting anxieties and contradictions that affect people’s lives in the post-colonial world. Gosh explores the issue of borders and the history of partition that results in a multitude of insider-outsider configurations and it depicted how Independence brought with it Partition and how national reconstruction on the bases of some abstract ideologies causes riots and destroys lives of people.

In the Chapter Four entitled “*The Calcutta Chromosome*: Home in the Virtual World of Memory, Imagination and Internet” deals with Amitav Ghosh’s treatment of pre-nation state era and supposedly post-nation state era and tries to show that the idea of nation as home and a safe home in nation state is a myth. The virtual world of World Wide Web may appear connecting with physical space but remains virtual though, Ghosh sees human life in flux, not as static and rooted in one place; therefore, the real home of people is not a house made of bricks on a piece of land, rather it is in the constant movement and the sites that facilitate the movement. However, it highlights how Ghosh investigates diverse trajectories between tradition and modernity.

In the Chapter Five entitled “Home and Nation in Flux: A Study of *The Glass Palace*” looks at the novel as a saga of people on perpetual move. This movement keeps home and nation in flux and defies the idea of fixed home in a nation with fixed national boundaries. All characters in the novel - whether rich or poor, king or servant, colonizer or colonized- cross and re-cross-national boundaries in search of a true home without any success because the idea of nation interferes with the idea of home. It establishes that the imposition of the notion of nation, fixes home in the national space and dislocates many people living in that geographical space for centuries simply because they do not fit into the newly created national culture.

In the Chapter Six entitled “Home and Homelessness in the National Space: A Study of *The Hungry Tide*” deals with the sense of home and the dangers of homelessness with regard to subaltern sections of society in Indian national space. This chapter highlights Indian nation state’s different attitudes towards people with land and money. *The Hungry Tide*, as an amalgamation of imaginary and real which is fundamental to Ghosh’s project of analyzing the relationship between island geography, life of people there, international politics, discourse of nationalism and the attitude of self-proclaimed nationalist state machinery towards the outcasts. Ghosh draws attention to the political notion of nation that restricts this movement and renders people homeless rather than providing home to people.

In the Chapter Seven entitled “Searching for Home: A Study of the *Ibis Trilogy*” goes back in history to the period of opium wars (1838-1841) that forms the temporal location of Amitav Ghosh’s *Ibis Trilogy*. Ghosh portray the scenario of a historical period when the understanding of nation and nationalism was completely missing in the Third World. However, the socio-political and economic circumstances changed radically with the entry of capitalist forces and many of them were rendered homeless in their own birthplaces. Even though, Colonialism challenges the idea of home in a feudal state where rigid caste and class hierarchies does not allow any space for merit and ambition as far as subalterns are concerned and provides an opportunity to realize one’s dreams. Thus, here home and nation cease to be political entities based on nationalism rather they become the spaces constituted on the bases of love and respect for human life or just life.

In the Chapter Eight entitled “Conclusion” concludes the major arguments of the thesis and shows that this research associates nation and nationalism with national identity, not merely as a form of political identity but as a cultural strategy of representation. Amitav Ghosh as a part of

diaspora offers a resistant, more empowering, conception of the nation and redefines it to make it more inclusive in nature. Thus, the conclusion of the thesis “Home and Nation: Issues of Cultural Identities in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh” is that it analyzes the intricate relationship between home and nation on the one hand and issues of cultural identity on the other hand.

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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of postmodernism, that according to T. Nageswara Rao, “inherited ‘fragmentation’ and ‘schizoid self’ from modernism” (Rao, 1994: 10) and influenced the perception of self, cultural identity, and home in national space, the idea of home in national space has gained a lot of currency in political and literary spheres especially in the context of postcolonial theory, diaspora, nationalism and multiculturalism. Even before the advent of postmodernism home occupied a significant function in the lives of people however with the emergence of postmodernism as an academic discipline home, its location and relationship with national space became a matter of intellectual investigation and debate. Home as a space occupies an important place in creative writing as the entire psychological gamut of a postmodern creative writer especially a diaspora writer’s self is split in the dichotomy of the inside and the outside as the author navigates both, constantly questioning the notions of home and abroad or national as well as international. John McLeod foregrounds the significance of home in contemporary life and literature, which is constantly haunted by orthodox nationalist frameworks,

The concept of ‘home’ often performs an important function in our lives. It can act as a valuable means of orientation by giving us a sense of our place in the world. It tells us where we originated from and where we belong...In this formulation, home becomes primarily a mental construction built from the incomplete odds and ends of memory that survive from the past. It exists in a fractured, discontinuous relationship with the present. (McLeod: 210)

The idea of home has a very complex relationship with the idea of nation and its different connotations for different stakeholders as McLeod points out, “Community, belonging, a sense of rootedness in the land, home- each is relevant to the construction and purpose of nationalist representation” (McLeod: 210). And this complex relationship between home and nation affects the identity especially cultural identity of nationals housed in the national space as McLeod highlights, “every definition of identity is always defined in relation to something else” (McLeod: 211).

Cultural identity become more important in the field of literary studies and literature especially in the Third World with the advent of postcolonialism as P. Baburaj says, “The literary work is studied as a creation or symptom of its culture or of its author’s identity and not as a self-enclosed unit of purely artistic elements” (Baburaj, 2017: 81). With these developments in the

field of literature and criticism, critics, and scholars started looking at the identity of novelist as a cultural product and something crisis ridden or itself a crisis that resulted in a shift in the understanding of literature in the “postcolonial situation” where “personal identity is culture-based and posits a general shift in literary studies from the content to the milieu” (Baburaj, 2013: 183). During the postcolonial age, literature became a kind of mission to challenge the colonial legacies most of the postcolonial writers whether they accept or reject the postcolonial tag, try to deconstruct colonial identities and formulate new identities therefore “Cultural representations are the very substance of which identities are made and literature is one crucial arena for the same” (Baburaj, 2015: 25). Amitav Ghosh is no exception in this matter; his works are a site where culture and identity are contested. According to S. D. Sharma

Amitav Ghosh explores how the various psychological damages, which played a crucial role in determining the colonial identity at crucial personal level, have altered the traditional meaning of history for the novelist; and the question of colonial mimicry also attracts his attention, and he analyzes the politics of history in the postcolonial world submerged in politics of identity. (Sharma, 2012: 7)

This particular aspect of Amitav Ghosh draws attention towards a kind of catharsis, which “is a process of learning, and, therefore pleasurable” (Sharma, 1984: 158). It is not just a cathartic process for the author but also a cathartic process for a reader from the postcolonial Third World reader. In this way, Amitav Ghosh as an author rises above the status of a materialist author who is concerned just about the material existence. He realizes that “the only redeeming feature for the survival of mankind is spiritual evolution. When all else collapses, spiritual struggle will provide mankind the essential wherewithal to survive (Sharma, 2003: 97). This particular feature of Amitav Ghosh puts him beside classical writers not just of India but also of entire world.

In postcolonial age the issue of cultural identity has emerged as a major theme among the creative as well as critical writers as evident from Joel Kuortti’s observation that in “many of the new literary arrivals, the thematics revolve around cultural identity, cultural hybridity, and cultural conflict” (Kuortti, 2007: 207). Diaspora writers like V.S Naipaul, Rohinton Mistry, Bharati Mukherjee, Robert Cohen, John McLeod, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Shyam Selvadurai, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Avtar Brah, Sujata Bhatt, and Amitav Ghosh etc. have given space to the issues related to migrations, concepts of home and belonging in national space. Diaspora writings are very important to understand the relationship between home and

nation because they capture “two invariables of their experiences: exile and homeland. All diasporic literature is an attempt to negotiate between these two polarities. The writings of exiled/immigrant writers undertakes two moves, one temporal, and one spatial” (Dangwal, 2017: 173). It is true about Amitav Ghosh as well who moves in time and space in all novels. His constant physical and intellectual movements throughout his life make him a person with diaspora identity, which is “constantly producing and reproducing” in a transnational world “which is constituted for us as place, a narrative of Displacement” (Dangwal, 2017: 174). The experiences and writings of Diaspora writers in general and Amitav Ghosh in particular help in understanding the concepts of home, nation, and cultural identities in the postcolonial Third World because the “subjective expression of the veiled self-identity is attained through the active self-consciousness” (Singh, 2016: 28) by a writer coming from a region that has long colonial history. Individual’s identity with reference to culture and nation is always a historical construct influenced by numerous forces since the dawn of history Rajni Singh foregrounds, “Identity is one of the most nuanced constructions of the socio-political formation as it is indeterminate and retracts over the alternating historical contexts” (Singh, 2017: 74).

The issues of home in national space and cultural identity “inhabit a privileged space, not because the essentialist notions of belonging and identity are possible within the framework of this symbol, but because it itself becomes a symbol for what the diaspora may seek to express” (Mehta, 2014: 126). Being Diaspora becomes a symbol for Amitav Ghosh as evident from the fact that not just the author but most of his characters as well are Diasporas and in his novels the “expressions of diaspora which codified and privileged notions of loss and displacement read the experience of travel and living in a new homeland in terms of a metaphysical conflict of geographical space and subjective expressions of a shared experience” (Mehta, 2014: 124). They roam around the world and do not have any home in the traditional sense therefore they can be called homeless wanderers. For Amitav Ghosh homelessness is not something to be repented or mourned rather in his novels homelessness is “celebrated, exulted in and become itself a site for imagination and creativity” (Mehta, 2014: 125).

Amitav Ghosh in his novels deals with the process of modern nation-state building and its impact on the idea of home in national space and cultural identity of the citizens in the national space. The major concerns in the fictional world of Amitav Ghosh are cultural identity and home in the national space. He also problematizes the ostensibly unifying notion of the modern nation that homogenizes the issues of diversity. According to Vipin Kumar, “a writer’s technique is

actually the means by which s/he discovers, objectifies, explores, and evaluates is /her subject” (Kumar, *Historiography: An Endeavour to Reconstruct History in Tony Morrison’s Beloved and Jazz*: 79) and in Amitav Ghosh’s novels history and geography become fundamental components in the questioning identities and foregrounding their impure and heterogeneous character. However the “novelist concerned with history is beyond the traditional way of assessing events; he has to blend history with his vision and philosophy. The novel deals with history through a camouflage” (Dhawan, 1999: 14).

Partition of India influenced the formation of identity in Indian subcontinent and many author in post-independence era worked on the themes related to partition as R. K. Dhawan says, “A number of novels were written on the theme of partition, the destruction it brought and the plight of the refugees. They faithfully recorded the reign of the violence that characterized the period and provided a sad, telling commentary on the breakdown of human values” (Dhawan, 1999: 14). Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*, *The Hungry Tide*, and *Glass Palace* foreground the plight of refugees and how formation of nation states alters their perception of home and identity in the national space.

Amitav Ghosh also moves in time and space in his novels, which is also an effort to rewrite and reinvent identities- personal as well as cultural. His novels deal with questions of nation and nationalism and focus on themes like the meaning of nation to a person who does not belong to one, but to many nations as per his/her passport, to a person who is banished from his or her native country. His novels foreground “Nations are defined by their boundaries, but these boundaries join as well as separate” (Dhawan, 1997: 13). He also foregrounds the experiences of migration and migration literature in terms of place of production, language employed. The study of the novels of Amitav Ghosh from the perspective of home, nation and cultural identity becomes important because due to “transnational migrations, cultural appropriations, and diasporic peoples, all contributing to increased cultural contact and mixing, and to the intermingling of the local and the global” (Kuortti, 2007: 3). While analyzing the novels of Amitav Ghosh the research focuses on diachronic and synchronic study of the idea of home and cultural identity. This theme is particular to Third World Diaspora novelists as “this reworking of colonial structures happens in such a diasporic location”, because their novels “underlines dispersion and new formation of both the neocolonial forms of subjugation and the post-colonial forms of resistance” (Kuortti, 2007: 213). Therefore, Amitav Ghosh’s location as a Diaspora writer becomes very important in the understanding the post-colonial versus neo-colonial, home

versus homelessness, and cultural identity as he belongs to a “tradition which is both modern and traditional” (Rao, 1990: 73).

It is quite appropriate to use postmodern tool because “A modern poet or artist is one who is capable of incorporating into his/her work contemporary currents of thought and emotion without waging a war against the past- intellectually, psychologically, or technically” (Rao, 1994: 3) and Amitav Ghosh questions past in his history based novels and becomes a postmodern novelist. He neither he finds fault with his predecessor nor he declares war on anything like a “modernist is one who finds fault with his/her predecessors and declares war on the received, the bourgeois, and the sentimental” (Rao, 2003: 3).

This research uses the theoretical framework developed by postmodern thinkers like Foucault, Derrida etc. who according to A. Elliot state, “the identities are constructed by the social institutions and regulations” (Elliot: 139). Postmodern thinkers like Foucault, Derrida, and many others look at identity and idea of home as something in flux. According to Z. Bauman “You have to create your identity, you do not inherit it, not only you need to make it from scratch, but you have to spend your life redeciding your identity” (Bauman: n. d.). Therefore the identity, both personal identity and social identity is in flux that lead to changes in the perception of self and identity. When identity is destabilized, the idea of home is sure to be destabilized because both are connected to each other as I. Altman says, “Being at home is a mode of being whereby we are oriented within a spatial, temporal and sociocultural order that we understand” (Altman, 1985: 35). To understand the location of home in the contemporary nation states Benedict Anderson’s idea of “‘nationness’ and nationalism as ‘cultural artefacts’ developed from the late eighteenth century on in the Americas and Europe, and then became ‘modular’ and so ‘capable of being transplanted’ to other parts of the world” (Anderson 1991: 4). To understand the implication of nation and nationalism on the idea of home and identity in the post-colonial world including India the research makes use of theoretical framework developed by postcolonial thinkers like Homi Bhabha who problematize the concept of pure culture by developing the concept of cultural difference. The postcolonial theorists of diasporic culture invoke disassembling of the segregating notion of nation that this research has used, as a theoretical tool to look into Amitav Ghosh’s representation of Third World post-colonial nation in his fictional world. This research demonstrates how the hybrid aesthetic of diaspora writers in general and Amitav Ghosh in particular discards the currency about the veracity and purity of cultures. This research is a contribution to the knowledge on diaspora literature in general and Amitav Ghosh

in particular as it deals with socio-political issues like multiculturalism in the Western metropolitan nations as well as post- colonial Indian nation.

The objective of research is how a Diaspora writer looks at his/her country from a distance while living in the adopted country. To understand this particular aspect of Diaspora literature, novels of Amitav Ghosh are selected for two reasons one Amitav Ghosh himself is a Diaspora writer secondly his characters cross, re-cross national boundaries, and challenge the orthodox nationalism. Another objective is to see how Diaspora writers in general and Amitav Ghosh in particular deal with the issues of cultural identity, and home with reference to nation.

The thesis deal with the research questions of culture identity within a nation state as dealt by Amitav Ghosh. How Amitav Ghosh presents citizens' search for home in postcolonial nation state. Along with physical space, Amitav Ghosh is interested in the virtual space therefore another research question is how he deals with the idea of home in the virtual world of memory, imagination and internet. He believes that home and nation are not stable categories rather they are in flux so the thesis investigates this particular dimension. Amitav Ghosh also foregrounds how subaltern are rendered homeless within the national space and how search for home continues from colonial to postcolonial period.

Amitav Ghosh was born in 1956 in Calcutta and educated at various places including the Doon School for school education, and St. Stephen's College, Delhi for graduation, did Ph. D. in Social Anthropology at the Oxford University. Since his childhood, he travelled a lot with his family within India and abroad this particular experience of being at home and homeless simultaneously shaped his creative sensibility, which is evident from his characters who are at home and homeless at the same time. Even in his professional life, he could not settle at one particular place and could not stick to one particular job, which is evident from his brief professional biography. During (1982-83) the Centre for Social Sciences, at Trivandrum, Kerala hosted him as a visiting Fellow in 1988 University of Virginia, appointed him visiting Professor of Anthropology in 1989 he was at the University of Pennsylvania, in 1994 he was at the American University in Cairo, from 1994 to 1997 he was at Columbia University, and the Queens College of City University of New York hosted him as Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature from 1999 to 2003). In 2004, Harvard University appointed him visiting Professor in the Department of English.

His eight novels are:

1. *The Circle of Reason* published in 1986

2. *The Shadow Lines* published in 1990
3. *The Calcutta Chromosome* published in 1995
4. *The Glass Palace* published in 2000
5. *The Hungry Tide* published in 2004
6. *The Sea of Poppies* published in 2008
7. *The River of Smoke* published in 2011
8. *Flood of Fire* published in 2015

Many critics categorize his *In an Antique Land* (1992) a novel however, Amitav Ghosh himself categorizes it as “biography” (Ghosh: n. d.) on his own website therefore this thesis does not discuss this work. Along with fiction, Amitav Ghosh has written non-fiction:

1. *The Imam and the Indian* (a large collection of essays on different themes such as fundamentalism, history of the novel, Egyptian culture and literature)
2. *Dancing in Cambodia, At Large in Burma*
3. *Incendiary Circumstances*.
4. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016), which discusses the climate changes on the earth, the home to human beings along with flora and fauna.
5. He has also written many articles and essays in various newspapers and journals.

His works are well recognized at national and international level, which is evident from the awards conferred on him by national and international organizations. *The Glass Palace* got Myanmar National Literature Award in 2012, Tagore Literature Award, was conferred on *Sea of Poppies* in 2012. He is conferred Blue Metropolis International Literary Grand Prix in 2011, Doctorate, Honoris Causa, Sorbonne in 2010. While conferring Dan David Prize 2010 the jury stated, “Ghosh’s work provides a transnational understanding of the self, seen as the interaction of the many identities produced by the collision of languages and cultures; displacement and exile--lives torn between India, Burma, England, and elsewhere; families torn by the violence and psychological turmoil of colonial rule and postcolonial dispossession; a globe wrecked by two world wars and their ancillary bloodshed” (Swarup: 13). His *River of Smoke* was shortlisted for Man Booker Asian Prize in 2012. *The Sea of Poppies* won India plaza Golden Quill Award for best novel in 2009, Crossword Book Award, for best novel of the year in 2009 and shortlisted for Man Booker Prize, 2008. The Government of India conferred the Padma Shri on him in 2007. His *The Hungry Tide* was finalist for Kiriya Prize, San Francisco in 2006 and secured

Crossword Book Award, for best novel of the year in 2005. He got Frankfurt eBook Award for *The Glass Palace* in 2001, The Arthur C. Clark Award for *The Calcutta Chromosome* in 1996 and The Prix Medicis Étrangère, for *The Circle of Reason* in 1990.

The attention that Amitav Ghosh received in the form of awards and research established him as one of the most significant Indian writers of his generation. His Writings “are an outcome of the historical encounter between the two cultures- the Indian and the Western” (Dharmani, 2017: 8). This particular location gives him an advantage over vernacular writers. However despite the fact that “the medium of expression was English, but the portrayed saga of human activities, experiences, thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams was very much Indian” (Dharmani, 2017: 8). He occupies a unique location in the history of Indian fiction in English as he belongs to post 1980 era that “marks a watershed in Indian Fiction in English as it witnessed an effervescence of a new generation of creative talents – Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Alan Sealy, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Taroor ... who virtually revolutionized and replotted the literary and cultural map of India (Beniwal, 2005: 153). As a novelist he has an edge over other writers because “The novel is a powerful and pungent comment on the political scenario that was, that has been and that shall be” and his novels “surely claims a pride of place among the political novels of today” (Beniwal, 1992: 275). In his novels, he takes a political stand against politically motivated evils like communalism, terrorism that have emerged as major threats “With the advent of globalization” because they have “undergone a change. Aided by technology, economic linkages and the information revolution; communalism has assumed global proportions. Terror strikes and communal carnages are no longer sporadic or localised occurrences. Riots and recurrent bomb blasts impinge uncomfortably on everyday physical and psychological reality” (Beniwal, 2011: 1).

Ghosh has established a significant body of work that reverberates with some of the central concerns of home, nation and identity. In his works, he ponders over a principal set of issues however, each time he investigates them from a new angle. In his *World Literature Today* interview, he reflects on the value and major themes of his novels:

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. As I see it the novel is a meta-form that transcends the boundaries that circumscribe other kinds of writing, rendering meaningless the

usual workaday distinctions between historian, journalist, anthropologist, and et cetera. (Ghosh, 2002: 84)

Ghosh belongs to postcolonial age and many critics treat him as a postcolonial novelist however, he has disowned the label of postcolonial author from many national and international platforms. As the major theoretical frameworks of the age always influence the creative writers of the age therefore his interest in the issues related to “language, textuality, and discourse, and the ways in which human perception, comprehension, and experience is invariably shaped and, to varying degrees, determined by them” (Mondal: 20). In his fiction, he deals with the indecisive relationship of the Third World with modernity, the issues of home and homelessness in postcolonial nation state, and the construction and reconstruction of identities especially cultural and national ones in the post-colonial Third World.

Amitav Ghosh’s his own location as a person with home (that is dispersed over nations and continents), and a homeless person as per the traditional definition of the term simultaneously, makes him a transnational personality and this personality pervades his fictional world. Chitra Sankarn quotes Tammy Vernerey to discuss the theme of transnationalism in the novels of Amitav Ghosh:

Tammy Vernerey takes an uncharted path in her exploration of the subject in “‘Dwelling in Travel’: *In an Antique Land* and the Making of a Resisting Postcolonial History” when she begins her study of *In an Antique Land* by invoking James Clifford’s explication of ethnographers’ trend of blurring the boundaries between travel writing and ethnography by “dwelling in travel.” Vernerey positions Ghosh as the “resisting, traveling ethnographer” with a vision of transcultural identity. Without doubt, this involves the establishment of new roots. Vernerey observes that for Ghosh, new roots lead to new routes that work toward the excavation of subaltern histories. (Chitra, 2012: xxviii)

Amitav Ghosh traces the origin of idea of nationalism or rather militant nationalism to West in his novels indirectly and directly in an *Interview* by highlighting that writers in Europe and America are equally infatuated with the idea of nation in their novels:

In fact, it is precisely the First World novel that is most commonly about nations and nation building. Consider for instance, the peculiar obsession with ‘Englishness’ that runs through so much of nineteenth and twentieth – century British writing. This is even more strikingly evident in the US today, where

nothing seems to be of interest unless it is American ('the *American* family') or has 'America' or 'American' in its title (witness such phenomena as *American Beauty*, *Riding in Cars in America* etc.) (emphasis in the original) (Hawley: 10).

Amitav Ghosh's stance in this Interview is an apt reply to Fredric Jameson who in his well-known article entitled "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" terms all Third World Literature as nationalist literature as opposed to the First World Literature, which is humanist. Jameson says,

Judging from recent conversations among third-world intellectuals, there is now an obsessive return of the national situation itself, the name of the country that returns again and again like a gong, the collective attention to "us" and what we have to do and how we do it, to what we can't do and what we do better than this or that nationality, our unique characteristics, in short, to the level of the "people." This is not the way American intellectuals have been discussing "America," and indeed one might feel that the whole matter is nothing but that old thing called "nationalism," long since liquidated here and rightly so. Yet a certain nationalism is fundamental in the third world (and also in the most vital areas of the second world), thus making it legitimate to ask whether it is all that bad in the end. (Jameson: 65)

Quite opposite to Jameson's views, Amitav Ghosh in his novels deconstructs the idea of nation and foregrounds that this political structure is imposed on the Third World by the European colonizers. In his novels, Ghosh shows the nation states in the formerly colonized world that emerged under the influence of colonial rule become a threat to their own citizens.

The issues of home, nation and identity are vital to Amitav Ghosh and he deconstructs them all and many critics have praised him for doing so for instance, Anshuman A. Mondal appreciates him for deconstructing the myth of stable identity, "For him, the question of 'identity' is always implicated in representations of the 'self' and of the world around it; identity does not stand alone nor is it derived from some inborn 'essence' within a given human being; rather, it is made or 'fashioned' by language and representation....Moreover, Ghosh's texts also represent the correlative view that identity is therefore 'unstable' and fluid" (Mondal: 20-21).

Both at national and international level Amitav Ghosh's literary works received a lot of critical attention some of them are:

1. Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanamdam's *The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh*, and *Interpretation of Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines* published respectively in 2001 and 2000.
2. R. K. Dhawan's *The Novel of Amitav Ghosh* published in 1999.
3. Novy Kapadia's *Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines-Critical Perspectives* published in 2001,
4. Brinda Bose's *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives* published in 2003.
5. Arvind Chowdhary's *Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines: Critical Essays* published in 2002.
6. Tabish Khair's "The Calcutta Chromosome" in his *Babu Fictions: Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Novels* published in 2005.

Most of the books written on the novels of Amitav Ghosh are edited collections of articles for instance:

1. *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives* edited by Meenakshi Dalal.
2. *Amitav Ghosh: A Traveller Across Time and Space* edited by G. A. Ghanshyam and Devasree Chakravarti in 2014.
3. *The Fictional Craftsmanship of Amitav Ghosh* edited by Rakhi Nara.
4. *The Novels of Amitav Ghosh: An Analytical Appraisal* edited by Arvind M. Nawale and Nibedita Mukherjee.
5. *History, Narrative, and Testimony in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction* edited by Chitra Sankaran.
6. *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion* edited by Tabish Khair.

These edited books are a loose group of articles focusing on either one novel or one aspect of Amitav Ghosh fiction. Along with these edited books, some single author books are also there that deal with either one aspect or one novel for instance:

1. B. K. Nagarajan's *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study*.
2. John C Hawley's *Amitav Ghosh*.
3. Brinda Bose's *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives*.
4. Anshuman Mondal's *Amitav Ghosh: Contemporary World Writers*.

Many PhD level research works are also done around the world some became quite famous for instance Claire Chambers did her PhD on Amitav Ghosh and wrote articles on various aspects of his novels some of them are on *The Circle of Reason* and the relationship between science and pseudo-science and *The Calcutta Chromosome* as post-colonial science fiction where Amitav Ghosh shows how “Technology and information have created a remarkable age where time and distance have shrunk to almost nothing” (Raizada, 2013: 38).

Despite wide range of critical work on Amitav Ghosh’s novels, the theme “Home and Nation: Issues of Cultural Identities in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh” is not explored by anyone. Amitav Ghosh as a writer belongs to postmodern era so the questions of home, nation and cultural identity are vital to his creative and critical works. The term Identity has many dimensions for instance in psychology and sociology, it refers to a person’s notion and expression of their individuality and various affiliations such as nation, geography, as is the case with lower caste refugees in *The Hungry Tide*, culture, society, ethnic group, religion, caste etc. Therefore for postmodern thinkers in general and Amitav Ghosh in particular the term,

Identity...is used in the sense of a person’s conceptualization of self; the ways in which subjectively people perceive or experience themselves as individuals....Nominal identity is the set of attributes assigned to a person by society and which need to be fixed, so that a person can be identified and re-identified consistently (Manders-Huits: 46, 48).

In short, Ghosh subscribes to the idea that identity is always in flux and keeps evolving which is also supported by Stuart Hall who says,

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, with the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a “production”, which is never complete, always in the process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. (Hall: 222)

Amitav Ghosh seems to subscribe Hall’s definition of identity. His training as an anthropologist, also interests him in the processes of displacement and relocation. He deals with various aspects of identity- national identity, cultural identity, political identity, tendency to identify with the geographical space etc. Ghosh seems to be influenced by Stuart Hall’s notions of cultural identity, who says,

Cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture....Identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall: 236-37)

Homi Bhabha relates Diaspora writer's quest for identity with culture, nation, transnational situation, and migration across national borders:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement ... The transnational dimension of cultural transformation--migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation -makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. (Bhabha, 2004: 172)

Ghosh takes a cue from Edward Said who questions the concept of pure identity, the foundation of militant nationalism around the globe, Said says, "No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian ... or American are no more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind" (Said, 1994: 407).

The search for identity is one of the major aspects of the Third World writing in general and Indian writing in particular as Hind Wassef says, "identity is an urgent quest for Third World countries attempting to assert their individuality as nations and shed the yoke of having been culturally oppressed for a significant period of their history" (Wassef, 1998: 75). With more than hundred years of history India fiction in English in the words of Deepti Dharmani:

...grown over the years in variety and maturity, has aroused considerable interest both in India and abroad. From the first-generation writers like Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao to the current breed of novelists like Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh etc., many Indian novelists have carved a niche in the global literary world by successfully projecting the growing trends in a highly complex, varied and rich manner. (Dharmani, 2017: 8-9)

A close survey of Post 1980 Indian English literature establishes that the quest for identity especially cultural identity and a feeling of some kind of rootlessness or homelessness under the shadow of emergence of culturally orthodox groups and their evolution and major political forces forms central aspect of the Indian English fiction. According to Sanjiv Kumar the influence of globalization "is so engaging that the erstwhile celebrated conventions in art, literature, cinema

and other forms of human representation are now being replaced by a different set of concerns in the name of celebrating postmodernism” (Kumar, 2012: 38).

Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands*, describes this condition: “that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that is lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind”(Rushdie, 1991: 10). He further compares the vision of the diaspora writers as fragmented but integral to the understanding the postcolonial reality in the newly independent postcolonial world in general and India in particular, “The broken mirror may actually be as valuable as the one which is supposedly unflawed,” (Rushdie, 1991: 11). The vision of creative writers about the nation as home is broken due to situation particular to the Third World described by Frantz Fanon, “national consciousness is nothing but a crude, empty, fragile shell. The cracks in it explain how easy it is for young independent countries to switch back from nation to ethnic group and from state to tribe - a regression which is so terribly detrimental and prejudicial to the development of the nation and national unity. (Fanon, 1963: 97) Rushdie also says, “Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel we straddle two cultures, at other times that we fall between two stools” (Rushdie, 1991: 15). Ghosh also echoes Fanon and Rushdie’s sentiments in an essay entitled “The Diaspora in Indian Culture,” when he says, “the links between India and her diaspora are lived within the imagination,” and for this reason, “the specialists of the imagination - writers - play so important a part within it” (Ghosh, 1989: 76). Due to the reasons mentioned by Fanon and visible in the postcolonial India, it is risky to write India, when located in the geographical and political space of India therefore they write their own India from their unique viewpoint from the outside. Amitav Ghosh in his novels attempts a “reading of the colonial encounter by focusing on the global amalgam of cultures and identities consolidated by imperialism” (Gandhi, 1998: 129), and problematizes the very notion of nationalism especially the militant nationalism rooted in the regional, religious, and caste based prejudices. In his novels, he shows that kind of nationalism uproots people and renders them homeless.

According to Vipin Kumar, “Artists have to tailor the beauty of their work in a way that is agreeable to the tastes of aesthetics” (Kumar, *The Aesthetic of Different Concerns in Contemporary Eriterian Poetry*: 665) and this particular quality is found in the novels of Amitav Ghosh that makes him a world writer. He is most important among diaspora writers because he represent the voices that the “dominant culture may neglect, repress, oppose or even may not

recognize” (Singh, 2011: 31) furthermore he questions the orthodox notions of home and nation in the postcolonial world. He believes 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” (Ghosh, 1998: 100). In “The Diaspora in Indian Culture”, Amitav Ghosh writes, “India exported with her population, not a language, as other civilizations have done, but a linguistic process -- the process of adaptation to heteroglossia” (Ghosh, 1989: 75). Therefore, Diaspora becomes a kind of metaphor that foregrounds the margins of culture. Amitav Ghosh contrasts this situation with the conception of the “colonial in Britain. In Britain, Ghosh clarifies, to be a colonial, whether Canadian, Australian, or South African, is to be imperfectly British” (Ghosh, 1989: 77). Ghosh’s sees the origin of Indian culture in heteroglossia, a situation in which different cultures, identities, ideologies can coexist harmoniously. In his novels, he foregrounds the “cultural processes” that depend “on the dynamic interaction between its historically varied and variable elements- dominant, residual, and emergent” (Singh, 2011: 31).

Ghosh’s biographical details, if seen as a text, are also an example of heteroglossia, as his life is marked by manifold travels traversing physical, linguistic, social, national and cultural boundaries, his location as a perpetual diaspora provides a significant transnational angle to cultural frontiers, and challenges homogeneous notions of national cultural identity. Sandhya Rao Mehta also foregrounds the complex relationship between Diaspora writings and cultural identities when she says, “Some of the most influential work surrounding the changing concept of diaspora revolved around the cultural studies of Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy, with an increased focus on travel, migration and identity formations being seen as fluid and transforming” (Mehta, 2015: 3). These cross-border movements, due to his profession as an anthropologist provide him an exclusive and important insight into the procedures of cultural production. His consistent movements as part of a family constantly on move and later on as an individual to research and career requirements formulate his idea of nation, home, and borders and challenge the traditional idea of nation, borders, home. The narrator in one of his short story, “The Imam and the Indian”, while doing his ethnographic research on kinship patterns in a small village on the Nile Delta, finds that the village community is quite mobile and many members of this community have migrated to various parts of the world as he says, “Every man in [the village] was a traveler”, (Ghosh, 1986: 140) therefore the supposedly “ancient and settled field site displays all the busy restlessness of airline passengers in a transit lounge” (Ghosh, 1986: 140). Like the author himself, most of the characters in his novels are perpetual diaspora who destabilize the notions of cultural

purity by disrupting the notion of the confinement of cultural spaces and constructing culture as a site where various streams across time and space amalgamate.

Social, cultural, political and economic concerns and dimensions influence the issues of cultural identity, home and nation in the novels of Amitav Ghosh. In his history based novels where he gives significant space to capitalist forces like East India Company he foregrounds how the “capitalist mode of production promotes the tendency for profit which weakens the sense of togetherness and solidarity with fellow human beings” (Singh, 2011: 37) and alters the very idea of individual identity. The central theme that runs through his novels is identity of individual with reference to Home and Nation. In his novels he explores how a person’s identity can be determined by different aspects, such as appearance, family, relationships, gender, oppression and liberation, motherhood, and age.

The cultural, social, national, and geographical space in the novels of Amitav Ghosh is both a place of interaction as well as struggle. Both the space imagined or remembered on the one hand and space captured by political and economic powers on the other hand have a profound influence on the novelist and his protagonists in his novels. He seems to confirm to James Clifford who points out, that cultural “space is never ontologically given. It is discursively mapped and corporeally practiced” (Clifford, 1986: 54). By highlighting the discursive dimension of space, he exhibits the subtleties of “overlapping territories, intertwined histories” (Said, 1994: 3-61) in our gradually interlinked world. The creation of space in Ghosh’s novel manifest in territorial scuffles, foregrounded through the interaction between local and global impacts, national and transnational restructurings. His characters try to comprehend space not just a source of disparity of territorial struggle and cultural conflict, but a point of interconnection and concurrence, and try to envisage space above the narrow precincts of a singular culture, territory, community, and nation.

Amitav Ghosh as a creative writer dwells in the diaspora space, which is a very important space in the age of orthodox nationalism that renders its own citizens as homeless. On the importance of diasporic space Okwui Enwezor reflects, “[T]he diasporic space [is] the quintessential late 20th-century space, a space in which the terms of modern immigration, exile, loss, nation, subject, and citizen are negotiated and reinvented for various uses” (Enwezor, 1997: 88).

Amitav Ghosh produces a critique of nationalism around the world with focus on the former colonies such as Sri Lanka, India, Burma, Indonesia, and many others nations where the

politically driven 'nationalism' has taken on an mutinous dimension for a national identity that excludes on the basis of religious, linguistic, or ethnic, fault lines. He distinguishes between pre-independence nationalism and post-independence nationalism Eric Hobsbawm supports this hypothesis, "the major difference between these late twentieth-century nationalist movements and those that took place before the middle of the twentieth century is that the earlier ones rallied around revolution, imperialism and decolonization" (Hobsbawm, 1990: 55). This statement clears that the post-independence nationalism in most of the former colonies developed along ethnic, religious, regional, and linguistic lines that proved a hazard for significant portion of population as Edward W Said in his *Culture and Imperialism* points out:

[I]t is one of the unhappiest characteristics of the age to have produced more refugees, migrants, displaced persons, and exiles than ever before in history, most of them as an accompaniment to and, ironically enough, as afterthoughts of great post-colonial and imperial conflicts. As the struggle for independence produced new states and new boundaries, it also produced homeless wanderers, nomads, vagrants, unassimilated to the emerging structures of institutional power, rejected by the established order... And in so far as these people exist between the old and the new, between the old empire and the new state, their condition articulates the tensions, irresolutions, and contradictions in the overlapping territories shown on the cultural map of imperialism (Said, 1993: 402).

It establishes that the independence movements in the colonies that fought against colonialism were not inclusive in nature, and compelled people to move out in search of their true homelands, as it happened in the case of division of India that led to the formation of Pakistan these experiences were even more horrible and traumatic than colonialism itself. However, it does not mean that people were not migrating from one place to another or from one political unit to another during the colonial or precolonial era. Amitav Ghosh is well aware of this reality and therefore he contrasts the migrations caused by the formation of post-colonial nation states with the migration that is going on since ages by showing that early colonial or pre-colonial societies were neither stagnant nor homogeneous. To prove this point Amitav Ghosh in his, "The Imam and the Indian" highlights that "cross-cultural movements and exchanges fostered by the travel trajectories of wars, or trade and business circuits between India and the Mediterranean -- 'or perhaps simply because [people] got tired of living always in one place' -- were not uncommon practices even as far back as the twelfth century" (Ghosh, 1986: 135). The movements mentioned

above are radically different from the movements caused by the formation of nation state in the post-colonial age when most of the colonies got independence. The colonizers created political units in the colonial that replaced the princely states (more of cultural and social units than political units) to great extent this division became a permanent feature of the postcolonial world when it achieved political independence. This political independence uprooted millions from the newly independent nation states and shattered the idea of home in a nation state.

In the post-colonial Third World nation states the idea of home becomes closely associated to the idea of nation and even a slight change in the idea of nation renders millions homeless. Independence of former colonies turned out to be a tragedy for people who migrated centuries ago and adopted the country of their birth as their homeland and did not consider themselves as “homeless wanderers, nomads, vagrants” (Said, 1994: 402). This tragedy befell on them because the ruling elite of the newly independent started treating them as aliens. Amitav Ghosh foregrounds this aspect in his novels, and shows that the post-independence nationalism fortifies the postulation that ethnic communities do not belong ‘here’, that they belong ‘elsewhere’, as Ien Ang notes, “The very name with which the “ethnic” is referred to -- ... Chinese [or Indian] -- already transposes her or him to, and conjures up the received memory of, another site of symbolic belonging, a site which is not “here” (Ang, 1994: 17).

Story and plot of Amitav Ghosh’s novels enacts in the background of continuously changing social relations, political structures, rulers and movement of people across social, cultural, political and physical borders. This research will attempt to investigate the complexities of home and nation in the novels of Amitav Ghosh, where ‘home’, becomes a metaphor of shared emotional securities, and is often proposed as a space of steadiness in the discourse of anti-colonial nationalism as Angelika Bammer, notes that “On all levels and in all places, it seems ‘home’ in the traditional sense (whether taken to mean ‘family’ or ‘community’ or ‘homeland’/ ‘nation’) is either disintegrating or being radically redefined” (Bammer, 1992: viii).

These are some of the central questions that are being discussed in this thesis. This research associates nation and nationalism with national identity, not merely as a kind of political identity but as a cultural approach of representing individual, community, or even entire nation. One thing is taken for sure that national identity is not just a matter of political, cultural, or social association rather it is entrenched in the very notion of national culture and identity. Amitav Ghosh in his novels re-conceptualizes national identity that offers a possibility of challenging the post-Enlightenment modernist philosophy that configures the discourse of national culture and

identity and tries “to write over the given and privileged narratives of citizenship other narratives of human connections that draw sustenance from dreamed-up pasts and futures where collectivities are defined neither by the rituals of citizenship nor by the nightmare of ‘tradition’ that ‘modernity’ creates” (Chakrabarty, 1992: 23). This thesis focuses on the issues of home in nation and cultural identity, and the way Amitav Ghosh as a part of diaspora offers a resistant, more empowering, conception of the nation and redefines it to make it more inclusive in nature. The thesis also foregrounds in the words of Joel Kuortti, “Diaspora is a loaded term that brings to mind various contested ideas and images. It can be a positive site for the affirmation of identity, or, conversely, a negative site of fears of losing that identity” (Kuortti, 2007: 3).

His location as a Diaspora writer provides him special insight to look into the issues of home and nation as Khachig Tololian says, “diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment’ which interrogate the privileged homogeneity of the nation/state” (Tololian, 1991: 5). Diaspora writers in general and Amitav Ghosh in particular question the idea of pure national culture that renders homeless all those who do not fit into it, by foregrounding its eternal Diaspora dimensions as Bhabha says:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, whether they are the ‘middle passage’ of slavery and indenture, the ‘voyage out’ of the civilizing mission, the fraught accommodation of Third World migration to the West after the Second World War, or the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World ... The transnational dimension of cultural transformation --migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation - makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. (Bhabha, 1994: 172)

His main emphasis is to show that culture is basically transnational in its nature and scope because it is entrenched in histories of dislocations and that is why it is continually connecting across time and space, and defies the idea of purity. This transnational notion of culture and identity can dislodge the discursive project of homogenizing national culture and national traditions. According to Sanjiv kumar “the term Culture...has gained special prominence after the emergence of Cultural Studies in 1960s. The concept of culture has undergone numerous paradigmatic shifts with the association of the term with different disciplines, schools of Cultural

Studies and Cultural theorists” (Kumar, 2011: 48). This thesis is an effort to understand different connotations and implication of culture in the novels of Amitav Ghosh.

He rejects the teleology of origin/return that helps him transcend the degenerating facets of the conception of the homeland and the narrative of exclusivism, essentialism, and nativism. His works are timely intervention because the dialectics of homecoming and pure ethnic identity are co-opted by reactionary nationalist forces all over the world, who claim that their national space is contaminated by the infiltration of outsiders. They start a political and cultural movement that becomes violent quite often for extradition of these migrants and create fear psychosis in the hearts of majority against minority and render minorities homeless in a geographical setting where they are living for centuries. His works in a very subtle manner gives a message once the reactionary forces usurp the national space “[T]he discourses of race and nation”, as Etienne Balibar warns, “are never very far apart” (Balibar, 1991: 37).

Most of Amitav Ghosh’s novels are based on meticulous research in history and reveal that human civilizations had never been static or pure. This research entitled “Home and Nation: Issues of Cultural Identities in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh” is an original contribution to the existing scholarship on Amitav Ghosh as no other scholar has discussed this particular aspect of Amitav Ghosh’s novels.

The thesis will be confined to the study of Amitav Ghosh’s novels only and all of his novels given below will be analyzed.

1. *The Circle of Reason* published in 1986
2. *The Shadow Lines* published in 1988
3. *The Glass Palace* published in 2000
4. *Calcutta Chromosome* published in 1995
5. *The Hungry Tide* published in 2004
6. *Sea of Poppies* published in 2008
7. *River of Smoke* published in 2011
8. *Flood of Fire* published in 2015

Chapter Two entitled “Culture and Rationality within A Nation State: A Study of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*” shows how Ghosh illustrates that all borders instead of safeguarding home pose biggest danger to home. This chapter establishes Amitav Gosh as the most cosmopolitan of contemporary Indian English writers who re-charts the world by establishing networks across the political borders of modern nation states. This chapter discusses

Amitav Ghosh's depiction of various characters' quest for home in the world, which is divided into nations. Lalpukur ceases to be Balaram's home when he starts helping the refugees and persuades his nephew learn the art of weaving which is below dignity for an Upper caste and therefore all Upper caste people turn hostile towards him. The state police kill all members of Alu's family in a violent attack and he runs away from the village and embarks on a journey to relocate himself away from the clutches of orthodox nationalism that spends more money on chasing the citizens than on their welfare.

Chapter Three entitled "Searching of Home in Postcolonial Nations: A Study of *The Shadow Lines*" analyzes the way Amitav Ghosh explore the issues of home, national borders, the historical process responsible for their mergence, and the resulting anxieties and contradictions that affect people's lives in the post-colonial world. Amitav Gosh explores the issue of borders and the history of partition in *The Shadow Lines* that arranges and rearranges the insider-outsider configurations and comes up with new perspectives to look at the history of partition. Ghosh contrasts bordered nations with borderless universe of humanity and nature and advocates for an idealistic proposition of a world without political boundaries, which is signified through the symbol of atlas and the story of Tristan that Tridib hands over to his nephew. He is persuaded of the insignificance of Border and its dreadful effects when he highlights the uselessness of demarcating boundary lines. Ghosh points out how Independence brought with it Partition and how national reconstruction on the bases of some abstract ideologies causes riots and destroys lives of people.

Chapter Four entitled "*The Calcutta Chromosome: Home in the Virtual World of Memory, Imagination and Internet*" deals with Amitav Ghosh's treatment of pre-nation state era tries to show that the idea of nation as home and a safe home in nation state is a myth. On the one hand, Mangala, Lutchman, Ross etc. belong to the virtual world of memory and imagination on the other hand, Antar allegedly enters into the virtual world of cyberspace. The virtual world of World Wide Web may appear connecting with physical space but remains virtual. Ghosh sees human life in flux, not as static and rooted in one place; therefore, the real home of people is not a house made of bricks on a piece of land, rather it is in the constant movement and the sites that facilitate the movement.

This chapter highlights how Ghosh investigates diverse trajectories between tradition and modernity in his novels and *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) is his most sustained examination of the place of science and technology in colonial India. He challenges the

colonialist notion that the colonies are devoid of any meaningful science and as they possess only ancient technologies. In this novel, he hints at two dimensions of colonialism- one belongs to past that deprived India of its intellectual credibility by registering the work done by Indians in the name of the British. The second belongs to present where cybernetic warfare poses a threat to nation state not because it wants to destroy nation states but because it wants to alter the nature and scope of nation states. Both the colonialisms of past as well as present are propelled by multinational capitalism, in the past various East India Companies, belonging to different European Nations colonized the non-European world by de-territorializing and reterritorializing the monarchial kingdoms and in the present it is done by using the innovative technologies related to cyberspace, world wide web, global communications that lead to deeper access to markets and a more regulated flow of capital

Chapter Five entitled “Home and Nation in Flux: A Study of *The Glass Palace*” looks at the novel as a saga of people on perpetual move. This movement keeps home and nation in flux and defies the idea of fixed home in a nation with fixed national boundaries. All characters in the novel - whether rich or poor, king or servant, colonizer or colonized- cross and re-cross national boundaries in search of a true home without any success because the idea of nation interferes with the idea of home. Ghosh seems to advocate that it is not the advent of colonialism, which resulted in the homelessness of people rather human beings have always been mobile however he highlights that colonialism as an auxiliary of capitalism makes people move en masse for profit to the capitalist organizations that move both colonizers as well as colonized. To emphasize his point of view Ghosh has brought in various capitalist ventures such as international trade in teak, rubber and petroleum and search for markets for Western consumer goods and technology. To achieve his aim he depicts intersecting lives of Rajkumar, a timber merchant and his family, the Burmese Royal family, Uma Dey and her family and the family of Saya John. All these families have a very intricate relationship with capitalism and colonialism and their resultant nation state and nationalism.

Chapter Six entitled “Home and Homelessness in the National Space: A Study of *The Hungry Tide*” deals with the sense of home and the dangers of homelessness with regard to subaltern sections of society in Indian national space. In this novel, the author projects himself as pro-subaltern, highlights Indian nation state’s different attitudes towards people with land and money on the one the one hand and people without land and money on the other hand, and foregrounds state’s antipathy towards the subaltern groups. A comprehensive study of

relationship between land and formation of nation states and how nation state will be a home to certain sections and certain others will be rendered homeless in the nation state will reveal that the roots of this problem lie in the advent of capitalism in Europe and the setting up of colonies overseas. Emergence and empowerment of capitalist institution in Europe led to the enclosure movement that persuaded masses that “a privatized, enclosed piece of land” is “a more efficient and cost-effective means of capital accumulation (and personal, moral development) than the Common-field system of land cultivation” (Forster: 214). This enclosure movement in Europe culminated in colonial occupation overseas. This chapter looks at *The Hungry Tide*, as an amalgamation of imaginary and real which is fundamental to Ghosh’s project of analyzing the relationship between island geography, life of people there, international politics, discourse of nationalism and the attitude of self-proclaimed nationalist state machinery towards the outcasts.

Chapter Seven entitled “Searching for Home: A Study of the *Ibis Trilogy*” goes back in history to the period of opium wars (1838-1841) that forms the temporal location of Amitav Ghosh’s *Ibis Trilogy*. He takes us to a historical period when the understanding of nation and nationalism was completely missing in the Third World. However, the Capitalism in the West had already constituted the discourse of nationalism, which was used to counter monarchy by bringing in the idea of nation state and shifting the loyalties of people towards abstract idea of nation from the royalty. The entry of capitalist establishments like the East India Company proved a turning point in the history of Indian subcontinent. Through the depiction of fictional character Raja Neel Rattan, the novelist shows the socio-political and economic circumstances changed radically with the entry of capitalist forces and many of them were rendered homeless in their own birthplaces. All major characters in this novel are searching for their home the emerging nation states. Colonialism challenges the idea of home in a feudal state where rigid caste and class hierarchies does not allow any space for merit and ambition as far as subalterns are concerned on the other hand colonialism provides an opportunity to realize one’s dreams and the author highlights it through the depiction of Mr. Burnham, Zachary Reid, Bahram Moddie, Shireen, Deeti and even Kalua.

Chapter Eight entitled “Conclusion” concludes the thesis “Home and Nation: Issues of Cultural Identities in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh” that analyzes the intricate relationship between home and nation on the one hand and issues of cultural identity on the other hand.

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CHAPTER - 2

CULTURE AND RATIONALITY WITHIN A NATION STATE: A STUDY OF AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE CIRCLE OF REASON*

The Circle of Reason (1986) was the first novel by Amitav Ghosh. According to Yumna Siddiqi it “deserves more critical consideration by scholars of postcolonial fiction than it has received because it points to the state rationalities that shape postcolonial experience. Its conceptual focus on reason, as signaled by the title, makes it a particularly suitable text through which to explore the ambiguous legacy of Enlightenment rationality in postcolonial India” (Siddiqi, 2002: 177). The novel narrates the life of Alu to various places across cities, states countries and continents. This novel explores the plight of Indian Diaspora especially lower class Diaspora in the Middle East, something that no other mainstream Indian author explored as Sandhya Rao Mehta says, “While specific studies of particular movements of people have been continually explored, it is certain that a major lacunae in the area of diaspora research has been a focus on the Middle East” (Mehta, 2013: 43). After the death of his parents, Alu comes to live in the village of Lalpukur with his uncle, Balaram, who is infatuated with both mainstream sciences as well as disregarded pseudo-sciences’, like phrenology. Therefore, his attitude keeps fluctuating between rational and irrational however, his strange notion of scientific reason leads to a dispute with his neighbour, Bhudeb Roy that culminates in a tragedy. The police, based on the inputs given by Bhudeb Roy consider Alu, the sole survivor of the tragedy, a political extremist. As a result, once more he becomes a refugee once more searching for a home for himself. In his bid to escape he travels to various parts of India but police follows him everywhere. Then he leaves the nation of his birth to find a safe home for himself in the outside world and reaches Al-Ghazira, where he becomes part of the multi-cultural and multi-lingual diverse crowd of illegal migrants/immigrants from all parts of the world such as Africa, Bangladesh, India and other Arab states. While living on rent in Zindi’s house he starts working as a laborer though illegal. Just like his life in the village of Lalpukur, here also, his life becomes stable for some time; however, an accident changes his life once more. He buries under the rubble of collapsed Star, a multistory building where he goes for painting work, miraculously he survives as his friends takes him alive from under the debris. People of that area start believing that he has supernatural powers after the incident he starts weaving and starts a socialist mission to create a society in the Souq where there is no place for money. Just like his uncle, he lets loose the forces that he cannot control and invites problem for himself. On the one hand, due the

unprecedented actions by some of the members the local authorities turn hostile on the other hand Jyoti Das, an Indian police officer reaches there to arrest him. When the local police attack the community, Zindi takes Alu, Kulfi and newborn Boss and escapes from there. In this way, Alu keeps running from place to place in search of a safe home for himself.

In *The Circle of Reason*, Ghosh tries to illustrate that all borders instead of safeguarding home pose biggest danger to home. In the words of G J V Prasad, this tendency makes him a cosmopolitan writer:

Amitav Gosh is arguably the most cosmopolitan of contemporary Indian English writers as also the most significant. His significance has its roots in his cosmopolitanism, for he is a writer who travels and remaps the world drawing connections across the boundaries of modern nation states. It is in this creative engagement with historical and political realities and truths, it is in this clearheaded erasure and redrawing of cultural and political lines that divide and unite, that Amitav Ghosh finds his mission as a writer. With an anthropologist's sense of detail, and a historian's grasp of facts and chronology, and with a creative writer's curiosity about causation and effects and great narrative skill and imagination, Ghosh weaves together a pluralistic and self reflexive view of the world – one that challenges the smugness of accepted narratives and points of views and the certainties of post-colonial borders as well as generic boundaries. (Prasad, 2003: 59)

Amitav Ghosh makes use of the history of weaving and the international cloth trade to deconstruct the idea of nation and national culture and uses it as a metaphor of the sophisticated setup of differences in which all cultures are entwined with their neighbors as the loom “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” (Ghosh, 2008: 59). Ghosh advances and supports the notion that culture is a procedure of transmission that has nothing to do with national boundaries when he says:

Indian cloth was found in the graves of the pharaohs. Indian soil is strewn with cloth from China. The whole of the ancient world hummed with the cloth trade. The silk route from China running through central Asia and Persia to the parts of the Mediterranean and from there to the markets of Africa and Europe, bound continents together for more centuries – than we can count... All through the

centuries, cloth in its richness and variety, bound the Mediterranean to Asia, India to Africa, the Arab world to Europe in equal bountiful trade. (Ghosh, 2008: 59-60).

Other than narrating the history of weaving, Amitav Ghosh makes the protagonist learn the art of weaving. Alu is despised for learning weaving in his political home i.e. India, a caste ridden country where if an upper caste tries to learn the work of a lower caste he is looked down upon. When he reaches al-Ghazira and displays his art, everybody starts respecting him, unlike India attains a prominent position, and hence feels more at home there. Through this depiction, Ghosh produces a critique of nation as home when he says, “Since the beginning of time, al-Ghazira has been home to anyone who chooses to call it such” (Ghosh, 2008: 281). In the words of this novel highlights a situation in which:

All of us inhabit an interdependent late-twentieth century world marked by borrowing and lending across porous national and cultural boundaries, but we do not do so on equal terms. These boundaries are saturated with inequality, power and domination. (Rosaldo, 1992: 217)

Almost all characters cross the boundaries of political nation in search of a place that they can call their home; Jeevanbhai Patel is one such character. Patel though a *Gujarati* Hindu is a global citizen roaming place to place in search of true home. His dream of finding a home is always shattered either by cultural rationality or by national rationality. Ghosh describes his travels as, “The Indian merchants along the coast to pull them northwards like a bucket from a well. First they went to Mozambique, the Dar-es-Salaam then Zanzibar, Djibouti, Perim and Aden” (Ghosh, 2008: 237). For Amitav Ghosh the art of writing is a critique of hegemonic structures and forces that happen to be demarcation of national and cultural boundaries as while speaking to Michelle Caswell he says, “... the novel is a metaphor that transcends the boundaries that circumscribe other kinds of writing, rendering meaningless the usual workaday distinctions between historians, journalists, anthropologists etc.” (Hawley, 2005: 166).

In the novel, the characters transcend the differences of culture and nation that are related to the concept of purity, which, in turn is related to the notion of unadulterated origin, and uncontaminated distinct essences. The concept of purity deduces that there must be beings who are separate and distinct from one another, each retaining certain physiognomies of the counterparts.

The Circle of Reason by Amitav Ghosh explores the incongruities of culture and rationality in a nation state when he foregrounds the relation between Enlightenment, rationality and coercive state apparatus i.e. police. While looking at the project of Enlightenment he seems to follow the formula given by Adorno and Horkheimer in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* where they argue that, “In thought, men distance themselves from nature in order thus imaginatively to present it to themselves-but only in order to determine how it is to be dominated” (Adorno, 1972: 39). Robert Young provides a critical modal for the study of Enlightenment when he says, “analyze plural objects as such rather than offering forms of integrated understanding that simply comprehend them within totalizing schemas” (Young, 1990: 11). His insight paves the way of “questioning of Western knowledge’s categories and assumptions” (Young, 1990: 11). Along with Enlightenment he also analyzes the concept of rationality and takes up poststructuralist position by focusing “not so much upon the continued presence of irrationality, for irrationality after all is simply reason’s own excluded but necessary negative other, but rather on the possibility of other logics being imbricated within reason which might serve to undo its own tendency to domination” (Young, 1990: 8). While discussing nation Ghosh highlights that the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie that sets up the colonial state does not just inherit and imitate the state apparatus established during colonial period which is now used to subordinate all the indigenous social classes in the post-colonial nation states as Hamza Alavi also points out when he says, “The colonial state is therefore equipped with a powerful bureaucratic military apparatus and mechanisms of government which enable it through its routine operations to subordinate the native social classes. The postcolonial society inherits that overdeveloped apparatus of state and its institutionalized practices through which the operations of the indigenous social classes are regulated and controlled” (Alavi, 1972: 61)

This idea of violence as a rational act in the making of a nation state is closely associated with the emergence of Enlightenment in Europe that justifies it. Even a progressive thinker like Karl Marx could not escape the influence of this concept and justified the violence perpetrated by the colonial authorities in India:

Now, sickening as it must be to human feeling to witness those myriads of industrious patriarchal and inoffensive social organizations disorganized and dissolved into their units, thrown into a sea of woes, and their individual members losing at the same time their ancient form of civilization and their hereditary means of subsistence, we must not forget that these idyllic village communities,

inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it an unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath the traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies.

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution. (Marx, 1960: 38)

Emergence and canonization of such discourses in the West led to the evolution of orthodox nationalism that took up the task of civilizing the non-white world as a national project. They established various institutions in the colonies to civilize them however; the same institutions infused a sense of nationalism among the colonized who after gaining independence continued the same project. Therefore, Ghosh considers nation, the defining political experience of twentieth-century India, as a derivative of Enlightenment rationality. This cultural essentialism take up a view of rationality that authenticates an imperial logic of domination as Partha Chatterjee argues:

It is indeed a post-Enlightenment view of the world in which the idea of rational knowledge assumes a very definite form. The sciences of nature become the paradigm of all rational knowledge. And the principle characteristics of these sciences as they are now conceived is their relation to an entirely new idea of man's control over nature- a progressive and ceaseless process of the appropriation of nature to serve human "interests." By extension, a notion of "interests" also enters into the conception of the new sciences of society. The rational knowledge of human society comes to be organized around concepts such as wealth, productive efficiency, progress, etc. all of which are defined in terms of the pro-motion of some social "interests." Yet interests in society are necessarily diverse; indeed, they are stratified in terms of the relations of power. Consequently, the subject-object relation between man and nature which is central to the new conception of the sciences of nature is now subtly transferred, through the "rational" conception of society, to relations between man and man. Thus, the

sciences of society become the knowledge of the Self and of the Other. Construed in terms of rationality, it necessarily also becomes a means to the power of the Self over the Other. In short, knowledge becomes the means to the domination of the world. (Chatterjee, 1986: 14-15)

Here Chatterjee echoes Adorno and Horkheimer's argument that the logic of domination that drives man's will to subdue nature comes to take as its object man itself. Amitav Ghosh in *The Circle of Reason* takes up a similar stance and proposes a critique of culture and rationality within the larger discourse of nation. According to Sujala Singh "various discourses both construct and represent the subaltern" in *The Circle of Reason* and some of these discourses are "discourses of global migration, national power as bureaucratic fetishism, science as social mission" (Singh, 2004: 47). Therefore, it "is a novel about subalterns on the move - the process of their construction and representation as a group is necessarily shifting and fluid as various representational discourses (the national-political, migration, bureaucratic fetishism) attempt to 'constitute' them. This is different from the means by which subalterns attempt to constitute themselves through everyday tactics of survival but also by setting up alternative micro-economies." (Singh, 2004: 48). The novel traces the excursions of impoverished people rendered refugees by formation of nation states in post-colonial world after independence from the colonial powers. The rationality based on culture and nation proves irrational and renders a large chunk of citizens homeless in the nation. It is so because people with stakes who want to become rulers in an apparently democratic setup use undemocratic ways to achieve it, which Pierre Bourdieu terms a 'paradox':

The paradox of the situations in which a group can exist only by delegation to an individual person - the general secretary, the Pope, etc. - who can act as a moral person, that is, as a substitute for the group. In all these cases (following the formula established by canon lawyers, 'the Church is the Pope'), in appearance the group creates the man who speaks in its place and its name - to put it that way is to think in terms of delegation - whereas in reality it is more or less just as true to say that it is the spokesperson who creates the group. (Bourdieu, 1991: 204)

Amitav Ghosh represents the plight of these displaced people in the following words:

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 Dholshwari, the Kirtinosh, the Shitolokhka, the majestic Arialkha, wider than the horizon. (Ghosh, 2008: 63)

Amitav Ghosh invites our attention to the change in the political status of former colonies that affected the lives of people living in those countries. At this turn of history, many people who contributed to the wealth and prosperity of those nations became foreigners in that country and the world saw mass movement of people from one nation to another in search of a true home. However, when they moved to their so-called mother country they were not welcome and in many cases, their life was not less than hell as Ghosh depicts:

He was appalled: he saw 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. (Ghosh, 2008: 65)

In *The Circle of Reason*, Amitav Ghosh highlights this unsuccessful quest for home in the world divided into nations. Lalpukur is not a true home for the Indian refugees and with the passage of time when Balaram starts helping the refugees and makes his nephew learn the art of weaving the same place ceases to be their home. The state police kill all members of Alu's family in a violent attack. Alu, the only survivor runs away from the village and embarks on a journey to relocate himself away from the clutches of orthodox nationalism that spends more money on chasing the citizens than on their welfare. He escapes aboard in a ship called Mariamma with a diverse crew and passengers. The homeless refugees on the ship follow a trajectory of travel determined on the one hand by orthodox nationalism and on the other hand by the demands of unskilled and semi-skilled labor in the international market. It marks a moment of shift from the modern to what David Harvey calls the "cultural turn to postmodernism", from the Fordist-Keynesian to "new systems of production and marketing, characterized by more flexible labour processes and markets" (Harvey, 1990: 124).

This postmodernist system of production and consumption does not want the people to develop expertise in any area therefore in the words of Deepak Nayyar the "skills composition" of migrant labors is different from earlier migrants who were "persons with professional expertise, technical qualifications or other skills perceived to be scarce, or needed in labour-importing countries" (Nayyar, 1994: 13).

That is why they are not given a status of proper citizens of that country, their status as illegal migrants suits the ruling elite because then their exploitation is extremely easy on both sides – their mother country and the country of migration as highlighted by Ghosh:

Nothing, Lal said drily. There's nothing we can do. It's a very tricky situation. We can't alert the Ghaziri authorities. It would be a disaster if they found out that Indians are involved in this business. They'd probably stop giving visas to Indian workers. ... That would mean a drop in remittances, and therefore in the foreign-exchange reserves back home and so forth. (Ghosh, 2008: 307)

One nation withdraws all welfare schemes so that its legal citizens are forced to move out and another proposes an attractive future that the displaced labor moves towards it like moths as is evident from the reaction of Karthamma, a woman about to give birth aboard the Mariamma refuses to give birth unless the suitable “form” is signed which she take up will warranty a better life for her unborn child by assuring him legal rights and citizenship that will ensure a respectable life for him. Here the author questions the validity of constitutional authorities for the poor people:

What I can't understand is how she got these ideas. Kahan se? She's so uneducated she doesn't even know when a baby's been stuck inside her, but she still wants to sign forms. It's not like she's from Bangalore or some big city or something. You can tell as soon as you see her that she does eight-anna jobs in ricefields and things like that. And here she is, convinced that if she signs a form her baby will get cars and houses and all that. Where do these villages get these ideas? (Ghosh, 2008: 190)

On the surface level, he questions the dream of going abroad and prospering at deeper level he also questions the validity of India as a nation state that also assures a similar dream to its citizens. The power of the written word eludes legal guarantee not for an illiterate and innocent person like Karthamma, who wants a better life for her son but also for educated people and even for the members of government machinery. For instance, when Jyoti Das, the Assistant Commissioner of Police and representative of the state, writes a report:

There appeared to be no rational grounds to substantiate the principal source's belief that a retired schoolmaster in his village was being used by a foreign-trained agent of some kind, disguised as a weaver to run a network of extremists. (Ghosh, 2008: 137).

This report that could be used to prove Balaram innocent is used to compile a case against Alu, who is designated as a dangerous terrorist with wide network and the same police officer is assigned a duty to chase him halfway across the world. Therefore, Ghosh shows all kind of legality associated with nation states as chimerical. Jyoti Das though not an evil natured person has to follow the dictates of an administrative machinery, which operates through excess, dependent on an intricate structure of internal codes understandable only to itself, marked by greed, narcissism and narrow-mindedness. The state apparatus creates an illusion that entire nation is in danger though reality is that one powerful officer in the Ministry wants to generate a post by sending Jyoti Das abroad for one of his relatives. Unaware of this trick played on himself he becomes an agent in a bureaucratic apparatus and is responsible for the deaths of several innocent people, though indirectly and hence becomes an embodiment of Bourdieu's caution that "the social force of representation is not necessarily proportional to [its] truth-value" (Bourdieu, 1991: 227).

Both Alu, the victim and Jyoti Das, apparently a victimizer are victims of violent and irrational state apparatus are rendered homeless by the same forces. Both however, for different reasons become part of the deterritorialized, diasporic mobile populations, who contest the notion of territorially bound nation states as Arjun Appadurai hints at when he says, "It is in the fertile ground of deterritorialization, in which money, commodities, and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world" (Appadurai, 1996: 38). He further establishes an uncomfortable relationship between home and nation when he says:

One major fact that accounts for strains in the union of nation and state is that the nationalist genie, never perfectly contained in the bottle of the territorial state, is now itself diasporic. Carried in the repertoire of increasingly mobile populations of refugees, tourists, guest workers, trans-national intellectuals, scientists and illegal aliens, it is increasingly unrestrained by ideas of spatial boundary and territorial sovereignty. (Appadurai, 1996, 161)

In contrast to Appadurai's idea of willing movement of motivated travelling between various national, economic, political and geographical spaces, the mobility of people in *The Circle of Reason* is more a consequence of forced deracinating rather than deliberate movement, therefore the peripatetic individual is more often redundant rather than independent. Ghosh foregrounds not just the process of travel, but also the conditions of travel in the novel when he narrates multiple hazardous journeys forced on subaltern. In the novel, he highlights their

position as scapegoats in a global economy; immigrants in the novel are pragmatists who bond not merely with surrogate familial ties but through a pragmatic understanding of mutual economic needs. In Zindi's lodging house where people from different nationalities live like a unified imagined community only because of mutual economic needs, the common fear of authorities and the up-rootedness from the places of their birth that is common to all.

To borrow a phrase from Fredric Jameson, *The Circle of Reason* is a "vehicle for judgments on society and revelations of its hidden nature" (Jameson, 1992: 39). Therefore, it paved the way for a new kind of novel in Asia. Some examples of this genre in Asia are Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* that deals with the mystery of Sophie Moll's death and the consequent suffering and murder of Velutha, Amu's lover, by the police. Here like Ghosh she problematizes the so-called great Indian culture and the nation state that came into being to protect the citizens of India. Similarly Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*, foregrounds the complicated nature of state apparatus where it very difficult to determine who is more corrupt-the state apparatus or the corrupt people who form the state apparatus. Sometimes there are honest people like the protagonist of the novel who are forced by the state apparatus to do wrong things and sometimes the corrupt people use a benevolent state apparatus to their advantage. Another example of this genre is Michael Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost* traces the how a troubled state becomes a dangerous place to live in. *The Circle of Reason*, that hints at the body politics considered essential to nation, which is generally seen in the personified form and many things that go against the interests of the ruling elite are designated as an ostensible threat to the body politic in the name of national security. Yumna Siddiqi also supports this perspective in the following words:

When its characters become migrants-and here the novel fully acknowledges the very different circumstances of bourgeois and subaltern migration-it is to escape the police, driven by the rationalities of the state. At the level of plot, the forces of police criminalize the protagonists and defeat their enlightened utopian projects. However, the narrative techniques that the novel employs go against the grain of the logic of repression that is embedded in classic police fiction. A deliberation upon intelligence gathering and policing in postcolonial India, the novel engages, disrupts, and parodies the generic conventions of police fiction in order to challenge its coercive logic. By turning the generic conventions of police

fiction upside down, Ghosh critiques the repressive tendencies of Enlightenment reason. (Siddiqi, 2002: 177- 178)

Amitav Ghosh here shows that the institutions of police and army, which are supposed to protect people, are actually used for the forcible maintenance of civil peace. To understand the role of police in civil society and nation state we can take help of Pascale Pasquino who in his “*Theatrum politicum: the genealogy of capital*” where he argues that during the second half of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries emerged the institution of police which is supposed to “the maintenance of order and prevention of dangers” (Pasquino, 1991: 109). While commenting on Pasquale Pasquino’s observation Yumna Siddiqi says:

From the Middle Ages until the late eighteenth century, “police” referred more broadly to the administration of a population to promote happiness and the public good. The task of police was to be achieved by the application of specialized knowledges and practices. This administration in the interest of public happiness is the ostensible mission of the modern nation. (Siddiqi, 2002: 178)

However, with the consolidation of nation states, compromise between capitalism and nation state and establishment of colonies things started changing rapidly slowly even in Europe they started using police for surveillance and repression of others: the working classes, women, the insane, and so on. The situation was far worse in Europe’s colonies, where establishment of rule and maximum profit were the chief objectives of colonial administration; , and happiness of people was of least importance, the rational regulation of the masses from the beginning implied the inhibition and overpowering of challenges to the power of the regime was the main use of police.

In order to unearth the anti-people stance of police in India many subaltern historians go back in the history to study unhappy effects of colonial administration on the population of India because at the time of Independence India inherited these institutions from the British colonial setup. During this period, governing colonies stood for the maintenance of order and the prevention of dangers- that may arise from unmanageable native population. For the colonial authorities rational administration implied rational use of police and other instruments of order to manage the colonial apparatus so that they can get maximum profit out of it. After the independence of formerly colonized world, the nation states that came into being were imitation of European nation states to some extent as reflected in their use of terms like democracies however a closer look reveals that they were bad imitation of Western nation states as evident in

their use of violent means to solve their internal problems. Therefore, as Amitav Ghosh shows in his novels the postcolonial state becomes an administrative machine uninterested in the welfare of the masses.

The government machinery always sides with the powerful for instance Bhudeb Roy, the police informant who bribes the government officials and benefits from this closeness persuades the government official that Balaram and his family members are plotting against the government however; reality Balaram's social service frees many innocent people from the clutches of Bhudeb. Balaram equates him with germs and decides to use carbolic acid against as he is using the acid against germs. The police believe the story provided by Bhudeb and does not talk to Balaram or anyone else in the city to know the ground reality. They fire a warning flare at the house, that causes the acid barrels to blast and the entire family is killed except Alu who is send out by his aunt to throw sewing machines in the pond. Through this incident, Ghosh shows that a compromise between private stake holders who are interested in maximum profit and coercive state apparatus destroys individual efforts to bring about enlightenment and social development.

The chapter entitled "Signs of the Time" presents state both as a welfare state and as a coercive state especially when an Air Force plane falls on the formerly school building. As the plane falls on the building that belongs to Bhudeb he decides to make money out of it. He auctions all the parts of the plane to the innocent villagers for whom Bhudeb is the only government in the village. This is a sheer example of cheating because the plane belongs to the Government of India and after a few days, people from forces come there to claim it and the villagers had to return all the parts that they had bought from Bhudeb, who convinces Army officials that the villagers has stolen parts of the plane from the site of accident and Ghosh has presented this scene very beautifully:

Nobody ever really learned what happened there, but over the next two days the blue-uniforms went unerringly to the shops with sheet-metal roofs, the canals bridged by reinforced steel, the rickshaws decorated with shiny bolts, and recovered every last bit of scrap the plane had deposited in the village. All that anyone knew was that when the jeeps drove out ranks of blue-uniformed arms appeared in the windows waving cordially to Bhudeb Roy, and he waved back, smiling happily. (Ghosh, 2008: 104)

This accident proves very beneficial for Bhudeb because on the one hand, he sells the Government plane to the villagers that were finally recovered by the army on the other hand, the

building was also insured and he gets money from insurance company as well. Therefore, the nation/government proves welfare government for Bhudeb but the same government proves coercive for the innocent villagers.

To highlight the relationship between India as a postcolonial nation state and its citizens who expected the independent nation state to be a benevolent and welfare state, Ghosh locates the novel in the 1970's when strong nationalism was in the air. The second phase of nationalism was not directed against the colonizers. Apparently, it was directed against its neighbour, which is also a product of same colonial design however it was to consolidate the hold of ruling elite on the government machinery so that all dissenting voices against the coercive state apparatus coming from within can be silenced in the name of nationalism.

The novel narrates the misfortunes in the life of Alu, an orphan, who is enmeshed in a hostility between his uncle, Balam and the village strong man, also a police informant because Balam tries to shatter the hierarchies between upper caste-lower caste, rich-poor, educated-uneducated, natives-refugees etc. As the most part of state machinery is occupied by the upper castes, therefore these hierarchies are seen as the most important part of national culture hence, the police identify Balam as an anti-national and anti-social element and finally he is attacked by the police and killed. When the police discovers that Alu is not killed in the attack they set a special agent on his trail. In addressing, the nature and scope of nation state and its coercive nature and the role its subsidiaries- police, army and allied services play, Ghosh questions the character of modernity in India. While discussing *The Circle of Reason* Yumna Siddiqi establishes a relationship between modernity, culture and nation:

In liberal discourses, modern nations are broadly imagined in two ways: as political communities that are universally governed by a rule of law, assuring the duties and privileges of citizenship to all; and as "ethnic" communities that have a sense of shared history and culture. In both kinds of images, the repressive aspects of the nation tend to be obscured. The nation-state form is energetically vested in newly decolonized countries with the promise of liberation from oppressive rule. It holds out the assurance of true equality and true fraternity. Yet, the newly liberated nation inherits the repressive apparatuses of the colonial state, apparatuses that are freshly deployed against a "free" citizenry. (Siddiqi, 2002: 179-180)

Partha Chatterjee also highlights the continuity of not only colonial apparatus of administration but also the same or similar mechanism to rule independent India, when he says:

the new state chose to retain in a virtually unaltered form the basic structure of the civil service, the police administration, the judicial system, including the codes of civil and criminal law, and the armed forces as they existed in the colonial period. As far as the normal executive functions of the state were concerned, the new state operated within a framework of universal rationality, whose principals were seen as having been contained (even if they were misapplied) in the preceding state structure. (Chatterjee, 1993: 4)

Ghosh subscribes to these ideas when he depicts the governmental reconnaissance and regulation of various characters in the novel as a colonial legacy, which in turn, is the legacy of Enlightenment rationality.

The Circle of Reason also deals with the question whether rationality is something universal or it is specific where Indian rationality is different from European rationality. According to Tapan Raychaudhuri the use to the word “Reason” in the title of the novel invokes the relationship between nation and rationality when he says,

Rational assessment of current needs and received traditions, both indigenous and alien, became the hallmark of Bengali thought in the nineteenth century. Arguably, this development marked a total discontinuity in the history of the region. A product of the colonial encounter, it was a development with explosive potentialities which acquired a measure of autonomy. (Raychaudhuri, 1995: 47)

Another aspect of European Enlightenment culture, reason was to challenge and loosen the grip of orthodox religious authority and tradition. As the main aim of colonial authorities in India was to rule not to develop, therefore they also encouraged pseudoscience that paved way for internal colonization, which was a great help to the British rulers who were a minority in India. Balaram’s obsession with both phrenology and hygiene foregrounds this aspect of colonial rule. Balaram finds a copy of Practical Phrenology that sparks his interest in phrenology, a pseudoscience quite near to Indian astrology. Balaram’s pseudo-scientific line of investigation, especially his predictions about Bhudeb’s newborn baby brings him into conflict him. The conflict between Bhudeb and Balaram becomes more and more violent from Bhudeb’s side however; Balaram is not dissuaded by Bhudeb Roy’s threats. When large numbers of Refugees come from East Bengal’s side and he finds their colonies full of germs and disease, he initiates

an even more ruthless struggle for the rationalist cause against germs with the help of carbolic acid and is able to save many lives in Lalpukur.

Balaram's confidence in the power of scientific rationality is not just eccentric; rather its roots can be traced to the belief shared by nationalist thinkers. For instance Jawaharlal Nehru, first prime minister of India, reposes faith in science when he says:

I am convinced that the methods and approach of science have revolutionized human life more than anything else in the long course of history, and have opened doors and avenues of further and even more radical change, leading up to the very portals of what has long been considered the unknown. (Nehru, 1960: 17)

Bhudeb Roy is more interested in earning money and the school that he runs is not to impart education but to generate profit when he finds better sources to make money he closes down the school where Balaram teaches. Unlike Bhudeb Roy, Balaram has the temperament of a teacher therefore after the closure of Bhudeb Roy's school he decides to start his own school. The very name of the school "Pasture School of Reason" invokes the entire history of reason from pre-colonial to colonial to post-colonial, Ghosh describes the school as:

The School would have two main departments. After much careful thought Balaram had decided to name one the Department of Pure Reason and the other the Department of Practical Reason: abstract reason and concrete reason, a meeting of the two great forms of human thought. Every student would have to attend classes in both departments. In the Department of Pure Reason they would be taught elementary reading, writing and arithmetic, and they would be given lectures in the history of science and technology.... In the Department of Practical Reason, the students would be taught weaving or tailoring. (Ghosh, 2008: 116)

He adopts Gandhian Model of Rationality for empowering people and building nation when he decides to utilize Alu's talents as a weaver and his wife's ability as a tailor. Through this project like Gandhi, he modifies the Enlightenment rationality to serve the needs of underprivileged masses of postcolonial India. When the school starts earning profit, he decides to start the Department of the March of Reason, which embodies "Reason Militant" and takes up the task of disinfecting the refugee colonies, Ghosh describes the new Department as:

A school, like Reason itself, must have a purpose. Without a purpose Reason decays into a mere trick, forever reflecting itself like mirrors at a fair. It is that sense of purpose which the third department will restore to our school. It will help

us to remember that we cannot limit the benefits of our education and our learning to ourselves-that it is our duty to use it for the benefit of everybody around us. That is why I have decided to name the new department the Department of the March of Reason. It will remind us that our school has another aspect: Reason Militant. (Ghosh, 2008: 126-127)

At this point Balaram's rationality comes in conflict with the national rationality, which is actually an extension of colonial rule where the interests of the ruling elite become the interests of nation. His school empowers the poor people and makes them less vulnerable to internal hegemony and exploitation by people like Bhudeb Roy, who stood with colonial authorities before independence and became the representatives of nation after independence. Through example of weaving as a mode of empowerment for the marginal sections, Ghosh tries to show whatever was nationalist before independence becomes anti-national after independence. In the course of the novel, the act of weaving ceases to be merely an act of empowerment and resistance and becomes a symbol of journey of humankind:

Man at the loom is the finest example of Mechanical man; a creature who makes his 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.... It has never permitted the division of reason. (Ghosh, 2008: 59)

By going into history of weaving Ghosh, deconstructs the modern idea of nation and challenges the orthodox nationalists who create national histories to exclude large sections of people from the nation and deny them the right of home in the nation where they are living for centuries.

Ghosh contrast the idea of nation developed during struggle for independence by the nationalist leaders, which was more inclusive, and circular means if the poorest of poor is empowered and becomes prosperous the nation becomes empowered and prosperous in turn however after independence the entire discourse was reversed instead of circular motion they started advocating straight lines:

The time has come, he said, his tears drying on his cheeks, for straight lines. The trouble with this village is that there aren't enough straight lines. Look at Europe,

look at America, look at Tokyo: straight lines, that's the secret. Everything is in straight lines. The roads are straight, the houses are straight, the cars are straight (except for the wheels). They even walk straight. That's what we need: straight lines. There's a time and an age for everything, and this is the age of the straight line. (Ghosh, 2008: 107)

The new discourse focuses on the development of nation, which has become a synonym of ruling elite amalgam of feudalist lords, capitalists and many other opportunists who supported the colonizers during colonial period.

Towards the end of the novel when Zindi, Boss, Alu, and Kulfi have come, still pursued by Jyoti Das reach El Oued, a small town in Algeria and come in contact with India diaspora there Ghosh brings in the issues of religion, rationality and Indianness. Mrs. Verma, a Doctor decides to stage Tagore's play *Chitrangada* at the local hospital just to avoid a boring and much repeated public speech by her colleague Dr. Mishra however, it is also an occasion to assert national identity through public displays of cultural ethos. Dr. Mishra objects to staging this play as he argues that the cultural image put forward by *Chitrangada* is outmoded in its quasi-religious character. Before the play could be staged Kulfi dies of heart attack and the issue of her last rites and cremation again initiate a debate on national culture, religion, rationality. Dr. Verma, a non-Brahmin plans to erect a pyre and perform last rites of Kulfi in Brahmanical manner, which is somehow projected as Indian national culture However Dr. Mishra, a Brahmin scoffs at her religiosity. He opposes this idea because following such rites is incongruous with a modern, secular outlook. Furthermore, when tap water is substituted for Ganges water and broken furniture used for a funeral pyre the entire idea of following cultural ethos is absurd. According to him either one should have pure modern outlook or pure orthodox outlook. On the other hand, Dr. Verma follows a hybrid approach and becomes representative of middle class of modern India that is modern when it comes to making money otherwise it is completely orthodox.

The Circle of Reason provides a criticism of the exploitive features of postcolonial societies without neglecting the possibilities for positive changes inherent in the postcolonial modernity. His critique dwells on both philosophical as well as social levels and take into consideration both domineering as well as emancipatory facets of Enlightenment Reason without forgetting to highlight the role of force and violence as normal and rational activity in the state and civil society. He also explores the idea of a perpetual traveler an escape from the oppressive features of modern rationalities and social systems however, he reminds the reader that one can

escape the geographical nation but it is almost impossible to escape the national borders engraved in the psyche by the nationalist discourses in last three- four centuries. In *The Circle of Reason* Ghosh hints at the complicity between the discourses of rationality and the state apparatus, by depicting the functioning of the legal-bureaucratic apparatus of the state and by depicting the futile endeavor by subaltern to become a part of state machinery.

The most significant theme in *The Circle of Reason* is the transcendence of politically erected cultural differences, lines and borders supposedly preserved for the benefit of common humanity. Ghosh highlights the constructedness of these demarcations to make the reader aware so that other possibilities of constructing the world on different parameters they can explore.

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CHAPTER - 3

SEARCHING FOR HOME IN POSTCOLONIAL NATIONS: A STUDY OF *THE SHADOW LINES*

India became a nation state on 15 August 1947 officially, however the idea of nation state that often intermingled with the idea of religious identities in orthodox terms was already there that caused the partition of the subcontinent and rendered millions homeless and nationless. This tragedy of partition compelled the writers to think and write about the predicament of the people in the subcontinent searching for home in post-colonial nation states. The large-scale bloodshed and migration at the time of formation of nation states made the creative writers ponder over the significance of nationhood for common people. At the same time a large number of writers from formerly colonized world, despite the heterogeneous nature of nations and nationals assert that their countries possess a prestigious history, culture and heritage. Furthermore, they also valorize the past often with large gaps from which they have drawn the raw materials for their works in the name of national culture and nationalism.

Amitav Ghosh is a postmodern postcolonial novelist who is greatly influenced by the cultural and political location of post independent India. As a social anthropologist and being a visitor to numerous countries, he is qualified enough to comments on the present form of nationalism through his fictional world that is why all the works of Amitav Ghosh revolve around the idea of home and homelessness in a nation state and an antagonism between both. He questions the idea of militant nationalism through continuous crossing, re-crossing and rejects borders and boundaries. He foregrounds that borders drawn out of some political concern disturbs the harmonious environment.

The 1984 Anti-Sikh riots that took place after her Sikh bodyguards assassinated the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi compelled Amitav Ghosh to ponder over the questions of home and homelessness in a postcolonial nation state. That is why these questions form an integral part of *The Shadow Lines* (1988) written in 1988, which was the author's retort to another unparalleled event in Post-Colonial Indian history. The state apparatus that is meant to protect the lives of people lets the riots happen and thousands of Sikhs lose their lives it makes the writer think where the home lies in the state for citizens who fought for its independence. Deeply touched by the riots the author locates the 1964 communal riots in Calcutta experienced by the unnamed protagonist when he was a school-going child in his psyche.

As a product of author's encounter with the real life encounter with riots, *The Shadow Lines* deals particularly with the outcome of the Partition that resulted in the homelessness and motionlessness for millions. It is noteworthy that Ghosh is the only Indian novelist writing in English who deals with the Bengal Partition in his novels- *The Circle of Reason*, *The Shadow Lines* and *The Hungry Tide* and foreground the problems face by the refugees. While examining the logic of national borders in the postcolonial context, he demonstrates the complexity of national identity and home.

Ghosh contrasts bordered nations with borderless universe of humanity and nature and advocates for an idealistic image of a world without national borders, which is represented through the symbol of atlas and the story of Tristan that Tridib tells his nephew. He is convinced of the meaninglessness of Border and its terrible effects that is why he highlights the futility of drawing boundary lines. Ghosh points out how Independence brought with it Partition and how national reconstruction on the bases of some abstract ideologies causes riots and destroys lives of people.

To understand Amitav Ghosh's notion of home in nation and nation as home we should understand the emergence of nationalist discourses around the globe in the postcolonial struggle and their impact on the lives of people who do not fit either in the definition of nation or in the definition of home. Nationalism has emerged one of the most powerful forces of contemporary period that is obvious from the increasing number of separatist activities all over the world. During the anti-colonial struggles in the formerly colonized world, nationalism is born of the concept of a shared heritage of a people that covers a long past and collective ethnic, religious, cultural, economic and political heritage. However, the situation changed in the post-colonial era when the issue of identity became an urgent quest for newly independent countries that are attempting to assert their individuality as nations and trying to shed the yoke of having been culturally oppressed for a long time in their history.

Though these former colonies are trying to inculcate the idea of purity one can very easily see that all, nation-states are far away from the notion of unadulterated national identity that they think, popularize and many a time impose on the people. Peoples move in time and space under the influence of local and global pressures, become religiously and culturally hybrid in ways that modern differentiations of nationality instigates a sense of homelessness among a large part of masses. Therefore, the national borders become artificial, not only in the sense of being contrived

but also in the sense of being insufficient: if they bring together one group along a particular principle, they inevitably segregate others as Amitav Ghosh puts forward in an interview,

Today nationalism, once conceived of as a form of freedom, is really destroying our world. It's destroying the forms of ordinary life that many people know. The nation-state prevents the development of free exchange between peoples (Ghosh, 1993: 52).

In this chapter, I will analyze the ways in which the works of Amitav Ghosh explore the issues of home, national borders, the historical process by which they have come about, and the resulting anxieties and contradictions that affect people's lives in the post-colonial. Amitav Ghosh explores the issue of borders and the history of partition in *The Shadow Lines* that results in diverse insider-outsider perspectives and changes the way history of partition is written. In *An Antique Land*, continues the same theme through the narrative that crosses those precise national confines and going beyond the present into the past to a time where they did not exist, at least not in the modern limiting sense. Both texts construct a complex relationship with other nations primarily with the colonizer. In most of his novels, the characters are uprooted and located in a precinct where they are connected only through their links that has nothing to do with nationalism. In all these texts, there is a conscious objective on the part of the author to construct a history, which is more personal than nationalistic. This need for personal history arises from author's intention to search for the origins of the present and produces an alternative to the written or known broad sweeps of official history churned out of historical events or people that excludes ordinary people and a more genuinely human experience. This task of recording an alternative history has become identified with the responsibility of the Third World post-colonial intellectual.

Benedict Anderson, author of *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, also puts forward similar views on the concept of nation that will help in understanding the intricate fictional world of Amitav Ghosh. He writes, "nationality, or as one might prefer to put it in view of the word's multiple signification, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artifacts of a particular kind." He further defines the nation as "an imagined political community -- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson, 1987: 13-15), which is fraught with incongruities because though the nation-states are historically new entities, "the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past" (Anderson, 1987: 19). To illustrate this idea of nation building on

ideological lines Anderson challenges President Sukarno's conception of Indonesia by saying that, "although the very concept of 'Indonesia' is a twentieth century invention, and most of today's Indonesia was only conquered by the Dutch between 1850 and 1910" (Anderson, 1987: 19). The nationalistic discourse of most Third World leader's today echoes the same concept and reveals the same inconsistencies. It is a historical fact that most of the borders of Third World countries were drawn by the colonial powers and not by the sovereign nation-states, themselves as it happened in the case of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the postcolonial age, these borders become all-important for the nation, which it must protect for its own salvation. Anderson differentiates between modern nations and the older empires and sheds particular light on it *In An Antique Land* when he says that the twentieth century state sovereignty is recognized over all the

legally demarcated territory. But in the older imaginings, where states were defined by centres, borders were porous and indistinct and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another. Hence paradoxically enough, the ease with which pre-modern empires and kingdoms were able to sustain their rule over immensely heterogeneous and often not even contiguous populations for long periods of time. (Anderson, 1987: 26).

Then Ghosh adds:

the greater freedom of movement in the world.... In the 12th century, people developed a much more sophisticated language of cultural negotiation than we know today. They were able to include different cultures in their lives, while maintaining what was distinct about themselves (Ghosh, 1993: 52).

Major themes in Ghosh's works are- the notion of the selectiveness and the non-porous nature of modern national boundaries. He foregrounds it by contrasting it with the all-inclusiveness of earlier communities that lacked the very idea of nationality with all its modern accessories of passports and visas.

Anderson then looks into the mode of writing that condenses the creation of the imagined community of the nation-state and makes "it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves and to relate themselves to others in profoundly new ways" (Ghosh, 1993: 52).

He highlights the role of print-capitalism that comes in the form of the novel and the newspaper etc. and allows the author and the reader to communicate an almost false intimacy.

The disseminated information, builds the community around it by allowing sharing of common facts. Amitav Ghosh in his *The Shadow Lines* exploits this device where the most important event in the life of the narrator, the riots that lead to Tridib's death, risks being permanently lost if not recorded. This foreground the division that exists between official history and the more personal history that author is writing.

For Indian Diaspora writers like Ghosh there is an urgent sense in which the past can be lost by virtue of their being away from it. Salman Rushdie, another Diaspora writer, in his *Imaginary Homelands*, describes this condition:

that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not of capable to reclaiming precisely the thing that is lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind (Rushdie, 1991: 10).

He tries to justify his own location as a Diaspora writer by using the image of a broken mirror that will "be as valuable as the one which is supposedly unflawed" (Anderson, 1987: 11), simply because it provides another vision or angle to perceive and therefore reconstruct history. He further tries to find his location when he says, "Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel we straddle two cultures, at other times that we fall between two stools" (Rushdie, 1991: 11). Therefore the Diaspora writers experience and understand the disingenuousness of national boundaries and the fissures they have put through by invoking the past therefore they must reconstruct a past and a present which are broken and disjointed if they want to do justice to their actual conditions.

Ghosh supports Rushdie's views in his essay entitled "The Diaspora in Indian Culture," when he says that "the links between India and her diaspora are lived within the imagination," rather than nationalism or religion therefore "the specialists of the imagination - writers - play so important a part within it" (Ghosh, 1989: 76). They write their own India from their unique viewpoint from the outside expressing most pertinently the colonial experience. His concept that it is "impossible to be imperfectly Indian," (Ghosh, 1989: 77), ironically defines the perfect Indian as hybrid who is neither Indian nor British rather a product of that cultural clash, one who is not purely.

Amitav Ghosh as a creative writer belongs to the postcolonial postmodern era that demands the literature to break free from the,

limited spheres of nationalism, language, or ethnicity. The cages in which writers were once confined have now been sprung open. Essentially, the problem of alienation is less acute today, because the world is so much more complex, so polyglot, so full of competing voices, that most writers have become nations unto themselves (Alter, 1994: 13).

Amitav Ghosh through his narrative, that moves across time and space to show that hybridity and multiculturalism have always been the essential features of our world. He validates his point of view by validating his position as a Diaspora writer that he validates in his article “The Diaspora in Indian Culture”, where he posits that “India exported with her population not a language, as other civilizations have done, but a linguistic process—the process of adaptation to heteroglossia” (Ghosh, 1989: 75) that help them to understand the concept of home and nation from a distance.

Amitav Ghosh identifies the idea of heteroglossia as the unique form of Indian culture that influences the constructions of the national derives. He took this idea from Mikhail Bakhtin’s interpretations of the genre of novel. Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia demonstrates itself in the diversity of meanings and signs linked through the interaction between the different levels of dialog that exist within the creative and relational characteristics of the novel as he himself argues unlike most texts which have historically been “monologic” (e.g. the epic, fable, romance or the pastoral which are essentially framed by a unitary, homogeneous or uniform meaning), the novel works through heteroglossia by juxtaposing the different levels of discourse within language, no one of which can fully capture that language’s variety and resourcefulness (Bakhtin, 1981: 428).

Heteroglossia purports that life as well as art do not have static meaning; which is fundamentally unstable site of conflict. The interplay between the various social, cultural, political forces across time, linguistic devices present in a work of art capture the multiplicity within any national or cultural sign structure. Therefore, Bakhtin’s view of heteroglossia is constructed on the notion of dialogue as a site of conflict rather than complaisant as it recognizes and highlights the existence of “another consciousness”, “another and equal I” (Todorov, 1984: 107), that signifies the presence of conflict - of otherness within a socio-linguistic, cultural or national system.

This presence of conflicting forces can be seen at work in the novels of Amitav Ghosh that draws from the writer’s denunciation of preexisting anthropological hypothesis of cultural

consistency, stability and legitimacy. Ghosh reveals the privilege with which anthropology, from the very beginning as a discipline, has used the hypothesis of culture in the service of European imperial expansion. The anthropological fixing of cultures strengthens the idea that cultures have constant and unchanging identity it overshadows the fact they are the products of history. This emphasis on the presence of static borders between races and cultures helped the Western anthropologists in the colonial period in writing about other cultures without allowing the others to read, write or talk back. This is the conceptual framework behind the depiction or rather creation of other cultures.

Amitav Ghosh's novels disrupt the fixed and homogeneous nature of nationalist discourse and the epistemological notion of cultures. The narrator of *The Imam and the Indian* discovers:

Many of them [the villagers] had worked and travelled in the sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, others had been in Libya and Jordan and Syria, some had been to the Yemen as soldiers, others to Saudi Arabia as pilgrims, a few had visited Europe (Ghosh, 1986: 140).

This extensive mobility challenges the narrator's anthropologically shaped expectation of the village as a land fixed in some distant space and time however he come to know the villagers from close he remarks, "Every man in [the village] was a traveler". Through his narrator Amitav Ghosh foregrounds that the inhabitants of the village who were assumed to be the "most ancient and most settled of soils" display all "the busy restlessness of airline passengers in a transit lounge" (Ghosh, 1986: 140). Therefore, he challenges the passive nature imposed by Eurocentric anthropological studies on the other cultures by revealing that these so-called passive cultures always had the practices of moving across boundaries, interacting with other cultures.

Through his narratives, Amitav Ghosh conceptualizes new tropes for representing the cultures of others therefore the notion of heteroglossia forms foundation of both literary aesthetics as well as cultural politics in the works of Amitav Ghosh. By using the concept of heteroglossia along with the practices of crossing boundaries, exchange of cultural practices, and interaction among different cultures across time and space, he conceives of national and cultural structures and sees them in a state of flux. This particular position taken by Amitav Ghosh in his writings make him question the paradigm of fixed roots that plays a pivotal role in the formulation and consolidation of boundaries in nationalist discourse. In this way through his writings he produces a continuous critique of the segregationist nature of nationalism practiced by a large section of people in the formerly colonized world that they have inherited as colonial legacy of

subjugation through division, whose “lines drawn in sands still haunt Third World geographies” (Shohat, 1993: 99). This kind of nationalist discourse constructs and consolidates itself on the basis of difference because the notion of binary oppositions is implicit in it.

The Russian semiotician Yuri Lotman, looks into the formation of cultures in the age of nation states and reveals that every cultural organization “begins by dividing the world into ‘its own’ internal space and ‘their’ external space” (Lotman, 1990: 131). It results in the fragmentation of the world into cultural domains marked as “us” and “them”, “inside” and “outside” as the narrative of the “self” is amalgamated through a complete antagonism with its “other”. The same formula can be applied to the concept of “home” and “non-home” which are acknowledged as the basic demarcations within geographic space of nation states.

This chapter studies *The Shadow Lines* (1988), to demonstrate the author’s commitment to the notion of heteroglossia that discards the binary logic in the nationalist creation of borders that he finds exclusionary, hostile and finally self-defeating. This study will show that Ghosh’s re-narration of the nation and national borders both as international border and as lines of separation in the hearts of people, which constitutes the main apprehension of the novel. He foregrounds the problematic nature of these national boundaries by bringing in the important event in the history of India i.e. the division of the Bengal into Indian side known as West Bengal and Pakistani side known as East Bengal in 1947 at the time of Independence. Through this depiction, he dislocates some of the important convictions of nationalist discourse by incessantly highlighting “the disillusion and discontents that have marked India as an independent state” (Kaul, 1994: 143).

Amitav Ghosh presents his critique of nationalist logic through the depiction of the life of Datta - Chaudhuries of Bengal who traverse the boundaries not only physically but imaginatively as well across time and space between Calcutta, London and Dhaka of past and present. The writer takes up several family lines at the same time. He introduces life history of several members of a family such as unnamed narrator, who lives in Calcutta and moves to London, his grandmother Tha’mma and her sister Mayadebi born and brought up in Dhaka but married in Calcutta marriage stays there after partition as part of the mass migration of Bengali Hindus around that time; and some more family members are mentioned in the story. The author presents contrasting views through Tha’mma and her sister’s son, Tridib, who can be seen as opposite to each other in intellectual frameworks. Along with blood relations there are friendships that provide an opportunity to look into nationalist projects from a different angle.

In his essay “Interrogating Identity”, Homi Bhabha points out that “[i]n the postcolonial text the problem of identity returns as a persistent questioning of the frame, the space of representation, where the image [. . .] is confronted with its difference, its Other” (Bhabha, 1994: 46). Ghosh in his *The Shadow Lines* confirms what Bhabha describes as “the otherness of the Self” (Bhabha, 1994: 44), here identity and difference exist not as binary oppositions but in a state of conjoint structuring. For both Bhabha and Ghosh identity is not pre-existing, unwavering, or total, but divided by processes of othering within itself, permanently in a state of inconsistency, therefore the national space becomes a site of multiplicity, contradiction and uncertainty.

To highlight this idea Ghosh uses the device of mirror image, which runs through the novel to highlight the associations that ironically connect and divide nations and individuals. Slowly the narrator recognizes the otherness of other characters such as Tha'mma, Tridib, Ila, Nick, Robi as his mirror image through which he tries to define his own identity. Here the writer suggests that the self has to be known not in its distinctiveness from but in its affiliation to the other. This identification of the self through others becomes very important because according to Ghosh's idea selfhood lacks fixed monologic meaning and therefore renders the monotonous nationalistic discourse invalid. With the movement of narrative, the narrator starts interweaving the contending experiences and imaginations of others who become mirror images of his own self. Therefore, the narrator's consciousness emerges as a representation of Indian national consciousness and its reformulation emerges as a metaphor for the heterogeneous national identity of the Indian.

A micro level study of the mirror image in this novel reveals a similarity in the construction of the narrator and the other characters. At the macro level, it replicates the same relationship among the cities of Calcutta, London, and Dhaka. With the evolution of consciousness, the narrator discerns new meanings and envisages new links between his own and the other characters' observations and understandings of space. Slowly he starts perceiving that “Muslim Dhaka” and “Hindu Calcutta” are basically mirror images of each other, divided by a “looking-glass border” (Ghosh, 1995: 233) and the communal riot in which he was trapped as a child and the one in which Tridib gets killed in Dhaka were caused by the same thing or attitude. The narrator realizes that nations a home does not guarantee safety to its citizens. Rather two separate countries in their bid to look different become inverted images of each other as the writer says, “I, in Calcutta, only had to look in the mirror to be in Dhaka; a moment where each city was the inverted image of the other” (Ghosh, 1995: 233). This conception of otherness and

difference play a very significant role in the formation of national identity and leads to the tragic event of partition as Sunil Khilnani observes:

Partition is the unspeakable sadness at the heart of the idea of India: a [reminder] that what made India possible also profoundly diminished the integral value of the idea [... and ...] the conviction that what defined India was its extraordinary capacity to accumulate and live with differences (Khilnani, 1997: 201-202).

Under the influence of colonial rule, Indians have forgotten their most important quality to live with differences. Even after independence the state apparatus is replete with the homogenizing formal description of the nation that the actually leads to appearance of more and more borders within the national space. Bhabha in his seminal essay “Dissemi Nation” portrays this situation as “the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference” (Bhabha, 1994: 148). It implies that contrary to nationalistic discourse the unities of nation formation are based on erasing difference. However, such discourses based on differences caused trauma and violence, which culminated in the partition as *The Shadow Lines* foregrounds.

Therefore, interrogating the discourses of nationalism and re-narrating the nation in its heterogeneous complexity is one of the chief concerns of this novel. The author suggests that even the effort to define one’s own nation as completely different from others is a subtle effort of enforcing internal homogenization. This effort only induces hostility and aversion for differences that further fragment the nation, which in all cases constituted of diverse cultures, which react violently when one of them attains hegemonic position and becomes a representative of all of them.

Peter van der Veer traces the rise of religious nationalism in India and points out the binary undercurrents that reinforce the dominant nationalist ideology when he says:

In the construction of the Muslim “other” by Hindu nationalist movements, Muslims are always referred to as a dangerous “foreign element”, as not truly Indian. The partition of 1947 [...] ha[s] given this construction a strongly “realistic” aspect (Veer, 1994: 10).

While highlighting the construction of nation state on religious lines he points out how the difference between Hindus and Muslims, which happened to be difference in the individual personalities in many cases were naturalized. Therefore, he foregrounds the paradigmatic implication of Partition in the visualization of the Indian nation and the establishing its borders

initially in the psyche of people. Furthermore, the authorized Indian nationalism defends the terrible aspects and bloodshed of Partition as a historical and political necessity; as Tha'mma believes, "across the border there existed another reality" (Ghosh, 1995: 219). Most of the people believe that real borders separate nations, that's why Tha'mma is surprised when informed that borderline between India and East Pakistan would not be visible from the plane. "Where's the difference then?", she asks, "And if there's no difference both sides will be the same; it'll be just like it used to be before [...] What was it all for then—Partition and all the killing and everything—if there isn't something in between?" (Ghosh, 1995: 151). The author foregrounds that people like Tha'mma on both sides of the border who have meticulously internalized the doctrines of the authorized nationalist notions and believe that Partition was compulsory to delineate the real borders and the absolute difference between Muslims and Hindus. For such people, the absence of even a metaphorical indicator of "those separate realities" (Ghosh, 1995: 219) is highly destabilizing. Tha'mma represents the entire breed of such nationalists who believe in concrete lines between nation and cultures. Like all such people loss of her "special enchantment in lines" (Ghosh, 1995: 233) steadily results in Tha'mma's mental imbalance. The unnamed narrator belongs to another category who does believe "in the reality of nations and borders" (Ghosh, 1995: 219) but can transcend this concept and discover at some moment that political boundaries are culturally dependent, not "a corporeal substance" (Ghosh, 1995: 219).

Ghosh creates the scene of division of the Bose family house in Dhaka to foreground the ineffectiveness of drawing borderlines to contain the problem of communalism in the Indian subcontinent. The author brings forth the meaninglessness as well as the arbitrariness of Partition by depicting that the partition wall is erected to ensure that the ancestral house is divided equally, down to the tiniest detail between Tha'mma's Jethamoshai and his younger brother, it goes to the extent of "bisecting an old commode" (Ghosh, 1995: 123). After this strange division the author shows how the discourses of difference and division are constructed to draw pleasure which is evident from how Tha'mma invents stories about her uncle's house on the other side of the wall to amuse her younger sister. The unseen side of the house becomes a daily source of imaginative creation based on aesthetics of fear for the girls, gradually it assumes the status of the "upside-down house" (Ghosh, 1995: 125) for them and ultimately they start fearing their own imaginative creation that hardly correspond to any reality outside. Amitav Ghosh applies the principle of binary division as in Jethamoshai's house everything "upside-down", like a mirror image of normality, which Tha'mma's house stands for. This myth breaks; when she goes to take

her uncle from Muslim Bangladesh after independence, and finds that his house is just like her own side. Here, Ghosh challenges the key nationalist logic “that across the border there existed another reality” (Ghosh, 1995: 219). The use of house as a contesting site becomes a metaphor for conflicting forces at national level. The trajectory of developments through collaboration with Indians from different parts and the British, which is common to a large section of Indian middle class of that time, serves as an artistic strategy to deliver a powerful criticism of divisive politics of hatred played out in the subcontinent.

The ancestral house in pre-partitioned Dhaka has

... evolved slowly, growing like a honeycomb, with every generation of Boses adding layers and extensions, until it was like a huge, lop-sided step-pyramid, inhabited by so many branches of the family that even the most knowledgeable amongst them had become a little confused about their relationships. (Ghosh, 1995: 121)

This portrayal of the ancestral joint family home with its diversity recalls A.K. Ramanujan’s suggestive interpretation of 20th-century India through the metaphor of the family house in his poem “Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House” domestic space has the all-inclusive power where “[n]othing stays out” (Ramanujan, 1976: 41). Ghosh does neglect the communal conflict in pre-Partition India, however at the same time he foregrounds the radical changes in describing and justifying communalism.

Sudhir Kakar while looking into the causes behind communal violence in contemporary India, Kakar points out that in pre-British India, clashes between Hindus and Muslims were political rather than a “communal” nature. In that age religion was “a matter of personal faith and reverence for a particular set of icons, rituals, and dogmas”, communalism evokes one’s “exclusive attachment to his or her community combined with an active hostility against other communities which share its geographical and political space” (Kakar, 1996: 13). According to Kakar communalism as a discourse and violent act produces recognizes individuals with a religious identity and propounds that political, economic, social and cultural interests of different communities clash with each other. Furthermore, Kakar highlights that “partition violence is commonly agreed to have been the most momentous event in the shaping of Hindu–Muslim relations in independent India [... with particular reference to] the division of the country into two states of India and Pakistan” (Kakar, 1996: 37-38).

The phenomena to locate home within a nation state on the basis of religious, cultural, regional, racial, and linguistic identities culminated in the partition. It is still continuing and has become a recurrent refrain in the subsequent history of the subcontinent. The author voices this reality through Robi when he says “all those [...] dead people—in Assam, the north-east, Punjab, Sri Lanka, Tripura—people shot by terrorists and separatists and the army and the police”(Ghosh, 1995: 246). It compels us to question what Bhabha calls “the idea of a pure, ‘ethnically cleansed’ national identity” (Bhabha, 1994: 5).

The Shadow Lines implicitly endorses the view that all identities like religious, cultural, national do not have fixed or stable meanings. Bakhtin highlights the role of various contexts of past and present in shaping the meanings of words and signs, similarly Ghosh suggest that political, social, cultural, economic and historical forces influence various contexts that determine the identities of citizens within the framework of nation state. Ghosh’s shows that concept of difference and its perception and people’s reaction to it keep changing with change in external circumstances. He demonstrates it when the communal riots of 1964 break out in Calcutta, with this change Hindu and Sikh classmates of narrator start perceiving their Muslim classmate Mansur as enemy.

Tridib is a Bakhtinian character who challenges the binaries of nationalism because he looks at everything through his imagination that enables him to transcend the officially created rigid narratives of nation and culture and location of home within these narratives. The willingness to free himself from the narrow confines culminates when he plays Tristan “a man without a country, who fell in love with a woman-across the-seas” (Ghosh, 1995: 186). Years later the narrator understands Tridib’s desire to surpass the geo-political ordering of world for a place having no border “between oneself and one’s image in the mirror” (Ghosh, 1995: 204) is actually an effort to return to a larger cultural and historical space that stands in contrast to the rigid boundaries of nationalist ideology. To prove this point he takes the reader to the multicultural and multiethnic medieval India in *In an Antique Land*. The existence of such multicultural spaces, pave the way for the crystallization of national boundary lines that marked “the dissolution of the centuries of dialogue that had linked” people (Ghosh, 1992: 236).

Tridib’s looking to the pre-Partition past does not refer to the pressures, which shape present-day India. The murder of Tridib, the Oldman and Khalil the rickshaw puller by the rioting mob in Dhaka and Narrator’s own experience with rioting mob in Calcutta foreground the impact of nationalism on the lives of individuals and how home and nation become antagonistic to each

other. *The Shadow Lines* as a narrative destabilizes the rigid binary logic imposed on the idea of otherness, identity, history and memory used in the construction of nationalist boundaries. *The Shadow Lines* is a dialogic narrative as it gives space to contrasting views. For instance Tha'mma on the other hand stands for exclusionary nationalism Tridib on the other hand searches for "routes" that go beyond "the limits of one's mind to other times and other places" (Ghosh, 1995: 29) to develop alternative paradigm of connections across and beyond the confining boundaries. However, this novel deals with the concept of national boundaries and home it does not give any political statement. Rather it is an effort of a creative imagination that feels a need to formulate fluid that interrogates the polarization of differences as set off against each other, in order to achieve the homogenized unity of nationalism.

Amitav Ghosh foregrounds the fear psychosis instilled in the hearts of people in the name of national identity, which according to him is actually "the fear of the war between oneself and one's image in the mirror" (Ghosh, 1995: 204). This feeling of fear is dangerous for the individual as it leads to what the narrator says is a "special quality of loneliness" (Ghosh, 1995: 204). Therefore, the author deals with the problem of creating national identity and forces us to acknowledge the ambivalence of boundaries. According to him, empowerment in the subcontinent can be attained by overcoming the fear of the other.

The author also problematizes the rooted notion of national identity through the numerous journeys undertaken by various characters. Most of the characters keep moving in space from one place to another. The other characters who do not move out, the experiences of different time and space reach them indirectly so they also move but only in the psychological space. By foregrounding this movement in the outside world or in the psychological space, he challenges the idea of permanent rootedness of people that looks for permanent points for coming and going as the narrator observes:

Every language assumes a centrality, a fixed and settled point to go away from and come back to, and what my grandmother was looking for was a word for a journey which was not a coming or a going at all [but] a journey that was a search for precisely that fixed point which permits the proper use of verbs of movement. (Ghosh, 1995: 153)

Even the grandmother who speaks for permanent identities finds herself confused about identities that is why while talking about her proposed journey to the place of her birth i.e. Dhaka, a separate country, she says "come home to Dhaka" (Ghosh, 1995: 152) in place of "go" home

to Dhaka. Initially the narrator feels Tha'mma's confusion is due to lack of geographical understanding and teases her for lacking the knowledge of "the difference between coming and going" (Ghosh, 1995: 152) later on he realizes that her statement is shaped by her acclimatization of the official nationalist discourse. He points out that grandmother's hypothesis of home and nation as political categories is grounded in the "fixed and settled" (Ghosh, 1995: 153) logic of the state-led dominant and monolithic nationalist discourse that does not accommodate the routes—the "comings and goings", the discontinuities and fissured meanings of national space.

The idea of home is further challenged when Tha'mma finds Dhaka where she was born and brought up turns into other of home, a place of danger and threat when visits it after partition. She finds herself unable to describe the complex nature of home located within the nationalist system of defining things. Dhaka the ancestral home turns into the unhomey Muslim Dhaka where Tha'mma is a foreigner and where the riots that kill Tridib. The home at this juncture become a split space of home versus non-home and destabilizes Tha'mma's assumption of home as place of uniformity, stability, and coherence. The author uses this transformation of home to deconstruct hegemonic meaning of national space and identity. *The Shadow Lines* assert that the meaning of home is dependent on so many contexts otherwise "between [home] and its metaphors there is no more connection than there is between a word, such as mat, and the thing itself" (Ghosh, 1995: 96).

Formation of nation states on communal lines at the time of partition created a large mass of people who were victims of the official definitions of nation and home. Tha'mma as a representative of these homeless people discovers that displaced people like herself has lost "their roots, their land, their past" (Ghosh, 1995:51), and "have no home but in memory" (Ghosh, 1995:194). This statement by Tha'mma has a deeper implication because all her life she considered nostalgia as a weakness and has always valorized the forgetting of the past as crucial for nation building. Therefore, she creates a home in the memory that allows her to see the subtle connections that transcend national borders. Despite a votary of official version of Indianness, which is based on communal and caste lines, she visualizes her ancestral house in post-partition East Pakistan as a space free from the territorializing tendency of nationalism. However, it is only a temporary phase in her life most of the time she represents orthodox nationalism.

In contrast to Tha'mma's concept of rootedness of home and nation the author has presented Tridib for whom home "does not merely exist", rather, "it has to be invented in one's imagination" (Ghosh, 1995: 21). Later in his life, the narrator comes to understand Tridib's point

of view that there is something more complex than the theory of rooted citizenry that becomes visible through the cartographical symbols found on political maps. While suggesting us the inherent dangers of the hegemonic discourses of identities that focus on differences Ghosh indicates towards the need to search for alternate ways to look at identities that focus on inclusion. While drawing circles on Tridib's copy of Bartholomew's Atlas, the narrator revises his earlier perception of space and reality and learns "the meaning of distance" (232). Through the character of narrator who towards the end of the novel rejects the binaries of the world constructed out of "the tidy ordering of Euclidean space" (Ghosh, 1995: 232) of maps. Hall supports this assumption when he says, "reading a map represents a profound act of faith [...] in the idea of the map—that the unique mosaic of boundaries and symbols corresponds to real space in what we like to call the real world" (Hall, 1992: 369). When the narrator looks at the atlas and compares the geographical distances with cultural distances, he finds that geographically Chiang Mai in Thailand is nearer to Calcutta than New Delhi, and Chengdu in China is closer than Srinagar. However, the geographical closeness does not translate in cultural closeness. On the other hand, Dhaka, Lahore and Delhi are closer to each other culturally though only as a product of cultural binaries created by political discourses of nationalism that believes in excluding than including.

The emergence of nation states coincide with the emergence of novel and Amitav Ghosh is aware of this fact so he knows that his narrative of nation will always be seen as problematic in the tradition of realistic novel. Therefore he disrupts the linear, coherent and continuous narrative required for formulating fixed identities rather he opts for a "disruptive temporality of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1994: 37) that challenges the "homogeneous empty time" (Benjamin, 1968: 263).

This novel constructs heteroglossia of home that transcends the politically created national boundaries visible in overlapping of the Calcutta of 1939 over the Calcutta of 1952 and the England of 1939. Through the depiction of historical and spatial interconnections, of routes and the incessant amalgamation of peoples and places, the author questions the enforced unity and consistency in this mostly realist novel. The narrative in this novel keeps moving across space to various places such as London, Calcutta, Dhaka. It also moves forward and backward in time from childhood of the narrator to the childhood of the grandmother and from the childhood of the narrator to the adulthood of narrator. These different narratives not only move across time and space but also sustained by the narrator who remembers connections and associations. To project the text as a heteroglossia the narrator maintains the fluidity of time and

space that is why war-torn London is contrasted with riot-torn Calcutta of 1970's. A chance remark by the owner of a Bangladeshi restaurant reminds Robi of the traumatizing events of Dhaka in 1964 when he lost his brother in a riot asserting national identity in response to a certain incident that happened in India. Similarly, the events that take place in the cellar of Price's home in London remind the narrator of something that happened between the narrator and Ila while hiding under a table in their old house in Raibazar. This technique of overlapping time and space challenges the narration of national identity in a homogeneous and linear manner. This method discards the epistemology of binaries and reminds, "that the experience of overlapping heterogeneities itself can be counter posed to the violent sub-continental insistence on cultural purity and communal division" (Dutta, 1990: 61).

The Shadow Lines tries to construct a new aesthetic that acknowledges otherness, where the difference is not seen as a threat to national integrity. By aligning with Bakhtin's and Bhabha's ideas about the heterogeneity this novel looks into the possibility of building a new model that can be used to search the meaning of national identity that acknowledges differences.

To consolidate this position he begins the novel with the formation of the Diaspora: "In 1939, thirteen years before I was born, my father's aunt, Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib" (Ghosh, 1995: 3). This movement is a permanent feature of mankind in the novels of Amitav Ghosh that is why the novel the title of first section as "Going Away". In this regard, Tridib is an important character because he is the least rooted character among all the characters mentioned in the novel. He is always on a move either physically or psychologically. Later on, the narrator inherits this legacy from him and tries to complete and reconstruct the story, or history of his family, which can be seen as a microcosm of the nation. He constructs this history through recollection that renders it fragmented and non-linear, which mirrors the fact of a history that is dispersed within various geographical locations and various memories. Furthermore the protagonist himself is a dual persona who "is at once a first-person participant in or observer of his youthful stories and mature commentator reflecting on past events, putting together pieces." (Sudrann, 1990: 434). Therefore through narrator with his mentor Tridib the author is constructing an alternative history.

Tridib as philosopher of time instills the narrator with an obsession for past that needs to be reconstituted and preserved otherwise will be lost. Tridib transports the narrator to the past which is equally vivid and real as present is to other people that is why he says "people like Tridib.... could experience the world as concretely in their imagination...., more so if anything,

since to them those experiences were permanently available in their memories” (Ghosh, 1995: 29-30). The narrator acknowledges the contribution of Tridib when he says, “the Tridib who had pushed me to imagine the roofs of Colombo for myself, the Tridib who had said that we could not see without inventing what we saw ...that if we didn't try ourselves, we would never be free of other people's inventions” (Ghosh, 1995: 31). Here through the narrator Ghosh wants his reader to come out of the official narrative of nationalism that renders a large section of Indian public homeless and which is gaining momentum day by day and making nationalism more and more anti-people. Elusiveness of the reality is projected through the character of Tridib who is shown from the very start to be an unreliable narrator, “Nobody was ever quite sure where they stood with Tridib” (Ghosh, 1995: 10), for he tells different stories different people and at different times therefore people are always free to decide which version they want to believe. This narrative technique de-stabilizes people the notion of official rigid history and provides space for alternative points of views. The novel projects that all knowledge is instable, even less significant incidents are interpreted in different ways. For instance, the story about Ila's Doll gains different meanings in different contexts and different people interpret it differently. Even the narrator understands it differently at different times depending on his level of knowledge and his psychological state. On the other hand when the narrator tells this story to the grandmother for her it becomes an issue of nationalism. In this way, the simple incident in the novel becomes an instrument to discuss serious issues of otherness, nationalism, home, nation and many other things.

To look at the issues of home and nation in a nationalist state the author through the narrator takes the history and narrative outside Indian nation state to a British family in England on the eve of Second World War. In this way through the consciousness of Tridib that manifest through the narrator the story is taken outside the binary notions of India and Pakistan to the land of colonizers. To understand and feel the life in England Tridib makes use of imagination. He imagines the lives of Tresawsen and his friends from pictures he sees at Mrs. Price's home. He further imagines:

in all probability they themselves would not survive the war. What is the colour of that knowledge? Nobody knows, nobody can ever know, not even in memory, because there are moments in time that are not knowable: nobody can ever know what it was like to be young and intelligent in the summer of 1939 in London or Berlin (Ghosh, 1995: 66-7).

Here by imagining the influence of World War on the private lives of people he challenges the official record of war, which is by and large objective.

Here G. R. Taneja praises Ghosh for transcending the narrow boundaries in his fictional world when he says:

The new Indian English fiction of the eighties is free from the self-consciousness, shallow idealism, and sentimentalism that characterized the work of the older generation of novelists.... who started writing in the thirties. The fiction of the eighties takes a maturer view of Indian reality (Taneja, 1991: 365).

The author takes the story of a family that is spread across nations, cultures, crosses time starting from colonialism to post-colonialism, and links it with the history of individuals that become a more comprehensive history of the nation. The novel discusses the influence of European colonialism and the way it affected the lives of people in the colonized world; however, the major emphasis here is not on the divide between the colonizer and the colonized. More importantly, the novel discusses the more urgent factors that divide people and result in their exploitation and he places the orthodox notion of nationalism as one of such factors that becomes anti-people by rendering them homeless within the nation. As Alter affirms, “The novel betrays no anxiety because it attempts to prove nothing and interrogates rather than defines the concept of a totalising India” (Alter, 1994:13).

The major concern of the novel is to highlight different views of nationalism; their influence on the concept of home and the way they contest with each other throughout the novel. For instance, narrator’s grandmother Tha’mma voices one of these while the other one evolves in the background in a very subtle manner. The narrator’s grandmother stands for abstract nationalism where people fight for freedom and autonomy. She represents the orthodox nationalists who have formulated their abstract idea of nation and want people to fight for it, that are why anyone who does not subscribe to their idea of nationalism is a traitor. This attitude of grandmother is clear when she dislikes Ila because she considers her a product of cosmopolitan education, so hanging between Indian and London and a traitor because she has bought freedom “for the price of an air ticket” (Ghosh, 1995: 87). She objects,

Ila has no right to live there Everyone who lives there has earned his right to be there with blood They know they’re a nation because they've drawn their borders with blood War is their religion. That’s what it takes to make a country. Once that happens people forget they were born this or that, Muslim or

Hindu, Bengali or Punjabi: they become a family born of the same pool of blood.

That is what you have to achieve for India, don't you see (Ghosh, 1995: 76)?

Through Ila the author calls her views a warmongering fascist ideology, however through the narrator he looks at the grandmother as a victim of the abstract ideas of nationalism absorbed by newly emerged middle class that yearns for “unity of nationhood” and “self-respect and national power” (Ghosh, 1995: 77). In this novel Ila seems to “carry with” her “a wider sense of nationality based on imperial loyalties to an idealized island of Great Britain” (Dhawan, 1997: 13).

The author is not against nation state but against the idea of orthodox nationalism that divides people more than uniting them therefore, he has arranged most of the events in the novel to deconstruct this particular notion. Keeping this in mind he brings in the concept of national borders and persuades the reader to ask if the national borders guarantee security to its citizens especially in the time of riots. Then he shows that borders are not that much visible at the point where nations are separated from each other as they are within the social, cultural and political structures constituting the nation state that is why more killings occur not on the border but within the nation. This particular situation gives leads to the concept of “shadow lines” found nowhere and everywhere and house or un-house a person.

Here the author questions the validity and utility of national borders which were supposed to provide a solution to the problem of communal riots but fails to do so because this division

once it had actually happened... instead of the peace they had so much looked forward to, they found that a strange, eerie silence had descended on the house. It was never the same again after that; the life went out of it (Ghosh, 1995: 121).

Now the author questions the very act of drawing boundaries to reach peace because they neglect the reality of human and political diversity, which is present in any culture. Under such circumstances, the boundaries have to pass even through the most hidden parts of human psyche as it happens with the ancestral house of the grandmother. Amitav Ghosh refers to this problem in one of his interview when he says:

When [one] comes under pressure the first response is to say the problem can be solved by division.... An absolutely unipolitical culture is an impossibility. It's enormously important for us to think of multiethnic states, because every state is multi-ethnic (Ghosh, 1993: 52).

The author looks into the problem of home and nation through the character of grandmother, Tridib, the narrator and Ila who are always searching for their home within and across borders for instance the grandmother cannot “understand how her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality” (Ghosh, 1995: 149). She starts feeling that she belongs to the category of Bangladeshi refugees with the partition in the country of residence and country of birth when her son points to the historical fact that they too came from Dhaka as refugees, she is agitated and says, “We’re not refugees... We came long before Partition” (Ghosh, 1995: 129). Her family members are now scattered in many countries and the Muslims unhoused by the nation formation have occupied her ancestral house.

Tha'mma the grandmother represents the traditional concept of nationalism. She is preoccupied with the idea of religious nationalism therefore she goes to rescue her Jethamoshai and bring him to India from her ancestral house in Dhaka. Jethamoshai on the other hand a common person for whom the piece of land on which he is born and brought up constitute the entire universe that is why he always feels comfortable in his house though now it is occupied by the outsiders. The nationalist project of Tha'mma to rescue the old man only results in the death of Tridib, Jethamoshai, and Khalil the poor rickshaw puller. Therefore by selecting and arranging the incidents very carefully the author wants to warn the reader to be aware of narrow definitions of nationalism that render all sections of society homeless at some time. The holistic sense of home can be achieved through nationalism, which is more humane and more inclusive.

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CHAPTER - 4

THE CALCUTTA CHROMOSOME: HOME IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD OF MEMORY, IMAGINATION AND INTERNET

The Calcutta Chromosome (1995) by Amitav Ghosh is received very differently by different critics some even went to the extent of rejecting it as a trivial novel as recorded by Diane M. Nelson:

A friend and long-time Ghosh fan reads *The Calcutta Chromosome* as a “lite” book, meant to entertain the NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) in the US and Britain and far less serious than Ghosh’s earlier novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988), which is about communal violence and diaspora; his academic ethnohistory, *In an Antique Land* (1994); or his massive historical fiction, *The Glass Palace* (2000), about sovereignty and labor regimes. (Nelson, 2003: 251)

It is the statement, not the novel that is non-serious because it deals with the newly opened dimension of human life opened by developments in the field of information technology, which shifted the focus of neocolonialism from the geographical land to to the virtual world of cyberspace. Tabish Khair unlike the above-mentioned fan praises Amitav Ghosh as a serious writer whose major concern is not to thrill the reader with cyberpunk but to make the reader aware of the complexities of human –machine interface with focus on human:

For one, Ghosh’s vision of the future, unlike that of cyberpunk, is not that of a dystopia. Second, Ghosh’s cyberspace is an appendage of lived life, not its substitute. [...] Third, cyberspace is not central to Ghosh’s narration: humans are. Technology is not a fetish for the lack of humanity. The contacts established through computers are human contacts, not disembodied data. [...] Ghosh’s narration of subaltern subversion, in its physical enactment and strong social consciousness, also saves his novel from becoming the sort of ‘consumer-oriented, technologically dependent libertarianis’ that cyberpunk often seems to be. (Khair, 2001: 331-332)

Amitav Ghosh is an important proponent of science fiction in India his strength comes from his vocation as a social scientist trained in anthropology has influenced him as science fiction writer. He explores the role played by modern science and technology in the creation of new humans in the highly hybridized interzones of the postcolonial world. He explores the virtual world of cyberspace and the fluidity of “identity and the kinds of images people of various

backgrounds project onto their identities” (Hamdan, 2013:48) through the computer Ava and many other computers that serve as a gateway to the cyberspace.

Mike Frangos establishes relationship between postcolonial effort to reclaim history, cyberspace, and the act of writing a work of imagination in the following words:

Published in 1996, Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome* figures machine reading as an imaginative device enabling the recovery of subaltern histories and the construction of a posthuman future. The novel dramatizes a series of information recovery operations in which digital traces are retrieved from a seemingly all-encompassing electronic ether. The novel is thus centered around questions of digital archiving and digital forensics — central themes of the digital humanities. Indeed, Ghosh’s exploration of topics of machine reading and digital forensics well exemplifies what Matthew Kirschenbaum has referred to as the "forensic imagination" in his study of electronic literature between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s, precisely the context for Ghosh’s novel. Ostensibly a medical mystery, *The Calcutta Chromosome*’s central question — how a mediocre scientist in the British imperial service in India was able to discover the mechanism of malaria’s transmission through mosquitoes — is only solved when the work of a writer of Bengali vernacular literature is recovered alongside deleted emails and other documents retrieved through digital forensics. (Frangos, 2013:

1)

The Calcutta Chromosome deals with pre-nation state era and tries to show that the idea of nation as home and a safe home in nation state is a myth. On the one hand, Mangala, Lutchman, Ross etc. belong to the virtual world of memory and imagination on the other hand, Antar allegedly enters into the virtual world of cyberspace that projects as if “world is a computer and everything in it a simulation” (Hansen, 2004: xv). The virtual world of World Wide Web may appear “contiguous with geographical space,” however in the words of Martin Dodge the world it creates remains primarily informational and relational “with no weight or mass” (Dodge, 2005:118). In his *Calcutta Chromosome* Amitav Ghosh transcends the physical space of nation state and enters into the vast space known as cyberspace, which is not divided into boundaries. Through this depiction he foregrounds, “One of the most significant markers in the development of human civilisation comes in the forms of tools and devices. Humans form close “relationships” with these tools and devices to the point of being inseparable” (Hamdan, 2011: 121).

Ghosh sees human life in flux, not as static and rooted in one place therefore the real home of people is not a house made of bricks on a piece of land, rather it is in the constant movement and the sites that facilitate the movement this idea is supported by Martin Leer in his essay “Odologia Indica” who propounds that “[r]ailway stations ... function as the sites where characters and stories appear from and disappear into; centres which connect parallel worlds, a kind of real world Internet portals” (Leer, 2001: 55).

Therefore, railways, internet and the flow of history become the locale of this novel. Though the nineteenth-century invention of the railway was deeply implicated in the colonial project, the subaltern characters like Laakhan and Mangala who were found on the railway stations and control the railways and other colonial things in a very subtle manner. Similarly, subalterns like Antar also manipulate tentacles of neo-colonialism like internet that are entangled in more subtle forms of hegemony and control.

Although Ghosh investigates diverse trajectories between tradition and modernity in his novels, *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) is his most sustained examination of the place of science and technology in colonial India. He challenges the colonialist notion that the colonies are devoid of any meaningful science and as they possess only ancient technologies. Uppinder Mehan throws light on this aspect of the novel:

The Calcutta Chromosome forces a clash between western and eastern understandings of science and technology. Ghosh gives us more than just the stereotypes of west meets east, however. *The Calcutta Chromosome* brings together not just the more inclusive “science” that Harding speaks of with an eastern epistemology; Ghosh makes modern western science meet an older knowledge. The main plot of the novel concerns a group of eastern “scientists” that subverts and manipulates the scientific method of the western scientists engaged in malaria research in turn-of-the-century India for their own purposes. This eastern group is engaged in a systematic attempt to produce knowledge about the real world but the “real” world for them includes the possibility of the transmigration of souls. (Mehan, 2012: 2)

The main plot of the novel revolves a group of eastern “scientists” who topple and deploy the scientific method of the western scientists engaged in malaria research for their own purposes. This eastern group is involved in a logical effort to produce knowledge about the material world that includes the possibility of the transmigration of souls. Towards the end of the novel, Antar

moves into the “Simultaneous Visualization headgear” (Ghosh, 1996: 261) and sees Murugan playing out the very first scene of the novel and transmigration of souls takes place with the help of modern technology:

He felt a cool soft touch upon his shoulder and his hand flew up to take off the Sim Vis headgear. But now there was a restraining hand upon his wrist, and a voice in his ear, Tara's voice, whispering: 'Keep watching; we're here; we're all with you.

There were voices everywhere now, in his room, in his head, in his ears, it was as though a crowd of people were in the room with him. They were saying: “We're with you; you're not alone; we'll help you across.” (Ghosh, 1996: 262)

The novel ends before anything could be known about the new kind of being that will now carry on the work of transmigration. However the characters transmigrate from the old technology of blood infection to the latest “technology for interpersonal transference” as Murugan puts it (Ghosh, 1996: 93).

The transmigration of souls and the chromosome in the title correspond a previously unknown and mysterious, neural-type material that yields human traits and can be influenced technologically and shifted to other bodies. While talking to Antar, Murugan proves that the essence of an individual-- human personality, the soul can be transferred from one body to another body when brain harmony is transformed or stimulated by the embedding a viral-type substance into the body; this transforms the body into a conductor for “interpersonal transference” (Ghosh, 1996: 93). This kind of transference takes place many times in the novel such as between Antar and Murugan Urmila Roy and Tara, and then there is human-computer interface when Antar migrates into the world of cyberspace, entering into Ava’s consciousness however, it would be reductive to claim that Antar becomes a mere computer simulation or Human Computer Interface produces a new species of the human cyborg or a post-human machine.

The Calcutta chromosome mentioned in the title of the novel does not refer to biological genetic material rather it is a part of consciousness- the software of life, which is found only in “non-regenerative tissue, in other words, the brain” “certain kinds of cells: it simply isn’t present in regenerative tissue. It only exists in non-regenerating tissue: in other words, the brain” (Ghosh, 1996: 213). It implies that the new transporter of the virus is no longer the Anopheles mosquito or the pigeon, as was the case in nineteenth-century colonial India, in the postmodern era same

task is accomplished by the computer that Diane M. Nelson designates “organic reprogramming” (Nelson, 2003 248). The chromosome thus provides a clue to transcend national borders it corresponds to virus of living world that does not recognize the boundaries of bodies and keep moving from one body to another. In the novel, the term emerges as a symbol of cosmopolitanism that resists the homogenizing influence of both-colonialism and nationalism.

All discourses of nation and home appear to dissolve because life seems to become synonymous with digital computations as technologies of power has reached a level where they take life as their object, and situate it within the dominant order of the machine. The merging of human and machine converts humans into cyborgs and transforms computers into anthropomorphic creatures. *The Calcutta Chromosome* seems to affirm Haraway’s theory of cyborg ontology who considers the evolution of the feminist cyborg as the symbol of a new form of “cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism ... our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction” (Haraway, 1991: 149).

To borrow Indira Karamcheti’s term “cyborg diaspora” (Karamcheti, 1992: 271) that she used in 1992 with reference to Indian diaspora writings, Amitav Ghosh may be studied as a cyborg diaspora a term which is defined by Donna Haraway as “a hybrid creature, composed of organism and machine” (Haraway, 1991: 1). Following the lead given by Donna Haraway, Karamcheti proposes that the existing group of middle-class South Asian migrants is closely allied with technology and “the greater availability of twentieth-century travel and communications technology” (Karamcheti, 1992: 272) helps them move from margin to center. Similarly Ananda Mitra argues that “a shared system of communication such as CMC [computer-mediated communication], with its shared language and systems of meaning, can be used to produce communities that do not need geographic closeness” (Mitra, 1997: 58).

Amitav Ghosh in *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* (1995) hints at two dimensions of colonialism- one belongs to past that deprived India of its intellectual credibility by registering the work done by Indians in the name of the British. Second belongs to present where cybernetic warfare poses a threat to nation state not because it wants to destroy nation states but because it wants to alter the nature and scope of nation states. Both the colonialism of past as well as present are propelled by multinational capitalism, in the past various East India Companies belonging to different European Nations colonized the world by de-territorializing and reterritorializing the monarchial kingdoms and in the present it is done by using the innovative computer technologies of the Web, global communications, and cyberspace

that help in penetrating the market and regulating the flow of capital. W. Jeremy Crampton supports this idea when he says:

Although we speak of cyberspace as if it were a single object, we might also wonder if it is instead an unevenly distributed and complex set of interrelated technologies (the Internet, the Web), practices (e-mail, interactive mapping) which have multiple outcomes at different spatial scales (the digital divide, production of subjectivities). (Crampton, 2003: 5-6)

In this novel Ghosh, foregrounds the attempts at restructuring the world by the neocolonial powers that will affect the very idea of nation and home in nation. In the novel the International Water Council attempts to restructure world history by epitomizing globalization's resurgent forms of neo-imperialism in which through structural hegemonies multinational corporations dissolve the idea of nation states and persuade the Third World leaders to open their borders for flow of transnational capital that will change the nature and scope of nation state in the Third World and the State itself will help in turning the natives into tame, acquiescent laborers. The International Water Council in the novel plans to make world's water supplies salable commodities in the international market that will advance a corporatist vision to control all life. However, Ghosh believes that the process of colonization is never complete and the colonized start dominating and controlling the colonizer in a very strange and subtle way. To prove his point he takes the reader to nineteenth century India, a British Colony and everything seems to be under the control of the British and shows how an underground society of Indian mystics led by the mysterious, slightly deranged, syphilitic Mangala controls and directs the research on malaria in a colonial laboratory which is seen as a western prerogative.

Mangala is introduced in the novel is a promising character who emerges as a scientist and challenges the Orientalist idea that "Orientals, and Muslims in particular, are lazy," (Said, 1994: 178). She works as a maid servant in Cunningham's laboratory she is very intelligent and keen observer she learns all techniques related to laboratory and pathology as Ghosh comments she knows "a whole lot more about malaria than Cunningham could ever have taught her" (Ghosh, 1996: 208). She becomes an expert in this field and outsmarts even the professional scientists because as Murugan says, "she wasn't hampered by the sort of stuff that might slow down someone who was conventionally trained: she wasn't carrying a shit-load of theory in her head, she didn't have to write papers or construct proofs" (Ghosh, 1996: 209). Ghosh shatters the image of India created by colonial authorities by depicting Mangala as a person with scientific

disposition and Ronald Ross, the Nobel Laureate for a breakthrough in research on malaria as a person with casual, unscientific temperament as through Murugan he describes:

Okay,' said Murugan, picture this: here's this guy, a real huntin', fishin', shootin', Colonial type, like in the movies; plays tennis and polo and goes pig-sticking; good-looking guy, thick moustache, chubby pink cheeks, likes a night out on the town every now and again; drinks whisky for breakfast some mornings; wasn't sure what he wanted to do with this life for the longest time; ...then Pa Ross, who's this big General in the British Army in India, says to him, 'And what the fuck do you think you're doing, Ron? Our family's been out here in India since it was invented and there's no goddam service here doesn't have a Ross in it. . . . There's this outfit that's short on Rosses right now: the Indian Medical Service. . . . So young Ronnie snaps off a salute and scoots over to medical school in London (Ghosh, 1996: 47).

Ghosh's portrayal of Ross as a person with inefficient scientific temperament is not a purely fictional thing he has drawn his argument from Ross's *Memoirs* published in 1923. Along with Ghosh many other critics see this text as a store house of facts carefully chosen and reorganized to establish him as a great scientist. Due to this assortment and reordering most of the critics agree that despite its value, the text cannot be relied upon fully for its doctored and prejudiced account of research on malaria. Ghosh foregrounds this element when through Murugan argues that Ross "wants everyone to know the story like he's going to tell it; he's not about to leave any of it up to grabs, not a single minute if he can help it" (Ghosh, 1996: 46). Edwin R. Nye and Mary E Gibson also question Ross's *Memoirs*:

One thing that stands out in assessing Ross's view of his own self worth was the fact that he kept everything. He kept letters sent to him, apart from family ones, and whenever he could he got back his own letters from people. He kept cuttings, telegrams, copies of articles and so on. The Ross Archives, distributed between London and Glasgow, comprise about 30,000 catalogued items, all of which he carefully saved for posterity. (Nye, 1997: 279)

Ghosh in *The Calcutta Chromosome* inspects *Memoirs* for references of Lutchman, his indispensable Indian patient and servant. Ghosh takes a minor character from the margins of *Memoirs* and makes him one of the important characters in the novel. To make his claim stronger Ghosh quotes directly from Ross' *Memoirs*:

While he's recouping Lutchman succeeds in planting a crucially important idea in his head: that the malaria vector might be one particular species of mosquito. . . . Trouble is Ron doesn't know a goddam thing about mosquitoes: he's never even heard the word anopheles. He ends up chasing after Culex, Stegomyia – going every which way but ahead. Now Lutchman cuts in once again. On August 15 1897 he goes into a huddle with the rest of his crew and decides something's got to be done double quick.

The way Ronnie tells it: “Next morning, 16 August, when I went again to hospital after breakfast, the Hospital Attendant (I regret I have forgotten his name) pointed out a small mosquito seated on the wall with its tail *sticking outwards*.” Ronnie kills it with a puff of tobacco smoke and cuts it open: nothing. But at last he's on the right track: Lutchman's got him chasing after the real malaria vector. . . . “Sure enough,” says Ronnie, “there they were: about a dozen big, brown fellows, with fine tapered bodies and spotted wings, hungrily trying to escape through the gauze covering of the flask which the Angel of Fate had given to my humble retainer! – dappled-winged mosquitoes' ...” Angel of Fate my ass! With Ronnie it always has to be some Fat Cat way up in the sky: what's under his nose he can't see.

“On August 20 1897 Ronnie makes his first major breakthrough: he sees the placement of plasmodium zygotes in the stomach sac of Anopheles Stephensii.” (Ghosh, 1996: 68-69)

Ross in his *Memoirs* also hints at the same, when he says that long after the experiment was over he tried to find out Lutchman by giving advertisement in the newspapers, “On the quay we said good-bye to our faithful servants, Lutchman and Berlisi. We never heard of them again, though I advertised for the former in 1911” (Ross, 1923: 360). Ghosh's point of view is attested by Ross's confessions in his *Memoirs* for instance on page number sixty-five of the novel when Ross requests Manson not to make public his experiments on Lutchman, is quoted directly from *Memoirs* where Ross writes: “Don't for heaven's sake mention at the British Medical Association that Lutchman is a dhooley-bearer... To give a Government servant fever would be a crime!” (Ross, 1923: 165). Mangala is depicted as a scientist who challenges the dichotomy between Europe as rational and scientific and India as irrational and unscientific and proves that India is equally scientific by directing the research on malaria through Ross and finding some cure for

syphilis earlier than Wagner and Jauregg who were awarded Nobel Prize for their similar research on syphilis as Murugan describes:

Let's just stick with that old saying about no smoke without a fire. If a whole crowd of people believed that Mangala had a cure, or a halfway effective treatment, it must have been because she had a certain rate of success. People aren't crazy: if they travelled long distances to see her they must have thought she offered some kind of hope.' 'What do you think that treatment was?' said Urmila. (Ghosh, 1996: 210)

He then compares Mangala's research with the research of Wagner and Jauregg:

What Wagner-Jauregg showed was that artificially induced malaria often cured, or at least mitigated, syphilitic paresis. What he'd do is, he'd actually inject malarial blood into the patient by making a little incision. It was a pretty crude process, but the weird thing is that it worked. (Ghosh, 1996: 211)

Ghosh is successful in underlining colonial authority's marginalization of Indians who contributed to the development of science and technology. He does so by including views of historians of science, who question the success of Ross. Ghosh takes some lead from Ross' *Memoirs* and invents the character of Mangala whose personality is an amalgam of science, myth and superstition. In this way, Ghosh provides explanation for Ross's success and the historical role of Lutchman documented in oblique manner in *Memoirs*. For instance, he admits the contribution of lab attendants in the discovery of the fact that the mosquito species *Anopheles* is the carrier of human malaria:

Now, as if in answer, some Angel of Fate must have met one of my three "mosquito men" in his leisurely perambulations and must have put into his hand a bottle of mosquito larvæ, some of which I saw at once were of a type different from the usual *Culex* and *Stygomyia* larvæ. Next morning, the 16 August, when I went again to hospital after breakfast, the Hospital Assistant (I regret I have forgotten his name) pointed out a small mosquito seated on the wall with its tail *sticking outwards*....I dissected it at once and found nothing unusual; but while I was doing so--I remember the details well--the worthy Hospital Assistant ran in to say that there were [*sic*] a number of mosquitoes of the same class which had hatched out in the bottle that my men had brought me yesterday. Sure enough there they were: about a dozen big brown fellows, with fine tapered bodies and

spotted wings, hungrily trying to escape through the gauze covering the flask which the Angel of Fate had given to my humble retainer!--dappled-winged mosquitoes (emphasis in the original). (Ross, 1923: 221-222)

Ghosh is successful in foregrounding that the Indian scientists are progressive as they believe “that to know something is to change it, then it follows that one way of changing something—of effecting a mutation, let’s say—is to attempt to know it, or aspects of it” (Ghosh, 1996: 92). However due to certain circumstances these reach an impasse and need someone trained in pathology so they manage Ross to work for them in a very subtle manner and further their research on malaria:

But let’s say that by accident or design they’ve made a certain amount of progress; they’ve taken their work to a certain point and then they’ve run smack into a dead end: they’re stuck, they can’t go any further – because of the glitches in their own methods, because they just haven’t got the right equipment. Whatever. They decide that the next big leap in their project will come from a mutation in the parasite. The question now is: how do they speed up the process? The answer is: they’ve got to find a conventional scientist who’ll give it a push. (Ghosh, 1996: 92)

They select Ross for this job and make use of his proficiency in such a way that he conducts experiments as per their commands without being conscious of it. Before Ross is selected Farley, a young, United States based doctor visits Cunningham’s lab in India to pursue his investigation on malaria by using Laveran’s idea that malaria is caused by protozoan or animal parasite. In the lab he meets Mangala, the illiterate cleaning woman who has an astonishing proficiency in handling sample slides and microscope. Mangala and Farley both become distrustful of each other therefore she does not want him in the lab and asks Lutchman to make sure that he finds what he is looking for in the blood samples. It is for the first time that any European scientist sees the parasite. As Farley suspects Mangala so he tries to find out the secret role of Mangala in the lab and research on malaria because he is astounded when she provides fresh slide that only a professional can do. While investigating the role of Mangala and Lutchman he disappears strangely. After the disappearance of Farley, Cunningham also deserts his lab and makes way for Ross, who is not that brilliant or intrusive to sense that Mangala and Lutchman are guiding him in his research. Mangala needs Ross’s because as Murugan says:

It's my guess that by about 1897 Mangala had run into a dead end, and she'd come to the conclusion that the existent strains of malaria wouldn't let her go any further. That's why she was so desperate to have Ronnie figure the whole thing out and publish it. (Ghosh, 1996: 214).

Ghosh successfully projects Mangala as an expert scientist who uses pigeons both as carrier of malaria and as test tubes for the transmission of blood and genetic code like a genetic engineer; she introduces a strain of malaria to the pigeons that is used to transmit information from one body to another by bringing out changes in the structure of chromosomes as Murugan explains:

From what we know of her technique, it sounds like she was working with some weird strain of malaria -- that is, by some kind of primitive horsebreeding method she has developed a strain that could actually be cultivated in pigeons. My hunch is that she found some way of making the bug cross over, so that the bird could be used like a test tube, or an agar plate. (Ghosh, 1996: 212)

Ghosh has premeditated the figures of Mangala and Lutchman as tools for postcolonial connectivity through their secretive cult that repeats through their reincarnations and hence in the words of Kich, "All the characters become a succession of host bodies as they serve the mission of bringing together a series of forces that precipitate a catachresis of information through a chain reaction" (Kich: 10). Christopher A. Shinn also says, "The key to the technology of transference-- that is, to a scientific investigation into Hindu reincarnation-- resides in the function of the host, which evolves in the novel from past carriers such as the mosquito or the pigeon to the present-day locus of the computer" (Shinn, 2008: 146).

Mangala emerges as the final symbol of postcolonial agency as she initiates many unsuspecting hosts into her quasi-scientific experiments in biological mutation that leads to a radical solution to the question of home in the postmodern world. Suchitra Mathur supports this aspect of the novel when she says, Antar "cross over into the third space, into a community that transcends space and time and promises the bliss of ultimate homecoming" (Mathur, 2004: 136). According to Barbara Romanik in the novel "colonized characters subvert the binary of colonizer and colonized" by challenging "Western knowledge's authority" (Romanik, 2005: 53). She further praises Ghosh for challenging the colonial hegemony for he "has convinced us that it is the people Calcutta (non-Western, lower-caste, female, and subaltern included) that count" and that the people will ultimately return to a privileged and honorific place that is actually their

“rightful one”” (Romanik, 2005: 56). According to critics like Suchitra Mathur and Barbara Romanik, Mangala and her followers of Silence are projected as postcolonial symbols of a new post-human race that consolidates into an idealized cyborgian community that triumph over historic oppressors. Chris Hables and others throw more light on the idea of cyborgian community in the following words:

There are many actual cyborgs among us.... Not just the cyberwarriors of a hundred militaristic science fiction stories, but arguably anyone whose immune system has been programmed through vaccination to recognize and kill the polio virus. Not just the fighter- bomber pilot in the state-of-the art cockpit who can target enemies with the eyes, fire missiles with a word, and who uses computers to ... create a disembodied "God's eye" view of the baffle, but also the potentially billions of humans yet unborn who will be the products of genetic engineering. (Gray, 1995: 1)

In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, the World Wide Web seems to replace the traditional domains of nation and home and hints at the emergence of a new human race whose only permanent address will be web addresses like e-mail, face book, twitter etc. The major locale of the novel is the internet and the railway stations, where people keep appearing and disappearing, these locales function as intersecting points between different, even if parallel, realities. Antar who acts as uniting point for all the threads at the end of the novel is able to do so only with the help of his computer, Ava.

These networks and the emanating and connecting points of these networks host different dimensions of reality. This dimension of the networks is visible on many occasions. For instance, when Antar received a call from Tara/Mrs. Aratounian/Mangala (responding to the future, 1990s and 1890s incarnations respectively), he “stared at the receiver not quite sure of what had happened. For a moment it had sounded as though Tara were in the room with him and her mouthpiece had picked up Ava’s ping” (Ghosh, 1996: 192). Leer sees this incident as an example of a chronotopological switch in the narrative that allows for “stories to coexist on different levels as each other’s’ ghosts – as happens both in genetic processes and in cyberspace” (Leer, 2001, 59).

In place of home in nation Ghosh is more interested in intermediate spaces not under direct control of authorities where interpersonal transference takes place Suchitra Mathur highlights this aspect when she says, “the outhouses, anterooms, ramshackle houses under

construction, and private apartments, where the actual work of ‘interpersonal transference’ takes place, are neither completely outside the dominant socio-political structure, nor completely controlled by it” (Mathur, 2004, 133). In other words, the novel deals with the problem of representing space, geographically as well as socially. Geographically, the plot of the novel moves across countries and continents such as USA, India, Egypt and Sudan (Africa), Hungary, Sweden and Finland (Europe), Soviet Union and Armenia. On the one hand, characters of Indian origin cross borders and move to some of these countries on the other hand, characters from these parts come to India. The author is equally interested in the social space therefore; he describes the domestic spaces in which various characters live very graphically. Even some of the public spaces like railway stations are used as domestic spaces by characters Mangala and Laakhan who use the public space of railways like their private space. Ghosh uses the railway stations as symbols for suspension between home-abroad, and coming-going, places in which we have to reconsider our notions about time and space as Martin Leer says:

The scenes of crossing or near-crossing [the interpersonal transference of the Cult’s members into new bodies] seem connected with railway tracks or railway stations in the topological plotting of the novel, just as the three main railway stations of Penn Station in New York, Sealdah in Calcutta and Renupur in rural Bengal seem to be on some kind of web circuit. They function as the sites where characters and stories appear from and disappear into; centres which connect parallel worlds [sic], a kind of real-world Internet portals. (Leer, 2003: n page)

The Calcutta Chromosome looks at the idea of home and nation state as a product of colonial restructuring of the world to carry forward his argument Ghosh depicts nation not as a homogeneous space rather as a heterogeneous space. In the words of Tabish Khair he challenges the colonial historiography of India:

The second (inter-Orient) level of the colonial myth of India’s lack-of-history isolates India from the cluster of relations that have constituted it (both in its parts and as more-than-its-parts) before European colonisation - turning India’s history with various other peoples and kingdom-states to an emptiness before the ‘arrival’ of the colonial presence as the great connecting link. This is the other side of the same coin: it attributes historical agency only or largely to the Europeans. (Khair, 2003: 154)

This novel just does not just focus on colonialism rather it establishes continuity between colonialism and neocolonialism. Ghosh highlights that just as colonialism of past neocolonialism also concentrates on rewriting history as evident from the project taken by the International Water Council in which the stake holders,

[S]aw themselves making history with their vast water-control experiments: they wanted to record every minute detail of what they had done, what they would do. Instead of having a historian sift through their dirt, looking for meanings, they wanted to do it themselves: they wanted to load their dirt with their own meanings. (Ghosh, 1996: 6)

The Calcutta Chromosome is set in the future and uses science fiction not only to highlight the dangers posed by development in the field of science and technology and how it can lead to the neocolonialism and but also to explore how the same can be used by the subaltern to challenge neocolonialism. The novelist has constituted the narrative of the novel by exploiting the gaps and silences of the archive, and by weaving together the traces of imperialism. To deconstruct the literature of imperialism he introduces a new technique of machine reading that provides not only the aesthetic framework to the text but also a critical angle to look at the concept of home and nation in the age of orthodox nationalism. The concept of machine reading and the technique of digital forensics are integral to the novel. Antar makes use of these two techniques to recollect and rearrange the leads regarding the disappearance of his former Life Watch co-worker Murugan and his archival research on Ronald Ross's findings about the transmission of malaria that further clears the mystery behind the role played by Indian researchers in research on malaria. Throughout the narrative, the novelist displaces and replaces ideas from numerous scholars- scientists, administrators, spiritualists etc. by making use of computer related technique of cut, copy, and paste with the help of his computer Ava. He also get access to data which is not readily available with the help of internet because in the contemporary age a lot of data is digitized and once digitized it is available to people very easily.

Amitav Ghosh in his only science fiction *The Calcutta Chromosome* explores the new dimensions of home and nation in the virtual space of internet where home and nation cannot be what they are supposed to be. The virtual world of internet deconstructs the very idea of national and domestic space because in this world the boundaries that demarcate the national and domestic space are rendered irrelevant. The structure of the novel that replicates the web like structure of

internet enables Ghosh to move not only information but also people in the form of holograms from one place to another and across time.

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CHAPTER - 5

HOME AND NATION IN FLUX: A STUDY OF *THE GLASS PALACE*

The Glass Palace (2000) by Amitav Ghosh is a saga of people on perpetual move. This movement keeps home and nation in flux and defies the idea of fixed home in a nation with fixed national boundaries. All characters in the novel - whether rich or poor, king or servant, colonizer or colonized- cross and re-cross national boundaries in search of a true home without any success because the idea of nation interferes with the idea of home. Ghosh seems to advocate that it is not the advent of colonialism, which resulted in the homelessness of people rather human beings have always been mobile however he highlights that colonialism as an auxiliary of capitalism makes people move en masse for profit to the capitalist organizations that move both colonizers as well as colonized. To emphasize his point of view Ghosh has brought in various capitalist ventures such as international trade in teak, rubber and petroleum and search for markets for Western consumer goods and technology. To achieve his aim he depicts crisscrossing lives of Uma Day and her family, Rajkumar, the businessperson and timber merchant and his family, the Burmese Royal family, and the families of Saya John, each of them has very intricate relationship with capitalism and colonialism and their resultant nation state and nationalism Melita Glasgow and Don Fletcher throw light on this relationship in the following words:

The Glass Palace is an epic exploring three generations of families and their activities across Burma, India and Malaya. The story begins with the colonization of Burma, proceeds through WWII, and ends during Ne Win's military dictatorship in Myanmar (ex-Burma). The major characters are: the Bengali Rajkumar, his eventual (Burmese) wife Dolly and their sons Dinu and Neel; Dolly's friend and Indian independence activist, Uma Dey, and Uma's twin nephew and niece Arjun and Manju; and Alison, the grand-daughter of Rajkumar's mentor, Saya John. Rajkumar, a dispossessed orphan, grows up and makes his fortune in Burma while Dolly moves as a child to India with the exiled Burmese royal family. Uma, Arjun and Manju's stories take place largely in India. Dinu and Arjun meet Alison on her family's rubber plantation in Malaya. (Glasgow, 2005: 76).

Before the advent of nationalism, people could move to any place and establish their home and other people living around that place had no objection to it on the other hand after the advent of nationalism many people living for years in a particular place were rendered homeless

because the place of their has become an independent nation and place of their residence has also become a separate nation or they do not subscribe to the orthodox notion of national culture which is actually the culture of ruling elite. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of world as a machine evolving constantly can be used to understand the migration of people in the age of capitalism, colonialism and nationalism:

[I]t was the modern State and capitalism that brought the triumph of machines, in particular of motorized machines (whereas the archaic State had simple machines at best); but what we are referring to now are *technical machines*, which are definable extrinsically. One is not enslaved by the technical machine but rather subjected to it. It would appear, then, that the modern State, through technological development, has substituted an increasingly powerful social subjection for machinic enslavement. Ancient slavery and feudal serfdom were already procedures of subjection. But the naked or "free" worker of capitalism takes subjection to its most radical expression, since the processes of subjectification no longer even enter into partial conjunctions that interrupt the flow. In effect, capital acts as the point of subjectification that constitutes all human beings as subjects; but some, the "capitalists," are subjects of enunciation that form the private subjectivity of capital, while the others, the "proletarians," are subjects of the statement, subjected to the technical machines in which constant capital is effectuated. The wage regime can therefore take the subjection of human beings to an unprecedented point, and exhibit a singular cruelty, yet still be justified in its humanist cry: No, human beings are not machines, we don't treat them like machines, we certainly don't confuse variable capital and constant capital. (Deleuze: 457).

The capitalistic imperialism wanted cheap labor for its industries therefore it moved people from one place to another as *The Singapore Grip* (1978) by J.G. Farrell points out "One of the most astounding things about our Empire ... is the way we've transported vast populations across the globe as cheap labour" (Farrell: 175). Amitav Ghosh also highlights the similar thing in his *The Glass Palace*:

What vast, what incomprehensible power, to move people in such huge numbers from one place to another – emperors, kings, farmers, dockworkers, soldiers,

coolies, policemen. Why? Why this furious movement – people taken from one place to another, to pull rickshaws, to sit blind in exile (Ghosh, 2000: 50)?

Amitav Ghosh points out how home and nations have always been in flux even in the pre-colonial era:

The number of foreigners living in Mandalay was not insubstantial—there were envoys and missionaries from Europe; traders and merchants of Greek, Armenian, Chinese and Indian origin; laborers and boatmen from Bengal, Malaya and the Coromandel coast; white-clothed astrologers from Manipur; businessmen from Gujarat—an assortment of people such as Rajkumar had never seen before he came here (Ghosh, 2000: 16).

Ghosh shows how the ideas of home and nation are very complex as they do not exist merely on land, they also exist in the psyche of people, one may be living in a foreign country and has adapted oneself completely to the life style of the foreign country but still fighting for one's country. To prove his point of view he brings in Madame Cama, a person from history who fought for the independence of India by staying abroad:

[M]ore European than Indian—in clothes, manner and appearance. Yet she, Uma, had never known anyone who spoke more truthfully or forthrightly on matters concerning India. She'd been kind enough to introduce Uma into her circle. Uma had never met such people—so interesting and idealistic, men and women whose views and sentiments were so akin to her own. Through these people Uma had begun to understand that a woman like herself could contribute a great deal to India's struggle from overseas (Ghosh, 2000: 191).

Indian diaspora like Madame Cama live abroad with India within them and fight for the independence of India on the other hand millions of lower class and lower caste Indians living in India does not have same feeling towards India and hardly takes part for independence of India because India as a concept excludes them. Indian indentured labor does not find India as a safe home for themselves due to various reasons such as poverty, caste based discrimination, exploitation by the upper caste feudal lords, and many others and therefore they decide to leave India. Once they migrate, the future that awaits them is the same that they could expect in India or better. Success is not sure however, the best thing is that they participate in the competition for social, economic and political ambitions that the very idea of Indian National culture denies them. The idea of Indian national culture is ridden with caste hierarchies recommended in the

canonical book of Hindu legislature, *Laws of Manu* that is an important part of Indian mind, if not Indian constitution and endorses:

No collection of wealth must be made by a Sudra, even though he be able (to do it); for a Sudra who has acquired wealth, gives pain to Brahmanas (Buhler: 430).

The hegemonic position of this canonical text in India makes it clear that millions of Indians cannot feel at home in India. Ghosh in this novel is innovative in the delineation of Rajkumar, a lower caste, as an aspiring person. He accompanies Baburao, an experienced Indian coolie recruiter to earn money and becomes a businessperson, something rare for a lower caste in India. Therefore, search for home proves beneficial for him because once out of India where the canonical text of rules and regulations for orthodox Hindus, *The Laws of Manu*, does not allow an outcaste to earn and save money. However, some critics carrying the burden of orthodox nationalism do not want to acknowledge this aspect of movement and see this movement as a part of colonial expansion for instance Shanthini Pillai says:

Yet, this ironically leads recruiters like Baburao (and later Rajkumar himself) to share in the burden of imperial culpability in selling the myth of the “Promised Land” to the peasants in India and by so doing, share the spaces on board the stage of colonialist expansion in the Far East. They are not nameless stagehands or extras but have their own names and their own individualities, thus creatively resignified in the forefront of the stage (Pillai: 56-57).

People get the feeling of home at any place when they get safety and the socio-cultural, political and economic circumstances support their ambition to move upwards. Ghosh shows that in case of many Indians the foreign lands provide them safety and support their upward movement. For instance, Baburao, the recruiter describes his own journey of becoming rich to the poor people and offers them money to pay off their debts which they will not be able to pay off even after generations if they put their thumbprint on the paper and agree to come with him to Burma. He says:

Are there any here who have debts? Are there any who owe money to their landlords? You can settle your obligations right now, right here. As soon as your sons and brothers make their marks on these contracts, this money will be yours. In a matter of a few years they will earn back enough to free themselves of debt. Then they will be at liberty to return or stay in Burma as they choose (Ghosh, 2000: 126).

In contrast to Madame Cama who lives abroad and cherishes the feeling of home in the nation of her birth and fights for its freedom; the poor people want to go abroad to improve their lot because the nation holds no bright future for them therefore when Baburao made them promise they “rushed eagerly forward, some were pushed on by their relatives and some had their hands held forcibly to the paper by their fathers and brothers” (Ghosh, 2000: 126).

Ghosh tries to challenge that nation is merely a cultural and emotional construct rather he extends the definition by including many more factors like economic facilities, social security, opportunities to make progress etc. therefore he depicts that moving out of the orthodox notion of nation provides hope as at least a few lower caste people such as Rajkumar and Ilongo move upward. With materialist progress made possible by outward movement Rajkumar comes out of national/nationalist social structure of caste and moves up the social position and his caste becomes immaterial to the upper caste Indians living in Burma as apparent from the letter sent by Uma’s relative to her that says:

At home in India a man like Rajkumar-babu would stand little chance of gaining acceptance in the society of people like ourselves. But here in Burma our standards are a little more lax. Some of the richest people in the city are Indians, and most of them began with nothing more than a bundle of clothes and a tin box.

I fully understand that in India a man of Rajkumar-babu’s station could scarcely hope to be entertained—or even received—by a District Collector (Ghosh, 2000: 135).

This letter also specifies the association between money, religion, caste and culture. Rajkumar’s acceptance among the upper caste society of Burma shows that money is the only thing that can weaken the stigmas related to caste, there is hardly any scope for a lower caste to accumulate money in India because the popular culture and rigid caste system is against this tendency among lower castes, however outside India upper caste hegemony weakens to some extent and a lower caste can move upwards. And Amitav Ghosh sees “Popular culture” as a site of “articulation/disarticulation that may denote conflicts of gender, race, class, generation, sexuality and more” (Hamdan, 2012: 53). The untouchables who are not allowed in the temples in India are welcomed in the temples abroad because they have money to donate in the temples. Ghosh, contrary to other Indian diaspora writers writing on similar issues, takes a different stand and looks at religion as an economic and political issue first and a religious and cultural one later as he says:

Then suddenly one morning, he had dropped down like a hailstone from the sky, right into the Durga temple on Spark Street, the gathering-place of the city's Hindu Bengalis. He had come perfectly costumed for the occasion, in a starched white dhoti and a gold-buttoned *punjabi*. To ease his entry he had taken the precaution of bringing along a substantial donation for the *purohit*.

It turned out that Mr. Raha was in the timber trade. He was planning to make a bid for a major contract and had come to ask the *purohit* to pray for him. Like all of his kind the *purohit* had the intuition of a famished tiger when it came to the judging of potential prey. He did much more than offer a blessing. At the temple there were several employees of the big European banks and timber companies; the *purohit* made it his business to introduce Rajkumar-babu to all these men.... Out of gratitude he'd virtually rebuilt the temple, paving its floors in marble, gilding the walls of the shrine and erecting a beautiful new dwelling for the *purohit* and his family (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 2000: 134).

Here the author shows how the colonial intervention in the life on Indian subcontinent is benevolent for lower castes as it helps at least a lower caste people move upwards economically as well as caste wise. However, the author is not able to free himself from the caste-based prejudices completely and he blames only the lower caste people for their proximity to colonial authorities, which was negligible when compared to upper caste's proximity to the colonizers. He does not write even a single line in this novel about the close association between colonialism and Brahmanism and the help extended by upper caste Indians in colonial expansion however; in his *Ibis Trilogy*, he throws light on this aspect.

Slowly he drifts away from the economic and political aspect of nation and movement away from nation Ghosh moves towards cultural aspect of nationalism therefore through the expedition taken by Rajkumar and Baburao along with indentured laborers he draws attention to how the individuals feel once they are uprooted from their land though the land does not support their aspirations rather wants to keep them as perpetual slaves. Despite depicting people nostalgic of their birthplaces, it is an achievement on the part of Ghosh that he makes the lower caste characters realize their economic value that even the Dalit writers are not doing. Amitav Ghosh in some places even follows Dalit aesthetics that according to Sanjiv Kumar is, "being defined differently because instead of form, symbols and artistic features, what is considered crucial, is

the social sensibility and representing the people belonging to the underprivileged communities who were earlier considered as ‘unrepresented’ and voiceless” (Kumar, 2012: 15-16).

For instance while on the sea, one of the immigrant laborers jumps overboard Baburao jumps after him, saves him, and tries to make him recognize his economic worth, which though seems too materialistic and inhuman, has a human aspect because in conventional Hindu society they are considered burden on the earth and have almost negligible economic value for their families. Baburao scolds him, “where did you think you were going?” Baburao crooned, almost tenderly, as though he were singing to a lover. ‘And what about all the money I gave your father so he could pay off his debts? What use would your corpse be, to him or to me?’” (Ghosh, 2000: 127).

Amitav Ghosh does not highlight or criticize the cruel caste system in India and tries to overshadow it by giving an account of the insensitive circumstances in which the girmityas are forced to live on the ship when he says:

The passage was rough and the floor of the holding area was soon covered with vomit and urine. This foul-smelling layer of slime welled back and forth with the rolling of the ship, rising inches high against the walls. The recruits sat huddled on their tin boxes and cloth bundles (Ghosh, 2000: 127).

He avoids giving an account of caste-based internal colonization that is crueller than the British colonization and situation in Dalit colonies in India back home are worse than they get on the ship. Mulk Raj Anand describes a colony of lower caste people in his novel *Untouchable* and this description shows that the life of lower castes is harder in India than on ships or in Burma. A colony of lower caste people in India is

...soiled by the dirt and filth of the public latrines situated about it, the odour of the hides and skins of dead carcasses left to dry on its banks....The absence of a drainage system had, through the rains of various seasons, made of the quarter a marsh which gave out the most offensive stink...made it an ‘uncongenial’ place to live in (Anand: 18-19).

This passage from Anand, which is a diluted version of actual condition in the Dalit colonies, clearly shows that the British colonialism is not worse than the internal colonialism of India. Amitav Ghosh gives a slight version of caste-based discrimination though through Arjun’s contemplation when he tries to enlist the support of plantation workers to fight British Indian Army. He highlights the elitist nature of entire movement for independence and questions if

independence of India for which the plantation workers are fighting will bring any freedom to their castes. He puts a direct question to himself, “Did they know of the poverty, of the hunger their parents and grandparents had left behind? Did they know about the customs that would prevent them from drinking at high-caste wells” (Ghosh, 2000: 522)? He exposes the blinding influence of nationalist discourse that enlist the support of disadvantaged sections without proposing them any freedom and equality that is why Arjun fears “What would they find...wondered, when they crossed the horizon” (Ghosh, 2000: 522)?

In a very subtle manner Ghosh says that the British colonialism is not that bad for the lower caste for its mediation reterritorialize the nation for the lower caste diaspora as “the diasporic self seeks to reterritorialize itself” (Radhakrishnan: 175) in the new space. This reterritorialization transmutes Rajkumar in his new geographic and socio-political location as a part of colonial machinery from an orphan lower caste boy to Mr. Raha.

Through Uma, the author questions the colonial intervention as benevolent for Indian lower caste workers on plantation when she says, “No. But did you see the terror on their faces when that man—the manager—shouted at them” (Ghosh, 2000: 232)? However, Uma can be seen, as a representative of the kind of nationalism developing around that time. Through her the author shows in a very subtle way that this nationalism want to enlist the support lower caste Indians by convincing them that they are victims of colonialism however it hides the exploitative nature of Indian culture and does not address the practical problems of lower caste life that are more due to internal exploitation than colonial one. In the novel Uma lives an easy life, and does not have the experience of real life of social outcasts in India, however she projects herself as a nationalist representative of Indian marginal sections on foreign lands and tries to shame Rajkumar as complicit to colonialism, “Did you ever think of the consequences when you were transporting people here? What you and your people have done is far worse than the worst deeds of the Europeans” (Ghosh, 2000: 247). Through this question, she tries to expose the British colonialism however; gets exposed herself when Rajkumar answers her, “You have so many opinions, Uma—about things of which you know nothing. For weeks now I’ve heard you criticizing everything you see: the state of Burma, the treatment of women, the condition of India, the atrocities of the Empire” (Ghosh, 2000: 248).

Despite his abnegation to diagnose the gloomy side of caste-based discrimination he shows how the British colonialism though uproots the lower caste people it allows them space to move upward. Ilongo, illegitimate son of Rajkumar is another character with Indian roots who is

successful in his career. Uma comes to know this fact, and tries to make an issue out of it to highlight Rajkumar's exploitative nature; however, his wife Dolly takes care that he is provided education that helps him grow.

The Second World War that terminates the career of many people helps Ilongo build his career in a country where he is a second generation Diaspora and luckily is not identified with India. Through the growth of Ilongo's career Amitav Ghosh challenges the idea of nation as something fixed in geography and political boundaries on a nation state. He propounds that true nation for an individual is the place where he/she can feel at home and can grow in terms of economics, politics, and has freedom for personal choice. For instance Ilongo, born in an untouchable family that too because of sexual exploitation his mother, who moves out of India as a contract laborer becomes "a prominent figure in Malaysian politics; he'd been a minister in the Government and had been honored with a title—"Dato" (Ghosh, 2000: 497) this kind of future was almost impossible for a lower caste in India of that time, therefore Malaysia is the true home for them not India.

Colonial intervention in the Eastern world was altering the concept of home; the capitalists were taking skilled and non-skilled labor from Europe to their colonies and from one colony to another colony; however Ghosh portrays this movement beneficial for subalterns from Europe as well as from rest of the world. *The Glass Palace* opens with the British colonial forces' war on Burma; the main reason behind this war is the expanding transnational business. King Thebaw of Burma on his way to India for exile reflects on the nature and scope of colonialism that transforms people into permanent refugees,

What vast, what incomprehensible power, to move people in such huge numbers from one place to another— emperors, kings, farmers, dockworkers, soldiers, coolies, policemen. Why? Why this furious movement—people taken from one place to another, to pull rickshaws, to sit blind in exile? (Ghosh, 2000: 50)

King Thebaw's views on colonial intervention in the colonies shows how this project altered the idea of home and nation for once and all, however Ghosh shows that it is not negative all the time as seen by various postcolonial thinkers and further this tendency to uproot people was present even before the British Colonialism. For instance, Dolly is uprooted by the internal colonization of Burma that uproots "Young girls, orphans, many of them just children. They say that the girls are brought to the palace from the far mountains. The Queen adopts them and brings them up and they serve as her handmaids" (Ghosh, 2000: 7). Through the character of Dolly; the

author exposes the internal exploitation of weaker sections, which is often defended by nationalist thinkers in the name of national culture, and colonial intervention to end this exploitation is seen as attack on national culture.

Here Ghosh looks at the colonial intervention as benevolent for weaker sections. As evident from the life of Dolly and Rajkumar who could never think of the kind of rise they achieve under colonial rule, in their respective cultures. This interference in India and Burma abolishes the feudal social structures to some extent and allows people from lower castes move upwards slightly. Anshuman A. Mondal analyzes *The Glass Palace's* location when he says,

Within the context of a grand historical defeat, then, *The Glass Palace* explores the complex dynamics of collaboration, complicity and resistance to colonialism and its aftermath. Its characters' identities and motivations, their ideas and desires are shown to be shot through with tensions as they negotiate their sense of self and evaluate their place in the colonial scheme of things. (Mondal: 113)

Though Ghosh highlights the benevolent nature of Empire for subalterns, he looks at the British colonialism as a new form of governance that sometimes destroys and sometimes consolidates feudalism and the social hierarchies associated with it depending upon their business interests. To foreground how economic ambitions of the British culminated in attack on Burma the author depicts Burma as a utopian space before the coming of the British. He depicts it as a place where women are educated and free, people are thriving and everything is fine then the British come and ruins everything.

To project the exploitative nature of colonial machinery he creates a miniature of Empire in the form of Matthew's rubber plantation which is a "little empire, Uma. I made it. I took it from the jungle and molded it into what I wanted it to be. Now that it's mine, I take good care of it. There's law, there's order, everything is well run" (Ghosh, 2000: 233). However, he shows how various parts of the machine resist this taming that is why "when you try to make the whole machine work that you discover that every bit of it is fighting back. It has nothing to do with me or with rights and wrongs: I could make this the best-run little kingdom in the world and it would still fight back" (Ghosh, 2000: 233). Ghosh shows how the human nature itself resists the British colonialism however; he is silent on violence and exploitation inherent to native cultures.

The author supports nationalist culture by showing exploitation of marginal sections at the hands of colonialists and hiding the exploitation of same sections by privileged sections of same culture he says, "Every rubber tree in Malaya was paid for with an Indian life" (Ghosh,

2000: 233). The author transforms the untouchable body into national body and puts all responsibility on the empire. He does not foreground the grim reality of the life of the outcastes in India, their social, financial and cultural ostracism and manipulation at the hands of upper castes that made the life of the untouchables a hell.

Saya John and Rajkumar, the outcasts of their respective societies join the capitalist colonial enterprise and grow. However many critics caught in nationalistic paradigm see them as betrayer of nation at a time when there was no nation in India. For instance, Anshuman A. Mondal denounces them for their collusion with the Empire and concludes that it is “their ability to absorb the colonial worldview, to subject themselves to its hegemony that enables them to ascend to the pinnacle of colonial society” (Mondal: 115). However, neither the author nor the critics interrogate the alliance of upper caste and upper class Indians with the Empire directly or indirectly like Uma and Indian Diaspora in Europe and America, Indian religious priests and many more.

Amitav Ghosh tries to correlate the idea of home and nation with the idea of identity by subscribing to Homi K. Bhabha’s idea of mimicry that highlights the “ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from *mimicry* - a difference that is almost nothing but not quite - to *menace* - a difference that is almost total but not quite” (emphasis in the original) (Bhabha: 91). However, he sees mimicry as a problem only for the lower caste Indians who come out of the clutches of caste based hegemony.

He neither looks at identity as a problem for Madam Cama, Uma and the rest of the Indian Diaspora nor questions the whole discourse of Hinduism based on excavation and elucidation of Brahmanical texts by the Orientalists. Most of the traditional critics of British colonialism, who did not see the mission of Orientalism and the imposition of Indianness on Indians as a colonial mission, look at Ghosh’s analysis of the British colonialism as something radical and praise him. For instance, Anshuman A. Mondal tries to pinpoint hybrid nature of Rajkumar, Saya John and the Collector as the imitators of the British when he says:

The hybrid identity of the mimic man discloses the lack of an essential difference between the identity of the English and the Indian precisely because it unsettles the location of such identities. Where does ‘Englishness’ reside? In ‘blood and colour’ or in ‘tastes, in morals, and in intellect’? In acquiring English ‘culture’, have these Indian mimics become English? If so, what has happened to their Indianness? And what gives the English their identity if anyone can become

English? The colonial ‘mimic men’ occupy a hybrid cultural space that is indefinable in static or essentialised terms because they are neither one thing nor the other but something else besides, an excess that cannot be contained within the terms ‘English’ or ‘Indian’. This illustrates an ambivalence within those very terms that renders them uncertain (Mondal: 116).

Most of the postcolonial thinkers, critics and writers are engrossed with the issue of identity and neglect the important fact that neither identity nor the idea of home in a political and geographical space is stable.

Amitav Ghosh looks at Rajkumar’s hesitation over table-etiquettes as a psychological conflict to the accommodation into a European identity, “Even now, after two years of dinners and parties, he found it hard to cope with this atmosphere of constrained enactment” (Ghosh, 2000: 141). The author here neglects the vital fact that Rajkumar does not just moves to new geographical space, he is also moving to a new culture and trying to learn new ways of life. His inadequate table manners are not cultural resistance rather they are part of learning procedure of a person moving from one culture to another culture.

The author here questions the identity without confirming the source of fixed identity and challenges the acquired European identity. Rajkumar born in Chittagong, migrates to Burma at the age of around ten, and lives there for a long-time and acquires Burmese culture along with remains of Chittagong culture, which is one of the innumerable Indian cultures. While depicting Rajkumar’s character Ghosh shows that, his Chittagong identity is at peace with the popular Indian identity or rather Hindu identity, these two identities are at peace with his Burmese identity, however when it comes to newly acquired European identity he is depicted uncomfortable with it.

The concept of home and nation can be studied with regard to the King, the Queen of Burma, and their daughters who are exiled to India. The queen even in exile tries her best to follow the customs of Burmese royal family she is always “so insistent on observing all the old Mandalay rules—the shikoes, the crawling—but she wouldn’t hear of any changes” (Ghosh, 2000: 55). However, the author here shows that the national culture loses its validity outside its political boundaries because the culture needs coercive apparatus supported by family, society or state for its survival. For instance, the servant girls fetched from Burma deny conforming to their Burmese culture of devotion to the King and the Queen and revolt under changed circumstances. Here it becomes apparent that the so-called fixed identity is not fixed at all. The

Princesses also undergo a slow alteration and slowly assumes a hybrid identity somewhere between Indian and Burmese as Ghosh shows:

In their early years in India, the Princesses usually dressed in Burmese clothes—*aingyis* and *htameins*. But as the years passed their garments changed. One day, no one quite remembered when, they appeared in saris—not expensive or sumptuous saris but the simple green and red cottons of the district. They began to wear their hair braided and oiled like Ratnagiri school girls; they learnt to speak Marathi and Hindustani as fluently as any of the townsfolk (Ghosh, 2000: 76-77).

Amitav Ghosh deals with the problem of identity, and home in national space only in selected cases especially whenever there is an encounter between benevolent aspects of colonialism like diluting caste hegemonies, scientific approach etc. with irrational, exploitative and hegemonic aspects like caste system, unscientific approach of native life, and the author sides with native culture. Aijaz Ahmad, questions the practice of upholding national cultural distinctiveness because it “is usually an illusion induced by availability of surpluses – of money capital or cultural capital, or both” (Ahmad: 291).

Despite so many alterations going on in the understanding of national identities and home in national space, the author foregrounds nervousness only in the transformation of Rajkumar and Saya John. He hints at displacement and hardships in the life of British people without bringing in the issues of home and identity as Saya John describes the life of young British boy who joins a multinational company one of the capitalist institutions that churn out British nationalism and traps young unemployed British running after a bright future however end up tragically:

Think of the kind of life they lead here, these young Europeans. They have had at best two or three years in the jungle before malaria or dengue fever weakens them to the point where they cannot afford to be far from doctors and hospitals. The company knows this very well; it knows that within a few years these men will be prematurely aged, old at twenty-one; and that they will have to be posted off to city offices (Ghosh, 2000: 74).

Furthermore through Saya John he throws light on the condition of the lower class British in India when he says, “That man is not much older than you, Rajkumar—maybe eighteen or nineteen—and here he is, sick and alone, thousands of miles from home, surrounded by people

the likes of whom he has never known, deep inside a forest. And look at him: there he is, reading his book, with not a trace of fear on his face” (Ghosh, 2000: 74).

The author abandons this angle after this brief description and takes up the theme of home in colonized national space where imitation of European manners by Indians alters the idea of home, nation and culture for once and all. For instance the Burmese Queen retorts the Collector “Collector-sahib, Sawant is less a servant than you. At least he has no delusions about his place in the world” (Ghosh, 2000: 150). Moreover, the author makes him introspect that “the position had brought him nothing but unease and uncertainty... There seemed never to be a moment when he was not haunted by the fear of being thought lacking by his British colleagues” (Ghosh, 2000: 186).

The problem of Indian cultural identity under the British rule is most highlighted in case of Arjun who like Arjuna of Mahabharata “pauses in battle to question the purpose of war and the kingdom he is fighting for” (Budhos: 5) however unlike Arjuna of Mahabharata, he transforms into a rebel soldier from a loyal colonial subject.

Ghosh highlights that the education system more than anything else interfered with the idea of home in national space therefore the educated Indians face contradictions revolving around the issues of race for instance the collector is ruined due to racism inherent in the colonial structure.

In this novel Ghosh interrogates only the British colonialism and its impact on the educated Indians in their understanding of home and nation with regard to food. It is evident from the description of life of Arjun and Hardy, the first-generation Indian officers in British Indian Army, from upper middle class Indian semi-urban families who are opened them to new experience especially in the field of food,

They ate foods that none of them had ever touched at home: bacon, ham and sausages at breakfast; roast beef and pork chops for dinner. They drank whisky, beer and wine, smoked cigars, cigarettes and cigarillos. Nor was this just a matter of satisfying appetites; every mouthful had a meaning—each represented an advance towards the evolution of a new, more complete kind of Indian” (Ghosh, 2000: 278-279).

Here Ghosh tries to show imperialism of food culture however, he neglects a vital fact that the food culture they experience is more cosmopolitan than imperial. Moreover, all these foodstuffs are indispensable food items in one or the other part of India moreover for people like

Hardy and Arjun nation is not bigger than their village and city and therefore the culture of their village becomes synonymous for national culture. Hence even bringing in culture from other parts of India is seen as cultural imperialism of the British. After discussing food Ghosh brings in problematizes the language of nationalism used in the Academy where the officers are trained. An inscription on the podium in Chetwode Hall, the Military Academy in Dehra Dun reads “*The safety, honor and welfare of your country come first, always and every time. The honor, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next...*” (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 2000: 330) Amitav Ghosh questions the colonial definition of nation and nationalism the even the citizens of modern day nation state can ask the same question,

this country whose safety, honor and welfare are to come first, always and every time—what is it? Where is this country? The fact is that you and I don’t have a country—so where is this place whose safety, honor and welfare are to come first, always and every time? And why was it that when we took our oath it wasn’t to a country but to the King Emperor—to defend the Empire?” Arjun turned to face him. “Hardy, what are you trying to get at?” “Just this,” said Hardy. “Yaar, if my country really comes first, why am I being sent abroad? There’s no threat to my country right now—and if there were, it would be my duty to stay here and defend it” (Ghosh, 2000: 330).

The implicit meaning of this statement is that the political and cultural narrative of nationalism is constructed more to help the imperialistic and hegemonic forces than common people. Hardy and Arjun the members of imperial army gets their salaries from the money collected, by manipulating, the marginal people and if they do not have a nation then where is the nation for untouchables, social outcastes. People are killed for eating certain kind of foods, women, tribal and many other sections are marginalized in the name of Indian national culture. The writer makes Arjun comprehend that the very idea of modern Indian is flawed, and this awareness makes him feel alienated from himself, and suffers from a psychological breakdown that a self-aware colonial subject is bound to pass through as discussed by Ziauddin Sardar in his “Foreword” to the 2008 Edition of *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Dignity is not located in seeking equality with the white man and his civilization: it is not about assuming the attitudes of the master *who has allowed his slaves to eat at his table*. It is about being oneself with all the multiplicities, systems and

contradictions of one's own ways of being, doing and knowing. It is about being true to one's Self (emphasis in the original) (Sardar: vii).

Arjun's statement in the novel also attests this hypothesis when he says, "I wasn't really a human being—just a tool, an instrument. This is what I ask myself, Arjun: In what way do I become human again" (Ghosh, 2000: 407)? The only thing that makes Arjun unlike other nationalists is that he sees himself as both a prey of colonialism as well as a source of manipulation.

Ghosh also reveals the proximity between nationalism of the colonized world and the nationalism of colonizing forces. He sees the native nationalism as a byproduct of European nationalism with almost the similar structures and exclusionary nature. For instance, the Burmese nationalism accepts the nation and nationalism as handed over by the British and does not look into the problems intensified by the British colonialism and left unattended for long.

In this novel Ghosh deconstructs the idea of nation as something rooted in geography or culture, and to strengthen his argument he has created characters who are migrants, refugees, displaced and born of parents from different races and nationalities. Through the depiction of these characters, he tries to achieve a historical viewpoint that entire life is in flux. Paul Carter also upholds this view when he says, "question would be, then, not how to arrive, but how to move, how to identify convergent and divergent movements; and the challenge would be how to notate such events, how to give them a social and historical value (Carter: 101).

The Glass Palace depicts the life of the protagonist Rajkumar, an orphan boy of Indian origin compelled to search and even invent a family, home and nation for himself in Burma. Regarding homelessness and nationlessness of Rajkumar, Rukmini B. Nair, a renowned critic says:

Rajkumar's symbolic as well as real orphan-hood implies that he has to invent a family where none exists;... Rajkumar in effect to solve the same dilemma that confronts the post-colonial authors... he has to make the sense of the existential corundum that plagues all individual who cross... the well define lines of national identity and, family genealogy (Nagarjun: 40).

The location and idea of home and nation for Rajkumar keeps changing with the change in the position of England as a colonial power. Rajkumar an Indian by birth loses his home due to premature death of his parents, followed by homelessness and poverty. In a world where he has no one whom he can call, his own he reaches Burma with some boat people and strands there.

Around the same time, the British capture Burma and they demolish the social hierarchies of royal family that provides space to an outcaste, poor and a foreigner to grow. He converts into a colonial subject and he is happy to be so.

Rajkumar is one of the few colonized subjects who could make progress under the colonial rule. He becomes more pragmatic as a companion of Saya John. He uses his detachment from the institutions of family, home and nation into establishing his own business and he by taking credit from Soya John he starts his own timber yard and advances his business by his determination and hard work at the same time forgetting the barriers of nationhood Sarika Auradkar reflects on the character of Rajkumar as a representative of many such characters in real life:

Through Rajkumar we can observe the wheels of British commerce transforming the subcontinent and its other colonies into a vast network of trading and exploitation. And though this book aims at a deep critique of empire, Ghosh does not have so narrow an agenda as to simply bash the imperial masters. After all, in the new colonial system, someone like Rajkumar is not stuck in his born station in life, but given a greater chance to succeed on his own initiative. Instead, through the novel's characters, Ghosh shows the subtle questions of allegiance that come to torment them all (Auradkar: 96-97).

In this novel, Amitav Ghosh demystifies the idea army fighting to protect the nation as home. He very clearly highlights that the Indian British army fights for the expansion of British colonialism and protects only the business interests of the capitalist's forces that propel it. Sarika Auradkar exposes the subtle association between politics, army and discourses of nationalism:

Amitav Ghosh refers to the phrase "banality of evil" in the context of soldiers fighting for their British masters from neither enmity nor anger, but the submission to orders from superiors, without protest and without conscious. The process of colonization and the state of colonized are very relevant thought components of this novel. The very word used Rajkumar Kaala is objectionable, which is decolonized at least in the actual process of aggression, capture and colonization. How the Burmese people are robbed of all grace with guns and artillery. The British are only giving commands. The soldiers are fighting among themselves (Auradkar: 99).

The novelist highlights that there is no home and nation for Indian people in the British Army to protect rather they are the instruments of colonial expansion that too unconsciously as Ghosh says, “These men who would think nothing of setting fire, an orange. I would look into their eyes and see also a kind innocence. An innocent evil. I could think nothing more dangerous” (Ghosh, 2000: 30). In this novel, Amitav Ghosh deconstructs the idea of fixed home and nation through the life of three generations of men and women moving from India to Burma and vice versa.

To conclude the novel focuses on the formation and reformation of home with the evolution of the institution of nation throughout history. Speaking about his works, Ghosh himself said, “My fiction has always been about places that are states in the process of coming unmade or communities coming unmade or remaking themselves in many ways” (Ghosh, 2002: 19). Indirectly he challenges the valorization of constructions like nation, national identity, and nationalism, and highlights that the idea of home has always been in flux however the imposition of the notion of nation fixes home in the national space and dislocates many people in that geographical space for centuries simply because they do not fit into the newly created national culture.

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CHAPTER - 6

HOME AND HOMELESSNESS IN THE NATIONAL SPACE: A STUDY OF *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* deals with the sense of home and the dangers of homelessness with regard to subaltern sections of society in Indian national space. In this novel, the author projects himself as pro-subaltern, highlights Indian nation state's different attitudes towards people with land and money on the one the one hand and people without land and money on the other hand, and foregrounds state's antipathy towards the subaltern groups that according to Vipin Kumar "may include peasants, workers and other groups" (Kumar, 2012: 272) . A comprehensive study of relationship between land and formation of nation states and how nation state will be a home to certain sections and certain others will be rendered homeless in the nation state will reveal that the roots of this problem lie in the advent of capitalism in Europe and the setting up of colonies overseas. Emergence and empowerment of capitalist institution in Europe led to the enclosure movement in Europe that transformed the land into private property and convinced masses that "a privatized, enclosed piece of land" is "a more efficient and cost-effective means of capital accumulation (and personal, moral development) than the Common-field system of land cultivation" (Forster: 214). This enclosure movement in Europe culminated in colonial occupation overseas and "began to flourish at a time in history when the Dutch, the French, and the English were vying for sovereign control of the Indian subcontinent and the trade routes to the Far East" (Marzec: 2).

Capitalism powered colonialism started enclosing lands in all parts of the world as evident from the letter written by Columbus when he reached America in which he writes this island "is to be desired and very desirable...I solemnly took possession of all the others for our invincible king, yet I especially took possession of a certain large town, in a very convenient location, and adapted to all kinds of gain and commerce" (Columbus: 21). When the European capitalists reached India, they started enclosing land in the name of India colony that reached its height "when the English government was concentrating on the transformation of the East India Company from a merchant organization into a political apparatus for overseas domination" (Marzec: 2).

The Sundarbans Delta Region the locale of this novel has a long history of territorialisation; it was mapped by the,

Surveyor General as early as 1764 following soon after proprietary rights were obtained from the Mughal Emperor, Alamgir II, by the East India Company in 1757.... The first Forest Management Division to have jurisdiction over the Sundarbans was established in 1869. The Sundarbans was declared a Reserved Forest in 1875-76. (Hussain: 257)

It was a decisive moment in the history of this region because it became the state property and the state would decide who would live on here and who has no right to live here. After independence Indian nation state got rights over this region however before the attitude of newly independent state could change towards the relationship between aboriginals and the land on which they are living for centuries, neo-colonial apparatus that reincarnated in the form of transnationalism and globalization changed the attitude of state to even worse than it was during colonial period. As Paul Greenough affirms, “until recently the Sundarbans have been thought of, when thought of at all, as forbidding and obscure. Yet, during the late 1980s a reversal of values occurred, and the Sundarbans’ obvious hazards, inaccessibility and desolation began to be read by cosmopolitan naturalists in positive terms” (Greenough: 237)

Amitav Ghosh’s 2004 novel *The Hungry Tide* touches upon all these issues and analyses the problem of home and homelessness in Indian nation state especially for the subalterns. This novel includes a comprehensive account of colonial and postcolonial settlement in the history of Sundarbans starting from Hamilton’s project to Nilima’s Badabon Trust and its takeover by Piya and foregrounds this region’s “perpetually mutating topography” (Anand, 2008: 25) of both geographical and political landscape. Ghosh explores the national space as “imaginary geographies” (Aldama, 2002: 142) and highlights that the far off places like islands where life is extremely difficult are equally important to nationalist discourses that is least interested in improving the life of people living there. In this novel, the author studies the changing relationship between the depiction of space in diverse textual fields (e.g. histories, literature, travel writing, journalism etc.) and their geo-political realities from historical to contemporary.

This novel deals with the representation of space “in both its political and discursive senses” (Mondal, 2007: 25). On the one hand, Ghosh invented some characters and geographical spaces on the other hand, takes some characters from the history and some real geographical spaces however whether fictional or real they help the author in highlighting the idea of home as a geographical location and as a political construct and how change in political circumstances

leads to homelessness for people living in a geographical space even for centuries. He himself comments on the fictitious and real spaces in the novel:

The characters of this novel are fictitious, as are two of its principal settings, Lusibari and Garjontola. However, the secondary locations, such as Canning, Gosoba, Satjelia, Morichjhāpi and Emilybari, do indeed exist and were indeed founded or settled in the manner alluded to here (Ghosh, 2005: 401).

This amalgamation of imaginary and real is fundamental to Ghosh's project of analysing the relationship between island geography, life of people there, international politics, discourse of nationalism and the attitude of self-proclaimed nationalist state machinery towards the outcasts. In this way, the novel becomes "a meta-form that transcends the boundaries that circumscribe other kinds of writing, rendering meaningless the usual workaday distinctions between historian, journalist, anthropologist etc." (Hawley, 2005: 166). Therefore, Ghosh's fictional world is located in time and space and transcends the narrow boundaries of time and space simultaneously, as he himself says in an Interview:

I don't want to write just about the individual in a particular place. I also want to write about what is there, the geology, the deep time that exists outside the individual, and the immediacy of time, and the times that make up every aspect of the circumstance (Kumar, 2007: 103).

He foregrounds the state, which is least interested in the welfare of its citizens however suddenly wakes up for protecting flora and fauna because a lot of international funding is coming for this purpose and the functionaries of the government see a great opportunity for corrupt practices therefore, they reverse the cycle by rendering the citizens homeless and trying their best to provide a home to tigers as Jalais comments:

The usual portrayal of the Sundarbans is that of an exotic mangrove forest full of Royal Bengal tigers rather than that of a region which is often referred to as 'mager mulluk' for the lawlessness and violence which characterizes it; moreover, the lack of basic infrastructure such as electricity, drinking water and health centres make it one of the poorest regions of West Bengal (Jalais, 2005: 1760).

Through this novel Ghosh highlights the plight of the socio-economically, culturally and politically marginalized masses crushed by the inhospitable nature on the one hand and nation state on the other hand. The socio-economic, political and even environmental pressures that

generate at the global level further contribute to their misery. In 1979, the state apparatus partially under the pressure of international organizations cogently renders thousands of people homeless from the island of Morichjhāpi. The state considered the settlement of Morichjhāpi as illegal encroaching on a state Forest Reserve and on land assigned for tiger conservancy. Mallick assesses that as many as “17,000 of the refugees who had settled on the island died of starvation or disease, and drowned when police scuttled their boats, or killed by the police with eviction” (Mallick: 114).

The novel persuades the readers to think about the meaning and role of place in fictional as well as nonfictional narratives-in ideological, political, and narratological terms. In short, Ghosh’s depiction of the Sundarbans foregrounds the limits of detaining character and setting as distinct and sometimes opposite categories. According to Mondal Ghosh’s fiction finds “a recognition that space is not an inert physical dimension exterior to human consciousness but is rather intimately shaped by the particular ways in which it is imagined ...” (Mondal: 4) therefore the imaginary overlaps the real.

The issue of home and homelessness starts dominating the novel from the very beginning both subaltern as well as upper-class and upper-caste characters experience homelessness sometimes it is their own choice and sometimes it is imposed by various forces. The novel begins on the Kolkata station where Kanai and Piya are waiting independently for the train to Canning. Piya is a scientist of Indian origin whose parents migrated from Bengal and she feels at home neither in India nor outside India she is doubtful of “her own place ... in the great scheme of things” (Ghosh, 2004: 35). In a sense, she is homeless at least on the land however; on sea she finds her real home therefore, she spends most of her time surveying the marine mammal population of the Sundarbans. Kanai, a Bengali decides to settle in Delhi for economic reasons he also feels homeless at both places- Delhi and Bengal. He is coming back to the Lusibari Island, on the invitation of his aunt, Nilima who wants him to examine some papers left for him by his uncle, Nirmal.

Despite their feeling of outsider in the Delta region of Bengal both of them are linked to the place by their Bengali heritage-by the convoluted memories of family. Due to a particular location of this geographical space in the political discourse of nation, everyone in the Sundarbans becomes an “outsider” and has to work “under the sign of migration” (Mukherjee, 2006: 150).

Amitav Ghosh in his *The Hungry Tide* problematizes the idea of nation state especially in the Third World during post-colonial period when former colonies after gaining independence started treating their own citizens as aliens if they do not belong to the ruling majority. He shows how these states forced minorities leave those countries Himanshi Raizada also foregrounds this particular trait of the Third World nation states and their “justification for this forcible migration may vary from country to country. But because of the multi-religious and pluralistic culture prevailing in almost all the third world countries” (Raizada, 2013: 2).

With the advent of post-colonial era when most of the colonies got independence millions of people in the entire formerly colonized world were converted into refugees and India was no exception as during “the post-independence period, India has been witnessing the influx of “Refugees” from many of its neighboring countries. This “Refugee” phenomenon had been one of the growing problems faced by almost all the developed and developing countries in the world” (Raizada, 2013: 2).

In case of upper caste and upper class people, the homelessness is more or less a personal choice on the other hand in case of lower caste and lower class people it is more of nation states’ imposition. Most of the Third World countries mismanaged the problem of migration of huge number of people across the border because “Managing refugees is just as complex and varied as the dynamics of displacement. The response of the host country to incoming refugees has been diverse. At the same time, the same country responds in different way to different refugee groups” (Raizada, 2013: 9). The state’s antipathy towards the refugees and the act of rendering homeless and killing them, had one more dimension i.e. the dimension of caste. The refugees were primarily untouchable as well as touchable dalits who had escaped to India from Bangladesh in various waves after Partition in 1947 and then, after the 1971 Bangladesh war of independence. Huge numbers of these refugees were kept forcibly in relocation camps in Madhya Pradesh. Though the government has provided them home, they do not feel like home because the camps were uninhabited, hazardous, and culturally foreign to the refugees as Jalais says, these refugees settlements were “entirely removed, both culturally and physically, from the refugees’ known world” (Jalais, 2005: 1758).

In case of Bengal region where the novel is located upper caste, antipathy towards the lower castes has a long history that further increased with the initiation of electorate-based politics that later on decided the very idea of home in nation. The political awareness among lower castes and their solidarity based on economic factors across religions “mobilized

Untouchables politically in alliance with the more numerous Muslims and had kept the Bengal Congress Party in opposition from the 1920s. The exclusion of high-caste Hindus from power led the Hindu elite and eventually the Congress Party pressing for partition of the province at independence, so that at least the western half would return to their control” (Mallick: 105). However, partition of nation on religious lines proved biggest blow to the solidarity among lower castes and the lower castes who were termed as Hindus by the Muslims rulers of East Pakistan were rendered homeless on the land where they lived for centuries.

Amitav Ghosh in his *The Hungry Tide* highlights all these historical, cultural and political facts and reveals how “the elite culture of nationalism” that “participated and participates with the colonizer in various ways” (Spivak, 1988: 245) and marginalizes lower castes, women, tribal and many other groups. The author highlights how the nation state is under the control of powerful castes and classes and how the particular attitude of upper castes and classes towards the lower caste people shapes the government policies.

The refugees whom the state sees as a challenge to its authorities belong to the lower castes. The ruling elite in India is scared of the solidarity among lower castes who are more in number than the upper castes therefore they feel if the lower castes get a chance to unite politically they will oust the upper castes from power. Keeping in mind these possibilities the state, which is largely under the control of upper castes disperses most of the untouchable migrants out of the Bengal. By doing so, they successfully disbanded the Namasudra Movement and, thereby strengthened the control of the traditional Bengali tricaste elite.

Amitav Ghosh in this novel presents the pro-subaltern outlook of the press when a “*young man had somehow made his way to Kolkata where he talked at length to the newspapers.*” As a result of publication of this account “*A furor broke out, citizens’ groups filed petitions, questions were asked in the legislature and finally the High Court ruled that barricading the settlers was illegal; the siege would have to be lifted*” (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh: 260). However, there is one more facet of press’s role that is the anti-subaltern attitude was formed amid the common people by the “Cartoons” that “appeared in Calcutta newspapers revealing public apprehension regarding the costs of assisting a large population of East Bengali refugees.” For example, “In *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, issue dated 14 January 1950; West Bengal was depicted lying in a hospital bed with various ailments including “refugee-itis”. A worried visitor was shown asking the attendant doctor, Chief Minister B.C. Roy, if the case was “hopeless” (Chatterjee: 6). Innumerable articles in various newspapers linked the arrival of thousands of

East Bengali immigrants with every disorder from congestion, shabbiness, social degeneration and mounting crime rates to joblessness and the increasing cost of living and created an anti-Dalit Refugee public opinion. Therefore, “government’s “mistrust” of the refugees reflected that of the general West Bengali population’s” (Chatterjee: 6).

Emergence of nation states around the world and handing over powers to privileged classes coincides with the emergence of capitalism that led to the colonization of the large part of the world. Finally, when most of the colonized world got independence the colonial powers handed over the powers to the privileged class of the former colonies. In case of India, the powers were handed over to upper class and upper caste minority that had its own prejudices against the lower castes. When India turned into a nation state a bulk of land and powers were vested with the state, which was mainly possessed by upper caste Hindus that is why the idea of home in nation has different connotations for different sections of Indian society. In case of privileged sections, it acts like a happy home on the other hand for the underprivileged sections there is no home in the nation they are like secondary citizens despite having equal rights as per the constitution of India. Ghosh shows this dimension of nation in the novel by highlighting that when the upper caste Hindus came from Bangladesh and occupied empty lands; the state legalized their colonies immediately on the other hand the lower caste refugees were shunted out of Bengal. For instance, Nirmal “was originally from Dhaka but had come to Calcutta as a student. The events of Partition had cut him off from his family and he had elected to stay on in Calcutta,” (Ghosh: 76). The society that is antagonistic towards the refugees provides him many opportunities for personal growth. He gets a teaching job as lecturer in English at Ashutosh College, a wife from a politically strong family. When he becomes mentally unstable, his wife Nilima’s father who occupies some important position in the trust that looks after the Hamilton Estate gets him the job of Head Master in the Lucibari School. On the other hand, when the lower caste refugees started coming the attitude of both public and the state transformed mainly due to caste dimensions.

Amitav Ghosh throws light on state’s antagonism towards the lower caste refugees through Nilima who calls the untouchable migrants as “*squatters*” and that land “*doesn’t belong to them; it’s government property*” (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh: 213), and “*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*” (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh: 213)?

Once the refugees migrate from East Pakistan they are shifted to Dandakaranya which is designated as home for these refugees by the government Ghosh describes the situation as “the authorities had removed the refugees to a place called Dandakaranya”, where they were “surrounded by security forces and forbidden to leave” (Ghosh: 118). Through this description, he questions the very idea of home in nation state. The situation in these camps is very grim and they are always under surveillance under such circumstances “1978 some of them organized themselves and broke out of the camp. By train and on foot they moved eastward in the hope of settling in the Sundarbans”. These camps were more like prison houses and their movement out of that area is termed as breaking a prison therefore the authorities “declared that Morichjhāpi was a protected forest reserve and they had proved unbending in their determination to evict the settlers. Over a period of about a year there had been a series of confrontations between the settlers and government forces” (Ghosh: 118-119).

Once the atrocities on the refugees were reported in the press the government came under pressure to investigate the whole incident therefore the Central government appointed a Parliamentary Committee of Mehta, Pandey, and Visharat. This committee in its report uphold that the refugees felt more at home on the Sundarbans islands where “By their own efforts they established a viable fishing industry, salt pans, a health center, and schools over the following year” (Mallick: 107). Amitav Ghosh records this report in the diary of Nirmal who visits the place in the novel and observes:

...there had been many additions, many improvements. Salt pans had been created, tube wells had been planted, water had been dammed for the rearing of fish, a bakery had started up, boat-builders had set up workshops, a pottery had been founded as well as an ironsmith's shop; All this in the space of a few months! It was an astonishing spectacle — as though an entire civilization had sprouted suddenly in the mud (Ghosh: 190-191).

Amitav Ghosh reflects upon the caste and class dimension behind uprooting the utopia, a home for the marginalized section built by the subalterns within the borders of a nation state, when he says, “It was universally agreed that in Morichjhāpi had been planted the seeds of what might become, if not a Dalit nation, then at least a safe haven, a place of true freedom for the country's most oppressed” (Ghosh: 191). A peep into the history when B R Ambedkar demanded a separate electorate for dalits and violent reactions to these demands make this “Dalit nation, then at least a safe haven, a place of true freedom for the country's most oppressed”

(Ghosh: 191) a potent vehicle of questioning the nation state as a home for the most oppressed people.

Along with the nation state, Amitav Ghosh questions the International forces that create antagonism between human beings and nature and also tries to establish the individual responsibility when in the novel Kanai blames Piya and himself, “it was people like you...who made a push to protect the wildlife here, without regard for the human costs. And I’m complicit because people like me — Indians of my class, that is — have chosen to hide these costs, basically in order to curry favor with their Western patrons.”(Ghosh: 301). However, researchers, and intellectuals like who do not belong to any political nation are used by the neo-colonial system that provides them money and work and will buy and use the information gathered by them for its own benefit.

This novel is constructed around on the one hand search for home and on the other hand around self-chosen or imposed homelessness. The author’s view becomes even more important as he himself does not belong to any politically constituted nation and believes in “homelessness as the natural condition of man” (Das, 2006: 179). However, credibility and authenticity of diasporic experience of all diaspora writers in general and Amitav Ghosh in particular are questioned by several thinkers especially by those who claim to be firmly rooted in geographical and political national space. This criticism is not fare as he is not in favour of homelessness rather he is for the universal right to the search and establish home wherever one wants that is restricted by the nation states.

All characters in this novel are struggling to find out a place there they can feel at home. Kanai, a Bengali by birth decides for metropolitan life, he has to travel to Sundarbans Island where he lived for some time in his childhood, but this time he does not get the feeling of home in this place Saswat S. Das comments on this particular situation:

Though Kanai lives in a translated world, a world at once unreal and vacuous, he is not at ease while journeying through the socio-cultural hinterlands. Kanai’s fall, in a literal sense, indicates nature’s way of rejecting those who rush into its fold without understanding its law, which is one of perpetual change and transformation. Kanai’s return to the world where he came from, is indirectly a comment on those who cannot live life beyond the confines of a routine, that is spun like a paralyzing web within the cozy spaces of habitats, called ‘home’. (Das, 2006: 179).

Saswat S. Das highlights nature's antagonism to the very idea of home. In this way, some are rendered homeless by nature and some are rendered homeless by state. Piya, cetologist who spends a lot of time in doing field research does not want a home on the land for her real home is on the sea with fishes as she herself says, "for me, home is where the Orcaella are, so there's no reason why this couldn't be it" (Ghosh, 2004: 400) and decides to stay on the Sundarbans islands and study Orcaella there. On the other hand, Nilima, the president of Badabon Trust is quite homely in her deep heart and says, "For me, home is wherever I can brew a pot of good tea" (Ghosh, 2004: 400). All characters in this novel have different notions of home and homelessness that are most of the times opposite to each other.

Some of them see home as a location of conflict, some others see it as a symbol for harmony and synchronisation, a single amalgamating principle that reunites and binds the divergent elements. Nilima and Nirmal belong to the first group who see home as a location of conflict. Nilima is ingenious and she longs for a space to which she develop a feeling of belongingness, can root her dreams, and intimate desires. When her husband loses his mental stability and she is uprooted from the familiar ambiance of Calcutta and placed in the completely unfamiliar environment of Sundarbans islands she starts creating a world of her own around her. space by which she lives her dreams and innate desires, lending them her vivid presence for herself can do anything to secure the space, to which she belongs, space in which she can materialize her dreams and innate desires. She is completely entrenched in her socio-cultural ambiance. Nirmal, on the other hand has a more philosophical and humane notion of home as per the traditional idea of home he remains homeless throughout his life however, he never feels like a homeless because for him humanity is the only home and nation. On the other hand, Nilima is deeply rooted in her self-created universe of Lusibari and transcending the narrow limits of space, culture, and politics is impossible for her because she firmly believes in the sanctity of these limits. Nirmal, very often transcends these limits because he considers these limits as impositions. Nilima tries to be political correct as she is aware that there can be no home in the nation if one is not politically correct and has confrontation with the politically strong forces. Unlike Nilima, her husband Nirmal pursues an idealistic notion of home along the lines suggested Rilke in his poetry however his search for ideal home culminates in the illusive space between what the Bangladeshi refugees claim as home and what renders them 'homeless' and ends tragically. He dwells in the illusive space that challenges the idea of home in nation in political

terms according to which earth is divided into political units at war perpetually to facilitate the business interests of capitalists in the business of arms and ammunitions.

He is against the political idea of nation as a home to him the earth is a common property of all human beings as well as nonhuman. When the refugees start pouring in from across the border and Indian nation state is unwilling to provide them home, he directs all his energies towards acquiring a place for the refugees. While doing efforts in this dimension he learns the significance of fluidity. His unique location between home and homelessness removes him from the specificities of his location and exposes him to cruel state apparatus. His unsuccessful adventure for the refugee settlements on the Sundarbans island shows how individuals are helpless before the state apparatus which is quite inhuman in the execution its policies. This reality is recounted in Nirmal's diary entries made by him when he was sitting with the refugees on the island and on the one hand, police was hounding and killing them for occupying the vacant islands on the other hand the police cut off water and food supply to compel the refugees to come out of their hiding so that they can either be taken away or killed. By presenting, the fictionalized account of the incidents that took place while evacuating the islands the author says,

. . . 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 for by people from all around the world." Everyday 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? Do they know what is being done in their names? Where do they live, these people, do they have children, do they have mothers, fathers? 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 is a crime unless they have forgotten that this is how humans have always lived—by fishing, by clearing land and by planting the soil. (Emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 2004: 261-62)

Fokir and Moyna, another couple created by the author parallel to Nirmal and Nilima are also searching for a home that eludes them. Moyna though a working person embodies the spirit of a homely wife for whom the home created around husband, wife, and kids is the true home. She tries to materialise her idea of home but fails and in the end with the death of her husband Fokir, her idea of home is completely shattered. The major reason behind her failure to achieve her aim is her husband Fokir who is a violator of the harmony that home stands for. Unlike Moyna, his idea of home is located somewhere else in this regard he is closer to Piya as both of them are more comfortable on water than on land. River and sea are passion for Fokir, who identifies each moment of their life with his own, the placid moments and the deeply ferocious ones that lie within, whenever he is on land, with his wife or for some other task, he feels detained. He is completely disinterested in the material progress of himself and his family, water, fishes, and many other things are the only things that interest him in this way he is opposite to Moyna, who is ambitious and wants to rise above the circumstances she was born in, he works very hard to materialise a better future for herself and her family.

The existence of both home and homelessness bhatir desh or the tide country depends on the mood the sea. Amitav Ghosh establishes a correlation between home, homelessness, nature as an agency on the Sundarbans islands, and the concept of Indian Nation state.

Through the above-mentioned passage, Amitav Ghosh makes it clear that Sundarbans Delta region a home is not a fixed geographical space with the ebb and tide they appear and disappear. In this way, the home is elusive both ways geographically as well as politically. Sometimes the islands disappear due to ebb and tide or storms and sometime the government chases people out of this region. Ghosh foregrounds how conflicting concepts of home and homelessness, pass into each other and how the characters apparently embody these opposing concepts end up achieving none. Divya Anand also supports this analysis in the following words

In *The Hungry Tide* Ghosh problematizes the tensions between and within human communities, their respective relations with the natural world, and the extra-discursive reality of nature that changes and is simultaneously changed by humanity. Ghosh sets his novel in the Sundarbans, the tide country where the contours of land constantly change with the ebb and flow of water. But Ghosh presses this point further: He uses water as the agent that rewrites the social matrix of the Sundarbans in the novel. Water is both motif and agent, shaping not only the story but also the geography and history of the land. (Anand, 2008: 23)

The issue of home and homelessness does not only about human beings it is also about flora and fauna. The Sundarbans Delta region is not a home only to refugees it is also a home to other forms of life. For instance, this region is the world's largest mangrove forest area that covers an area of 10,000 square kilometers, sprawling across India and Bangladesh. If human habitation is allowed they will clear the mangrove forests that will be a great loss to biodiversity and at the same time expose the topography of delta region to the violent sea storms that will be fatal for people who establish settlements here and also expose the coastal regions of Bengal to the storms. As compared to developed nations in India citizens, especially the lower caste and lower class citizens are least protected against the natural calamities. On the other hand as when Hurricane Rita hit USA as Himanshi Raizada notes down "Jefferson County citizens evacuated prior to Hurricane Rita... most traveled at least 300 miles and stayed with relatives" (Raizada, 2013: 3). Amitav Ghosh in the novel shows how Indian government and other organizations were least concerned about the life of citizens home ceases to be home in a nation state fails to provide security to its citizens.

In this way, providing home to refugees on the Sundarbans Island will ultimately render them homeless because nature does not support human habitation on these islands. Along with mangrove plants this region "is home to the largest remaining contiguous population of tigers in the world—245 in Indian Sundarbans in 2001-02 according to the Project Tiger census, plus 200 in the Bangladesh Sundarbans" (Khan 3). Therefore, the Indian government declared Indian part of the Sundarbans a Tiger Reserve in 1973 and a national park in 1984. Further, International agencies declared it Biosphere Reserve in 1989 and a World Heritage Site in 1985 due to its distinctive and rich biodiversity.

Due to its unique location in this region flora and fauna on the one hand and human beings are pitted against each other and the state apparatus controlled by the capitalist forces tries to render homeless these to exploit the natural resources available here. The novel is replete with instances of conflict such as the scene in which a tiger is trapped and killed by villagers in the cowshed, a scene in which a tiger killing Kusum's father, Fokir's susceptibility to the state officials, the scene in which a dolphins is killed by the coast guard's boat and on the top of all the Morichjhapi massacre.

Amitav Ghosh in this novel shows how the setting of the Sundarbans becomes a battlefield between forces of nature and that of the human world. Not just human beings wild animals like tigers are also confused about their home and while searching for their home or

territory venture forth into human settlements. The author provides various theories to explain this behaviour of the tigers. For instance, Nilima describes it as a problem arising due to:

... peculiar conditions of the tidal ecology, in which large parts of the forest were subjected to daily submersions. The theory went that this raised the animals' threshold of aggression by washing away their scent markings and confusing their territorial instincts. (Ghosh, 2004: 241)

The novel foregrounds the problem of encroaching mutual space and confusion regarding territory and borders in the ecosystem of the Sundarbans. Along with the local factors, the international forces also interfere with the ecology of this region. The massive International grant that comes to government of India for the preservation of tigers lures the forest officials to put their own interest after all in the name of preserving lions many officials and political leaders will grow rich. Ghosh provides a critique of this attitude of national and international forces when through Nilima he says, "Just imagine that!" said Nilima. "They [forest department] were providing water for tigers! In a place where nobody thinks twice about human beings going thirsty!" (Ghosh, 2004: 241).

Amitav Ghosh delineates the idea of home through both fixity and perpetual negotiations in space. It is true that human beings live on a particular geographical space, which they call their home but they also keep changing their location depending on their requirements Ghosh draws attention to the political notion of nation that restricts this movement and renders people homeless rather than providing home to people. The political dimension of home in nation makes the conception of location cast its shadow on its dwellers, stalking their steps and compelling them to return to its fold, according to Ghosh it becomes an autocracy validated by those who see locations as immutable and integrated wholes of their cognizance from which escape proves both perfidious and pointless. In other words, the novel is about the power that is vested in the location or landscape by various institutions and how its representation is a part of power structure. W. J. T. Mitchell in his book *Landscape and Power* throws light on this aspect in the following words:

... landscape is itself a physical and multisensory medium... in which cultural meanings and values are encoded, whether they are put there by the physical transformation of a place in landscape, gardening or architecture, or found in a place formed, as we say by nature.... Landscape is already artifice in the moment

of its beholding, long before it becomes the subject of pictorial representation.
(Mitchell, 1994: 14)

The landscape becomes a conflicting zone in this novel and all characters experience homelessness in this region; however for the characters from privileged section homelessness is a self-chosen situation and part of their business on the other hand for the subaltern characters it is imposed and a kind of punishment. This sense of homelessness is visible in the lives, their fears and their longing for a piece of land in the Sundarbans. As ownership of geographical space is denied to them so possessing, a piece of land becomes a moment of a fulfillment of desire.

The novelist's major purpose in presenting home and homelessness as contrasting perceptions is finally to show them not as two distinct concepts but one. The author achieves this aim by reworking on the binary in the fictional and philosophical framework and taking facts from the history of the region and erasing the boundaries between the two concepts by portraying characters who have a home but live homeless and another group of characters who are homeless and lose their lives while searching for home in the nation state.

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CHAPTER - 7

SEARCHING FOR HOME: A STUDY OF THE *IBIS TRILOGY*

The temporal location of Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis Trilogy* is 1838-1841 when the understanding of nation and nationalism was completely missing in the Third World. However, the Capitalism in the West had already constituted the discourse of nationalism, which was used to counter monarchy by bringing in the idea of nation state and shifting the loyalties of people towards abstract idea of nation from the royalty. The entry of capitalist establishments like the East India Company proved a turning point in the history of Indian subcontinent. Through the depiction of fictional character Raja Neel Rattan, the novelist shows the socio-political and economic circumstances changed radically with the entry of capitalist forces and many of them were rendered homeless in their own birthplaces. All major characters in this novel are searching for their home the emerging nation states.

Colonialism challenges the idea of home in a feudal state where rigid caste and class hierarchies does not allow any space for merit and ambition as far as subalterns are concerned on the other hand colonialism provides an opportunity to realize one's dreams and the author highlights it through the depiction of Mr. Burnham, Zachary Reid, Bahram Moddie, Shireen, Deeti and even Kalua. Zachary Reid accepts the role played by colonialism in shaping his destiny providing him a transnational home, which provides him a space to realize his dreams as he himself says:

I have become what you wanted, Mrs Burnham,' he said. 'You wanted me to be a man of the times, did you not? And that is what I am now; I am a man who wants more and more and more; a man who does not know the meaning of "enough". Anyone who tries to thwart my desires is the enemy of my liberty and must expect to be treated as such.'(Ghosh, 2015: 582).

Army, war and transnational trade are the main axis around which colonialism revolved and shaped the idea of home in nation state as Deleuze and Guattari say:

The constitution of a military institution or an army necessarily implies a territorialization of the war machine, in other words, the granting of land ("colonial" or domestic), which can take very diverse forms. But at the same time, fiscal regimes determine both the nature of the services and taxes owed by the beneficiary warriors, and especially the kind of civil tax to which all or part of society is subject for the maintenance of the army (Deleuze: 418).

Ghosh also throws light on the constitution of modern colonial army that converts the soldiers into machines as Kesri Singh wonders, “what it was that enabled their NCOs to mold their men into machines” (Ghosh, 2015: 228). However, he also highlights another aspect of army as an institution that frees people from age-old hegemonic social structures and makes them see more of the world. T. S. Eliot, the modernist poet speaks in favour of feudalism in his poem “To the Indians Who Died in Africa” when he says:

A man’s destination is his own village,
His own fire, and his wife’s cooking,
To Sit in front of his own door at sunset
And see his grandson, and his neighbour’s grandson
Playing in the dust together.

.....
.....
A man’s destination is not his destiny,
Every country is home to one man
And exile to another. Where a man dies bravely
At one with his destiny, that Soil is his.
Let his village remember.

(Eliot: 217)

Amitav Ghosh holds a different view and shows how the British colonialism sometimes confronted the feudal social order ridden with caste hierarchies to raise the army because this, [T]ook into their armies any Indian who was willing to serve. At times their ranks included large numbers of tribals and untouchables. Only when the sepoy system was introduced in the eighteenth century was there any attempt to regulate the kinds of Indians taken into the military (Cohen: 454).

However later on they joined hands with Indian feudal order, which is more or less based on Manusamriti, and therefore:

the numbers of low castes and classes dropped, for several reasons. First, the benefits of associating with the British became more obvious to many high castes with military traditions, and they volunteered for service in increasing numbers. Also, it was easy to permit those men actually serving to recruit relatives and friends, making the units more homogeneous. Finally, the British themselves

gradually adjusted to the caste system and identified more and more with the higher strata of Indian society (Cohen: 454).

The idea of home in the age of transnational capitalism and colonialism is at logger heads with the idea of home in the Indian feudal system which prohibits all kinds of ambition among the subaltern therefore home in the feudal setup becomes the worst place to live in.

The soldier recruited in the Indian British Army fight for East India Company all over the world not to safeguard their home nation but for money as Bhyro Singh, explains all benefits: economic, religious and existentialist of joining this army as compared to others. However, Ghosh does not criticize the internal colonization that is often projected as Indian culture and religion by various thinkers. Sydney Smith highlights how subalterns in the Indian feudal system were exploited:

If it were possible to invent a method by which a few men sent from a distant country could hold such masses of people as the Hindoos in subjection, that method would be the institution of castes. There is no institution which can so effectually curb the ambition of genius, reconcile the individual more completely to his stations, and reduce the varieties of human character to such a state of insipid and monotonous tameness (Fisch: 51-52).

He also highlights how the colonialism provides a space for personal growth to them therefore they did not oppose the colonizers because internal colonization did not give them rights therefore they give silent support to colonizers, who promised a space for personal growth. However later on Indian feudal system based on caste hierarchies joined hands with the British colonialism to consolidate the inner colonialism that makes the home for subalterns a very oppressive space. Ghosh throws light on this aspect through a discourse by Bhyro Singh who tells:

the English care more about the dharma of caste than any of our nawabs and rajas ever did. There is not a sepoy in the Bengal Native Infantry who is not a Brahmin or a Rajput. And these are not impostors, trying to pass themselves off as twiceborn: every sepoy's caste is carefully checked, as is his body. As you know, in the old days the armies of Hindustan were like jungles – men went into them to hide, so that they could change their origins. After a few years of fighting ordinary julaha Muslims would pass themselves off as high-class Afghans, and half the men who called themselves Rajputs were just junglees and hill-people.

Our badshahs and maharajahs put up with it because they were desperate for recruits. That is how it has been in Hindustan for hundreds of years: everything has become degenerate, people have forgotten the true dharma of caste and they do whatever they find convenient. But now at last things are being put right by the Angrezi Company. The sahibs are stricter about these matters than our rajas and nawabs ever were. They have brought learned men from their country to study our old books. These white pundits know more about our scriptures than we do ourselves. They are making everything pure again, just like it was in the days of the earliest sages and rishis. Under the sahibs' guidance every caste will once again become like an iron cage – no one will be allowed to move one finger's breadth, this way or that. Already the sahibs have done more to keep the lower castes in their places than our Hindu kings did over hundreds of years. In the gora paltan no one can join unless he is known to be of high caste, and no person of doubtful origin will last more than a couple of days (Ghosh, 2015: 69).

This statement hints at the formation of nation state as a home based on caste hierarchies, caste based discrimination and all other forms of exploitation and marginalization inherited in the native cultures, which were diluted to some extent during the Mughal rule. The Indian nation state was constituted by the colonial authorities not purely on the European modal but on a model which is hybrid of European modal, *Manusamriti* modal and many other Indian modals and very ironically they saw not European modal but the Indian modals as the carrier of colonialism as evident from Max Muller's letter to his wife:

...that this edition of mine and the translation of the Veda will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India, and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion, and to show them what that root is, is, I feel sure, the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last 3,000 years (Muller: 328).

He wrote one more letter to the Duke of Argyll in which he says: "India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again, and that second conquest should be a conquest by education...By encouraging a study of their own ancient literature, as part of their education." (Muller: 357). Similarly Bhyro Singh's statement that "They are making everything pure again, just like it was in the days of the earliest sages and rishis" (Ghosh, 2015: 69), reveals the exclusive nature of Indian nation state and hints at future that people born in India and

communities living in India will not be able to perceive India as their home because of the policies of the nation state.

Caste becomes synonymous with nation and if someone challenges the caste hegemonies that person has no place in the nation itself for instance when the news of Kesri Singh's sister Deeti's flight with a lower caste reaches the Regiment the entire Regiment starts treating him like an untouchable:

not the afsars and nor the jawans – will eat with you or accept water from you, or even exchange words with you. From now on you have no place in this paltan – if you choose to remain here it will be as a ghost. I will explain all this to the English officers in the morning; as you know, in matters of family and caste, they always respect our decisions. I will tell them that as far as we are concerned you are now a pariah, an outcast. In our eyes you are no better than a stray dog; you are worse than filth. For you to remain in this tent for another moment is intolerable: it is an insult to our biraderi. You will never set foot in any of our tents ever again (Ghosh, 2015: 174).

At this point Kesri Singh is compelled to feel that India is no home for him and he signs a contract to go abroad and fight against China from where he never returns. The idea of home in the national space is seen very critically here. Ghosh seems to propound that home is a place to facilitate happiness and growth; it may be within or outside the national bounds. Similar situation is faced by Captain Mee whose “father, now dead, had been a shopkeeper – ‘a banyan’” (Ghosh, 2015:199) at this point Kesri Singh comments, “the English officers, no less than the sepoys, were very particular about the castes of the men they admitted to their ranks. Most of the officers were from professional, landed or military backgrounds and it was through their family connections” (Ghosh, 2015: 199). Ghosh through his characters hints that the British also practised some kind of untouchability among themselves as “all the other ensigns and second lieutenants had been admitted; he alone had been blackballed. That was when Kesri had understood that there was something about his butcha – perhaps to do with his parentage or caste – that set him apart from the other officers” (Ghosh, 2015: 199).

However, the discrimination and exploitation based on caste, class, gender etc. in the British society is much less than Indian society and notwithstanding discrimination, there was scope for people to move up the social hierarchies, which was not available in India, that is why the First World is a more inclusive nation state than the Third World. However, in the Indian

culture the abhorrence for people of untouchable castes is apparent in the behaviour of upper castes for instance Raja Neel Rattan's mother's "most potent fears centred upon the men and women who emptied the palace's outhouses and disposed of its sewage: these sweepers and cleaners of night-soil she regarded with such loathing that staying out of their way became one of her besetting preoccupations" (Ghosh, 2008: 199). Similarly, when Kalua saves Deeti all Rajputs become ferocious and their only aim is to get him murdered. If the nation is founded on this kind social structure and culture, it will be impossible to find a home for subalterns in the Indian State.

He also explores the relationship between language, culture and identity when he makes extensive use of Jahaji language, the language spoken by sailors by sailors from all linguistic zones. He is trying to preserve a vast linguistic and cultural heritage through this novel because he believes that, the "extinction of each language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique culture, historical and ecological knowledge. Each language is a unique expression of the human experience of the world" (Singh, 2018:183).

The idea of home and nation is linked to economic circumstances in the lives of individuals as well as entire communities in this novel opium trade, opium wars, migration of people to China, the search for home in new places everything is linked to economic compulsions of Multinational Companies and the economy of the entire nation. For instance to cover up losses in International trade the European and American traders decide to sell opium to Chinese people, as Ghosh says:

Since the middle years of the last century, the demand for Chinese tea has grown at such a pace in Britain and America that it is now the principal source of profit for the East India Company. The taxes on it account for fully one-tenth of Britain's revenues. If one adds to this such goods as silk, porcelain and lacquerware it becomes clear that the European demand for Chinese products is insatiable. In China, on the other hand, there is little interest in European exports – the Chinese are a people who believe that their own products, like their food and their own customs, are superior to all others. In years past this presented a great problem for the British, for the flow of trade was so unequal that there was an immense outpouring of silver from Britain. This indeed was why they started to export Indian opium to China.

...the trade was a mere trickle until about sixty years ago, when the East India Company adopted it as a means of rectifying the outflow of bullion. They succeeded so well that now the supply can barely keep pace with the demand. The flow of silver is now completely reversed, and it pours away from China to Britain, America and Europe (Ghosh, 2011: 173).

Carl Trocki, an eminent economist also establishes the relationship between empire and opium trade, “Without the drug, there probably would have been no British Empire” since “the economic foundation of the imperial economy lay on opium” (Trocki: xiii). To smuggle opium to China it must be grown somewhere and they decided upon India for its cultivation as Deeti says:

English sahibs would allow little else to be planted; their agents would go from home to home, forcing cash advances on the farmers, making them sign *asámi* contracts. It was impossible to say no to them: if you refused they would leave their silver hidden in your house, or throw it through a window. It was no use telling the white magistrate that you hadn't accepted the money and your thumbprint was forged: he earned commissions on the opium and would never let you off. And, at the end of it, your earnings would come to no more than three-and-a-half sicca rupees, just about enough to pay off your advance (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 2008: 29).

Ram Singh father of Kesri Singh also expresses similar views:

...the Company had begun to interfere in matters that previous rulers had never meddled with – like crops and harvests for example. In recent years the Company's opium factory in Ghazipur had started to send out hundreds of agents – arkatis and sadar mattus – to press loans on farmers, so that they would plant poppies in the autumn. They said these loans were meant to cover the costs of the crop and they always promised that there would be handsome profits after the harvest. But when the time came the opium factory often changed its prices, depending on how good the crop had been that year. Since growers were not allowed to sell to anyone but the factory, they often ended up making a loss and getting deeper into debt. Ram Singh knew of several men who had been ruined in this way (Ghosh, 2015: 52).

Farmers' loss was gain to the Company: which on the one hand gets cheap poppy for international trade, and on the other hand, the farmers who are in debt force their sons to join the East India Company's army that was trying to settle the issues of home and nation inside and outside India. At the same time, the debt-ridden agriculture was creating an army of jobless agriculture based lower-caste labor that was absorbed by the same multinational companies as indentured labor searching for home in alien lands because their homelands cannot support their lives and aspirations both culturally and economically.

Opium trade becomes a means of redefining home and provides a new home to all those displaced due to social, cultural, political or economic reasons that is why everyone from small labor, farmer to army and big traders oppose Chinese ban on opium as Zachary explains, "Never had he seen such a spectacle, such a marvel of planning and such a miracle of precision. It seemed to him a triumph of modern civilization; a perfect example of the ways in which discipline and reason could conquer continents of darkness filled with gratitude that destiny had afforded him a place in this magnificent machine" (Ghosh, 2015: 503). Such narratives "played a crucial role in the reproduction of imperial ideologies" and enlisted "ideological support for the British Empire in Asia by disavowing its origins in war and plunder" (Marez: 42).

Ballantyne highlights the intricacies of home in a nation state that forms an important part of multinational capitalism:

"I believe it is productive to conceive of the empire not in terms of a spoked wheel with London as the 'hub,' where the various spokes (whether flows of finance, lines of communication, or the movement of people and objects) from the periphery meet, but rather in terms of a complex web consisting of horizontal filaments that run among various colonies in addition to 'vertical' connections between the metropole and individual colonies." Ballantyne goes on to acknowledge that India was a "subimperial center in its own right." While accepting the utility of the web metaphor as a way of providing a structural coherence for the empire—as a "complex system of overlapping and interwoven institutions, organizations, ideologies, and discourses," in Ballantyne's words—I emphasize the subimperial role of India within it. If not quite a "spider" sitting at the heart of the web, India is, I argue, more than just one of the many colonial "knots" that may be said to constitute that web (Metcalf: 7).

The transnational capital tries to make maximum use of human resources therefore wherever they need the help of individuals they free them from the grasp of feudalism, racialism etc. and help them grow. To prove this point the author connects the oceanic worlds of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean by bringing an African-American who is now a freeman in the Indian Ocean and by creating a scene where Indian indentured labor are housed in the holds of Ibis, an ex-slaver which will eventually transport opium, and displays how the “forces from the Atlantic . . . affected the Indian Ocean World” (Ewald: 71).

Zachary is both a victim and beneficiary of transnational capital he was born of a black slave woman and a white father Mr. Reid who grants “his mother her freedom so that he, Zachary, would not be born a slave” (Ghosh, 2008: 304-305)? He gets employment at Gardiner’s shipyard in Baltimore that he leaves because of color-based discrimination Ghosh highlights this practice very accurately and reveals racialism intrinsic to the colonialism:

He saw again a face with a burst eyeball, the scalp torn open where a handspike had landed, the dark skin slick with blood. He remembered, as if it were happening again, the encirclement of Freddy Douglass, set upon by four white carpenters; he remembered the howls, ‘Kill him, kill the damned nigger, knock his brains out’; he remembered how he and the other men of colour, all free, unlike Freddy, had held back, their hands stayed by fear. And he remembered, too, Freddy’s voice afterwards, not reproaching them for their failure to come to his defence, but urging them to leave, scatter: ‘It’s about jobs; the whites won’t work with you, freeman or slave: keeping you out is their way of saving their bread.’ That was when Zachary had decided to quit the shipyard and seek a berth on a ship’s crew (Ghosh, 2008: 51-52.)

However, the capitalist colonialist Ibis, though practices racial discrimination, provides him some respite for two reasons- he is black only racially not in color and he is more skilled than Blacks are. Many critics see the opportunities that he gets on Ibis as benevolent aspect of ocean. They feel that ocean as a home provides a space where the differences of caste, class and creed become feeble as Anupama Arora says, “Cross- cultural, caste, class, gender, and national collaborations blur all sorts of boundaries and enable the formation of new alliances (both oppressive and liberating) and emergence of reconstituted families within contexts of domination and resistance” (Arora: 22). However, this assumption is challenging because the culture of his home nation haunts him even on the ocean as he is listed as black in the register of the ship,

which is detached by Baboo Nob Kissin. The captain of the ship does not permit him in the upper part of the ship because he dislikes the blacks. However, the extreme circumstances enable the rising of Zachary, Ibis is not in good state and running short of food and water therefore, all white crewmembers abandon it when they get a chance. When the captain is left with no choice, he invites Zachary to come and take the role of first mate. The adverse circumstances- loneliness and dwindling health of the captain forces him to forget his prejudices as Ghosh describes:

Before this, the skipper had instructed Zachary to eat his meals below – ‘not going to spill no colour on my table, even if it’s just a pale shade of yaller.’ But now, rather than dine alone, he insisted on having Zachary share the table in the cuddy, where they were waited on by a sizeable contingent of lascar ship’s-boys – a scuttling company of launders and chuckeroos (Ghosh, 2008: 15).

Therefore, the real home of Zachary is not the place of his birth but the ocean and the ship Ibis where he is reborn as a new being. The status of Zachary transmutes from black to white by the disparaging effect of the sea, not by the compassionate feature of the ocean. Once his status is uplifted on the ship he starts shedding blackness (though only a paler shade not pure black) associated with him. When the Captain asks him to go six miles from Port Louis and deliver a letter to the owner of a plantation, he is ready to go in the same clothes; he seems unaware of the ground reality in the colonies that is hinted at by Homi K Bhabha:

In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema ... I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects... I took myself far off from my own presence...What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood (Bhabha: xxv)?

Zachary is unaware of the ground realities in the colonies that there is no home for the black other than the jail, colonizers’ plantations and if a black person is found roaming freely he will be shot dead. He plans to go ashore in his regular clothes, canvas trousers and the usual sailor’s banyan – a loose-fitting tunic made, in this case, of rough and faded usual cloth. Serang Ali informs Zachary of all the dangers involved in going ashore in a colony where blacks are either slaves or fugitives and it is the duty of every White either to arrest or shoot if they find a black who looks like an fugitive. He warns him:

Malum Zikri go so-fashion to Por’Lwee, no come back,’ said Serang Ali. ‘Too muchi press gang in Por’Lwee. Plenty blackbirder wanchi catch one piece slave.

Malum go be shanghaied, made slave; allo time floggin, beatin. No good (Ghosh, 2008: 18).

Zachary comprehends Serang Ali's fear and allows him to get him ready for the going ashore. Serang Ali improves the features of Zachary in two ways- first he removes all the traces of blackness accrued on the body of Zachary, due to travel and negligence who is otherwise fair. Secondly, he arranges clothes appropriate for a white officer. One officer has died and one has left the ship and their clothes are with Serang Ali. However, they needed some modification to fit Zachary this problem also solves because "Among the lascars there were many who boasted of skills apart from sailing – among them a kussab who had once worked as a 'dress-boy' for a shipowner; a steward who was also a darzee and earned extra money by sewing and mending clothes; and a topas who had learnt barbering and served as the crew's balwar. Under Serang Ali's direction, the team went to work, rifling through Zachary's bags and trunks, picking out clothes, measuring, folding, snipping, and cutting. While the tailor-steward and his chuckeroos busied themselves with inseams and cuffs, the barber-topas led Zachary to the lee scuppers and, with the aid of a couple of launders, subjected him to as thorough a scrubbing as he had ever had" (Ghosh, 2008: 18-19). After getting proper clothes for Zachary the next issue is to make him look like a British officer. Serang Ali has experts in this job as well who apply various creams and shampoos and,

In a couple of hours Zachary was looking at an almost unrecognizable image of himself in the mirror, clothed in a white linen shirt, riding breeches and a double-breasted summer paletot, with a white cravat knotted neatly around his neck. On his hair, trimmed, brushed and tied with a blue ribbon at the nape of his neck, sat a glossy black hat. There was nothing missing, so far as Zachary could see, but Serang Ali was still not satisfied: 'Sing-song no hab got (Ghosh, 2008: 19)?

Serang Ali and his team transform him completely, no one is able to see the presence of "black blood" (Fields 1982: 146) and black skin, and he does not feel disadvantaged in any sense. This transformation of Zachary reveals one more dimension of the idea of home in this world i.e. clothing and makeup can also determine home or no home. His awareness of the tag 'black' attached to him keeps haunting him and unsettles his feeling of home even in most comfortable circumstances for instance when Paulette reveals her existence on the ship and Zachary calls her an sham she counter blames him, "Oh, Mr Reid! You allow me more credit than is my due. If I have any equal in impersonation, surely it is none other than yourself?" (Ghosh,

2008: 501) and intimidates him “If his imposture had been announced from the truck of the mainmast, he could not have felt more exposed, more completely a charlatan than he did then” (Ghosh, 2008: 501).

Zachary is terrified to the core because legally he cannot occupy this position and this detection will lead to his incarceration and the home will be converted into a prison and even worse because the “status of the Black is decreed by “eternal Act of Parliament,” so there is no real prospect for self-help, ascendance, or even something “better than outright slavery” (Said, 1994: 122). However, Paulette’s aim was not to embarrass or intimidate Zachary, rather hers is only an effort to enlist the support of one subaltern occupying a position of power to help other subalterns like Kalua and Jodu who will be severely punished otherwise. Her tactic to this act of masquerade is more metaphysical as she says, “Are not all appearances deceptive, in the end? Whatever there is within us – whether good, or bad, or neither – its existence will continue uninterrupted, will it not, no matter what the drape of our clothes, or the colour of our skin? What if it is the world that is a duperie, Mr Reid, and we the exceptions to its lies” (Ghosh, 2008: 501)?

Zachary feels the loss of home and identity once again when Mr. Crowle somehow acquires the letter or is delivered the letter as a part of some design by Paulette, Nob Kissin and party. The callous and xenophobic British first mate, Crowle, when notices that Zachary has that corrupting drop of Negro blood, he warns him of dreadful penalties if he does not follow him. Mr. Crowle believes in the confrontational racialism widespread in the Europe and America of Nineteenth Century.

The relationship between blood and racial identity on the one hand and home on the other hand can be understood in two ways as described by Fields “How do you define black in your country!’ Receiving the explanation that in the United States anyone with black blood was considered black, Duvalier nodded and said, ‘Well, that’s the way we define white in my country” (Fields 1982: 146). Mr. Crowle follows the first definition and Zachary follows the second one. Differing from his earlier reaction before Paulette this time Zachary “was amazed to think that something so slight, so innocuous, could be invested with so much authority: that it should be able to melt away the fear, the apparent invulnerability that he, Zachary, had possessed in his guise as a ‘gentleman”” (Ghosh, 2008: 465).

Despite a threat to expose, his Blackness render him homeless Zachary is not afraid of Crowle and he challenges him to “Go ahead” because he senses that he is a free man that is why he says, “Whatever that paper is, it’s not a letter of indenture. Take it to the Captain – believe

me, I'd be glad of it (Ghosh, 2009: 509). This off-the-cuff reference to coolies by Zachary brings in the relationship between the Empire and the indenture labor who are also a group of people searching for home in this vast world, because they are rendered homeless in their birthplaces due to various factors like poverty, caste or gender based discrimination and many more forms of discriminations and exploitations.

Between people like Zachary and indentured labor stands one more group of people like Serang Ali who do not have a home or nation of their own they are known as lascars. David Chappell acknowledges the valuable role of non-European sailors like lascars on European ships, and highlights that their presence “challenges the triumphant tale of European seafarers heroically globalizing the world and offers us instead an image of interdependency with alien ‘others,’ whose skills made voyaging so far from home possible” (Chappell: 75–76). For Chappell, as well as Ghosh the lascars form the unacknowledged working force of Western trading ships. Ghosh through Zachary who comes to learn that “Serang Ali had been steering his own course all along, using a method of navigation that combined dead reckoning – or ‘tup ka shoomar’ as he called it – with frequent readings of the stars” (Ghosh, 2008: 18) highlights the scientific temperament of the European other. Ghosh in this novel highlights the worst aspect of capitalism that looks at everything including Lascars, opium, indentured Indian laborers, African slaves, convicts and many others just commodities and sidelines all the knowledge gained by them. Linebaugh and Rediker positions this mechanical use of everything living and non-living as a part of capitalist machine when they call them the “engine[s] of commerce, the machine[s] of empire” (Linebaugh: 150). In his article entitled “Of Fanas and Forecastles: The Indian Ocean and Some Lost Languages of the Age of Sail” Ghosh highlights importance of lascars in the development of sea routes and life on sea. He sees them as the first among the Asians who cooperated with the capitalist venture of globalization as he says, “the lives of the *lascars* should be of more interest today than before because they were the first Asians and Africans to participate freely and in substantial numbers in a globalised workspace” (emphasis in the original) (Ghosh, 2008: 56).

Ghosh in his earlier novel *The Glass Palace* (2000) also deals with the question of home and nation with regard to indentured labor and their transportation to different British colonies. In *The Glass Palace* two characters, Baburao and Rajkumar involved in the transnational business of providing man power to colonizers by recruiting Indians as indentured labor and transporting them to Burma, at great profit to themselves. Similarly, in the *Ibis Trilogy* Mr.

Burnham gets into the world of business as a transporter of convicts and indentured labor to the British Empire's network of island. These people are on the margins of home and nation the primary definition of home and nation for them is the place where they and get work and food. However, in the newly adopted nation does not fulfil the criteria of home and nation because here they are only nominally free and their status as indentured laborers highlights the intimate "relationship between the political economy of convictism and indenture" (Anderson, 2000: 95). Burnham, like Baburao and Rajkumar of *The Glass Palace* treats coolies and convicts as commodities to fill his coffers by sending labor to develop the newly acquired British Mauritius. However, Ghosh highlights that the complete control over human life is impossible and life resists any such attempt as "a variety of moving subjects utilized a wide range of intimate opportunities and practices to negotiate, contest, and reconfirm the boundaries of rule" (Ballantyne: 2).

In this *Trilogy* through the movement of various characters, Ghosh highlights the influence of colonialism and capitalism on the lives of different characters, their feeling and conception of home and the entire world simultaneously. In a way, he confirms that:

These flows of profits and people involved settlement and plantations as in the Americas, 'trade' as in India, and enormous global shifts of populations. Both the colonised and the colonisers moved: the former not only as slaves but also as indentured labourers, domestic servants, travellers and traders, and the colonial masters as administrators, soldiers, merchants, settlers, travellers, writers, domestic staff, missionaries, teachers and scientists (Loomba: 4)

Though everybody including indentured laborers, domestic servants, travelers and traders like Kalua, Deeti, Serang, Zachary, Bahram, Kesri Singh etc. from amongst the colonized and soldiers, settlers, writers, missionaries, scientists, administrators, merchants, travelers, domestic staff, teachers and scientists like Mr. Burnham, Captain Mee, Lambert, Paulette and many others are moving for different purposes, the quest to find a home and nation is integral to all such movements. Burnham's own space of business including far off places like Liverpool, Andaman Islands, Canton; Calcutta, Mauritius which is a kind of home and nation in its own way, discloses the networks of imperial trade and society. Burnham's life can be seen as a miniature of the network of phases of the Euro-American Empire as he starts from the Atlantic slave trader to become missionaries to opium trade in China. He purchases Ibis an American ex-slaver for the

transportation of indentured laborers, opium, and prisoners. He epitomizes the colonizer's version of Empire.

This large-scale transport of laborers from one part to another part leads to the emergence of "a modern racialized division of labor" (Lowe: 192). Though apparently free as compared to slaves the indentured laborers "were used instrumentally in this political discourse as a collective figure, a fantasy of 'free' yet racialized and indentured labour, at a time when the possession of body, work, life, and death was foreclosed to the enslaved and the indentured alike" (Lowe: 194). Many thinkers in contrast to colonial scholarship look at the indentured labor as a tool in the hand of Empire to realize its capitalist dreams. For instance Anderson says, "The practices and experiences of indenture are best understood primarily in relation to the institutions and imaginative discourses that framed the well-established contemporary colonial practice of penal transportation as a process of social dislocation and rupture" (Anderson, 2009: 94).

The colonial project did not aim at fixing the problems related to home and nation however, when it transported people from one geographical, cultural and political space having one type of economy to another it altered the sense of home and constituted the notion of nation, which was non-existent among those people. The colonial project displaced people not only from the colonies but also from Europe and America. For example, Mr. Burnham had no chance of growth without moving to colonies therefore his real home is colonies, Zachary's transformation also takes place in the colonies so his real home also lies outside the place of his birth, Paulette could realize her dream of becoming a Botanist only because she runs away from Mr. Burnham's house. In the same way, characters from the colonies also grow when they leave their home for instance Bahram Moddie becomes an international opium trader when his mother allows him to leave the parental home, similarly Kalua and Deeti transform into powerful individuals and realizes their potentials only when they are chased away from the nation of their birth.

Going out of the home village or country is shown as benevolent by the author because the life for them in their own villages and their own country with their own families is miserable without any hope. Therefore, the proposal of going to other continents as indentured labor is not a curse but a blessing for them. Ghosh's catering to this idea is clear in his portrayal of characters like Deeti and Kalua who would be murdered if they did not leave India as indentured labor.

Other indentured labor also share the same prospectus in their home town. Sarju, a *dái* from a village, near Ara, is driven from her home because of a mistake in the delivery of a thakur's son. Heeru's husband leaves her in a fare and remarries as she is rendered homeless she

signs as indentured labor. Munia becomes a mother without marriage due to her sexual exploitation by a rich and powerful man who kills her entire family now without home she signs as indentured labor. Ratna and Champa, the two sisters also have a similar story they have a contract with the opium factory to grow only opium and due to decrease in opium price their income has come down therefore rather than famish, they had decided to indenture themselves together. This mention of Ratna and Champa's life indicate a larger colonial game that devastates the means of sustenance accessible to people and hence induce them to sign as indentured labors. The elimination of resources at indigenous level, leads to the migration of laborers from India to Britain's overseas colonies. Ranajit Das Gupta highlights monetary aspect of indentured labor "The question of survival or death was a stark reality facing them. The erosion of non-agricultural sources of livelihood, that is, the process of deindustrialisation which had begun in the early decades of the nineteenth century intensified the pressure on agriculture (Gupta: 1797). Lommarsh Roopnarine also develops a connection between colonial manipulation and relocation of Indians "India as a dispatching colony experienced uneven development because of British colonialism. Foreign penetration and imperialism disintegrated and dissolved the traditional economic and social structure in the countryside, rendering massive population available for recruitment (Roopnarine: 103).

Though the colonial authorities claim of providing the first legal system to India, however the same legal system is used against people and they are rendered homeless due to the misuse of it. Deeti highlights how the Company officers compel the farmers to grow poppy and ruin them economically who are compelled to join indentured labor and set out in search of a new home far away from the birthplace. Zachary's is another case of law as discriminating system because if it is established that one of his parents was black he will be imprisoned for all the service he has done to various shipping companies.

Along with the British colonialism, Ghosh highlights the internal colonization by the Brahmanical forces that treat a large chunk of Indian population below the level of even animals, for those sections, all forces coming from outside are benevolent because they dent the internal colonization and provide them some space for growth. In this way, Brahmanism proves to be the major reason behind colonization of India. In this regard Ronald B. Inden says, "India is still regarded as a civilization in which a distorted form of civil society long ago engulfed the economy and state" (Inden: 76). Barrington Moor, Jr. also comments on the connection between religion, caste and economy that makes millions of Indians feel homeless in home:

In pre-British Indian society, and still today in much of the countryside, the fact of being born in a particular caste determined for the individual the entire span of existence, quite literally from before conception until after death. It gave the range of choice for a marital partner in the case of parents, the type of upbringing the offspring would have and their choice of mate in marriage, the work he or she could legitimately undertake, the appropriate religious ceremonies, food, dress, rules of evacuation (which are very important), down to most details of daily living, all organized around a conception of disgust. (Moore, 1967: 337-8).

This alliance between religion and statecraft validates caste hierarchies and ill-treats its own citizens. Ghosh in his novels shows how a few untouchable characters grow rich and powerful when they move out of India, which is their birth place but no home for them. In the *Ibis Trilogy* Ghosh gives, many examples to show a nation can render its own citizens homeless for instance, the upper caste people cruelly treat Kalua, and he is not even allowed to look at the face of upper caste people. Deeti's in laws decide to burn her alive with the dead body of her husband, for cultural reasons which are actually economic reasons. Kalua saves her and he becomes a criminal in the eyes of upper caste people, however the act is not illegal according to the British legal system. On the other hand, the Indian legal system based on Manusmriti prescribes severe punishment to a lower caste for any kind of relationship with an upper caste woman:

A (man of) low (caste) who makes love to a maiden (of) the highest (caste) shall suffer corporal punishment (Buhler: 318).

If a lower caste man has, sex with an upper caste woman should be killed as per Dharma:

A sudra who has intercourse with a woman of a twice-born caste (varna), guarded or unguarded, (shall be punished in the following manner): if she was unguarded, he loses the part (offending) and all his property; if she was guarded, everything (even his life) (Buhler: 319).

Ghosh hints at the internal colonization in the name of religion, culture or social norm and recommends punishments even for saving the life of an innocent person who belongs to upper caste than only alternative left before people is to move out of that place. The legal system of Manusamriti, which is based on caste prejudices is deeply entrenched in the consciousness of Indians that they cannot liberate of it permanently. Here the idea of home and nation moves from geographical space to psychological space. In this way though the characters move from one

geographical space to another the idea of home moves with them, who will be considered part of home and who will be considered outsider, and who will not be allowed within the home space. In Indian context, caste is very important factor to decide home and homelessness. Untouchables or outcastes stand for home outside nation, culture, and society. For instance, Kalua saves Deeti from the deathbed; she falls in love with him and marries him however, she is still tormented by Brahmanism lodged deep in her psyche:

hearing voices in the recesses of her head, condemning her for running away with Kalua? Why should she know that no matter how hard she tried, she would never be able to silence the whispers that told her she would suffer for what she had done – not just today or tomorrow, but for kalpas and yugas, through lifetime after lifetime, into eternity (Ghosh, 2008: 431).

Amitav Ghosh connects the idea of home and nation with caste in Indian context, when Neel Rattan uses the phrase “world’s new Brahmins” it connects the Indian Brahmanism and European Brahmanism as is evident from following shloka from Manusmriti:

The son of a Brahmana, a Kshatriya, and a Vaisya by a Sudra (wife) receives no share of the inheritance; whatever his father may give to him, that shall be his property (Buhler: 358).

In European context especially in the colonies where the white European males were fathering children with none-white and non-European women but the children were not considered free and hence were not considered part of home. The life of Zachary in his first stage follows this principle, his father is a White man but his mother is a black woman therefore he gets nothing except freedom and the surname of his father that his father grants him. On the other hand, in India the situation is even worse Raja Neel Rattan’s father just gives hundred rupees to the women when they become pregnant and dispatch them to their villages. Along with the plight of lower caste people Ghosh foregrounds the anxiety in the heart of upper caste people of losing caste that amounts to losing both home and nation. Three major characters Kesri Singh, Deeti, and Neel Rattan lose their caste in the novel. Kesri Singh loses his caste because his sister runs away with an untouchable, Deeti loses her caste when she elopes with Kalua, an untouchable and Neel Rattan loses his caste when the British prison authorities compel him do menial jobs meant for scavengers.

The *Ibis Trilogy* deals with the search for home and nation in the world, which is mostly ruled by caste, class and racial prejudices and the capitalist forces, intervene even in the private

life of people. Here Ghosh follows a holistic approach and shows that it is only the capability of the individuals to surpass numerous barriers created by the discourses of race, caste, religion, nationalism, and many more. In the novel Paulette transcends such boundaries therefore instead of supporting colonial power she “renounces the privileges of imperialism and elect[s] affinity with victims of [European] expansionist cultures” (Gandhi: 1). Similarly Baboo Nob Kissin transcends orthodox Hinduism and treats Neel Rattan as his son, has full empathy and love for Kalua, an untouchable and frees him when he was confined on the Ibis. He does not have any resentments against anybody including his employers who many times kick and abuse him. Towards the end, Kesri Singh is also able to transcend the barriers laid down by his caste when he accepts Kalua, an untouchable as his brother-in-law. All these characters transcend the narrow idea of space and find their true homes in rather alien geographical and cultural spaces that are not hostile to human sentiments and where love, care, and respect for fellow human beings are of utmost importance. Here home and nation ceases to be political entities based on nationalism rather they become the spaces constituted on the bases of love and respect for human life or just life.

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CHAPTER - 8

CONCLUSION

The thesis “Home and Nation: Issues of Cultural Identities in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh” analyzes the intricate relationship between home and nation along with the issues related to cultural identity in the postcolonial Third World. The research looks at the search for identity as one of the major aspects of the Third World writing in general and Indian writing in particular which is evident from a close survey of Post 1980 Indian English literature that establishes that the quest for identity especially cultural identity and a feeling of some kind of rootlessness or homelessness under the shadow of emergence of culturally orthodox groups and their evolution and major political forces forms central aspect of the Indian English fiction. The vision of the diaspora writers is seen as fragmented but integral to the understanding the postcolonial reality in the Third World in general and India in particular because the fragmented vision is as valuable as the supposedly un-fragmented one, as the fragmentation of vision correspond to the fragmented reality in the post-colonial Third World. Along with Ghosh, many other writers share this fragmented vision.

Ghosh believes that the links between India and her diaspora are very deep but he does not support homogeneous and hegemonic notion of nation and cultural identity in the national space. He problematizes the very notion of nationalism especially the militant nationalism rooted in the regional, religious, and caste based prejudices. In his novels, he shows this kind of nationalism uproots people and renders them homeless.

The research sees Ghosh as one of the most important Diaspora Writer who questions the orthodox notions of home and nation in the postcolonial world. He believes that people with particular political aims make all borders and there are no natural national borders, no pure cultural identities. Even a cursory glimpse into the history of humanity shatters the myth of pure national culture.

His location as a Diaspora writer and his training as an anthropologist makes him interrogate the notion of political borders and cultural identities as static, indisputable and unnegotiable, for instance in one of his short story, “The Imam and the Indian”, he researches in a small village on the Nile Delta, and finds that the village community is quite mobile and many members of this community have migrated to various parts of the world. Just like the author himself, most of the characters in his novels are perpetual diaspora who destabilize the notions

of cultural purity by disrupting the conception of the static periphery of cultural spaces as a site of different spatial intersections.

The thesis revolves around the issues of cultural identity, home and nation and their treatment in the novels of Amitav Ghosh as determinants of social, cultural, political and economic concerns and dimensions. The central theme that runs through his novels is identity of individual with reference to Home and Nation. The cultural, social, national, and geographical space in the novels of Amitav Ghosh is both a place of contact as well as conflict. Both the space imagined or remembered on the one hand and space captured by political and economic powers on the other hand have a profound influence on the novelist and his protagonists. He believes that cultural space or cultural definition of geographical space is created discursively and maintained with the help of coercive apparatus however with the passage of time lived histories and territories created in one geographical space precipitate and pose a challenge to the idea of purity.

In each age, there are forces that try to claim the pure identities, which are impossible because they themselves are products of this hybridity that manifest in territorial struggles, foregrounded through the interaction between global and local pressures, and transnational to national reconfigurations. However, Ghosh's characters try to understand space not only as a cause of disparity of territorial clash and cultural conflict, but also, as a point of linking and consensus, and try to imagine space above the narrow confines of a singular culture, nation, territory and community.

Amitav Ghosh's location as a creative writer in the diaspora space is very important in the age of orthodox nationalism that renders its own citizens as homeless. While writing from this location he Ghosh produces a critique of nationalism around the world with focus on the former colonies such as Burma, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Burma, India and many others where the politically mobilized category of 'nationalism' has taken on an insurgent dimension for a national identity that excludes on the basis of linguistic, religious or ethnic fault lines. He distinguishes between pre-independence nationalism and post-independence nationalism. He highlights the difference between the two, as the first one was a movement against imperialism and colonialism however, the second one developed along ethnic, religious, regional, and linguistic lines that proved a hazard for significant portion of population.

He depicts that the post-independence nationalism is not inclusive in nature, and compelled people to move out in search of their true homelands, as it happened in case of division

of Indian that led to the formation of Pakistan and migration of Indian Diaspora from Burma these experiences were even more horrible and traumatic than colonialism itself. However, it does not mean that people were not migrating from one place to another or from one political unit to another during the colonial or precolonial era. Amitav Ghosh is well aware of this reality therefore he contrasts the migrations caused by the formation of post-colonial nation states with the migration that is going on since ages by showing that early colonial or pre-colonial societies were not static or homogeneous. In most of his novels, we find that the Diaspora in all parts of the world was centuries old when colonialism started transporting people to the colonies who were later on forced to migrate back when colonies got independence.

In the post-colonial Third World nation states the idea of home becomes closely associated to the idea of nation and even a slight change in the idea of nation renders millions homeless. Independence of former colonies turned out to be a tragedy for people who migrated centuries ago and adopted the country of their birth as their homeland. This tragedy befalls on them because the ruling elite of the newly independent started treating them as aliens. Amitav Ghosh foregrounds this aspect in his novels, and shows that the post-independence nationalism fortifies the postulation that ethnic communities are not citizens but intruders.

Amitav Ghosh locates his novels in the background of these fluctuating political crises, social relations, and ongoing histories of dislocation and cross-border movements of people. This research investigates the complexities of home and nation in the novels of Amitav Ghosh, where 'home', as a set of shared emotional and material securities, is often proposed as a space of idyllic steadiness in the discourse of anti-colonial nationalism.

This research associates nation and nationalism with national identity, not merely as a kind of political identity but as a cultural approach of representation. One thing is taken for sure that national identity is not just a matter of social or political association rather it is entrenched in the constitutive meaning of national culture and identity. Amitav Ghosh in his novels re-conceptualizes national identity that offers a possibility of challenging the post-Enlightenment modernist ideology that constitutes the discourse of national culture and identity. This thesis focuses on the issues of home in nation and cultural identity, and the way Amitav Ghosh as a part of diaspora offers a more empowering and resisting conception of the nation and redefines it to make it more inclusive in nature.

The research highlights Amitav Ghosh's emphasis on the idea that culture is basically transnational in its nature and scope because it is entrenched in histories of dislocation and that

is why it is constantly making links between the past and present, the here and there, and resists the idea of purity. This transnational hypothesis of culture and identity has the capability to dislocate the homogenizing discourse of national traditions and national culture.

He rejects the teleology of origin/return that helps him transcend the degenerating features of the discourse of nativism, the notion of homeland, essentialism that excludes citizens from nation. His works are timely intervention because the idea of return to the homeland and unadulterated ethnicity are co-opted by reactionary nationalist forces all over the world, who claim that their national space is contaminated by the infiltration of outsiders. They start a political and cultural movement that becomes violent quite often for extradition of these migrants and create fear psychosis in the hearts of majority against minority and render minorities homeless in a geographical setting where they are living for centuries.

The thesis deals with individual chapters and shows how Ghosh deals with the theme of “Home and Nation: Issues of Cultural Identities in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh” in his novels. For instance, analysis of *The Circle of Reason* illustrates that all borders instead of safeguarding home pose biggest danger to home. It discusses Amitav Ghosh’s depiction of various characters’ quest for home in the world, which is divided into nations. Most of the characters depicted in this novel are homeless and nationless because they do not fit into any of the national frameworks available.

Analysis of *The Shadow Lines* foregrounds the ways in which the works of Amitav Ghosh explore the issues of home, national borders, the historical process by which they have come about, and the resulting anxieties and contradictions that affect people’s lives in the post-colonial. Amitav Gosh explores the issue of borders and the history of partition in *The Shadow Lines* that results in a multitude of perspective to narrate the history of partition through insider-outsider configurations. Ghosh contrasts bordered nations with borderless universe of humanity and nature and advocates for an ideal vision of a world devoid of borders, which is represented through the metaphor of atlas and the story of Tristan that Tridib tells to his nephew. He is convinced of the insignificance of Border and its dreadful influence when he highlights the ineffectuality of drawing borders. Ghosh points out how Independence brought with it Partition and how national reconstruction on the bases of some abstract ideologies causes riots and destroys lives of people.

The thesis analyzes *The Calcutta Chromosome* as an effort to search home in the Virtual World of Memory, Imagination and Internet, highlights Amitav Ghosh’s treatment of pre-nation

state era, and tries to show that the idea of nation as home and a safe home in nation state is a myth.

The Thesis looks at *The Glass Palace* looks at as a saga of people on perpetual move. This movement keeps home and nation in flux and defies the idea of fixed home in a nation with fixed national boundaries. All characters in the novel - whether rich or poor, king or servant, colonizer or colonized- cross and re-cross national boundaries in search of a true home without any success because the idea of nation interferes with the idea of home. Ghosh seems to advocate that it is not the advent of colonialism, which resulted in the homelessness of people rather human beings have always been mobile however he highlights that colonialism as an auxiliary of capitalism makes people move en masse for profit to the capitalist organizations that move both colonizers as well as colonized. To emphasize his point of view Ghosh has brought in various capitalist ventures such as international trade in teak, rubber and petroleum and search for markets for Western consumer goods and technology. To achieve his aim he depicts crisscrossing lives of the Burmese Royal family, the family of the businessperson and timber merchant, Rajkumar, and the families of Saya John and Uma Dey each of them has very intricate relationship with capitalism and colonialism and their resultant nation state and nationalism.

The research studies *The Hungry Tide* the subtleties of the sense of home and the dangers of homelessness with regard to subaltern sections of society in Indian national space. In this novel, the author projects himself as pro-subaltern, highlights Indian nation state's different attitudes towards people with land and money on the one the one hand and people without land and money on the other hand, and foregrounds state's antipathy towards the subaltern groups. A comprehensive study of relationship between land and formation of nation states and how nation state will be a home to certain sections and certain others will be rendered homeless in the nation state will reveal that the roots of this problem lie in the advent of capitalism in Europe and the setting up of colonies overseas. Emergence and empowerment of capitalist institution in Europe led to the enclosure movement in Europe that transformed the land into private property. This enclosure movement in Europe culminated in colonial occupation overseas. This chapter looks at *The Hungry Tide*, as an amalgamation of imaginary and real which is fundamental to Ghosh's project of analyzing the relationship between island geography, life of people there, international politics, discourse of nationalism and the attitude of self-proclaimed nationalist state machinery towards the outcasts.

To study the *Ibis Trilogy* the thesis goes back in history to analyze the temporal location of Amitav Ghosh's *Ibis Trilogy* which is 1838-1841 when the understanding of nation and nationalism was completely missing in the Third World. However, the Capitalism in the West had already constituted the discourse of nationalism, which was used to counter monarchy by bringing in the idea of nation state and shifting the loyalties of people towards abstract idea of nation from the royalty. The entry of capitalist establishments like the East India Company proved a turning point in the history of Indian subcontinent. Through the depiction of fictional character Raja Neel Rattan, the novelist shows how the socio-political and economic circumstances changed radically with the entry of capitalist forces and many of them were rendered homeless in their own birthplaces. All major characters in this novel are searching for their home in the emerging nation states.

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