

**TRANSFORMATION FROM PATRIOTISM TO HUMANISM IN
THE SELECT NOVELS OF AMITAV GHOSH**

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By

YOUVENIYA G.

Under the Guidance of

DR. SUMATHY K. SWAMY



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CHAPTER VI

SUMMATION

The entity called nation seems to lose its semiotic significance between the two discursive markets called the ‘global’ and ‘local’...Incidentally, both the movements herald the death of nation in their unique way; in the sense both the movements are meaningful and desirable in leading humanity towards universalism. (Komalesh 164)

Humanism, the sublime essence of humanity is shrouded under the invisible tangles of patriotism, nationalism and nationality. The move against humanism had intense with the increased demand for power, dominance and superiority. The spread of colonialism along with globalization, trade and commerce has ravaged the countries that were technologically backward. The imperialist’s anti-humanistic measures have paved way for the upsurge of patriotic and nationalistic spirit. The surge of patriotism and nationalism that initiated the freedom struggle for liberty and independence had resulted in partition of the nation. This partition had only worsened and deepened the animosity within the nation and also among the neighbouring countries. This violence of partition has thus set a snare for the peace of humanity - humanism.

Freedom and liberty that has been achieved from the imperialist at the cost of numerous lives has been a mirage since Independence. Ghosh in an interview published in *Newsweek* 1993, states: “Today nationalism, once conceived as a form of freedom, is really destroying our world. . . . The nation-state prevents the development of free exchange between peoples”(52). The above lines by Komalesh in *Issue of Identity in Indian English Fiction: A Close Reading of Canonical Indian*

English Novels emphasises the need for a humanitarian outlook towards life. He expresses his wish of universalizing humanism shattering the shackles of borders and boundaries. Amitav Ghosh addresses the issues of 'borders and 'boundaries' in his attempt to unify the nations as a whole. His novels bring to light the forgotten and the neglected aspect of history. He through his novels expresses his desire for a world *sans* borders and *sans* boundaries by universalizing the creed 'Unity in Diversity'.

Post colonialism has given new terms for migration as Diaspora and Transnationalism. Ghosh considers diaspora and transnationalism as unifying terms of humanity. He purposefully draws his characters from the elite community portraying them to create transnational bonds among different countries. His works serves as a platform to highlight the havoc created by violence, riots and partition. He through his work exhibits his contempt for violence that is engulfing humankind in the form of caste, religion, patriotism, nationality and terrorism. He envisions the creed 'Unity in Diversity' at the global level by establishing religious harmony and ethnic co-existence. In the modern scenario where power and superiority becomes predominant and morals nonchalant, Ghosh characters are rooted firmly on the basis of humanism as they also turn out to be the epitome of transhumanization.

Amitav Ghosh upholds the value and importance of being human 'Humanism' and life in his novels. *The Shadow Lines* brings out the futility of boundaries that separate humanity in the name of nations. *The Glass Palace* voices the suppression of the colonial nation by the colonizers during World War II and also brings to limelight of various developments in trade and commerce. *The Hungry Tide* portrays the life of the suppressed people tossed between the devouring tides and inhuman beings who rule in the name of power. *Sea of Poppies* exhibits the life of suppression both in land and in water.

Tridib in *The Shadow Lines* is deemed to be the real hero of the novel. He is the connecting character of the two families and the events that follow. He shares his legacy of his memories, experiences and recollections to the protagonist-narrator with his faculty of imagination. His wide exposure puts him a step higher as he was fortunate enough to traverse the boundaries of India at an early age of eight. He was always sought after for any advice regarding an examination or an interview. He was at ease to establish rapport with the public as he spent his time in the street addas. He also had the charm to make people listen to his stories. He, as a research scholar of archaeology lived on his father money. As an archaeology student he never wished to confine himself to any restrictions like borders or boundaries in the name of patriotism rather wished to be a man of everywhere for he was blest with faculty of imagination. His carefree way of living made Tha'mma misjudge his potential and calibre yet on witnessing his humanism with act of sacrifice in his attempt to save two innocent lives; she was trapped in with her sense of guilt. Thus Tridib becomes an epitome of transhumanization by willingly sacrificing his life in his attempt to save Jethamoshai and Khalil.

Thamma in *The Shadow Lines* represents the first generation character. She teemed with patriotic and nationalistic feeling as a college girl for the freedom of India. She expressed her desire to do daily errands like cleaning and washing for the revolutionists. Her jubilant nationalistic feeling for her nation was shattered as she was shocked and disappointment to find that there were no visible demarcations like a trench or a huge wall to separate the borders of India from Bangladesh, formerly known as Dhaka. Her nationalistic feeling is questioned, why then was such a war between India and Pakistan, riots and bloodshed.

The riots of 1964 had brushed aside Tha'mma's left over patriotic and nationalistic feeling. The riot that broke out in the Independent Bangladesh was the result of religious animosity. The theft of relic of Mohammed's hair in Kashmir had stirred up religious animosity between the Hindus and Muslims as a result of partition on the basis of religion. Jethamoshai, Tha'mma's aged uncle who once lived as a strict orthodox has now come out of his dogmatic belief and traditions and has given refuge to Khalil, a Muslim family from the rural parts of north India. Tha'mma on witnessing the brutal death of Jethamoshai, Khalil and Tridib by the rioters, questions the need for patriotism that savaged the lives of innocent men who were neither responsible nor reason for the theft. The lives that the rioters savaged were their own countrymen and neighbours. Tha'mma understood the truth behind the biblical command and law that states in the book of Matthew chapter 19 verse 19, "Love your neighbours as thyself" (Matt 19:19). She felt that had only this command was universally put into vogue then such animosity would never had its roots rooted firm in humanity. Her patriotic and nationalistic feeling is no more on its dominant front; instead she realizes that if only these rioters possessed the quality of humanism, such brutality would have been prevented.

Arjun in *The Glass Palace* exhibits his patriotic feeling by joining the Indian British Army. He initially deems it a pride but latter he regrets to be in the British Army. His passion for military service deteriorates as he understands the truth that he neither serves for his country, India nor for its upliftment and development. He realizes that he is merely a slave in the hands of the British. He loses his spirit of patriotism on his revelation of being a puppet in the hands of anti-humanistic colonizers. He understood the futility of war when he was in the trenches to save his life from the Malayan troops. He then felt the dire need for humanism and

compassion which would enable his survival possible. He ends up in debasing his life and career, for opting to become a slave for the rulers who use him to devour the life and happiness of his own countrymen.

King Thebaw despite his royal background is forced to lead a life of refugee in India. He had no other option but to accept the life of ordinariness that the colonizers had offered him. Though he had been denied his royal life in his own land Burma, he was deemed as the guardian King for the people of Ratnagiri because of his humanistic concern over the prospects of the local people.

Fokir in *The Hungry Tide* is celebrated as the epitome of transhumanization. He is a naive fisherman who does not crave for the pleasures and sophistication of the world. He is a man of nature, who could understand the language of nature better than the multi-linguist Kanai. Fokir and Kanai are the representations of two extremes. Kanai represents the fortunate sophisticated cosmopolitan society whereas; Fokir represents the unfortunate downtrodden community of fishermen. Kanai, despite of his connoisseur's ability and cosmopolitan exposure lacks the essence of being human. He is a womanizer and tried his luck with Piya and Moyna to entice them to his plan. Fokir, on the other hand possessed childlike innocence and purity of heart. It is his purity of heart that made him superior to Kanai. It is because of Fokir's innocence Moyna grew indignant with Fokir's and Piya's adventure.

The adventurous trip of Piya in search of her river dolphins *Orcella bervertios* culminates to the essence of the novel. Fokir's boat is caught up by the storm and Fokir initiates their means of escape from the storm. He immediately finds a rescue point on a huge tree against the storm and wound them both to the tree trunk with the help of his wife's sari. He also saw a tiger seeking refuge in one of the trees just beside them. Though Fokir had been in close proximity with the man-eaters of

Bengal, his humanistic concern and his childlike innocence had always been his shield and guard against tigers. Even on the tree trunk Fokir was fortunate to possess a place that would have helped him survive the storm but he had taken his responsibility to protect the woman (Piya) behind him took the stand behind her protecting her from the unknown thunders of the storm. He was hit by a huge tree trunk and gave his life in order to save Piya.

Fokir the man of nature attuned himself to comprehend the language of nature. He possessed humanism in full measure that he daringly faced death in his attempt to save Piya, leaving behind his loving wife Moyna and Tutul, his son. Fokir possessed the quality of being human than being a patriot. Thus he is deemed as an epitome of transhumanization in his act of saving Piya.

Nirmal is portrayed as a revolutionary character expressing his stand against the inhuman government. He is torn away from senses on witnessing the holocaust of the refugees in the island of Morchijipai. His revolutionary feeling urged him to record the traumatic events of the camp in order to pass on the history to the next generation – Kanai. Nirmal joins the refugee group in order to attain freedom not from the colonizers but from the inhuman rulers of his own country protesting against the authorities for freedom of survival. His quest for freedom is not an outcome of his patriotic feeling but an urge from his humanitarianism. It is not the inhuman act of the imperialist that affected him but the anti-humanistic measures of his own government that affected him for being the reason behind the holocaust of the Morchijipai island.

Kalua in *Sea of Poppies* is esteemed to be a man of humanism. Though Kalua belong to the leather caste community, he possessed the quality of being human in the inhuman society of the upper class family. Deeti, the wife of the upper class Hukum Singh – a sepoy from Rajput family sought the help of Kalua to bring home

her sick husband from the opium factory where he was working despite of having her relatives living nearby. Kalua came to her aid in time of need for bringing home her husband. He exhibits his rich trace of humanistic concern on his act of risking his life in order to save Deeti from committing sati.

Deeti's family lacked the core of being human. Her family and her husband were responsible for robbing off her chastity by forcing her to consume opium in order to hid Hukum Singh's impotency. She had to live six long years without tasting the pleasure of nuptial life though she bore a girl child for her family. Even after the death of her husband she was forced to lead a life of shame by being a mistress to her brother-in law. Her family forced to commit sati just in order to gain fame and honour through her death. It is evident that the menial differences like caste, class, religion, nation and nationality do not have meaning when the real essence of humanity – humanism – is lost.

Kalua, exhibits his humanitarian concern throughout his act of saving Deeti. He first rescues Deeti from the funeral pyre and from then on both of them were sought after to be slaughtered for dishonouring their family's honour. Kalua and Deeti, as a couple decide to renounce their sentiments towards their native land and were ready to explore the black waters in search of new livelihood. They join the group of grimitiyas and board the *Ibis* with new dreams. Their plight for survival had continued even in the ship. Bhryo Singh, Deeti's uncle exhibited his inhuman quality by sexually harassing Deeti without any consideration that she is pregnant. He even took Kalua by force and obtained permission from the captain to flog him till death. Helpless Kalua withstood such inhuman treatment but found his means of escape from the *Ibis*.

Neel Ratan Hadlar in *Sea of Poppies* is embossed with humanitarian concern. The rich zamindar falls a prey to the schemes of the colonizers becomes bankrupt, imprisoned and is transported to Mauritius along with Ah Fatt in the *Ibis*. Neel, despite of his royal background exhibits his humanistic concern in rescuing his cellmate from the sludge of human filth. He who had never eaten anything prepared by unknown hands is ready to clean the human faeces. It is because of his humanistic concern towards Ah Fatt that Ah Fatt was fortunate to lead his life afresh and anew.

Ghosh profess the religion of *Humanism* through his characters. Tridib and Khalil in *The Shadow Lines* are characters that existed in the story within the novel, yet they possess rich trace of humanistic concern over other human beings who are in any way not related to them. Khalil, a Muslim refugee from India taking care of Jethamoshai; Tridib who had never attached his affinity to any place in the name of patriotism sacrificing his life in order to save the innocent lives of aged Jethamoshai and Khalil. Arjun in *The Glass Palace* on understanding the inhumanness and meanness of the British Army opts to refrain from the army but becomes a victim and dies. Fokir in *The Hungry Tide* is an exemplary character that emphasises the need for good heart and clear conscience to survive in this world of uncertainties and unknown tremors. He is celebrated as an epitome of transhumanization for his sacrifice for saving Piya's life. Fokir, though dead is remembered as Piya returns back to Sundarbans for her next project that would be named after Fokir. Nirmal becomes a victim of the inhuman society. He, though being a revolutionist could not fight against the inhuman government to prevent the evacuation of the people in the Morchijhapi Island. He opts to be a victim along with Kusum, Fokir's mother whom he considers to be her muse for his writing. Kalua in *Sea of Poppies* is the man of humanistic concern amidst the inhuman people of Deeti's family. Despite the family's attempt to

force Deeti to commit sati in order to gain honour for their family, Kalua risked his life to exhibit his humanism to save Deeti from the funeral pyre. Kalua risked his life for the second time in the Ibis for his humanistic concern for saving Deeti. Thus the characters profess the universal quality of *humanism* which is the need of the hour.

Ghosh's women characters are self dependent and committed towards life. His elderly characters – the grandmother known as Tha'mma in *The Shadow Lines*; and Nilima who is fondly called as Mashima in *The Hungry Tide* have striking similarities, whereas Dolly, Uma in *The Glass Palace* and Deeti in *Sea of Poppies* are contrasting characters.

Tha'mma and Nilima, both share the same emotional bonding; both suffer the loss of their husband, loss of their country and lead a life of strict discipline and commitment. They could strongly sense their mental agony for being uprooted from their natal place. Tha'mma is basically from Dhaka settled in Calcutta in India. Nilima had to move away from her natal place Calcutta and settle down in the island of Lusibari in Sundarbans. Both the characters are presented as widows but passionate towards life in their own way. Tha'mma, is a retired headmistress and takes up her mission of rescuing her aged uncle Jethamoshai from Dhaka. Nilima, runs Badabon trust and supports the underprivileged community in the island. Both the characters are humanistic in nature.

The loss of nativity creates ripples in the memory of Tha'mma. She is from Dhaka a place she considers to be a heaven. She shares her nostalgia with her grandson about her energizing childhood. Nilima, on the other hand was deprived of children yet manages to attribute to the needs of her local people. She is successful in running a hospital for the welfare of the people of Lusibari, engaging her time in the upliftment of the local people. There is one notable contrast between them is their

sense of patriotism. Tha'mma actively participates in freedom struggle by parting away with her dear chain as a fund for the freedom struggle, whereas Nilima remains passive with the revolution and national movements. She opts to remain humanitarian besides the odds like the Morchijhapi incident.

Tha'mma overlooks patriotism and embraces humanism on witnessing the riot of 1964. It is evident that Tha'mma teeming patriotic feeling was nullified with her change of nationality, initially from Dhaka to India and latter from India to Dhaka. She realizes the futility of these imaginary lines called borders and boundaries that were wrought on the sacrifice of numerous lives in the name of partition. She understood that the imaginary lines of the cartographers neither have power on her life nor on her memory. As to her both India and Dhaka were her home as she relished the essence of humanism in her life in both the countries before partition. But her visit to Dhaka after partition has confined her to the guilt of being responsible for Tridib's sacrifice. She who never considered Tridib as a responsible adult is now dumbstruck in his swiftness to fend her aged uncle from the rioters. She deems Tridib as an epitome of transhumanization for sacrificing his life in order to save the other human being.

Dolly and Uma represents the two opposite poles. Dolly had to forgo her national identity and patriotism to be transformed into a transnational community. Though being born in Burma, she was exiled to India at the age of ten and she had adopted herself fully to the Indian culture. Her friendship with Uma made her life fruitful. Uma on the other hand was not as fortunate as Dolly, for her married life prove to be failure as she was widowed at a young age of twenty eight. Uma never confined herself to the shackles of the patriarchal society and its traditions. Uma was fortunate enough to enjoy financial stability and independence as her husband had

occupied an esteemed position as the commissioner with the British government. She had never imagined leading a life of seclusion; instead she was brave to follow her heart and took on to continental tour. She exhibited her patriotism by becoming a nationalistic leader and also a woman of fame. But for Dolly, Dinu's impairment and Neel's unexpected death had confined her to her home adding the responsibility to bring up her new born granddaughter Jaya. Dolly had to move to different places yet these places never decreased her yearning to return to Burma.

Deeti, the strong woman, represents the women folk who deemed honour and chastity to be the breath of life than mere survival. She though being wronged by her in-law family on the very night of her marriage, to her, chastity was in her belief knowing pretty well that her husband is not the father of her child. Even later, on discovering the truth of her first night episode she never compromised her chastity for her survival, instead she willingly announced that she would commit sati than to lead a life of shame. She then readily accepted her new life with Kalua, who saved her from the consuming fire of her husband's pyre. She saw the quality of humanism in Kalua and overlooked the differences like the caste and colour though she was from a high-class Rajput family. Her commitment towards life is well established in the Ibis, where she becomes everyone's Bhauji – the leader. Thus all the women characters become striking individuals who were ready to face any hardship in order to attain the life they envisioned.

Ghosh's concept of freedom has different dimensions to different characters. Ila's concept of freedom is contradicted by uncle Robi. Ila opts to stay away from the dogmatic rules and traditions of the Indian patriarchal society. Freedom according to Ila is her liberty to dress and behave to her instincts. She does not approve of any domination as to her liking, desires and wishes. But then her concept of freedom was

shattered when Nick, her husband, implemented her concept of freedom and was not loyal to her. It was then she felt the necessity for the tradition and custom in which she was born to. Her flight from India in order to escape the custom and culture proved to be in vain as her life itself was ruined by her action.

Kanni, on wearing a connoisseur's ability wilfully indulged in flirting with Moyna and Piya in the name of freedom. Piya though being a foreigner held the concept of chastity high, that his evil intention was never entertained. But he was thrown into the fire of jealousy when he saw the understanding and compatibility between Fokir and Piya. Ghosh has proved that the silent language of love between Fokir and Piya overpowered Kanni's linguistic ability. His service as a translator was seen as an intrusion for their compatibility was so perfect that silence became their language of communication.

Arjun had to share the same impulse with Kanni as his affectation and attraction towards Alison never lasted long. Arjun also felt the heat of jealousy when Alison grew attached to Dinu despite the fact of his impairment. Alison's rejection pushed him into a state of despair. Arjun's concept of patriotism, war and freedom underwent total change as he feels that he has become a refugee in the hands of the British army. Arjun who deemed it a great pride and prestige to get into the battalion is now in the state of frenzy as he feels that he has been trapped into the Indian British army as a slave, winning victories for the colonizers by destroying the life of his own countrymen. Thus his despair and disappointment about freedom has paved way for his untimely and unnatural death.

Deeti's concept of freedom is of two fold. Firstly, her desperate need for survival from the clutches of the colonizers as she was forced to cultivate only poppy in her fields. Secondly, her dire need for her security for her life and livelihood from

her own family members. Her urge of freedom ends up in joining the group of grimitiyas to be transnationalized to Martitius. Thus Ghosh clearly proves that the concept of freedom varies according to individuals and situations yet their aspired freedom remains unachieved. All the more the dream of Tagore's freedom also remains unachieved after sixty eight years of independence. Ghosh thus re-instils the spirit of humanism and freedom that Tagore had dreamt of.

Ghosh has enriched his novels with the essence of romanticism. The character in the novels falls in love irrespective of differences. Tridib an Indian research scholar of archaeology falls in love with May, a fine arts student in London. The friendship between the two families has laid the foundation for their love life. Then the narrator initially finds his heart tossing for the affection of Ila, who is of his same age. But as the novel progress, he attains maturity in understanding the realities of life, and discovers that he is deeply interested in May, Tridib's lover. Then there is a strong bonding between Fokir, the local fisherman of Sunderbans and Piya, an American research student. They share a unique bonding, irrespective of their nationality, education and class. The language of silence was the only means of their communication. In the same vein Rajkumar, an Indian born falls in love with Dolly, a Burmese girl. Deeti, the high class widow willingly accepts her destiny with Kalua, the leather worker. Ghosh employs the quality of love that surpasses all differences.

Love conquers all differences. It is this love in them that has set them apart as Martyrs and their act of sacrifice is celebrated as Transhumanization. They had practised the command in the Bible that states, "Love thy neighbour as thy self" thereby they become the followers of Saviour Jesus Christ, who had come to this world just in order to fulfil the Divine's will to save the whole world from the clutches of sin and death for the book of Romans chapter 6 verse 23 states, "For the

wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (NIV, Rom 6:23). The Divine God do not delight in destruction so as the Gospel of John chapter 3 verse 16 states, “For God so loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (NIV John 3:16). Thus the promise of eternal life is true as history that is divided into B.C. and A.D. (Before Christ and *Anno Domino* – After Christ’s Death) stands as its witness. He extends his thematic concerns to explore human relationship, and the uncertainty of life emphasising the need for humanitarianism.

Ghosh has employed unique and unconventional narrative strategies. His skill as a writer is revealed in his extraordinary art of narration. His art of narration absorbs the full attention of his readers. His narrative technique exhibits his rich knowledge of English language which is effectively used to represent the events or story or to retell the history of the nation. He also gives them first hand experience of the riots, turmoil, commotion and violence. Ghosh makes his fiction a real experience to go through the novel in such a way that the reader is absorbed in the lives and events narrated in the novel in spite of the fact that Ghosh’s fiction depicts an amalgamation of historical events and stories of the life of middle class families by following his own particular narrative strategy.

The narration in *The Shadow Lines* is complex and unconventional. The story does not follow linear timeframe or fits into chronological order. The narrator is moulded in such a way that he is either listening to the stories of the other characters’ or he is recollecting his own memory. The novel presents many episodes which in fact do not happen at the present time but they are narrated. Numbers of stories are told to

the narrator like grandma's story about home in Dhaka or a story of Robi's and May's accounts of Tridib's death.

Ghosh in *The Glass Palace* has collaged the epic story of love of the protagonist, futility of patriotism through Indian British army and struggle for survival as a transnationalist over Burma, East India, and Malaysia with colonialism and Second World War. The narration is lucid and lively. The third person narrative is used throughout the narration encompassing the impact of the colonial encounter on the lives of people who struggle for survival. The fictional characters like Rajkumar, Dolly, Saya John, Uma Dey reflect their lives in the historical events and impact of colonial rule of British. The reading of *The Glass Palace* gives an epochal effect to the novel. It starts with the story of the protagonist – Rajkumar – the first generation and ends with the third generation of the family Jaya, discovering her familial connection between her and her uncle Dinu. Though the story is narrated in the third person narrative Ghosh has used the flashback technique to describe the inner aspect of personality of the characters. He has made use of 'Shifts' technique to shuttle between the stories of India and Burma. His narrative technique assigns every character its importance and gives a realistic effect. There are many stories within the stories of *The Glass Palace*. The narrative is interconnected and reveals the lives of Rajkumar, Uma Dey, Saya John, and Dolly. All his characters move cross boundaries for survival.

The narration in *The Hungry Tide* is an amalgamation of history, ecology and scientific research. Ghosh imbibes epistolary narration in revisiting the Morchiapji incident of 1979 through Nirmal's diary. He implements different viewpoint to trigger the reasoning skills of his readers. He expresses his view substantiating from Rilkie's poems and emphasises the need for humanitarian outlook towards society.

Ghosh's concern of the dispossessed subaltern settlers in the Morichjhapi Islands is expressed through the fictional characters like Nirmal and Kusum. Kusum's narration to Nirmal and Horen reveal the callous and inhuman manner in which the deprived and marginalized people were harassed by the rich, sophisticated and powerful bourgeois. His polyphonic narrative technique helps him to give a realistic touch to the novel and also to portray the prevalent contradictions in the society.

Sea of Poppies sets a unique narrative technique by enriching the vocabulary with language of the seas. The novel being the first of the Ibis trilogy opens to the political cause of the Opium war. The story is set on the backdrop of the opium trade and is divided into three parts land, river and sea. In the first part, Land, the narrative progress has a central role to play for the progress of the story from the conditions of the characters. The second part tied up in the river near Kidder pore when the Ibis is get to board all the characters by some rap of destiny or the other. In the last section all the characters get to travel by water in the Ibis through the Hooghly. All the characters are destined to take the journey.

The use of language accredits Ghosh for his linguistic ability. The novel records dynamic and factual words that ease the narration of the story. In this novel, the use of language helps various characters to negotiate their marginality. It is as colourful as the characters and by its Bhojpuri, Lascari, Hindustani and Anglo-Indian words which was very delight to read. At the primary level, the lascar's languages found to be a perplexing, and afterwards it is immersed. Ghosh disburses a secure thought to the subtleness of numerous detach lingual groupings, and they all mix among each other with a rich blend of well-realized, dependable but supple voices. Ghosh has an extremely alert ear and deep knowledge of words that functions in civilization. Zachary and Serang Ali's dialogue is very identifiable. They speak to

each other in the manner which proves they hope each other and a way that does not try to conceal their individual milieu.

Ghosh's narrative style is unique and unconventional. His writings are the outcome of his fervent involvement with the world around. His writings are his expression for a unified humanity. He has searched and re-searched history to exemplify the futility of borders and boundaries before humanism. He is the voice of the voiceless lost in the chasm of silent history.

Ghosh has depicted certain common characteristic that is of great importance in these novels. The characters in the novel share the same kind of emotional bonding, which could be the replica of the author's emotions which he has instilled in his characters'. His emphasis is laid on the inevitability of human life. He has made the readers understand and realize that the destiny of human life is constructed and controlled by the supreme power, God. The four novels are constructed on the basic fulcrum of Partition, Violence and Destruction. The novels constantly focus on the futility of man's desires, which is of less importance. He has clearly presented the truth that humans in the constant pursuit of wealth and knowledge, tend to lose their inborn quality of being human, that is innocence, simplicity and purity of heart. Men in order to attain their aspired positions become inhuman; exploring all treaded tactics and means by going to the extent of killing their own fellow human beings in the name of free-trade, freedom, independence and patriotism.

Ghosh writing puts a sharp sickle to the belief of human life and living. He being an anthropologist pays his attention to the life of the people. He searches the annals of history and proves that the terms marginalized, subaltern and colonized are labels given to the unfortunate lot by the fortunate ones. His writings explore different cultures, traditions and customs. He has also tried to prove the importance of every

human being through his characters whether it is a sophisticated Judge or the neglected, unworthy Kalua – the leather worker. He respects every difference on the base of natural divisions - the continents, Oceans the West and the East, apart from these he is totally against all man- made boundaries and differences like the race, sect, class, caste, nation and nationality. Thus his focus is on humanism which he aspires to universalize despite all trivial and minor differences.

The novelist has proved that boundaries cannot be limited to mere chronology or physical contours through his character the narrator. The places imagined by the narrator, listening to Tridib are vivid experiences. Though Ila has travelled to numerous places her understanding towards life remains immature. To Piya, the place where *Orcaella brevirostris* lives is her home, as she had to forgo her natal boundaries to end up in a suburb in Sunderbans. As for Rajkumar, his heart is set not on any place for his survival. No geographical differences could surpass his determination to get rich. Whereas Dolly's heart is fixed to her natal home Burma and succeeds in returning to her place. Deeti's plight for survival has made her cross the black waters to a place unknown. Yet with such domination of history and power all the characters were successful in their own way and succeeded to follow their heart surpassing all such menial differences. They also prove that their life is not permanent in this non-permanent world.

Ghosh has depicted the concept of 'Home' on a unified whole. In all the four novels 'Home' places a vital aspect. In *The Shadow Lines* to Thamma, Dhaka, which was her home in her childhood, is no longer her home town but another nation from which she wanted to rescue her uncle. In *The Glass Palace* Rajkumar thrives as a young successful businessman in Burma but returns to India as a refugee. His heart clings neither on India nor Burma but on his family. Piya in *The Hungry Tide* longs to

live in India and she returns with a new project that is named after Fokir. In *Sea of Poppies* Deeti's concept of home undergoes a great transformation. Deeti, who on seeing the *grimityas* felt pity for them for giving up all that they possess and having set on a journey to a nether land. But when her life was at stake all her attachment took to flight and even she was ready to explore the nether land by joining the group of *grimityas* and boarded the Ibis. Here Ghosh has proved that the concept of home, nation and nationality are just beliefs that we blindly inherit in the name of custom and tradition. In this age of globalization, *home* is universal where survival is possible.

Survival has become a constant pursuit for these characters to explore new horizons. Metaphorically, the concept of partition is implied to death that serves as a passage from the live on the earth to the believed life after death. Death is the only factor that the characters were ready to accept at one point of their life and also in the life of their dear ones. Death is the ultimate destiny that encompasses all the fame, wealth, riches, power, struggle, agony and pain yet the manner and the cause through which one faces this inescapable destiny is of reverence. The protagonists' in the novels embrace their destiny out of willing choice thereby becoming an epitome of transhumanization. Though death is inevitable, it is the common destiny that provides equality to all living things but its manner and time is concealed for human comprehension. Here Ghosh has proved that the geographical differences and national boundaries does not have any value before the passion of survival and it is death that opens the gates of future hope a new vista of life eternal. Man should be aware of his responsibility with which he is bound with, his responsibility towards his family, fellow human beings, city and country. Thus the study has thrown the lime light to the

theme of transformation of beliefs, the agony of being transnationalised and the destiny of becoming transhumanization.

The research has proved the futility of power and domination in the name of patriotism and nationalism. It has vividly portrayed the unquenchable quest for life and survival under the constant threat of both man and nature. The study portrays how man's selfish desire in the form of trade, globalization, patriotism and nationalism has devoured the life of many innocent folks. The study focuses on the theme of Transformation from Patriotism to Humanism emphasising to overlook patriotism with transnationalism to make human survival possible in the vast space of humanity.

The novelist deconstructs the norms and beliefs of the society and humanity on the whole that are blindly inherited with the tool of 'Humanism'. In all his works, he desires for equality and liberty to live life with dignity. He does not follow conventional pattern and style but has experimented with different styles in writing. Ghosh explores the multiple threads that strangle our identities in the name of 'nation'.

Ghosh, through his writings profess a new religion, the religion of *Humanism*, a very essential and vital quality in the present chaotic scenario. He is of the opinion that peace could be established, when men follow the basic humanistic feeling towards one another by practicing the law stated in the book of Matthew chapter 19 verse 19, "Love your neighbours as thyself" (Matt 19:19). He has tried to prove that though rich or powerful, mighty or weak; rich or poor all such differences could be bridged only by one quality that is *Humanism*. He is of the view that the creed, "Unity in Diversity" could be achieved only if the 'religion of humanism' is practised despite the difference of nation and nationality. He has also aimed at voicing his longing to attain universal brotherhood through his new religion. Hence, it is Ghosh's effort to

pay tribute to the Creator by respecting human beings who is an awe of all his creations.

The novels are imbued with the theme of humanism against the historical events of the nation. It attempts to probe into human feelings and emotions that are universally shared despite all differences like nation, nationality, race, class, caste and colour. It proves that the concept of loss, suffering, pain, death, and thirst for freedom is the same to all people despite the cultural and traditional differences. It has focussed how the life of the characters are determined and transformed through various transitions by the social and political interventions and their various forms of transformations as a transformed individual, or a transnationalist or a transhumanist. Ghosh has artfully aimed at hitting the universal brotherhood undoing the differences drawn or demarcated in the name of patriotism, nation and nationality. All his characters transpire from their dogmatic ideas and readily embrace their insights and revelations. The sting of transformation was stung by the episode of partition.

The thematic study “Transformation from Patriotism to Humanism in the select novels of Amitav Ghosh” is just the tip of the iceberg in the vast ocean of Ghosh’s innovative and highly philosophical ideas. There are many more equally important and valuable aspects of the novel which could be dealt in detail. The other major topics for discussion could be diaspora, ecology, feminism, identity crises, subaltern studies, masculinity, marginalized literature, exile, partition, post-colonialism, transnationalism, history and nationality. Thus Ghosh’s writing undoubtedly kindles the interests of the readers and provides a deeper understanding towards life and instils hope for a better future foreseen.

Ghosh’s novels are packed with metaphorical insights of the triviality of human life of the colonized determined by the colonizer. His anthropologist feeling is evident

in his works emphasising and attaching importance to life and survival. Though his works reveal the minds of the subaltern, neglected and voiceless people he never fails to criticise the evils of the ruling class. He vividly portrays the ruthless, inhuman and immoral life of the colonizers hidden under the frame of freedom, religion and free trade. His work directly attacks the immoral attitude of these dominant people despite their nationality. His novels go further in search of the real meaning for 'Freedom' and 'Independence' encompassing the notion called 'border' and 'boundaries'.

Ghosh deems *Humanism* as a tool to achieve the vital creed "Unity in Diversity". He focuses on the universality of human emotions, the feelings of loss, pain, agony, sorrow and suffering. He is of the view that the impact of these feeling would be the same despite all differences like, race, sect, class and caste. The study has focused on these vital aspects of emotions embossed on history that catalyst the theme of Transformation of characters, their uprooted destiny as Transnationalist despite of their patriotic and nationalistic feeling and their unimaginable destiny of becoming an embodiment of Transhumanization. Ghosh has successfully substantiates his view through his fictional characters in a blend with history. All his characters shed off their skin of differences and beliefs and proclaim their new religion *Humanism*.