

OVERTURNING THE ESTABLISHED HISTORIOGRAPHY – ANALYSING THE NOVELS THE SHADOW LINES AND THE CALCUTTA CHROMOSOME OF AMITAV GHOSH

C. CANDACE JESSIN GRACETA

Research Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to analyze, how Amitav Ghosh has overthrown historiography, by bringing into view the various aspects of real history and exhibiting them in the novels, *The Shadow Lines* and *The Calcutta Chromosome*. Ghosh brings forward the forgotten voices of History, by focusing on the genuine stories of individual people, by the imaginary reconstruction of the past with precision, by refashioning of history with memories and questioning the validity of the grand narratives of the West and the notion of nationalism, creating new identities and recognition of the colonized 'other'.

KEYWORDS: Historiography, Revise, Postcolonial, Forgotten, Resistance, Master Narratives, Imaginary Reconstruction, Nationalism & Subdued Memories

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial writers have attempted to revive traditional expressions and recuperate the history which had denied their existence. The critic Amilcar Cabral identifies this as a "return to history" in his essay, *Unity and Struggle* (1980). According to Amilcar Cabral, the real emancipation of people is the regaining of historical personage of that people and in their return to history. Chinua Achebe believes that, the Postcolonial writings should recreate the full and deep past of the colonized people as in their past lies their dignity. In the novels, *Things fall apart* (1938) and *Arrow of God* (1964), Chinua Achebe has rewritten colonial history, from the point of view of the colonized and recuperated the Igbo history. In *Things fall Apart*, Achebe has made a clash of two versions of history and representations eradicating Okonkwo and his village's history, giving way to western authorial voice in the end.

Passive resistance against colonialism is found in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938). Ngugi wa Thiongo's *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), celebrates an inspirational hero, who died in the Kenyan anti- colonial struggle. Derek Walcott's poems *Omeros* (1991) and Grace Nichols' *I is A long Memoried Woman* (1938), conveys through the words of a slave woman, the worth of sugar cane, the economy and plantations in the Caribbean and the state of people who were consigned there by force.

Jean Rhys in her *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), has rewritten Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1846) giving voice to Bertha (A Creole who is the heiress of great wealth), who is forced by marriage to live in the cold, unloving England and is finally turned mad and shut in an attic with her suppressed emotions. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a striking postcolonial novel which questions the Metan narratives or Grand narratives, which construct and provide versions of history and values to people. *Wide Sargasso Sea* argues against canonical texts and colonial representations of History. Margaret Atwood' *Alias*

Grace (1996) is also a rewritten history of Irish classes who arrived to work in Canada. Through Grace Marks who is a murder suspect, Margaret Atwood questions the validity of the recorded, reported histories of the colonized in the novel, *Alias Grace* (1996).

Indian English writers attempt to revise and refashion myth and history. Salman Rushdie Shashi Tharoor and Rohinton Mistry have made use of Indian history and mythology. History is brought back often, in the novels of Amitav Ghosh. Brinda Bose states:

“Ghosh’s fiction takes upon itself the responsibility of reassessing its troubled antecedents, using history as a tool by which we can begin to make sense of – or at least come to terms with - our troubling present.”

The unrecorded, forgotten history of countless nameless people becomes a significant feature of Ghosh’s novels. In many such empty spaces of India, the textualities already existed, were excluded and depreciated and replaced with colonial values and representations. This colonial historical practice has been for a long time and is illustrated by Brian Friel’s play *Translations*. Ghosh universalizes subaltern history, by the imaginary reconstruction of the past which makes the past a part of the present. Past is constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. The real history of survival, pain and misery of the subalterns are overlooked by the mainstream history. Ghosh highlights this missing dimension of history, which presents the true picture of humanity that is nevertheless the real history.

The novel *The Shadow Lines* sketches historical events like Freedom Movement in Bengal, The Second World War and the Partition of India in 1947. R. Sankar comments, “Ghosh borrows events from History and creates his heterocosmos, by placing imaginary characters in those events.” *The Shadow Lines* is a tale of a family, which lived in Dhaka before partition and shifted to Kolkata afterwards. The novel *The Shadow Lines* deals, mainly with the after effects of partition in individual lives. The term ‘Partition’ pertains to the partition of British India on the basis of religious genus. The Indian Independence Act 1947, proclaimed the Partition that had split India into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. The Partition had a massive consequence of the displacement of 12.5 million people with enormous loss of life of over a million people. The violent partition had created a hostile atmosphere between India and Pakistan which still remains in the same state.

In this novel, *The Shadow Lines* Amitav has linked the personal lives of people with historical events, such as the freedom movement and insurgency in Bangladesh, The second World war, Indo- Pak war, the sacrilege happened in Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar in 1963 and the violence that perpetrated between communities of different religious faiths, in Calcutta and Khulna. These historical events have a great influence in the narrator’s mind. The novel starts with the narrator’s memory of the year 1939 in which his father’s aunt Mayadebi, her husband and son Trinib went to England. Then, it moves on to his memory of meeting May Price in London, as he went there for doing his research work. Then, the narrator recalls the memory of meeting May Price in the year 1959. She had come there, accepting the invitation of Trinib. There, she narrated how a friendship flowered between herself and Trinib, through the correspondence of cards and letters. Now, the narrator remembers the arrival of Ila to Calcutta from London. He asks her, if she remembers anything of the narration of Trinib of their stay in London. Knowing that she remembers nothing more, he cries, “But how could you forget? I cried. She shrugged and arched her eyebrows in surprise and said: it was a long time ago-the real question is how do you remember? (TSL:21,22) Amitav here throws the question to the readers, asking how they could

forget their past glorious history and get lost in the world which tries to prove them that they are inferior to their colonizers.

Amitav stresses upon the power of imagination, in bringing up the minute and precise details of the past in *The Shadow Lines*. While moving on from one street to another the narrator points at the exact places in London. Though he visits the places for the first time, he knows the places very well, as he imagined it accurately as narrated by Trinib. He enquires Ila, “Could you tell me please, I said, whether this is where the Left Book Club used to be, before the war?” (TSL: 34). Amitav affirms that, the “past seems concurrent with its present.” (TSL: 34) He emphasizes upon the impact of past shaping and directing the present, discreetly.

The narrator explains how when Ila’s father, who was appointed as visiting professor in the newly founded institute of a university in North England, could not accommodate his family in his small room were helped by Mrs. Price, the daughter of Lionel Tresawsen, to stay in their house in West Hampstead. Amitav shares Thamma’s experience of knowing the secret terrorist societies like ‘Anushilan and Jugantar’s plan, to assassinate British officials and policemen during the freedom fight. Thamma’s love of nationalism is revealed in the way, she revered the secret terrorist boy in her class standing firm “head erect and unflinching” (TSL: 42), even after getting caught by the British officers. Thamma herself wanted to become like him and fight for the rights of her country “with a pistol in her hand” (TSL: 43). She enunciates,

“I would have been frightened, she said. But I would have prayed for strength, God willing, yes, I would have killed him. It was for our freedom: I would have done anything to be free.” (TSL: 43)

AT this point Amitav puts forth a question to the readers, asking what real freedom is and if nationalism alone can establish that freedom? Amitav here breaks the age old concept of nationalism and the freedom it offers. Through the riot that happens in Dhaka, which takes away the lives of Jethmoshai and Tribib, Amitav asserts that, nationalism cannot make a man free. Man becomes free by living in harmony with one another breaking the walls of discrimination, religious, caste and class bias. Borders between countries can only divide people more. Amitav condemns the West’s idea of nationalism promoted everywhere.

The reference to the large table brought by Trinib’s grandfather in the year 1890, the history of Lionel Tresawsen, his journeys and friendship with Tribib’s grandfather Mr. Justice Chandrashekar Datta Chaudhari, the history of Lionel Tresawsen’s friends Alan, Snipe, Mike, Dan, Fransesca Halevy being narrated by the narrator on looking at their photograph, having a prior knowledge about them from Tridib in the past, interposing with the details of the newspaper of the time, *News chronicle* and the details of the War prone year 1939 in London, are valid proofs of how Amitav retrieves the past aptly to show us the real historical experience.

Thamma wants Ila to come back to India, as she believes that, Ila should stay back in her own country. She says that, England was built out of war and bloodshed and their borders were made with blood. There are a lot of regimental flags, fluttering in the Cathedrals of England and all their churches are filled with memorials to commemorate the men who died in war. Thamma declares that, war has been the religion of England. Amitav puts it beautifully, from the voice of Thamma,

“it took those people a long time to build that country; ... They know they are a nation

because they've drawn their borders with blood. Hasn't Maya told how regimental flags hangs 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."

(TSL:43)

Here, Amitav Ghosh by showing a glimpse of history and indirectly attacking the colonizing attitude of England points out, how much they have plundered and exploited the countries like India and Africa and have established themselves as a developed country in the world arena.

The disappearance of the sacred relic known as Mu-i-Mubarak which was believed to be the hair of Prophet Mohamed himself, from the Hazratbal Mosque on 27th December 1963, two hundred years after it was installed in Kashmir has resulted in a great riot in the valley of Kashmir. People demonstrated with black flags and gathered together to mourn for the loss. Mu-i-Mubarak was recovered by the officials of central bureau of intelligence, on 4th January 1964. Thamma, May and Trinib left for Dhaka the day before the relic was reinstalled. Riots started in East Pakistan, when the people's demonstration against the disappearance of the prophet's hair turns violent and spread to the neighboring towns of Khulna. Communal riots permeated in Calcutta and then in Dhaka.

The novel *The Shadow Lines* questions the validity of master narratives, reconstructs identities, invents stories and retrieves the truly authentic stories about the death of his uncle amidst other versions. Amitav Ghosh stresses upon three forms of violence that encapsulated the previous century. Violence was testified, during periods of war, violence caused by extremist groups, the indistinctive violence that spurts during communal riots. He focuses on the psychic trauma of communal riots. The narrator struggles with silence while reconstructing the past. The title *The Shadow Lines* pertains to borders and boundary lines and their illusionary nature which is the key concern of Postcolonialism. According to Rabindranath Tagore, Nationalism is a western imported ideology which is associated with fear, borders and barricades. Nationalism has been a terrible source of psychological violence. Crossing of boundaries and barrier comes naturally for Ghosh's characters. In the post – integrated phase of nationalism and historiography everything gets subverted from within.

The novel narrates the actions taking place in 1939 - 40, 1960 -63, 1978 -79. *The Shadow Lines* is concerned of 'knowing'. The motif which predominates Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is memory, which functions as a graph on which history is plotted. Amitav Ghosh uses Memory to indicate that, past can coexist with present and that geographical distances can be outdone.

According to critic, Barucha,

"Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* subverts official version of history and provides ideological resistance to totalizing political discourses. The lines which colonial cartographers had drawn through the Indian land mass throw their dark shadows on events in decolonized India and Pakistan."

Cartography (Map and Mapping) has been practiced in Colonialism. Maps became tools of Eurocentric exploitation. Cartography is the science of systematizing space. Bartholomew atlas plays a vital role in the novel, as Trinib was gifted with the Bartholomew atlas at the age of nine as a birthday gift. Trinib was able to point out places in the

Bartholomew atlas to the narrator. Amitav Ghosh has explored cartographic imagination in the novel *The Shadow Lines*. Names of places, description of houses and names of brand names of objects are marked with excessive care in the novel. The individuals construct their own stories in the novel. Trinib warns the narrator to imagine precisely. Amitav opines that, if we are not sure of our own stories/ history, someone else will construct it for us with precise imagination.

The narrator searches for the archives to know the real details of the riot of 1964. Through this example Amitav proves how, what really had happened in 1964, vanished without a trace in history and is eaten up by the narratives of others. Time and place variation in the novel makes the novel appear like a puzzle with one link missing. The missing link was the mystery that engulfed the death of Trinib in Dhaka. The maps have not been corrected or changed and the barriers and restrictions to move from one country to another remain the same. Ghosh has created different perspectives, through the version of disparate people.

In *The Shadow Lines* Ghosh, ridicules the grandmother Thamma's nationalist views. According to Ghosh, the delimitation of national border and cultural boundaries are mere shadow lines, which is not based on reason or evidence but brought into effect to divide the people. In *The Shadow Lines* the narrator becomes the historian and Trinib becomes his authority. Trinib constructs a fictional thread with facts, when he described about his visit to London to meet the Price. Through Trinib's story, Ghosh mixes up fact and fiction and history and imagination, in an inseparable manner.

Trinib acts as the real image of the author, Amitav Ghosh. Both Ghosh and Trinib give voice to their own power of imagination which when done with precision exhibits a reality. In the novel *The Shadow Lines*, Trinib gives record of different version of himself and the places he visited to different people and finally no one knows which one is true. People are let free to believe in, whichever version they want. Amitav states, "Nobody was ever quite sure where they stood with Trinib". (TSL:10) Thus, Amitav Ghosh makes Trinib his mouthpiece and subverts history.

In *The Shadow Lines* Ghosh has brought into light how the minor historical events like riots which has been happening in the country for religious or caste reasons are totally removed from the national memory as it may interrupt the dominant historiography's narrative of the battles with foreign countries. The Narrator keeps on asking to the other characters in the family, about their memory of events throughout the novel. The narrator continues to insist his friends and relatives to carefully examine their memories for materials to agree to his recollected point of views. The narrator reminds the other characters to remember what really has happened and support their experiences with the stories heard from others.

Ghosh affirms that the subdued memories of the people have formed the basis for the accepted historiography and the historiographers did not try to expose it. The subdued memories of the people were not included in the nation's history. The subdued memories are full of undisclosed twinging pain. Ghosh attempts to unveil the suppressed memories of the ordinary people, in order to retrieve their lost history which has only silence to offer. So, the narrative pattern used by Amitav Ghosh in this novel, *The Shadow Lines* is different from the other novels. His narrative arises with the unsure, contradictory memories of different characters and moves across different times and space destabilizes national historiography.

Thamma, the grandmother of the narrator in *The Shadow Lines* often moves towards the past through her memories. Dhaka was her birth place and she had spent a vital part of her life in Dhaka. After the partition, Dhaka became the capital of East Bengal which was under the reign of Pakistan. In the year 1971, after Bangladesh had attained freedom

from Pakistan, Dhaka evolved into the capital of Bangladesh. Thamma came to Calcutta in India, during Partition period. Widowed at a very young age, Thamma had to fight for life. With the bachelor's degree in History, which she had obtained from Dhaka University, she became a school teacher.

After her retirement, Thamma felt so desolate and so, she has tried to seek comfort in memories. She could remember the murky colour of the lake in Dhaka, during night time and then she remembers how they had left behind her Dad's brother Jethamosai in their Dhaka house itself. Haunted by loneliness and the thought of her uncle Jethamosai, Thamma plans to visit Dhaka with her sister Mayadebi, Trinib, May Price and Robi. Amitav points out how the orthodox Hindu Jethamosai has to depend on the muslim rickshaw driver Khalil after partition. Ghosh attempts to convey the message of oneness, by bringing up these incidents. Thamma tells Robi,

“there was a time when that old man so orthodox that he wouldn't let a muslim's
Shadow pass within the ten feet of his food? And look at him now, paying the price
of his sins.” (TSL: 210)

Thamma sees how her old house has turned into a motor-cycle workshop. She is even more disappointed to realize that her uncle Jethamosai, no longer remembers her. He calls her a stranger and refuses to move along with her to India. Sense of identity and belongingness, which seems very important for any man during the prime of his youth, becomes nothing as old age creeps in. With old age, Jethamosai finds comfort in the warmth of the poor rickshaw driver Khalil's love and shelter. Amitav here imparts the most important message of life that human beings need love and care more than their extremist ideologies of creed.

Ghosh has created Thamma, as the manifestation of the constructed national identity, which is supported by the accepted historiography. After the Dhaka tragedy, Thamma undergoes nervous breakdown as she had confronted the delusion of her illusion. Ghosh has sketched the character of Robi, as a balanced person who is able to think against the ideology of nationhood and freedom, which is believed to be brought by borders between countries. Ghosh considers the creation of borderlines, as burden of colonialism imposed upon the colonized Indian people. He says,

“people shot by terrorists and separatists and the army and the police, you'll find
somewhere behind it all that single word: everyone's doing it to be free. And then I
think to myself, why don't they draw thousands of little lines through the whole
subcontinent and give every little place a name? What would it change? It's a mirage;
the whole thing is a mirage.” (TSL: 247)

Amitav considers the concept of nation as a myth, which is constructed with powerful symbols. In the opinion of Amitav, these symbols have the capability to coalesce and dissociate people. Amitav states that, the concept of nation and national border divides more people and creates walls between human beings. The partition of the grandmother's house in Dhaka is an allegory which indirectly points out at the India Pakistan partition done in an unreasonable way lacking complete discretion. The importance to boundary and border has created an indentation in the hearts of Thamma, the narrator, Robi and other family members as everyone gets emotionally scourged and ravaged by the brutal death of Trinib and Thamma's uncle. When speaking of the partition, Amitav says how people have started liking to live, within their

walls of differences never wanting or wishing to cross their boundary lines to find the meaning of their existence as human beings. Amitav states,

“they had grown so thoroughly into the habits engendered by decades of hostility that none of them wanted to venture out into the limbo of reconciliation. They liked the wall now; it had become a part of them.” (TSL: 122)

Amitav reconstructs the past very effectively. The narrator was confronted with silence and loss of perceiving real information for fifteen years until he searches in the newspaper to prove his friends and colleagues that some riots had taken place in Calcutta which he witnessed as a boy. During this discovery he finds out the riots which had started in East Pakistan and then spread to Dhaka and Calcutta simultaneously. Dhaka and Calcutta share the inverted image of Thamma’s father’s house, which was bifurcated into two. Muslims attacked Hindus in Dhaka, whereas Hindus attacked Muslims in Calcutta. Newspaper reported as “twenty nine killed in riots” or “fourteen killed in Frenzy”. The narrator breaks the silence of this reported event and seeks the truth of Trinib’s death. By dusting out and bringing back the past history from oblivion; Amitav gives voice to the aftermath of national borders, blazing each other with bloodshed for the stolen relic of a saint on whom people believed in.

Amitav narrates how a simple event of taking a old man back to his country, ends up in the tragic death of three people, which in future would haunt and annihilate the lives of their loved ones until their last breath. As Thamma’s uncle Jethamosai refuses to be taken back to India, Thamma requests Khalil, to bring Jethamosai in his rickshaw, which has to follow their car. As the car and rickshaw reached the bazaar, they could observe the sudden stillness around and the closed shops and the deserted nature of the place. Then danger slowly approaches them in the form of the violent mob who have turned aggressive due to the spreading news of the stolen relic of the prophet. Amitav describes,

“there were dozens of them stretched all the way across the road. They had lit a fire in the middle of the road, with a few broken chairs and bits of wood. Some of them were squatting around the fire. Others were leaning against the lamp – posts and the shop – fronts.” (TSL: 217)

The vilolent mob sorrounds the car and breaks the window screen, which injures the driver, as they begin to attack the people inside the car, the security guards start shooting with their guns and the crowd’s attention now shifts towards the old man and Khalil. Khalil and the old man Jethamosai gets killed brutally and Trinib receives a fatal slit in his throat as he goes near to save the old man Jethamosai. May Price see the death of her beloved Trinib in the background of fire and blood, and this scene gets etched in her mind. She develops a guilty feeling that her hasty act of getting out of the car to save old man Jethamosai has resulted in the killing of Trinib, who went ahead towards the scene, in order to protect her, knowing very well that his life is in danger. With the narration of this tragic event of history, Amitav recreates the history pointing to the world how precious human lives and their emotions are than religion and its fanaticism.

In *The Shadow Lines* Trinib is the story teller amidst many stories and narrators. The protagonist tries to reconstruct the story, the history of his family which eventually leads to the history of the nation. History is compiled in *The Shadow Lines* with many sediments of narration, recollection and various geographic locations. The narrator acts as

the listener and observer of stories and later reinterprets it and thereby constructs history.

When Trinib describes, the lives of Mrs. Price and of Tresawsen, during the Second World War with the use of his imagination, it is different from what was recorded in history. Trinib speaks out the consciousness of the affected people, whose lives come to a still because of the international violence and unrest. The narrator too finds out the secret beneath Trinib's death from Robi and May Price, which was reported just as a riot ending up in casualties in the newspaper. Through, these characters and events, Amitav points out how the known history has hidden the true history of many people, whose lives were precious to their loved ones.

In *The Shadow Lines* the narrator remembers Trinib's account of his first visit in London. At 44, Lymington road in London Trinib's family stayed with the Prices on the eve of the World War II. In the photograph taken by Trinib's dad in the year 1939, Alan Tresawsen, Mrs. Price's brother, his friends, Mayadebi, Mrs. Price and her husband Snipe are present. Later in the year 1940, Alan and his friend Dan were killed in the bombardment. Here, Amitav tries to expose the historical impact of war and how it affects the personal lives of people through the haunting memories.

The Calcutta Chromosome exposes that before Western science could find out the causation and cure for Malaria, indigenous system of cure was discovered by Lakaan and Managala who stand for non - Eurocentric lore. Here, Ghosh shows how the colonial master Ronald Ross gets manipulated, in the hands of Lakaan and Managala, his servants of which he is remains unaware of. Ghosh makes fun of the Western discourse of knowledge in this novel, by placing it against a common priestess' or the 'other's' counter science of silence. In this novel Ghosh tries to create an incongruity between history as furnished written evidence and history as an expression of the real emotions and experiences of ordinary people. In *The Calcutta Chromosome* Amitav Ghosh cherishes the memory of the past and the novel expresses the suppressed history of the empire, which is writing back. The novel deals with the history of the discovery of the malaria parasite by Ronald Ross. The accepted fact is that Ronald Ross had discovered the plasmodium falciparum virus in the year 1898 and was awarded the Nobel prize, for medicine in the year 1906.

The history of Malaria is analogous to the history of colonialism. The European scientists where competing fiercely with each other to gain more knowledge about Malaria, in order to eradicate it completely. This is similar to the European countries' vicious ambitions to win over the boundaries of Asia and Africa and expand their circumference of power. The European scientists worked hard with effulgence and miscues to discover a remedy for Malaria. Their journey of discovery can be compared with the discovery of European discoveries of new lands. Ronald Ross' discovery of the Malarial parasite was a result of intuition and benightedness. The medical discovery of Ronald Ross and the territorial expansion of the European colonizers have in some way or the other disregarded and debilitated the knowledge of the colonized people. Here, in this novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Amitav focuses on the denigrated native knowledge and uplifts them.

Malaria research is actually about bridling of knowledge. Knowledge which was controlled by the European scientists is now brought back to the Indians. Amitav has reclaimed and reformulated the knowledge of the malaria disease in Indian ways and terms. L. Murugan the employee of 'Life watch Organisation' has written two articles, such as "Certain systematic discrepancies in Ronald Ross's account of plasmodium B" and an "Alternative interpretation of late 19th century Malaria research: is there a Secret History?" (32). These articles created a kind of mystery and questioned the authenticity of Ronald Ross's discovery. The Science Society threatened Murugan, that he will be punished legally if he continues to write articles against the discovery of Ronald Ross. Undeterred by the threat, Murugan continues his research and finally

finds out that, a group of efficient native scientists of a “Secret cult” who were much advanced than the British scientists, had discovered the malaria parasite.

According to western tradition, a scientific discourse should have qualities such as objectivity, explicitness, reason and established way of doing things to know the scientific truth. Amitav Ghosh accentuates the prospect of counter science in *The Calcutta Chromosome*. Counter Science has unknown techniques and process. It’s a kind of personal science, rooted in native tradition. Counter Science may cure diseases, but it cannot give scientific explanation. Taking advantage of this opportunity the colonizers claimed credit of this great discovery depriving the native scientists of their acknowledgement which ended up in the oppression of their actual history.

Murugan, in *The Calcutta Chromosome* believes that there is an ‘other mind or counter mind or counter rationality that questions the notion that everything can be explained scientifically. Murugan, also believes that any discovery is made of accidents, intuition, coincidence, incredible experiences and the intelligence, provided by the ‘other mind’. Murugan opines that, some native Indian method would have inspired Ronald Ross’s malaria research and that, many intelligent ‘other minds’ have contributed to the Malaria research. Murugan thinks that, Malaria was treated in India, even before the malarial parasite was isolated.

Ghosh opines that, the system and process through which, the counter science of the third world works was not recorded in the history of medical science as these counter sciences were associated as manifestations of magic and superstition. Dr. Pratima Das observes:

“*The Calcutta Chromosome* is also a medical historiography. The novel tries to replace the received medical history of malaria research with historiographic details. These details though not reliable always, generate enough doubt in the mind of readers regarding the sole genius of Ronald Ross.”

Phulmoni has many identities as his real name is Saiyad Murad Husain. His mask speaks more than his true self. His speech on the power of silence affirms that the counter science in India has to function under the mask of some religious or cultural practice. Westerners would never understand the counter science as it works under the mask of religious or cultural practices and as it would not offer clear scientific procedures according to the expectation of the western scientific procedures.

Phulmoni corroborates his power of silence notion, through his narration of his experience as a young officer in the British company. Once, he happened to spend a night in Renupur railway station. The station master cautioned that, he staying at the station during night time is not same. As Phulmoni stays there, he had to encounter the movement of things in his room without human agency and later he was nearly killed by the train which suddenly shifted moving towards the side track. In the morning when Phulmoni explained the station master what had happened at night, the station master denied that what he said was wrong as the lamp remains in the same place where it was kept earlier. Here Ghosh brings forth before us two narrations, two possibilities of truth – (i) The report of Phulmoni (ii) the report of the station master and puts forth a question to the readers asking which version is true. There is a dig on the historical records framed by the colonizers here. The narration continues as Phulmoni wakes up and finds a train arriving. While, conversing with a station engineer he comes to know that, there was no station master in the Renupur station for the past thirty years. At this point

the reader gets confused as he doesn't know which version to be considered as truth. Through these three versions of truth, Amitav beautifully parodies the way history was constructed by the colonizers, to keep up the subjectivity of the subalterns.

Murugan's investigation of Laakhan, the mysterious man who helped Ronald Ross's discovery of the malarial parasite, bears the truth that Laakhan lacks thumb finger in one of his hands. Phulmoni remembers that, he had seen the handprint of Laakhan's four fingered palm, in the premises of Renupur station. Here, the narration of Murugan and Phulmoni intersect with the truth of Laakhan, and makes it credible for the reader. Amitav intertwines the two narratives to bring out the truth that Historiographic records have been created personally and collaboratively. Ghosh draws on in the novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome* a succession of intertwined half truths which strengthens each other and does away with each other to establish themselves.

Ghosh disreputes Western scientists, for their inability to accept and understand the system and principles of counter science. The finding of the colonized subjects Mangala and Laakhan 'Interpersonal Transference' challenges the hegemony of colonial scientific discourses. The characters in this novel, who indulge in the discovery of malaria gets affected by the disease eventually. Through this, Ghosh tries to prove that in counter science the interpreter becomes the evidence and the discoverer gets discovered. Ghosh indicates that counter science can operate only in the medium of silence as the transmission of such knowledge cannot be done through language, but through alternative modes of articulation from the borderline of scientific discourse.

REFERENCES

1. Sankar, R. Encounter Between Civilisations : A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The shadow Lines* and *In an Antique Land*. The Quest, June 2010. 43.
2. Bharucha, E. Nilufer.1996. "The Charting of Cultural Territory Second Generation Postcolonial Indian English Fiction" In Kirpal: 365.
3. Das Pratima, "Counter Science: A Study of Subaltern Agency in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta chromosome*" in Dr. B. K. Sharma (ed.,) *The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh: A Postcolonial Perspective*, New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers, 2011,116.
4. Ghosh, Amitav: *The Shadow Lines*, New Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publisher, 1988.
5. Ghosh, Amitav: *The Calcutta Chromosome*, New Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publisher, 1996.