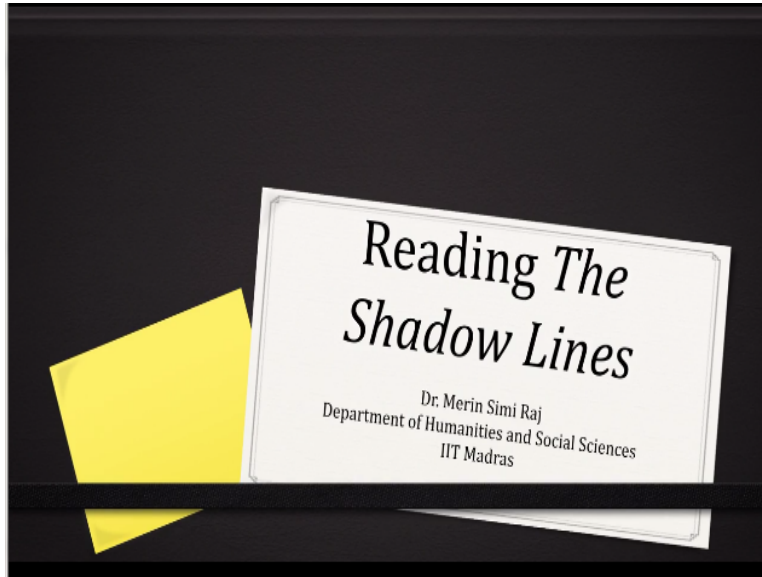


Indian Fiction in English
Prof. Dr. Merin Simi Raj
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology–Madras

Lecture-22
Reading The Shadow Lines

(Refer Slide Time: 00:11)



Hello everyone, I am happy to welcome you to today's session of this emphathial cause Indian fiction in English.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:25)



Here we are again looking at this Stella Work by Amitav Ghosh the shadow lines work published in the year 1988 and the winner of awards including the Sahitya Akademi award. And we also be noticed how inclined, how popular this work is been since a moment of it is publication. This could be a seen as yet another moment is event after rest these midnights children so much.

So, that set of writers who followed the same style of writing and emitted the similar thematic style they came to be known as the course generation. I assume that by now you are more familiar with this text that you for either complete at reading this novel or real half way through. Because it is extremely important in understanding the discussions which are to follow and today's session.

And before we begin with a set of themes in the set of trends which a part of this novel the shadow lines it is important to set a weight to this win the critical journal get to get as a title implies the shadow lines. This is about a set of arbitrary invisible lines which are drawn to separate nation's communities and individuals from each other course with multiple levels, questions the irrationality and the absurd the which thieves lines are drawn.

And how these lines are also used to instigate violence to justify violence to different kinds, I would like to read to you very brief description from the blub of this on over the shadow lines. It says Amitav Kush questions the meaning of political freedom and the force of nationalism in the modern world exposing the idea of the nation state does not illusion an arbitrary dissection of people course reviews the absurd manner.

In which your home can certainly become your enemy, we find that course plays with this IT of home and the outside at various levels even the 2 major sections of this novel going away and coming home. We find that going away also becomes coming home and coming home in the sense is also about going away from the shelf. The title is could have been easily exchanged, so that is the arbitrariness that is the absorptivity of these shadow lines that who is talks about throughout this novel in certain also inventors.

Apart from this be once my personal favorites of Indian English fiction, I think the born we enduring things about this novel is that. This continuous to be relevant, that depiction of violence the invocations so flying is the references to violence and the various phases of it, it continues to be relevant even today when we are facing different kinds of sectarianism and different forms of fragmentation written in the aftermath of this sectarians which was decades back.

We realize that the same tone could be applied to talk about various things in the contemporary as well, most reviewers have also spoken about how course makes it possible to cartable the reader into different time zones and into different locations. In this novel through it is reading with is not in a linear way. We realize that we have been taken to 3 different places to Calcutta, London and Dhaka.

And this travel through these different locations and across time it is meet possible through a series of stories related to us by the narrator by Ila characters has stride up by the grandmother. They all bring together as niece of stories which is responsible for making the places and the times unlike for us. And this novel also believes in this tip of that we on live in stories, so it is a importance of stories that course celebrates.

He is also bringing to us a set of stories which could have been told in any other way, the importance of bringing many many stories together also together challenge this grand narrative about the nation and also but the significance of the victorinus with which lines start across nations and across communities exist in the contemporary world. The way Ghosh depicts violence it is in a total different way.

He is not interested in a graphic description of violence is a void it is not into his terms that he talks about violence. There are different phases of violence that he explores in very such a ways, the marriage between Ila and Nick there is a violence inherent in it in terms of relationships. He also talks about the riot which happens in the streets of Taka and Calcutta. I want to draw your attention to the way violence is described in this piece of work.

And talking of the day of riots that to Calcutta part in 1964, this is the way he describes it I open my mouth to answer and I found I have nothing to say all I could have told them was a sound of voices running past the wolves my school. And if a glimpse of a modern park Circus, there are no explicit graphic descriptions but the certainness of it makes absorptivity of violence makes the absolute senselessness of violence all the more clear to us.

It would not be wrong to say that what Ghosh perhaps tries to highlight here is the absurdity of this entire thing which is based on series of obituary lines drawn across the various places. And he uses some kind of certain humor to talk about this as well the this is very interesting and that is this incidence where the grandmother reacts in particular way on discovering how her old Jetmosha is living with the Muslim family in taka.

We find some serious humor at work over here and we cannot be but amazed by the way and which Ghosh is able to infuse a shuttle humor into this otherwise great situation, a reach you from this extent. She exchange the look of amaze when to with Mayadebi, do you know she whisper to Robby that was a time and that old man show out the dark set he would not let a Muslims shadow past within 10 feet of his foot.

And look at him now paying the price of his sense, 10 feet Robby explain to me in hushed whisper morning at the position of the measurement, how did he measure. He whispered back at my grandmother to they keep at **keep at** tape in his pocket when he eat, no no my grandmother said in patiently. And those days many people followed rules like that they had an instinct, trigonometry Robby cried and trying from the side to made.

They must have known trigonometry, they probably worked it out like a Sam if a Muslim is standing under at 22 foot building, how far as his shadow, you see we are much clever than you. But your grandfather could not tell when a job in shadow was passing within 10 feet of his foot this is a hilarious situation. But the humor evoked over here it is also indicating the centuries old and justice which were problem and different parts of the world and different cultures.

It is talking about how in spite of the arbitrariness of these divisions, the hierarchy which is practice in different societies. The attitudes to different beings which are lower in the run, they remain pretty much the same just as a Muslim as ostracized, we find a German Jew also being ostracized and the European setting which is being move to over here. Khuswant Singh one of the important writers and critics of our Times.

He has said this about shadow lines, this is how the line which should be used, this is how a novel should be written much as it is difficult to lead stays to gives such claims about how a novel should be written. Ghosh uses a kind of language which is extremely impeccable, Ghosh use of language is hartamas it continues to amaze as well as instructs, I read to you this distinction that he brings about between knowledge and ignorance.

He knew the clarity of that imaginary mind was merely the seductive clarity of ignorance and illusion of knowledge created by a deceptive wait of remembered detail. Look the beauty of the diction over here and how it blends quiet seamlessly with the many seamless profound things that he discusses as part of this work, the shadow lines much as we are attentive to the many critical insight as part of this novel it is hard to miss that fact that this is one work which has been accepted and widely acclaimed by writers and critics from across the world.

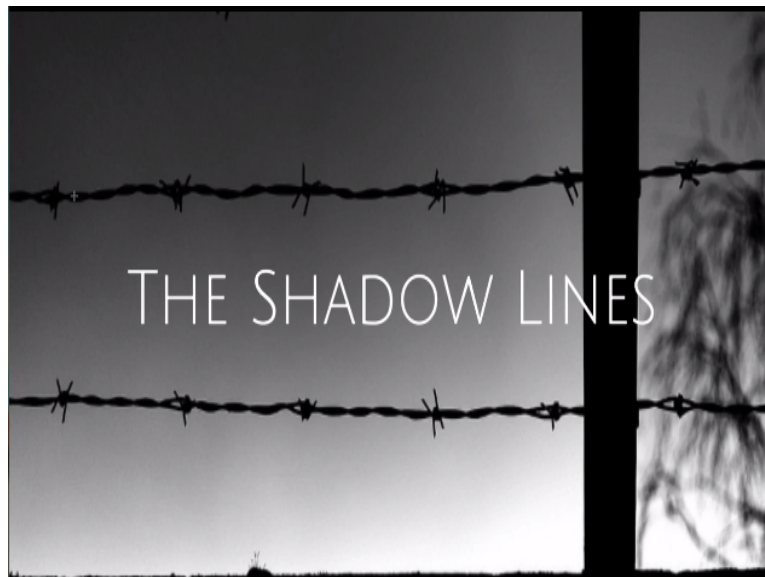
That is a certain coherence this work which brings us together to engage with this in a mold inclusive and to a more personal way and many critics and review was also spoken about how this is one novel which is stayed with them long after the wages have turned. And that is a rare feet in today's terms of course there are many things that Ghosh's not attentive to his not attentive to the different kinds of violence's which are part of cast divisions.

Here not attentive to the many articulations of gender differences nevertheless he is managed to reach the heart of the matter by looking at the shadow lines which divide 1 nation from the other as perhaps the route of all of those sectarian and divisive tendencies in first place. Shadow lines being one work that has been worked on by critics of different stature it is important to take a look at the frame works within which this is situated.

For that purpose we also have 2 presentations coming up today 2 of our students will be sharing with you, some of the critical insights that they have gained in the context of reading the shadow lines Sridhar and later Sibi will be talking to you about the many fasciitis and the many themes which make shadow lines one of the best stories ever told in the context of narrating this nation and Indian fiction in English.

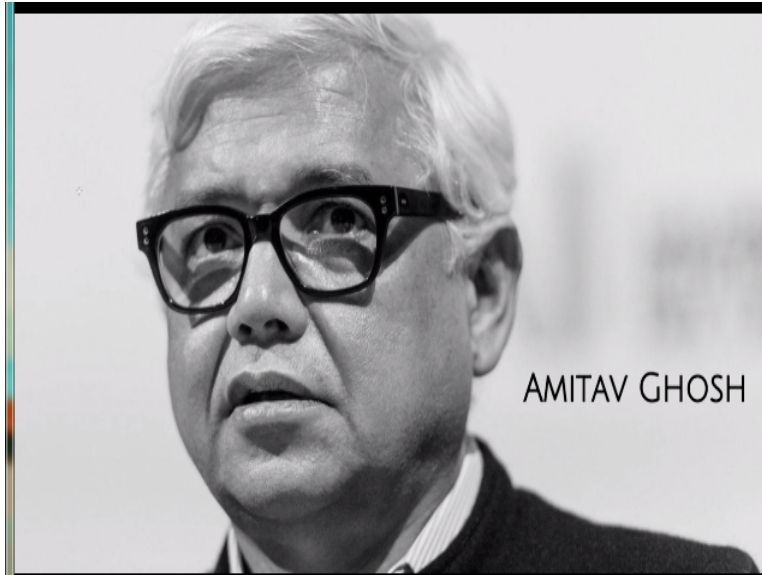
I welcome these presenters and I also hope you will get a better understanding of this novel and the light of these discussions are also strongly encouraged you to continue reading this novel and pay attention to the different segments which are being discussed over here as part of these presentations thank you.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:43)



I am presenting on shadow lines, it is a novel by Amitav Ghosh, it was published in 1988 it won the Shakitya Akademi award in 1999.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:56)



So, Amitav Ghosh, he was born in Calcutta in 1956 is narratives that he uses in his novels are usually cosmopolitan in nature. His family originates from East Bengal and they migrated to Calcutta before the partition, he grow up in Calcutta and later he studied in Delhi and in the U.S. So, he fined western ideals yet he reminds culturally routed, so this kind of almost exactly super embosses on our novel's narrator.

Ghosh has his own struggle to find space to balances cosmopolitan ideals with the cultural legacy that he has. So, with relation to the cosmopolitan ideas we see Ghosh characters even when they are non-Indians. There are no false nose that are struck because the emotions as well as passions they are related to you know universal humanity rather than their racial identity. So, people might agree or disagree whether this right or wrong but turns out this, this is few points.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:58)

CHARACTERS

And as for the characters, so when I read the novel I manage to put some phases on each other characters. So, I am adding those phases because it might be easier for the imagination for this presentation because it is a spawn of 20 minutes you won't be able to make up phases for the characters.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:12)



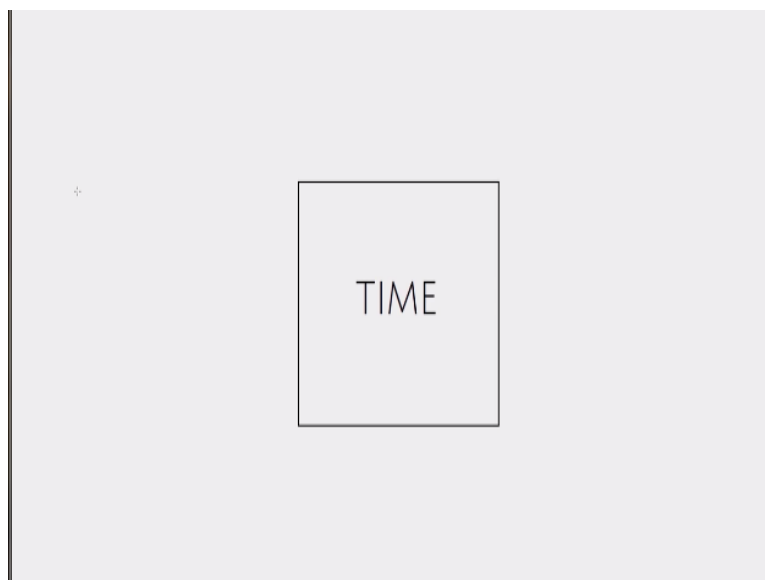
Only the main characters are we mentioned, so this is the narrator he is a Calcutta middle class boy, he born and brought up in Calcutta. And he moves to Delhi to his masters and moves to London to do his doctorate and then there is Ila. She is a daughter of a UN official and therefore has to travel around lot, she considers a lifestyle choices to be not so much in tandem with a Indian cultural novels.

And there is Thawma, she is a very hardworking women she is self-made, she has very strict principles and she is a school principle and she is also kind of a traditionalist. There is Tridib Tridib is a son of Shaib and Mayadebi, Mayadebi is Thawma sister. So, in a way Tridib is narrator's uncle, he was at England during the second world-war and he has a doctorate in archeology, he stays in Calcutta.

And there is Robi who is a you know typical tough guy, he is Tridib's younger brother and but he is young enough to hang out with the narrator Ila who is kind of a generation below her. He goes by the book, and he is respected for that. He goes by his motto like never question the rules just live by them, so naturally Thamma loves Robi. There is May who is Tridib's love, she is spenpel with him.

She later visits India, she works for some charity organization and there is Nick price who is May's younger brother and he is Ila's love he is kind of a very ambitious guy he does chartered accountancy and wants to start a businesses. So, getting into the 9 topic of this presentation it is time.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:00)



So, when you talk about time in this generation we see the philosophy that is dominant in the generation is to life live life in the present. There is a detachment from history that we see as well

as we tend to feel this you know how know expectations for a future. So, people say this is the true reflection of the postmodern society, in Ghosh's shadow line there is a simultaneous time and not a sequential structure that you see.

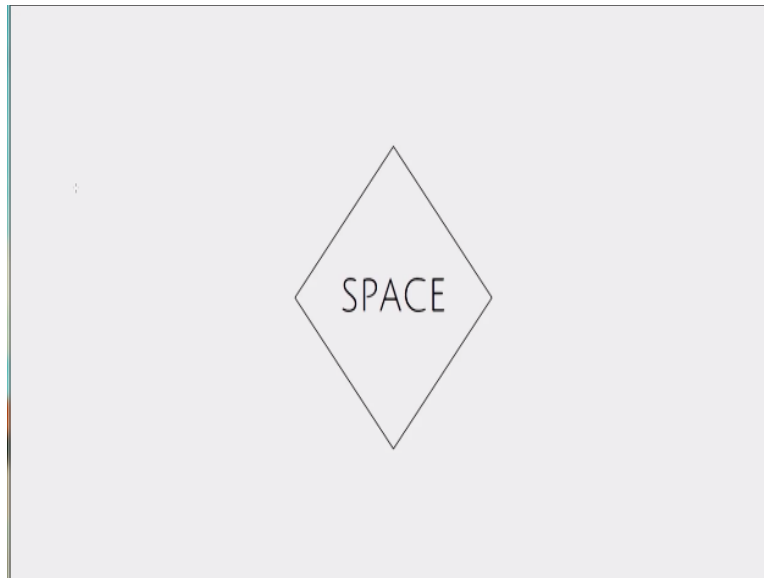
Ghosh creates a gap in the narrative and then goes on to fill the gap as the novel moves along, I am not talking about the details when I talk about gaps but rather the story that lie beyond the details. So, fictions starts at the place for example Calcutta and then seems to be there are multiple narration by characters. For example Thamma's Dhaka stories in which she lived in a small house with a sister as well as her parents and their father's brother.

And there are Tridib's war time stories in which he was in England during the second world war in the when the Germans are bombing at. And then there is Roby's riot story which happened in Dhaka during the 1960s and then there is Ila her story about her I mean the races on that she faced when she was in England. So, this inevitably leads to the multiplicity of time and place that happens in the novel.

For example there Thamma are who I mentioned is a school principle, we see Thamma before retirement as well as after retirement and how the time treats her. And we see Ila before her and after her marriage, so this narration this complex of a culminates as a complete whole. And there is be owe to the mastery of Ghosh here. They were also fetch history through all this stories for example as I mention earlier Thamma's Dhaka which is in the late 19th century.

And then there is Tridib's England during the second world war which is beginning of 20th century and there is 60s Calcutta and there is 60s Dhaka and there is the 80s England that he see finally. So, the changes with time for the fiction is also mention for example when Thamma repeats Dhaka after nearly some 50 years she gives some asking where is Dhaka throughout the trip, she keeps on repeating it to everybody, so that is about the for time.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:19)



And as for space there is a French sociologist Mark Ghosh so, he defines under logical plays as something that can be defined as relational historical and concern with identity. So, narrator, Ila, Tridib almost all of the characters fall in different special drum in this novel and therefore I mean it obvious at the possess different identities as supposed to say like a married couple living in Calcutta like say the narrators parents.

Their identities kind of fall in tandem with each other, so this place is define an opposition to non-place which is the concept of like which cannot be defined as relational historical concern with identity. And it is kind of divide of emotion and memory, so places are history and **we** we associate that history with the place when you call it by it is name.

For example Tridib is a very imaginative character he tells stories about I mean he devotes his time to reading geographies from far away and I mean since he is doctorate in archeology he do obviously do that. And he mentions all these stories to the narrator, so when the narrator visits London he is excited by the idea because he is viewing London through Tridib's eyes, so this is a place for him.

Because it has the history that is associated with this identity, in contrast to that we have non places which have no present, past or future they are always a same. For example the roadside teashops that the narrator mentions in Calcutta. No matter what they do not change they just they

are do not have any history associated with them. So, this idea of place or non-place comes into play when Tridib says to May that I mention the (()) (19:11).

So, he says I want you to meet you as a stranger in her own, he wants to meet her in a non-place which he means free from relatives, a place without a past without a culture. So, this is a free place where 2 people in love come together and another instance would be the tube which is the underground train service in London. So, this place for the narrator is the very exciting one because it has the history as well as the stories for him that associated with it even before he came to London.

But for Ila was been in London for a very long time it is a non-place she just says it is a bloody underground. So, with that we also come to the idea of home as a huge part of the identity of these characters, home is also by the definition of the huge this is also a place. For example (()) (20:09) who is Thamma's father's brother, so when he has ask to taken back from Dhaka to India he says I do not believe in India's India.

But suppose you get and they decided to draw another line somewhere, so what will you do you also see that when Thamma visits Dhaka since she is travelling by airplane for the first time she is not very much knowledgeable about the forms and everything that goes into it. So, with the she does not know the difference between frontiers and borders, so she believes when she crosses Dhaka there would be a line a big line which she knows that she is crossing India and going to east Pakistan.

However I mean that obviously not the case, she has to she comes to know that she has to fill in birthplace when she has to go to East Pakistan. And because of a birthplace is Dhaka she has to fill in Dhaka, so she goes into the crisis as to what does a maker does not maker Indian or not, also we find Ila the girl who moves away from the cultural boundaries here. So, she wants to define what her home is and what she is comfortable with.

And what culture does her home has to be, so that he does not you know bind her in. so, many symbolic metaphors you know come in this novel, for example the portioning borders is

obviously a huge part in with relation to space. Because Thamma's Dhaka home her father as well as his brother are lawyers and when a dispute happens between the 2 families, previous in the use to live together in a home and then there is a dispute.

So, the lawyers decide to divide the home very rationally, so that their families are separate and the house was divided exactly in half and it even cuts through a toilet and she never spoke to her cousins after that and the playing with them also stopped. So, I mean the metaphor here comes when she says to her sister about how she had no idea how the other idea was because they have been separate for a very long time.

I mean her sister is Mayadebi and since she is very young Thamma use to tell stories to her about how the other side is upside down place where they start with dinner first and they end with breakfast. And (()) (22:24) will shout because he has to have his breakfast in his bathroom and he would yeah such like that. And this is a metaphor because this kind of becomes metaphor for the portioning about us that happen.

Because suddenly I mean at one time you are a subcontinent and the next day you are a different country. So, the reality aspect also comes in without a metaphor part, for example the border is states that you know come in the novel the narrator's father when Thamma is living for Dhaka I mean the narrator's father is Thamma's son. So, he has what did you expect, did you expect a long black line with green on one side and scarlet on the other just like you see on the school atlas, it does not like that.

But however curiously Thamma isn't offended but she is rather confuse, that is in the way it is even though she is a school principle and all. So, with this idea of space to counter at we have stories and imagination in the novel. So, imagination is powerful enough to deserve all the special and temporal borders in the novel and open up a lot of cosmopolitan possibilities. Tridib the imaginative guy he uses his education to imagination.

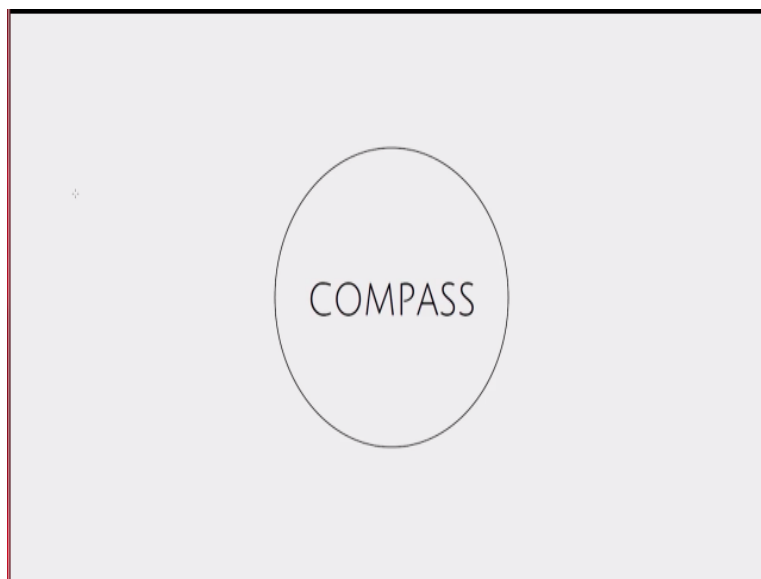
And it is a personal liberation for him that way and cosmopolitanism was a ideas day limited by the stories that we live in. Our lives are more or less the stories that we tell to each other, so in

that way shadow lines is a story about stories. The stories in the novel is web together in such a manner that when a detail of 1 story is revealed it affects the other stories surrounding it also.

For example the narrator he I mean spoiler but obviously Tridib gets killed, so it took on 15 years to describe that there was a connection between this nightmare bus ride background school which was the communal riots in Calcutta. And the events that Tridib and others in Dhaka which was the same communal riot at the same time in Dhaka. An imagination here us is useful and carrying also beyond the limits of once mine to others time and places just as the narrator did in case of Tridib.

So, another example of be when Ila says to the narrator they are in London and it is a vault and both of them are to sleep there. And she says here we are back in Raj bazaar, Raj bazaar is a place back in Bengal where she and the narrator use to play together. So, she I mean it is a metaphorical reference. And also we see the narrator knowing London too well even though he has never visited it just because Tridib as told him stories about London all along. Like what street thus the price family live-in, what street do you find the museum stuff like that.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:16)



An important metaphor which the novel ends is essential and understanding the meaning of distances both real and constructed and the national frontiers as the narrator calls a looking glass borders. So, the narrator finds I mean once Tridib is dead he finds a compass as well as the

botulism is map of Tridib, I mean he knows that I mean the riot that happen was because there was a (()) (25:43) Mohamed's hair in Kashmir which when missing. So, that resulted in riot in Dhaka as well as in Calcutta, so and that was the reason Tridib got killed in the communal riot there. So, he takes the compass as well as atlas, you can see it here.

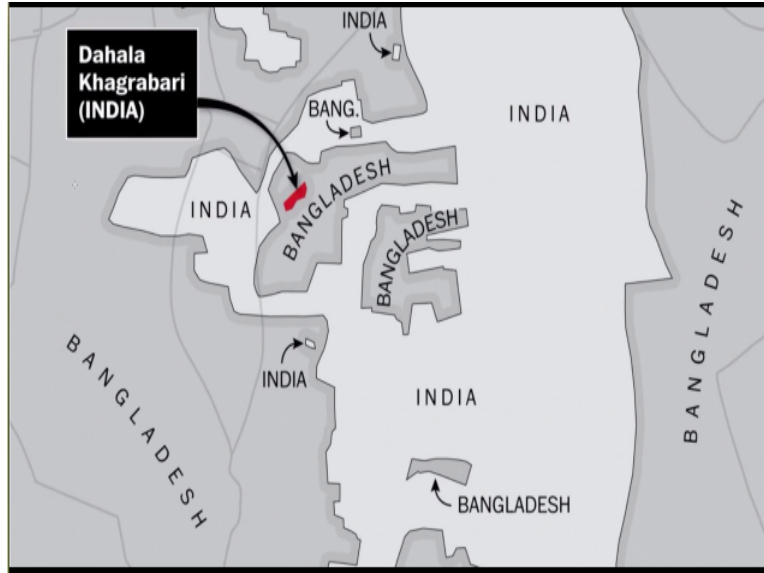
(Refer Slide Time: 26:00)



He place it on Dhaka and then stresses the compass to Kashmir and then with that as a radius it just draws a circle and realizes that it converse almost a lot of China and Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and goes a full round. And then he says what about what happen in China or Indonesia why do not people care about that. In why does it have to be this. So, there are lines these are lines he says that these are lines at make the stories of people different at they actually hard to be.

The artificial divisions that he find just like the (()) (26:39) house in Dhaka, this is to especially in the case of the Bengal religion. Because all are Bengal people the west Pakistan even detach to the east Pakistan because of it is bungalow culture but ever since partition there entirely different people as they say and many borders even run through homes and if you are familiar with the idea of enclaves with the border you will see that India and east Pakistan border usually go up to the third order.

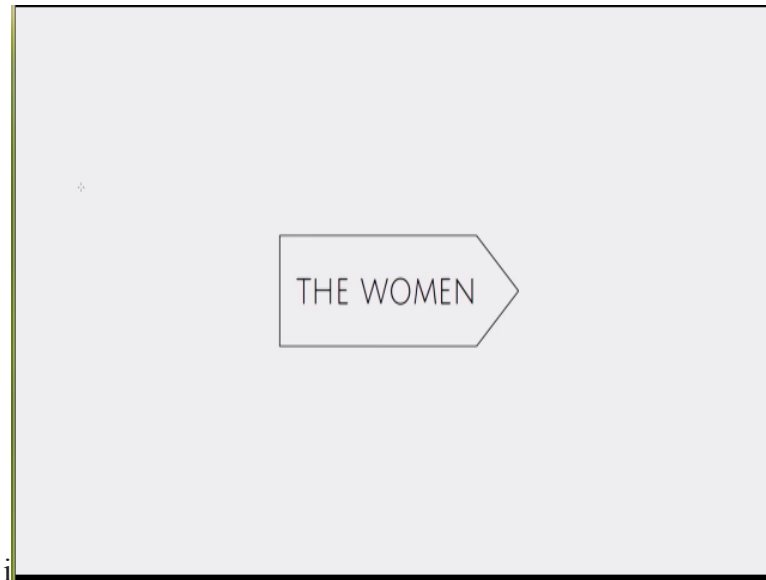
(Refer Slide Time: 27:10)



As you see here this is a piece of India which is in Bangladesh which is insane. And so coming back to the characters Tridib with his imagination he represents the openers to space and place I mean May was there when Tridib got killed in the communal violence. He talks about the mystery of the sacrifice that went along with it.

So, you see this is the communal riot which was boosted by the roundedness of the national narrative which ended up killing Tridib who is the who stands as a symbol of you know cosmopolitan imagination. So, again a metaphor so amongst these dark lines Ghosh tries to find us space between cultures.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:59)



So, I will go onto the women of the novel because the role that women of this novel the role that plays quite a lot, though the narrator narrates the story is in about him. It is a story about how the narrator consciousness is shaped by the relating with the women in his life. However the story is about the women either it is merely this guy telling the story of those women the perspective is quite well established.

So, that maybe the one of the reason I can connect to the narration, so there as other characters no other characters to the exception of Tridib are fully formed with the third dimension except for these 3 women in the novel.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:38)



Thamma, Ila and May, Thamma and Ila stand for certain things as you can see through the novel which is one of the reasons why they characters seem to have very strong foundation Thamma is a nationalist and a traditionalist well Ila is a freeze prettier girl who could not careless for the above. And there is Thamma who is motto is be strong enough to face what comes at you and Ila is choose what comes at you Thamma calls Ila whoever and Ila calls Thamma as fascist.

The narrative kind of stands between them both and trying to place these 2 people with relation to their opinion as well as the opinion of the other. He seems to be defending Thamma when he is talking to Ila defending Ila when he is talking to Thamma because both have a very radical opinion about each other. There are name calling to as I mention earlier, so however both of these characters are limited in adopting 2 things.

Thamma is limited by a Rohan very strong ethical principles which is very obvious when she visits Dhaka and Ila is limited by her very own concept of freedom because when she see because I told about how Ila married Nick the British guy. And when she finds Nick cheating on her, she could not take it because she is in quite use to things going not the way that she plan to goes on. May however represents the view that is away from the orientalist view with which we think British view India.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:20)

REFERENCES

- 1 GHOSH, AMITAV "THE SHADOW LINES" JOHN MURRAY, 2011
- 2 HAWLEY, JOHN C. "AMITAV GHOSH: AN INTRODUCTION" NEW DELHI: FOUNDATION BOOKS, 2005
- 3 MUKHERJEE, MEENAKSHI "NARRATING A NATION" INDIAN LITERATURE, VOL. 35, NO. 4 (150), 1992, PP. 138-149
- 4 SHARMA, BHASHA SHUKLA "CONCEPT OF SPACE AND TIME IN THE SHADOW LINES" THE CRITERION, NO. 12, FEB. 2013.
- 5 DR. SREENATHACHARY "THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE, STRUCTURE AND TECHNIQUE OF THE NOVEL THE SHADOW LINES BY AMITAV GHOSH" IJELLH, II, NO. III, JULY 2014, PP. 347-353
- 6 PEETERS, ERIK "CROSSING BOUNDARIES, MAKING HOME: ISSUES OF BELONGING AND MIGRATION IN AMITAV GHOSH'S THE SHADOW LINES" ENGLISH ACADEMY REVIEW, 25, NO. 1, PP. 29-39

And yeah that would be yet this may these are references. Good morning to everyone present here my name is Sibi and I am here to present on the shadow lines by Amitav Ghosh.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:30)

The Shadow Lines

- Perspective of Time and Events
- Narrative Structure
- Backdrop: Swadeshi Movement, Second World War, Partition of India and Communal riots of 1963-64.
- Awards : Sahitya Akademi Award for English
Ananda Puraskar

Moving on to the novel the shadow lines provides a perspective of time and events of lines that bring you together and hold you upward full lines that exist in the memory of the narrator.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:46)

The Shadow Lines

- Perspective of Time and Events
- Narrative Structure
- Backdrop: Swadeshi Movement, Second World War, Partition of India and Communal riots of 1963-64.
- Awards : Sahitya Akademi Award for English
Ananda Puraskar

Therefore it invites a reader to join the narrative and correlate with the incidence happening in the novel and the actual events at were taking place during that time in India. Amitav Ghosh tries to use a special device here call the mirroring where he considers the mirror to be a shadow line between the reader and the characters in the novel. And they tend to reflect ideas of each other of their own on each other.

Ghosh questions the real question of political freedom in this novel and also talks and this novel spread across spawn of 70 years that covers many movements in India and events in India such as the Swadeshi movement. The partition of India and a communal riots that happened in the 63 and 64.

(Refer Slide Time: 31:37)

Love for Homeland

"Ila has no right to live there. She does n't belong there. It took those people a long time to build that country; hundreds of years, years and years of war and bloodshed. Everyone who lives there has earned his or her right to be there with blood, with their brother's blood and their father's blood and their son's blood. They know they are a nation because they have drawn their borders with blood. War is their (The British) 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."

"I don't believe in this India-Sindhia. It's all very well you are going away now, but suppose when you get there they decide to draw another line somewhere? What will you do then? Where will you move to? No one will have to move anywhere? As for me, I was born here, and I will die here."

The first theme love for homeland it is very clear that Thamma and dad's brother (()) (31:46) who is and their love for their homeland. They decided to never move their homeland and also even when Thamma's husband dies. She does not move away from her home in search of a livelihood and she also criticizes Ila for going to an alien land saying she has no right to live there, she does not belong there.

It took those people a long time to build that country, this shows how Thamma is very serious about how one should never leave their homeland no matter what the situation is as long as and as well as Thamma's dad's brother (()) (32:33) when Thamma and Mayadebi. The sister visit to go to Dhaka to take there to bring back their uncle to Calcutta.

He tells them that he would not move anywhere from his homeland and he told the same thing to sons as well. He told that he does not believe in the India's India it is all very well you are going away now but suppose when you get there they decided draw on other lines somewhere what will you do then where will you move to, no one love to move anywhere as for me I was born here and I will die here.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:08)

Historical Novel

"when we came out of the tube station I stopped them and pointed down the road. Since this is west lane, I said, that must be Sumatra road over there. So that corner must be where the air raid shelter was, the same one that Robi's mother and your mother and your uncle Alan ducked into on their way back from mill lane, when one of those huge high caliber bombs exploded on silent road, around the corner, blowing up most of the houses there. And that house, that one, just down the road, over there, on the corner of Lymington road, I know what it's called Lymington mansions, and an incendiary bomb fell on it, and burned down two floors. That was on the 1st of October 1940, two days before your uncle died."

Then you could also call this novel a historical novel because it deals with such historical events and it is closely associated with them. The modern it depicts the modern history of India such as the Calcutta the communal wars, the partition and Swadeshi movement.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:31)

Violence

"I can only describe at second hand the manner of Tridib's death: I do not have the words to give it meaning. I do not have the words, and I do not have the strength to listen"

"In Calcutta rumours were in the air, especially that familiar old rumour, the harbinger of every serious riot that the trains from Pakistan were arriving packed with corpses."

Violence is another striking theme in the novel because violence is not directly portrayed in the form of words. But Ghosh chose to not use words rather than this disguise it in the narrative structure to make the violence more effective. He is states that he does not even have words to describe that manner in which Trdib's death occurred.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:57)

Migration

"Thirteen years before I was born. My father's aunt, Maya Debi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib. Her elder son, Jatin-kakie, who was 20 years older than Tridib, was an economist with the U.N. He was always away too, somewhere in Africa or South East Asia, with his wife and daughter, Ila."

"Shall I tell you what Ila is gone for? She is gone there because she is greedy." "She is gone there for money", he replied. She said, "it's not for money. It's a thing: it's all things money can buy, fridges like the one Mrs. Sen's son-in-law brought back from America, with two doors and a spout that drops ice-cubes into your glass; colour TVs and Cars, calculators and cameras all things you can't get here."

Migration is another postmodern theme that Ghosh employs in this novel. The characters are constantly shown moving from one place to another even though the most of the characters are actually not for it this novel starts with 13 years before the narrator was born. There was also a kind of criticism against the migration in the novel where Thamma criticizes Ila for going to another country while she converses with the narrator grandson.

She states that shall I tell you what Ila is gone for and the narrator immediately reply saying she is gone there for money. But she immediately responds to it is saying it is not for money it is a thing it is all things money can buy fridges like the one Mrs. Sen's son-in-law brought back from America with 2 doors and a spout that drops ice-cubes into your glass; color TVs and cars, calculators and cameras all things you cannot get here .

(Refer Slide Time: 35:10)

Fact and Fiction

"I think fiction has always played that part. If you look at Tolstoy's War and Peace... I think the difference between the history historians write and the history fiction writers write is that fiction writers write about the human history. It's about finding human predicament, it's about finding what happens to individuals, characters. I mean that's what fiction, Exploring both dimensions, where as history, the kind of history exploring causes, causality, is of no interest to me."

Ghosh does a good job blending fact in fiction into the novel in an interview Ghosh defined his choice of fiction over history stating that I think fiction as always played that part. If you look at Tolstoy's war and piece I think the difference between the history and historians write and the history fiction writers write is that fiction writers write about the human history which about finding human predicament.

It is about finding what happens to individuals, characters I mean that is what fiction exploring both dimensions whereas his history the kind of history exploring causes causality is of no interest to me .

(Refer Slide Time: 35:47)

Communal Differences

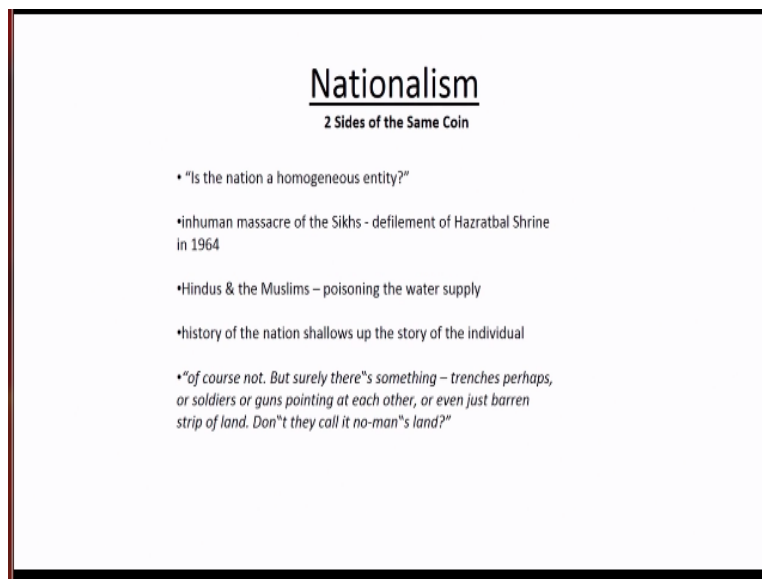
She asked Saifuddin, "does Khalil's wife cook for him too?" "Of course", said Saifuddin. "If she did n't cook, the old man would n't get anything to eat". She exchanged a look of amazement with Mayadebi. "Do you know?" She whispered to Robi. "There was a time when that old man was so orthodox that he would n't let a Muslim's shadow pass within ten feet of his food? And look at him now, paying for the price of his sins"

Communal differences in other theme that Amitav Ghosh employs coding from the novel as always there were unknowable cases of Muslims in East Pakistan giving shelters to Hindus often at the cost of their own lives and equally India of Hindus sheltering Muslims by they are ordinary people soon forgotten not for them any memorials or eternal flames.

And in an other occasion Ghosh criticizes the factors of communal violence through the talks of the narrator's grandmother and local mechanic from Bengal. And the exchange follows she asked the mechanic name is Saifuddin and she asks that mechanic does Khalli's wife cook for him too? of course said Saifuddin. If she did not cook the old man could not get anything to eat.

She exchanged a look of amazement with Mayadebi do you know? She whispered to Robi there was a time when the old man was so orthodox that he would not let a Muslim shadow pass within 10 feet of his food and look at him now paying for the price of his sins.

(Refer Slide Time: 36:56)



And moving onto nationalism, I found this theme to be the most impactful in the novel because it raises several questions Amitav Ghosh focused on the meaning of political freedom and in the modern world as well as the force of nationalism through the description of various political scenarios such as the communal riots the partition time as well as world war 2.

He not only introduces the concept of nationalism to the readers but as well questions the validity of the so called nationalism. He also raises this question that if nation can be considered a homogenous entity. But most of the critics as well as the writers of that time stated answered with the firm no. The incidence that inspire Amitav Ghosh to write this novel was the massacre.

The inhuman massacre of Sikhs during falling Indragandhi's assassination even though this novel, this incident is not present in the novel. There are several other incidents in the novel such as the defilement of the Hazartbal Shrine in 1964. There are other incidences in the novel where the narrator is often with suspicion and his mind set is poison from the very young age.

Because there was a rumor that time that the Hindus and Muslims contaminated and poisoned each other's water supply to kill members of the other community. There was an other key moment in the narrator's life when he visits New Delhi to find out what happen to his uncle Tridib. Although he visits to every place and every museum and every memorial to find out any news about his uncle, he does not find anything about this.

So, Amitav Ghosh tries to show that the history of a nation can swallow up the story of a individual through the narrators growth from childhood to adulthood. Ghosh has shown that national border is just a mirage and also when he mocks his grandmother asking if the lines that separate 2 nations are black in color. She states the she says of course nor there is surely there is something trenches perhaps or soldiers or guns pointing at each other.

Or even just barren strip of land do not they call at no-man's land? And in 1964 when she plans to visit Dhaka somewhere she would be able to see the borders between India and East Pakistan from the air. With her experience of the dramatic events of the partition the grandmother's experience and the grandmother is forced to realize that such borders are just a mirage.

And they just separate the 2 sides of the just a mirror reflecting each other as well as the realization in a sense she ultimately still refuses to believe that borders and demarcations will not affect the society in anyway. And she finds reasons to make herself believes saying that.

(Refer Slide Time: 40:45)

"But if there aren't any trenches or anything, how are people to know? I mean, where's the difference then? And if there's no difference, both sides will be the same; it'll be just like it used to be before, when we used to catch a train in Dhaka and get off in Calcutta the next day without anybody stopping us. What was it all for then – Partition and all the killing and everything – if there isn't something in between?"

But if they are not any trenches or anything, how are people to know? I mean what is the difference then? And if there is no difference both sides will be the same. It will just be like it used to be before, when we used to catch a train Dhaka and get off in Calcutta. The next day without anybody stopping us what was it all for then- partition and all the killing and everything is not something in between.

She tries to fool herself thinking that the borders will actually make a difference. But Amitav Ghosh leaves us with this question and I found this except by the grandmother to be the most impactful and heartbreaking. Because she is not able to she understands the situation exactly as it is but still tries to fool herself thinking everything is fine in the world.

(Refer Slide Time: 41:36)

References

Manjula Saxena, *The Shadow Lines as a Memory Novel*, in Arvind Chowdhary (Ed) Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*- Critical Essays (New Delhi: Atlantic publishers & distributors(p) Ltd, 2008)

Murari Prasad, *The Shadow Lines –A quest for indivisible sanity*, in Mithilesh k. Pandey (Ed) *Contemporary Indian Literature in English- A humanistic perspective*. (New Delhi: Kalyani Publishers,1999)

Rangrao Bhongle, *The Evils of cosmopolitanism: a native approach to Amitav Ghosh's The shadow Lines* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors (P) Ltd, 2003)

Brinda Bose, *Amitav Ghosh: Critical perspectives*. (New Delhi: Pencraft International, 2003)

Amitav Ghosh., *The Shadow Lines*. (New Delhi: Penguin Books, Ravi Dayal Publishers, 1988)

Novy Kapadia, *Imagination and politics in Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines*, in Sharmistha Panja (Ed) – *Many Indias, Many Literatures-New Critical Essays*. (Delhi: World View, 2004)

These are my references with all.