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CONVERGENCE OF DIASPORIC CONCERNS IN AMITAV GHOSH'S LIFE AND IN HIS WORKS

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The subject English literature became a cultural and political phenomenon when people expressed their experiences and views on colonialism and post colonialism through writing. Thus language became a medium of expression and this subject later on subdivided into different literature such as African literature British literature, Indian literature and so on.

As pointed out in *The Empire Writes Back*, place and displacement are the major concerns of postcolonial literature. The question of self identity comes into relevance. Colonialism exploited natives of one particular land economically, politically, culturally at last chased away from their place and forced them to migrate in other countries as refugees. The colonizers affected the psyche of natives, enraged anger and doubts in their self consciousness, thus the quest for identity emerged in their minds.

Indian Writing in English plays a significant role in postcolonial literature. It draws out to cultural differences in literary texts in terms of gender, class. Most of the Indian writers adapted to European model of writing since they assumed there was a universal pattern in defining postcolonial texts and also included Indian heritage and themes in their works. However the Indian writers tried to come out of this European model because they realized that they are not a tool to follow European style of writing, they have their own literature called Indian literature. The first book written by an Indian in English was *Travels of Dean Mahomet*, a travel narrative by Sake Dean Mahomet published in England in 1793.

English language is the most important thing British left in India. India is a country with many languages and dialects. Even then English language became popular and a common dialect which helped unify Indian sub-continent during colonial and post-colonial period. The affluent middle class used English language frequently. Likewise many Indian writers also used English Language for their writing. The writers who lived in India as well as in other countries most commonly wrote in English language. Some of the modern Indian writers are Anita Desai, Khuswant Singh, and Arundathi Roy and so on.

Among such writers, Amitav Ghosh has published various acclaimed works of fiction and non-fiction. He was born in 1956 in Calcutta and grew up in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. He studied in Delhi, Oxford, Alexandria. His works are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), *The Flood of Fire* (2015), the three volumes of *The Ibis Trilogy*. Most of his works deals with historical issues. The non-fiction works are *In an Antique Land* (1992), *Dancing in Cambodia and at Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), and *The Imam and the Indian* (2002)

Diaspora derived from the Greek "scattering of seeds", it is used to describe population, migration and dispersal. Diaspora can be referred to people migrating from one country to another country due to various reasons such as seeking refugees, for example jews went in exile from the homeland of Palestine. Thus diaspora refers to displaced communities of people migrating from their homeland. Somehow the thought process and the way of living of a diasporic community have influenced Amitav Ghosh's life and eventually the consciousness of a confused mind and sense of loneliness experienced by the migrated people can be seen in his writings. As V.S. Naipaul pointed out in *A Way in The World*, 1994

"Sometimes we can be strangers to ourselves"

Amitav Ghosh travelled frequently in his youth, living in East Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, and India. His first novel *The Circle of Reason* deals with the life of a boy named Alu who lived in India and his adventure living in India and later, due to certain circumstances flees to Middle East. During his travel he meets various people from different nations. Thus this novel throws light on to the subject of exile, loneliness, migration, displacement. The visuals and situations the author encountered in his own life is seen in *The Circle of Reason*.

In *The Shadow Lines* (1988), he focussed on the encounter between two families, one Indian and other English. The differences between them in terms of culture, geographical structures have been discussed. The boundary line between nations and families showed the

readers the quest for self identity existed in each one of us. The characters in the novel are caught between two nations and the struggle to come of their artificially self made personalities due to the influence of migration.

In an Anitque Land is based on historical and anthropological research that Gosh conducted in Egypt during the 1980's. The novel was based on the problems of Jewish settlers in Egypt. So to collect more information about the main character, a slave and for further research on the subject the author lived in Egypt for few years and he described about his experiences with his neighbours in a small Egyptian village in his fiction.

The Calcutta Chromosome (1996) is a science fiction set in three places, Calcutta, London and new York. It is also set in three different periods. *The Glass Palace(2001)* depicts the themes of displacement and quest for identity. Thus Amitav Ghosh's works mainly dealt with his own experiences. The major theme in his works is the diasporic influence which is evident from his own life. As Amitav Gosh pointed out in one of Jash Sen's article,

"I really don't plot a novel. I just start with an idea I find interesting or a character and then I give myself plenty of loose threads that I don't cut off, so I can pick them up again later as part of the story, if it suits. Sometimes the thread resolves them into the narrative and sometimes they just remain loose ends. It's a mystery really, how the story evolves."

The sensitivity of Amitav Ghosh towards issues of political influence as well as cultural significance is evident in his works. His thoughts are linked with the contemporary

reality and present circumstances, thus he is not writing for the sake of writing but he is writing because he wants to express his views on political , cultural , religious, racial issues through his fictions and non- fictions. Thus Ghosh represents the real narrative world, not the competitive narrative world who competes with each other for receiving the best awards.

Ghosh has been acclaimed with many awards but he himself had once revealed that he is not an interesting person, he does not interacts with many people. He involves himself in the world of writing for many days then comes out for few days, again goes onto his own world. Thus he is not an active person who comes to raise issues to the world as a revolutionist or as a fighter but comes as a real writer. Once again proving that

"Pen is mightier than a sword"

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