

The Geocritical Imagination: Mapping the Space of Frontiers, Identity Crisis and Memories in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*

Mr. Sahin Reja Mondal

State-Aided College Teacher (Category-I)

Department of English

Domkal Girls' College (Affiliated to the University of Kalyani)

Murshidabad, West Bengal

Abstract

Many scholars and critics have separately discussed and analysed the relations among space, place, time, culture, politics and landscapes generation after generation. They have also differently opined on postcolonial issues like displacement, lost home, identity crisis, finding a new home, cross-cultural memories, immigration, and political and psychological implications of crossing a border as an interdisciplinary in the field of Humanities. Now Geocriticism has been performed as an interdisciplinary or sometimes as a multidisciplinary theoretical approach which helps us to explore any literary text by providing the approaches of postcolonial studies, cartography, environmental studies, spatial-temporality, political history, urban studies, cultural studies, gender studies, human psychology and film studies or other spatial turns. Indian Writing in English as part of postcolonial literature, has been gradually developed since its origin by some phenomenal and prolific writers among whom Amitav Ghosh is a pioneering one and he writes about the concept of anti-nation, deterritorialization, identity crisis, hybridity, multiculturalism, maps of memory, diasporic sensibility, ethnic conflicts, imaginary shadowy lines, the subcontinental political history and other socio-political issues through his novels. His famous novel, *The Shadow Lines* published in 1988, captures and binds the dynamic referentiality of space, place and historical events that bring people together and hold them apart, and redefines the frailty constructions of space of phantom borderlines, identity, place, and time, wherein humans try to create national(-ism), regional, and self-identity as their strength. Thus, Amitav Ghosh aestheticizes political history and human geography with physical geography in this novel. This research paper applies geocriticism to find out and interpret the space of frontiers, identity crisis, and the partition memories of mid-twentieth century India in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. It also tries to examine how the politically made borders affected human lives of the time for the sake of arbitrariness of partition and poignantly maps the psychological hollowness of partition for making frontiers and different nations through the opinions and memories of the characters of the novel.

Keywords: Geocriticism, Cartography, Postcolonialism, Multiculturalism, Nationalism, Space, Identity, Displacement, Partition, Deterritorialization, Memory.

Introduction

Over time, literature has been used as the finest medium to communicate various problems of our life and society, and every literary discourse provides ideas, reflections and responses to individual, social, cultural, environmental, political, economic, geographical, anthropological historical facts and narratives of the world by conveying various shared experiences whereas literary theory is a systematic study and a method for literary analysis that gives us ways to critique the ideas, reflections and principles of literature, and simultaneously helps us to gain a deeper understanding while reading literary texts with different assumptions and approaches. In the twentieth century or after, scholars and critics have significantly discussed postcolonial issues like displacement, lost home, identity crisis, finding a new home, cross-cultural memories, immigration, and political and psychological implications of crossing a border as an interdisciplinary in the field of Humanities. They have also investigated the relations among space, place, time, culture, politics and landscapes generation after generation. However, Indian Writing in English in Postcolonial literature has enormous areas to imbibe and represent Indian legends and myths, history, politics, regionality, ethnic and religious conflicts, the issues of partition, the sensibilities of diaspora, nationalism, the subalternity, gender issues, and other contemporary socio-cultural problems as India is so diverse for the living of various casts, creeds, cultures, religions and landscapes. In contemporary times, Amitav Ghosh as an Indian author, tries to exhibit mostly the concepts of anti-nation, deterritorialization, identity crisis, hybridity, multiculturalism, maps of memory, diasporic sensibility, ethnic conflicts, effects of the imaginary shadowy lines, and other socio-political issues through his novels. His famous novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988) aestheticizes the history of India after the partition when India was divided into three different countries named as now India, Pakistan and Bangladesh based on religion and culture. Even the novel is written set against historical catastrophes and events like the Swadeshi Movement, the Second World War, the Partition of India and the Communal riots of 1964 in Dhaka. So, the novel *The Shadow Lines* is called a partition novel for introducing the geopolitics and the partition experiences of the time. It shares the experiences of the life of the narrator growing up in Calcutta, who is educated in Delhi and then follows with the

experiences he has in London by dividing into two parts — “going away” and “coming home”. The experiences that the unnamed narrator has felt throughout the novel, are the disenchantment and separation of the families of three generations for migration and dislocation, the communal riots for which he has lost his uncle, Tridib, the lack of belonging(-ness), the border-politics, cultural displacement and the experience of making new nation and nationalism. The novel also encapsulates how people were conscious of the relationship between freedom and identity at that time and how freedom influences the concept of identity in making a new territory of India; these things are poignantly described in the words of the characters. Here Amitav Ghosh has interwoven an array of communal riots, cultural deviations, displacement, migration and its consequences, political violence, identity crisis, homelessness etc. to reproduce the narrative space of the novel. Then he ironically represents the futility of the imaginary borderlines and the frailty of making the nation and nationalism and voices out for deterritorialization, hybridity, multiculturalism, and anti-nationalism through the phenomenal speeches of the novel's fictional characters. Thus, he captures the dynamic referentiality of space, place and historical events that bring people together and hold them apart, and redefines the frailty constructions of space of phantom borderlines, identity and place, wherein humans meaninglessly try to create national(-ism), regional, and self-identity as their strength.

This research paper incorporates the theoretical approaches of geocriticism to interpret the space of frontiers, identity crisis and the partition memories of mid-twentieth century India in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. It examines how the border-politics influenced human lives of the time and satirically maps the psychological hollowness of partition. Amitav Ghosh has masterly brought and highlighted a lot of issues of the time of pro-independence, independence and post-independence of India in the novel. He has fictionally represented the reality of border politics and demarcation, and its effects on the then Bengali people, the traumatic condition of the people resulting from communal riots, the people's identity crises, the diasporic sensibilities, the cross-cultural memories, the sentiments of nation and nationalism, and other socio-political and historical incidents of the time in the art of characterisation of the novel. Many scholars inside and outside of our nation have accomplished their research on this novel differently with different perspectives to examine the above data and variables. But this paper now aims to examine mapping the space of

frontiers, identity crisis in the sensibility of border politics and the cross-cultural memories with geographical imaginations of the characters in this novel.

Research Methodology

Geocriticism is an interdisciplinary literary theory that associates the study of geographic space with fictional space and focuses on spatial representations of individual or social aspects in literature. It simply takes an attempt to intertextualize anthropology, geography, history, politics, environmental studies, urban studies, cultural studies, gender studies, human psychology, film studies or other spatial turns as an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and interpreting literature. Thus, it allows us to interpret the world with the combination of real places and the imaginary space of fiction within a specific time. The French scholar, Bertrand Westphal first used the term, “Geocriticism” in the book *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces* (2011) in which he explained geocriticism as a distinct academic subfield and pragmatic fashion in the field of Humanities. For him, Geocriticism is a geo-centred or geocentric model of criticism, and so he prominently says that a geocritic must not concern only literary texts, authors or genres, but places in the configuration interface between the fictional representations of real-world places and the places themselves in reality. In the foreword of *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* (2011) edited by Robert T. Tally Jr., He says:

Geocriticism, further, associates both geometric and philosophical coordinates of life—time and space—in a spatio-temporal scheme. A geocritical analysis locates places in a temporal depth to uncover or discover multi-layered identities, and it highlights the temporal variability of heterogeneous spaces. Spatial analysis reveals that present is a synchronic: our vision of time is not necessarily the same as our neighbour’s. So, Globality implies polychrony of any text. (XIV)

Here Westphal emphasises the globality of a text that expounds a literary ground of multifocal representations of our life and society in a fully postmodern meaning. In the pastiche of postmodernity, he relates geocriticism with three theoretical concepts such as “spatial temporality”, “transgressivity”, and “referentiality”. Each concept is pragmatically linked to four elements of geocriticism such as multifocalization [that refers to many different points of view to establish a literary space], polysensoriality [that focuses on the perception of place not only by vision but also through smell, sound and so on], stratographic vision [in which a place comprises multiple layers of meaning that are timely deterritorialized and

reterritorialized] and intertextuality [that produces meanings and structures by absorbing and transforming other texts, utterances, and sign systems]. These concepts altogether or differently are used to interpret literary texts depending on these four elements. He describes “spatial-temporality” as a concept that establishes metaphorically an overlapping of diachronic and synchronic relation between the referentiality of the time of the author, the history of the text and the topography that surrounds and infuses the text. Consecutively he also sets forth “transgressivity” as a geocritical approach that crosses the boundaries of established norms to re-establish new relations among people, places, and things, and the “referentiality” as a concept that finds a relation between the spaces of the world and the spaces of a text. Every concept of geocriticism is pregnant with manifold ideas and seeks a theoretical platform to incorporate the relations among an author, a reader, a text and the universe based on space, place and time. So, we can measure how Bertrand Westphal has minutely observed literature in the eyes of classical mimetic theory to follow the ancient classical masters who had earlier seen art as an “imitation of nature” and similarly he has now observed the relations between the imaginary places and the imitated real places in the forms of literature. Concerning the representation of fictional spaces and real places of the world, he probably sees a work of writing as a “lamp” that not only reproduces the real world around us but also actualizes new virtual realities of that world in literature as a space of “mirror”. So, fictional texts provide and attribute the real places of the world not only as aesthetic forms on both psychological and socio-political levels but also as an aid to the sophistication of the fictional world in literature. He elusively foregrounds geocriticism as an attempt to understand the changing meaning of space and place in our meta-narrative era and he has observed a place as a symbolical representation of Foucault’s “heterotopia” by breaking the traditional representation of a place as “homotopia” in the narrative space of our postmodern literature.

Likewise, an American literary critic, Robert T. Tally Jr. has preferred to rename geocriticism as "literary cartography". He sees geocriticism as a multidisciplinary theoretical foundation that focuses on the dynamic relations among space, place, and literature in the field of Humanities. To reflect upon the representation of space and place, both in imaginary universes and in those zones where fiction meets reality, he also establishes spatial literary

studies as a critical method to disclose, analyse, and explore the significance of space and place in the fictional map of literature. In *Spatiality* (2013), he says:

“The act of writing itself might be considered a form of mapping or a cartographic activity. Like the mapmaker, the writer must survey territory, determining which features of a given landscape to include, to emphasize, or to diminish; for example, some shadings may need to be darker than others, some lines bolder, and so on”. (45)

Here Tally Jr. explicates that a map is a space of story or a narrative where a writer like a cartographer creates an ideological connection between the real and imagined world and mirrors all real issues surrealistically in the fictional space of literature. Thus, geocriticism contributes different approaches to interpreting a literary text and makes a dimension of literary value by mapping the space of new literary territory in literature in the diversity and complexity of contemporary issues. It presents itself as a field of research that once again challenges the theoretical assumptions of spatial referentiality and literary creation in the context of postmodernity, in which the spaces of the frontier, of passage, or the territorial configurations resulting from new cartographies of human spaces, taking new mobilities into account, become fundamental values.

Consequently, we can understand that geocriticism contributes to and reframes the very words “Space” and “Place” with multiple metaphorical reflections and connotative meanings in the field of literature. It shows how they are closely related to time and go beyond their literary meanings when it attempts to interpret literary texts. Generally, we understand that a place is only a place in which we individually or collectively try to find a space in such a way as to set it apart from other spaces surrounding it and infuse it over time. So, traditionally we signify a place as a physical landscape, real and definite but space as indefinite, boundless and imaginary. Furthermore, we understand time as indefinite, dynamic, fickle and fecund. But geocriticism allows us to see a place going beyond its real existence and makes us feel in the cognitive field that a place is likely dynamic, fertile and alive in meaning in the scroll of multiplicity. It also teaches us to redefine the sense of places of the world in the field of social sciences as time was thought to be dynamic, unstable and referent in our traditional sense. There are lots of opinions regarding the concept of space, place and time among intellectuals. In the essay “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel” taken from *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1984), Bakhtin describes the concept of chronotope in

the fusion between *chronos* (time) and *topos* (space/place) to constitute the intrinsic value of literature. Here he says: "Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope" (84).

On the other hand, in "Of Other Space" (1967), Michel Foucault envisions space as "heterotopia". He denotes "heterotopia" as a "heterogeneous space" in contrast to a single real place. He further describes "heterotopia" as a "placeless place" without geographical marks wherein "we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and not superimposable on one another" (Foucault 20-27). Then, Edward Soja sees the very word "Space" in three divisions respectively: "First space", "Second space" and "Third space". He defines the "First space" as a "real space" of the real world that represents the relations between our society and nature over time, and the "Second space" as an "imagined space" that is conceived in the minds of the people. Finally, he defines "Third space" as a "fully lived space" and a combination of "real-and-imagined space" in which we live. Above all, he considers space in *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) as a "reflective mirror of societal modernization" (33). In postcolonial studies, Homi K. Bhabha signifies "Third Space" in *The Location of Culture* (1994) as a space of hybrid identity and multiculturalism to break the Western constitutive myth of cultural space as a "homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the original past, kept alive in the national tradition of the people" (Bhabha 37). So, nowadays we understand that place is not stable or inert but rather practically complex and heterogeneous. This concept of space allows literature to explore the always problematic representation of space between fictional and real spaces in which multiple discourses constantly cross and recross.

Discussion

At first, the paper introduces the concept of frontiers in the novel *The Shadow Lines* and tries to examine the fictional representation of frontiers in the theoretical method of geocriticism. Generally, we understand in geography that the space of frontiers is closely associated with divisions between different countries and nationalities. But the space of frontiers (known as borders, boundaries etc.) in literature is metaphorically multifocal at an individual, territorial and social level. Sometimes frontiers mirror the spatial temporality in which a piece of literature was written and represent the narrative space of a literary text with different

personal or social contexts. Further, they create an alternate reality where the physical boundaries and borders in real life do not apply or do not exist at all. However, Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is a narrative form of mapping that symbolically describes frontiers as imaginary lines that divided and introduced India into different fragmented nations presently as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh by the Partition in 1947 although it once would celebrate the same cultures, religions, customs, ideology and lifestyles. Now, these newly made countries are celebrating different cultures, religions, customs, ideologies and lifestyles based on fanatic nationalism. The novel also metaphorically represents how the space of borders created a question about the identity of the people of contemporary India and their sense of belonging through the characters. Briefly, it can even be said that the space of frontiers is the symbolic construction of our nationality, society and culture to where a person belongs and tries to find his/her own identity. So, the demarcation of frontiers defines and maps not only the national identity but also the cultural identity of the characters in the novel. For example, the very character Tha'mma is sketched as a strong nationalist, and she finds her own national identity in the space of the politically made geographical borders. So, she says:

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 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. Hasn't Maya told you how regimental flags hang in all their cathedrals and how all their churches are lined with memorials to men who died in wars, all around the world? War is their 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. That is what you have to achieve for India, don't you see? (Ghosh 85-86)

For her, the space of borders is everything, a reconstructed fantasy and a sense of wonder. This is proved when she wanted to know about borders with curiosity before travelling to Dhaka and immediately asked: "whether she would be able to see the border between India and East Pakistan from the plane" (Ghosh 167). But when she knew from her son (the narrator's father) that there were no phantom lines seen between the borders of the two nations from the plane, she says in dismay:

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 will 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? (Ghosh 167).

Amitav Ghosh here unmasks and stresses the irony and arbitrariness of creating borderlines and national identity with these very lines of *Tha'mma*. He also lashes out at the emptiness of partition for the colossal death of the people in the time of partition and post-partition. Even, he exhibits the meaninglessness of frontiers in the character of Jethamoshai when he tells *Tha'mma* at the time of persuading him to come to Calcutta:

I don't believe in this India-Shindia. It's all very well, you're 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 you anywhere. As for me, I was born here, and I'll die here. (Ghosh 237)

However, Ghosh has manifested the hollowness of the politically drawn borderlines that do not perform as anything more than metaphorical shadows. For this, he has fictionally revisited the time of partition to embody the crucial role of the space of frontiers that led India into its identity crisis under British imperialism. Simultaneously, revisiting there, he has shown how the Partition had snatched the lives of the dislocated people from their birthplaces and thrown them out to an unknown land to lose their own identities. Besides, the novel has displayed how the space of geographical frontiers has failed to fence the cultural relationship between the Datta-Chaudhury family in India and the Price family in London. These families are intensively connected through the love between Maya and Tridib and the marriage between Ila and Nick. So, the culturally made relationships among them primarily break their national identity and create the ideology of multicultural identity. Thus, Amitav Ghosh has satirised the concept of mapping the space of frontiers in the cartography of a nation in the specification of Benedict's "imagined political community" under "print capitalism". So, geocriticism offers the referentiality of the history of the shadowy lines that transgressively co-ordinates the space and the time of the Partition to move across the politically made geographical borders and challenges the notion of nationalism to establish cosmopolitanism in this novel. This is the way that geocriticism makes an attempt to look into this postcolonial topographical identity and paves the way to interpret the text to be closely associated with it.

Then, this paper introduces the concept of identity crisis in the geocritical imaginations in the novel *The Shadow Lines*. We normally understand that an identity crisis is a situation that raises a question about a person's existence in the world. The Oxford Dictionary defines "Identity Crisis" as "a period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or role in society". It was first coined by a Danish-German-American psychologist, Erik Erikson in *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (1968) in which he explains that an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself. So, it can vary from person to person-to-person and sometimes it can be a crisis between national identity and personal identity. The concept of identity crisis has been a recurrent theme in Indian Writing in English. It has been displayed through the diverse approaches and studies of literature by picking up various social and political issues of India. Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is a narrative map that represents the crisis of national identity, personal identity and cultural identity of the characters that involve the relationships between individuals, belonging to the same community or to different communities to go beyond the shadowy lines of geographical borders. For example, the very nationalist character, Tha'mma, expresses her own identity in her nation's freedom. We can understand it when she tells her grandson how she once dreamt of killing the English magistrate. She says: "...I would have prayed for strength, and God willing, yes, I would have killed him. It was for our freedom: I would have done anything to be free." (Ghosh 43). The above lines indicate her patriotic love for her nation and she justifies violence for her nation's freedom. But she feels dislocated, identity crisis and is unfamiliar with her birthplace when she brings her Jethamoshai from Dhaka after the Partition of India. At this moment she says: "She liked things to be neat and in place and at that moment she had not been able to quite understand how her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality." (Ghosh 168). So, these lines reveal that Tha'mma is hanging on the heart-touching conflict between the birthplace and nationality, and precisely to say a conflict between homeland and the host land. On the other hand, Jethamoshai has become an 'outcast' in his nation because of his different religion and culture. He would not let Muslim people in his personal space earlier but later on, he lives and eats with Khalil's family. Thus, a territory defines a country's identity and a person's identity where he belongs to, similarly a culture metaphorically implies the identity of a person and a community. The characters of the novel are heavily moved by their cross

nationality and cross-cultures and suffer from identity crises owing to the partition at both psychological and territorial levels. As a result, the characters like Tha'mma, Jethamoshai and Nick Price have become the "glocal" characters in their terrain, on the contrary Tridib and May Price have become the "global" characters. Then the novel shows that Ila is a free character who wants to be free from the "bloody culture" of India but later on, she fluctuates between foreignness and Indianness when she comes into the relationship with Nick and she has become a citizen of the world. On the other hand, Tridib is a global character who does not believe in any imaginary boundaries, and his relationship with Maya Price embraces globality and mixed culture. Moreover, the novel portrays the narrator as a transformative character from glocal to global when he says to Ila:

I tried to tell her, but neither then nor later, though we talked about it often, did I ever succeed in explaining to her that I could not forget because Tridib had given me worlds to travel in and he had given me eyes to see them with: she who had been travelling around the world since she was a child; could never understand what those hours in Tridib's room had meant to me a boy who had never been more than a few hundred miles from Calcutta (Ghosh 22).

Here we understand that the narrator's concrete imagination dwells heavily upon Tridib's memories and experiences. Even he admits that he has seen London through the eyes of Tridib and felt that he has already visited the place before. Holding the hands of Tridib, the narrator quests his identity and tries to be transformed into a citizen of the world by the choice of reality or in the flux of imagination. Apart from this, Amitav Ghosh has shown the boy narrator as a global character when he realises, recalls and says:

I believed that distance separates, that it is a corporeal substance; I believed in the reality of nationalism and borders; I believed that across the border there existed another reality. The only relationship my vocabulary permitted between those separate realities was war or friendship. I could not have perceived that there was something more than an incidental connection between those events of which I had a brief glimpse from the windows of that lens, in Calcutta and those other events in Dhaka simply because Dhaka was in another country (Ghosh 241).

This realization clarifies that the narrator believes in the reality of the space of nation but rather he emphasises the deterritorialization of culture to establish the space of global identity across the frontiers of nations by dismantling the identity of national or regional culture as a distinct cultural identity. So, he uses the image of a "looking glass" to signify that Dhaka and

Calcutta are connected as images in a mirror; one reflects the other. Thus, the novel describes and represents the culture of the Datta Chaudhary family of India and the Price family of England as a prospect of hybrid culture. So, geocriticism here examines the space of identity crisis in national identity and the cultural and personal identity of the characters in the trickster of geographical imaginations. It scrutinises the characters' loss of identity because of dislocation and displacement from their homeland. Then, it appoints the concept of referentiality to compare the real and imagined space to draw a map of the disturbing psychology and identity crises of the characters in the novel.

Lastly, this paper redefines and interprets the space of memory in the outlook of geocriticism in the novel *The Shadow Lines*. Generally, we understand that memory is a term of human psychology and space of the human brain that is used to recall and retain the stored experiences of the past in the configurations of imagination. The space of memory is found in all genres of literature from the ancient to the present. Indian Writing in English depicts memories of the past in Partition literature and Diasporic literature apart from other genres and fields of literature. However, the novel, *The Shadow Lines* is a cartographic narrative that has been constructed on the memories and experiences of various characters, most preferably the memories and experiences of the narrator. Here the narrator interweaves the memories of the past to interact with other characters and thereby he introduces himself as a teller of the story. He says: I knew that a part of my life as a human being had ceased that I no longer existed, but as a chronicle (Ghosh 123). Even the narrator's character takes shape gradually in the explorative space of his memories. Memories of the past have also brought developments and changes in other characters of the novel. Further, memories are used to interweave the fragmented events and incidents of the past and reconstruct them as more real in sharing experiences between the characters. For this, the novel is called a memory novel in the Partition literature of Indian Writing in English. Looking back to the memories of 1964, the narrator says:

Every word I write about these events of 1964 is the product of a struggle with silence. It is a struggle I am destined to lose-have already lost-for even after all these years I do not know where within me, in which corner of my world, this silence lies. All I know of it is what it is not. It is not, for example, the silence of an imperfect memory. (Ghosh 240)

Thus, the narrator memorises the issues of partition and the backdrop of communal violence that foregrounds the cross-national experiences in the narrative space of this novel. Subsequently, he reflects on the effect of imperialism despondently as “an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted and finally brought under control” (Said 77). Amitav Ghosh has tactfully handled the memories of geopolitics on the Partition, the communal riots in Dhaka and the interconnected memories and experiences of a young boy in Calcutta, Delhi and London to embody the cross-national experiences and the cross-cultural memories in the aftermath of the Partition. Thus, Amitav Ghosh introduces his memories as a bridge between the past and the present to go across geographical borders. So, here we can apply geocritical approaches to examine the mapping of memories of the boy-narrator and his cultural experiences throughout the novel. Geocriticism looks into the space of the narrator’s psychology in the intersection of memories. It also stipulates how his sense of place and belonging is controlled by the geographical lines but his sense of memory and nostalgia is crossing and recrossing the shadowy lines from one side to another side uncontrollably.

Conclusion

It, therefore, can be said that Geocriticism offers us an interdisciplinary critical method to understand literature and interact with the world by exploring all ways of dealing with the somewhat literary world. It examines how the novel, *The Shadow Lines*, imitates recognizable spaces, places, and the times of incidents like the Swadeshi Movement, the Second World War, the Partition of India and the Communal riots of 1964 either real or imaginary or bit of both at once and transform them into a fictional world of the novel. Accordingly, it incorporates the existence of the borders and the historical narratives of the Partition to highlight the novel's fundamental fictionality of postcolonial utopianism. It delineates how Amitav Ghosh as a cartographer focuses on globalisation to move across space and time transgressively to insist on geographical imaginations. It seems that a Baudrillardian hyperreality is to have permanently done away with it. Besides, geocriticism raises questions on the issues of partition, identity crises, freedom and cross-cultural interactions in the postcolonial context and highlights the uselessness of maps and the shadowiness of the demarcation of borders in the novel. Thus, geocriticism explores and

maps the facts of political history, sociocultural history, physical geography and human geography altogether and examines them in the narrative space of this novel aesthetically.

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