A Study On Reflections Of Cosmopolitanism In Amitav Ghosh's Novel

Manav Dahiya

Independent Scholar, M. A., Department of English, MDU Rohtak, Haryana, India.

Abstract:

The area of postcolonial studies has dominated literature and academia for the past fifty years, and cosmopolitanism theory may be seen as a continuation of, or perhaps a kind of opposition to, that field of study. Philosophers and theorists in fields as diverse as philosophy, sociology, economics, politics, and international relations have debated the concept of "cosmopolitanism" for decades. Although cosmopolitanism's name suggests a wide-ranging phenomenon, academics cannot agree on a single acceptable or unified definition. It is multidimensional in moral, political, social, economic, and cultural elements. First, it is vital to examine the concept's origins and growth across time and around the world. This paper studied the Reflections of Cosmopolitanism in Amitav Ghosh's novel.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, dominated, Literature, Academia

Introduction:

The roots of cosmopolitanism may be traced back Etymologically; cosmopolitanism may be traced back to the Greek language and culture. The word comes from the Greek Cosmopolites, which combines the words "world," "universe," or "cosmos" with the word "citizen" to mean "citizen of the universe." 'Citizen of the globe' is the exact definition of cosmopolitan. The term "cosmopolitan" refers to someone who does not identify with any race, ethnicity, village, city, or nation but is seen as a global citizen. Consequently, no matter where one lives, one will feel that they are a part of the globe, no matter where they are. Increased intercultural interaction between cultures and the thinkers of the Enlightenment saw "all races and all continents" with the same "human interest and concern" as a result (Kohn 228).

A revival of cosmopolitanism only occurred after World War II and the end of imperialism in the 1960s. Moreover, Immanuel Kant's theories are primarily responsible for our modern cosmopolitanism. Some of the world's most cosmopolitan organisations were founded on his ideals. For example, Kant's ideas are reflected in the League of Nations, established in the early twentieth century. Also, the United Nations (UN) is a structural implementation of the concepts of Kant's theory of fostering world peace (Kleingeld 315).

After the 1980s and into the 21st century, cosmopolitanism has gained much attention, not just as a theory but also as a practice. Due to technological advancement, the globe is racing, and there is a high degree of physical and electronic interconnectivity. Even those who would like to deny it admit that we have grown utterly dependent on the internet and social media to conduct our lives. According to McLuhan, the phrase "global village" (McLuhan 31) is well suited to today's environment. 'Globalisation' is a phrase we hear frequently and serves as a foundation for our world today.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, an anti-cosmopolitan movement arose, and cosmopolitan movements arose in response. Terrorist strikes on September 11, 2001, in the United States sparked a "war on terror." the United States launched a military campaign in Afghanistan to eliminate the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Eighteen years later, the conflict continues. Terrorist assaults have also increased significantly during the past few years. Anti-cosmopolitan inclinations were also influenced by the global financial crisis that began with the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in September 2008. New norms were established for security and capitalism during this international economic downturn and recession. The consequences of these historical processes were not cosmopolitan, according to the evidence.

Empirical, analytical, or descriptive cosmopolitanism: Modern and contemporary cosmopolitanism have emphasised the empirical ride of cosmopolitanism rather than the normative, philosophical, or abstract theoretical cosmopolitanism of earlier times. Cosmopolitan thinkers have been known to combine the best of both worlds to get the most satisfactory outcomes. The three dimensions of cosmopolitanism are crucial.

One of the main criticisms of cosmopolitanism is that it has been criticised on several fronts. Cosmophiles have been accused of being privileged because they have the means to travel, acquire languages, and absorb cultures from various countries. A cosmopolitan experience was never possible for most individuals globally since they had never ventured outside their cultural bubble. However, the globe has seen a significant change in the contemporary era. Ghosh uses the mutually constitutive characteristics of home and the world to argue for cosmopolitanism. Postcolonial homes and families are more closely associated with cosmopolitan ideas, deeds, and ambitions than with the communities he ironically refers to in his work. The Glass Palace and The Shadow Lines are both about families. The collection highlights the difficulty of developing complete national allegories. Ghosh's ambivalence about the iconography of South Asian globalisation has enabled critical reflections on multi-ethnic societies. The Shadow Lines is replete with links and proposals for a society without cultural, political, or geographical limits. Ghosh successfully illustrates that such a world is urgently needed. Borders no longertruly matter in the affluent nations, more integrated into a single entity.

Ghosh's ambivalence regarding South Asian globalisation imagery has allowed critical thoughts on multi-ethnic cultures. The Glass Palace and The Shadow Lines are both about families, he wrote to Dipesh Chakrabarty in a letter. My own experience tells me that this is a means for me to

distance myself from Indian culture, which is likely the case for many other Indian writers. According to this theory, writing about families means avoiding writing about the country.

Cosmopolitanism in The Shadow Lines refers to an openness to meeting new people and locations. Modern academia uses cosmopolitanism to define exiles, refugees, foreigners, world-travelling aristocracy, and the like. Post-nationalism refers to a shift from the importance of national identities and nation-states in the face of global and supranational institutions. The concept of a 'country' is imaginary, arbitrary,and erroneous and is made clear in Ghosh's novel The Shadow Lines. Bordercrossings between India and the rest of the world are common in this novel.

Although, at the same time, nationalism creates rifts, Ghosh's syncretism and humanism bridge gaps between people of different cultural backgrounds. Tridib Kaul: What sparked my interest in limits was their arbitrariness, constructed-ness - how they are 'naturalised' by contemporary political mythmaking(Kaul).

The narrator is the only one who can explain the riots that tore through the cities of Calcutta, Dhaka, and Srinagar. He discovers that national identity is created or preserved by constructing borders. Ghosh's novel depicts the deterioration of the boundaries between India and Bangladesh. To retain its identity and organic unity, the nation-state is forced to create a border, which separates it from the rest of the world. Ghosh offers us the figure of Tridib, a cosmopolitan idealist, as a rescue if the notion of nationalism fails. The tale's ideas are well expressed by focusing on the narrator's grandmother, Tha'mma. She believes Ila has no business in London since she has no place there. With her unwavering belief in the power of patriotic unity shaken, she decides to fly from Calcutta to Dhaka.

The border is located inside the airport, not on the borders. The novel's shadow lines are nothing more than cultural, ideological, geographic, and psychological limits that we should dismiss in favour of greater humanity. The story has many religious, racial, and ethnic tensions that we learn about as we progress through the book. Ghosh feels that inventiveness and open-minded acceptance of others is the best way to go. The events of two families are entwined, and so are the families themselves.

Ila's uncle Tridib sees the world as a single community where everyone attempts to reach out to each other. The narrator of the narrative has inherited his uncle's vision of humanity. The Shadow Lines creates a fusion of familiarity and alienation. In The Shadow Lines, we see a progressive cosmopolitanism that challenges masculine and imperialist conceptions of world citizenship. Domestic pressures are oppressive to the female characters in the text yet liberating to the male ones.

Ghosh's concept of having a more empathetic stance is not only a romantic fantasy. The novel's distinctive feature is the author's ambition to conceive and innovate actively at once. Rooted cosmopolitanism is also shown in the story, which illustrates how we may simultaneously

build links to home and the rest of the globe. Ghosh suggests that forces at work in the world and at home can work together. Amitav Ghosh's novel The Glass Palace examines transcultural identity in colonial and postcolonial eras. Ghosh endorses the concept of an ever-changing cultural and moral cosmopolitanism. The tale extols international affiliations above ethnic ones. The Glass Palace is set in Burma and India and depicts the region's history before and during the Second World War. The Shadow Lines focuses on India, Bangladesh, and London.

Ghosh's fiction actively engages in this theoretical discourse on the nature of contemporary cosmopolitanism by arguing for the mutually constitutive qualities of home and the world. Because postcolonial homes and families frequently serve as an alternative to the country, Ghosh's domestic spaces and relationships are more closely associated with cosmopolitan ideas, deeds, and ambitions than with the communities' practices that he ironically refers to in his work. According to his fiction, global views do not originate from sterile abstractions but rather from the dense worlds of daily life and the ties that bind us collectively.

This hopeful worldview emphasises attachment and enjoyment, elements seen throughout The Shadow Lines. The tale respects the desire to create one's world rather than passively accept one's surroundings. At the same time, Amitav Ghosh's work acknowledges the pitfalls of combining the domestic and the global in one's writing. The novel's characters develop as people through confronting and picturing the families of others who are different from them. Ghosh uses this tendency in his work as both an author and an academic. He has been featured in the Indian fiction issue of The New Yorker, his books are often read on Indian and Western college campuses alike, and his articles have appeared in other prestigious Western publications and publishers.

On the other hand, Ghosh has tended to remove himself from the literary world's celebrity circles. Ghosh told an interviewer from Outlook India: "As far as the media and is concerned, I have always felt that I have been outside the machine"(Ghosh). In addition to Ravi Dayal being an old-fashioned publisher, I have a strong preference for privacy. The New Yorker's cover shot featuring Indian authors features Amitav Ghosh, a distant figure in the crowd who appears unfazed by the camera's attention. Celebrity internationalism comes with much responsibility, and Ghosh has refused to take on that load by serving up any palatable national allegories to the West. Interpretations of cosmopolitanism rooted in Indian culture, such as those in "At Home in the World: A Window on Contemporary Indian Literature" (Howley 3), connect more powerfully with the spirit of his work. This anthology, a compilation of Indian works in English and other languages, highlights the difficulty of developing complete national allegories. As mentioned in the Introduction, Indianness is not a term that can be applied universally. The collection's title takes back a word that has long been linked with the privileged advantages of the Western world and uses it to characterise Indian works written in Hindi, Bengali, Malayalam, Oriya, and other less commonly known Western metropolitan languages. In a similar vein to this collection, Ghosh's work draws our attention to the dangers of unbridled cosmopolitanism.

A discourse on country and culture ironically contains Ghosh's argument that he avoids writing about the nation. He stated in a 1997 Kunapipi interview: I feel that if you are Indian or Asian, you would think in terms of the family.

Thinking about families, he wrote in a letter like many other Indian authors, including me. He claims it reflectsmore comprehensive historical processes that have destroyed community groups. If all underlying frameworks are destroyed, as was the case during colonisation, the people experience a profound sense of loss. Whereas in the United States, there is a strong feeling of nationalism and individualism, the family takes precedence in other countries. As a result, the most vital sense of community is created.

The novel appears in direct opposition to the notion of a 'border.' It examines the cracks in our conception of country, nationality, and the state as a nationality unit. The Shadow Lines is replete with links and proposals for a society without limits, whether cultural, political, or geographical, and they range from the local to the global in scope. Ghosh successfully illustrates that such a world is urgently needed, as he states: The entire structure of nation-states is becoming stressed. Borders no longer truly matter in the affluent nations, more integrated into a single entity. Once again, the boundaries have dissolved in nations like Pakistan and Burma, and the state has disintegrated completely. I believe we have reached a tipping point where the nation-state ideal of social organisation no longer holds water (Howley 5).

The politics and discourse surrounding nationalism must first be understood to decentre the term. According to Merriam-Webster, the term nation is an English translation of the French word nacion, which means birth and hence a place of origin. The term "nation" refers to a large group of people who share a common origin, history, and culture. A nationality is a cultural-political group conscious of autonomy, unity, and specific interests in other groups.

Many thinkers, including Francis Fukuyama, support Hegel's theory of the state, a post-Cold War world that has achieved peaceful stability characterised by respect for human rights and liberal democratic institutions. Against this, Huntington argues that the central future conflict axis will be between peoples of different cultures and religious backgrounds. That is precisely what happened, and it is obvious to see those once colonised nations won freedom in the early 20th century, nation-states formed, and the air of nationalism began to fade.

The discourse of cosmopolitanism has provided new means to examine acts, identities, and ideas that question the force of well-defined social borders as current scholars cope with the philosophical problems of a growing planetary world. Modern academia uses cosmopolitanism to define exiles, refugees, foreigners, world-travelling aristocracy, and the like. Cultivating the concept of "cosmopolitanism" has become a robust and often contentious vocabulary for those who live beyond social barriers. My interpretation of "cosmopolitan" in The Shadow Lines refers to an openness to meeting new people and locations. With the help of Ghosh's fiction, it is possible to absorb a wealth of cross-cultural experience without ever striving to embrace people who are

different from themselves. "cosmopolitanism" refers to the belief that openness to different cultures and viewpoints is desirable.

"Post-nationalism" refers to a shift from the importance of national identities and nation-states in the face of global and supranational institutions. This change in focus from national economies to global ones is the consequence of many causes, such as economic globalisation and the internationalisation of financial markets. In addition, multinational organisations like the United Nations and the European Union have gained sociopolitical power. For the first time in history, developments have been marked as global by the media, entertainment, and, most crucially, the internet.

Diogenes, a Greek cynic philosopher, is thought to have coined the term "cosmopolites, which means a citizen of the globe, to describe himself as a cosmopolites" (Vertovec 41). Although the notion has been widely contested, understood, and used in various contexts, it is a multi-layered one that has been widely explored by scholars, philosophers, and critics.

This awareness and experience felt by Indians in a rapidly globalising world appear to be the most plausible and applicable Neo-liberal deregulations, and the formation of a global market has dissolved national boundaries, cultures, and values. For the first time in human history, we are all connected in ways we never thought possible in economics, political agendas, and cultural phenomena (McLuhan 31). Moreover,with the nation's shifting demographics, a more progressive and pragmatic global viewpoint has emerged.

At the same time, globalisation has resulted in a tremendous scale of movement and migration, resulting in cultural hybridisation that challenges traditional concepts of identity and belonging. Because of this, many people in the postcolonial world feel more significant worry, sadness, and confusion, necessitating an expanded state of awareness capable of meaningful dialogues and connections inside the nationalist matrix of thought. Most of India's postcolonial authors, notably the younger generations of avant-garde novelists working in English, have been captivated by the strange condition of affairs described above. Their work uses innovative approaches and topics to delve deeper into the Indian experience. As the previous generation's master narratives proved uninteresting, insufficient, and out of touch with current reality, most of them struggled to find new ones. Prior writers, such as the famous trinity of Anand, Narayan, and Raja Rao, were mostly nationalists who lived throughout the Gandhian era.

Cosmopolitanism is not merely a continuation of postcolonial thought but a reflection of today's unique and complicated global prepositions. Both works acknowledge new cultural phenomena and set the stage for ethically bright prospects for cultural participation. There are several parallels and distinctions between these works. First, it encompasses various viewpoints from different countries, continents, cultures, and histories. They employ a variety of novel approaches to deal with the many issues they tackle in their stories. As a result, they contribute to a broader movement in contemporary fiction toward emergent cultural ethics informed by a global

awareness viewpoint, which can construct a web of different but mutually linked histories and geographies. The interconnectedness of the global community is rooted in the importance of local locations, cultures, and experiences. Put another way; we must balance the theoretical and the practical, ethical, pragmatic, and vernacular. When these are combined in the right way, they will contribute to a peaceful community without ignoring the needs of residents.

Conclusion:

To sum up, we may say there cannot be a single definition of global citizenship. A global consciousness is present in both works, but it is expressed differently. In addition, the writer's treatment of various subjects is varied and, at times, contradictory. According to the study, the author's works are not wholly or entirely cosmopolitan, but numerous cosmopolitan currents, tendencies, and inclinations are unquestionably present behind the tales. According to many interpretations and world perspectives inspired by cosmopolitanism, modern literary fiction reveals cosmopolitan notions that can be achieved in the future.

References:

Avineri, Shlomo. "Hegel's Theory of the Modern State." Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Auradkar, Sarika Pradiprao. "Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study." New Delhi: Creative Books, 2007, Print.

Amitav Ghosh. "The Glass Palace." New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000, Print.

Black, Shameem. "Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines." The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, vol. 41, no. 3, 2006, pp. 45-65.

Bachelard, Gaston. "The Poetics of Space. Translated by Maria Jolas." Beacon Press, 1964.

Barry, Peter. "Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory." Manchester, 2008.

Bayly, C. A., T. N. Harper. : Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia." United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 2004, Print.

Ghosh, Amitav. "The Shadow Lines." New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995. Print https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cosmopolitanismon.

Ghosh. The Shadow Lines. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995. Print

Ghosh. The Glass Palace. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000, Print.

Hannerz, Ulf. "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture." Theory, Culture, and Society, 1990, 237-52, Print.

Howley, C. John. "Contemporary Indian Writers in English: Amitav Ghosh." Foundation Books, 2005.

Hayward, Helen. "Once a Golden Land." Rev. of The Glass Palace. The Times Literary Supplement, July 2000, pp 3-21, Print.

Kohn, Hans. "The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background." Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2005.

Kleingeld, Pauline. "Approaching Perpetual Peace: Kant's Defence of a League of States and His Ideal of a World Federation." European Journal of Philosophy, vol. 12, no. 3, 2004, pp. 304-25.

McLuhan, Marshall. "The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man." Toronto University Press, 1962.

Majumdar, Kinshuk. "Psychological Domination in The Glass Palace." Littcrit, 2004, pp 25-34, Print.

Majumdar, Nivedita. "Shadows of the Nation: Amitav Ghosh and the Critique of Nationalism." Ariel 2003, pp 237-58, Print.

Mukherjee, Meenakshi. "The Anxiety of Indianness". The Perishable Empire: Essays on Indian Writing in English. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, Print.

Rajalakshmi, N. K. "Nation and Violence: A View from The Glass Palace." Littcrit, 2004, pp 50-56, Print.

Steven Vertovec, Robin Cohen. "The Cosmopolitan Perspective: Sociology in the Second Age of Modernity." Oxford UP, 2002, pp. 61-85.

Shaw, Kristian. "Cosmopolitanism in Twenty-First Century Fiction." Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Tiwari, Shubha. "Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study." New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributers, 2003, Print.

Tuomas Huttunen. "Representation of London in The Shadow Lines by Amitav Ghosh." Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London, vol. 2, no., 1, March2004,Web.http://www.literarylondon.org/londonjournal/march2004/huttunen.html.