

Topic - Critical Analysis of the novel
'The SHADOW LINES' By Amitav Ghosh.

The Shadow Lines : Background :-

- ⇒ The Shadow Lines, 1988 is a Sahitya Akademi Award winning novel by Indian writer Amitav Ghosh.
- ⇒ The book is named 'The Shadow Lines' as a main idea of the novel is that different people have different views, none of those views capable of being completely comprehended by another.
- ⇒ It is a book that captures perspectives of time and events, of lines that bring people together and hold them apart; lines that are clearly visible from one perspective and non-existent from another; lines that exist in one memory of one, and in therefore others' imagination.

⇒ The novel is set against the backdrop of historical events like the Swadeshi Movement, Second World War, Partition of India and communal riots of 1963-64 in Dhaka and Calcutta.

⇒ The novel earned Ghosh the 1989 Sahitya Akademi Award for English, by the Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters. The novel was translated by Shalini Topiwala into Gujarati in 1998.

Critical Analysis of the Shadow Lines: -

⇒ The Shadow Lines, basically a novel which deals with three families spread over three countries across the world viz - Dhaka, Calcutta and London.

⇒ The three families narrate their own experiences of cultural, religious, and national differences / prejudices along the generation.

⇒ The events in the novel especially revolve around Maya Devi's family their friendship with the English friends - the Peices, and Thamma, the narrator's grandmother and Maya Devi's elder sister.

⇒ Ghosh uses the multiple narrators from whose point of views the story or novel is described. Hence, the novel falls under the study of narratology. The novel while it is being narrated through different narrators creates a picture of their memory in front of the reader.

⇒ The novel has an unnamed narrator relating of his experience or to be precise his Uncle Tereleb's experience most of the times. Tereleb was the narrator's guiding spirit and mentor, who taught him how to use his imagination with precision and gave his words to



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travel in and eyes to see them
with.

⇒ The action of the novel has as its starting point the narrator's memories of Tridib (then 8 years old) being taken to London during war time and his experiences there with the peice family.

⇒ Critics observe that Ghosh puts the very concept of nationalism and nationality, in fact Ghosh even questioned the idea of nationalism and national boundaries and its operation upon human mind.

⇒ Nationalism in Modern history, Movement in which nation state is regarded as paramount for the realization of social, economic, and cultural aspirations of a people.

Here, the author shows that the borders, these are drawn on the surface of the earth are so called borders, which can not divide one's mind and imagination and the sense of nativity and Origin.

Thus, The Shadow Lines, is a novel, which stands out for its powerful imagination. Both Tredis and narrators are extraordinary men with magnificent memory and dominant imagination.