

Presentation

By

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On

Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* as a Partition Novel

Semester VI

# *The Shadow Lines* as a Partition Novel

## Background

- Struggle for Independence.
- Freedom movement in Bengal.
- The Second World War.
- The Partition of 1947.
- Communal riots in Bangladesh and India.
- Impact of these historical events on *The Shadow Lines*.

## Partition in the Novel

- Importance of three different locations in the novel- Dhaka, Calcutta, London.
- Differences in cultures, regions, people, religions, nationalities.
- Inter-national tensions causing boundaries to arise.
- Human emotions are restricted within these boundaries.
- Reflecting the relationship between nation and citizens.

- Characters related to each other through relationships, family, friends.
- Narrator's Tha'mma and her root.
- Mayadevi and her England.
- Tridib and his Calcutta.
- The Datta-chaudhury family of Bengal and The Price family of London.
- Newly created frontiers between India and East Pakistan.

- Theme of Love in the Novel.
- Tridib's love with May Price.
- The narrator is in love with Ila, his cousin who lives in London, but he never tells her of his forbidden feelings.
- The narrator is attracted especially by the western culture of Ila.
- Tha'mma remembers her past nostalgically. The narrator becomes fascinated with the stories of Tha'mma's old days at her ancestral home.

- Tha'mma's Bangladesh tour- return to root.
- Mayadebi, Tridib, May Price and Robi accompanied Tha'mma in her Bangladesh tour.
- Shock to Tha'mma as everything changed in Bangladesh.
- Climax when riot took place.
- The mob put to death Khalil, the old man and Tridib.

- Map drawn by the colonisers.
- Map re-created and revisited by the colonised.
- Desire of the colonial masters and tragedy of the ruled subjects.
- Geographical locations- as they were in the past and as they are now.
- Impossibility of the characters to relive the moments of past.
- Revisiting the past means driving self-consciously to death.
- The concept of division or border leads to psychological sufferings of homeless people.

- Lines creating personal identity, national identity, geo-political identity.

- Amidst such crises, Ghosh asserts freedom of human beings.

- Dhaka, Calcutta, London- geographically possible places, but physically 'impossible' places for the characters.

- Old versus new, maps and mirrors, borders and mirrors.

- Suffering of Tha'mma is equal to suffering of everyman.

- National boundaries creating 'shadow' not to be understood by the characters.